PLACEMAKING DOWNTOWN

Action Plan for Lighter Quicker Cheaper for Downtown Meridian
“Placemaking” is an overarching idea and a hands-on tool for improving a Neighborhood, City or Region. It has the potential to be one of the most transformative ideas of this century.

Chicago - Metropolitan Planning Council
When you focus on People, you do things differently and get different outcomes
THE BENEFITS OF GREAT PLACES

- Promotes Sense of Comfort
- Creates Improved Accessibility
- Nurtures & Defines Sense of Community
- Builds & Supports the Local Economy
- Promotes Health
- Social Interaction

PLACE
43 countries, 6 continents, 50 US states, 7 Canadian provinces, 110 major cities, 3,000 communities

40 Years of Placemaking
William H. (Holly) Whyte

- The Organization Man, 1956
- The Exploding Metropolis, 1958
- The Last Landscape, 1968
- Plan for the City of New York, 1969
- The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, 1980
- City: Rediscovering the Center, 1988
Social public spaces “are built of a set of basics...”
Social public spaces “are built of a set of basics...”

- Places to Sit
- Sun/Shade
- Water
- Sense of Scale
- Trees
- Food
- Triangulation
- Places to People Watch
- Programming

...it doesn’t take much...
“What attracts people most it would appear, is other people.”
WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

PLACE

- Sociability
- Uses & Activities
- Access & Linkages
- Comfort & Image
USES & ACTIVITIES

✓ Fun/Vital
✓ Active
✓ Local
✓ Sustainable
✓ Affordable
✓ Challenging
COMFORT & IMAGE

✓ Inviting
✓ Attractive
✓ Usable
✓ Historic
✓ Green
✓ Friendly
✓ Cared for
ACCESS & LINKAGES

✓ Convenient
✓ Walkable
✓ Informative
✓ Orienting
✓ Connected
✓ Enticing
“The street is the river of life, the place where we come together, the pathway to the center.”
SOCIABILITY

- Welcoming
- Cooperative
- Interactive
- Neighborly
- Diverse
- International
- Variety of activities
Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper

- Activation Events
- Comfort, Amenities & Public Art
- Interim Public Spaces
- Experimental Implementation
- Light Development
Providence: Burnside Park
Providence: Burnside Park: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
Providence: Burnside Park: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
Providence: Burnside Park: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
Providence: Burnside Park: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
Providence: Burnside Park: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
Providence: Burnside Park: Play in the Park
Providence: Burnside Park: Rendering
Providence: Burnside Park: Heart of the Community
Providence: Burnside Park: Imagination Center
Providence: Burnside Park: Imagination Center Launch
REOCCURRING IDEAS

- Food options
- Moveable chairs & tables
- Mini-concerts and local-music
- Community gathering spaces
- After-work events: Happy hours etc.
- Outdoor Movies and Telecasting
- Talks and Documentaries
- Local Talent
“If you want to seed a place with activity, put out food.”
13 Sites within Downtown Meridian Core Project Area
Recommendations and Priorities

4 Priority locations from the 14

- Generations Plaza
- Children’s Theater Alley
- City Hall Plaza
- Idaho Avenue Main to 2nd

Selected for

- Central location
- High visibility
- Public property
- Potential partners
- Opportunity for daily activity
Site 7: Idaho Avenue between Main St and 2nd Ave

This block provides a great opportunity for LQC in the street itself. The street width could readily accommodate temporary conversions to uses for people to sit, eat, etc. without loss of parking or adequate room for people driving. This could be accomplished parklet by parklet as local businesses desire to have one in front of their storefront. A vibrant street scene on this block would create a stronger connection between downtown and large employers on 3rd and the downtown residential neighborhood east of 3rd Street.

- Team Leader: Caleb/Community Development
- Team Players:
  - ACHD
    - Econ Development Program
  - COMPASS
  - VRT
  - Adjacent neighborhoods
  - DBA: potential educator
  - Adjacent businesses
- Activities
  - Rightsizing: measuring from Google Earth, Idaho Ave appears to be 52’ from curb to curb. Allowing for 8’ parking lanes on both sides, this leaves two 18’ travel lanes.
    - If the lanes are reduced to the industry maximum of 12’, this allows recapture of 12’ for reallocation to wider sidewalks and café seating.
    - It is recommended that the conversation start with the desire for reallocation by reduction of lane widths to 12’, with a professional conversation about the future potential to reduce to 10’ if the LQC experiment proves successful.
LQC for Streets

Better Blocks Philadelphia
The erosion of cities by automobiles proceeds as a kind of nibbling. Small nibbles at first but eventually hefty bites. A street is widened here, another is straightened there, a wide avenue is converted to one way flow and more land goes into parking. No one step in this process is in itself crucial but cumulatively the effect is enormous.

*Jane Jacobs, 1954*
We stopped viewing Streets as Places
Focus on high speed mobility

Slide Courtesy of Chris Sinclair, Renaissance Planning Group
When you design your community around cars...you get more cars.
When you design your community around people … you get more people.
Rightsizing

An Approach to Making Streets Safer & Comfortable for Everyone
Russell Street, Missoula
Russell Street, Missoula
People put the Place back in streets
From a lighter, quicker, cheaper effort in Detroit
It’s hard to create a space that will not attract people, what is remarkable, is how often this has been accomplished. —William H. Whyte
Why don’t we have better Public Spaces today?

- Planning and development in silos
- Project-driven vs. Place-driven Planning
- Narrow Development Goals
- Design Led vs Place Led
- Lack of Political and/or Community will to do things differently.
We Must Stop Planning Our Communities in Silos

Current conversation
OR
siloed accountability

New conversation
OR
collaborative accountability

Source: Sunshine Coast Council (adapted)
PLACE/COMMUNITY DRIVEN APPROACH

- Define place
- Identify stakeholders
- Evaluate space

Stakeholder roles:
- Advise/suggest
- Bring additional resources

Expert roles:
- Resource
- Facilitate
- Implement vision

Place vision:
- Short-term experiments
- Long-term experiments
- On-going reevaluation & improvement

Empowers communities:
- Attracts partners, money & creative solutions

Professionals become resources:
- Design supports uses
- Solutions are flexible

Engagement & commitment grow:
- Public spaces
Get Feedback

What do you want to do here?

Pratt Street

Light Street
Share your findings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underlying Ideas</th>
<th>The community is the expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You are creating a place not just a design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can’t do it alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They always say it can’t be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Outreach Techniques</td>
<td>You can see a lot just by observing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating Ideas Into Action</td>
<td>Form supports function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulate – layer activities together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Start with the petunias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Money is not the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You are never finished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Place Map App - Opportunities
What is Placemaking?

It is a Community Process
It is a Natural, Organic Process
It Localizes
It is Economic Development
It is Scaled to each Community
It Creates Social and Place Capital

to achieve
Health, Sustainability and Quality of Life
Try Something