



ANNUAL REPORT

A H Public Spaces Consulting

2022





Celebrating Downtown in 2022

Alexandra Hall, Founder of A H Public Spaces Consulting

In 2022 Fort Wayne, Indiana was listed under the heading, “Where to Travel in 2022: 5 of the Best Places to Visit This Year”? What asset are they selling...our public art! The article goes on to state, “Fort Wayne’s public art trail has exploded over the past few years, with more than 150 larger-than-life murals and sculptures to discover.” In 2017 we did not have this resource; In just five years we have curated these works, educated this community, and proven the value of these investments.

Some community leaders struggle to understand the direct correlation between quality-of-life improvements—such as the investment in public art—and economic development. Yes, it can be difficult to quantify the impact of a mural, a clean alley, a new public park, a music festival, sidewalk improvements, and even the existence of a trash bin, but these elements within a public space can impact our overall impression of a community. That matters because it is our impression of a place that can determine whether we choose to invest ourselves in that place. That investment doesn’t always mean a financial investment. It can encourage us to treat public spaces with more care, it can mean visiting communal spaces with more frequency, it can mean spending your time and energy on projects that further improve your community, and it can mean that we become ambassadors for our community—part of an immeasurable ripple effect of positive change.

The 2020 **Make It Your Own Mural Fest** inspired other communities around the country to approach public art as a mechanism for economic development and a tourism asset. In 2021 – 2022 I had the privilege of working with Livingston County Economic Development (Grow Liv Co) and Visit Liv Co on a county-wide initiative, **LivCo Walls**. In July of 2022, they invested in nine murals within the nine villages of Livingston County. They are leveraging a number of tools to celebrate and change the economic health of their downtowns, and murals are just one additional piece of the puzzle. They will continue to invest in art because they understand the benefit of targeted and strategic public art implementation.

In 2022 three large **Art This Way** projects brought more life to South Harrison Street, the home of Fort Wayne’s Urban Trail. We partnered with a veteran motorcycle club, Warrior Breed MC and the 122nd Fighter Wing to see Mitchell Egly’s ‘Conquer Above’ mural on the exterior façade of 135 W Main Street. A City of Fort Wayne Façade Grant funded a botanical-themed mural by Julie Wall on the Copper Spoon’s ‘Sidecar’. Norfolk Southern’s underpass was markedly improved by the DeBrand Fine Chocolate-funded ‘Unity Mural’ by Jared Applegate and Erin Salyers, who had help from their former and current Ivy Tech VISC Students. We continue to see a need to shift our programming into projects that enhance the entire public realm experience. We are curating artwork in locations where artwork would not have organically developed on its own. We hosted our sixth successful **Art This Way Art Crawl**. We improved the **PNC Plaza** in its second year with the implementation of umbrellas, life-size chess, and other games. Projects like the lighting feature, **77 Steps**, are entirely unique and send visitors away with a powerful and positive impression of our city, and we hope to aim for more immersive and experiential projects moving forward.

In 2022 we installed 60 individual projects, facilitated a mural festival, and managed three public events.

2022 PROJECTS

- ART THIS WAY, A PROGRAM OF THE FORT WAYNE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
- FRIENDS OF THE RIVERS CLEAN DRAIN MURAL INITIATIVE
- LIV CO WALLS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LIVINGSTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- City of Fort Wayne Public Art Commission, Nebraska Neighborhood Mural
- ELECTRIC WORKS Market Murals & Union Tunnel Mural Projects

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2022 ART THIS WAY | A PROGRAM OF THE FORT WAYNE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

ART THIS WAY brought three new murals to Downtown Fort Wayne, IN in 2022. The program worked with all local artists! Jared Applegate and Erin Salyers installed their 2,000+ square foot mural 'Unity' on the underpass between The Landing and Promenade Park. This piece was funded by DeBrand Fine Chocolates and the Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District.



'Unity' mural near The Landing | Fort Wayne, IN



(above) 'Pontiac' mural by Julie Wall | (below, left to right) 123 Main Street parking lot | PNC Plaza Activation | Life-size chess and new umbrellas will return to the plaza in 2023

The Art This Way program was pleased to hire local artist, **Julie Wall**. She installed her botanical-themed mural at 301 W Jefferson Blvd. This project was funded through a City of Fort Wayne Façade Grant. The owner of the Copper Spoon did a number of improvements to this outdoor dining zone through the façade grant program. This is a great example of how the city helps local business owners to make investments in their streetscape. Property Owners are sometimes unaware of the resources available to them.



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2022 ART THIS WAY | A PROGRAM OF THE FORT WAYNE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

ART THIS WAY worked with Warrior Breed Motorcycle Club, 122nd Fighter Wing, and artist Mitchell Egly on a mural at 135 W Main Street. The piece celebrates the 122nd and embodies the respect and love our community has for all service people. The work was installed in June with a block-party dedication on July 1, 2022.



Commander of the 122nd Fighter Wing, Joshua Waggoner with his family | 135 W Main Street, Fort Wayne, IN



(above) Artist Mitchell Egly installs his 'Conquer Above' mural with the help of USF intern, Sky Charleston | (below) Mural Dedication Event

The 2,000-square-foot mural commemorates Fort Wayne's 122nd Fighter Wing and the memorialized aircraft at Heritage Park. Heritage Park is located near Baer Field, and it showcases all the aircraft flown by the Indiana Air National Guard since 1947. In 2019, Warrior Breed MC raised funds to restore the planes at the park. Warrior Breed MC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, veteran-based, traditional motorcycle club focusing on veteran issues, including Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Veteran Suicide Prevention. Warrior Breed MC's mission is to take care of those that sacrificed for our freedom.

"Public art is a wonderful mechanism for storytelling and capturing our history. Celebrating military history and heritage can play an important role in continuing traditions and remembering legacies. We are excited to see a mural project that highlights the 122nd included in our collection of murals in Downtown Fort Wayne."

-Alex Hall



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2022 ART THIS WAY ART CRAWL

The **Art This Way Art Crawl** fundraiser returned to Downtown Fort Wayne in 2022! The Art Crawl began in 2017, and since that year, this educational and experiential event has introduced attendees to Fort Wayne's professional creatives, including sculptors, bands, painters, print makers, and culinary wizards. Each year we partner with different local businesses to create non-traditional gallery spaces. In 2021 our venues included Jeffrey Benjamin Hair, The Citedel at 125 W. Main Street, PNC Plaza, The Landing, Start Fort Wayne, Porch Off Calhoun, Dash-In, and several outdoor venues. Each location along the Crawl featured a live band, free appetizers, cash bar and a gallery show. Attendees enjoyed appetizers provided by Copper Spoon, Landing Beer Co., Hall's Restaurants, Smile More Meal Prep, Dash-In, JK O'Donnells, and Poptique. We celebrated the new **Unity Mural**, installation at The Landing, and featured local artists!

The 2022 Art Crawl raised \$11,000 for the Art This Way program.

A Silent Disco entertained Art Crawl Attendees in the art-filled alley | 2022 Art Crawl (below)



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CLEAN DRAINS MURALS

Be River SmART is a three-year collaborative initiative between Friends of the Rivers and Fort Wayne City Utilities. Clean Drains is an education and community outreach/engagement initiative that uses art to convey the message... *only rain in the drain!*

In 2022 the program hired artists to install 15 drain murals on downtown Fort Wayne's sidewalks, and 22 drain murals on sidewalks in surrounding neighborhoods. The **37 murals** are expected to last between 1-4 years. These temporary murals will serve as a visual reminder that the storm drains in the city go directly to the waterways and rivers. This educational initiative culminates each year at World River Day.



NEBRASKA NEIGHBORHOOD

Public Art Commission funded this project by Jeff Pilkinton in the Nebraska Neighborhood.

There was an open call for artists to submit qualifications. The top three chosen by the jury were paid to create concepts for review. This design by Pilkinton celebrates the Kekionga Baseball history, the local gardens, and the women of Wayne Knitting Mills.

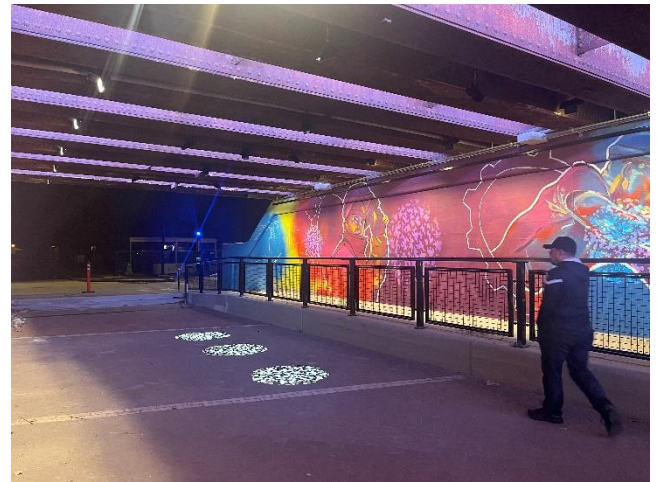


ADVOCATING for PARKLETS

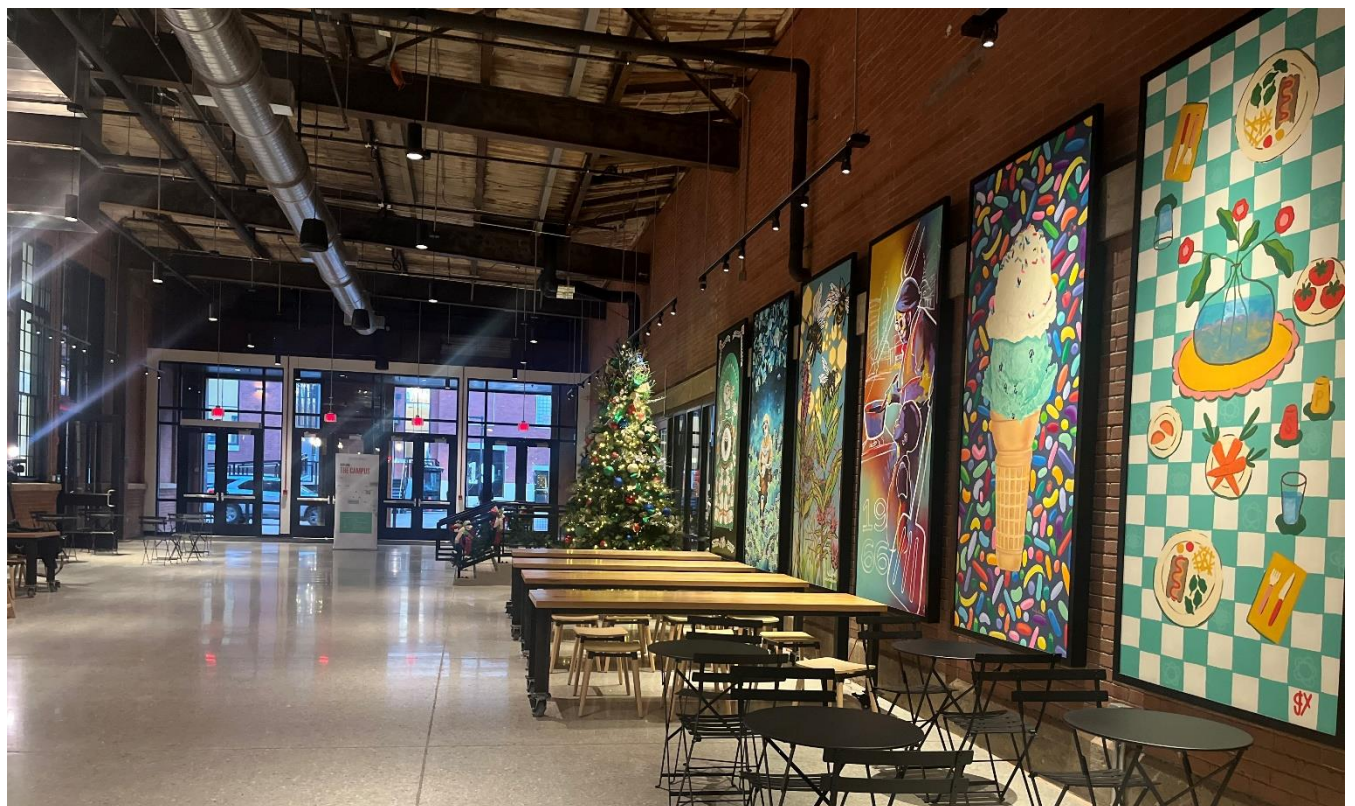
We spent 2022 working towards more outdoor dining spaces in Fort Wayne, IN. Bona Vita Architecture generously helped to develop some concepts to show what a more generous outdoor seating area might look like at Bistro Noda. It is our hope that we see more outdoor dining opportunities in Fort Wayne in 2023.



ELECTRIC WORKS MURAL PROJECTS



Theoplis Smith aka Phresh Laundry was hired to install the Union Street Tunnel. This mural acts as the gateway piece that invites and welcomes visitors to the newly renovated Electric Works campus. The project is a 700,000 square foot adaptive re-use of the former GE campus will act as the heart of innovation, collaboration, programming and cultural change for Northeast Indiana. It was an honor to work with the Ancora team to implement this tunnel mural as well as nine mural panels for the Union Street Market. All the artists we hired are local to Fort Wayne, and each project tells a story about GE's history and celebrates the new makers coming to the renovated campus. Artists who painted the nine mural panels are: OLIVIA PEREZ & CECILIA DUNIFON, RAUL PEREZ, THEOPLIS SMITH III aka PHRESH LAUNDRY, JULIE WALL, TERRY RATLIFF, JEREMY STROUP, GRACE YENCER, BONNIE "BONJO" ANDREWS, EMILY MERCEDES.



LIV CO WALLS

CELEBRATING THE FINGERLAKES & UPSTATE NEW YORK



2021 photo of Geneseo, NY LivCo Walls Mural Site, Livingston County | 2022 Key Detail Mural

The 2022 Liv Co Walls mural festival is an innovative project intended to enhance Livingston County’s economic development efforts. This project brought one large mural to each of the nine downtown districts— providing another asset in their walkable, pedestrian-friendly downtowns. These murals attract visitors, locals, and tourists! In July of 2022 regional, national, and international artists created 9 high-quality murals — one in each of the 9 villages of Livingston County. The murals were unveiled on the same month, with celebrations and events taking place all over the county throughout the duration of the festival to recognize the artists and the communities.

This regional mural festival concept builds on the quality of place efforts accelerated by the Downtown Partnership, a program of Livingston County Economic Development, grows regional pride, and garnered significant attention and exposure nationally.



2021 photo of LivCo Walls Caledonia, NY mural site (left)



2022 photo of Tim Parsley’s ‘Trout Culture’ mural (right)

Each community celebrated their new asset with a block-party event. The artists were acknowledged and each was given an opportunity to speak, town-hall-style, with the community members. From start to finish, the community was engaged with the process and encouraged to participate in the location of the project, content of the murals, and the celebration surrounding the new community asset.





"Art can celebrate the qualities that make one place different from another. The best of public art can challenge, delight, educate and illuminate. Most of all, public art creates a sense of civic vitality in the cities, towns, and communities we inhabit and visit."

-AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS
PUBLIC ART NETWORK COUNCIL: GREEN PAPER



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CREDITS:

Photos: Alexandra Hall | Stephen Bailey| Brett Frauhiger | Keith Walters | Rachel Von Stroup

Artist's Work Pictured: Jared Applegate Erin Salyers, Mitchell Egly, Jeff Pilkinton, Bonjo Andrews, Key Detail, Justin Suarez, Tim Parsley, OLIVIA PEREZ & CECILIA DUNIFON, RAUL PEREZ, THEOPLIS SMITH III aka PHRESH LAUNDRY, JULIE WALL, TERRY RATLIFF, JEREMY STROUP, GRACE YENCER, EMILY MERCEDES, Abigail Penfold, Bryan Ballinger

REFERENCES:

Americans For The Arts, artsu.americansforthearts.org | AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS PUBLIC ART NETWORK COUNCIL: GREEN PAPER | 2016 Indiana Arts Commission Creative Economy Report | 2019 Gehl PUBLIC SPACE + PUBLIC LIFE STUDY | Gehl Downtown Fort Wayne Public Realm Action Plan | Make It Your Own Mural Fest | NEIRP | Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District | City of Fort Wayne Public Art Commission | FORBES, 'Fort Wayne, Indiana: Small City, Big Future,' November 13, 2020 by Brandon Schultz | FORBES, 'Northeast Indiana Becomes The Canvas For 'Make It Your Own Mural Fest',' September 10, 2020 by Michele Herrmann | INPUT FORT WAYNE, 'From casual painter to muralist: A Fort Wayne artist shares how she broke into the public art scene' by SIERAH BARNHART, OCTOBER 4, 2021

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