

In 2016, our artist team of Elizabeth Billings, Evie Lovett, and Andrea Wasserman created **From the River, To the River**, five interrelated outdoor public art installations for the Town of Brattleboro, Vermont, as part of a National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant. **From the River, To the River**, including the temporary sculpture, **River Wall**, forged a way, through art, to create a stronger connection between the town and the Connecticut River. **River Wall**, the 32'x32' kinetic art installation of 32,000 discs fluttering with the wind currents, brought vitality and life to the Transportation Center. Wide public support for this temporary installation, slated for removal, has seeded an initiative in partnership with the town and community organizations to create a new and permanent installation.

The temporary **River Wall** sculpture on the side of the parking garage brings beauty, respect, and movement to an area of our community that is often disparaged. Our Transportation Center hosts some of our most vulnerable neighbors as people wait for buses, access restrooms, and have a sheltered place to socialize. Art has the power to unite and yet is often reserved for just one segment of our population. The sculpture brings beauty, attention, and worth to a part of our town and our townspeople that are often considered a blight. Essentially it brings light and reflection to our darker corners and, it is my hope, brings a sense of worthiness to folks who spend time in that darkness. It feels very important to find a way to make this uplift a permanent one.

Emilie Kornheiser  
Vermont State Representative  
Youth Services Director of  
Workforce Development

As a Founding Director of The In-Sight Photography Project, I have had the opportunity to watch numerous people enjoy the site specific installation. People have loved the work, myself included. Current American economic struggles and the prevalence of substance abuse leave Brattleboro, as much of the country, looking depressed and challenged. The area of town around the Transportation Center is among the worst areas. The creation of a permanent installation and even encouraging more artwork to be publicly displayed around town will help revitalize downtown. Bringing more positive cultural examples throughout town will only enhance the ability to draw locals and visitors downtown.

John Willis  
faculty, Marlboro College

I would like to express my utmost support for the installation of a permanent public artwork on the side of the Brattleboro Transportation Center. The initial installation not only enhanced the aesthetic scenery of a relatively art-less and color-less environment, but has also managed to engage people in a unique way through general observation, curious inquiry, and conversational interactions.

Joshua Farr  
Executive Director and  
Curator, Vermont Center  
for Photography

## ASK THE RIVER

**Ask the River**, a new kinetic public art installation and educational placemaking project, transforms the side of the Brattleboro Transportation Center with imagery of river patterns, reinforcing the connection between the Town of Brattleboro and the Connecticut River, while enlivening a underutilized public space.

At a time of human--driven change and vulnerability, **Ask the River** is a pathway to see ourselves in connection with the Connecticut River, transforming us from observers and bystanders into engaged river activists. The scientific data on climate change and other impacts of human intervention on our rivers is overwhelming and clear. **Ask the River** comes out of that knowledge using art as the vehicle and catalyst for change.



**Ask the River** aligns public art with science, education and community concerns. In partnership with the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, the Connecticut River Conservancy and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, **Ask the River** reimagines the Brattleboro Transportation Center and communicates Brattleboro's reputation in the creative economy. Disks rippling across the façade of the building become vibrant, ever-changing patterns of the river, reflecting wind and light. Lighting is elemental in the feeling of river currents and further animates the façade as day becomes night.

**Ask the River** has the strong support of the Brattleboro Arts Committee and the Brattleboro Selectboard. Grants from the Ben and Jerry's Foundation, both the Arts Endowment Fund and the Dunham-Mason Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts through a Vermont Arts Council Creation Grant, the Thomas Thompson Trust, the Vanderbilt Family Foundation, and a Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure Grant have launched the fundraising process. We are actively seeking support and raising funds for this permanent public art project and are grateful for donations in any amount.

To contribute, contact:  
[asktherivervt@gmail.com](mailto:asktherivervt@gmail.com)

**Ask the River**, preliminary design