

**GFRY:Publi©ity**

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## **City Screen: Illuminating The Mind**

### **When Public Space and Public Participant Work Toward Sustainability**

Art in urban spaces change perception, initiates new forms of communication, and provides information and dialog for social change. Digital and mobile media are changing the way our lives take shape and how we experience our built environment. *City Screen* unites public art and digital media through a series of projections, screenings, and interactive new media installations that invite the public to redesign 10 East Lake Street while also providing information on sustainability and green technology resources. *City Screen* uses technology to visualize data, increase environmental awareness, and influence the way that our city functions as a community. *City Screen* is where the stories, desires and memories of people are projected.

Chicago has a rich history of lighting up the city. At the Chicago World's Fair of 1933, the *Century of Progress* dazzled visitors with experiments in light and color, including unprecedented "floods" of light produced by gaseous tubes. In January 2014, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced an international competition to light the city with night-lights. The competition is seeking entries from artists, architects, planners and designers from around the world to activate Chicago at night as part of an effort to boost tourism.

While we light up skyscrapers and landmarks, illuminating underutilized places like 10 East Lake Street is often a neglected part of the process. Self-driven spontaneous interventions are needed to provide both immediate and long-term solutions to vacant and underutilized spaces in the urban realm. I conducted a series of observations and research studies including the *I Wish Here* event, which occurred at 10 East Lake Street in February 2014. Eight blinking LED lights were installed on the site to attract attention from people passing by and a 4x8' poster printed with the *I Wish Here* sign hung on the fence as an invitation to the public to write down their wishes for the 10 East Lake Street. The poster was quickly filled with comments and suggestions. Among them one person wrote: "...people would be more curious".

Building upon these interactions, the *City Screen* project includes light installations combined with Arduino based environmental sensors that create a sensory experience and attract the curiosity of people passing by the 10 East Lake Street site. The projections on the facade of the site function as a platform for providing open resources and educational programs around sustainability and green technology, neighborhood based storytelling meant to promote a sense of participation, a virtual garden which should have a restorative effect on cognitive functioning of interactions with natural versus urban environments; and data visualization that reflect the environmental conditions surrounding the site. The sensors transmit live data over wireless link for visualization in a projection. The visualization reacts to movement, light, and sound, while also tracking CO and other gas levels, temperature, and humidity. The motion sensor traces

movements of people passing by and the LED lights installed on the wall of 10 East Lake Street will blink responsively. Through the visualization of environmental data, the advanced technical data for green technology will be interpreted in a playful and easy to read format for the public to interact with.

The GFRY studio website adds another layer of interactivity with the site by fostering connections with the public in a way that values their voices. The website uses social media and #hashtags to create dialogues with the public, provide open data and resources. The public can also use mobile devices to interact with the web server and be incorporated into the projections on-site. The billboards installed on the train track near the site function as portable platforms for display and as acoustic barriers to reduce the noise from the red line train passing by. The sensory installations can be further developed on a lower budget and with a more user-friendly version that could easily be distributed to a broader public.

Through this participatory public design process we wish to: increase social interaction and public participation; illuminate the space; engage the stakeholders; bring attention to current green technology developments; and activate conscious participation in the creation of public space.