



# Trash Turned Resource: Bush Stadium Seat Salvage Project

Amy Crook<sup>5</sup>

**Abstract:** *People for Urban Progress (PUP), an Indianapolis-based 501(c)3 promotes and advances public transit, environmental awareness and urban design. They take on massive salvage projects including accumulating materials that has a symbolic connection to Indianapolis.*



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<sup>5</sup> Amy Crook joined People for Urban Progress (PUP) as Development Innovator in February 2012. She is a marketing professional proud to call downtown Indianapolis home. Her past work includes franchise development for a food concept covering the Midwest region and business development for a brewery expanding into Wisconsin and Kentucky markets. Amy also serves on the Indianapolis Downtown Marketing, Inc Board, she is on the Resource Committee for the Indianapolis Cultural Trail and the Young Alumni Council for Kelley School of Business at Indianapolis.

People for Urban Progress (PUP), an Indianapolis-based 501(c)3 promotes and advances public transit, environmental awareness and urban design. They take on massive salvage projects including accumulating materials that has a symbolic connection to Indianapolis. The organization is turning what once may have been viewed as trash headed to a landfill into a resource that is given a second life in the community. To date, the organization has salvaged 13 acres of the RCA Dome roof top (the Dome that formerly hosted the Indianapolis Colts team prior to current, Lucas Oil Stadium), five miles of Indianapolis-hosted Super Bowl 46 banners and 9,000 Bush Stadium Seats (former home of the Indianapolis Indians AA baseball team prior to their current home, Victory Field). The organization makes products with the RCA Dome fabric as the base material including wallets, clutches and messenger bags to raise money to fund the design and installation of public shade structures using this same material at pocket parks and urban farms. The Bush Stadium Seat Salvage and PUPstop program is a great example of their social enterprise at work. PUP salvaged 9,000 seats and sold 1,000 seats, as-is, to the general public to raise money to support public installations. PUP's main program for public distribution of this cherished resource is installing the seats at IndyGo, Indianapolis Public Transportation bus stops addressing a specific need. Not including stops with overhead shelters to protect you from the weather elements, only 42 of 4,000 stops had any seating amenity. PUP aims to double that number by the end of 2013. The project has been featured in this year's SpontaneousInterventions: urban actions for the common good exhibit as a part of the Venice Architecture Biennale. The exhibit is in the Chicago Cultural Center through September 1, 2013.

People for Urban Progress (PUP) is an Indianapolis-based 501(c)3 not for profit established in 2008. The organization formed around their first project, salvaging 13 acres of the rooftop of the RCA Dome, the Indianapolis sports stadium that was the home of the Indianapolis Colts. The organization began making products out of this teflon-coated fiberglass including wallets, clutches and messenger bags to name a few. The money raised from the sale of these products



funds projects that the organization takes on that fall within their mission of promoting and advancing public transit, environmental awareness and urban design.

To date, PUP has sold 4,000 products made out of this RCA Dome roof top material. The proceeds from the sale of these goods has paid for the design and installation of three shade structures: 1) Reagan Park (located near 25th Street and College Avenue) 2) Highland Vicinity Park (located at 29th Street and Capitol Avenue) 3) South Circle Farm (located on South Meridian Street, 2 miles south of Monument Circle).

PUP also became stewards of 5 miles of banners from Indianapolis hosted Super Bowl 46. To date they are about 1 mile into fulfillment of reuse opportunities. They have incorporated these vinyls and mesh fabrics into their product line. In addition, they have repurposed the material for a public project, using a polyester fabric as fence covering at the Indy Bike Polo Court in Arsenal Park (located on 46th Street just east of College Avenue).

In October 2011, representatives of Ecolaborative presented the idea of salvaging Bush Stadium Seats to People for Urban Progress (PUP) knowing of their expertise for massive salvage projects like the RCA Dome roof top salvage. This was another



salvage attempt with a short deadline as the stadium was currently owned and maintained by the Indy Parks Department and was getting ready to be sold to a developer planning to build Stadium Lofts as a part of the 16 Tech development, which is working to create a life sciences and information technology hub in Indianapolis.

The stadium held 11,000 seats. At the time, PUP had an urban planning intern, Ryan Gallagher, who was in the middle of a thesis project involving IndyGo, Indianapolis' public transportation system. He had realized the immense need for more seating amenities at IndyGo bus stops. What if we installed these Bush Stadium Seats at IndyGo bus stops? PUP presented the idea to IndyGo and they were ecstatic. They then began to prototype a set of 4 seats with the expertise of Indianapolis Fabrications. At the same time started to do some fundraising to pay for the salvage process. They were successful in raising \$10,000, \$2,500 each from Wishard Health Services, The Lumina Foundation, Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) and a private contributor.

PUP used the funds to pay for labor to remove the seats hiring RecycleForce. RecycleForce is a social enterprise, and not for profit, offering some of the most comprehensive and innovative recycling services while providing life-changing workforce training to formerly incarcerated individuals. The newly formed team had 13 days to pull out as many seats as they could. They managed to rescue 9,000 of 11,000 seats.

There were other expenses involved with the project. Transporting the seats to storage and the storage expense as a whole. In addition to the \$10,000 fundraised. People for Urban Progress put in \$13,190 towards the salvage project. This is money raised solely from the sale of products. This would equate to the profit from the sale of: 842 DOMEwallets, 987 DOMEclutches or 453 DOME messenger bags.



### **PUPstop Program**

People for Urban Progress worked with IndyGo in the prototyping phase to refurbish a bench that would work at IndyGo sites. Indianapolis Fabrications completely refurbished the seat. The arms were painted with lead paint, so they had to be sent out to have professionally sandblasted. The arms returned and were then repainted. The seats were taken completely apart



to review that the pieces were not broken and could be reused. A ball inside the seat that helps with the flipping of the seat up and down was replaced and then all of the parts were put back together and attached to a custom made and built steel base with footings. The refurbishing cost came to \$1700 for a set of four seats. PUP worked with IndyGo to roll out the PUPstop program. Basically, IndyGo has a budget for seating amenities. They applied that to the cost of the refurbished Bush Stadium seats and PUP seeks \$850 in sponsorships to cover the rest of the cost per PUPstop installation.

Then, PUP tried something a little different. They had some public interest about the seats, so they thought they'd open their warehouse doors for a weekend to make the Bush Stadium Seats, as-is with no base, available for purchase to the public. They sold 962 seats. The money raised from the sale of these seats went to the labor of processing this material, taking the seats apart, using the forklift to reorganize our massive piles of material and to start organizing seat parts and overall storage expense. The additional money will go towards 10 more People for Urban Progress sponsored PUPstop installations. The community interest was astounding. PUP realized that the Indianapolis community is full of "Makers" and "Doers" interested and willing to assemble and create their own seating installations whether for public use or private, in using in their backyard.



Current PUPstop locations include:

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| 1.) Alabama & Vermont Cultural Trail. Serving Routes 17, 2 and 5 | 4.) Meridian and 26 <sup>th</sup> , Ivy Tech, Routes 18, 38, 39 | 7.) Central and 34 <sup>th</sup> , Mapleton Fall Creek, Route 4 |
| 2.) 86th and The Monon. Routes 18, 86                            | 5.) Shelby Street at Garfield Park, Garfield Library, Route 22  | 8.) Meridian and McCarty, Stadium Village, Route 16             |
| 3.) 62nd and Carrollton, Broad Ripple, Route 17                  | 6.) Staughton and Arlington, Devington, Routes 3, 4             |   |

The team of people behind People for Urban Progress is reinventing how we look at materials that have the potential for new life versus being thrown away in massive demolition projects. It is even more rewarding to be able to keep these resources in the community for the public to continue to use and enjoy. The projects PUP takes on must fall within two of three areas of focus related to transit, environment and urban design.