



How to Win a Vacant Lot Competition

Public space and vacant lot competitions are becoming more popular as cities seek to generate and support creative, low-cost solutions for under-utilized or vacant land. OpportunitySpace has compiled winning proposals from recent competitions- the [Sustainable Land Lab Competition](#) in St. Louis, which ended April 2013, and the [Public Space Competition](#) in Miami, which ended October 2013. These proposals illustrate 4 key qualities of success: simplicity, practicality, responsibility, and replicability.



1. Simplicity

The City is, first and foremost, interested to support projects that can and will happen. It may be tempting to add complexity to demonstrate vision, but the more moving parts means more potential mistakes and delays. Those delays matter because they will prevent the City from using progress on your project as momentum to do more.

Miami: Chalked Up Miami

This team was able to implement the pilot of their idea- transforming chain link fences into community chalkboards- shortly after receiving their grant without raising additional funding.

2. Practicality

If you were to win the competition, what are the next 5 steps? What are the greatest challenges you expect to face and how do you plan to overcome them? Without answers, its hard to know if you are prepared to take your idea to reality.

St. Louis: Sunflower+

This sunflower experiment clearly laid out a timeline, project implementation steps, costs, and inputs for each stage.

3. Responsibility

Ultimately, the City is interested to support responsible private ownership of the land they don't want to own. How might you demonstrate responsibility? Is there a long-term, committed resident of the area around the lot on your team? Are you partnered with an established 501c3 or agency?

Miami: Opa-locka Tri-Rail Station

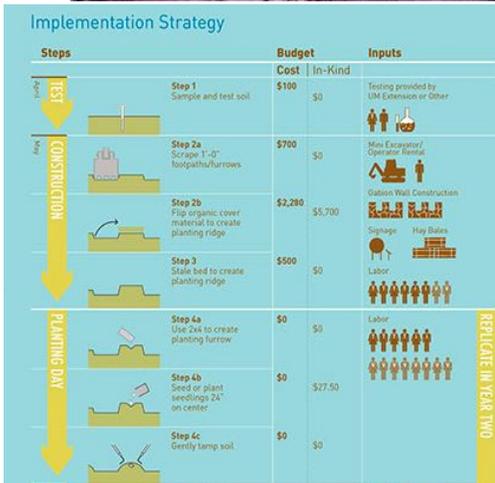
The Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) formed a partnership with the state and local transit authority, city government, and artists to create new bus bays, solar powered canopies, and charging stations in the new Opa-locka station.

4. Replicability

Each city has hundreds, if not thousands, of vacant lots. For them to be addressed more quickly, they would prefer to fund ideas that can scale- that is, be used as a solution for many more problem properties.

Miami: Umbrella

This team made the case that they were addressing a need with scale. An umbrella-ed walkway colorfully and artfully makes a statement about one of Miami's biggest small needs: shade.



OpportunitySpace is providing the technology platform for the Lots of Possibility competition, administered by VAPStat and Louisville Metro Government. There will be a total of 12 finalists: 6 each in the Temporary Use and Permanent Use categories. Of each set of 6, one winner will receive ownership/lease of the proposed lot(s) and funding up to \$15,000.