iHeartStreet - Business Plan

Company: iHeartStreet **Founder:** Niko Katsaounis (solo) **Stage:** Pre-launch. Zero users, zero revenue. Working prototype on iPhone simulator; TestFlight build is the next step. **Domains:** iheartstreet.art, iheartstreet.food **Demo:** Working demo and tutorial video live at nikoskatsaounis.com **Companion docs:** docs/PRODUCT_BLUEPRINT.md (backend architecture), docs/UX_STANDARDS.md (design rationale), kit/EXIT-THESIS.md (acquirer analysis)

▶1. Executive Summary

iHeartStreet is a mobile app for discovering and archiving street culture across three sectors — Street Art, Street Music, Street Food — built on React Native + Expo, with a Supabase backend and a CRT-phosphor-terminal design language shared with the founder's portfolio site.

The consumer surface is a discovery app: find the mural, catch the busker's next set, order tacos from the cart. The strategic asset underneath is different: **ALIGN + CAPTURE**, a rephotography camera. Half the frame shows a reference view of a wall (Street View or the newest archive capture); half shows the live camera. The user lines up the shot and shoots, and the dated capture appends to that wall's timeline. A TimeSlider — styled as a tape deck — lets anyone rewind a wall through years of captures. Every user who plays with the camera is manufacturing a **dated, geo-locked, camera-aligned rephotography corpus of city walls** — data nobody else systematically collects, and data that has clear buyers in geospatial AI, visual positioning, and historical street imagery.

A vendor economy sits on top: verified profile claiming, food pickup ordering with menus and ratings, musician tip jars with set schedules and streaming links, artist galleries with commission intake. Consumers get the app free; claimed vendors get a lightweight SaaS tier; orders and tips carry a take rate; the data corpus is the long-term prize.

The company is designed from day one to be operated by AI agents. Content ops, social publishing, metrics, moderation triage, and partner-outreach drafting run through the founder's existing Claude Code agent infrastructure, with a human gate on anything user-facing or irreversible. The plan is a near-zero-headcount operating company where the founder's time goes to product and community, not administration.

Honest position: this idea has a ten-year lineage (the original 2016 treatment proposed a time-layered street-art archive on Street View), the prototype exists and demos well, the schema and EAS config are written, 36 San Francisco records are seeded — and none of it has met a real user yet. This document does not claim traction. It claims a defensible thesis, a working artifact, and an unusually cheap path to finding out.

▶2. Problem + Insight

Street culture is the most-photographed, worst-archived layer of the city.

- **Walls get buffed.** A mural that took three weeks to paint can disappear under a coat of gray primer in an afternoon. The photos of it are scattered across ten thousand camera rolls and Instagram accounts, untagged, undated, unfindable.
- **Buskers move.** A street musician's "venue" is a corner and a time window. There is no listings infrastructure for people whose stage is a sidewalk — no schedule, no way to find them again, no way to pay them without cash.
- **Carts vanish.** Street food vendors operate on informal schedules at informal locations. Half are cash-only. The best taco in the city has no page anywhere.

Existing tools fail structurally. Instagram has the photos but no location truth, no dates you can trust, no timeline per place. Google Maps has the places but treats a buffed mural, a moved cart, and a departed busker as data errors to be deleted rather than history to be kept. Street-art databases catalog works but don't capture *change*.

The insight: the ephemerality is not a bug to route around — it is the product. Because street culture disappears, a systematic, dated, location-locked archive of it becomes more valuable every year it runs. A photo of a wall is content. Fifty aligned photos of the same wall across six years is an asset. The archive of what was is worth more than the map of what is — and only an app that makes capturing *fun and repeatable* can build it. That is what ALIGN + CAPTURE is for.

▶3. Product

THREE SECTORS, ONE MAP

One app, three tabs, three fixed accent colors on the CRT phosphor skin (art = green, music = amber, food = red). Each sector's detail page follows the proven pattern of the best app in its lane (rationale documented in UX_STANDARDS.md):

- **Street Art** — gallery-shaped pages (Behance / Street Art Cities pattern): edge-to-edge image, prominent attribution ("credit is the currency"), lifecycle status (ACTIVE / FADING / BUFFED), commission intake with budget-first filtering, quiet links to sales platforms. A BUFFED page is a memorial by design.
- **Street Music** — Bandsintown-shaped: listen links (Spotify/Bandcamp) high, the next set as the hero fact ("FRI 19:00 POWELL TURNAROUND"), tip jar positioned like a merch table — visible, never a paywall.
- **Street Food** — DoorDash-shaped: menu first, OPEN NOW glowing at the top, sticky order bar, cash-only flagged loudly, delivery-app links present but secondary to native pickup.

THE CAPTURE FLYWHEEL

ALIGN + CAPTURE is the mechanic that turns users into archivists. Open the camera at a known wall and the top half of the frame shows the reference view — Street View imagery or the most recent archive capture. Align the live bottom half with it, shoot, and the capture appends to that wall's timeline with a timestamp and location lock. The **TimeSlider** then lets anyone scrub that wall backward through time like rewinding a tape.

The flywheel: more captures → richer timelines → more compelling TimeSlider moments to share ("watch this wall change over four years") → more users → more captures. Each loop deepens the archive, and the alignment constraint means the captures are *comparable* — same framing, same wall, different dates — which is exactly what makes the corpus scientifically and commercially useful rather than a pile of snapshots.

VENDOR ECONOMY (BUILT, IN DEMO MODE)

- **Profile claiming** — verified operators via social-OAuth match (the Instagram handle *is* the identity in this world), email-domain match, or photo-at-location challenge, with a human moderation queue.
- **Food** — pickup ordering, menus, ratings and feedback with verified-visit weighting, owner responses.
- **Music** — tip jar (Venmo/CashApp deep links at v1, Stripe Connect later), streaming links, set schedules.
- **Art** — galleries, commission requests (brief → budget → contact), links to sale platforms.

TECHNICAL STATE (HONEST INVENTORY)

- React Native + Expo SDK 54; working prototype on iPhone simulator.
- Supabase backend (Postgres + PostGIS + Row-Level Security + Storage); schema written.
- EAS configured for TestFlight; build not yet shipped — it is the immediate next step.
- 36 seeded San Francisco records across the three sectors.
- CRT design system codified as reusable components, shared with the founder's portfolio site.

3D ROADMAP: SPLAT CAPTURE

The next capture format after aligned photos is 3D. A prototype pipeline using **apple/ml-sharp** (single photo → 3D Gaussian splat) is in progress locally, and **RealityKit 5 ships first-party splat rendering in iOS 27**. The product expression: walls become explorable 3D memories — stand in front of a buffed wall and walk through what used to be there. Splat capture also upgrades the data asset from 2D timelines to sparse 4D reconstructions of street-level space (see §4).

▶4. The Data Moat

Every social app claims "our content is our moat." iHeartStreet's claim is narrower and stronger: **the rephotography corpus is a dataset with properties no scraper can reproduce.**

What one wall's record contains after two years of community capture: a series of photographs of the same physical surface, taken from approximately the same camera position (enforced by the alignment UI), each with a trusted timestamp and GPS lock, spanning the wall's full lifecycle — painted, tagged over, faded, buffed, repainted.

Why that specific shape is hard to get any other way: Instagram photos of the same wall are shot from arbitrary angles with unreliable geodata. Google Street View revisits a given street on a multi-year cadence and shoots from a car lane, not a sidewalk viewpoint. Academic rephotography projects are tiny and manual. Nobody else has an incentive structure that makes *thousands of people re-shoot the same walls from the same spots, repeatedly, for fun.*

Who values it and why:

1. **Geospatial / visual-positioning AI.** Visual positioning systems (Niantic's VPS lineage, Google's Live View, emerging AR platforms) need dense, current, ground-level, pedestrian-viewpoint imagery — and they need to know how scenes *change*, because change is what breaks localization. A corpus of aligned same-viewpoint image series across time is close to purpose-built training and evaluation data for scene-change robustness.
2. **Historical street imagery.** Municipalities, urban-studies researchers, cultural institutions, and media licensing all buy dated street-level imagery. A queryable "what did this wall look like in March 2027" API has no current supplier at sidewalk granularity.
3. **3D reconstruction.** Once SPLAT CAPTURE ships, the corpus adds sparse 3D structure — multiple splats of the same location over time — relevant to anyone building city-scale 3D (mapping companies, AR platform owners, simulation).

Two honest qualifiers. First, the moat is prospective: 36 seeded records is a demo, not a corpus; the moat exists only after the flywheel spins in at least one city. Second, the moat compounds with *density and duration*, which is why the go-to-market (§7) prioritizes making a few neighborhoods deep rather than many cities shallow. Data licensing must also be squared with user trust from day one: contributor terms will state plainly that captures may be licensed in aggregate, with contributor credit preserved — the archive ethic (attribution, no dark patterns) applies to the business model too.

▶5. Market

All figures below are estimates with stated reasoning, not measurements. iHeartStreet has no market data of its own yet.

Bottom-up, three revenue-relevant populations:

1. Street-culture tourism and local discovery (the audience). Street art is a documented tourism driver: cities from Philadelphia (Mural Arts) to Melbourne, Berlin, and George Town market mural districts as attractions, and mural-tour operators exist in essentially every major art city. Estimate: ~40–60 cities worldwide with dense, tour-worthy street-art scenes; if each draws on the order of 100K–1M+ annual visitors who engage with street

culture plus a resident enthusiast base in the tens of thousands, the reachable audience is plausibly in the **tens of millions of people** who would open a street-culture discovery app at least occasionally. (Reasoning: comparable single-vertical apps — Untappd for beer, AllTrails for trails — grew to 5-10M+ registered users on similarly-shaped enthusiast bases.)

2. Vendors (the SaaS + take-rate base). Estimates: the US has on the order of **35,000-70,000 food trucks and carts** (IBISWorld-style industry counts cluster in this range); street performers are uncounted but plausibly **tens of thousands** across major US/EU cities based on busking-permit registries where they exist (e.g., hundreds of licensed pitches per major city); working street artists and muralists likely number in the **low tens of thousands** globally at the "takes commissions" level. Rough serviceable vendor pool: **~100K operators** across the three sectors in Western markets. At a $10-30/month claimed-profile tier and realistic single-digit-percent penetration, vendor SaaS alone is a **$5-20M ARR ceiling** — real money, not venture-scale on its own, which is why it is one leg of four.

3. Creator-economy tipping and local ordering (the transaction base). Digital tipping is displacing cash tipping for performers (Venmo/CashApp handles taped to guitar cases are now standard). Estimate: an active busker earning $50-200/day in tips, shifting 20-50% digital, means each *claimed, active* musician profile could route $3K-15K/year in tips; food pickup orders per active cart could plausibly reach $10K-50K/year through the app in a dense deployment. At a 5-10% order take rate and 0-5% tip take rate, **each hundred active transacting vendors ≈ $100K-500K/year in platform gross revenue** (estimate; sensitive to activation, which is unproven).

4. Data licensing (the strategic market, not modeled bottom-up). Ground-level imagery and visual-positioning data are procured by a small number of very large buyers (Google, Apple, Niantic-lineage companies, mapping/AV firms) at prices set by negotiation, not rate cards. This is treated as optionality with potentially the highest single-contract value, not as a forecastable revenue line.

The honest summary: the consumer audience is large enough to matter, the vendor economics are modest but real, and the outlier outcomes run through the data asset and §11.

▶6. Business Model

Four layers, sequenced deliberately:

1. **Freemium consumer (launch).** The app, map, archive, TimeSlider, and capture are free forever — the corpus depends on maximum capture volume, so the capture side is never paywalled. A possible later supporter tier (archive-patron cosmetics, early splat features) is optional and must never gate the archive.
2. **Vendor SaaS-lite (P2, after claiming ships).** Free claiming and basic profile editing (menu, hours, schedule, links) — free because claimed profiles improve the product for everyone. Paid tier ($10-30/mo, estimate) adds analytics, multiple locations/pitches, priority placement in *labeled* sponsored slots, and commission-pipeline tools for artists. No pay-to-rank, no pay-to-remove-reviews — ever (see UX_STANDARDS.md; this is the Yelp-vs-directories line).
3. **Transaction take rate (P3, on Stripe Connect).** Pickup orders: 5-10% platform fee, vendor-paid, well under delivery-app commissions — the pitch to vendors is "keep the margin DoorDash takes." Tips: 0% at launch (deep links cost nothing and goodwill matters more), optional low take later once in-app tipping via Connect adds real convenience. Commissions: a fee on deposits held/released through the platform. All of this is real-world goods and services, processed outside in-app purchase under App Store rule 3.1.3(e) — the Uber Eats / StubHub lane (analysis in PRODUCT_BLUEPRINT.md §5).
4. **Data licensing (the strategic prize).** Aggregate, credited licensing of the rephotography corpus to geospatial-AI, mapping, and research buyers. Not a launch revenue line; a reason the company is worth acquiring. Contributor terms disclose it from the first TestFlight build.

Cost structure is the quiet advantage: infrastructure is ~$10/month pre-launch and an estimated $300-700/month at 50K users (Supabase + EAS + Stripe per-transaction; table in PRODUCT_BLUEPRINT.md), and operations are agent-run (§8). Burn is effectively the founder's time plus double-digit dollars of monthly services until real scale.

▶7. Go-to-Market

Beachhead: San Francisco, density-first. SF is where the founder lives, where the 36 seed records are, and where street art (Mission murals), buskers (Powell, Embarcadero), and food carts coexist within walking distance. The strategy is depth over breadth: make **three SF neighborhoods feel complete** — every notable wall, regular busker, and cart mapped — before adding a fourth. A discovery app with 90% coverage of one neighborhood is useful; 5% coverage of ten cities is a ghost town.

Sequence:

1. **TestFlight field test (now).** EAS config is ready; a field-test waitlist is already live on the founder's site alongside the demo and tutorial video. First cohort: street-culture photographers, mural-tour guides, and vendors themselves — people who already document the street and just need a better container.
2. **Vendor-side seeding in parallel.** Hand-claim the first 20–50 vendors personally. A busker whose set times are accurate and whose tip QR works is a walking billboard at their own pitch; a cart with pickup ordering tells its regulars. Vendors are the distribution channel — their audiences are already physically present.
3. **Content as marketing, agent-produced.** TimeSlider sequences of walls changing over time are natively shareable short-form video. The AI ops layer (§8) generates and schedules this content from the archive itself — every dense wall timeline is a marketing asset that manufactures its own promotion.
4. **Expansion: art cities in archive-density order.** LA, NYC, Berlin, London, Melbourne, Lisbon, Mexico City — chosen by scene density and existing documentation communities (estimate-based ordering, revisited with real data). Each city launch is a repeatable playbook: seed records via agents + local partner, recruit 10–20 anchor vendors, run the capture flywheel.

Community ethics as positioning. The graffiti-neutrality policy (area-level pins for unsanctioned work, no exact addresses, document-don't-dox — PRODUCT_BLUEPRINT.md §7) is not just risk management; it is what earns the trust of the artists whose participation makes the archive legitimate. Street Art Cities proved the community accepts platforms that respect this line.

▶8. AI-Native Operations

iHeartStreet is designed to be run by AI agents, not staffed around. The founder operates a mature personal agent infrastructure — Claude Code plus a routing layer plus scheduled automations, already running multiple content-production pipelines — and the company inherits it.

Agent org chart:

FUNCTION	RUNS AUTONOMOUSLY	HUMAN-GATED
Content ops	Seed-record research and drafting; metadata enrichment; TimeSlider video assembly	Publishing new records; anything touching artist attribution
Social	Drafting posts from archive material; scheduling; performance tracking	Final approval of outbound posts (batch-reviewed)
Moderation	NSFW/violence scan on upload; auto-approve obvious passes; flag-clustering	Borderline images; claim disputes; takedown/DMCA responses
Vendor claims	Social-OAuth automatic verification (handle match)	Email-domain and photo-challenge claims (minutes/week at this scale)
Metrics	Daily KPI digests; anomaly alerts (review-brigading spikes, capture-volume drops)	Interpretation and response
Partner outreach	Prospect research; draft emails to tour operators, vendor associations, city programs	Every send
Engineering	Test runs, dependency updates, build pipelines	All merges and releases

The rule: agents draft, humans decide, for anything user-facing, financial, or irreversible. Everything else runs on schedules.

Why this matters commercially: the comparable-stage local-discovery startup carries 3–6 salaries ($500K–1M/year, estimate) for community management, content, social, and ops before revenue. iHeartStreet's equivalent line item is API costs — realistically **hundreds of dollars a month**. That collapses the runway math: the company can afford to spend two years getting one city right, which is exactly what a density-first archive strategy requires. It also makes the per-city expansion playbook (§7) largely a matter of compute rather than hiring.

Caveat, stated plainly: agent-run ops is itself a thesis under test. The founder's infrastructure demonstrably produces content pipelines today, but it has not yet run a live consumer app's operations. Early TestFlight is deliberately small partly to shake this out.

▶9. Competition

Positioned honestly, strongest threat last:

- **Street Art Cities** — the closest direct competitor: a real app, a real community, ~2,000+ cities of crowd-mapped street art (their public claim). They validated the category and pioneered the archival-status ethic iHeartStreet adopts. What they don't have: aligned rephotography (their photos are one-off snapshots, not comparable time series), a TimeSlider, the music and food sectors, or a vendor economy. iHeartStreet's bet is that *capture mechanics and cross-sector density* beat *breadth of one-shot catalog*. Respectful posture; possible future partner or consolidation target.
- **Untappd-for-X vertical apps** (Untappd, AllTrails, Bandsintown) — proof that single-vertical enthusiast logging apps reach millions of users and real revenue. None touches street culture; they are the pattern, not the threat.
- **Google Maps / Apple Maps** — own general local discovery and could add mural pins tomorrow. But their structural incentive is *current-state accuracy*: they delete what's gone. An archive of the vanished is philosophically opposed to their product goal, and street vendors without addresses fit their model poorly. Threat level: low on product, high as gatekeepers (Street View API pricing, App Store review — see §12).
- **Snap (Local Lenses / city-scale AR)** — the most serious long-term overlap, because Snap already gets users to point cameras at city walls and has built city-scale meshes. If Snap decided street-culture archiving was strategic, it has the distribution to swamp anyone. Mitigations: Snap's incentive is ephemeral engagement, not durable archive; and its interest validates the acquisition case more than it threatens the niche (§11).
- **Instagram** — where street culture lives today, and the default alternative to using any new app. Not a structural competitor (no location truth, no timelines, no vendor tools) but the gravity iHeartStreet must escape: the app must be worth opening *in addition to* Instagram. ALIGN + CAPTURE, OPEN NOW, and the next-set schedule are the wedge — things Instagram structurally cannot answer.

▶10. Roadmap with OKRs

Discipline note: everything below is a target, not a forecast. Baselines are zero.

NEXT 30 DAYS — "IT'S ON PHONES"

Objective: iHeartStreet is in real users' hands via TestFlight.

- KR1: TestFlight build approved and live; waitlist cohort invited (target: first 25–50 testers from the existing waitlist).
- KR2: Supabase backend live — records served from Postgres, not `seed.ts`; accounts and photo upload with moderation scan working end-to-end.
- KR3: ≥10 real ALIGN + CAPTURE captures on seeded SF walls by people other than the founder.

- KR4: Google Maps/Street View API key rotated into secrets management; repo pushed to a private remote (removes the single-point-of-failure on one laptop).

NEXT 90 DAYS — "THREE NEIGHBORHOODS, DENSE"

Objective: three SF neighborhoods feel complete, and the flywheel shows a pulse.

- KR1: ≥300 records live across Mission, Haight, and Fisherman's Wharf/Embarcadero corridors (art + music + food).
- KR2: ≥20 claimed, verified vendor profiles with operator-maintained content (menus, set times, galleries).
- KR3: ≥5 walls with 3+ dated captures each — the first true TimeSlider timelines.
- KR4: Weekly active testers ≥ 40% of installed TestFlight base (retention signal over vanity installs).
- KR5: First agent-produced TimeSlider social content published on a schedule without founder hands-on-keyboard.

NEXT 365 DAYS — "THE ARCHIVE IS REAL, AND IT'S 3D-CURIOUS"

Objective: a public App Store launch, one proven city, and the splat future demonstrated.

- KR1: Public App Store release; ≥5,000 registered users (estimate-grade target).
- KR2: ≥2,000 records and ≥500 multi-capture wall timelines in SF; playbook executed in one second city.
- KR3: Stripe Connect live: first in-app tips and pickup orders processed; ≥$10K cumulative GMV through the platform (target, from zero).
- KR4: **SPLAT CAPTURE beta** — apple/ml-sharp pipeline producing Gaussian splats from user captures, rendered in-app via RealityKit 5 on iOS 27; ≥25 walls explorable in 3D.
- KR5: One signed letter of intent or paid pilot for archive data access (research institution or commercial), validating §4 with a counterparty.

▶11. Exit Landscape

The full acquirer analysis lives in kit/EXIT-THESIS.md; the one-paragraph version: the natural buyers are the companies for whom a dated, camera-aligned, pedestrian-viewpoint corpus of urban change is strategic rather than interesting — ranked: **Snap** (city-scale AR and camera culture; iHeartStreet is Local Lenses' missing memory layer), **Niantic Spatial** (visual positioning is literally the business; scene-change data is their hardest problem), **Apple** (RealityKit splats, Look Around, and a services story around local culture), and **Google** (Street View's historical layer at sidewalk granularity, plus Maps' local-vendor ambitions). The plan is to build a real company on the four revenue layers in §6 — but the data asset is deliberately shaped so that its value to these four compounds with every capture.

▶12. Risks and Honest Gaps

Stated without cushioning:

1. **Pre-launch, zero everything.** No users, no revenue, no TestFlight build yet. Every number in §5 and §10 is an estimate or a target. The cold-start problem for a two-sided, density-dependent app is the primary risk, and it is entirely ahead of us.
2. **Solo founder, bus factor 1.** One person, no team, and until the 30-day KRs land, the only copy of the repo risk has to be fully retired. The AI-ops thesis mitigates workload, not judgment or continuity. An acquirer or investor should price this.
3. **Street View billing dependency.** The ALIGN reference view leans on Google Street View imagery, which is metered and repriceable at Google's discretion — and Google is also a competitor-adjacent gatekeeper. Mitigation: the design already prefers the newest *archive* capture as the reference once one exists, so

Street View dependence decays as the corpus grows; but v1 alignment UX in un-captured locations depends on it.

4. **Moderation and copyright of street-art photos.** Photographs of possibly-unauthorized artworks, artist attribution disputes, DMCA takedowns, and people captured in frame are all live issues. Mitigations exist and are designed (upload scanning, takedown process, area-level pins for unsanctioned work, UGC license in TOS) but are unproven under load, and the legality-adjacent nature of graffiti means one mishandled case could cost community trust that can't be bought back.
5. **Apple 3.1.3(e) discipline.** The entire payments model depends on staying cleanly on the physical-goods side of App Store rules. The lane is well-established (DoorDash, StubHub), but any future feature that couples payment to in-app digital value — "tip to unlock" anything — would drag in the 30% IAP regime. This is a design constraint that must be enforced forever, including by future contributors and agents.
6. **Data-licensing / trust tension.** The strategic prize (§4, §6) requires licensing user-contributed captures. Handled transparently from day one it's a feature; handled retroactively it's a scandal. Contributor terms must ship in the first build, not be bolted on.
7. **Flywheel unproven.** The core behavioral bet — that ordinary users will find aligned rephotography *fun enough to repeat* — has exactly zero evidence beyond the founder's conviction and a demo that people enjoy touching. The 90-day KR3 (five walls with 3+ captures by real users) is the first honest test, and the plan should be re-examined hard if it fails.

Prepared 2026-08-09. All market figures are estimates with reasoning stated inline; no traction is claimed because none exists yet. The demo is real, the schema is written, and the next step is TestFlight.