



Strategic Plan

2014 - 2020

This plan charts goals and tactics that define success for Big Car through 2020. A new plan is in progress for our next phase following the opening of Cruft Street Commons, our multi-facility campus on one block on the near-southside of Indianapolis.

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 engagement with communities, using art as a tool for action and transformation.

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.

Social practice equalizes the relationship between art practitioners and citizens, and offers people new perspectives and connectivity with each other and our city. From 2011 to 2103, we staged a major placemaking project in Lafayette Square, the Service Center for Community & Culture. Today, Big Car practices social entrepreneurship. 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 seven full-time workers and an annual budget hovering, in some years, near \$1 million — 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 five neighborhoods:

Fountain Square, Lafayette Square, Garfield Park, the Far Eastside and Downtown. We engage with both neighborhood communities, and cultural communities. 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.

Big Car's activities fit into four overlapping categories:

- Design and creative placemaking initiatives
- Neighborhood-based cultural initiatives
- City-wide collective initiatives
- Arts programming and events

Design & creative

placemaking: Design spaces, experiences and materials that enable clients and partners to identify and maximize their assets and tell a compelling story.

Neighborhood-based cultural initiatives:

Conduct place-based initiatives that enliven places, leverage collective impact, and engage people with their neighbors, long term.

City-wide collective projects:

Create a culture of innovation and generate creative energy in Indianapolis in partnership with like organizations.

Arts programming &

events: Produce engagement-based programming for all ages that sparks creativity.

Administrative initiatives:

Build the capacity of Big Car to achieve our mission.

We use these first four categories when presenting and marketing Big Car's work to the public and funders. Administrative initiatives, the fifth area of focus, enables Big Car to leverage the human and financial resources necessary to achieve our mission.

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

OUR ACTIVITIES FIT INTO FOUR CATEGORIES

design & creative placemaking

neighborhood-based cultural initiatives

city-wide collective projects

arts programming & events

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

- ✓ Prioritize projects that make Indianapolis a more livable city (example: a neighborhood soccer league that builds neighborhood identity and connection)
- ✓ 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

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- ✓ Sustain walkability programming
- ✓ Continue producing TEDxIndianapolis: a city-wide conference of ideas that reaches 1,000+ people and supports the culture of innovation in our city

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- ✓ In the five year period, engage and pay a total 300 artists for their creative public work, contributing substantially to the local economy. In 2019 alone, we paid more than 200 artists.

STRATEGY #2

Use art and creativity to address cultural disparities in our city

YEAR ONE: 2014

- ✓ Launch and leverage the Wagon of Wonders mobile art truck to create art access all over the city

YEAR THREE: BY 2017

- ✓ Re-develop a cultural presence on the near Southside, an area challenged by low incomes and low educational attainment

- ✓ Advocate for a "Percent for Art" program: developers contributing neighborhood public art funds as part of each private development deal

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

We are artists,
the public work
of Big Car is our
art medium,
and the people
of Indianapolis
are our
collaborators.

YEAR SIX: BY 2020

- Work to strengthen urban/rural/suburban connections through art to promote social cohesion
- Continue work diversifying our board and staff to reflect the citizenry of Indianapolis

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

YEAR SIX: BY 2020

- Have a department of Big Car or partnership 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

- ✓ Package and professionalize our social entrepreneurship service
- ✓ Improve the design and effectiveness of our program evaluation
- ✓ Grow our annual giving campaign to \$25K

YEAR FIVE: BY 2019

- ✓ Structure our staff as an art collective whose art is transforming places and quality of life

YEAR SIX: BY 2020

- Start an endowment

CONCLUSION

As Big Car's leaders and members inherit the responsibility of stewarding our city's future, we will remain responsive, creative and inclusive. Everybody deserves access to art, to creativity, to activities that challenge our minds. And artists should help make creativity an integral part of people's lives. Better than anyone, we know the joy of using our imaginations. And we have a moral imperative to share this joy — which boosts the quality of life and economic vibrancy in Indianapolis and beyond.



PROGRESS TO DATE (2014 - 2019)

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

- COMPLETED: Conducted Jane Jacobs walks and continued advocacy
(Expand programming related to walkability)
- COMPLETED: Working with two new organizations; fiscal sponsor policy established by Big Car board
(Develop an incubation program in which Big Car serves as advisor and fiscal sponsor to upstart, innovative cultural groups)
- COMPLETED: Produce Art in Odd Places event
(Add Downtown as fifth neighborhood of focus)
- COMPLETED, IN PROGRESS: Initiated citywide co-ed soccer league with neighborhood-based teams designed to boost neighborhood pride and identity with artist-designed branding/logos

YEAR TWO: 2015

- COMPLETED: Produced Spark Monument Circle, an 11-week placemaking project
(Add Downtown as fifth neighborhood of focus)
- IN PROGRESS: Secured radio station license, and identify tower location; station to launch in 2016
(Start a low-power community radio station)

YEARS THREE, FOUR & FIVE: 2017-2019

- COMPLETED: Launched WQRT 99.1 FM in 2017
- COMPLETED: Aired more than a dozen community-led radio programs on a regular schedule
- COMPLETED: Hosted more than 30 artists talks, featuring local and national authors and visual artists
(Start a low-power community radio station)

YEARS FIVE & SIX: 2018-2019

- COMPLETED: Conducted placemaking projects in Lockerbie Square, Indianapolis City Market, and Lugar Plaza.
- COMPLETED: Aired more than a dozen community-led WQRT radio programs on a regular schedule
- COMPLETED: Hosted more than 30 artists talks, featuring local and national authors and visual artists on WQRT
- COMPLETED: In 2019 alone, we paid more than 200 artists through steady employment, exhibit commissions, artist residencies, and part-time contract work
(Add Downtown as fifth neighborhood of focus)

STRATEGY #2

Use art and creativity to address cultural disparities in our city

YEAR ONE: 2014

- COMPLETED: Included Lafayette Square and Far Eastside in the Fun Fleet circuit
(Launch and leverage the Wagon of Wonders mobile art truck to create art access all over the city)
- COMPLETED: Purchased a vacant building in Garfield Park
(Re-develop a cultural presence on the near Southside)

YEAR TWO: 2015

- COMPLETED: Raised funds for the renovation of Tube/Garfield Park Creative Community project
(Re-develop a cultural presence on the near Southside)
- COMPLETED: Helped publicize the Percent for Art proposal, which passed in November 2015
(Advocate for a "Percent for People" program)

YEAR THREE: 2016

- COMPLETED: Renovated and opened Tube Factory artspace in spring 2016 with a full slate of exhibitions and programs each year
(Re-develop a physical presence on the near Southside, current hotbed of creative activity)

YEAR FOUR: 2017

- ONGOING: Supported the launch of a new masters degree program at the University of Indianapolis in social practice and placemaking
(Train and recruit local people to become social practice artists, to enhance our pool of collaborators and collective members)

YEARS FOUR, FIVE, & SIX: 2017-2019

- COMPLETED: Collaborated with the Arts Council, IndyGo, and other partners on Ready for the Red Line, a project to gather input and test strategies for bus rapid transit stations, now being built
- ONGOING: House a community garden with beehive and chickens at the Tube.
- ONGOING: Curate exhibitions that give voice to the experiences of people of color
(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).
- ONGOING: Launched Artist and Public Life Residency Program with three artists in affordable homes linked with community support — two purchased and one rented so far. A total of 10 to be occupied in 2020.

STRATEGY #3

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

YEAR ONE: 2014

- COMPLETED: Produced a retrospective exhibition of Big Car's work at the University of Indianapolis gallery
(Mark Big Car's 10th anniversary exhibition and show)

YEAR TWO: 2015

- IN PROGRESS: Pursuing funding to provide this training on a statewide basis via the Indiana Arts Commission
(Produce a regional conference on creative placemaking/social practice art)
- IN PROGRESS: Received funds to hire a Creative Placemaker through Reconnecting to Our Waterways, who works with artists for each waterways and conducts workshops and public events
(Train and recruit local people to become social practice artists)
- IN PROGRESS: Act as a consultant to Richmond/Wayne County on an NEA-funded placemaking project
- COMPLETED: Accepted invitation to speak about Big Car's work in Valparaiso
(Have a department of Big Car that services and teaches Indiana cities and towns statewide about creative placemaking)

YEARS THREE, FOUR, FIVE, & SIX: 2016-2019

- COMPLETED: Finished work in Richmond; completed summer-long project in Lafayette/West Lafayette; presented about our work in multiple cities in Indiana, across the United States, and in Canada, Holland, the United Kingdom, and Germany.
- COMPLETED: Study of Big Car's work published by United Kingdom-based Routledge in 2016 and a chapter in a second book about placemaking written by Walker and Marsh published by Routledge in 2018.
- COMPLETED: International media coverage of our placemaking, artist housing work, projects in Garfield Park, and exhibitions by *The Guardian* (UK), *Washington Post*, *Next City*, *Fast Company*, *Vice Creators*, *Modern Cities*, *Curbed*, *Sculpture*, *Hyperallergic*, and *New Art Examiner*.
- COMPLETED: Marsh accompanied a version of the Big-Car-commissioned Mari Evans exhibit to the Virginia Commonwealth University Gallery in Qatar. In Qatar, Marsh helped with the exhibition install, met with undergrad and grad students and faculty — including making studio visits, connected with staff from museums there, led private tours of the exhibit, and conducted a public lecture before the opening.
- IN PROGRESS: Developing partnerships (with Andy Warhol Foundation support) in St. Louis, Kansas City, Cleveland, and Chicago.
- IN PROGRESS: Big Car is part of a massive redevelopment project in Fort Wayne called Electric Works at a former General Electric campus (over 1 million square feet of interior space).
- IN PROGRESS: Embarked on an ongoing placemaking partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis to revision the Jewish Community Campus
- IN PROGRESS: Urban/Suburban/Rural Social Cohesion - Through our work in New Harmony, IN via Social Alchemy, Marshall, IN via Arts in the Parks, and the grounds at Tube Factory artspace we are connecting these places through public programs.
- IN PROGRESS: Partner with Indiana Arts Commission and others on a placemaking program in multiple communities around the state. Conversations currently happening.
- IN PROGRESS: International art partnerships - Virginia Commonwealth University-Qatar partnership for Wendy Red Star & Elisa Harkins exhibit and Argos Center for Audiovisual Arts in Belgium for large scale video works in the new large building.

STRATEGY #4

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

YEAR ONE: 2014

- IN PROGRESS: Hired an AmeriCorps worker who is of Mexican heritage
(Increase board and staff diversity)
- COMPLETED: Received grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation
(Obtain national funding)
- COMPLETED: Received \$24,469 in the month of December 2014
(Grow our annual giving campaign to \$25K)

YEAR TWO: 2015

- IN PROGRESS: Hired full-time and part-time staff members who are African-American; elected board member who is an immigration attorney
(Increase board and staff diversity)
- COMPLETED: Received \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for a sound art studio in Garfield Park
(Obtain national funding)

- COMPLETED: Instituted project-based time tracking method for all staff
(Refine our project management systems)
- IN PROGRESS: As of 12/9/15, raised more than \$11,000 for the year-end appeal
(Grow our annual giving campaign to \$25K)

YEARS THREE, FOUR & FIVE: 2016-2018

- COMPLETED: Raised more than \$2 million for Tube Factory artspace
- COMPLETED: Successfully raised \$50,000 in crowdsourced campaigns that came with a one-to-one match in 2017 and 2018
- COMPLETED: Raised more than \$3 million for next phase of work (2018)
- COMPLETED: Hired Foster Results to manage accounting, payroll, and CFO work
- COMPLETED: Now have four years of audited financials
- IN PROGRESS: Turn WQRT into a revenue source
- IN PROGRESS: Turn rental houses into a revenue source
- IN PROGRESS: Earn studio and event rental income in larger Tube building
- IN PROGRESS: Continue to expand our revenue through fee for service work that fits our mission