

# Grand Street Community Arts' Vacant Lot Project



## ***Request for Proposals***

Grand Street Community Arts is seeking proposals for projects that will benefit the community on selected vacant lots in Albany's South End. A brief description of the lots, along with a site map and photographs, is included with this Request for Proposals. Responses are **due no later than 4 p.m. on April 30, 2010**, addressed to Vacant Lot Project, 14 Wilbur St., Albany, NY 12202. Proposals may also be emailed to [vacantlotproject@grandarts.org](mailto:vacantlotproject@grandarts.org).

GSCA's role will be to secure use agreements with the owners of lots selected, insure the owners for liability, support the project with design assistance, community outreach, fund raising for materials, volunteer recruitment and organization, and liaison with other community organizations.

This is a volunteer project in the spirit of Grand Street Community Arts' mission to foster "unity and connection, especially through the arts, in an inner-city neighborhood with racial and economic diversity." Project proposals may vary widely, from landscaping, to parks, outdoor performance space, and art installations. Creativity is encouraged. Approval of nearby residents is required and their participation is welcomed. The South End Neighborhood Association and other stakeholders will be kept informed of all project proposals and their progress.

### **Proposals *must* include answers to these questions:**

1. Identification of the organization, group or individual making the proposal, including complete contact information for the responsible individual(s).
2. A brief written description of the project, no more than 2,000 characters. Each project must address a specific lot or set of lots and be appropriate to that site. We do not expect that any organization or group will be awarded more than one project, but you may make more than one proposal.
3. A budget for materials and/or labor. It is anticipated that these will be volunteer projects. If payment is required for materials or labor, it will come from the proposing group or organization, *not* from GSCA.
4. How do you propose to raise the necessary funds and provide labor for the project, and what support do you need from GSCA?
5. Proposed duration of the project. If the project is to extend beyond six months, how will it be maintained so it remains an asset to the immediate neighborhood?

### **We *recommend* including:**

- ❖ A site plan/sketch of the project, together with photographs and/or other supporting material as appropriate.
- ❖ A brief report on contact with nearby residents with their feedback, ideas and any concerns.

## NOTES

- Applicants should be aware that most soil in the South End is likely to be contaminated by lead and other materials. Please be forewarned that any projects involving growing food for human consumption will require you/your organization to conduct soil tests proving safety, or use raised beds and other approved remediation techniques. Please contact GSCA if this is something you plan on pursuing.
- All sites offered in this RFP are under private or municipal ownership. *GSCA cannot guarantee long-term availability of any site.* Once a project proposal is accepted by GSCA's reviewing committee, the owner(s) will be asked to sign a use agreement for a specific period of time (but no less than six months), with options to renew. While each site description includes our best estimate of long-term availability, GSCA cannot guarantee availability beyond what is specified in the use agreement.

## TIMELINE – *Revised*

- ❖ Deadline for proposals: April 30.
- ❖ Review by Grand Street Community Arts and selections: May 7.
- ❖ Owners sign use agreements for projects: May 14.
- ❖ Project groups may start work as soon as agreements are signed by both owners and project representatives.

## CONTACTS AND SUPPORT

- ❖ Project coordinator, Jane Wolterding, (518) 596-5135, [vacantlotproject@grandarts.org](mailto:vacantlotproject@grandarts.org)
- ❖ GSCA staff: (518) 463-2222, or [staff@grandarts.org](mailto:staff@grandarts.org)

This document and supplemental information will also be posted on our website at [www.grandarts.org/programs/vacant-lot-project/](http://www.grandarts.org/programs/vacant-lot-project/).

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**Grand Street Community Arts, Inc.**, is a neighborhood-based not-for-profit offering youth and adult programming in the South End of Albany. In addition to the Vacant Lot Project, our summer programs are Youth Organics (YO), a gardening and educational project for teens based at our Third and Hawk garden site; Youth Film eXperience (YouthFX) offering training and hands-on experience in digital film making; and Youth Arts, including the Grand Street Kids Club summer arts program at our arts center on Grand Street. The arts center also presents a variety of arts experience for the entire community, including the BoardedUP revolving art show and the Out of the Margins performance series. Classes and other community activities are also presented.

To learn more and keep up with events, please visit our website at [www.grandarts.org](http://www.grandarts.org).

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## Site Photos

**1. 155 Fourth Ave (at Elizabeth)**



**4. 70-76 Broad St**



**2. 86-88 Catherine St**



**5. 13 Alexander St/71 Broad St**



**3. 43 Catherine St**



**6. 65-67 Broad St**



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## *Site Descriptions*

### **1. 155 Fourth Ave.** (Dimensions: 55.8' x 51.1')

This lot is owned by the City of Albany. It is located at the corner of Fourth Ave. and Elizabeth Street. There is strong neighborhood support in this area: property owners are supportive, and nearby there is already a community garden (at Third and Elizabeth). This lot is flat, gets decent sunlight, and is a good size for a wide range of projects. It is not likely to be developed in the near future, so this would be a good site for a longer-term proposal. A youth project last summer proposed that the lot be developed as an outdoor performance/meeting space, with stage and seating with landscaping.

### **2. 86-88 Catherine St.** (Dimensions: 66' x 136.96')

These lots are owned by an area resident who is allowing us to have site control over her land for this project. They are in a highly visible location on a mostly owner-occupied block and near new construction and housing developments on Catherine St and Morton Ave. These are partially-wooded, irregular lots, with a steep grade at the rear. They need to be cleared of brush and other debris before use. These would be well suited for some sort of beautification or art project.

### **3. 43 Catherine St.** (Dimensions: 22.1' x 66.7')

This lot is owned by the City of Albany. It is one of two vacant lots with buildings on both sides. It is adjacent to an occupied building at 41 Catherine St. The listed owner of the vacant lot to the north, at 45 Catherine St., cannot be reached. This is also a highly visible location in the South End. Its proximity to Elizabeth St., new construction that will be occurring directly behind the site on Morton Ave., and the potential of an art project nearby at 24 Elizabeth St. should all help foster neighborhood interest. This is a smaller lot, and would be well suited for beautification or an art project.

### **4. 70-72 Broad St.** (Dimensions: 33.11' x 132')/ **74-76 Broad St.** (Dimensions: 32.88' x 100')

70-72 Broad St. are owned by the City of Albany, while 74-76 Broad St. are owned by a local organization that is allowing us site control over their land. The lots are large, sunny, and grassy. While they would be well suited for landscaping/gardening, there is a high likelihood of development in the near future, so any projects proposed would have to be short-term (for the duration of the summer, but perhaps longer). They would also be well suited for an art project or other beautification efforts. It should be noted that there are high vacancy rates in this area and not a lot of visible neighborhood activity; however, these lots are a block away from the newly-renovated Howe Library, and are visible from South Pearl St.

### **5. 13 Alexander St.** (Dimensions: 22.14' x 67.91')/ **71 Broad St.** (Dimensions: 24.02' x 70.00')

These lots are owned by the City of Albany. They are at right angles to each other. The land is irregular and there is a moderate possibility of development in the future, so any projects proposed would have to be short-term. They are located across from 70-76 Broad St., so the neighborhood characteristics are the same. It would be well suited for beautification or an art project.

### **6. 65-67 Broad St** (Dimensions: 46.64' x 140')

These lots are owned by a local organization that is allowing us site control over their land. The lots are large and suited for a wide range of projects. They are located one lot down from 71 Broad St. and across from 70-76 Broad St., and have the same neighborhood characteristics.