Vibrant Spaces Podcast - Season 1 Wrap-up

[00:00:00] **Speaker:** This is Vibrant Spaces. A show about placemaking, activating and connecting city spaces for the communities you serve.

[00:00:14] **Emily Craven:** Welcome, welcome, welcome to the wrap up episode of this season of Vibrant Faces Podcast.

[00:00:24] **Tim Souza:** Whoop,

[00:00:25] **Emily Craven:** whoop! Book ending! I love it!

[00:00:29] **Tim Souza:** Mm hmm. Every story has to have a beginning, middle, and end, so this is perfect. I'm excited for today.

[00:00:33] **Emily Craven:** Exactly, but we can run in serieses, so this is just series or season one, friends.

[00:00:39] **Tim Souza:** Season one.

[00:00:41] **Emily Craven:** Well, I, speaking

[00:00:45] **Tim Souza:** of which we should probably introduce the cast. So without further ado, this is the amazing Emily Craven. For those who have not caught on yet she is an excellent placemaker and vibrancy expert. I [00:01:00] will say she's been working actually in this space for about a decade.

[00:01:04] **Tim Souza:** But one of the things that I really love about him is that she didn't start in the Vibrancy space. She actually started she went to school and became an astrophysicist, so she really wanted to, like, lead that Trekkie universe into existence though what she really discovered is that she didn't really care too much about slingshotting ships around planets, and what she really cared about was the stories that happened while the ship was slingshotting around the planet, so those dramas and those pieces that came in, so she became an amazing author.

[00:01:33] **Tim Souza:** She's a published author and a renowned editor as well as she has been doing production in the vibrancy space and for cities now for about a decade. Um, I mean, I love all of those pieces about you. I think the thing I love most about you though, is that you're a very well versed traveler. I know that you've called Love it.

[00:01:53] **Tim Souza:** Yeah. Love it. Two countries home, I believe, Australia and Canada and had visited another 32. You were [00:02:00] telling me about the age parody that you were able to like, keep going for a while. I was!

[00:02:05] **Emily Craven:** I was! Country age parody for a bit there. For just a glorious moment.

[00:02:10] **Tim Souza:** I think it's definitely a goal of mine. I love to travel, and so I think that's something I really respect about you, but I think the cool part is how many cities you've gotten to experience while you've traveled, and the way that you've gotten to see X city do this festival, Y city do this kind of art installation, the way we've seen community collaboration work, whether that's in Asia or Latin America, or even in the Vatican.

[00:02:35] **Tim Souza:** where you got married the way that they do events.

[00:02:39] **Emily Craven:** Way to out me, Tim.

[00:02:44] **Emily Craven:** Not everybody can say that. He gets married in the fanciest place in the world.

[00:02:49] **Tim Souza:** He did. But you got to see how a city like the Vatican runs events. And I think that's really, really cool. And so it gives you a very unique perspective that not everyone can say they've done it. [00:03:00] Or have experienced. So I think It's true.

[00:03:01] **Emily Craven:** My documents will live forever in those archives. They will. You will

[00:03:05] **Tim Souza:** be remembered no matter what. You've achieved the legacy. Check the box. You can retire now.

[00:03:12] **Emily Craven:** That's right. That's right. And here, over. To my right is the delightful Tim Sousa. So Tim here is our head of community activation at StoryCity. He has, I think the most insane title of a degree that I've ever come across, which is peace, justice, entrepreneurship, and technology, which, I feel like more.

[00:03:37] **Emily Craven:** Yeah. Well, I also feel like more degrees should have that combination because I think that it's given you, it's equipped you to do some really interesting things. So you in your career have tackled really hard things with a combination of technology and collaboration, right? So you worked on anti human trafficking projects where you brought [00:04:00] together Startup government police forces to work on anti human trafficking and, capturing people in, you know, legally admissible manners.

[00:04:12] **Emily Craven:** And that's like, it's such a hard thing. And most people would look at human trafficking and be like, not too big. Can't handle it. But I think that. It really speaks to how you look at that wider problem and you look at, well, what are the smaller things that contribute to that, that we can control?

[00:04:28] **Emily Craven:** And then how do we bring partners to the table to do that? Right. And so I think that is a really interesting degree and it gives you this ability to handle those sorts of things in a really interesting way. And And surprisingly, even in something like real estate, which you worked in for multiple years as well, where, you get to see how people can universally apply things.

[00:04:53] **Emily Craven:** But then also localize them. Right. Because like real estate is the same everywhere [00:05:00] you're buying and selling houses, but , there's definitely a very local element to it. And if you move cities and become a real estate agent in a different city, it's a completely different ballgame to previous ones that you've been in.

[00:05:11] **Emily Craven:** And so there are things you can apply across all of them.

[00:05:15] **Speaker 3:** Right. But,

[00:05:16] **Emily Craven:** But you have to also have that local knowledge. So like, how do you take and adapt, but then leverage nationality to cover when people come in from interstate in, from, international to live in a new place. I think what's the statistic on that?

[00:05:31] **Emily Craven:** Like every five to 10 years people move. So

[00:05:33] **Tim Souza:** yeah, Americans are every seven to, 10 now. Yeah. It used to be five to eight. Now it's seven to 10.

[00:05:40] **Emily Craven:** Yeah. And that's it's also a very helpful skillset, particularly within placemaking, right? How do you universally take things that have worked in other areas that are based on human psychology and behavior and how we react to space and advertisements and conversations and [00:06:00] negotiation.

[00:06:00] **Emily Craven:** And then what, Can that turn into on a local level?

[00:06:06] **Tim Souza:** Well, yeah, no, absolutely. I think that one of the things that I absolutely love and obviously I'm a nerd about it and I have a degree in it. It's exciting, you know, solutions come out of the environments that we live in. Right. And I think of like Uber as an example.

[00:06:19] **Tim Souza:** I love when people come to visit California because they're like, Oh, well, just hop on the bus or hop on the train. And I'll be like, no. Like you're not, you're not just going to do that. Uber was designed cause we don't have good public transit within our cities. It's somewhere where California like falls apart.

[00:06:34] **Tim Souza:** People think of us as this technological leader, but it's not efficient. And so we talk about, you know, where do those solutions come from?

[00:06:40] **Tim Souza:** Well, Uber was designed out of a need in the Bay area for people to not park their cars on the streets. Not everybody owns a car, but they still want to get to that party in time. So what do they do? Pirate taxis. It was a solution that existed in Latin America. They pulled it over into North America. They put an app and a brand on it.

[00:06:57] **Tim Souza:** They created that community trust and [00:07:00] the solution thrived in the environment that it was designed for, right, in the San Francisco area, moved to L. A., boomed there. Then it can begin to spread like crazy. And we've all got to witness how that innovation has shifted and changed other communities over the last decade.

[00:07:16] **Tim Souza:** Uh, how long has Uber been around? Like a decade?

[00:07:18] **Emily Craven:** Little bit more, but yeah,

[00:07:20] **Tim Souza:** yeah right about there. But we've, we've watched that transition and change, but that was a solution that was crafted very specifically to handle a Bay Area problem. And I think that we've seen that pattern repeated itself a lot in tech where stuff was crafted for Bay Area problems and then rolled out to other communities because they found, you know, parity in the need for the solutions that were being crafted, but All that to be said, yes, I get really excited about this stuff.

[00:07:46] **Tim Souza:** Thank you for that.

[00:07:49] **Emily Craven:** And I think that that's what I found really interesting about delving really deeply into issues of vibrancy with cities, right? Because there are a lot of very locally [00:08:00] grown solutions but for some reason in the city ecosystem, they then don't move outside that city.

[00:08:06] **Emily Craven:** Right. And then that causes problems and, continued vibrancy and it all, it feels like you're rolling a ball uphill. And I just don't think that that's necessary. And I think that a lot of the projects that we have seen in this season have shown that it doesn't need to be that way.

[00:08:21] **Tim Souza:** No. And I think that what you're, tapping on and we'll jump into it. I think in a little bit is the idea that, there's not a scaling desire for, a city to come up with a solution and then scale it solution to other cities. The way that you might have a tech company do, and so

[00:08:37] **Emily Craven:** money, and that's not the, that's not the mindset of public money

[00:08:40] **Tim Souza:** and it's not what people pay their taxes for. They don't pay their taxes in, for me here in San Luis Obispo, I don't pay my taxes so that people over in Bakersfield can benefit from, my contribution.

[00:08:50] **Tim Souza:** And so because of that financial system, I think we'll talk more about that as well. The way the finances are set up really do. Create the container for cities to play in. [00:09:00] And I think our hope with this podcast is that we can begin to draw holes in those containers. So at least people can see some solutions and maybe we can do one of those.

[00:09:08] **Emily Craven:** Those are the leaky bucket analogy. I don't know what this is. Not a

[00:09:11] **Tim Souza:** leaky bucket. I was thinking more like old those old telephone with a can and a string and you talk to your neighbor on it. I'll try to do it.

[00:09:18] **Speaker 3:** Yep. Yep.

[00:09:19] **Tim Souza:** Okay. Like holes, string size holes. So your tin can can talk to the person next to you.

[00:09:24] **Tim Souza:** I think that's part of our goal is that we're breaking down those barriers a little bit and allowing us to share those ideas.

[00:09:29] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, and I think so the whole reason why we wanted to have a wrap up episode is that we Got to hear so many amazing ideas and I really want to pull all of those threads together, right?

[00:09:40] **Emily Craven:** We often sit in our little city vacuums and we only listen to that one Baltimore episode or we are that one Kansas City episode. And so I want us to start weaving threads between all of these cities and in this wrap up being like, what are the parallels we can draw?

[00:09:53] **Emily Craven:** What are the connections that we can make? What are the ways that we can expand and build on the things that we are doing? So we are not so [00:10:00] siloed. And to give those who maybe have only listened to one or two of the episodes in this season, it's only a short season. It's only seven episodes. Like I recommend you go back and look at it.

[00:10:09] **Emily Craven:** But like in this season, we visit the city of Tampa with Robin and Steven. So they were really focusing in on listening to constituents. Building feeder lines between neighborhoods and cities to really build a cohesive network. Then you had your city of Kansas city. So we got to visit Kansas city twice in this season.

[00:10:29] **Emily Craven:** We met Will and Elliot who really were a backbone of a lot of community and events that happen in Kansas city. And then Melissa and Jared, who are those like event gap fillers, I suppose you'd call them, the, I would, the cultural shift changes. I think that they're not going in there to fill in.

[00:10:47] **Emily Craven:** They're not going in there with the idea of filling in event gaps, but like a lot of what they do does help in that case.

[00:10:54] **Tim Souza:** And then we ended up in the city of Baltimore and we got to talk to Tanya Miller Hall, who is [00:11:00] a phenomenal human being but she's really kind of talked to us about collaboration between city and community.

[00:11:05] **Tim Souza:** And so her role has been bridging and giving access to the mayor's office to quite honestly, community that hasn't had that access before. And so we talk about what she's been, what she did with graffiti and street artists and providing them that access, what she's done with taking communities that have been.

[00:11:23] **Tim Souza:** neglected and providing them direct access. And so really looking at the value of how do you build up community by giving them access to that positional power. And then the next week, we got to see what that systemized collaboration looked like. Also talking with Cassie, Shalanda and Faith all of whom are involved in the downtown transformation known as downtown rise bringing together all of the different Efforts that the city is having.

[00:11:48] **Tim Souza:** Not just this is what the city department is doing and that's what transportation is doing, but this is what these organizations in the city are doing nonprofit for profit. These are what our assets are. How can we bring them all together? [00:12:00] Collaborate is a singular system and entity that has multiple parts very much

[00:12:05] **Emily Craven:** additional pots to pull funding from, to make shit better.

[00:12:08] **Tim Souza:** Right. And then we finally finished off our. season in Philadelphia, looking at how Raheem Manning is building a city for overlooked people, but specifically the overlooked people at night, that nighttime economy as a nighttime manager. His role is to really oversee how are people getting access to their banking and their groceries and their medicine when they get off their shift at 4 a.

[00:12:32] **Tim Souza:** m. How are we designing a city to be inclusive of all people and not just using the typical delineations that we do around demographics, but also including that demographic of our nighttime workers, which in the city of Philadelphia is about a third of the population. So, how are we ultimately designing for the constituents kind of leading back to our conversation?

[00:12:51] **Tim Souza:** For example. Begin

[00:12:53] **Emily Craven:** using kind of that augmentation a hundred percent, you know, um, I think that there was also a thread of healing [00:13:00] through a lot of these communities as well, like in, in Baltimore I, it was something that I kind of got a history lesson from you, Tim, like I wasn't as an Australian, as a Canadian, we obviously have our own kind of historic racial divides, but like I didn't, I hadn't known what redlining was.

[00:13:20] **Emily Craven:** Like I didn't know how that kind of worked. And so to kind of see the healing that all of these departments are on in trying to bridge those historic gaps and bridge those historic vibes and make sure people feel heard. Whether it's in Tampa with the soul walk whether it's in, in Baltimore with the intense, like collaboration they're doing with like squeegee collective and downtown rise, or whether, it's in Philadelphia where they're trying to be able to celebrate history, but at the same time, acknowledge the past.

[00:13:52] **Tim Souza:** Yeah, I think that what our cities are currently in a stage of doing is reconciliation. If I'm going to put my peace pat back on and not [00:14:00] reconciliation is in like, we're going to get a peace and reconciliation committee. We're going to sit down and do these pieces, but in the same methodology what you see in the city of Tampa is that the city of Tampa has regifted the highways that they came in and just dropped in the interstate system over black communities.

[00:14:15] **Tim Souza:** They are coming in and from a couple of those highways are flagged for removal. There are, there's work that is physical infrastructure work being done to create that reconciliation with the black community in Tampa. To right those historical wrongs.

[00:14:28] **Tim Souza:** And I think that mode of reconciliation that you see within people is a desire to truly build better moving forward, right? It's not about, Hey, we're going to change this thing or do this thing because it was wrong in the past period, which. Is I think speaks to the heart of the change makers in these cities as they want to reconcile these wrongs, but they're doing it because they want to build the city's stronger, healthier, better moving forward.

[00:14:54] **Tim Souza:** And to do so they are leveraging all Art and culture to help with the healing [00:15:00] of the cities so that when they talk about what the next era is, so we look at a couple of our cities that are focused on FIFA coming up in 2026, they want to present a healed city, not a city that is still struggling with its own past, which I think is part of the beauty of what we kind of uncovered as like a Not a main theme.

[00:15:22] **Tim Souza:** It wasn't what we were looking for, but it was fascinating to see, despite what we see in the news, despite what we see out in mainstream media, cities are actively working on making sure their communities are healing and moving forward together, and I think that's beautiful.

[00:15:36] **Emily Craven:** And I think that that's a value in.

[00:15:39] **Emily Craven:** Looking at what other cities are doing to find that inspiration for your own life. Cause that's how innovation happens. Like the Uber example that you just gave, like it happens when people bring new ideas into a space and you kind of get this Venn diagram of local culture with need. And like an [00:16:00] Uber had to adapt to completely different markets.

[00:16:03] **Emily Craven:** Things are different in Asia in comparison to the U S in comparison from California to the East coast. And that then diagram does shift and change, but

[00:16:13] **Emily Craven:** I think in my mind, this podcast is about taking our background in tech tools and methodologies and applying them to cities and taking that, you know, the idea of things like UX, like user experience and that understanding that we see in places like Kansas city, right? It's taking those kind of.

[00:16:31] **Emily Craven:** Interconnected ideals and not seeing things as silos and not necessarily replicating things because of funding structures or budgets or whatever that might be like learning to work within those limits of what you have but to do it in an effective way that looks at a bigger picture rather than a downtown, a square mile of blocks.

[00:16:54] **Tim Souza:** Right. Yeah. And I think

[00:16:55] **Tim Souza:** to use a popular phrase that we've seen trending on [00:17:00] TikTok you know, coming from one of the presidential candidates in the us you think you just fell out of a coconut tree. You really do exist within the context of all that you live and all that came before you. And I think that this conversation is truly looking at like, how are you looking at everything?

[00:17:15] **Tim Souza:** You know exists within the tech space within the culture space within the social justice space How are you leveraging all of these assets because true innovation does happen in that then other than diagram? That's where you get disruptive change. That's where you get, new pillars that strengthen a community Come out of people saying hey, let's take this idea this idea and mesh them together and I think that Hopefully what we have been able to do in this podcast is truly begin to show you some of these ideas next to each other and, hope and allow for our audience, for you guys, to look at this charcuterie board and build your own little plate of all of the things that you think could be useful for your city in the context that your cities exist in, in a tech context, in a social context, in the context that you are not, you know, alone as a city facing these challenges, but other cities [00:18:00] are also facing these challenges.

[00:18:01] **Tim Souza:** And you can kind of do what they did in Philadelphia and see what cities in Europe are doing and say, Hey, we want to steal that and adjust it for our people, our community and our taxpayers. So I think, and I

[00:18:14] **Emily Craven:** think another three line for all of these cities as well, is that all of these cities have would appear to be really great mayors.

[00:18:24] **Emily Craven:** Right. So like they who acknowledge or are upfront with problems. In as much as a politician can acknowledge and be upfront about problems. They don't necessarily try to control, but empower people. So they have people put in place to address things based on those various skill sets.

[00:18:43] **Emily Craven:** And they, that, that has resulted in these varied paths of vibrancy, building and placemaking as well. So I think that that's an acknowledgement as well, is that sometimes your city is not in the right moment. And that's why leaders are so important and why I was so excited that we spoke to these leaders in [00:19:00] their city, because it really is such a core factor.

[00:19:04] **Emily Craven:** But at the same time, I think that when you look at the bios of the people that we spoke to they stepped up to become leaders. And I think that all of us can step up to become these types of leaders as well.

[00:19:15] **Tim Souza:** And I think this actually leads into a great question that I hope will guide the rest of our conversation Emily.

[00:19:21] **Tim Souza:** So if you were to design a city from scratch, okay, so we're talking about leaders, we're talking about social movements, we're talking about, place making how would you activate? A city via placemaking. If you were to look at everything from the community plans, community building, fundraising strategies, the departments that have impact, community driven change, all of the things that we've spoken about this season, plus maybe a little bit of your own knowledge thrown in there, how would you design a city for people in this audience being like, okay, these are a lot of great ideas, guys.

[00:19:55] **Tim Souza:** what would it look like to pull them together? I want to hear what Emily's, the city of Emily would look like. Right,

[00:19:59] **Emily Craven:** [00:20:00] because you can't enact all of the things that we talked about unless you had a really, really, really hardcore, super powered wand. So if I had a moderately hardcore, super powered wand that I could wave around and make my own, like, Wizard of Oz, City of Emily, Emerald City, okay.

[00:20:19] **Emily Craven:** All right I would, uh, this will probably say a lot about our personalities. So I would be focusing on building a city that is not insular while celebrating who we are in that city. So, it's not just about Researching all the things that other cities have done, but like taking execution level things that you can apply across multiple cities and being a part of that network.

[00:20:45] **Emily Craven:** And so I think that the key things that I would do would be to install a creative director, UX lead for the city. It would be to put vibrancy and vibrancy related roles or departments under economic development. [00:21:00] So

[00:21:01] **Tim Souza:** I can see you're pulling a little bit from Kansas City. You're pulling a little bit from what we've seen in cities like Austin,

[00:21:08] **Emily Craven:** Philadelphia.

[00:21:09] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, yeah, Austin. Yeah. I would build feeder lines in, in that kind of like systematized way. I would be building things that link neighborhoods to downtown. I would be trying to build the feeder network. Um. Giving Tampa. Yeah. Probably use storytelling as like a main. vehicle for that. I have butted my head against enough red tape in municipality land that I would probably take a Melissa and Jared approach of Top down, top down approach to change is probably where I would, where

[00:21:43] **Tim Souza:** I would be.

[00:21:44] **Emily Craven:** Yeah.

[00:21:45] **Tim Souza:** Okay let's dive into this has been a discussion that we've kind of like, put in. Before we

[00:21:49] **Emily Craven:** dive into this, because you know that I can go on rants, I want to know like your, what's your base, what's your base city look like first, before we, we dive into

[00:21:57] **Tim Souza:** Okay.

[00:21:57] **Tim Souza:** So my base city [00:22:00] would definitely well, I'll just be contrarian and say it would be bottom up driven community. I think that leadership is important. You'll laugh at me. It's true. I'm just going to go bottom. If you're going to go top, you know, that's just, maybe that speaks to my life a little bit too personally, but, but what I would do is definitely be, I love the bottom up approach that we saw.

[00:22:21] **Tim Souza:** Out of Baltimore, and with all of my peace background and training, really, that community collaboration screams justice and healing to me in a way that I absolutely love so that the Emerald City of Tim, we would want to make sure that everybody feels like they have participated in the experience of building that city, though.

[00:22:40] **Tim Souza:** I do recognize that leadership is important. And so I would. Make sure that there was like a council of mayors. I know those exist but I'd make sure that I have shoulder tapped and have kind of like on my board of directors as leader in the city or for whoever the leader of the city is that they can.

[00:22:55] **Tim Souza:** When you say

[00:22:55] **Emily Craven:** council of mayors, you mean like mayors in like multiple cities? Mayors? Or you mean like the nightmare, [00:23:00] the, you know, like that's a

[00:23:01] **Tim Souza:** great, that's a great point. I think what I was thinking was like who are the five mayors that I would want on my speed dial to quickly get a hold of and say, Hey, I'm facing this problem.

[00:23:10] **Tim Souza:** What solutions are you seeing in your city? So I would make sure that, the mayor of Tampa and the mayor of Kansas City and the mayor of Philadelphia are all on that list because, you know, They have obviously taken steps to empower people to help and so to have a grassroots community having leadership that understands empowerment of others.

[00:23:29] **Tim Souza:** This is something I would find really important, important. But at the same time, like you said, feeder lines, I would go and do what Kansas City has done with Mayor Quentin Luskis and make those free. So I think I would begin to ask the true question of what is the role of government, and the role of government is to serve people, and if we are going to drive economic change, I want people spending their money in the places that those feeder lines can take them, and less on that transit, so if I have to re jig that tax.

[00:23:59] **Tim Souza:** That's how I would [00:24:00] do it. But at the end of the day, we need to bring fun and hope back into cities. And people need to be able to freely understand that they can go out for a drink at night and come back home and get there and back safely. So I guess in that way, making a nightmare, maybe there's a day mayor panel and a nightmare panel, but the idea of allowing people to move freely and safely at all times.

[00:24:20] **Tim Souza:** One of my favorite things about the city of Singapore is I had a female friends who look at me and be like, Tim, I feel perfectly safe walking down the street at 2 a. m. My purse in one hand and my phone on the other. And I feel like I could do that every night. That vibe. Is what I would love to bring into whatever cities.

[00:24:37] **Tim Souza:** I want people to feel safe. I want people to feel connected to each other and to me, culture and art should be the driver for that healing. Like, we've seen in some of these studies and that needs to be housed underneath economic development with opportunities for that fund to grow and to scale and growing.

[00:24:54] **Tim Souza:** So commercial partnerships via, uh, Uh, whether that be billboards or hotel tax, et cetera [00:25:00] creating an environment that people want to come to want to visit and making revenue off of those to continue to fund that solution, I think, is just as important and valuable. So that would be the base of my city is that the, again, you just talks about our styles, but the objective and the goal is to have a fun, safe.

[00:25:16] **Tim Souza:** Community driven city to do that. You would want to make sure that you have the right voices as mentorship and leadership isn't concerned. And then making sure you have the economic structure to support that. And can you continue to drive that change as you move forward? So that would be high level mind.

[00:25:33] **Tim Souza:** But do you have thoughts and feedback? I'm open.

[00:25:36] **Emily Craven:** I feel like I would like to visit your city. Your city, the Emerald city of Tim would be a great place. And fun city to visit. I think that, yeah, I think that it does really encompass that fun. You want cities to be fun and hopeful, right?

[00:25:52] **Emily Craven:** And I think that's what truly a lot of collaboration does is bring hope into the city. into things. Like, what would your [00:26:00] collaboration spectrum be? Because we've seen a lot of, like,

[00:26:03] **Speaker 3:** spectrum,

[00:26:03] **Emily Craven:** Like, level of collaboration in these episodes, like,

[00:26:10] **Tim Souza:** you being

[00:26:11] **Emily Craven:** the collaborative person, that bottom up mentality, like.

[00:26:15] **Tim Souza:** I think I would do something I've wanted to do for a long time. I would probably design a system leveraging technology. Everybody has this in their pocket, so how come the city is not here, right? How come the city is not in your pocket where all of your friends are, where all of your

[00:26:32] **Emily Craven:** food is?

[00:26:33] **Emily Craven:** But Tim, it's on social media.

[00:26:35] **Tim Souza:** That's true. I would probably design a way for that collaboration to be accessible, in the city. So I'm thinking like a Reddit system where community members could post their thoughts, their feelings, their pieces on, of what is happening on a consistent basis, like on the day to day when you're thinking about it and you go to your mailbox.

[00:26:54] **Tim Souza:** I want you to be able to post on the city subreddit for mailbox problems. Right? Maybe it's [00:27:00] located in the wrong spot or whatever. Post it there and then have Teams and committees that would meet to go over those pieces that are community driven and then having like town hall set up so that the top issues can be discussed, but everybody knowing that those issues are coming from the community directly collaborating.

[00:27:19] **Tim Souza:** Like, you have to have an address in the city to. To have access to the

[00:27:23] **Emily Craven:** very kind of Baltimore esque in that, like you are bringing everyone together once a week type of a deal where , you know, everyone doesn't believe the same thing, but you are leaning in to bridge the differences,

[00:27:35] **Tim Souza:** leaning in to bridge the differences.

[00:27:37] **Tim Souza:** But then the piece that I would differentiate that from Baltimore, then I would take that data that we'd be collecting that consistent stream of data. I would build an innovation team. That's whole job is to address those issues. And we take low hanging fruit, kind of like they did out of Kansas city.

[00:27:53] **Tim Souza:** Honestly, low hanging fruit. What can be changed? Like when Melissa came in and changed the trash, that's the solution. Yes. It costs money. [00:28:00] The solution was simple. Get the raccoons out of the trash. That's a very bottom level thing, but it created a substantial change for the city, which bought people on board.

[00:28:10] **Tim Souza:** And so that's the kind of movement that I would do is I would take those low hanging fruit that everybody interacts with. I quickly addressed those challenges, I guess, in a way that like Baltimore made their list of, you know, What

[00:28:22] **Emily Craven:** are the things that we can achieve in the next 18 months that are implementable, that take the assets that we have, that takes this, what is it?

[00:28:28] **Emily Craven:** What was it? 10, 30 million pot of money that the state gave us and and addresses them, distributes it and addresses them. Yeah.

[00:28:35] **Tim Souza:** Yeah. So I think, I guess that's how my collaboration, you ask on a spectrum, it would be like intensely collaborative and communicate community oriented that would funnel down into like action.

[00:28:46] **Tim Souza:** Like teams that are taking action on things and then having a little bit of a strategy from the leadership that is based on what our learnings. But I guess, yes, I've been sold by Baltimore. Baltimore has sold me on there on there. [00:29:00] I would be a man,

[00:29:01] **Emily Craven:** your man feedback

[00:29:04] **Tim Souza:** lines of communication. I will say that the tantalizing prospect of a Melissa talkersy is something that.

[00:29:13] **Tim Souza:** If I was king, I would love what it's what it works. And like, it works. And so, I think that there's a part of that that does need to be brought in. And so you do need to instruct your leadership to function accordingly. So I do see where your method of like a melissatocracy slash a, top down approach.

[00:29:30] **Emily Craven:** Yeah. And so, we, in our little cities we handled like the idea of feeder lines in different ways. To me, like I'm building feeder lines with storytelling and activation and events and history and like very like soul walk related kind of feeder lines for me. But when you talked feeder lines, you went directly to like free fares on streetcars.

[00:29:54] **Tim Souza:** I did. Yeah, I think that the free fares on streetcars, again, I [00:30:00] went there because it's about moving people and providing people opportunities within the city, like the city's job is to be the container that holds life, of the residents. And, maybe this also comes from when I was going through school, the city of Kitchener holds the second largest Oktoberfest globally.

[00:30:18] **Tim Souza:** And during Oktoberfest you do have to pay for buses most of the year, but during Oktoberfest, bussing is free because they don't want drunk people on the road. Right. And so it allows for you to get downtown. So during Oktoberfest was great. I was on public transit all the time. Outside of Oktoberfest, I was less on public transit.

[00:30:36] **Tim Souza:** Not, I'm talking about like, on my way to work and, on my way to school, not just on my way to work. Uh, I think the

[00:30:43] **Emily Craven:** thing about adding free fares, I suppose, into that mix is that you then get a ridership, like a level of ridership. That means that you get more consistent street cars and more consistent timing, and you can put more staff on and all of a sudden, like your expenses for running [00:31:00] that system are very fixed because you not , like exactly because you know, What the volume is it's going to be coming in and you and because it's so and that's what makes Singapore work really well actually is the reliability of its train system and its transit and so I think that that is definitely what free fares do in that regard.

[00:31:24] **Tim Souza:** But I think it's also it's the cost of everyone's writing that transit system. What's the cost to the police department and into the fire department and, you know, public responders for all of the accidents that you can pull off the road because of it. What is the risk, the wear and tear on those highways and on those roads and those overpasses that you don't have to worry about because you're taking that many vehicles off of it.

[00:31:46] **Tim Souza:** consistently. So I think to measure the full effects of the value of a free fare rider system really has to have

[00:31:53] **Emily Craven:** effects on health because like you would go to a stop and then you walk from your stop to where you're going and then that walking past [00:32:00] shops then has you engage with those shops and then it provides economic development with because you're walking somewhere rather than just driving directly up to the door and getting angry that you couldn't park outside the door and it improves that and it allows for, because Edmonton has this issue where we don't have a great public transport system and we have a lot of traffic but then we have like really large roads that are unpleasant to cross that are like, really difficult in that manner as a pedestrian.

[00:32:26] **Emily Craven:** So you don't really want to be on the ground.

[00:32:29] **Speaker 3:** in

[00:32:29] **Emily Craven:** those areas, which affects businesses and all of that sort of thing. So, okay. I can see, I can see, infrastructure. Yeah.

[00:32:36] **Tim Souza:** But tell me, why feeder lines, when you're thinking like story, these pieces, like what's the value for you there over, or maybe it's in conjunction with a free writer system, because we know.

[00:32:45] **Emily Craven:** Because I think that so to me, storytelling is a vehicle for your efforts to be seen. Right. Okay. And so. Like in Seoul Walk, it started out as African American history and specifically one of the main [00:33:00] things that they started with was African American history in African American cemeteries and forgotten cemeteries, right?

[00:33:06] **Emily Craven:** Like it started very, very niche, right? Very niche topic pulling from history books or projects that have been done and that have been sitting on a shelf and being like, how do we bring them to life so that they are visible? So to make them visible, you have to yes, build infrastructure in the form of public art or whatever that might be.

[00:33:25] **Emily Craven:** But you also have to tell a story. You have to tell a story in a compelling way that makes people care about it and in a way that makes them notice it when they are in a particular area. And so that Small storytelling from a small set of cemeteries, which like, let's face it, cemeteries are not things that people visit regularly.

[00:33:41] **Emily Craven:** Uh, except around Halloween. Right. And so from there, it's now blossomed into this thing where you now have the Latino community coming and being like, we want to be a part of soul walk and we want to contribute to soul walk. And we want to be a part of this feeder line of. Neighborhoods to [00:34:00] city

[00:34:01] **Speaker 3:** and

[00:34:01] **Emily Craven:** of cultural understanding of downtown and then that acts as an education piece to the influx of technology and technology companies that they've had come in from California.

[00:34:12] **Emily Craven:** We are storytelling creatures, like we will tell each other stories like the, reason why I tell you case studies all the time on this podcast is because we are wired for stories and the people that we are drawn to are the people who tell those stories.

[00:34:27] **Emily Craven:** And so if we make sure that we integrate Storytelling as a feeder line so that great, you've built the infrastructure, but why am I going to go and visit that park? If you haven't given me a reason to,

[00:34:40] **Speaker 3:** right?

[00:34:40] **Emily Craven:** Okay, it's pretty, I've visited it once done but why am I going to keep going back because you tell me stories about it because you set things up that allow me to then have experiences that I then tell the stories to others, which then make them come back.

[00:34:53] **Emily Craven:** Right? And so how do you, Yes, you need the physical infrastructure, events are great, but then [00:35:00] how do you keep that storytelling alive so that people can find it? At opportune moments where that builds things in. And so you see that in the design pieces that Kansas city we're putting together. You see that in, even in art after dark, people who attended that event that was storytelling a whole bunch of. Artwork now exists that continues to tell a story. Now, a lot of people are going to walk past there and wonder what was that for? And then if you continue to tell that story, then Tonya might start seeing businesses move into that space.

[00:35:31] **Emily Craven:** That was empty storefronts and right. And so that story is really important. Even in Baltimore, they were telling us how important it is to start talking positively about their city, because they've had a lot of negative press from. You know, the city

[00:35:45] **Tim Souza:** has lost like 400, 000 people in population, right? Like due to economic change, COVID, , what we're seeing downtown space, but also because of that press, because people are buying into that story.

[00:35:57] **Tim Souza:** So they're not moving to Baltimore.

[00:35:59] **Emily Craven:** [00:36:00] Yeah. And they're also buying into the story in that a lot of people won't visit downtown because they say that they feel unsafe. And yes, sometimes that's part of the houselessness problem. And there are various. Practical things that have to go into that.

[00:36:12] **Emily Craven:** But if you were putting in that effort in the same way that Baltimore is putting in that effort with the squeegee collective and all of those sorts of things, you need to let people know that you have put in that effort and then you need to help them ease them into having positive memories. in the space.

[00:36:27] **Tim Souza:** Well, so like really what you've Not just tell

[00:36:29] **Emily Craven:** the story, they have to have positive memories there. So them learning that you did blank, blank, blank, blank, blank is a bit boring, but if you, gave them something to do in that space

[00:36:39] **Tim Souza:** Right, well, because what you're, what you are really talking about is leading, the reason you're at the feeder lines, the reason you're leading with arts and culture.

[00:36:46] **Tim Souza:** Kind of what my argument was in the beginning, and I see your value in that. And saying we're going to start from there, and we're going to connect these spaces that have story and we're going to tell stories that connect stories, and really allow [00:37:00] people the opportunity to have their own experience right because it's not like you're saying it's not about what so and so historical figure did in this park, it's about what you're doing in the park, that's what makes that personal connection and what you do in the park is going to look different than what I have to in the park, but you need to provide it.

[00:37:15] **Tim Souza:** Basically build containers for people to have those experiences in those spaces and then bring their friends back to have it a similar but unique experience, right?

[00:37:25] **Emily Craven:** Yeah. And City UX is so important to the point that I would probably like, can you give multiple creative directors? I think the idea of like a director is that there's one kind of person, but like you would have almost a team where you have the Jared type person who is making sure that, that.

[00:37:43] **Emily Craven:** Design across departments is happening, right? So everything looks very similar that it is joyful, that it incorporates an element of arts and all of those sorts of things. But then I would probably also have another person whose job it is, is to look at what is the storytelling layer of that. And I don't mean [00:38:00] In traditional media and arts communications where we're like, we're putting out press releases that we've done a new project.

[00:38:04] **Emily Craven:** And no, like, how do we literally lay stories into all of those designs? Is it within plaques? Is it within something like story city? Is it within a podcast about the city? Like, how is that? How is that story being told and what methodologies can people access that story? I would almost a dual layer of like design, infrastructure and storytelling, which then brings that.

[00:38:31] **Emily Craven:** feed a line on like a whole bunch of human levels.

[00:38:34] **Tim Souza:** So I would propose that the Emerald City of Emily and the Emerald City of Tim need to become one city. And on that, on that proposal, I think that I would add on your, as a part of your directors, taking the role that is a traditional director of like finance kind of role and really reframing that to how the city can generate money to fund what you're talking about.

[00:38:58] **Tim Souza:** Right. So if we're having a [00:39:00] singular experience for users coming into the city, they are experiencing paying taxes to a singular entity. Right. They should be receiving that singular entity back as far as communication is concerned with your UX and with your storytelling. But also, I think that how we funded these pieces.

[00:39:16] **Tim Souza:** is what a lot of people get hung up on. A lot of cities get hung up on. It's like, great, I want to do these art things. I want to do these storytelling things. Like the financial structure is just as important. And so we have, which

[00:39:27] **Emily Craven:** I think is why both of us put vibrancy under economic development.

[00:39:32] **Tim Souza:** I think so because the cities that we've talked to who've done a good job at The vibrancy in the placemaking and the storytelling are the arts and cultural groups who are directly tied to that

[00:39:44] **Emily Craven:** correct. Yeah, because they're not necessarily scrounging for grant funding.

[00:39:48] **Emily Craven:** It's acknowledged that this arts and cultural and vibrancy are very tightly linked and that it can't be an afterthought in a line item. Of [00:40:00] a city and I would very much stress that I would put that vibrancy under economic development, not city hall. I understand that Tonya was under city hall and it is and her role is really helping connect artists directly into city hall and showing the importance of that.

[00:40:17] **Emily Craven:** But mayors are under the most scrutiny on what they spend money on. And for that money an economic development level money to come out of a mayor's office, it's just not going to happen, right? Which is why I think that you

[00:40:30] **Tim Souza:** need a director of like finance who understands that, that vision and can literally prepare things for leadership, for the public that tell that story.

[00:40:39] **Tim Souza:** Cause numbers tell a story too. Which is why people always go back to them, right? You can say, Hey, we spent money on this public installment. And then like, great, that was 100, 000, right? Of tax money. What's the value? you can directly see the value of those pieces. But if you're able to say, Hey, we spent 2 million this year in creating [00:41:00] vibrancy, it drove us X number of people into our, let's say we're focusing on downtown.

[00:41:05] **Tim Souza:** So downtown space, We were able to see our, get the growth numbers. Like if that same director of finance could also work with, because they're economic development focused work with those

[00:41:17] **Emily Craven:** analysts of some kind. Yep.

[00:41:18] **Tim Souza:** Look at what the bids are doing and say, Hey, look, we actually increased revenue for our small businesses downtown X amount because of all of these things that we have done.

[00:41:27] **Tim Souza:** these pieces that we have placed together. And I think that the reason I even suggest that is I know I hear from you all the time, how the granting system just gets your goat. Like you just get so, so bad.

[00:41:42] **Speaker 3:** And can you give us a link for those who

[00:41:43] **Tim Souza:** don't experience it too? Just, just, just a little bit, just a little bit of like, here it is. This is why I hate it. Go. Okay. So

[00:41:51] **Emily Craven:** granting systems build a reliance on the granting system. Particularly for arts and culture, because in the [00:42:00] granting systems and the way they are, they don't give you the full amount of what you need.

[00:42:06] **Emily Craven:** And they expect that you will bring X amount of dollars into this. relationship. And a lot of the time in arts and culture, that is you not paying yourself to bring your X amount of money to do something that is of vital importance to vibrancy to the public, right? And so what happens is that you don't pay yourself.

[00:42:26] **Emily Craven:** Therefore you do not have money to reinvest in the next thing and ask the city for less money or ask the granting body for less money because you were reliant on that money because they have made you reliant on that money because you can't get ahead. Right? And so that's what gets my goat about granting systems is that there's a lot of burden on someone to put that application together, which they don't get paid for.

[00:42:51] **Emily Craven:** And then they are expected to not pay themselves basically to get that grant. Right. And so it causes a reliance. And then what [00:43:00] happens is that very experienced people can't get themselves out of the system. Because they can't build enough capital to do so. And therefore that then doesn't let emerging people enter into that cycle to be able to upscale, develop, build a career, and then be able to exit out of the system as well.

[00:43:18] **Emily Craven:** So you don't get any new voices because experience is a de risking thing in the eyes of the government. So the same people just get the money. And you don't get any new people who come in and get the money. And so to me, the way that I would like the way that I would like fix a granting system is in a little bit more of a tech startup kind of method.

[00:43:39] **Emily Craven:** So in Canada, they have a,

[00:43:42] **Emily Craven:** grant, I suppose you could call it system alone system called the Canada media fund, where the idea is, is that essentially they invest X amount of dollars in you building a. digital media property, whether it's games or a film or whatever that might be within that creative [00:44:00] arts and media space. And so they essentially give you a grant, which up to a certain point you don't have to pay back, right?

[00:44:08] **Emily Craven:** If it turns out to be a bad idea or you didn't get enough of those numbers or whatever that might be, yes it acts as a grant. And you contest a bunch of ideas to see what will and won't work and that sort of thing. But beyond that, if you want to get the big dollars from this kind of granting system, the idea is, is that it is bringing you to commercialization.

[00:44:29] **Emily Craven:** And once you commercialize for seven years, post that commercialization, you pay 15 percent royalties of like ticket sales and things like that back into the pot. So the idea is, is that say you got a million dollars from this funding agency and through all of the ticket sales and things that you do as part of your event or as part of the game that you sell, you pay back 15 percent royalties until you've paid back that amount.

[00:44:56] **Emily Craven:** Right? If you don't end up paying back that amount, if it wasn't as successful as you [00:45:00] hoped it was, like the leftover bit ends up being a grant, but you haven't just given away 200, 000 that's never going to enter your coffers again. Like you got back 100, 000 of that. So that's less money you as a city have to put back into that granting program.

[00:45:14] **Emily Craven:** But if you pay back the amount that they gave you as part of that grant, before the seven years is up, you continue to pay a 15 percent royalty up to that seven years. So if your project is wildly successful, the funding body gets a, gets. overage money, which they can then take and then reinvest in the next emerging person to come out of that.

[00:45:39] **Emily Craven:** You, 15 percent is small. You have clearly made enough money as an organization to be able to run yourself. And the idea is, is that you graduate out of that program, but you don't need to go back to the CMF to be able to pull that money because you now have an established studio that has street credit that is able To build on ticket sales and money and all that kind of thing.

[00:45:59] **Emily Craven:** And so [00:46:00] that's what I want to see more of in granting systems, right. That allows for that cycling through, but also that payback in the way that like a lender, it's like a 0 percent loan, but you are paying back into that loan. And then you pay overages if you're really successful in it. And so it rewards people for being successful.

[00:46:18] **Emily Craven:** And then that success then gets to be enjoyed by the community. by funding additional things.

[00:46:23] **Tim Souza:** Interesting. And so it's basically, its name makes more sense, the Canadian Media Fund, because it is a fund that people contribute to and hopefully continues to grow and that is down to the management of it.

[00:46:34] **Tim Souza:** So then to counter that, how do you feel about the system that Will introduced us to in Kansas City? I know that it's not a granting system, but it works somewhat similarly of Community driven event. That's

[00:46:47] **Emily Craven:** a granting, that's a granting system.

[00:46:49] **Tim Souza:** It's just a non profit funded granting system.

[00:46:52] **Tim Souza:** Like it's just a different.

[00:46:54] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, correct. So rather than being from the government, it's just from a non profit, but it's still the same thing. They'll only give [00:47:00] you half, 75%, whatever that is. And there is no, cause it's part CMF application. It's around, Like, how will you commercialize this?

[00:47:12] **Emily Craven:** Have you thought about your audience? Have you thought about how you bring that audience in?

[00:47:16] **Tim Souza:** So the distinction is really building numbers

[00:47:18] **Emily Craven:** about tourism and that sort of thing, but like for, that project, to me, to feel truly effective is that you would want it to yes, have a tourism impact, but you would also want it to have a local impact as well.

[00:47:30] **Emily Craven:** And you would want it to be set up in such a way that people can graduate out of the. Program and self sustain.

[00:47:36] **Tim Souza:** It makes sense. And so it's really kind of like an incubator. We're

[00:47:41] **Emily Craven:** only granting to nonprofits, they are not like with the way we view nonprofits is that they're not allowed to spend a bunch of money on marketing and then allowed to hire the best people.

[00:47:53] **Emily Craven:** Because that's seen as wasting the funds. Right. And so that's probably one of the main issues that I have with that program is that [00:48:00] they only give to nonprofits.

[00:48:01] **Tim Souza:** And those nonprofits

[00:48:02] **Emily Craven:** don't pay back into the fund. And we know that with proper marketing and those sorts of things, you're going to bring more people in, but people don't like it when you spend dollars on marketing.

[00:48:09] **Emily Craven:** So I think that the nonprofit system is broken in that manner and how we view nonprofits and how people must spend the money within a nonprofit that I think that it is not as impactful as it could be.

[00:48:20] **Tim Souza:** Not as impactful as like the Canadian media fund solution. Yeah. Correct.

[00:48:24] **Emily Craven:** Yeah.

[00:48:24] **Tim Souza:** Interesting. Which is still government run right?

[00:48:27] **Tim Souza:** It's still government

[00:48:27] **Emily Craven:** run. I'm not saying don't make it government run or don't make it non profit run, but like, if you're restricting things to a non profit circle, it's going to limit the sorts of impact that they can make as a result.

[00:48:37] **Tim Souza:** So then, if we were setting this up for the MTIM city Emerald City, how would you, set that up tax wise, etc.,

[00:48:45] **Tim Souza:** for the people? So that it makes sense. Would that be like a levy that you would put on small businesses like through a via a business improvement district? Would that be a like, would you fund that through a billboard system?

[00:48:56] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, probably. I would probably fund that. I probably fund that through a [00:49:00] billboard system or like the CRAs that they have in like Florida, but also probably a developer like a developer, like, how they take some of the developers is 1 percent for arts you know, the developers make a ton of money.

[00:49:10] **Emily Craven:** You could probably do a 1 percent for art, 1 percent for like, And then like a 1 percent for programming. I feel like that could be expanded. Like the Melissa talked about like an open spaces

[00:49:21] **Speaker 3:** tax,

[00:49:22] **Emily Craven:** right? Like how you, so you'd have an open spaces tax or like a 1 percent for art tax.

[00:49:26] **Emily Craven:** And then a fund I think the developers can take, uh, can take a bit more.

[00:49:34] **Tim Souza:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:49:36] **Emily Craven:** Particularly considering all of the incentive programs and things that, that happened for those, but there'll probably be where I would pull that from, I understand the beds and heads tax in Kansas city, then funnels into that fund to then fund other tourism related things. But I think that we really need to stop thinking of tourism as being 40 kilometers external to the city.

[00:49:56] **Emily Craven:** Correct. You've got to think of tourism within your own. If your [00:50:00] economy is thriving internally in the same way that I think like New York city has a very thriving internal economy, then it is going to draw an external economy that helps.

[00:50:11] **Tim Souza:** So what you're really proposing that is tying that fund and up probably in the same way that Austin's UNESCO City, ties it up I'm trying, I'm

[00:50:20] **Emily Craven:** trying to get them to speak on the next season guys.

[00:50:23] **Emily Craven:** We don't want to don't want to preempt doing a preempt here.

[00:50:26] **Tim Souza:** Yeah, exactly., so, going back to what your proposed city was, it was a lot about breaking down silos within the city structure and creating this singular entity, but I get the feeling that you're leaning towards something outside of cities as well.

[00:50:46] **Emily Craven:** I think so. Maybe this is where my collaboration kicks in.

[00:50:50] **Speaker 3:** Okay. Yeah. Or

[00:50:52] **Emily Craven:** maybe this is, this is where like ultra like Melissa food dishery responsibility, like [00:51:00] mindset.

[00:51:00] **Tim Souza:** Okay. Got you. Right. Your responsibility to your taxpayers is what?

[00:51:04] **Emily Craven:** Is to be able to keep costs down while providing a high quality of life.

[00:51:09] **Emily Craven:** And if you're Melissa and Jared, fun, right? I see a lot of depart, like, yes, you have a creative director in Kansas city, who's like trying to streamline all of the design and whatnot. But another key thing that they were really doing was making sure that you didn't have two departments doing the same thing, right.

[00:51:24] **Emily Craven:** They didn't do the same thing. And that they weren't just spending their money on doing.

[00:51:28] **Tim Souza:** The same thing,

[00:51:29] **Emily Craven:** same thing and marketing the same stuff with slightly different angle. Right. And, I think that not only do we get siloed within cities, but we, within like city departments, but we also get siloed within a city itself.

[00:51:41] **Emily Craven:** Right. And. Sorry to throw your app idea under the bus, but like apps are a really great example of this. So like a lot of cities will build standalone apps. Right.

[00:51:56] **Speaker 3:** So

[00:51:56] **Emily Craven:** they acknowledge that they need that they're in the technology age, [00:52:00] but the people in the city are not technology people. They do not come from a tech background.

[00:52:04] **Emily Craven:** They do not come from a startup background. They do not come from that startup culture. And and so as a result, we ended up with this plethora of apps. That's causing like really hardcore app fatigue, right? Where you go to a new city and they're like, download our tourism app. And you're like, I don't want to download another app, but not only is like download the blank city tourism app, but it's download the blank museum tourism app, right?

[00:52:29] **Emily Craven:** So it's even more granular, right? Exactly. Exactly. And so as a result, what happens is that because they're standalone apps, they all need their own. Marketing, right? And so each department, I need

[00:52:42] **Tim Souza:** their own servers. They have to maintain the

[00:52:46] **Emily Craven:** technology they and building technology is expensive.

[00:52:51] **Emily Craven:** I know because it has taken me many years to build story city and we've spent a lot of money. Building story city. Right. And so people will drop that they have [00:53:00] to, you know, they'll be like, Oh yeah, a 50, 000 budget will be enough to build an app for us to do tours around our thing. And then they look and they speak to developers and developers are like, 50, 000 is not enough to build this app.

[00:53:10] **Emily Craven:** And people are like, Ooh. And so they scale back or , they just do QR code reliant things or whatever that might be. And so like you get all of these standalone apps that cause app fatigue that make. Each of those different departments have to spend money, right? And so the thing that tech and startup culture is really great at doing is like looking at that general need and then having an overarching thing.

[00:53:34] **Emily Craven:** And so that's where social media exists and works really well because each city can market directly to its citizens and constituents within social media and within paid advertising within social media, but it does connect them across the world. And it's one platform that everybody's on.

[00:53:50] **Emily Craven:** Right?

[00:53:50] **Tim Souza:** Part of that is that the tech company is paying for the design of that platform, they're paying for the servers, they're paying for the insurance, [00:54:00] for the use of it, and Correct. Those cities only have to pay for access to, I want to put 10k in marketing. The content

[00:54:07] **Emily Craven:** or access to specific audience, right?

[00:54:09] **Tim Souza:** Correct.

[00:54:09] **Emily Craven:** Exactly, and so, when people are like, yes, let's bring technology into things They don't then ask who has to maintain that, what division has to maintain that. Mayors cycle out sometimes every, four years or election cycles. And so those departments change and then the budget allocations change.

[00:54:26] **Emily Craven:** And then who then gets saddled with an aging asset that they can't bring up to standards because technology is expanding so quickly. Who's making it relevant for a new generation and all of those kind of things. Hey, I want

[00:54:37] **Tim Souza:** you to jump in and be like if it's if AI is not incorporated, anything that you built two years ago, that hasn't, does not have an AI interface is now not as valuable to people because they're expecting generative conversations and that to be incorporated.

[00:54:53] **Tim Souza:** And so in the next two years, that's going to become standard commonplace. Right. So if you're talking. Developed from two years ago to two [00:55:00] years from now, and you can't make that technological jump. You're contributing to that fatigue because people don't want an app on their phone that's not going to do what they want.

[00:55:07] **Emily Craven:** And so this is maybe like a cautionary tale around technology in cities and why you'll speak to someone, they'll be like, Oh, yeah, we tried self guided walking tours and it didn't work. And you're like, yes, well, if your marketing department was. And you were using a white labeled app. That's probably why.

[00:55:24] **Emily Craven:** And so when we think of like city and building city vibrancy and considering the fact that like a lot of vibrancy is about convincing people to move in and take up residences, convincing businesses to come in and open factories and all of those kinds of things. If you only have a siloed.

[00:55:43] **Emily Craven:** Festival that happens here, a tourism app there or whatever, like within your city how are the people outside that city going to be able to hear or access those things? And so, , when we talk about vibrancy and making sure that our cities are not [00:56:00] siloed, you want to be looking at what are the things that allow me to connect to other cities?

[00:56:06] **Emily Craven:** obviously showcasing my culture and all of those things, but what allows me to connect to other cities where as a fiduciary responsibility, I am not wasting my money on developers or I am not wasting my money on reinventing a particular type of pocket park or whatever that is.

[00:56:25] **Emily Craven:** , how can you access a network from other cities that allows you to be fiduciary responsible, and then. Allows for that network to happen like that, network effects that you see in tech companies, like an Uber or like to happen, but for you as a vibrancy in the city.

[00:56:44] **Emily Craven:** And so, that's what I would encourage people to think about in that, yes, do all of the research. To all of the different cities, but rather than necessarily just taking that thing and adapting it to your [00:57:00] city and just running it in your city, be like, how could I connect things? So that Jane's walk is a multi city movement, right?

[00:57:08] **Emily Craven:** So what are the movements that I can step into and tap into? What is the technology platforms that will span multiple cities rather than just one? What if I'm investing in a light installation from companies that do inflatables for festivals. Is, are there ways that I am leveraging the different cities that they have been in previously so that people in those cities know about my city, right?

[00:57:33] **Emily Craven:** Like how are you leveraging and building and stacking those things so that you're not creating a museum app and a city app and a blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[00:57:44] **Tim Souza:** As you were sharing that story. I have the Little Mermaid, Ariel, with a fork twisting in her hair, singing I want to be where the people are.

[00:57:52] **Tim Souza:** I'm sorry, that's just what was going through my head. It's the concept of like, you need to be Speaks to my brain [00:58:00] slightly, but you need to be in the spaces where people are. And you need to Like, yeah,

[00:58:03] **Emily Craven:** like, for all So several of the cities we spoke to were faithful cities. So rather than you being like, I'm just going to spend my 5 million budget in Philadelphia in the same places that Kansas city is spending their 5 million budget with your powers combined.

[00:58:19] **Emily Craven:** You can combine city marketing budgets to be even more impactful. Wonder cities.

[00:58:24] **Tim Souza:** Boop.

[00:58:25] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, wonder cities. Exactly. Hit my boop.

[00:58:27] **Tim Souza:** There it is. Do the little wonder cities.

[00:58:33] **Emily Craven:** Boop. Okay. Sorry, for those of you who are listening in podcast form, maybe you'd need to watch the YouTube version of this To

[00:58:37] **Tim Souza:** see the boop.

[00:58:38] **Tim Souza:** But like But yeah, I think you're right, and I think it's looking at it and , especially FIFA's a great example. You have multiple cities with people going to those cities. So there's a certain amount of people are going to expect, I'm going to FIFA, FIFA city should do X great.

[00:58:54] **Tim Souza:** That's, you know, that's going to be on their radar, but they're going to be jumping between those cities. So you're going to have people going from Philadelphia. [00:59:00] Back to Atlanta, back to Kansas city, back to Atlanta, back to Philadelphia for maybe the semi finals. So as they pop around, right?

[00:59:08] **Tim Souza:** People are going to want some, there'll be some consistency, but they'll also want those novel things. That's why they're going to Atlanta. They're going to Atlanta to do something they couldn't do in Kansas city, et cetera.

[00:59:21] **Emily Craven:** Actually, so this point. Brings me a little bit to wrapping up our wrap up episode, because one of our next season's guests the city of Tulsa is really great at acknowledging the fact that they're people

[00:59:37] **Speaker 3:** going

[00:59:37] **Emily Craven:** out into the world and connecting to other cities is a great way for them to spread the word about Tulsa and get people to move there and visit there.

[00:59:48] **Emily Craven:** And I don't want to give the episode away. I'm not going to give the episode away, but Tulsa, Oklahoma in the next season has a really interesting way that they do that, right? How [01:00:00] do they do that actually with their musicians? Cause Tulsa is a very musically based city.

[01:00:05] **Emily Craven:** It is starting to get a, Nashville style reputation for music. That Tulsa house at South by Southwest was really Pumping and so we got to speak to that wonderful crew there. And so they have a really interesting way of using musicians. To do this right to, to build that network, to use that human capital to be able to build that asset layer in the same way that story city tries to do that with technology and storytelling.

[01:00:29] **Emily Craven:** And, someone in Atlanta is going to do X thing, and then they'll go to Kansas city and do Y thing. And the marketing budgets of all of those help get more people involved in city life and vibrancy. So There's a bunch of exciting things that are coming up in season two. Tim, did you want to make a couple of gems of what here's a couple more.

[01:00:48] **Tim Souza:** Here's a couple more gems. We're going to be back in Baltimore. Baltimore is doing some crazy cool stuff. So we're going to be back talking to Midtown, seeing what they're up to. Going to be back in Philadelphia as well [01:01:00] talking to some of, um, Lovely Raheem Manning's colleagues as he talks about what he's doing at night.

[01:01:07] **Tim Souza:** We're gonna hear about what's going on in Philadelphia during the day. We are leveraging some connections and working towards a couple more cities. I'm just gonna throw Jersey City and Austin out into that mix. It'll be a fun season to truly take a look at how people are Engaging their cities, but then, starting to do what we've landed in at the end of this discussion, which is send out those feeder lines into surrounding cities, not just within themselves.

[01:01:32] **Tim Souza:** With Um, And that, I think I'm excited to see what happens next with this podcast and what happens next as we bring stories and fun and hope back into people's lives.

[01:01:43] **Emily Craven:** Me too. And a big, big thank you to our guests who were in season one. You guys are innovative. You guys are whip smart. Your cities are lucky.

[01:01:56] **Emily Craven:** To have you, thank you for your generosity in going into the [01:02:00] nitty gritty of everything from funding to budgets. Like we love the transparency and the honesty and the positivity. This has been such a fun season of celebrating the good. That we are doing in cities. We understand the world's full of a lot of

[01:02:20] **Tim Souza:** shit

[01:02:20] **Emily Craven:** and, politics and all of those sorts of things, but you guys are doing good work and innovative work, and we are so lucky to have had you on the podcast and to have you as references, to be able to talk to so many people about vibrancy and bringing downtowns to life you've changed our lives and our perspectives in so many positive ways.

[01:02:39] **Tim Souza:** Absolutely. And I think I would love to close with a quote from one of my favorite movies of all time. Remember the Titans? Attitude reflects leadership. And we want to just also thank all of the mayors for connecting us to these people this season. The amazing people we got to speak to are a reflection of that.

[01:02:56] **Tim Souza:** of their leaders and that a fraction of the change that causes within a city. And [01:03:00] so thank you so very much to all of the mayors from Tampa, Baltimore, Kansas city, and Philadelphia for giving us access to your people so that we can have these amazing conversations and lift each other up collectively.

[01:03:12] **Tim Souza:** So it has been an honor and a blessing for me to be a part of that.

[01:03:16] **Emily Craven:** Yeah, a hundred percent. And we're excited for you guys to join us next season. We are building a network here. If you are doing cool things. In your city, in vibrancy, in building public space, reach out to us. We want to have conversations with you.

[01:03:35] **Emily Craven:** We want to learn more. We want to help us learn from each other. We want this podcast to be one where you guys are excited to celebrate the successes and the wins that you've had and the data that you've collected and the human behavior that you've observed. So do reach out to us, Emily at storycity.

[01:03:51] **Emily Craven:** app and Tim at storycity. app. We will be back in our second season probably in around about six weeks, we like to record our seasons up [01:04:00] front so that we can build those through lines so that we can build those connections between seasons and places and the case studies that we tell. So you'll see us in around about six weeks time, but until then, we hope you have a really great adventure.

[01:04:15] **Tim Souza:** Stay positive everyone. Cheers. Have a great life.

[01:04:17] **Speaker 2:** The Vibrant Spaces Podcast is produced by Story City. You can find our entire archive on any podcasting app and on about. storycity. app where we publish transcripts and show notes. This episode was produced by Tim Sousa and our staff includes Justin Kahn, Brett Ludwig, and Victoria Lominska. Our theme song is Happy Indie by Alex Guz.

[01:04:40] **Speaker 2:** Our co hosts are Tim Sousa and me, Emily Craven. As always, thank you for listening. We hope you have a great day. A glorious adventure this week.