



PRESS RELEASE

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Office of Planning Launches Creative Placemaking Initiative

Program will deliver inclusive, innovative art and design projects in all 8 wards

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 5, 2016) – This week, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) launches a unique initiative that will deliver innovative placemaking projects across the District. The event is part of [innoMAYtion](#), Mayor Muriel Bowser’s month-long initiative showcasing DC’s innovation ecosystem and how ideas from local entrepreneurs are reshaping the nation’s capital.

The initiative, [Crossing the Street: Building DC’s Inclusive Future through Creative Placemaking](#), will promote community-building in neighborhoods that are experiencing rapid demographic and social change. Over the next year, OP will spearhead projects in 15 locations around the city to foster civic interaction and engage residents in a conversation about the future of Washington.

After conducting an international competition, OP has selected a diverse set of curators to develop and deliver these projects in all eight wards of the city. The winning curators represent a blend of deep, grassroots experience and global expertise: buildingcommunityWORKSHOP in partnership with Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Cultural DC, Gehl Studio, Pleasant Plains Workshop, Van Alen Institute, Ward 8 Arts & Culture Council, Washington Area Bicyclist Association in partnership with Street Plans, The Pink Line Project, and the Young Playwrights’ Theatre.

To ensure *Crossing the Street* projects are truly local, the curators must identify and define the community “canvas,” the spatial and cultural backdrop for each of their creative placemaking interventions. According to OP Director Eric D. Shaw, “We think our initiative will push the boundaries in terms of engagement, innovation and placemaking and inject new creative energy into planning. It will also allow us to test recommendations from various neighborhood plans that were developed with community input. We are now venturing into what data-driven art and art-driven planning look like in the District.”

On Saturday, May 7, OP will kick off the *Crossing the Street* initiative at the [2016 Funk Parade](#) with a program of fun and thought-provoking placemaking activities which celebrate DC's culture and community. Interventions will roll out through the summer and fall, bringing people together and testing new ways to integrate art into city planning. The *Crossing the Street* initiative is generously supported by [The Kresge Foundation](#) and the "Pioneering New Approaches" focus within its Arts and Culture Program.

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