



## iQuilt Phase II - Design

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### MAJOR PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The arts matter in Hartford. A river capital with a long tradition of innovation in culture and commerce, Hartford was recently ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in arts and culture among America's 140 largest cities, and the city's creative sector generates nearly \$245 million annually in economic activity. But these assets have not been fully leveraged. In 2007, The Urban Land Institute (ULI) in evaluating Hartford's built environment and economic challenges, made a single over-arching recommendation: "Focus on thoughtful, creative in-fill projects to link and leverage Hartford's cultural assets."

Following the ULI study, the city began the process of creating a new 10-year master plan, *One City, One Plan*, since hailed by all sectors of the community. In 2008, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts and The Greater Hartford Arts Council initiated The iQuilt, an exciting pedestrian network which will weave together 45 of downtown's cultural assets and public spaces around the theme of cultural innovation. Hartford's exceptionally compact downtown features extraordinary cultural assets including The Bushnell theaters, State Capitol, Bushnell Park, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford Stage Company, and the new Connecticut Science Center. In 2009, an iQuilt vision plan was formulated by the award-winning firm of Suisman Urban Design, led by architect (and Hartford native) Doug Suisman FAIA. As a result of more than a year of public dialogue and input, initial iQuilt concepts have now been incorporated as a key element in *One City, One Plan*. With the vision plan now successfully completed, Phase 2: Design will focus on the following key elements:

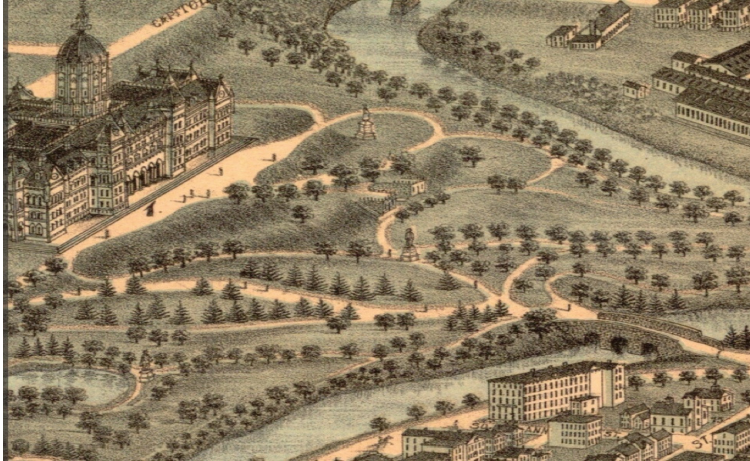


### ACTIVITY 1: Graphic Design of iQuilt Cultural District Visual Identity

The design team will develop an overall visual identity for the iQuilt both as a cultural district and economic program. This will include imagery, color, and typography to be used in a wide range of applications, from printed and promotional materials to wayfinding and street graphics.

## ACTIVITY 2: Landscape Design of the GreenWalk

The centerpiece of the iQuilt is the GreenWalk, the proposed spatial and pedestrian connection of Hartford's two great designed landscapes, Bushnell Park and the revitalized Connecticut River waterfront. The GreenWalk would integrate plazas and gardens – many of them existing – to connect park and river. Two projects will launch the GreenWalk: the creation of Connecticut Square, and the renovation of Bushnell Park. Connecticut Square will transform a large government parking lot adjacent to The Bushnell into a multi-use public space, retrofitted with advanced green infrastructure such as permeable paving and bioswales, and equipped with all the utilities required for outdoor concerts and festivals.



The 40-acre Bushnell Park is the oldest public park in the United States. A sensitive landscape renovation will position the park for modern use; improve play and refreshment facilities, upgrade and illuminate paths for nighttime use, and reintroduce the footbridges and flowing water removed in the 1930's. The park, once visionary in its conception and much loved today, can be rejuvenated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## ACTIVITY 3: Urban Design of the Pedestrian Network

The design team, working with the arts community, will employ a range of strategies to create an integrated, enhanced and engaging pedestrian network for downtown. The network will incorporate the pathways of the GreenWalk and downtown's web of sidewalks, alleys and staircases, both public and private. Features will include physical and digital wayfinding tools; interactive public art and cultural displays along guided paths; outdoor displays of interior collections; storefront cultural programming; sidewalk, bicycle rack and bus stop furnishing and lighting. Selected prototypes will be produced for public display.

Important collateral activities which will also be done over the 12-month period include:

#### **ACTIVITY 4: Asset Mapping and Economic Impact Analysis**

An inventory documenting all of the district's cultural resources will provide critical data to reinforce the impact of the arts on the local and regional economy. Analysis will also examine output, employment and income impacts.

#### **ACTIVITY 5: Community Engagement**

More than 1,800 people provided input during the iQuilt Vision phase. Continued community involvement will be strongly emphasized in the design phase to ensure that diverse community perspectives and innovations are incorporated. Multiple opportunities for community input exist under *One City, One Plan* and will be implemented during the iQuilt process.

### **GOALS**

#### **Strengthened Economy and Workforce**

Fully leverage Hartford's cultural assets to advance the city's economic growth, to promote residential and retail growth and the development of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce; increase visitation, tourism and attendant spending; integrate key state, municipal, and regional initiatives to leverage the \$1 billion public and private investment in downtown Hartford since 2000.

#### **Improved Citywide Cultural Network**

Strengthen Hartford arts organizations and individual artists through collaborations and establishment of critical mass; stimulate development and expansion of the cultural sector by attracting artists, other members of the creative class and other arts-related enterprises.

#### **More Walkable, Sustainable, and Welcoming Downtown**

Promote downtown's walkability and sustainability; promote new capital investment for residential and commercial development, especially transit-oriented uses near Union Station and provide, as one resident remarked, "A shared living room for all Hartford residents to come together."



### **SCHEDULE**

**(12 months, beginning January 1, 2011)**      Month 1: All five activities launched

Month 3: Asset Mapping and Economic Impacts Analysis concluded

Month 6: Graphic Design and Visual Identity concluded

Month 9: Landscape Design of the GreenWalk concluded

Month 12: Design of the Pedestrian Network and Community Engagement concluded

## KEY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

### Steering Committee

City of Hartford, State of Connecticut, MetroHartford Alliance, Greater Hartford Arts Council, Hartford Business Improvement District, Metropolitan District Commission, The Bushnell, The Bushnell Park Foundation

### Design Team

Suisman Urban Design (Los Angeles) – Doug Suisman (Lead Designer and Design Team Coordinator)  
Smith Edwards Architects (Hartford) – Tyler Smith (Local Architectural and Design Partner)  
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd. (Alexandria, VA) – Michael Vergason (Landscape Architect)  
Domingo Gonzalez Associates (New York) – Domingo Gonzalez (Architectural Lighting Design)

### Support Team

Biederman Development Ventures (New York) – Dan Biederman (Revenue Plan for the Park)  
W-ZHA, Inc. (Annapolis, MD) – Sarah Woodworth (Economic Impact Study)

## PROMOTION, PUBLICITY, AND DISSEMINATION

These efforts will be extensive and will include community meetings, website and blog maintenance, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Public Forum. An iQuilt membership program will be inaugurated and “iNOVATIONS Festival 2012,” marking the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bushnell Park and the Centennial of the City Plan, will be held as a part of Hartford’s ongoing 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Information will be regularly disseminated to all stakeholders, translated whenever appropriate, with emphasis on outreach to underserved communities.

## BUDGET

The budget for the iQuilt Design Phase is \$891,000. Necessary funds have been committed or are pending.



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