

Tom Borrup, Ph.D.
Community Planning Consultant
Creative Community Builders
Minneapolis, MN

Tom Borrup is a leader and innovator in creative community building, community-based cultural planning, and creative placemaking – leveraging cultural and other assets to advance equitable economic, social, civic, and physical regeneration of place-based communities. He consults with cities, foundations, and nonprofits across the U.S. to integrate arts, economic development, urban planning and design, civic engagement, and animation of public space. His 2006 book *The Creative Community Builders' Handbook*, remains the leading text in the field. It profiles communities that have transformed their economic, social, and physical infrastructures through the arts. From 2003 to 2009 he consulted with the Ford Foundation's Shifting Sands Initiative to assist community-based cultural organizations to take leading roles in local revitalization. In 2011 and 2012, he directed Plan-It Hennepin, a National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town creative placemaking project for the Downtown Minneapolis Cultural District.

As Executive Director of Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis from 1980 until 2002, Tom engaged with a diverse urban neighborhood to work on community-based concerns while building a nationally recognized multidisciplinary, cross-cultural organization. He has served as a member of many community and nonprofit boards as well as funding panels for public and private agencies, and was a trustee of the Jerome Foundation in Saint Paul from 1994 to 2003 where he served as Chair from 2001 to 2003. With the National Endowment for the Arts, Tom served on a variety of funding and policy panels over 25 years in the media arts, visual arts, presenting, design, and advancement program categories.

Tom earned his Ph.D. in Leadership and Change at Antioch University in 2015. His dissertation research focused on grassroots leadership in the planning and management of urban cultural districts where he found correlation between strong “horizontal” networks and economic and social stability.

Tom has an M.A. in Communications and Public Policy from Goddard College and was a 2001-2002 Fellow in the Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami School of Architecture. He serves as director of graduate studies for the Arts and Cultural Leadership Program at the University of Minnesota and teaches in Graduate Programs in Arts and Culture Management at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and online for the Arts Extension Service at the University of Massachusetts and for Drexel University's Arts Administration Graduate Program. He also teaches Creative Placemaking for Ohio State University's Knowlton School of Architecture's Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Program.

Who and what exactly are Creative Community Builders?

Creative Community Builders is Tom Borrup's team approach to asset based cultural planning, community building and creative placemaking projects. Creative Community Builders teams provide towns, cities, neighborhoods, and nonprofit organizations with the tools they need to make change for the better. Working with municipalities, public agencies, foundations, and regional organizations across the country, our team is uniquely positioned to build strategies and plans around community cultural assets that lead to vibrant and prosperous futures.

We mobilize the creative and cultural assets of communities positioning them as viable and sustainable partners in economic, social, civic, and physical development initiatives. We bring research-driven insights to fuel our work creating collaborative community relationships that are meaningful and sustainable. We conduct strategic planning designed to fit the needs, goals, and culture of organizations and communities. Every community and organization CCB works with is unique, and each faces different challenges. The first thing we do is to listen. We convene stakeholders, research the current state of affairs, and collect data that help us, together, shape a process and a plan.

Creative Community Builders' Principal, Tom Borrup, literally wrote the book on how to leverage cultural resources to support economic and community development, *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook* (Fieldstone, 2006). Through group discussion, one-on-one meetings, research and data analysis, we set the stage for your community to determine its values, assets, and vision. Strategic goals, action steps, and business plans are crafted to turn the vision into reality.