

LQC – FLINT STREET ALLEYWAY PROJECT
LAKE ORION, MI
FINAL REPORT
September, 2018

September 28, 2018

Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
720 N. Washington Avenue
Lansing, MI 48906

Regarding: LQC – Flint Street Alleyway Project; Lake Orion, MI
Contact Info: Tracy Woodrum, Realtor
Agency: Real Living John Burt Realty
Purpose of this Grant: To transform an existing alleyway into a destination location.

Dear Ms. Lipnitz:

The support that Real Living John Burt Realty and Downtown Lake Orion (DDA) received from the Lighter, Quicker, Higher organization has helped convert a pop-up alleyway into a permanent destination spot. We are proud of what we were able to accomplish over the summer and are pleased to share the details with you in the Final Report.

The Flint Street Alleyway Committee comprised of representatives from Real Living John Burt Realty, the Lake Orion Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and local business owners collaborated on this project. Through advertising the project and our event dates via newsletter, Facebook, and emails, were able to involve the community and add five new people to our list of volunteers. People have been so impressed with the changes that were made; we even received additional donations for the project.

With the support of LQC, Downtown Lake Orion was able to beautify the alleyway, involve volunteers, and increase citizen pride in our downtown.

Progress on Objectives

- 1. Adding a permanent pergola to replace the temporary posts allowing an opportunity to better position the lighting and provide support for temporary covering as needed for events.**

The Flint Street Alleyway Committee, along with support from the Department of Public Works (DPW), community business owners and volunteers, completed the installation of the pergola for the Flint Street Alleyway Project on August 22, 2018.

The DPW dug holes and installed the basic pergola framework. Volunteers added the additional support beams and installed the new LED lights. The gateway and recognition signs were hung just in time for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

As a result of this installation, we have received additional donations for this project; detailed below:

- We held a raffle to raise additional funds. Knude Products, a local business, donated a beautiful table as the prize. We raised an additional \$616 from the raffle proceeds.
- Lockhart's, one of our local restaurants, donated \$200 toward the project.
- After the ribbon cutting event, we received an anonymous donation of \$100 to be used toward the project.
- An anonymous community person donated some potted flowers to decorate the alleyway.
- Home Depot reduced the price of 3 chairs and provided a \$25 gift card toward the purchase.
- Home Depot donated some of the hooks needed to hang the LED lights.
- Fork-N-Pint and Lockhart's, two of our local restaurants, donated food for the Ribbon-cutting event.
- Steve Tyler, one of our Summer Concert Series performers, volunteered to perform for the Ribbon-Cutting.
- Our volunteers have donated 132 hours combined.

2. Create better seating options for the alleyway.

We explored many different solutions to providing better seating options for the alleyway. This particular goal was a challenge. We purchased what we thought was enough wood to build the pergola and the furniture. Our intention was to wait until the sign was made so we could determine the amount of lumber that could be used for the furniture. However, the gateway sign took more time to create as well as more lumber than we originally planned. The sign was not installed until the day before the ribbon-cutting ceremony and the furniture was not built in time.

One of our newly acquired volunteers, Mary Chayka-Crawford, was able to obtain some temporary plastic chairs along with a \$25 gift card for the purchase from Home Depot. These were used for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and will eventually be replaced.

The Downtown Development Authority, along with The Village of Lake Orion, the Orion Art Center and the Parks and Recreation Department has created a new website that will provide the community with available community service projects. The alleyway committee decided the furniture build would be a great way to continue community engagement in the Alleyway Project and it will be added as a project request on our new website.

3. Add some art and / or chalkboards to the building walls.

Our wish list for this project was large. This item was more of a 'nice if we get it now, but definitely want in the future.' This project will be added to our community service website and we will also seek grant funding for this project in the future.

4. Add Flower boxes at the base of the pergola posts.

We used more wood for the pergola installation than we initially planned. Additional support beams were installed on the structure to hold the new lights. This consumed most of the wood we wanted to use for the flower boxes.

In late July, we applied for an additional grant from the Home Depot Foundation for the purchase of wooden flower pots, gravel, potting soil and plants. However, we were notified that we did not receive this grant. This project will also be added to our community service website as a volunteer project.

For the ribbon-cutting event, two of our local businesses donated various flowers and pots. These pots will be moved to the front of their business establishments once we are able to place more permanent pots in the alley.

5. Adding an outdoor ashtray station, broom with dustpan, and garbage can.

An outdoor ashtray receptacle has been placed in the alleyway. We purchased a broom and dustpan to be used in the alleyway. A volunteer from the Orion Art Center has volunteered to painted a sign encouraging people to use the broom and keep their alleyway clean.

Summary

The Alleyway Committee has been very diligent in contributing to this project. We held monthly meetings, solved issues via email and provided volunteer hours on the project itself.

When we first started this project, the committee members thought this would be a quick installation similar to the original pop-up that only took one weekend. However, it took about six months to complete the pergola installation portion of this project. The other wish list items we wanted to include will become smaller, community volunteer projects.

The DDA was highly successful in promoting this project by utilizing Facebook, Instagram, Newsletters and the *Lake Orion Review* newspaper. Please see the table below for the outreach and other statistics we were able to capture regarding this project.

2018 Flint Street Alleyway Project

Sponsors	(2) John Burt Real Living & LQC Grant
Contributors	5*
Stage Entertainment	1 act - Steve Taylor
Volunteer hours	132 hours
ONTV General Audience –live	23,000 households
Website	2.4 K
E-Blasts – 3 newsletters	6,267
Facebook	18 Posts
Downtown FB Page Reach	54,343
FB Event Engagements	12,800
Instagram	5 Posts
Instagram reach	5,171
Lake Orion Review (2) articles	4000 impressions (2000 each)
Ribbon Cutting Attendance	150
New Volunteers	6
Total Impressions	108,137
*Knude Products	Pergola and Entrance sign installation
*M&B Graphics	Metal signs + installation
*Lockhart’s BBQ	\$200
*Builders Custom Flooring	Flowers + pots
*Anonymous donation	\$100

Community Response

We have received an overwhelming, enthusiastic response from the community regarding this alleyway transformation. Local businesses provided unexpected donations. We gained five new volunteers that have expressed an interest in working on other projects. Senior pictures were taken during every stage of build. People have made suggestions on how we can further utilize this space.

We also received feedback from a small group of people that do not understand the purpose of placemaking and the importance of projects like this one. We took that as an opportunity to teach people how these types of projects help prosper the downtown, increase interest in real estate sales and make their home town a better place to live.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) made 18 Facebook posts regarding this grant and the project. Some of the responses are listed below:

Jill Tukua Stodola says: *"A new place to Play."*

Drew Ciora says: *"This is awesome!"*

LouAnn Brown Pettibone says: *"When I was a kid I remember riding my bike through there. LOL. This is so great to see. Lake Orion has really come alive and thriving."*

Sharon Waite says: *"Lake Orion is a happening place! Looking Good!"*

Paul Zelenak says: *"Great job! Most people don't know the ramp to the street that used to be there was eliminated so something like this could happen. Way to go DDA and volunteers!"*

The ribbon-cutting event was extraordinary. Steve Taylor, one of our summertime concert performers, volunteered to provide music for the event. This is the first time we have ever had a musician play at a ribbon-cutting, making this event extra special. Additionally, we were equally flattered to have about 150 people in attendance, including two State Representatives. The community support was awe-inspiring.

We are very thankful for the community support, kind words, and new volunteers this project has fostered.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the process of this project, we realized we were reacting to many situations that could have been addressed had we spent a little more time planning in advance of starting the project.

For example, we knew we wanted to install a permanent pergola in the alleyway. Having done something similar over one weekend previously, we thought it would be just as easy. However, we didn't completely plan out all the steps it would take to install it permanently. We forgot to invite input from the Village Department of Public Works (DPW) on the parts of the project they would be responsible for. This caused unexpected delays because we did not account for their timing. Many other unplanned next steps presented themselves and we had to react, often.

This project has helped us to see that we need to better define our projects before we start. We have taken a new approach to dealing with future projects and grant applications. We will start by making our ever-changing wish list and breaking it down into smaller project sizes. Hopefully, we will cut down on reacting to situations by being proactive in the way we approach projects; ensuring we have worked-out as many details as possible up front.

Conclusion

Real Living John Burt Realty, the Downtown Lake Orion DDA, and members of the community thank the Michigan Great Places, Inc. and the Michigan Realtors for their support of the Flint Street Alleyway Project. We are very excited about the partnership we have formed with the Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Placemaking program; and, we look forward to continuing to inform Michigan Great Places about our Downtown and our plans for the 2019 season.

Enclosed please find the supplemental documentation you requested: photos of the space and events; media and social media coverage; and, an updated budget. If you need any other materials or documents, please feel free to contact the DDA office at 248-693-9742 or via e-mail at office@downtownlakeorion.org

Respectfully,



Molly LaLone
Executive Director
Lake Orion DDA