

NEWS RELEASE

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Knight Cities Challenge names 126 finalists

Finalists chosen from a pool of more than 7,000 applicants

MIAMI – Jan. 12, 2015 – The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation today announced 126 finalists in the first Knight Cities Challenge, a national call for new ideas to make the [26 communities where Knight invests](#) more vibrant places to live and work.

The challenge received more than 7,000 submissions. Finalists proposed a range of ideas: dinner parties that bring residents together to shape the future of their cities; competitive video gaming street arcades that reenliven public spaces and help establish the next NFL; master barbers partnering with professional landscapers to transform vacant lots; and a cycling journey that will cover all 2,600 miles of Philadelphia’s streets to gather stories of the city. Submissions came from many public and government organizations, as well as design experts, urban planning organizations and individuals focused on making their cities more successful.

Each of the ideas focuses on one or more of three drivers of city success:

- Talent: Ideas that help cities attract and keep the best and brightest
- Opportunity: Ideas that expand economic prospects and break down divides
- Engagement: Ideas that spur connection and civic involvement

All 26 Knight communities are represented in the pool of finalists. A full list is below.

Winners, who will receive a share of \$5 million, will be announced in spring 2015.

“The challenge has introduced us to a host of new ideas and people who want to take hold of the future of their cities,” said Carol Coletta, Knight Foundation vice president for community and national initiatives. “Through these new connections we hope to grow a network of civic innovators to take on community challenges and build solutions together.”



Open to innovators of all types, the Knight Cities Challenge asked applicants to answer the question: What's your best idea to make cities more successful?

Applicants have to follow only two rules: 1) A submission may come from anywhere, but the project must benefit one or more of [26 Knight communities](#). 2) The idea should focus on one or all of three key drivers of city success—talent, opportunity and engagement, as outlined above.

The challenge is part of a three-year, \$15 million commitment that Knight Foundation announced in the fall of 2014.

For more information, visit KnightCities.org.

Knight Cities Challenge Finalists 2015

Aberdeen, S.D.

Aberdeen SD Welcome and Relocation Center by Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce (Submitted by Gail Ochs): Strengthening newcomers' attachment to Aberdeen by creating a new welcome and relocation center.

Akron, Ohio

Akron League of Creative Interventionists Headquarters by the League of Creative Interventionists (Submitted by David Swirsky): Establishing a space for the creative community to hold meetings, workshops and programs, and brainstorm interventions designed to break down barriers between diverse populations.

Better Block International Hostel and AirBnB by Team Better Block (Submitted by Jason Roberts): Strengthening the city's sense of place by turning a vacant property into a cultural hub and hostel centered on a specific immigrant population.

Chickadee Society (Submitted by Chris Horne): Fostering a love for Akron through a subscription service that delivers Rubber City goods and opportunities to enjoy area attractions and events.

Downtown Babysitters (Submitted by Kurtiss Hare): Creating a new urban babysitting service in Akron to serve the needs of young talent and encourage more activity in Akron's downtown core.

Emerging City Leaders by Benwood Foundation (Submitted by Lori Quillen): Cultivating the next generation of civic leadership through cross-sector exchange between young leaders in Akron and Chattanooga, Tenn.

Flashbulb by Bettie Street Block Watch and the University of Akron (Submitted by Carolyn Behrman): Taking the energy of Akron's PorchRokr festival to diverse neighborhoods by creating a mobile entertainment vehicle to travel around the city hosting festive gatherings where people transform vacant lots into flower gardens.

Weekend Student Popup Space by Kent State University and the University of Akron (Submitted by Kate Harmon): Creating a student-run pop-up space that will serve as a meeting spot for the community, spark collaboration and help launch young entrepreneurs.

Biloxi, Miss.

Made in Biloxi by Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (Submitted by David Perkes): Fostering the local creative community by inviting artists, designers and other inventors to the city to experiment with a vacant lot.

Boulder, Colo.

Food Truck for the Brain and Hands by City of Boulder, Library & Arts in conjunction with Neighborhood Services Task Force (Submitted by David Farnan): Strengthening neighborhoods by deploying an ever-morphing mobile lab to host neighborhood dialogue and develop collaborative solutions to urban challenges.

Bradenton, Fla.

ReuseReCONNECT by Realize Bradenton (Submitted by Morgan Bettes): Experimenting with different uses of outdoor and vacant spaces to create vibrant community hubs.

Charlotte, N.C.

21st Century Office Access in Charlotte and Beyond by Charlotte Center City Partners (Submitted by Allison Billings): Opening up underused office space in the city to startups and small-scale entrepreneurs through an online platform and creating a model for a business space cooperative that would give companies the flexibility to expand to untested markets or to grow or shrink their workforce according to demand.

Art on the Asphalt (Submitted by Francene Greene): Redesigning bike lanes as blank canvases for local artists to create visuals that depict Charlotte life, history and diverse culture.

Connect.Occupy.Transform by LandDesign (Submitted by Kate Pearce): Connecting creative entrepreneurs with the owners of underused space in Charlotte's urban core to revitalize the North End neighborhood and create a model for redevelopment that could be applied across the city and in other metropolitan areas.

CrownTown Fest by Charlotte Area Transit System, City of Charlotte (Submitted by Jason Lawrence): Weaving together the diverse fabric of neighborhoods, business centers and hidden gems by creating a citywide festival that would use bike-share programs, transit and walking to encourage people to move between venues.

Neighborhood Mash-Up (Submitted by Michael Solender): Uniting residents by pairing different neighborhoods across the city to come together on two consecutive Saturdays to host simultaneous block parties that highlight businesses, houses of worship, parks, schools and other resources.

No Barriers Project by City of Charlotte (Submitted by Sarah Hazel): Identifying the physical barriers that separate different neighborhoods and engaging diverse groups to work together on lessening the impact of those divisions with tools such as gardens and public art.

“Porch” Swings in Public Places by City of Charlotte (Submitted by Tom Warshauer): Installing porch swings at bus stops and in other public spaces to encourage community interaction and use of public spaces.

Take Ten Initiative by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services, City of Charlotte (Submitted by Alyssa Dodd): Bringing people together by challenging municipal workers to take 10 minutes every week to connect with a new city resident and ask for their feedback.

Columbia, S.C.

Adaptive Reuse Art Studio/Greenway Connection by City of Columbia (Submitted by Lucinda Statler): Revitalizing a historic district by turning a vacant steam plant into a home for the city's award-winning art program and an adjacent tunnel into a part of the local greenway.

Columbus, Ga.

Death of the Bench (Submitted by Brian Phelps): Replacing fixed benches in public spaces with mobile tables and chairs that can be arranged in multiple configurations and monitored by sensors in real time to improve community engagement.

Minimum Grid: Maximum Impact by MidTown Inc. (Submitted by Anne King): Establishing a grid of bicycle and pedestrian lanes to connect the entertainment and business district of Uptown with the 24 diverse neighborhoods of MidTown.

Property Development Using Community Gardens by River Valley Regional Commission (Submitted by Jim Livingston): Adapting vacant lots into community gardens and using the gardens as a springboard to develop the real estate management skills of local residents.

Detroit

Beautify Our Block by ARISE Detroit! (Submitted by Luther Keith): Creating a jobs-focused, sustainable rapid response team to fight blight and clean up neighborhoods to improve the quality of life in the city.

The Boggs School Community Dreamscape by the Boggs Educational Center (Submitted by Shoshanna Utchenik): Repurposing the outdoor space of the Boggs school into a “dreamscape” where people can meet, learn from nature, explore art installations and recharge.

Border Talks (Submitted by Graig Donnelly): Creating a physical space to foster engagement between diverse residents of Detroit and its neighbor Grosse Pointe Park, who are separated by barricades and closed streets.

Brand Camp Pop-Up: School Branding Businesses in Detroit Neighborhoods by Brand Camp University (Submitted by Hajj Flemings): Assisting startups and entrepreneurs in underserved neighborhoods with branding their companies and ideas through a multi-day training and mentoring program that helps them tell their stories and establish a digital presence.

Brick + Beam Detroit: Let's Get Rehabbing! by Michigan Historic Preservation Network (Submitted by Emilie Evans): Rehabilitating Detroit architecture by providing training, social events and forums for people across skill levels to work together to improve their city.

Bus Riders Need to Be Engaged Too (Submitted by Jacob Rayford Jr.): Engaging the city's bus riders by providing information agents on public transit who can answer questions about the city and relay concerns.

The Buzz by Detroit Future City (Submitted by Erin Kelly): Pairing barbers with landscape contractors to transform overgrown vacant lots through facilitated design workshops that teach mowing and pattern-making techniques.

The Chain Link Kit (Submitted by Claire Nelson): Creating a how-to guide to transform the ubiquitous and unsightly fence into galleries, gardens and grids while promoting community connections.

Detroit Civic Engagement Traveling Road Show by Community Development Advocates of Detroit (Submitted by Sarida Scott): Engaging residents in the future of the city through a series of workshops and community dinners throughout Detroit.

Detroit Homecoming by Crain's Detroit Business (Submitted by Eric Cedo): Engaging residents -- past and present -- with a new digital community designed to keep Detroit expats in touch with the city even after they have moved away.

Growing Communities With Strong Funding Roots by Funding Roots (Submitted by Renette Gordon): Using crowdfunding to attract capital to rebuild Detroit, create jobs, engage residents and boost opportunity for new businesses.

Information Supergreenway by Detroit RiverFront Conservancy (Submitted by Jan Shimshock): Providing continuous public WiFi along Detroit's RiverWalk, Dequindre Cut and Eastern Market to break down digital divides, connect neighborhoods and support area entrepreneurs.

Middlecott Sketchbaffle Experiment (Submitted by Brook Banham): Opening the creative process by expanding a public design competition in Detroit, dubbed "a fight club for design," that makes the design process a spectator sport.

Neighborhood Exchange Program by Detroit Experience Factory (Submitted by Jeanette Pierce): Introducing residents to new communities through a series of events that will transport them from one neighborhood to another where they can connect with new people and learn about neighborhood assets, challenges and successes.

NOW WHAT!!!! by Neighbors Building Brightmoor (Submitted by Riet Schumack): Making the neighborhood business district in Brightmoor more vibrant through a competition that pairs local businesses with residents to transform vacant spaces using creative design solutions.

Project Groundtruth by Detroit Future City (Submitted by Dara O'Byrne): Improving quality of life for Detroit residents by transforming vacant lots and blighted properties that surround multifamily developments into green, open spaces.

ProsperU\$Det Innovation Stations in Your Neighborhood by Southwest Economic Solutions (Submitted by Hector Hernandez): Creating neighborhood "opportunity kiosks" where

entrepreneurs would pitch ideas to residents who would vote on proposals to receive small loans, subsidized rent and entrepreneurial training.

Shark Tank for Small Developers/Builders by Kim Architecture + Design with Strong Towns (Submitted by R. John Anderson): Training a new generation of local developers and builders to manage smaller scale city projects that take less time and fewer resources than traditional models.

Social Water Financing (Submitted by Rachel Cardone): Testing and delivering community-based financing for household and neighborhood water services that promote recycling and reduce water use, such as harvesting rainwater, establishing rain gardens and retrofitting housing with hyperefficient toilets.

SWOT City Shine by TechTown Detroit (Submitted by Marlo Staples): Engaging the community in designing solar lighting that identifies the city's unique commercial corridors while overcoming its challenges with maintaining lighting infrastructure.

Uber Local Food System House by Detroit City Planning Commission (Submitted by Kathryn Underwood): Repurposing vacant and abandoned houses to provide year-round indoor sites for growing vegetables for the local community.

The Urban Consulate (Submitted by Claire Nelson): Promoting cross-city cultural exchange by setting up a network of "consulates" for American cities, instead of foreign countries, that offer events and an entree into local culture.

Think Tanker by MODCaR c/o the Bureau of Emergent Urbanity (Submitted by Anya Sirota): Bringing attention to the power of design and the manufacturing economy through Think Tanker, a barge with design studios, exhibition space and maker facilities that will host international designers on the Detroit River.

Why Would Anyone Want to Live in Detroit by LIVE Detroit (Submitted by Rachel Perschetz): Attracting and keeping talent in Detroit by creating a one-stop shop for information about neighborhoods and living in the city.

Windows Into Detroit Communities (Submitted by Alex B. Hill, Meg Heeres and Maya Stovall): Bringing residents from diverse communities together in an artistic event where they participate in and listen to discussions that happen across mock borderlines while discovering their differences and commonalities.

Duluth, Minn.

The St. Louis River: One River, Many Stories by University of Minnesota, Duluth (Submitted by John Hatcher): Igniting community conversation by inviting local news sources to dedicate one month of coverage to the St. Louis River and its environmental issues, history and economic opportunities.

WESTuary Park (Submitted by Peter Stauduhar): Transforming a former industrial site on Duluth's waterfront into a new public park.

Fort Wayne, Ind.

Pop-Up Neighborhood by City of Fort Wayne (Submitted by Kate Riordan): Creating pop-up vibrant neighborhoods by providing entrepreneurs subsidized rates in small sections of underused commercial corridors for an extended time to stimulate public and private investment in targeted areas.

Re:Place | Re:Purpose by Big Car Collaborative (Submitted by Jim Walker): Testing quick, innovative solutions for repurposing vacant buildings and bringing more vitality to neighborhoods by bringing together a local team of artists, landscape architects, city planners and other community members.

Gary, Ind.

Creatives for the Good of Gary by Creatives for Good (Submitted by Nancy Schoon): Spurring creative industries by partnering artists and creative professionals with local entrepreneurs and organizations to help build, brand and promote companies and nonprofits

Dreams of a Sleeping City by Place Lab, University of Chicago (Submitted by Lori Berko): Adapting vacant spaces in the city to serve as incubators for businesses that reduce blight and promote artistic expression while creating cultural districts.

Gary Community Orchard by Brunswick Garden Club (Submitted by Ebony Tillman): Creating a community orchard on a vacant lot in Gary where community members will produce and cultivate organic fruit working side by side.

Soul Food Restaurant Incubator by University of Chicago (Submitted by Carol Brown): Repurposing a vacant former restaurant into a soul food incubator that creates jobs, stimulates entrepreneurship and establishes an anchor institution for downtown revitalization.

Grand Forks, N.D.

The Grand Forks Public Library and InfoShop by Grand Forks Public Library Board of Trustees (Submitted by Brian Schill): Transforming the Grand Forks Public Library into a new makerspace, arts center and hub for citywide WiFi.

Social Capital Investment Bank (Submitted by Pete Haga): Helping community changemakers by creating a social capital bank where volunteers lend time and expertise to launch projects and businesses.

Lexington, Ky.

Fancy Lex by University of Kentucky's "Citizen Kentucky" Honors Class (Submitted by Abigail Shelton): Inspiring Lexington residents to become involved in the city by hosting an event where they can meet local leaders while enjoying the city's finest foods, music and local goods.

Northside Common Market by North Limestone Community Development Corp. (Submitted by Richard Young): Repurposing a vacant transit hub to create a local market and creative business incubator that will bring healthful food into the city's largest food desert and provide a place for makers to sell their goods.

WorldWall (Submitted by Dave Anderson): Creating a giant, all-weather video wall that allows two-way, real-time interactions between citizens from across communities and the globe.

Long Beach, Calif.

Give and You Shall Receive (Submitted by Rachel Ng): Creating a neighborhood-based skills exchange where residents can offer their talent or post their needs.

Living Walls by Nostrum Inc. (Submitted by Susan Collida): Enlivening blank neighborhood walls by mobilizing residents to collaborate and create community assets around the walls, such as vertical gardens, rock climbing, film screens or visual art.

Macon, Ga.

Make It Happen in Macon Community Venture Capital Fund (Submitted by Lakey Boyd): Providing seed funding for businesses, causes and projects every month by having residents vote online to select five top ideas that will be presented in a forum where community judges will make final selections.

Operation Export Macon by College Hill Alliance (Submitted by Joshua Lovett): Fostering city pride by creating a roving camper van showcasing the best food, goods and experiences Macon has to offer.

Park Advocate Macon (submitted by Geoffrey Boyd): Creating an organization to bring together community volunteer groups interested in improving and maintaining local parks as vibrant community engagement venues.

SparkMacon Is Sparking Innovative Thinking for Macon-Bibb by SparkMacon (Submitted by Robert Betzel): Building on the success of a new makerspace in downtown Macon by hiring a full-time director and offering structured programming for members and the community.

Miami

Connective Tissue Plan and the Miami Department of Public Life by Gehl Studio (Submitted by Matthew Lister): Creating the nation's first Department of Public Life to promote a more inclusive, connected, walkable Miami.

Future Museum Park: An Iterative Placemaking Experiment (Submitted by Rebecca Mandelman): Involving the public in the creation and design of Museum Park through interactive experiments to help developers understand the wants and needs of the community.

Guagua App (Submitted by Armando Ibarra): Creating a single platform for private jitneys and minibuses to provide inexpensive, on-demand, door-to-door transportation that fills substantial gaps in the local transit system.

Made in Dade (Submitted by Eric Burnard): Matching entrepreneurs and inventors with local manufacturers who can produce their goods to create a positive environment for talented creators while stimulating the job market.

Multimodal, Linear Park by IoCI (Submitted by Malik Benjamin): Building a linear park along the Florida East Coast Railway from downtown to the Little River residential and business district.

PlaceMaking Agency/Lab (Submitted by Eric Burnard): Establishing a new creative agency focused on building a cultural identity in neighborhoods and helping developers and entrepreneurs build ideas based on those cultural foundations, to create stronger neighborhood ties.

SmartPARCS @ North by Miami Dade College (Submitted by Lenore Rodicio): Improving Internet access in underserved communities by creating a community park system around Miami Dade College that will provide free WiFi hotspots and encourage community engagement.

The Talent Development Network by The Talent Development Network (Submitted by Steven Rojas Tallon): Helping talented Miamians stay in the city by connecting students with employers in seven target industries through a collaboration between all major academic institutions in the city.

Wild Planting for a Fruitful Future by PlantMatter (Submitted by Tiffany Noe): Strengthening Miami by providing residents with free fruit trees to plant in public spaces for all to share - turning the streets into a veritable edible park.

The Science Barge by CappSci (Submitted by Nathalie Manzano-Smith): To promote sustainability by creating the Science Barge, a floating, urban sustainable farm and environmental education center powered by renewable energy

Milledgeville, Ga.

Making IT in Milledgeville by Twin Lakes Library System (Submitted by Stephen Houser): Creating a makerspace to promote learning and skill building in such areas as computer programming and robotics, while giving entrepreneurs a space to share and build ideas; the project is a collaboration between the Twin Lakes Library System, the Ina Dillard Russel Library and tech business Need-a-Nerd.

Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Iconic Loop by City of Myrtle Beach (Submitted by Kelly Mezzapelle): Creating a bicycle and pedestrian network that connects Myrtle Beach's diverse neighborhoods, public spaces and attractions.

Palm Beach County, Fla.

The Community School, 2.0 by PLACE Planning & Design Inc. (Submitted by Robert Field): Initiating a public planning process to reimagine a K-12 school and its facilities to more accurately reflect the needs of the community.

Philadelphia

Common Table by the Enterprise Center Community Development Corp. (Submitted by Jesse Blitzstein): Developing a restaurant incubator that allows aspiring restaurateurs to test their newest ideas in a low-risk temporary setting that encourages food entrepreneurs to thrive.

Creative Commons at 30th Street by Drexel University (Submitted by Harris Stienberg): Launching an experiment in urban development by temporarily transforming an underused

parking lot, near Drexel University and across from a busy rail station, into a creative hub where community members can gather to exchange ideas and spark civic innovation.

DIG Philly by The Big SandBox Inc. (Submitted by Jacques Gaffigan): Bringing together members of the community from diverse backgrounds, ages and economic groups to- reinvent the schoolyard using traditional grassroots outreach and new digital engagement tools.

Every Street in Philadelphia (Submitted by Jacob Winterstein): Promoting livable cities by having an artist and a journalist cycle the city's 2,600 miles of streets and engage residents in a multimedia conversation about how city design affects quality of life.

The Glass Schoolhouse Project by OLIN (Submitted by Meghan Talarowski): Reinventing Philadelphia's schools into multiuse community centers, including co-working facilities, makerspaces and recreation.

Hygge Project (Submitted by Meghan Talarowski): Providing people the chance to interact in public spaces during the winter months by installing "Hygge" stations, a fleet of warming devices that unfold to offer seating, heat lamps, small libraries or blankets; each has its own offering.

Philadelphia: An Urban Thinkscape by Temple University (Submitted by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek): Reimagining the city as an "Urban Thinkscape" through playful activities in parks and public spaces that encourage residents to learn and interact with their surroundings.

The Pop-Up Pool Project by Group Melvin Design (Submitted by Benjamin Bryant): Introducing fun, easy solutions to make the city's free outdoor public pools more vibrant places to meet and interact with neighbors and friends.

Recreation Centers as Hubs of Community Stewardship by City Parks Association of Philadelphia (Submitted by Timothy Baird): Reimagining city recreation centers into idea and education hubs for city sustainability, training residents in areas such as green infrastructure, food production and soil manufacturing.

Restoring the City Beautiful to Working Class Neighborhoods by Philadelphia City Planning Commission: Launching a design competition to engage residents in transforming the vacant rail yard that divides the Mantua-Powell neighborhood from Center City Philadelphia.

South Philly's Stoop by Scout (Submitted by Lindsey Scannapieco): Transforming the vacant space surrounding the recently closed, historic Edward Bok school in South Philadelphia into a new community living room that brings community members together, encourages connections and engages people with neighborhood history.

Urban Arboreta by City Parks Association of Philadelphia (Submitted by Timothy Baird): Transforming vacant land in Philadelphia into urban forests that produce trees to be replanted on city streets and in parks.

Next Stop: Democracy! The Voting Signage Project by Here's My Chance (Submitted by Lansie Sylvia): Making voting enticing by creating bright signs at polling places and commissioning artists to perform site-specific pieces on election days.

NCO Generator: Template for Neighborhood Conservation Overlays by Central Roxborough Civic Association (Submitted by Sandy Sorlien): Promoting walkable, livable neighborhoods by creating a toolkit residents can use to create a special zoning designation called a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay.

PACDC Entrepreneurs in Residence by Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (Submitted by Lynn Haskin): Embedding talented entrepreneurs into Philadelphia's community development corporations to create businesses and expand economic opportunity in the neighborhoods they serve.

Philadelphia Immigrant Innovation Hub by Mt. Airy USA (Submitted by Anuj Gupta): Harnessing the talent and energy of immigrants to revitalize distressed neighborhoods by providing centers that would provide low-cost space, language assistance, workshops and trainings, and access to traditional and non-traditional sources of capital.

Pop-Up Hustle Shops (Submitted by Steve Vassor): Creating a mobile mall that will provide traditional neighborhood businesses the opportunity to reach a wider audience of customers throughout the city.

Public Space as Public Media by Drexel University (Submitted by Kara Lindstrom): Engaging residents by using the sides of public buildings to display relevant city data and public information about policy discussions, elections, and other issues.

When Cities Vote, Cities Thrive by POWER - Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower & Rebuild (Submitted by Dwayne Royster): Encouraging voting by building networks of volunteers in low-income areas to encourage their own neighbors -- in one-on-one conversations -- to get engaged in local issues

Using Play as the Vehicle to Design Creative Abrasion Networks Leading to New Economic Ventures by Figure 8 Thinking LLC (Submitted by Natalie Nixon): Creating play hubs designed to prompt "happy accidents" among residents and create networks that lead to business collaborations.

San Jose, Calif.

The Bay Area Prototyping Festival by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (Submitted by Deborah Cullinan): Creating a large-scale urban prototyping festival that will call on the community to address challenges such as blight and lack of economic opportunity through public space solutions.

Civic One by The Tech Museum of Innovation (Submitted by Maryanna Rogers): Inviting the public to both imagine and test solutions for one significant city issue every year.

Crowdsourcing Three Creeks Trail Design & Development (Submitted by Scott Lane): Involving the Willow Glen community in designing and maintaining San Jose's Three Creeks Trail.

Knight Houses by Houslets (Submitted by Tim McCormick): Prototyping and deploying low-cost, modular, off-grid housing and workspace units to serve as civic building blocks to accommodate events, projects, creative space or the homeless.

Local Government Fiscal Assessment Tool (Submitted by Peter Furman and former Mayor Chuck Reed): Increasing transparency by designing a suite of tools to open up city budgets and make them comprehensible to the average person.

Mapping Learning Resources by Institute for the Future (Submitted by Sara Skvirsky): Mapping and sharing community knowledge through a "time bank" where residents can exchange hours of teaching for hours of learning, gain new skills and form new connections.

The Resolution (Submitted by Joshua Johnson): Making civic debates as engaging as televised sports coverage by assigning teams to an issue, crowdsourcing research, and presenting the debate live online

San Pedro Squared by San Jose Downtown Association (Submitted by Scott Knies): Transforming the ground floor of a parking lot in the San Pedro Square to build momentum around economic revival of the area by introducing ground floor retail to the garage.

We Run This Space by Somos Mayfair (Submitted by Camille Llanes-Fontanilla): Transforming unused community centers, rundown buildings and empty lots into community-owned and -operated spaces for residents to shape and develop with their own innovative ideas.

State College, Penn.

Changemaker-in-Residence by the co.space (Submitted by Spud Marshall): Spurring social innovation by creating a one-year fellowship where changemakers can come to the city and launch a local project.

St. Paul, Minn.

4 Play by Greater MSP (Submitted by Peter Frosch): Changing the way people perceive the city and its climate by inviting all residents to come together for an outdoor activity -- whether it's ice fishing or summer canoeing -- once each season.

8-80 Vitality Fellow by Mayor's Office, City of St. Paul (Submitted by Mayor Christopher Coleman): Promoting a livable St. Paul by embedding a fellow in the city who ensures that walking, biking and public spaces are a priority in all city projects.

MSPassport by Greater MSP (Submitted by Peter Frosch): Enticing former residents to move back to the city by creating an app filled with reasons to return, plus employment and civic opportunities.

MN Nice Breakers (Submitted by Jun-Li Wang): Making the city more welcoming by creating a series of events to introduce newcomers to the city so they can quickly establish social networks.

Rolling Out the Warm Welcome Hat (Submitted by Jun-Li Wang): Welcoming newcomers by having city leaders hold a ceremony for them each month and providing them with a welcome gift in the form of a warm hat for Minnesota winters.

Tallahassee, Fla.

Throw the Bus Stop Out With the Bathwater (Submitted by Megan Doherty): Transforming bus stops into welcoming public spaces that improve the surrounding area, benefit businesses and encourage people to use public transit.

Wichita, Kan.

Bicycle Wayfinding Brings Wichita Neighborhoods Together by City of Wichita (Submitted by Scott Wadle): Designing and implementing improvements for bicycle wayfinding designed to connect diverse communities.

Hack the Narrative by Institute for the Future (Submitted by Sara Skvirsky): Empowering residents to tell their own stories by creating a toolkit that helps citizens hack the narrative of their city.

Public Library as Boisterous Collision Space of Ideas by Wichita Public Library (Submitted by Cynthia Berner): Transforming a traditional public library into a high-tech center for interactive learning where residents from all backgrounds come together to learn, build ideas and advance the city's entrepreneurial spirit.

Multiple Cities

Breaking Local Barriers by Urbanful, Smart Growth America: Developing small business networks that transcend geography to empower makers and artisans, while providing training, mentoring and a market for their creations.

Building the Next NFL by OhHeckYeah! (Submitted by Brian Corrigan): Creating an interactive street arcade that will use the power of play to connect people on the street; the video gaming league of cities will be modeled after the NFL.

Eisenhower Fellowships Cities of Culture Competition by Eisenhower Fellowships (Submitted by Shona McCarthy): Launching a competition where residents explore the cultural DNA of their community as they vie for the title of City of Culture.

On the Table Place Setting by Chicago Community Trust (Submitted by Eva Penar): Bringing people together by helping cities host simultaneous dinner parties across their communities to discuss the city's future, replicating a successful Chicago initiative.

Small Batch Sunday by Urbanful, Smart Growth America (Submitted by Russell Brooks): Identifying and celebrating the most promising makers from Knight Foundation's eight resident communities through local popup markets where residents will select their favorites to advance to a national competition in Miami.

The Swings: An Exercise in Musical Cooperation by Daily Tous les Jours (Submitted by Mouna Andraos): Turning public spaces into hubs for play and community interaction through "The Swings" installation, 10 swings that play music when used and more complex melodies when used together.

Urban Safari (Submitted by Margaret Caust): Turning local residents into tour guides so that they can showcase locations most tourists don't see while creating jobs for themselves and true connections with city visitors.