

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Economic Development Division*

## **m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Public Arts Commission

**FROM:** Pauline Tannos, Public Arts Coordinator

**DATE:** September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Discussion on Open Scene

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### **Background**

Open Scene was awarded a \$50,000 Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in Spring 2016. Through this project, the City of Urbana is partnering with the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (UCIMC) to create a plan for reclaiming the city's center through arts-based dialogues that directly incorporate the experiences of youth ages 16-24, especially those who feel disconnected from the downtown scene. The five-phase project will be led by UCIMC and City staff, a team of community stakeholders, a dozen youth, and four artists from varied disciplines, who together will lead community workshops and create art that identifies the cultural needs of Urbana's diverse residents. Showcases of creative work rendered will be open to the public throughout the process. Open Scene's team leadership approach – youth partnering equally with adult community stakeholders – intends to empower local youth and works as a creative means of civic engagement in Urbana.

### **Update**

The City of Urbana and the UCIMC will soon announce the start of the first phase of Open Scene: Debuts of Youth's Views in Downtown Urbana. Starting next week, Open Scene will begin accepting applications for youth and adult leaders to participate.

The application form will be available online, and hard copies will be available for pickup at several locations in Champaign-Urbana, including the City Building, UCIMC, and Phillips Recreation Center. Adult leaders will be selected by October 4<sup>th</sup>, and youth leaders will be selected by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Twelve youth and ten community stakeholders will be chosen, to take part in the series of workshops and discussions. Together, youth and stakeholders represent Open Scene Leaders, who will develop criteria for artist selection, develop the project's guiding questions regarding livability in Downtown Urbana and the future role of UCIMC, and participate in two weekend intensives with selected artists. Using techniques learned from workshop intensives, youth will help facilitate arts-based civic dialogue workshops for the community and publicly showcase creative work and research.

In planning for and executing Open Scene, staff will work closely with board members, volunteers, and staff members at the UCIMC; including newly hired Program Director, Brian Dolinar, and Open Scene Project Coordinator, Blair Ebony Smith. Morgan White is serving as Open Scene Intern.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Public Arts Commission share any comments or questions they might have on Open Scene.

Prepared by:

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Pauline Tannos