

PLACEMAKING PROJECT

Souly Austin supports the vision of a Merchants Association by providing seed funding for a placemaking project. Placemaking is the process in which community input guides the development of quality public spaces and projects. Placemaking facilitates creativity in a community and focuses on the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

Project Goals Include:

- Foster a sense of community by bringing together and empowering stakeholders
- Highlight unique community characteristics and assets
- Allows the community to lead positive change and build strong relationships
- Enhancing community relationships and the sense of place through the execution of innovative projects
- Help further a district’s vision and a merchants association’s mission

Project Description

The East Cesar Chavez Merchant Association Field Guide is a community-driven project highlighting the significant culture and heritage of the District. It shares the many assets that have been identified by the merchants as unique and special places to the East Cesar Chavez District. The field guide launched on June 22, 2019, as the East Cesar Chavez District hosted the “Experience the Heart of the East Side” event, where field guide contributors read their pieces and shared their experience immersing themselves in the business district. The guide will not only serve as an expression of the District’s cultural and creative heritage, but also as a resource to navigate the district, accentuating the area’s artistic and dynamic assets with the inclusion of a creative map. Several businesses spread throughout the district have partnered with the Association to host the field guide, allowing wide access to the project to a variety of residents and visitors.

Partners:

- Public City (Placemaking Consultant, Execution Coordination)
- The Library Foundation, Badgerdog Program (Workshop Development and Execution)
- Spark Farm (Public Relations and Promotion)



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- Bodega Visual (Field Guide Design)
- Prizer Arts & Letters (Field Guide Launch Party Host)
- East Cesar Chavez District businesses and property owners

District Strategy Alignment:

- Music, Culture, and Arts, Strategy 1.2: Celebrate Cesar Chavez' legacy with cultural programs and events throughout the year, honoring his values. Organize a festival on Cesar Chavez's birthday. Identify partnerships with local organizations to sponsor or co-host the event.
- Music, Culture, and Arts, Strategy 2.2: Document existing art and murals, and discuss the benefits of retaining existing work with private property owners.
- Brand Development (Economic Growth) Strategy 2.1: Create a marketing and branding strategy for the Business District that includes a logo, website, and slogan. Digital and printed collateral will promote businesses and events.

Challenges:

- Lack of City developed parameters and processes around project feasibility. Clear procurement standards and clarity of project requirements
- Clear communication between all project parties to ensure proper messaging for implementation
- Public relations/media strategy to increase awareness
- Identification of long-term stewardship of content
- Long-term maintenance strategies
- Project funding structure presents challenges to final product ownership.
- Community capacity to accomplish project

Successes:

- Successful launch of the East Cesar Chavez Merchants Association's first project as a leader in the community.
- Partnering with multiple non-profit organizations, community members, and district businesses to ensure success of field guide.
- Positive engagement from community members and Merchants in the community to ensure equitable inclusion of stakeholders. This project brought a diverse mix of community members and business owner together for the project's execution.
- Provided an opportunity to increase district identity and district brand awareness.



Metrics

Number of Field Guides Distributed – 2,000

Media Hits - 5

District-Wide Business Engagement