

# Raising the Bar on Creative Placemaking: A Vibrant Transformation in Virginia Beach

Saturday, November 20, 2021

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM, Room 105

SAT-A07

150 artists, 50 businesses, 5 years, and 1 pandemic. What it took to transform an overlooked area behind Virginia Beach's oceanfront into a thriving, inclusive, creative district. Strategies for establishing, cultivating, and maintaining a successful arts district through challenges like roadway construction, bureaucracy and a pandemic will be discussed.

## Learning Objectives

1. Learn about the short history of Virginia Beach's ViBe Creative District and the challenges associated with establishing place, navigating bureaucracy, surviving road construction, and maintaining energy during a pandemic.
2. Understand how planning guidance, public/private partnerships, and incentives were utilized to achieve urban redevelopment, reclaim green spaces, and foster small business success.
3. Illustrate how the ViBe District has created a sense of place, formed synergy among artists, established alternative and authentic tourism opportunities and increased interactions among residents and businesses.
4. Discuss the incorporation of art into infrastructure, creating beauty in leftover spaces and equitable community engagement in the arts.







## Outline



### 1. Introduction to Virginia Beach and the ViBe Creative District

- ⚡ The District's establishment through policy and planning context
- ⚡ Business incentives offered and results

### 2. Infrastructure investments made and underway

- ⚡ Interim placemaking strategies
- ⚡ Inclusion of creative elements into infrastructure
- ⚡ Construction challenges

### 3. Defining an Arts District

- ⚡ Identifying key partners
- ⚡ Positive press opportunities

### 4. Positioning an Arts District for evolution

- ⚡ Surviving construction
- ⚡ Altering programming in a pandemic
- ⚡ Adopting more inclusive practices

### 5. Public art and programming

- ⚡ Offering a variety of public art opportunities
- ⚡ Programming on public and private properties

### 6. Private spaces with public edges, the landscape designs for small businesses and overlooked public spaces

- ⚡ Three Ships Coffee Roasters
- ⚡ ViBe Butterfly Garden
- ⚡ Croc's Bistro
- ⚡ The Pink Dinghy
- ⚡ North End Bag Co.





## Speakers

### **Emily Archer, ASLA, PLA - City of Virginia Beach**

Emily is a licensed landscape architect with a Master of City Planning and Urban Design from the University of Pennsylvania. She has over 16 years of experience working in both the private and public sectors within the U.S. and internationally. Emily's diverse training and experience makes her a skilled member of the City of Virginia Beach's Department of Economic Development, authoring council-adopted plans, managing multi-million-dollar capital improvement projects, and regularly working across departments on special initiatives. Her integrated solutions support economic vitality, improve transportation, and meet community needs to facilitate the vision and future growth of the City.

### **Kate Pittman - ViBe Creative District**

Kate Pittman has served as the ViBe Creative District nonprofit's Executive Director since 2016. The ViBe Creative District is a 501c3 which exists to promote, support, connect, and inspire the arts and creative industries to boost the local economy and enhance the quality of life in the City of Virginia Beach. Working collaboratively with local businesses, city staff and local artists, Kate organizes and leads community building events, including public art projects. Networking with 100 businesses/individuals in support of the nonprofit, she actively promotes the District's arts-inspired events. Kate has over 16 years of nonprofit management experience.

### **Nathan Lahy, ASLA, PLA - Orbis Landscape Architecture**

Nate is a licensed landscape architect with over 15 years of experience. He is a founding partner in Orbis Landscape Architecture located in Portsmouth, Virginia. Nathan focuses on designing inclusive public spaces that blend the historical context of the site with the social context of the moment. His work has led to collaborations with government agencies and local non-profits to create environmentally sensitive designs that engage the community and encourage interaction. His work includes gardens, residential communities, corporate headquarters, parks and recreational facilities. He is a Virginia Tech graduate and is currently serving Virginia ASLA as the Tidewater Section Chair.

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