



Strategic Plan

2014 – 2019

2014 marks Big Car's **tenth anniversary** as an incorporated organization. This plan charts goals and tactics that define success for Big Car through 2019.

1 MISSION + VISION + VALUES

Big Car brings art to people and people to art, sparking creativity in people's lives and transforming communities. We

envision an Indianapolis where people are more connected, and all people have access to creative experiences. We see a city where public spaces are fully utilized and designed for engagement, and where design and art play a recognized role in economic development, neighborhood identity, and civic pride. We believe that art can break down differences, encourage empathy, and make people happier. We value collaboration, accessibility to art for all, engagement with people, service, adventure, flexibility, and the swift seizing of opportunities.

2 HISTORY

Big Car began as an artist collective and gallery in the Fountain Square neighborhood. After producing both gallery shows and street-based art events in the neighborhood, we saw and felt the value of making art more visible and accessible, and how art activity can transform a neighborhood at the street level.

We began to do social practice art — a practice of art and design that is all about

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engagement with communities, using art as a tool for action and transformation. Social practice equalizes the relationship between art practitioners and citizens, and offers people new perspectives and connectivity with each other and our city. In 2011, we launched a major placemaking project in Lafayette Square, the Service Center for Community & Culture.

Today, Big Car practices social entrepreneurship, offering design services to nonprofits for all kinds of projects that improve quality of life in our city. We are artists, the public work of Big Car is our art medium, and the people of Indianapolis are our collaborators. In ten years, Big Car has gone from an all-volunteer group with a volunteer-contributed budget, to an organization with six full-time workers and an annual budget of nearly \$900,000, representing a great return on investment for stakeholders and community.

3 AUDIENCE + IMPACT

Big Car strives to serve all audiences and multiple ages, especially those with less access to art, due to income levels or location. Over time, Big Car's work has focused on four neighborhoods: Fountain Square, Lafayette Square, the Near Southside and the Far Eastside. We engage with both neighborhood communities, and cultural communities.

Big Car's activities fit into four overlapping categories:

- Design & creative placemaking initiative
- Neighborhood-based initiatives
- City-wide collective initiatives
- Programming and events

Design projects: Our design of experiences, spaces and materials enables clients and partners to identify and maximize their assets and tell a compelling story.

Neighborhood-based initiatives: Our place-based initiatives (Lafayette Square, Far Eastside, Near Southside) enliven places, leverage collective impact, and engage people with their neighbors, long term.

City-wide collective projects: Our citywide initiatives on livability create a culture of innovation and generate creative energy in Indianapolis.

Programming & Events: Our Department of Yes produces engagement-based programming in public places.

Administrative Initiatives: Builds the capacity of Big Car to achieve its mission.

This fifth area of focus relates to our organizational capacity. Administrative

excellence enables Big Car to leverage the human and financial resources necessary to achieve our mission.

We use these categories when presenting and marketing Big Car's work to the public and funders. Through these activities, we aim to make impact by:

- Building a **stronger sense of community** for people of all ages and backgrounds by including them in more arts experiences
- Boosting **economic development** and livability in struggling neighborhoods
- **Revitalizing** Indianapolis as a whole through our work

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4 STRATEGIES + TACTICS

Big Car's four big strategies for this five-year plan are:

- 1. Lead, cultivate and participate** in city-wide collaborations around transformative ideas that are all about engagement of people with places and art
- 2. Use art and creativity** to address cultural disparities in our city
- 3. Share, teach and replicate** the Big Car model of social practice art and design beyond Indianapolis
- 4. Further professionalize** our organizational structure and tap new support streams to further our mission

STRATEGY # 1

Lead, cultivate and participate in city-wide collaborations around transformative ideas that are all about engagement of people with places and art.

YEAR ONE: 2014

- Start a Livability Coalition: a cadre of small, agile organizations working toward raising the quality of life via new program offerings (examples: a curated Indianapolis visitor center; a neighborhood soccer league)
- Expand programming related to walkability
- Develop an incubation program in which Big Car serves as advisor and fiscal sponsor to upstart, innovative cultural groups
- Add Downtown as a fifth neighborhood of focus
- Start a low-power community radio station, based in Fountain Square

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- Sustain the Livability Coalition
- Sustain walkability programming
- Continue producing TEDxIndianapolis: a city-wide conference of ideas that reaches 1,000+ people and leverages our ability to meet potential supporters and collaborators and to support the culture of innovation in our city

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- Implement the incubation program with a venture philanthropy fund

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- Integrate social practice art into the fabric of how things are decided and done in our city at the city government level

STRATEGY # 2

Use art and creativity to address cultural disparities in our city

YEAR ONE: 2014

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- Add UNWA (United Northwest Area) as a sixth neighborhood of focus (an economically challenged but asset rich neighborhood)
- Re-develop a physical presence on the near Southside, current hotbed of creative activity
- Advocate for a "Percent for People" program: developers contributing space and funds to public spaces as part of each private development deal

- Train and recruit local people to become social practice artists, to enhance our pool of collaborators and collective members

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- Aim our work at addressing social justice issues and cultural disparities related to quality of life: environmental quality, transit, health and healthy food access, and education.

STRATEGY #3

Share, teach and replicate the Big Car model of social practice art and design beyond Indianapolis

YEAR ONE: 2014

- Mark Big Car's 10th anniversary with an exhibition and book

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- Produce a regional conference on creative placemaking/social practice art

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- Have a department of Big Car that services and teaches Indiana cities and towns statewide about creative placemaking

STRATEGY #4

Further professionalize our organizational structure and tap new support streams to further our mission

YEAR ONE: 2014

- Continue to diversify funding streams: increase total % of individual donor giving to 15%
- Refine our project management systems
- Obtain national funding
- Increase board and staff diversity

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- Define and professionalize our social entrepreneurship service
- Do pioneering program evaluation
- Grow our annual giving campaign to \$25K

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- Spin off Big Car Art + Design and the Incubation Program as independent, self-sustaining enterprises
- Structure our staff as an art collective whose art is transforming places and quality of life
- Start an endowment

CONCLUSION

As Big Car's leaders and members inherit the responsibility of stewarding our city's future, we must remain as nimble, responsive, creative and inclusive as ever—while expanding our own capacity to sustain this very work.

