

# CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COMMISSION

2025 Update and  
2026 Work Plan





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 “Live Murals” at Dred Scott fields, photo courtesy Jim Hanson.  
 On the One Music Festival, photo courtesy The Avant Garde.

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 Jennifer Davis “Bloom” ARTBOX, photo courtesy Jennifer Davis.  
 On the One Music Festival, photo courtesy The Avant Garde.  
 “Meant to Be Here” by Adam Turman at Bloomington Ice Garden.  
 Nature Fest, photo courtesy Drew Arrieta.

The Creative Placemaking Commission's 2026 Work Plan and 2025 Update outlines planned projects, partnerships, and activities that advance arts and community-driven creative placemaking throughout Bloomington, while reflecting on progress and impact achieved in 2025. Projects are aligned with and prioritized according to the Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan and broader City strategic goals.

## 2026 ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

### CITYWIDE ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS OUTSIDE SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT

#### • PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING

- Parks and Recreation Partnerships
  - Pond Dakota–Mission Park sculpture selection (partnership with Parks and Recreation + Dakota Advisory Committee).
  - Mural at Community Health and Wellness Center: scope and call for art.
  - Interactive installation at Tretbaugh Park.
  - Public art at Nine Mile Creek Corridor: begin scope development.
- Install garden kaleidoscope by R.C. Anderson at Civic Plaza. Garden Club volunteers to plant seasonally.
- Civic Plaza interior window: vinyl wrap design art project.
- Identify commercial node for near-term neighborhood-focused placemaking (consult with Port Authority, Business Assistance, and Planning Division).

#### • ARTIST AND CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

- Sketch & Stretch artist development workshop at The Works Museum, led by Bloomington artist Rupa Shenoy Thadhani.
- Updated arts impact study and/or arts space feasibility study.

#### • YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Revisit youth engagement concept at Valley View Skate Park (partnership with Parks and Recreation).
- Implementation of Bloomington Youth Art Expression Initiative Project in partnership with Public Health, OREIB and OEE Leadership Academy.
- Continued support of StoryFest and Bloomington Street Arts Festival.

#### • CROSS-DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

- ARTBOX: 1–2 utility box wraps (pilot citywide implementation with Public Works).
- Explore potential collaborations with City departments (i.e. Public Health, Public Works).
- Expand South Loop Public Art Guide in Otocast App citywide.



*"Meant to Be Here", mural by Adam Turman*

“It’s really important to make this place feel as though everybody is welcome. Every group that skates here is also represented here.”

– Adam Turman, *Meant to Be Here* mural artist, Bloomington Ice Garden, 2025

## SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT

- **PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING**
  - ARTBOXES: commission four painted Artbox designs on Xcel Energy utility boxes.
  - Install lighting for *The Goldfinch* sculpture at Killebrew and Old Shakopee.
  - Fabricate art banners by Sheila Novak and Erin Genia for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor and Education Center; initiate related community activities.
  - Advance activation of the vacant lot in front of SICK through phased next-step planning and implementation.
  - Develop project scope for creative wayfinding, Creative Sparks projects, and related public art throughout South Loop and Old Shakopee Road cultural trail elements.
- **CREATIVE GARDENS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
  - Continued cultivation of *Hanté (Cedar) Healing Bridge* indigenous garden and programming led by Tara Perron (Tanağidanj To Win).
  - South Loop Community Garden, continued maintenance.
- **COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING**
  - Nature Fest in partnership with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
  - Sunday Funday Music Series summer event July 12 at Bloomington Central Station Park (Produced by Parks and Recreation).
  - On the One Music Festival at Bloomington Central Station Park (August 8, produced by The Avante Garde and Parks and Recreation).
  - Continued support for community events such as Juneteenth and Celebrando Las Fiestas Patrias (Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month), to be confirmed.
- **CREATIVE ECONOMY AND ARTIST SUPPORT**
  - Develop project scope to support artist/creative business development.

### ENCOURAGING ARTS CREATION (PARTICIPATION + SUPPORT NEEDS)

“Bloomington artists report needing funding, space, and promotion to share creative work (Bloomington Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan Survey, 2024).”

## COMMISSION LEADERSHIP, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Guide and advance creative placemaking priorities through monthly Commission meetings, including development of 2026–2027 projects and events, prioritization of 2027–2028 initiatives, and year-end program evaluation.
- Advance key initiatives and policy discussions, including public art strategy, arts integration in development, and community engagement aligned with Citywide planning goals.
- Engage in cross-departmental and community collaborations, serving on committees, panels, and working groups to support artist selection processes and inclusive civic participation.
- Serve as ambassadors for Bloomington’s creative placemaking through events, outreach, and engagement with stakeholders.
- Funding and Resource Development
  - Develop toolkits for community-led or privately commissioned creative placemaking and public art.
  - Continued exploration of additional funding and revenue sources, including strategies to leverage philanthropic dollars in ways that expand the reach and impact of arts and culture throughout Bloomington and support both city initiatives and artist- and community-driven projects.

## 2025 ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

### CITYWIDE ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS OUTSIDE SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT

- **PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING**
  - Approval of the Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan. Celebration on July 16 at Bloomington Civic Plaza, featuring music, food, and performances.
  - Bloomington Ice Garden (BIG) murals: *Meant to Be Here* by Adam Turman (entryway vestibule), and a hockey history photo collage mural “*Garden Built on Ice*” by Creative Color (within the ice rink). (Partnership with Parks and Recreation and BIG).
  - Bryant Park Sculpture: developed and released the call for art. (Partnership with Parks and Recreation).
  - Prioritized public art projects for Community Health and Wellness Center.
  - Supported Live Murals at Dred – three live mural painting sessions at Clutch Hitters batting cages at Dred Scott. Coordinated by Jim Hanson.
  - Hometown Poetry: 5 poems stamped at Civic Plaza, 2 in neighborhoods with new sidewalks.
- **COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING**
  - Supported Juneteenth on June 21 at Valley View Middle School. Commissioned art activity led by Adrian Lowe.
- **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND CREATIVE WELLNESS**
  - Developed Bloomington Youth Art Expression Initiative Project in partnership with Public Health, OREIB, and OEE Leadership Academy. Aimed at empowering students to express their perspectives on well-being through art. Implementation pending scheduling.
- **ARTIST SUPPORT AND CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT**
  - Bloomington Street Arts Fest, on September 20, at Nine Mile Brewing, coordinated by artist Katie Ross, supported in part by Creative Placemaking.
  - StoryFest 2025 at Bloomington Civic Plaza on April 5. Presented by Story Arts of Minnesota, supported in part by Creative Placemaking.
  - Artist support for “Mino-bimaadiziwin” exhibition presented by Artistry in the Inez Greenberg Gallery.

### SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT

- **PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING**
  - *Evening Primrose* mural by international artist Mariela Ajras, installed in August on Fenley building next to Backstory Coffee.
  - *Hanté (Cedar) Healing Bridge* Mural and Garden, by Tara Perron (Tanaǵidan To Win) and Sandy Spieler at Old Cedar Avenue Bridge trailhead shelter. Partnered with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge on unveiling celebration on September 20.
  - ARTBOXES: four Xcel Energy transformers painted, three utility boxes wrapped in designs by local artists Jennifer Davis, Deneena Hughes, Erik Sletten, Kao Lee Thao.
  - Continued promotion of South Loop Public Art Audio Tour in the Otocast App.
- **CREATIVE GARDENS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
  - South Loop Community Garden: continued operation and maintenance of space and art banners.
- **COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING**
  - One Sunday Funday Arts in the Parks music performance from Joe Flip and Ken Valdez at Bloomington Central Station Park on August 3 (July 13 Charanga Tropical canceled due to air quality). Produced by Parks and Recreation.



Juneteenth

## 2025 ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS CONTINUED

- Nature Fest: Olas de Vida on July 26 at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor and Education Center. In partnership with Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends, Huellas Latinas, Indigenous Roots, and Minnesota Zoo.
- On the One Music Festival, August 16 at Bloomington Central Station Park. Produced by The Avant Garde and Parks and Recreation.
- Supported Celebrando las Fiestas Patrias (Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month), coordinated by Gilberto Diaz, on September 21 at Bloomington Central Station Park.



*Nature Fest photo by Drew Arrieta*

**“Nature Fest offers the chance to embrace the benefits of the outdoors while creating community connections through music, cultural performances, and art.”**

**– Lucia Portillo-Maldonado, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Park Ranger**

## COMMISSION LEADERSHIP, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Monthly meeting updates, discussion, and development of 2025-2026 projects and events, prioritization of 2026-2027 projects, and year-end review and evaluation discussion of projects and activities.
- Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan – reviews of drafts and approval of Plan.
- Presentations: Forecast Public Art (Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan); Bloomington Engagement Vehicle (BEV) from Community Outreach and Engagement Division; and Incentives for Art in Development, presented by Planning Division.
- Commissioners participated in: Welcoming and Connected Board and Commission connect meetings; “Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. Strategic Plan” Core Team Committee; Appreciative Inquiry Community Workshop; Volunteer Open House; Blooming Arts Grant Panel; Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan Celebration; Bryant Park Sculpture Artist Selection Panel; BIG Mural Artist Selection Panel; *Hanté (Cedar) Healing Bridge* Mural and Garden unveiling; and unveiling of new murals at BIG.
- Served as ambassadors to provide occasional tours to colleagues and visitors from other regions and districts, including national funders.
- Commissioners tabled at Juneteenth, Bloomington PRIDE, and a Midweek Farmer’s Market to promote creative placemaking efforts.
- Commissioners Anderson and Schumacher attended Grantmakers in the Arts (GMA) Conference and presented learnings to Commissioners.
- Number of applications for Creative Placemaking Commission are increasing year to year.
- Funding and Resource Development
  - Exploration of additional funding and revenue sources, such as grants and private investment. Grant applications submitted:
    - Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants (Play Area): proposal submitted by Parks and Recreation for creative, interactive bike installation at Tretbaugh Park.
    - The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC), 2025-2027 Festival Grants: proposals submitted by Huellas Latinas and Friends of the Refuge in support of Nature Fest 2026 at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
    - MRAC, Flexible Support: proposal submitted by Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends for Nature Fest 2026 at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

## 2025 ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS CONTINUED

### ECONOMIC IMPACT AND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Bloomington's arts and culture sector generates \$12.1 million annually (Creative MN, 2020), and creative placemaking projects increase foot traffic by up to 50%, supporting nearby small businesses and activating parks and commercial areas (CODAworx, 2025; Placer.ai reports, 2025).

### RECOGNITION, REACH, AND IMPACT

- Bloomington's Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan honored with the Advancing Diversity and Social Change Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA MN).
- Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington is ranked #18 among the Top 100 arts-vibrant U.S. communities and has earned "Veteran" status — one of only 17 regions to appear on every SMU DataArts Arts Vibrancy Index since 2015. (SMU DataArts, January 2026).
- Bloomington Creative Placemaking featured in "Public + Private" article in 2025 CODA Review by CODAworx, The Power of Public Art: Data, economic growth, policy, and placemaking.
- Bloomington Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan featured in Forecast Public Art April Newsletter and 2025 Report to the Community.
- Creative Placemaking projects and events featured in various media outlets including Sun Media, hoodline, WCCO, FOX9 KMSP, and Minneapolis/St.Paul Business Journal.
- Continued growth of the South Loop Public Art Audio Tour in the Otocast App public art locations increased to 56.
- Placer.ai reports showed significant spikes in number of visitors during events at Bloomington Central Station Park.
- Bloomington Street Arts Festival drew 1,000+ visitors, featured 25+ artists, including first-time vendors, and nearly doubled attendance at Nine Mile Brewing through a local business partnership.
- Augmented Reality Tour on Old Cedar Avenue Bridge by Adam Davis-McGee and Nancy Musinguzi: Over 50,000 all-time views of lenses. Top played and favorited lens is the Timeline. We reach a younger audience with this project, 25 years is the average age.



*Bloomington Street Arts Festival photo provided by Mike Ross.*

“We had a great turnout for last year's Oktoberfest and a big part of that success came from co-hosting the Art Festival in our parking lot. We had a lot more guests in the morning and throughout the day because of all the great vendors that were here. At the end of the day last year's Oktoberfest, with the addition of the Arts Festival, brought in twice as many people as we have had in previous years.”

– Bob Countryman, Nine Mile Brewing Company

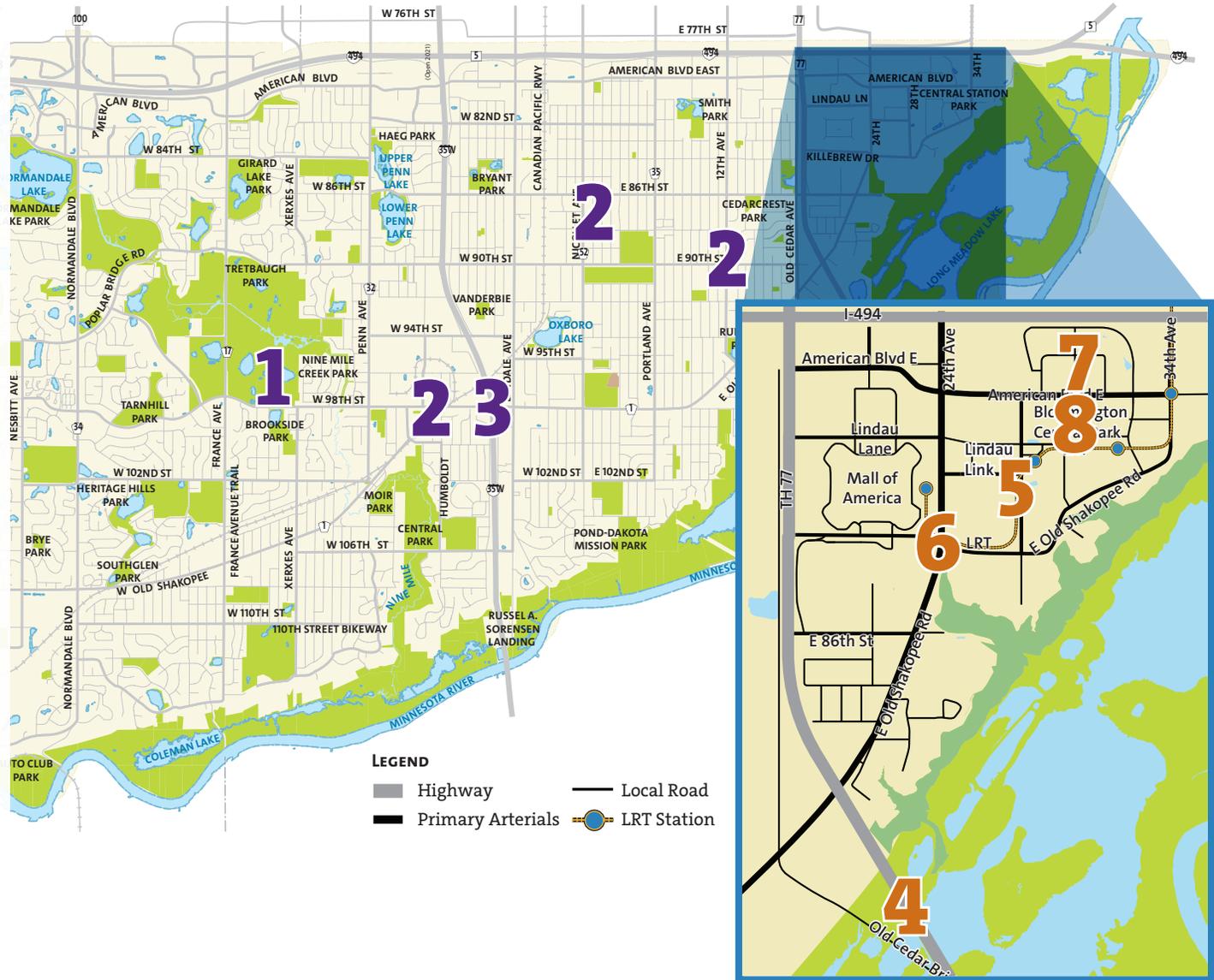
# 2025 PROJECTS MAP

## CITYWIDE

- 1** *Meant to be Here*, mural by Adam Turman (vestibule)  
*Garden Built on Ice*, mural by Creative Color (Rink 1)  
 Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 W 98th Street
- 2** *Hometown Poetry sidewalk stamps*  
 Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W Old Shakopee Road, 88th St just east of Nicollet Ave, and 90th St and 12th Ave S.
- 3** *Evening Primrose*, mural by Mariela Ajras  
 8061 33rd Avenue South

## SOUTH LOOP

- 4** *Hanté (Cedar) Healing Bridge mural and Indigenous garden* by Sandy Spieler and Tara Perron  
 9551 Old Cedar Avenue South
- 5** *City within a City*, ARTBOX by Erik Sletten  
 Lindau Lane and 30th Avenue (East side of 30th)
- 6** *Bloom*, ARTBOX by Jennifer Davis  
 Old Shakopee and Killebrew
- 7** *Art in Bloom*, ARTBOX by Kao Lee Thao  
 Fenley Apartments, 8051 33rd Avenue South
- 8** *Lily's Keeper* ARTBOX by Deneena Hughes and Sophie Hughes  
 Roundabout at Lindau and Winstead Way



## ABOUT CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Creative placemaking integrates arts, culture, and design to strengthen and connect communities. It includes and extends beyond art creation, involving partnerships across sectors, deep community engagement, and contributions from artists and culture bearers to advance local social, physical, and economic goals. Creative placemaking is a strategic investment that delivers social, economic, and community benefits while advancing Bloomington's strategic goals of belonging, vitality, public health and safety, and regional leadership.

### CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COMMISSION

Appointed by Bloomington City Council, the Creative Placemaking Commission advises the City Council on using arts, design, culture, and creativity to help accomplish the City's goals for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place in Bloomington.

### 2025 CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COMMISSIONERS:

- Jessica Anderson
- Paul Coate (Vice Chair)
- Mark Fabel (Outgoing)
- Julie Gustafson
- Megan Lundquist
- Beth McCoy
- Thao Pham
- Jacqui Rosenbush (Outgoing)
- Jamie Schumacher (Chair)



*CP Plan Celebration Commissioners. Photo provided by Jamie Schumacher*

### 2025 CREATIVE PLACEMAKING STAFF:

- Alejandra Pelinka, Director of Creative Placemaking
- Kathryn Murray, Creative Placemaking Specialist

### BELONGING AND SOCIAL CONNECTION

**Arts participants are significantly more socially connected and less lonely - 45.1% meet weekly with friends or family (vs. 30.2% of non-attendees), and only 2.7% report frequent loneliness (NEA HPS, 2024). This aligns with local findings on belonging and welcome (City of Bloomington Survey).**

## CITYWIDE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PLAN

The City of Bloomington recently approved a comprehensive Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan that aligns with the City's strategic plan goals and builds off the previous South Loop Creative Placemaking Plan. Expanding creative placemaking citywide was identified by the community as a strategic initiative in the "Bloomington. Tomorrow. Together. Strategic Plan" to advance the strategic outcome of "A Connected, Welcoming Community."

“When the mural is in a community, it becomes part of the community and part of like the visual landscape of the community, and so there’s a sense of belonging.”

– Mariela Ajras, “Evening Primrose” mural artist, 2025

The Citywide Creative Placemaking Plan also supports the Economic Development Strategic Plan by strengthening “Thriving Places.” Through arts- and community-driven activation of commercial areas and public spaces, it supports small businesses, entrepreneurs, and talent attraction, aligning with the Port Authority’s equity and business development goals.

**MISSION:** Bloomington Creative Placemaking cultivates a sense of belonging in Bloomington by celebrating and reflecting diverse perspectives, supporting local arts and culture, promoting exceptional places, and creating a vibrant and inclusive community to live in, work in, and visit.



“Evening Primrose” by Mariela Ajras

### GOALS:

- **SUPPORT CULTURE BEARERS AND ARTISTS:** Empower Bloomington’s artists and culture bearers to thrive and contribute to the city’s creative, cultural, and economic vibrancy.
- **PRACTICE EQUITY:** Ensure equitable inclusion and representation of Bloomington’s diverse populations across social and aesthetic environments, public spaces, and cultural activities.
- **FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS AND BUILD CONNECTIONS:** Foster constructive and joyful relationships among and between residents, organizations, and with visitors and workers in Bloomington through well-designed and activated public spaces, shared cultural and creative experiences, and activities, and accessible ways to move across the community that strengthen networks of mutual support and improve physical connectivity.
- **ENHANCE BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT:** Strengthen community members’ sense of belonging and foster inclusive engagement through placemaking and other creative and cultural activities.
- **BUILD PLACEMAKING CAPACITY:** Expand creative placemaking efforts citywide by growing resources, expertise, and partnerships.



Inside back cover photos from top to bottom:  
On the One Music Festival, photo courtesy The Avant Garde.  
Jennifer Davis "Bloom" ARTBOX, photo courtesy Jennifer Davis.  
Alive & Kickin' Creative Placemaking Plan Event.  
"Garden Built on Ice" at Bloomington Ice Gardens.  
Fiestas Patrias.



Back cover photos from top to bottom:  
"Hante Cedar Healing Bridge" Sandy Spieler and Tara Perron unveiling.  
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Nature Fest, photo courtesy Drew Arrieta.  
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