



Tatiana Daguillard is the project manager for Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency's History and Culture Trail, which shares and celebrates the rich history and culture of the neighborhoods, businesses, and people living in the areas surrounding the Capital Cascades Trail and FAMU Way Extension projects. PROVIDED

'Spaces for healing'

Drawing on history for the Culture Trail

Amanda Sieradzki

Council on Culture & Arts

"My end goal through everything I do is to create true public spaces for healing, knowledge exchange and individual and community uplift," says public historian Tatiana M. Daguillard. "I keep that at the forefront of my work. It's important to keep voices alive. It's important to honor voices that have been historically disenfranchised. That's what I do."

Daguillard is the project manager for Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency's History and Culture Trail, which shares and celebrates the rich history and culture of the neighborhoods, businesses, and people living in the areas surround the Capital Cascades Trail and FAMU Way Extension projects.

Blueprint addresses the community's pressing infrastructure needs by building projects that support community envisioned facilities, alternative transportation, passive recreation and wildlife-habitat preservation.

In partnership with the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA), the History and Culture Trail project is now accepting original public art submissions to complement the trail's educational kiosks now through Dec.10.

'Art in their own backyards'

"Art reflects people, and people reflect art," says Daguillard. "We heard directly from residents who wanted there to be an art component and wanted

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The Smokey Hollow memorial in Cascades Park features a fountain and spirit houses to commemorate the one-time black community displaced by urban renewal in the 1960s. GERALD ENSLEY/DEMOCRAT FILES

Learn more

What: Call for Public Art — History & Culture Trail Project

When: Application deadline by 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 10

Contact: For more information, visit coca.tallahasseearts.org



Smokey Hollow Barbershop is part of the History in Your Hands storymaps. HISTORY IN YOUR HANDS

Healing

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the art to reflect the African American voices, artistry and historicity of the area. Public art would be able to communicate a level of playfulness and vibrancy, to the children especially. They wanted the local community children to have art in their own backyards.”

Most of the work for the History and Culture Trail has taken place through citizen work groups and committees. Daguillard says the project is rooted in a 2015 FAMU historical survey conducted by the history department and the City of Tallahassee. In 2016, Blueprint began the trail project to honor adjacent resilient neighborhoods, civil rights advocates, and the economic engines of the communities located along FAMU Way.

Daguillard was first introduced to Blueprint’s work via The John G. Riley Center and Museum. As an undergraduate history major at Florida State University, she had interned at museums around town, including Mission San Luis, the Goodwood Museum and Gardens, and the Museum of Florida History. In all her roles, she was curious as a historian how to contribute to the community beyond written scholarship.

“I asked myself, how do you bring history to where the people are?” says Daguillard. “Where they work, live and play?”

Her mentor at the Museum of Florida History recommended she work with the Riley Museum. Daguillard fell in love with the Riley Museum’s mission as an African American minority institution and began working there full-time after graduation.

“They were really bringing the history to people in a way that was fun, consumable, and sometimes life-changing,” says Daguillard. “For me that was the key moment in my life where I realized I can be a public historian. I can champion preservation without working in a gallery, archive, library or museum. There are tangible ways to get people excited and energized about what’s around them.”

Collecting oral history, life stories

Daguillard gained experience through her work at the Riley Museum and throughout Florida through the African American Heritage Preservation network.

When the museum partnered with Blueprint for a historic sidewalk project, she became interested in how infrastructure and transportation planning could preserve community history within artful designs and projects.

Daguillard earned her master’s degree with a focus on historical preservation from FAMU while working for the Florida Department of Transportation before beginning her dream job at Blueprint. She had the opportunity to work on the Smokey Hollow Commemoration project as a part of the Cascades Park Trail, and has watched the History and Culture Trail come together piece by piece over the last six years.

“There’s a lot of great history in this area, but not

much of it has been written down so if you try to look for some local books on the history of the neighborhoods near FAMU Way you’re not going to find a lot,” says Daguillard, who worked with the citizen working groups and committees to gather research. “For this project we’ve been consulting living room repositories and meeting legacy citizens where they are, typically in their homes to collect interviews.”

Once the team collected and compiled oral and written histories from the community, a consulting team allowed this research to inform the design for the educational kiosks. Daguillard says this approach has ensured that the community’s narrative is what is driving the project, and the citizen’s group has been a part of every step of the process with frequent meetings and open houses.

Daguillard has been moved by the depth of information shared with the project team. The citizens who shared their life stories—“the highs, lows, the heartaches, the tragedies, and the blessings”—have all motivated her as a public historian to represent their voices in a way that empowers and gives agency.

‘Amplify the voices’

“We have to remember that everything we do reflects back to the communities that we are working with and we have a civic duty to respect and amplify the voices that we are working with without inserting ourselves into that,” says Daguillard. “I love people and I think part of being a good historian is listening. Listening with intent to people and trying to understand them where they are and figuring out ways you can best get their voice across to others.”

Daguillard says the goal of the public art call is to allow artists locally and nationally to propose pieces that will highlight aspects of the community’s history beyond what’s included on the informational kiosks. Interested artists can find the historical content and research on COCA’s digital prospectus, as well as view a recorded information session about the project.

“I’m really hoping that they add another level of interpretation to the trail and I’m really excited to see what artwork ideas are complimentary to the stations,” says Daguillard, who has been emotionally overwhelmed by many aspects of this project.

“We have cultural trails around the state of Florida, but none like this. A lot of folks did not see themselves, their lived experiences, their stories and friendships, joys, and cries as a part of this evolving community history,” Daguillard said.

“For a lot of people this was a healing project and process. They started viewing themselves as a part of their own community history, and not as these isolated individuals that just lived. It’s a triumphant moment when we breakthrough that you are important because you are. Just because you existed.”

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).