



“DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN UPHAM’S CORNER?”

A CASE STUDY OF BELONGING, DIS-BELONGING AND THE UPHAM’S CORNER ARTPLACE INITIATIVE

...understanding that before you have places of belonging, you must feel you belong. Before there is the vibrant street one needs an understanding of the social dynamics on that street – the politics of belonging and dis-belonging at work in placemaking in civil society.

Creative Placemaking and its aesthetics of belonging contribute and shape our person, the rights and duties of individuals crucial to a healthy democracy that animate the commons. It should also animate Creative Placemaking not as a development strategy but as a series of actions that build spatial justice, healthy communities and sites of imaginations.

--ROBERTO BEDOYA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TUCSON PIMA ARTS COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

“THE VIBRANT STREET” ALLEY

CEDRIC DOUGLAS, a local artist, was taking on “the alley” in Upham’s Corner. It was an alley that had once provided a pedestrian cut-through from the Jones Hill neighborhood to the heart of Upham’s Corner. Now it was too smelly, dark, and dumpster-filled for most folks to use it at all. As part of “STREETLAB: Upham’s,” residents had imagined solutions ranging from better lighting to more color, a handrail for the stairs and moving the dumpsters. As Cedric started to map his ideas for a colorful 3-D mural to draw folks back to using the alley, he was being watched...

“What are you doing on my wall?” asked the postman, who turned out to live in the home overlooking the alley. He was soon joined by his wife and adult daughter, and with some informal help from STREETLAB: Upham’s photographer Rafael Feliciano Cumbas, the conversation continued in English and Spanish. As Cedric explained the project and the vision, the family grew more interested. Later, the daughter, Sandra, talked about how the alley work went, “They’d been working out here late, and [my mom] leaves the door open for them, so they feel a little safe because there’s light and there’s somebody there. And she would step out every now and then just so people can see that there’s somebody’s watching.”



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

When the time came to unveil the alley gallery at Dorchester Open Studios, Cedric invited the neighboring family to come. Sandra said she'd certainly come, but her mom probably wouldn't. "She never leaves the house except when she needs to go out shopping." To her surprise, not only did her mom come to the event, she DJed it! With mom's Latin music enlivening the alley from above, the community enjoyed Rafael's photos, a community-knit railing and Cedric's 3-D mural.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

This case study is about a variety of things—from the creative placemaking initiative that led Cedric to the Upham's Corner alley, to the many families like Sandy's whose lives were being impacted by transit oriented development, to the local artists, merchants and residents who joined together to weigh in on what Upham's Corner was and was becoming. This case study looks at the 24 months of work done by nine organizations that came together with these residents, artists and merchants to form the Boston-based Upham's Corner ArtPlace Pilot (UCAP).

With the aim of sharing successes, challenges and lessons learned with both the Upham's Corner community and the broader field of creative placemaking, this case study digs into the initiative's goals to:

- Use an artistic approach to increase local awareness, engagement and leadership regarding plans for Upham's Corner,
- Support and expand the local creative economy, and
- Explore with the community what it would mean to create an "aesthetic of belonging" in one of the most vibrant, hectic and diverse neighborhoods in Boston.

With an eye to Roberto Bedoya's insights about belonging and dis-belonging, this case study threads the narrative of Upham's Corner ArtPlace not as a linear timeline, but as a movement from initiative-led events that fostered feelings of belonging to more community-led events that grew out of the civic implications for belonging. It also explores UCAP's cumulative impact on the daily art of belonging in Upham's Corner, or—to quote Bedoya again—

"the power of art to imagine our plurality — the ways we live, work, and play together, with all its paradoxes, warts and compassions."

Hopefully this approach will serve to underline how creative placemaking—done with a grounding in spatial justice and a commitment to revitalization without displacement—can impact both the civic engagement and vibrancy of a neighborhood. As such, the paper is laid out to offer the reader a background in both the neighborhood and creative placemaking, then walk through the experience of the Upham's Corner ArtPlace Pilot through the eyes of community members and partners, and finally through a reflection on what was learned and where the initiative hopes to go in the future.



PHOTO BY: LORI LOBENSTINE

PART 1: UPHAM'S CORNER AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE UPHAM'S CORNER ARTPLACE INITIATIVE

UPHAM'S CORNER— A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD

UPHAM'S CORNER is located in Dorchester, Boston's largest neighborhood. It is a historic neighborhood undergoing rapid change—known as much for its hectic intersections as its Victorian buildings, and for its towering mural honoring the Negro National Baseball League as for its marquee cultural institution, the beautiful Strand Theatre. Home now to a tightly packed Dominican grocery store, Brothers Supermarket II, just as it used to be home to one of America's first supermarkets—the sprawling Upham's Corner Market that served the growing European immigrant communities of the early 1900s.

Upham's Corner is also a dense and diverse residential neighborhood, with an estimated population of 13,000 in just one third of a square mile. This population, including one of the top ten most diverse zip codes in the country,¹ includes Cape Verdeans, African Americans, Dominicans, West Indians, Caucasians, and Asians (primarily Vietnamese). Its historic neighborhoods—home to much of its aging Caucasian population—include Jones Hill and Virginia-Monadnock. Its younger neighborhoods—home to a younger and more diverse population—include Dudley Street, Humphreys Street, “The Mag” (Magnolia Street) and more. On the whole, Upham's Corner is quite young, with almost 30% of the population under the age of twenty.² Upham's Corner and many of its residents face the numerous challenges that come with poverty (over 23% live below the poverty line³), including low educational attainment (over

30% of adult residents haven't completed high school⁴), unemployment (12.4% in 2011⁵) and social violence.

The Upham's Corner of today has an outsized reputation for violence that is both lamented and contested by its residents. When 50 residents were interviewed on the streets of Upham's Corner's bustling business district, violence and the reputation of violence topped the list of their complaints about the neighborhood. As one interviewee (who didn't give his name) said,

“When I lived here in the 90s, this area was gang-bang city. It was a very volatile place. It seems to have calmed down now. I couldn't have stood here ten years ago, fifteen years ago, with the problems we had when I was growing up.”

Another pointed out how the reputation lives on:

“Yea, people call it ‘Deadchester’ because of the violence. A lot of friends won't come by because they're afraid to come to ‘Deadchester.’ I've been trying...I'll bribe them [to come.] I enjoy this place very much now, and learned to appreciate the little things that make Dorchester.”

Unfortunately, the reputation of violence is also considered by some as an impediment to developing positive alternatives. As one resident shared his desire to open a barbershop/youth program,

“I would want to keep it here, because everybody comes from everywhere...they can

all come to this one spot. But the thing is, will they allow me to do it? Would they allow me to keep a location like that, knowing that in their brain, society-wise, too much youths [means] too much gangs...”

That said, there are many things that Upham’s Corner residents—both new and old—like about their neighborhood. Interviewees were most enthusiastic about the shopping district. As a relative newcomer to the neighborhood said,

“There’s pretty much everything I need in the community—stores, groceries, CVS, laundry. It’s very close-knit, but it’s not stuck together with everyone on top of each other. You still get to walk down the street and not know [people], and meet them and greet them.”

Another resident, Angela, who had grown up in Upham’s Corner and recently returned, said she liked

“the local businesses. It’s been amazing how humble people are. The moral compass is still there. I feel like the inner city gets the bad impression that people are mean and rude, but if you come with humility, then people are nice and happy to have your business.”



PHOTO BY: LORI LOBENSTINE

DIVERSITY AND BELONGING IN UPHAM’S CORNER

The diversity of Upham’s Corner was also cited frequently and positively in our street interviews. People regularly commented on the diverse cultural backgrounds and many languages of the neighborhood as one of its strengths. It was interesting, within that context, to see how interviewees made connections between diversity, identity and belonging.

As one new resident, Marcela, told us:

“I was forced out of Allston because I couldn’t afford my rent anymore. We’ve been living here for three months and one day....I can’t believe it, because I’m a Mexican Jew which is a minority within a minority, and in my building there’s a Jew from Argentina, and on my block there’s a Jew from Italy. It’s just incredible, so I feel at home and safe. My husband is white, monolingual and monocultural, but he feels safe too. We love it here....I want to do anything I can to help my community because this is my home. I have some history and some skills, and I would love to be a part of my community, and if I can make any difference I would be very excited.”

On the flip side, long-time residents—and even some who had moved out of Upham’s Corner and were back visiting—did not necessarily feel like the newcomers “belonged” in Upham’s Corner.

As Sandra from the alley said,

“I’ve noticed they have converted a few of the buildings into condos. Most of the people that were in the neighborhood renting, they can’t afford it. Like that house there, all of the people that lived in that building, they all hung out at our house, because all the kids went to school with my brother and sister. They all moved out...and they ended up selling the house, and now it’s condos. It’s all young people...”

basically single people, not as much couples.

It seems like they're the kind of stuck up people because one is an attorney, and I guess the other one is two couples of the same sex in each one. And one has like a high position and the other has a high position, so they must think they're better than everyone else, because they have a condo and they have a high position. Everybody else, we are always talking and everything, but those ones there, they haven't made it a point."

Residents also connected the diversity of Upham's Corner with other elements of daily life. For example, there was a popular desire to have more opportunities for evening entertainment. As lifelong Dorchester resident Scott said,

"This place was really exciting back in the day. I don't see why the city doesn't target entertainment, open it up to culture...all types of cultures and different ways of life.... Whatever ties people together and makes people feel good and comfortable in one place."

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COME TO UPHAM'S CORNER

The Upham's Corner neighborhood is getting more attention than it's used to from across the city. Whether it's Boston's Department of Transportation earmarking \$3 million dollars for a Columbia Road renovation, or the MBTA renovating the Upham's Corner station on the Fairmount Indigo commuter rail line, changes are coming to Upham's Corner and its surroundings. While some merchants and residents are enthusiastic about the upcoming pedestrian-friendly lighting along Columbia Road or the 18-month pilot program of lower fares on the commuter rail, others are concerned that the long-term

plans for Upham's Corner are not about them. The question, perhaps, is not only who the changes are for, but who gets to decide on what the changes are. Residents don't have to look far to see entire neighborhoods in Boston that have "flipped" as fast as their traditional triple deckers could be changed into condos.

Indeed, there is a larger plan in the works, with Boston's civic and business leadership eyeing Upham's Corner as an accessible node on what's being coined the "Fairmount Corridor." (Upham's Corner is just 11 minutes from downtown on the Fairmount Line.) For a community rich with tradition, diversity, artists and small businesses but struggling with poverty and lack of employment, this access could be a powerful one, or a looming threat of displacement and "dis-belonging."

UPHAM'S CORNER ARTPLACE

This moment of possibility—of both opportunity and threat—was a primary reason why community organizations, arts organizations and funders came together to engage local residents, artists and merchants in creative placemaking. The Boston Foundation (TBF) understood creative placemaking as a critical strategy for supporting an arts and community-led process for the city's transit-oriented development along the Fairmount Indigo commuter line. As TBF wrote in its application to ArtPlace America for what it initially called "Upham's Corner: A Fairmount Indigo Line Cultural Corridor Pilot:

"The Fairmount Corridor strategy focuses on community revitalization along the 9-mile transit corridor which cuts across three of Boston's lowest income neighborhoods. Upham's Corner, a key transit node along the corridor, is the gateway to the community. Increased transit service to this area is designed to boost economic and social vitality for residents. The Boston Redevelopment Authority's planning efforts include consideration for housing, greenway and

economic development. TBF's engagement will capitalize on the BRA's work to initiate a place-making strategy through cultural asset mapping and resident engagement."

The Boston Foundation did succeed in securing foundational funding from ArtPlace America. What became known as Upham's Corner ArtPlace also received critical funding from the Kresge Foundation's national Arts and Culture Program. Upham's Corner and its interdisciplinary approach to creative placemaking fit well with the Kresge Foundation's belief that "arts and culture are an integral part of life and, when embedded in cross-sector revitalization activity, can contribute to positive and enduring economic, social and cultural change in communities."

Upham's Corner ArtPlace, the resulting 24-month initiative for creative placemaking in Upham's Corner, describes itself as "a creative placemaking partnership of local artists, community organizations, residents and businesses. Our goal is to create a vibrant livable business district made stronger through an active, local creative economy and anchored by the historic Strand Theatre."⁶ Development was definitely coming to Upham's Corner, and so was a strategy that could put arts and artists at the forefront of bringing people together to have a voice in the changes coming to their neighborhood.

UPHAM'S CORNER ARTPLACE PARTNERS AND ROLES

If creative placemaking is going to address "belonging and dis-belonging," and succeed in "build[ing] spatial justice, healthy communities and sites of imaginations," as Bedoya describes, then it must engage a wide variety of people and partners. From community-based nonprofits with history and trust amongst residents to local merchant associations and artist collectives, to larger institutions like universities, performing arts

WHAT IS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING?

Ann Markusen (Director of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs) and Ann Gadwa (Metris Arts Consulting), open their seminal 2010 white paper entitled "Creative Placemaking" with this description:

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

Their vision was pivotal to the young field of creative placemaking, as well as to ArtPlace America, a collaboration of 14 foundations, 8 federal agencies, and 6 financial institutions dedicated to strengthening the field and its community of practice. For ArtPlace America that meant investing "in projects in which artists and arts organizations play an explicit and central role in strategies to help shape their communities' social, physical, and economic futures." ArtPlace America-funded projects have ranged from large scale to small, rural to urban, ephemeral to permanent. To date, ArtPlace has invested \$42.1 million in 134 projects in 80 communities of all sizes across the country.⁷

“Creative placemaking... allows you to feel like you belong. Like you have a friend on the street, you know?”

Jaypix Belmer
local artist

SPOTLIGHT: JAYPIX BELMER PEOPLE'S PHOTOGRAPHER



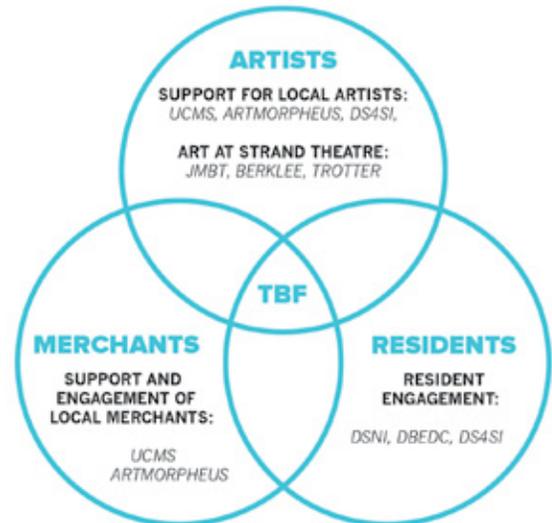
PHOTO BY: JOHN BREWER

Around Upham's Corner, Jaypix Belmer is known for her big camera and even bigger smile—both of which she aims at just about everybody. But it wasn't always like that. When she reflects on coming back to Dorchester after going away to college, she recalls,

"It was very challenging...getting to know people. I actually did a book called BIRD Street, Building Individuals Reconstructing Dorchester, because I live on Bird Street, and it allowed me to photograph people in the neighborhood.... My book was more about shining a light on the people who were unconsidered, like myself and giving them a voice, or a place in their community."

Jaypix has continued doing her photography and focusing on those usually left in the shadows. She has photographed many neighborhood musicians, youth and small business owners. As a community liaison for Upham's Corner ArtPlace, Jaypix has brought people together through leading meetings, doing outreach and helping plan the UP Markets where she's also been a vendor. For her, it's been about building her leadership. "Creative placemaking makes residents, business owners and people like myself feel more involved. Through a lot of creative practices, like being a leader, doing activities, having a voice, connecting with people in the streets, it allows you to feel like you belong."

organizations and city planners, Upham's Corner ArtPlace aimed to bring together a wide variety of resources and perspectives. UCAP began with a diverse group of nine organizational partners, and much of the early work was in figuring out the partners' roles and relationships. At the simplest level, it looked like this:



PROJECT CONCEPTION, OVERSIGHT + INVESTMENT: THE BOSTON FOUNDATION

- PARTNERS:**
- ARTMORPHEUS
 - Berklee College of Music
 - The Boston Foundation (TBF)
 - Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI)
 - Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)
 - Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)
 - Jose Mateo Ballet Theater (JMBT)
 - Trotter Institute (University of Massachusetts)
 - Upham's Corner Main Street (UCMS)

In addition to the organizational partners, local residents, artists and merchants played a large role in shaping Upham's Corner ArtPlace. They provided leadership as community liaisons, commissioned artists, volunteer event planning partners and local champions. Their various roles and skills were critical as UCAP sought to use creative placemaking to engage the "unconsidered people," as artist and community liaison Jaypix Belmer put it. This case study of Upham's Corner ArtPlace is largely about UCAP's successes and challenges in engaging the community and building resident leadership towards having a strong voice in the future of Upham's Corner.

PART 2: FEELING YOU BELONG

USING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING TO AMPLIFY COMMUNITY BELONGING

“...understanding that before you have places of belonging, you must feel you belong. Before there is the vibrant street one needs an understanding of the social dynamics on that street.”
Roberto Bedoya



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

INTERRUPTING THE “SIDEWALK BALLET”

JANE JACOBS, ground-breaking American urbanist, developed the analogy of an intricate sidewalk ballet to explain the daily rituals of living together that occur in community and place. She names the people who live and work, take out their trash and retrieve their mail, run to the bus and walk to the store as the dancers, and the buildings, businesses, streets, trees, etc. as the stage.⁸ Using this analogy, UCAP’s creative placemaking efforts sought to gently disrupt the scene of the “sidewalk ballet” as a way to bring attention to what was happening behind-the-scenes—the plans underway for Upham’s Corner, many of which the dancers, or residents, didn’t know.

One example of this gentle disruption was a curious wood and mirror structure placed on the sidewalk outside of Upham’s Corner Main Street during DS4SI’s Making Planning

Processes Public exhibit. The “Tall Mirror” sculpture, created by commissioned artist Philippe Lejeune, caught the attention of hundreds of residents as they walked past. Most would curiously walk around the wooden structure—seeing their reflection when they didn’t expect to and then suddenly seeming to disappear just when they thought they’d be reflected.

Residents’ surprise appearance and disappearance in the Tall Mirror became a metaphor to engage them in conversations about the planning happening in Upham’s Corner, including road renovations, the Fairmount Line, plans for a giant vacant building, and more. It figuratively underscored a key question for the “dancers” of Upham’s Corner—“Do you see yourself in Upham’s Corner?” It also brought us back to Bedoya’s concern with “belonging and dis-belonging.” Just as Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) actively engaged residents in conversations about revitalization without

displacement, Making Planning Processes Public gave hundreds of residents the opportunity to learn about and weigh in on plans that could greatly enrich their lives together, or if done without their input, could lead to their dis-belonging and displacement.

USING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ACTIVITIES TO REFLECT UPHAM'S CORNER BACK TO ITSELF

What does it mean to “belong” in a community as diverse as Upham’s Corner? Do you play cards at the Upham’s Corner Senior Center or basketball at the Bird Street Youth Center? Do you eat at Singh’s Roti, Café Paraiso or the overflowing free meals at the historic Pilgrim Church? Do you bump into old friends at the bus stop or meet new ones when you photograph them?

Part of feeling you belong somewhere is feeling reflected there, feeling you’re seen and that what you contribute matters. When creative placemaking is truly about the community and the people in it, it is anchored by what Bedoya referred to as the “aesthetics of belonging.” For Upham’s Corner ArtPlace, that meant creating and supporting a wide spectrum of activities that reflected the diversity of Upham’s Corner to its residents and its visitors.

MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Two large scale community-led events were expanded and renewed through Upham’s Corner ArtPlace. The DSNi Multicultural Festival, an annual event hosted by UCAP partner Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, brings together residents of all ages, local performers, businesses, partner organizations and DSNi supporters for a day of cultural celebration and fun. With UCAP support, it added a professional stage for its performers and a pilot version of the UP Market, giving local artists the opportunity to showcase and sell their work. Jaimorry Carter, a DSNi youth

planner, was excited to have “an opportunity to give back to the community,” and found it “challenging to make sure all of the cultures were represented.”



PHOTO BY: TRAVIS WATSON

Another large-scale multicultural event was put on by UCAP partner Upham’s Corner Main Street. With UCAP support and an in-depth community planning process, UCMS was able to bring back the Upham’s Corner Street Fair, a bustling street event that hadn’t happened in Upham’s Corner since the mid-2000s. The 2013 Street Fair included over 40 local performers and vendors, including artists, food vendors and merchants, and a large performance stage stretching across a street in the heart of the business district. With a beautiful sunny day, the event pulled in over 300 visitors, and attendee surveys taken during the event showed that the Street Fair vendors and surrounding businesses saw \$13,000 in increased sales.



PHOTO BY: LIORA BEER

REFLECTING AND ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AT THE HISTORIC STRAND THEATRE

The Strand Theatre is an iconic cultural landmark in Upham’s Corner, owned by Boston’s Department of Neighborhood Development and programmed by the city’s Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs. Like many urban landmarks, it has an aging infrastructure and needs significant on-going renovation. Despite its structural flaws, it holds an important place in the memories of many Upham’s Corner residents. When Upham’s Corner ArtPlace kicked off one of the monthly Resident Advisory Meetings with an interactive timeline of arts and culture in Upham’s Corner, many long-term residents reminisced about the sold out shows they used to attend at the Strand. When youth in attendance heard that, they advocated strongly for Strand movie nights that local families could attend.

The result was a free Summer Movie Night series that both reflected and attracted Upham’s Corner’s Cape Verdean, Latino, African-American and youth populations. The series included a family-oriented “Monsters and Nightmares” night, a Spike Lee Film Festival, and a Multicultural Movie Night hosted on the night of DSNI’s Multicultural Festival. The Trotter Institute followed up its successful Multicultural Movie Night with the first ever Greater Boston Cultural Equity Forum, a pioneering two day event that created another chance for the Strand Theatre to play a key role in the cultural life—and cultural equity—of Boston.

Another example of community engagement at the Strand was led by UCAP partner Jose Mateo Ballet Theater (JMBT). In 2012, they scaled up free tickets available to the community for their holiday Nutcracker performances. Partnering with Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and 30 local social service providers, JMBT was able to distribute over 2000 free and reduced price tickets to local families. Seeing the level

of resident interest, JMBT decided to host a set of auditions in the nearby Kroc Center the following year. Over 75 local children came out to audition and 58 were selected to perform. When Upham’s Corner theater goers attended the show in 2013, they truly saw themselves reflected in it.

UCAP partner the Berklee School of Music also engaged an enthusiastic local crowd at the Strand Theatre with their show “Jazz Fest, with a Taste of the Caribbean.” As Ronald Savage, Berklee’s Ensemble Department Chair and renowned jazz drummer, said in an interview on Boston Neighborhood Network, “For our students to go out into the community and play music that’s actually representative of the communities that we’re playing in is very important. And it’s a chance to introduce new audiences to what our students have to offer.”

In addition to increasing the diversity and local reflection of audiences, performers and cultural content at the Strand, UCAP partner UCMS added another dimension—connecting the local business community to the Strand Theatre. Their efforts increased visibility and sales for local merchants, including creating a multilingual local dining guide for patrons, having local restaurants like Singh’s Roti Shop setting up their food truck outside, and hosting a holiday version of the UP Market inside the Strand Theatre lobby. The merchants’ diversity and reflection of the community also served to increase the visibility of the entire community to themselves and visiting audiences at the Strand.



PHOTO BY: JAYPIX BELMER

UP MARKET: Upham's Corner's Own Arts Market

In its initial proposal to ArtPlace America, the Boston Foundation included plans for partner ARTMORPHEUS to do a feasibility study for an open air arts market in Upham's Corner. However, once Upham's Corner ArtPlace was underway, UCAP partners and artists were too excited to wait. With ARTMORPHEUS, Upham's Corner Main Street and several resident artist-entrepreneurs on the planning team, UCAP decided to implement four pilot markets (including three at existing community events). The pilots turned out to be extremely important for getting feedback from community residents, artists and vendors. As Clarinda King, an artist who made handmade clothing accessories, commented,

"The UP Market has been valuable for me, because I was able to see what the public is and is not interested in. It is nice to make contact with other vendors, new and future customers, and also nice to be out in the neighborhood!"

Over the year, the UP Market participant list swelled to 70, including merchants, food vendors and performers. As UCMS Executive Director Max MacCarthy noted,

"The UP Market is one of the bigger things we're trying to do in terms of creating opportunities for both brick-and-mortar and creative at-home businesses to come together and showcase their work, to draw more foot traffic into the business district, and boost sales for businesses. It's a way to bring together all types of businesses, to allow regular opportunities for folks who may not have the chance to really showcase and sell their work, and to showcase the talent that exists in neighborhoods like this."

In addition to having the opportunity to showcase and sell their work, local artist-

entrepreneurs were offered workshops and individualized technical assistance to help grow their creative businesses, especially with an eye toward increasing sales at each UP Market. Finally, a variety of assessment tools were used to create a complete feasibility plan for long range sustainability of the UP Market (with added assistance from a volunteer team of MBA candidates from Boston University).



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE BASEBALL MURAL

The short strip of Columbia Road in the heart of Upham's Corner's business district is visually anchored by the Strand Theatre and the giant Negro National League mural. Originally commissioned by Fleet Bank in 1999 to celebrate Major League Baseball's All-Star game coming to Boston, it was painted by Boston's highly-acclaimed youth arts program, Artists for Humanity (AFH). According to an AFH description, "Since this was painted in Upham's Corner, Dorchester, they wanted it to be relevant to the neighborhood. A representation of the Negro National League was created and is still there." Sadly, over the years since, the mural had become heavily chipped and deteriorated. Many residents and merchants commented that they wished it was in better shape. Indeed, when a reflection of you gets neglected, it can chip away at the sense that you matter. With support from the monthly Resident Advisory Group meeting, UCAP dedicated funding to having AFH refurbish the mural.

PART 3: THE ART OF BELONGING

SMALL SCALE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING EFFORTS THAT RESPOND TO A
COMMUNITY'S DAILY DESIRE TO CONNECT

[In the face of animosity towards difference] “the power of art to imagine our plurality — the ways we live, work, and play together, with all its paradoxes, warts and compassions.”

Roberto Bedoya



PHOTO BY: KELLY CREEDON

LIVING TOGETHER: A “Public Kitchen” Brings Upham’s Corner Passers-By Together

“WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO SEE IN A PUBLIC KITCHEN?” At first the question elicited a lot of responses about other people—poor people—in the neighborhood who needed food. But as neighbors started to come inside Public Kitchen, a “pop-up food community center” that the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) created in the Upham’s Corner Main Street office, they started to eat together, share recipes and imagine possibilities for how they would use a Public Kitchen in their neighborhood. Whether it was the neighbor who shyly agreed to make her famous Caribbean black cake for the Sage Gourmet Potluck, the local youth program that began to make plans to use the mobile kitchen as an organizing tool, or the daughter who finally convinced her mom to share her secret chicken recipe, it was clear that far from

being for other people, Public Kitchen was for everyone. As DS4SI co-founder, Kenneth Bailey, described,

“There was a real desire across walks of life to connect around food. Just the range of people that came together...was incredible. And there was a lot of power there—a lot of untapped potential to really change our relationship to food, and to change our relationship to the public, and to change our relationship to each other...”

Public Kitchen gave Upham’s Corner ArtPlace an early glimpse into how much Upham’s Corner residents—even those hustling about their business—wanted to connect with their neighbors. Sharing food was an important part of belonging, and in stepping into Public Kitchen, residents got to think creatively about how a Public Kitchen—like a public library—could make their lives more connected, affordable and vibrant.

WORKING TOGETHER: Building Community Connections That Make People Want To Stay

One thing that grew out of the complex partnerships that made up Upham's Corner ArtPlace was a new set of relationships between the organizations' primary constituencies. For example, Linda Webster, a local business and property owner, described herself as only mildly involved in the goings on of the neighborhood. Even as an Upham's Corner resident, she said, "I would drive in, work 9-5, and then drive right home." Max MacCarthy, the Executive Director of Upham's Corner Main Street, began to reach out to her to attend and support local events. By the time Upham's Corner ArtPlace had finished, her participation had grown tremendously. As well as hosting the "makers' alley" during five Saturdays of STREETLAB: Upham's, her Pacific Insurance Company hosted the Bird Street Community Center's youth glass blowers' work during Dorchester Open Studios, she reinvested in her own building (including renting out upper floor space to Cedric Douglas and other local UCAP artists) and agreed to maintain the landscaping involved with the Columbia Road reconstruction project. As Linda put it,

"Sure, local events and activities are good for local businesses, because they drive more foot traffic and help increase sales. But when you involve businesses in participating and planning, everyone feels more rooted to the neighborhood, and they will stay longer."

Again and again, the partners' growing connections with each other expanded to growing connections across the community. Singh's Roti was able to sell food at the Strand Theatre. The Strand's resident theatre company, Fiddlehead, debuted Fame Jr. as a "pop-up dinner theater" at nearby Restaurant Laura, complete with local youth performers. The Pisces Hair Salon adopted a STREETLAB: Upham's bench to care for, and a local photographer featured the salon owner and

other local merchants in their "alley gallery" show.

PLAYING TOGETHER: The Role Of Delight In Bringing A Neighborhood Together

The top desire listed by the 50 passers-by who we interviewed in Upham's Corner was more things to do—more entertainment, more parks and programs for youth, more ways to connect. As Raymond, who grew up in Upham's Corner, said,

"Bring back movies; they used to show movies at the Strand. Bring back more stuff at the Strand. And we need more stuff for youth....people need to show they care. Keep doing what you all are doing [pointing to STREETLAB: Upham's alley]. People been waiting ten years for this!"

Like Raymond, many people both longed for things they had enjoyed in the past and really appreciated things they'd never known to wish for, like STREETLAB: Upham's. Many of Upham's Corner ArtPlace's social interventions were about helping local residents imagine new possibilities for their neighborhood and their connections to others in it. Whether it was a "pop-up beach" at the Upham's Corner Street Fair (complete with sand, toys, beach umbrellas and excited kids), or the installation of an ouril board (the Cape Verdean mancala game) at a popular corner for gypsy cab drivers, UCAP brought people together with gestures of delight and play.



PHOTO BY: MAX MACCARTHY

PART 4: THE IMPLICATIONS OF BELONGING: From Community Engagement To Leadership

THE ROLE OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN EXPANDING BOTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

“Creative Placemaking and its aesthetics of belonging contribute and shape our person, the rights and duties of individuals crucial to a healthy democracy that animate the commons.”

Roberto Bedoya



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

Animating the commons was Upham’s Corner ArtPlace’s strategy for inviting residents, artists and merchants into new ways of belonging and mattering—mattering because they stepped into “their rights and duties as individuals crucial to a healthy democracy.” Throughout the year, they took on new leadership roles, whether it was residents weighing in to stop a fence down Columbia Road, artists taking the lead in planning the UP Market or merchants making private spaces—both indoors and out—available for public art. Throughout this process, UCAP’s partners also learned new ways to recognize organic leadership and offer a wider array of leadership opportunities.

ANIMATING THE COMMONS: Inviting Residents to Reimagine and Reclaim Public Spaces

TACTICAL URBANISM is one example of how Upham’s Corner ArtPlace animated the commons. Tactical urbanism refers to quick, often temporary, affordable projects that aim to make a small part of a city more welcoming, lively and enjoyable. UCAP partner DS4SI created STREETLAB: Upham’s to put tactical urbanism in the hands of the Upham’s Corner

community. As DS4SI’s Creativity Lab Design Lead, Aya Maruyama, noted,

“Tactical urbanism is frequently used by communities and people who already feel authority. For us, it was important to bring it to people whose presence, never mind authority, is often contested in their own neighborhoods—young people, elderly people, people of color, immigrants, et cetera. We felt STREETLAB: Upham’s could demonstrate to residents the power they had in coming together to create the Upham’s Corner they wanted to live in.”

With STREETLAB: Upham’s, residents of Upham’s Corner joined local artists, builders and makers to prototype and re-imagine everyday aspects of public space. Over six Saturdays, participants got to step into a full design process, from selecting public spaces to imagining, testing and building small-scale solutions. A local merchant, Linda Webster, donated the alley next to her building for a public makers’ space and her own insurance office, Pacific Insurance, for storage. The lively alley and its participants ended up generating temporary solutions that included a community-knit railing to highlight a set of stairs that needed attention, “DIY” wood benches that rested on music speakers (complete with instructions for building your own), and the 3-D improvements to the alley that Cedric Douglas and others worked on (see Introduction). As one Upham’s Corner resident who visited the alley commented, “I’m starting to feel most welcome in this alley, and when I look right in the murals, it’s inviting. If you’re not from here and you’re an outsider, it says ‘People get together and collaborate.’ It gives them hope...”

DIVERSE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: Going Beyond the Monthly Meeting

From the start, Upham’s Corner ArtPlace partners wanted their creative placemaking initiative to be led not just by organizations, but by the residents, merchants and artists of Upham’s Corner. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation had long histories of successfully engaging residents in community organizing, while Upham’s Corner Main Street was already a key resource for local merchants, and the Design Studio for Social Intervention was a leader in commissioning and supporting local artists in designing social interventions and public art. In addition, ARTMORPHEUS was fast becoming a resource for artist-entrepreneurs all over Boston.

For their first step, UCAP partners created a monthly Resident Advisory Group meeting for community input and leadership. Early meetings were so well attended that they had to be moved from the UCMS office to larger spaces. In addition, UCAP hired three community liaisons—all local artists—to co-facilitate meetings and chair working groups for on-going projects. One community liaison, Aziza Robinson-Goodnight, described her role this way, “Being a community liaison for UCAP has allowed me to be a voice at the table for artists with stakeholders that I consider leaders in the arts in communities of color.”



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

To include the voices of community members who couldn’t attend regular meetings and to begin to ground UCAP in the history of arts and culture in Upham’s Corner, UCAP created a community input kick-off event in conjunction with a popular Boston Ballet event at the Strand Theatre. Over 200 attendees from the neighborhood got to weigh in on a 100 Year Arts & Culture timeline of Upham’s Corner, including sharing what they had enjoyed in the past, what they valued in the present, and what they wanted in the future. In addition, an online tool was created through vojo.co that allowed people to weigh in with ideas and pictures via their phones.

As the initiative grew, residents, artists and merchants took leadership beyond the monthly meetings. Artist-entrepreneurs like Jaypix Belmer helped coordinate the UP Market, while residents like musician Fred Woodard stepped up to be on the planning committees for the DSNi Multicultural Festival and the Upham’s Corner Street Fair. Other artists took leadership in engaging hundreds of residents through their work with DS4SI, including Public Kitchen, Making Planning Processes Public and STREETLAB: Upham’s.

MOVING FROM ENGAGEMENT TO LEADERSHIP: Empowering Residents Within—And Without!—Non-Profits

Events like the Multicultural Festival and Upham’s Corner Street Fair, as well as DS4SI’s social interventions like Public Kitchen and Making Planning Processes Public, all had the “aesthetics of belonging”—they brought together thousands of diverse community members, engaging them in urban planning, showcasing local talent, etc. Nevertheless, Upham’s Corner ArtPlace had the desire to create larger scale opportunities for leadership, in addition to engagement.

DS4SI’s two editions of Public Kitchen were a good example of growing from community engagement to community leadership. Inspired by the family kitchen as a gathering place, DS4SI’s first Public Kitchen kicked off Upham’s Corner ArtPlace by inviting residents to feast, learn, share, imagine, unite and claim public space. In the end, over 500 community members and 200 visitors came together as Public Kitchen launched 9 days of fresh food, 2 mobile kitchens, cooking classes & competitions, food-inspired art and much more. When it was done, many residents asked DS4SI, “So, when are you going to open a permanent Public Kitchen?” While that was an encouraging show of support, it also indicated that hosting a Public Kitchen at that scale



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

certainly didn’t feel like something individual citizens could take on. It was perhaps also an indicator that many residents fell into the common habit of expecting change to be mediated through nonprofits.

In response, DS4SI decided to commission two local artists who had been a part of the first Public Kitchen—community liaison Aziza Robinson-Goodnight and local chef and urban gardener Nataka Crayton—to support residents in planning and hosting their own Public Kitchen in 2013. They brought together residents who had been inspired by the previous Public Kitchen and asked them to co-plan the next one. Together the group scaled the event down to something that felt more doable and focused it on the aspects of Public Kitchen that residents said they had enjoyed the most—cooking together, learning to cook healthy new dishes and doing so affordably.

The community-led event was a huge success, engaging over 100 people during four days of activities. Another key element to the event’s success was that The Food Project volunteered to host it in the Dudley Greenhouse. Having it all in one place felt manageable, and most of the residents involved were already farmers

there. It enabled a community-led event to be scaffolded and supported by a non-profit operating as a place-based community infrastructure. One outgrowth of this is that The Food Project offered to permanently host the mobile kitchens so that residents could use them regularly for potlucks and cooking classes. And instead of being approached about when they were going to open a permanent Public Kitchen, DS4SI staff were approached by two residents who wanted to bring the Public Kitchen concept to their church.

Another upcoming movement toward greater resident leadership is Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's decision to create a formal Arts and Culture Committee of their highly resident-led Board of Directors. With support from local foundations, the Committee's role in putting arts and culture central to the organization's work will be coordinated by a full-time staff person. As Harry Smith, DSNI's Director of Sustainable and Economic Development, explains,

"The Committee will serve as a vehicle for engaging residents, youth, merchants, artists and partners, and integrating arts and culture into all areas of DSNI's work."



PHOTO BY: RAFAEL FELICIANO CUMBAS

RESIDENTS STOP THE FENCE



PHOTO BY: JOHN BREWER

How often have urban planners missed “the social dynamics” of the communities and streets they plan for? In Upham’s Corner, it happened when Boston’s Department of Transportation had \$3 million slated to improve the hectic intersection in the heart of Upham’s Corner. After several poorly-attended community meetings, they developed a plan they hoped would both decrease traffic and make the intersection safer. It included a fence down the middle of Columbia Road to keep pedestrians from jaywalking, a common practice in Upham’s Corner.

When the Design Studio for Social Intervention included the Columbia Road plan in their Making Planning Processes Public exhibit, residents had strong reactions. Most had not heard of the plan, and many were quite offended by it. Over 100 residents voted in an sidewalk poll, with over 91% opposing the fence. Reasons for their distaste included practical ones, but also more deeply emotional ones. Residents spoke of the feel of a fence, especially one that separated the wealthier, whiter Jones Hill side of Upham’s Corner from the poorer neighborhoods across the street. In the end, with this overwhelmingly negative feedback, the Department of Transportation revised their plan and removed the fence. Now residents hope that without a fence, the upcoming construction will have a more resident-friendly impact on the “social dynamics of that street.”

PART 5: LOOKING BACK / LESSONS LEARNED

“STEALING OUR OWN IDEAS”

Somewhere in the midst of DS4SI’s Making Planning Processes Public installation, Upham’s Corner ArtPlace partners realized something ironic. As DS4SI co-founder Kenneth Bailey recalls, “We were making all these plans public, but in some ways Upham’s Corner ArtPlace wasn’t public. People liked all the stuff we did, but it didn’t read as one unified thing. We realized we needed to make UCAP public.” People might relate Making Planning Processes Public to STREETLAB: Upham’s, but could they relate it to the UP Market? Or the Upham’s Corner Street Fair? Or the local art work popping up in store front windows? To help make the overall initiative more coherent, UCAP followed their own lead on another front—putting art in store windows. UCMS agreed to having DS4SI artist Ayako Maruyama remake their storefront as a timeline of UCAP, looking backward and looking forward. Afterwards, passers-by could both relate to the larger events of UCAP and see places where they could step in and join.



PHOTO FROM UCAP ARCHIVE

Using regular monthly meetings with organizational partners as well as the Resident Advisory Group, UCAP did its best to both look forward and reflect back. This enabled them to catch some of their mistakes midway (like the need to “make UCAP public”). Here are some other things UCAP learned along the way:

CHALLENGES OF LARGE COLLABORATIONS

UPHAM’S CORNER ARTPLACE had nine partners, all with different roles, as well as different relationships to the arts and to

Upham’s Corner. This was an intentional design and meant that UCAP included organizations whose primary constituencies ranged from artists to merchants to residents to students to donors. That said, it was as complex as it sounds. Lessons learned included:

- Large collaborations require strong coordination: The Boston Foundation, the lead grantee, hired a coordinator who was dedicated to moving processes forward, convening meetings, sending notes, and keeping an eye on the deliverables. Much of UCAP’s success would not have been possible without the guidance and patience of Ena Fox.

- Tiers of inclusion can be problematic: Initially the large UCAP partnership was broken into “core partners” and “secondary partners”, with an understanding that the core partners were charged not just with their own work, but with overseeing the entire initiative, while the secondary partners were responsible more specifically for their own roles and work in Upham’s Corner. A few months into this set up, the “secondary partners” said they felt, well, secondary. The initiative moved to a monthly structure of “all partners” meetings and benefited from greater input in all aspects of its work.

meetings as well as helping lead Resident Advisory ones, the artists volunteering to help plan the UP Market or being commissioned to lead DS4SI’s interactive installations, the merchants helping to plan the Upham’s Corner Street Fair and Art Windows, or the residents coordinating the DSNI Multicultural Festival and Movie Nights at the Strand. It was clear that while not everyone wanted to—or had the time to—advise the larger initiative, many Upham’s Corner artists, residents and merchants cared about and helped shape specific parts of Upham’s Corner ArtPlace.

IMPACT: New Ideas About Upham’s Corner / New Ideas About Artists

“[Creative placemaking] not as a development strategy but as a series of actions that build spatial justice, healthy communities and sites of imaginations.”

Roberto Bodeya

Reflecting back on 24 months of the Upham’s Corner ArtPlace Pilot, it was clear that the impact was felt in a variety of ways. Many fell into two primary categories--changing perceptions of Upham’s Corner and changing ideas about local artists.

NEW IDEAS ABOUT UPHAM’S CORNER

“I like the way the community is starting to come together unlike before.” “I like that there’s a lot of people from a lot of different

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP STYLES AND INTERESTS: As Diverse As The Community Itself

At one point midway through the initiative, the partners were worried about a drop off in interest in the Resident Advisory Group. Monthly meetings weren’t the full-house affairs that they had been at the start. While some of this was attributable to the initial fanfare and curiosity about the ArtPlace grant, it also seemed to reflect something else. Again, Upham’s Corner ArtPlace realized it had to steal its own ideas—not everyone wants to (or can) come to a meeting!

As partners looked around, they saw community leadership all over UCAP—whether it was the community liaisons attending all-partner



PHOTO FROM UCAP ARCHIVE

communities. I like that it's the inner city, and that everything's accessible." "This area has a lot of potential, and the people are so lively, with lots of cultures and lots of potential." "I think this neighborhood is pretty cool, pretty vibrant, even though the stores aren't major businesses or anything. I love this neighborhood. People live here and struggle with adversity in this neighborhood for years, but I think it's a great neighborhood."

a business. Typically we think about brick-and-mortar businesses on streets, but we're realizing that there are a lot of home-based cottage industries, particularly in the creative arena, where there are folks who do knitting, who do cooking, glassblowing, and making clothes. Those are businesses we want to be supporting and integrating into the kind of economy we're trying to develop here in Upham's Corner."

While it is hard to know what Upham's Corner residents would have said about their neighborhood without Upham's Corner ArtPlace, it was clear that many felt a new energy and new hope. Whether expressing their support for pop-up social interventions like Public Kitchen and STREETLAB: Upham's, or turning out in large numbers for community-led Strand events, the Multicultural Festival or the Upham's Corner Street Fair, the people speaking were responding to the sites of imaginations that UCAP had helped create. Their conversations and interviews, their willingness to both step into new events and step up to lead them, seemed to indicate that UCAP's creative placemaking succeeded in increasing a sense of belonging and leadership in Upham's Corner.

In addition to new recognition from the business community, interested artist-entrepreneurs received technical assistance and individual support from ARTMORPHEUS, including workshops ranging from social media promotion to branding, target marketing and lean business models. Individual support for artist-entrepreneurs included on-demand technical assistance with topics ranging from better understanding of their customer base to improving merchandising display and creating formal business plans. In the end, Upham's Corner ended up with a greater awareness of its many artists, and the artists ended up with a greater awareness of the community of practice they were a part of. As one young Bird Street Youth Center artist said, "I didn't know I could make a living with my art!"

NEW IDEAS ABOUT ARTISTS

One big thing that grew out of Upham's Corner ArtPlace and the launching of the UP Market was a much greater awareness of the numerous home-based artists and artisans around Upham's Corner. Each UP Market saw new people with unique, hand-made products come out as vendors, with the total across the four pilots growing to 70 and including such diverse artistic practices as face painting, beading, oil painting and wreath-making. As Max MacCarthy, Executive Director of Upham's Corner Main Street, shared,

Another development that came out of UCAP was new ideas about the role of artists in creative placemaking and community engagement. From DS4SI's kick-off Public Kitchen that engaged over 500 community members around food to STREETLAB: Upham's' "horse bench" that added a touch of whimsy for thousands of patient (or impatient) bus riders. From Jaypix's photography celebrating "unconsidered" people in the neighborhood to Cedric Douglas' UpTruck celebrating community art. From an urban beach to a defeated fence, artists stepped up as leaders in Roberto Bedoya's challenge to "build spatial justice, healthy communities and sites of imaginations."

"One of the big things the UP Market has done for us is make us think more comprehensively about what it means to be

PART 6: LOOKING FORWARD: New Community Leadership and Connections

As the UCAP partners look forward, they're looking at expansion—expanding the role of community leadership in the initiative as well as expanding their creative placemaking approach along the Fairmount Indigo Line.

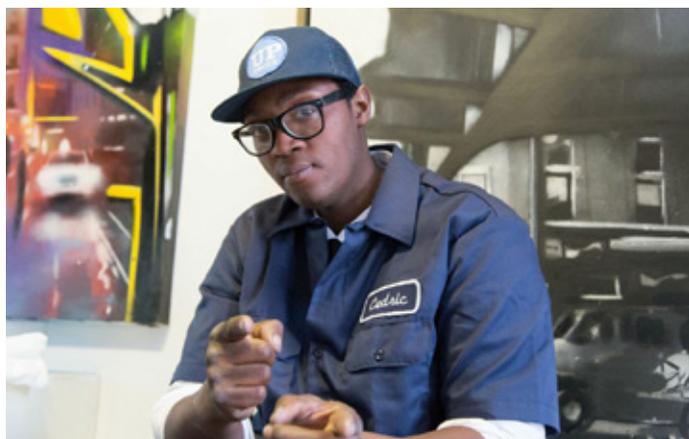
NEXT STOP: New Leadership

It is significant to Upham's Corner that Boston's new mayor—Martin "Marty" Walsh, the first new mayor in a generation—grew up in Dorchester, and not far from Upham's Corner itself. In fact, he announced his campaign with a kick-off event at the Strand Theatre. Likewise, his new Chief of Economic Development, John Barros, grew up in (and still lives in) the heart of Upham's Corner.

Both Mayor Walsh and John Barros showed their support for Upham's Corner and the future of the arts with a trip together to the Strand shortly after the election. They were a part of the announcement of Cedric Douglas as the winner of the DSNI / TBF \$100,000 Upham's Corner Public Art Commission. Cedric won the commission with his vision for the UpTruck, which as he describes it is "a creative moving art lab on wheels." Turning the traditional "public art" process on its head, Cedric's UP Truck is focused first on engaging the inner-artist in every passer-by, and then on getting them engaged in imagining new possibilities for public art in their neighborhood. As he uses the truck to both engage residents in doing art and in imagining what they want for public art in Upham's Corner, he will be leading the way on a truly community-led art process.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative itself took on a new leadership role, as the Boston Foundation stepped aside to let the second ArtPlace grant proposal be more community led. DSNI is now the lead applicant for the

growing partnership in its next proposal to ArtPlace America. Additionally, with the growing success of artists in leading community engagement and creative placemaking, DSNI's resident-led Board of Directors launched its first Arts and Culture Committee. "Arts have been a part of DSNI's DNA, since its conception," explained DSNI community organizer Bayoán Roselló-Cournier, "but the formation of an Arts and Culture Committee is a declaration that DSNI and area residents are taking a leadership role in the arts arena."



PHOTOS BY: TRAVIS WATSON

NEXT STOP: Connecting Communities To Create The Fairmount Cultural Corridor

Much of the slated transit-oriented development that inspired the Boston Foundation's original application to ArtPlace America has come to fruition—the city has refurbished two stations along the Fairmount Indigo commuter rail line, including the one in Upham's Corner, and opened three new stations, including the next stop along the line, Four Corners. While the line promises to provide increased access and opportunity for Boston's most ethnically diverse and low-income neighborhoods, this promise won't necessarily be kept without intense community involvement. The potential for economic displacement of longstanding residents and small businesses is also tremendously high.

Leveraging the learning from Upham's Corner ArtPlace, UCAP partners are planning to address this by deepening their work in Upham's Corner while also building with other communities along the line. They've included partners from the next stop, Four Corners, in their next ArtPlace proposal and renamed their initiative the "Fairmount Cultural Corridor" to reflect their plan to build lasting, interdependent and deeply connected cultural leadership along the Fairmount Corridor.

One of their new approaches to cultural leadership is based on what they saw during STREETLAB: Upham's. As DS4SI co-founder Kenneth Bailey observed, "We wanted to use tactical urbanism as a way to show residents they could take authority to make changes in their neighborhood. But feeling authority is more than a notion; it takes time to build." With this acknowledgment, the Fairmount Cultural Corridor strategy includes having artists-in-residence embedded in both Upham's Corner and Four Corners. These artists will be dedicated to engaging residents, merchants and other artists in on-going (rather than

SPOTLIGHT: CEDRIC DOUGLAS GUERRILLA ARTIST



PHOTO BY: JOHN BREWER

Perhaps no one person stirred the "power of art to imagine our plurality" more than local artist Cedric Douglas. As a commissioned artist in two of DS4SI's major social interventions, Making Planning Processes Public and STREETLAB: Upham's, Cedric's creativity inspired whimsy, laughter and a great deal of civic engagement. During Making Planning Processes Public, he was commissioned to raise awareness about the exhibit through interactive street signage. For the opening day, he surprised the entire community with a bold, spot-on mock-up of the popular free daily Metro newspaper. Suddenly there he was in uniform, handing out a "special Upham's Corner edition" of the Metro, complete with spaces for readers to weigh in on what they'd like to see in the neighborhood.

Next up, he created giant checks, made out to Upham's Corner for \$3 million, the amount that the Department of Transportation was spending on street improvements. The checks served as interactive murals that enabled passers-by to exchange ideas about how they would want to see that money spent in Upham's Corner. As Cedric described it, "People don't have time to go to meetings. They have two jobs, they go back and forth, it's a high traffic area with people coming and going. So how can we get them to give their feedback and become planners on the go?"

temporary) social interventions that continue to build that sense of authority.

Finally, UCAP partners and their new partners from Four Corners plan to continue to expand their repertoire of creative placemaking. Can social interventions like Making Planning Processes Public be used to expand a neighborhood's understanding of land-use policies? Can access to an artist-in-residence create greater opportunities for residents to advocate for their own ideas of transit-oriented development? Can local businesses partner with artists to creatively explore economic development incentives that would preserve affordable commercial and residential space?

As the "social dynamics on that street" expand to the social dynamics of the city, the belonging of neighborhoods along the Fairmount Line are critical to the development of a true Fairmount Cultural Corridor. If current residents, artists and merchants are going to continue to "see themselves in Upham's Corner," (and beyond), it will take all of their creativity, authority and leadership.

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PARTNERS LIST

Below is an alphabetical list of all Upham's Corner ArtPlace Pilot partners, including their websites and mission statements.

ARTMORPHEUS

<http://artmorpheus.org>

ARTMORPHEUS is a not-for-profit organization that empowers artists and creative entrepreneurs to develop, flourish and innovate. We connect the creative sector to a wide range of sustaining resources, provide strategies for growth, and tools for public engagement. By supporting the creative sector, we strive to strengthen local economies and enhance community vibrancy.

Berklee College of Music

<http://berklee.edu>

The mission of Berklee College of Music is to educate, train, and develop students to excel in music as a career.

The Boston Foundation (TBF)

<http://tbf.org>

As Greater Boston's community foundation, the Boston Foundation devotes its resources to building and sustaining a vital, prosperous city and region, where justice and opportunity are extended to everyone. We fulfill this mission in three principal ways:

- Making grants to nonprofit organizations and designing special funding initiatives to address this community's critical challenges;
- Working in partnership with donors and other funders to achieve high-impact philanthropy; and
- Serving as a civic hub and center of information, where ideas are shared, levers for change are identified, and common agendas for the future are developed.

Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI)

<http://ds4si.org>

The Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) is dedicated to changing how social justice is imagined, developed and deployed here in the United States. We are creating a design studio for the progressive arm of the nonprofit sector in order to support the sector's ability to create new forms of effective social intervention and the exploration of new ways to be interventionists.

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)

<http://dbedc.org>

Dorchester Bay EDC acts to build a strong, thriving, and diverse community in Boston's Dorchester neighborhoods. Working closely with neighborhoods, residents, businesses and partners, we access resources to:

- Develop & preserve home ownership and rental housing across income levels;
- Create and sustain economic development opportunities for businesses and individuals;
- Build community through organizing, civic engagement, and leadership development.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)

<http://ds4si.org>

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's (DSNI) mission is to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners.

Jose Mateo Ballet Theater (JMBT)

<http://ballettheater.org>

José Mateo Ballet Theatre's mission is to:

- create new ballets of excellence that are stimulating and culturally relevant to diverse audiences;
- create an innovative approach to ballet training that welcomes diversity, and ensures unanimous participation and achievement by all students;
- create sustainable, inclusive and engaging outreach programs that make ballet accessible to participants of all racial, cultural and economic backgrounds; and
- reposition the role of dance in our culture and expand its purpose in the education of youth and enrichment of community locally and beyond.

Trotter Institute (University of Massachusetts Boston)

<http://umb.edu/trotter>

The William Monroe Trotter Institute was founded at the University of Massachusetts Boston in 1984 to address the needs and concerns of the Black community and communities of color in Boston and Massachusetts through research, technical assistance, and public service.

Upham's Corner Main Street (UCMS)

<http://uphamscorner.org>

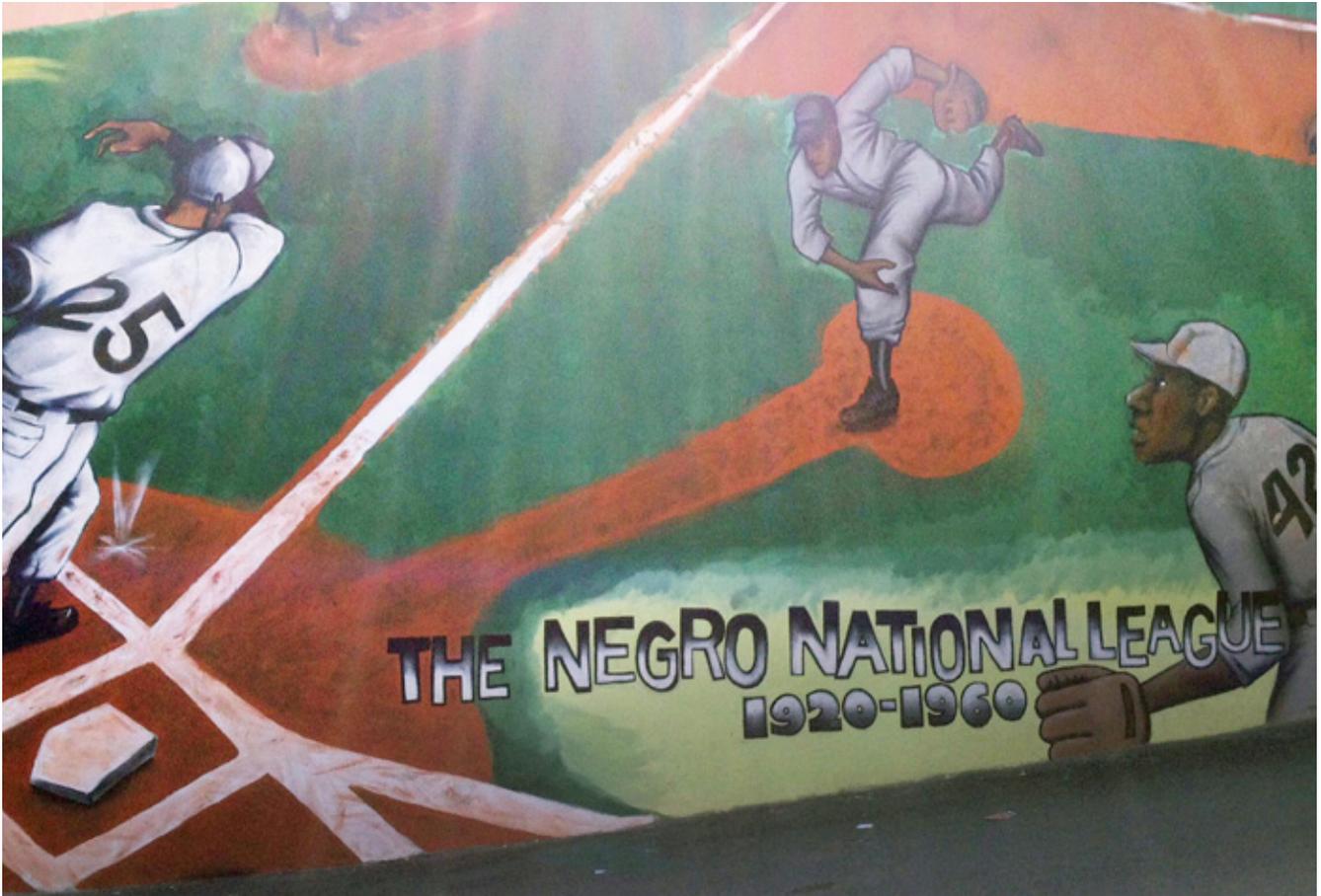
Upham's Corner Main Street, Inc. (UCMS) is a community-led business district planning agency that works to build a vibrant commercial district in Upham's Corner, a bustling town center in Dorchester, Massachusetts that is anchored by the historic Strand Theatre.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a life-long activist, **Lori Lobenstine** is inspired by the vision that new design tools and a greater design awareness will bring new energy and creativity to the social justice field. In 2005 she cofounded the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI), a creativity lab dedicated to changing how social justice is imagined, developed and deployed. Her recent writings have included “*Social / Justice / Practice: Exploring the Role of Artists in Creating a More Just and Social Public*” (published by AnimatingDemocracy.org), and “*Spatial Justice: A Frame for Reclaiming our Rights to Be, Thrive, Express and Connect*” (available at <http://ds4si.org>). Published works in print include *Girls Got Kicks* (Levellers Press, 2011) and a co-authored chapter in *All About the Girl: Culture, Politics and Identity* (Editor, Harris; Routledge, 2004).

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"THE NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE"
BASEBALL MURAL IN UPHAM'S CORNER
(BY ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY)
PHOTO BY JUSTIN ALMEIDA

"DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN UPHAM'S CORNER?"
A CASE STUDY OF BELONGING, DIS-BELONGING AND THE UPHAM'S CORNER
ARTPLACE INITIATIVE

LORI LOBENSTINE, 2014
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