



## Creatively communicate new rural transportation service amidst COVID-19 pandemic

This project is part of Smart Growth America's [Arts & Transportation Rapid Response](#).

**Client:** Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVDC)

### Background:

The Quaboag Valley is designated Area of Economic Distress. Towns under this designation represent the most rural, least dense, and most isolated areas of Massachusetts. These areas are generally characterized by declining populations, lower income levels, and fewer transportation and broadband options, all of which can lead to worse health outcomes and reduced quality of life. The resulting transportation desert impacts the health, economic, and social well-being of every member of the community.

In 2017, Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVDC), a member-based, non-profit organization committed to economic development, and the Town of Ware, Massachusetts launched a demand-response, curb-to-curb ride transit service called the Quaboag Connector. The goal of this service was to transport residents lacking transportation options to work, health care appointments, grocery stores, and other community resources. Ridership grew from under 30 rides per month (2017) to over 1,000 rides per month (2020) before the COVID-19 pandemic. This positive response is illustrative of the considerable transit need in the region and led QVDC to continue exploring additional transit services.

In 2021, QVDC will launch a fixed-route shuttle service as a complement to its current demand-response ride service, the Quaboag Connector. Through this new service, QVDC wishes to address public transportation as a social determinant of public health and social equity.

### Project Description:

QVDC seeks to work with an artist to clearly communicate the availability of its new fixed-route transit service to their community. QVDC also seeks to provide up-to-date information on COVID-19 and relevant safety protocols they are taking to keep riders and drivers safe.

### Project Goals:

- Develop clear materials to inform rural communities about routes, stops, and schedules.
- Provide engaging communications to alert riders of safety practices and measures.
- Improve relations and understanding of community and riders.

### Project Timeline:

- Beginning of March – Announcement of selected artist
- March - April
  - Project kickoff
  - Smart Growth America training for the selected artist
  - Artist works with QVDC and partners to develop the project
  - Artist conducts research and community engagement
- May - June
  - Smart Growth America workshop for artist
  - Project finalization. Installation or implementation needs to occur by June 30, 2021.



# Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

## Funding:

Up to \$8,500 is available towards artist fee, materials, and other project expenses.

## Additional Artist Assistance:

- Smart Growth America and Forecast Public Art will provide training and assistance to the artist to ensure success throughout the duration of the project.
- Smart Growth America and Forecast Public Art will be available to assist with project troubleshooting as needed.

## Artist Requirements:

- Artist must live in the Quaboag region in Massachusetts.
- Artist must be comfortable working in diverse environments.

## Artist Application:

SGA encourages artists from all artistic disciplines to apply here:

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/arts-culture/arts-transportation-rapid-response-application/artist/>

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience working on projects with a similar scope or scale.
- Compatibility of artistic approach with “Project Goals” listed above.
- The degree to which the artist meets “Artist Requirements” listed above.

*The application will ask for the following information:*

- **Information about you:** Name, address, website (if applicable), social media handles (if applicable), and a resume or bio.
- **Information about your work:** Provide information on 3 to 5 projects that you've worked on with similar scope and budget. For each project, the application will ask for a brief project description that explains your role in the project, high-level budget information, and a digital image.
- **Your interest in the project:** Briefly describe your interest in the and artistic approach to this project. *Please do not submit a concept or project proposal at this time, rather provide some information about your process in creating public art or public art programming and how that is compatible with this project.*

The deadline for submission is February 12, 2021. Artists will be notified of their status by the beginning of March 2021.