



The East Village Arts District

By Jenny DuBois
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It is a community that used to be known for its colorful crowd of drug dealers and brochs; real estate, the arts, and a devoted group of citizens developed a plan to transform the East Village into a cohesive "Arts District," propelling tree plantings, public art installations, an ever-changing throng of boutiques, and a congregation of hipsters.

Tucked away in the heart of downtown Long Beach, the East Village Arts District has been transformed. The neighborhood was developed to bring the economy out of a slump and the plan was to increase revenue for the merchants by bringing together multi-family housing with hosting art events for the public.

In 1976, Nancy Downs-Chimerly and Phil Appleby had a vision to revitalize the East Village. The two of them lobbied the City of Long Beach to put together a plan for major improvement. In 1993, the City Council approved the plan. The determined duo had the insight of bringing the feel of Greenwich

Village, NY to Long Beach. With the motivation of Downs-Chimerly and Appleby, 22 active businessmen and women reclaimed the East Village with a new perspective.

The East Village Arts Park at 190 Elm Avenue at Broadway, was created in 1973, its unique design has become a showcase for local art. As part of a joint effort to bring the Arts to Long Beach, the Arts Council for Long Beach was established in 1976 to respond to the needs of the growing local arts community and to develop cultural resources. The Arts Council receives annual city contracts as well as support from individuals, corporations and foundations. These funds, as well as those incurred through marketing services, benefit the community and keep it running smoothly.

Ryan Smolar, who claims the title "downtown personality" and founder of Smolarcorp, a marketing and design company, has been a crucial supporter in preserving the integrity of the area. "I got deeply involved the

