

Vermont Arts Council

Animating Infrastructure | Sample Design Projects

These samples are intended to spark your ideas and to demonstrate a simple process, budget, and timeline.

Bike and Pedestrian Path

Infrastructure Project: Parking areas along the trail.

Place: A community bike path that stretches six miles along an old railroad bed through the Town of XYZ. The path generally follows the ABC River through woodlands, farm fields, and the village.

Site: Two parking areas located in the village.

The Town of XYZ is working in partnership with local schools and the parks and recreation department to create a place for bikes at each of two parking areas at the trail heads of the recently completed bike path in town. The bike racks will provide a safe and attractive place to leave bikes while visiting the local village market and café.

Members of a local review committee are identified and the committee puts out a “Request for Qualifications” to Vermont artists. The committee selects three artist finalists and pays them each an honorarium of \$500 to visit the site and develop a simple concept/idea to share with the community at an open meeting. An artist is selected from the three finalists and is provided a \$3,500 design fee to work with the community to develop the specific designs for the bike racks. The remaining \$1,000 of the grant is used for administrative costs as well as community engagement and outreach activities (for example, the community works with the artists to collect stories and ideas from the local residents and users of the bike path). The final designs for the bike racks reflect the community stories and images found through the town historical society. The rack designs represent the train engine and caboose of the trains that used to pass through town. The town now has the designs, images, and a budget to be able to raise funds to be able to pay the artists to fabricate and install the sculptural bike racks. There is a strong sense of excitement and pride in the designs for a successful crowdfunding campaign. Grants and other private donations will be sought as well.

Streetscape Improvements

Infrastructure Project: Streetscape improvements to the Main Street.

Place: Town of ABC, Located in the rural northeastern corner of Vermont.

Site: A one-block stretch in the downtown with an empty lot and a vacant storefront.

ABC Alive, a community revitalization organization (with the town as a fiscal agent), has identified a one-block stretch of the main street in which they would like to install temporary public art to coincide with farmers markets and other activities planned for the area the following summer. The goals are to attract visitors, generate more economic activity, and to increase community pride, vibrancy, and social connections in the town. There are a number of blank walls, a vacant storefront, and an empty lot on the main street that have the potential for artistic enhancement. Working in partnership with a community theater group, the historical society, and local businesses, ABC Alive would like to hire an artist with Animating Infrastructure funds to develop a specific design for temporary artistic treatments to the area. The partners will convene a local review committee to develop a “Request for Qualifications” and select three artist finalists. Each finalist will be given an honorarium of \$500 to visit the site and to develop an approach to engaging the community. One artist will be selected and provided a \$3,500 design fee. The remaining \$1,000 of the grant is used to cover administrative costs, as well as costs for the artist to engage with the community.

sample timeline for design

May	Local review committee organized and meets to develop “Request for Qualifications” (RFQ)
June	RFQ posted and outreach to artists
July	Artist submission deadline and review, three finalists selected, site visit conducted
August	Artist finalists present concepts to local review committee at open meeting
September/October	Community engagement activities and design development
November	Final designs approved by appropriate authorizing officials

More Infrastructure Inspiration

Public Library

A local public library is about to undertake a design process to build an addition to its historic building. Working in partnership with the local elementary school, the library uses Animating Infrastructure Grant funds to hire a visual artist to work with the architect and the community. The team develops artistic enhancements to the building that reflect the importance of reading. At the end of the design phase, the library has final designs for permanent sculptural seating elements designed in the shape of letters of the alphabet and a plan to host weekly storytelling sessions with community elders.

Municipal Drinking Water System

The City of CLW is upgrading its municipal water system. The new facility is located near a city park with a playground. The city partners with the local arts council and the CLW Middle School to hire a sculptor with Animating Infrastructure funds to design a sculptural drinking water fountain to be located at the playground. The students work with the artist in an integrated art and science curriculum, and learn the science behind clean, safe drinking water as well as the physics and engineering necessary needed to make the art functional. After working with the community and the students, the final design for the water fountain is a horse and a colt; the site of the park is a former horse farm.

Gutters and Rain Barrel

The City of ABC is constructing a new municipal building and would like to manage stormwater running off their building and others in the adjoining alleyway. The city partners with the local science museum to hire a sculptor with Animating Infrastructure Grant funds. The artist works with the community and visitors to the science museum to gather ideas. The final design includes a whimsical and colorful series of rain gutters through which the rainwater travels-twisting, turning, and making sounds as it moves. Eventually, the water collects in the sculptural rain barrel below the gutters. The rain barrel is shaped like a giant brook trout, a native fish living in the river that runs through the city.

Watershed

The Town of XYZ is located in the ABC Watershed. Within the town is a ten-acre area along the ABC River in need of erosion control as well as floodplain and habitat restoration. The regional planning commission partners with the local river conservancy and a contemporary art museum to hire an artist with Animating Infrastructure fund to identify locations, materials and designs for temporary sculptures. The plan and final design calls for the community to collect natural materials from the site and help the artist to create and install a series of abstract, all-natural sculptures. These works are located along the riverbed and in the floodplain. The wooden and natural plant materials are intentionally temporary; they decompose and change over time. The material aids in preventing riverbank erosion and provides shelter and habitat for turtles and fish and other wildlife. The sculptures are visible from a town overlook on the highway and have become an attraction for visitors and residents alike as they observe the changing sculptures over time.

Farmers Market

A downtown association working in partnership with area farmers wants to create a series of permanent farm stand structures that are attractive, uniquely artful, and able to support regular farmers market activities. The farm stands will be designed in partnership with an architect and artists hired with Animating Infrastructure Grant funds to offer a visibly distinctive experience that attracts visitors and customers – not just for the world class food, but also for the exciting visual experience in the space. Each farm stand design reflects a unique element of the community's agricultural history. The structures will be used for weekly farmers and artisan markets.