Our City, Our Spaces!

Resources, Research, and Outreach for Neighborhood-Led Activities in Washington, DC

September 2021 Appendix



District of Columbia¹ Office of Planning

Council of Governments

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Acknowledgements

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01 Best Practices Summary

Children's area at Unity Park Activation Photo: Open City Projects

Overview

This is a summary of best practices for the inventory of materials and equipment used for public space activations. Street Plans reviewed 30 public space guidebooks and public activation programs/projects to understand how cities around the world invigorate their public spaces through both temporary design and activation. We applied a critical lens to evaluate how each of the examples empower community groups and non-profit organizations, residents, and local businesses to program and steward the public realm.

Street Plans found that the vast majority of guidebooks, policies, and programs focus on introducing the concept of tactical, short- to mid-term projects (parklets, plazas, outdoor cafes, and street murals) and offer guidance and/or a policy framework for helping city residents, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), and other non-profit partners engage and ultimately co-deliver the lasting physical transformation of public space. A few of the programs or guides we reviewed did include some very high-level materials guidance but none dug into the materials and equipment required to make the activation of the public realm a success. Indeed, of all the documents reviewed, only one had developed a framework for making basic materials accessible to the public: The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy and Guide published by the City of Burlington, Vermont. Finally, Street Plans own Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design is full of specifics (cost, durability, source, application, etc.) but is not calibrated to the physical, cultural, and governance framework of a specific city.

Due to the lack of inclusion of materials inventory guidance at the local scale, Street Plans also reviewed sharing models such as lending libraries and public space "kit of parts" deployments to share best practices around the distribution of materials and equipment used for the programming and activation of public space. We found that while no materials + equipment lending program exists specifically for public space activation, several lessons can be drawn from similar programs. COMMUNITY-LED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT POLICY + GUIDE

City of Burlington, VT | January 2018



<u>The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy</u> <u>and Guide</u>



Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design

Best Practice Key Findings

Define Public Space Activation Roles

Make clear the steps and roles for how different parties engage in the activation of public space. The guides/ programs/policies we reviewed that offered the most simple pathway to execution were the strongest and most successful in terms of public space activation output. While DC's <u>Public Space Activation and</u> <u>Stewardship Guide</u> provides such information to obtain select permits should be periodically reviewed and may provide a barrier for many low-resourced, would be Creators.

Define Appropriate Public Space Types

Defining the spaces most appropriate for specific types of public space activations illuminates where Creators, Consumers, and Regulators can identify the path of least resistance; Clarifying the description of space types where a range of specific types of activities without being overly prescriptive will help streamline activation. The City's Activation and Stewardship Guide offers several examples of activation types but does not directly link them to the well-defined types of spaces available for activation.

3

Provide Materials Selection, Cost, and Procurement Guidance

Clearly define the materials, costs, and procurement options to steer activation towards the clearest and fastest path forward for community-centered, and community-led implementation. Removing the guesswork from not just what activations are permitted where, but what materials and equipment are allowable/appropriate/available removes an important barrier, especially for Creators who are inexperienced or do not possess a technical urban design background.

4

Make Public Space Materials, Tools, and Equipment Available for All!

A locally available, free or low-cost, turnkey option for obtaining public space activation materials and equipment does not appear to exist. It should! <u>The</u> <u>Better Block in A Box</u> and the <u>Local Motion Pop-Up</u> <u>Projects Mobile Support Unit</u> offer unique models for the storage and lending of public space activation materials. Both models contain all necessary materials for a public space activation within a singular storage container, which can then be transported to the selected site for the event. This model works well for larger events such as street fairs or in highly-trafficked public spaces (plazas, squares, parks) but without a local steward to manage and operate the deployment can quickly become cumbersome for Creators and Regulators.

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Co-Locate Material, Tool, and Equipment Lending Libraries With Trusted Institutions

Material or tool lending libraries work well when organized in conjunction with well-established lending institutions, such as public libraries. Since public libraries are established entities familiar to most community members, lending libraries attached to them offer a low barrier to entry for constituents to access materials. <u>The Berkeley Tool Lending library</u> has been successfully operating out of the Berkeley Public library since 1979 and uses a similar structure to checking out a book. With the right resources, this model could be adapted to support the lending of materials for programming and activating public spaces at scale across the District.

District of Columbia Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide

December 2018

Best Practices Summary I 06

Recommendations Summary

The District of Columbia has a unique opportunity to produce a public space activation playbook that informs a material distribution program. Based on our research, it would be unlike anything else in the country. After reviewing the current range of public space best practices, it is clear that most efforts focus on the physical alteration of urban spaces rather than the materials and/or equipment required to do so. Street Plans therefore recommends that the District work to improve access to practical materials and equipment that support a wide range of public space activations across a range of public space types that may often be overlooked but would help better serve local neighborhood populations. This includes developing a kit of materials that specifically support and enhance hyper-local activations, such as block parties, film screenings, spoken word performances, barbecues, block parties, pick-up games, small-scale celebrations or protest, and/or other activities where materials availability and basic guidance would be helpful to the execution of more informal community-building activities.

A successful guide would instruct the reader on how to decide on which public space activation fits their needs based on size, scale, and the time resource that they can dedicate to both the planning and execution of the event. As a key component to a successful activation is community involvement, the guidance provided within the Playbook must be responsive to the specific pain points felt by both Creators and Regulators. Guidance on site selection, activation typologies, appropriate materials, and successful community engagement will create a well-appointed and action-specific companion to the District's Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide, and help bring still more public life to the city's rich network of public spaces.

As a key step to implementing the guidance, the District should strongly consider developing a scalable distribution strategy for public space activation materials and equipment. The previously referenced Better Block in a Box program and the Local Motion Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit both provide examples of containers filled with the necessary materials to complete a public space activation; however, they are relatively resource intensive and can be costly to move around as the former serves the whole country while the latter the entire State of Vermont.

The Better Block in a Box shipping container holds the materials for an event, such as tables, chairs, games, and string lights, while the Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit provides materials for a tactical urbanism intervention such as paint, stencils, sidewalk chalk, and more. In both instances, either the organization themselves or a city requests the unit to aid in the deployment of public space activations or tactical interventions.

On the local scale, the Berkeley Tool Library offers an alternative model for lending, with community residents able to rent up to 10 tools from the community library. The library is located within the public library, you can check tools out using a similar system to checking out a book, with your library card. Alternatively, the <u>Atlanta Toolbank</u> requires members to pay a "tool handling fee" equal to 3 percent of the cost for each tool borrowed per week. Such tools can be borrowed for up to eight weeks. Instituting the low-cost, fee-based system provides increased financial accountability (there are replacement and cleaning fees) and ensures sustainability of the program.

Street Plans recommends that the District develop a materials and equipment distribution program (with a catchy name!) that encapsulates the best practices from both these models but seeks to localize the benefits in neighborhoods of greatest need. Given startup costs and lack of knowledge for how such a program is to be operated locally, we recommend starting with just one or two Public Space Activation Materials and Equipment kits. Whether these kits exist at a fixed location (library basement, standing pod, purpose-built shed, etc.) requiring users to pick-up and drop-off materials or is a mobile solution (shipping container, retrofitted moving truck, etc.) checked out in its entirety, or some type of hybrid, a solution needs to be explored further. The ultimate selection of the model must align with current or future resources so that it may be sustained.





Tontine Crescent Plaza Photo: Ground, Inc

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Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook, 2020

City: Baltimore, MD

Sponsors/Partners: Baltimore Development Corporation | Neighborhood Design Center | City of Baltimore | John Hopkins School of Public Health

Focus: [COVID-19] public space activation

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, High-Level



DFD Ideas Guidebook

Overview

The Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook is a public space playbook published by the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Neighborhood Design Center, the City of Baltimore, and the John Hopkins School of Public Health in response to a greater need for safe, physically distant outdoor gatherings during the [COVID-19] pandemic. The Ideas Guidebook consists of 10 concepts for public space interventions that were chosen out of 162 submissions from the public. All submitted designs were evaluated to make sure that they were temporary, low-cost, people-focused, and could easily operate outdoors with safety protocols in mind. Each intervention includes relative costs, key materials needed for deployment, and demonstrates how the activation could work at a variety of sites, to show how the ideas could be adapted in cities anywhere.

The Ideas Guidebook makes clear that the key to public space activation success is to work with a variety of stakeholders, understand permitting requirements, establish a budget, understand maintenance capacities, and work collaboratively with your group to decide on the best site for an intervention. Most of the designs emphasize the necessity of a car-free streetscape for their success, as well as adherence to safety protocols, and distancing concerns.

Implementation

All of the examples provided in the Ideas Guidebook were provided in conceptual form, but a pilot program was also launched to use the guidebook to stage interventions in Baltimore throughout the summer of 2020 and beyond.

The winning design teams were paired with local Baltimore districts in order to bring the conceptual interventions to life. The design-build team PI.KI studio worked with the Bromo Arts and Entertainment District and the Market Center Merchants Association to envision a public space intervention that would work to bridge the two districts. They worked closely with the small business owners in the area to design an intervention named "The Meadow", a green space made from a vacant lot in the middle of the two districts. The Meadow design featured 20 small picnic tables, lighting, shade, shipping containers for storage, and wildflowers. They enlisted volunteers from the community to help build the site, and worked with local artists to create sidewalk art to connect the districts, using templates and spray paint.

Relevance

The Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook does a good job at introducing the concepts of tactical urbanism interventions as a solution to a public health crisis. The strength of this guide lies in the variety of activation choices, as well as the specific referencing to materials that can be used to reclaim a public space and activate it for people. There is less emphasis on where the materials can be purchased from or how they could be accessed, and not too much prescriptive advice for engaging the community around the particular public space idea.

References

Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook City Lab- How to Design a Post-Pandemic City How a Baltimore design initiative is rethinking cityscapes to promote economic recovery from COVID-19

The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy and Guide, 2018

City: Burlington, VT

Sponsors/Partners: The City of Burlington Department of Public Works, Street Plans, Local Motion

Focus: Community led temporary demonstration projects

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, specific

55 This policy aims to make it easier for everyday residents, advocacy organizations, and community groups to spearhead short-term demonstration projects alongside DPW and other agencies.



The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy and Guide

Overview

The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy and Guide was created by Street Plans in collaboration with The City of Burlington Department of Public Works, Local Motion, and residents and advocates of Burlington, VT. The guide aims to help community members and organizations understand the uses of short term demonstration projects and tactical urbanism for instituting long term change in their communities.

The guide discusses the benefits of the demonstration project approach and delves into the uses of tactical engagements, such as how they can help the community better understand local issues, draw attention to problems with policy and design, and test certain aspects of a proposed plan. The guide goes into detail about how to lead a demonstration project from start to finish, including how to get city approval, how to create the best design for a temporary change, what materiality works the best for different projects, and protocols for safely installing and removing a project.

In terms of best practices the guide emphasizes the importance of creating a team with a unified vision and vetting an appropriate project location. On the team organization side, the guide lists particular project roles and responsibilities that are instrumental in a projects success, such as people to assist with communications, coordinators to help organizing the budget, gatherers to track down borrowed materials, makers for the building of the project, and shepherds to recruit and manage volunteers. For deciding on an appropriate project site, the guide emphasizes that support from nearby property owners is instrumental for project success, as well as selecting a high impact location with lots of foot and bike traffic. The guide also lists potential materials for a demonstration project, with the majority of them able to be borrowed from Local Motion's Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit.

Implementation

The Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit was designed by Street Plans, and is maintained by Local Motion. It is a 12' trailer filled with all the supplies needed to run a demonstration project and available for rent by all the towns in Vermont. It includes supplies for traffic calming, temporary crosswalks, bike lanes, bump-outs, and plazas. Included in the trailer is a guidebook on projects that other towns have implemented, as well as a manual that includes pictures of previous projects, information about how to open and use the trailer, a list of inventory included, information about how to repack the trailer, and notes on how to create a successful project. Notes on the creation of a success project highlight similar concepts as the guidebook, such as creating a committee, determining a good location, getting appropriate approvals, and planning a timeline for the project. While Local Motion provides and maintains the trailer, project sponsors are responsible for reimbursement of materials used either directly or through Local Motion.

A conversation with the Complete Streets project manager at Local Motion was helpful in understanding how the trailer is deployed. The project manager, Jonathan Weber, mentioned that 75 percent of the time Local Motion deploys the trailer for community projects that they are providing technical assistance for. Notes on the creation of a success project highlight similar concepts as the guidebook, such as creating a committee, determining a good location, getting appropriate approvals, and planning a timeline for the project.

Relevance

The Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy and Guide is helpful for a community member who wants a better understanding of the methods to implement quick changes in their community's streetscapes. This guide has clear methods on how to engage the community and create a project team. Included in the guide is an inventive solution for storing and maintaining the elements necessary for creating a temporary street activation. The Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit that is managed by the local non-profit organization Local Motion offers a good option for storing public activation materials.

References

The Community-Led Demonstration Project and Guide Mobile Pop-Up Demonstration Project Trailer Manual Pop-Up Kit Inventory List Shared Streets in a Pandemic: Change in Motion during COVID-19

DID YOU ENJOY USING THIS PROTECTED BIKE LANE?

LOCAL

An impromptu discussion about the pros and cons of a parking protected-bike lane occurred between a passing bicyclist, a demonstration project team member, and the local mailman. Photo: Street Plans

BETTER BY BIKE

Tactical Public Realm Guidelines, 2019

City: Boston, MA

Sponsors/Partners: The City of Boston, A Better City, the Barr Foundation

Focus: Tactical public realm interventions

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, high level

Tactical Public Realm Guidelines

August 2018



Tactical Public Realm Guide, cover

Overview

The Tactical Public Realm Guidelines were published through a collaboration between the City of Boston, A Better City, and the Barr Foundation as part of the city's 2017 citywide mobility plan, Go Boston 2030. During the city's community engagement process for the citywide mobility plan, they received feedback that there was a desire to see improvements to the public realm. This feedback also highlighted the current lack of short and long term strategies to improve the underutilized infrastructure in the city. The guidelines were created in response to serve as an introduction to tactical public realm improvements as a method for creating quick and low cost changes to the streetscape.

Included in the document are guidelines on how to take a tactical intervention from inception to installation, with a focus on plazas, parklets, outdoor cafes, and temporary street murals around the city. Each intervention has a section in the guidelines with an overview that describes the intervention, key components, and how that specific intervention works within the structure of the city government. While the overview describes some key elements of the tactical project, it does not go into detail about the specific materials used for a successful installation. The guidelines go on to describe appropriate context and locations for each intervention, as well as the general requirements for installation, such as speed limit, size, access, and emergency access. Lastly, there is a section describing the application and implementation process necessary for each specific project. The guidelines list the steps needed to have one of these interventions installed, including the application that needs to be filled out, the review process, how to work with the on-call consultant provided by the city, and working with the city contractor for the final installation.

Implementation

One of the first projects to be implemented after the publication of the guidelines was Tontine Crescent Plaza, which was installed through a partnership between Millennium Partners, The Boston Transportation Department, and the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District. The "tactical plaza" was installed with plans for a two year implementation to study the installation and collect feedback on how the plaza works before a permanent installation. As the guidelines suggest, the plaza features a painted surface, tables and chairs for people to gather, and large pots with plants to act as a barrier protecting users from motorists. Additionally, the plaza includes a bike lane and public art to define the plaza as a separate place from the street. The location also adheres to the criteria suggested by the guidelines, as it reclaims excess roadway on a historic street in Boston's Downtown Crossing, a hightraffic commercial area in Boston's downtown core.

Relevance

The Tactical Public Realm Guidelines do a good job at introducing the concepts of tactical, low-cost, and temporary improvements to the streetscape. While the guidelines provide ideas of basic materials needed for each intervention, they do not focus on specific materiality or specify the durability and appropriateness of a certain material for a particular improvement. The guidelines also explain the process of installing a tactical project, but they do not make clear how community groups can get involved in the process. This publication provides high level guidelines for established organizations and businesses that could maintain the project.

References

The Tactical Public Realm Guides Tontine Crescent, a model for small public spaces in Boston, opens Downtown Crossing plaza with seating and bike lane with also test traffic patterns Totine Crescent Tactical Plaza

People St: Kit of Part for Parklets, 2020

City: Los Angeles, CA

Sponsors/Partners: The City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Los Angeles Department of Public Works and City Planning, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Focus: Program to increase the amount of plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals installed in the city

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, specific



People St, Kit of Parts for Parklets

Overview

The People St program was developed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Los Angeles Department of Public Works and City Planning, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as a way to transform neighborhoods across the city through public space improvements. The People St program aims to create people places out of underused space, utilize streets as venues for social interaction and community gatherings, and increase safety for people who walk, bike, and take public transportation while encouraging more people to use alternative transportation. Ultimately, the program hopes that through fostering these temporary and low-cost improvements, they can gain public support and political will for more capital-intensive infrastructure improvements.

The People St program consists of multiple documents for guiding changes to the public realm, with each intervention parsed out into separate manuals. For guidance on installing a parklet, there is a Parklet Application Manual, Parklet Kit of Parts, and a Kit of Parts for Parklets Technical Appendix. The Parklet Application Manual describes the uses for a parklet, and goes into further detail about criteria for the community partner, costs, the financial responsibilities of the community partner, operations, location criteria, application process, and steps to lead up to applying. There is an emphasis on which organizations are eligible to apply, on making sure that the partner organizations have the capacity to both maintain the parklet, as well as conduct all necessary community outreach. Community outreach and a bottom-up approach are central to the parklet process, and there is a requirement to submit a form in the application that demonstrates the community partner has talked to the surrounding community.

The Parklet Kit of Parts describes parklet typologies, the components needed to complete parklet, roadbed graphics, signage, and has a section devoted to budgeting. The typologies provided are sidewalk cafe, sidewalk extension, and landscape lounge. Each typology provides multiple iterations at different price points, starting with a base model that is built to be cost-effective for community partners with limited budgets. Each parklet is meant to be built using modular components with standardized details to simply parklet construction with easily accessible materials. The Kit of Parts document specifies a variety of materials for the construction of parklets, such as wood, steel, and pedestal frames for the base and goes into detail about the specific type of materiality for each.

Implementation

One of the successfully installed parklets referenced in the Parklet Application Manual was the Motor Street Parkway, installed in 2016 on a street in downtown Palms, Los Angeles. In 2012, Motor Ave was given a road diet, where a lane was removed and a bike lane was installed, making it a good candidate for a parklet due to the lower traffic volumes. The parklet is in front of a small cafe, and utilizes the Sidewalk Cafe parklet typology that is the most accessible price-point for installation. After installation in 2016, it has been renewed and still exists in its current location.

Relevance

The People St program developed by LADOT is a robust program to produce community led neighborhood transformations through the installation of parklets, plazas, and bike corrals. The guidelines for each intervention are detailed, and help a community partner understand the steps needed to install a parklet, plaza, or bike corral in their community. The Kit of Parts documents that correspond with each treatment is detailed in its typologies and materials selections, but does not go into great detail about where the materials could be purchased or price points. While the People St program documents emphasize that the plans should be led from the ground-up, there is not much detail in each document about how to engage the community in a successful installation.

References

LADOT People St Home Page People St Document Library Parklet Application Manual Kit of Parts for Parklets Eyes on the Street: Parklet Underway on Motor Ave

Parklet in LA Photo: People S1

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A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago, 2008

City: Chicago, IL

Sponsors/Partners: Project for Public Spaces and the Metropolitan Planning Council of Chicago

Focus: A framework for improvements to the city's public spaces through community led- placemaking efforts

Materials + Equipment Guidance: No



A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago

Overview

The Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago was developed through a partnership between the Project for Public Spaces and the Metropolitan Planning Council of Chicago to help guide placemaking efforts throughout the city. The guide places an emphasis on creating community led public spaces through a bottom-up approach, finding that it is a more economical, efficient, and inclusive way to create change than traditional cityled projects. The guide was written for people who want to coordinate and manage a placemaking project, from small to large scale. It aims to help community members define the elements of a successful place, analyze a specific site, facilitate groups of community leaders, and develop plans for immediate, short-term, and long-term site improvements. Ultimately, the guide hopes to help the reader understand the concepts of placemaking and how placemaking can be used to both improve a place but also foster community through the interaction of people and their public spaces.

The guidebook describes placemaking as a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces that engages the community to understand their needs and goals for a particular place. First, the guide sets a standard for successful places by describing 11 principles of placemaking, with the first one being that the community is the expert. The guide also seeks to make clear that the community member should not feel the need to develop a specific plan for their site, but instead can work on programming and economic opportunities to bolster engagement in the site. The guidelines also emphasize the importance of developing a vision and developing short-term actions as a way to test ideas. The "Power of 10" concept is proposed as a good way to start thinking about how to engage people in the space, a concept that proposes that a great place needs to have 10 things to do or 10 reasons to be there in order to properly engage a passerby.

The guide also offers step-by-step guidance on how a community member or organization can develop a placemaking program and engage their surrounding community. The guidance states that first the community members should assess the public space challenges in their neighborhood first to guide their site selection for a placemaking intervention. Once they have selected a site, the guide lists that it is key to identify key stakeholders and gives examples of typical stakeholders for a given project. The steps then go on to list that the community leader should gather data, host an evaluation workshop, create a working plan and a visual conceptual plan, as well as a summary report and presentation. After the vision and summary have been created, the guide mentions that it is key to start designing short term actions and activations of your selected place.

Implementation

After the guidebook was published in 2008, the City Department of Transportation Chicago developed the Make Way for People Program, an initiative to strengthen communities through the creation of neighborhood streets, sidewalks, plazas, and alleys into places for people to sit, eat, and play. By using less expensive materials such as decks, paints, and flower pots spaces can be easily and quickly converted into people centered places. One of the programs out of the Make Way for People ordinance is "People Spots", which reimagines on-street parking as people places not car spaces. These spaces are parklets and placemaking tools that are generated by business owners and maintained by them, and when the Metropolitan Planning Council studied the impact of the placemaking parklet program three years after it had first started they found that 80 percent of business owners felt like the parklet was better for their business.

A People Spot in Bronzeville has been working successfully, and has been activated through jazz nights by the Quad Community Development Corporation, and "Bronzeville Nights", a community event that features arts, cultures, and entertainment.

Relevance

This document is helpful in guiding community members to understand the tenants of placemaking and how to engage the community in a placemaking effort. The principles of placemaking that the document lays out set a good standard for developing a placemaking project, and gives the reader a concrete understanding of the steps to success. The strength of this guide is in how it explains in detail how to engage the community in a project, however the emphasis is on how to create a pop-up demonstration and less on how to create a successful community event, with no emphasis on the specific materiality needed to create a pop-up project or how to program a space.

References

A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago Placemaking Chicago- Chicago's People Spots Chicago Complete Street - Make Way for People CDOT- Make Way for People Placemaking Chicago People Spot Design Guidelines Take in the Chicago skyline



1400

Listen to the tourists' foreign languages

Take a stroll with your family

Smile at Segway riders

Meet friends at a cafe

Rent a bike

Navy Pier, Chicago Photo: Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council

Hear the lake splash and roar

The Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit, 2019

City: N/A

Sponsors/Partners: AARP, Better Block

Focus: Guidelines for community led placemaking efforts

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, detailed





Mix the paint with water. (See the ratios on ; will the pairs with water, (see the ratios on page 4-if using a striping machine, follow the manufacturer guidelines for latex paint. If painting with rollers, us the 5-gallon bucket with a screen, Dip the rollers as



The Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit, p. 25

Overview

The Pop-Up Placemaking toolkit was developed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and Better Block, an urban planning consulting firm, as a way to introduce people to the concept of placemaking and provide steps to develop a successful placemaking project in their community. The toolkit emphasizes that people are at the forefront of creating change and that community residents are integral in identifying and solving challenges in their neighborhoods. Included in the guide are some of the tools of placemaking, such as traffic calming, connectivity, public space, and programming. It notes that a successful project is community driven and also has a definite reason for why it is being proposed, and lists some good examples of definitions for a placemaking project as to test new ideas, to encourage community engagement, to make the case for permanent change, and to engage new residents. The guide is very thorough in its description of both what a placemaking project is, and the steps to taking it from a thought to a finished product.

Included in the toolkit is not just information about what a placemaking project is, but step-by-step instructions on how to develop one in your community, with examples of successful placemaking pop-ups around the country. The first step is listed as selecting a location, with main streets, residential neighborhoods, parks and plazas all provided as good locations for a pop-up placemaking intervention. Other keys for a successful location are provided, such as how it is important to have business buy-in, adjacency to nearby neighborhoods or public buildings, pedestrianfriendly spaces, and how a location with neighborhood support is key for a well done project. The next section describes engaging with the community, with emphasis on creating a team for project implementation that includes people with a wide range of skill sets, from an entrepreneur who can help raise funds for the project, to an artist that can assist with the vision for the space. While the guide does not go very in-depth on how to successfully engage a wide variety of residents, it does list one pro-tip for engagement, which is to host a community walk-and-talk, a walking tour where community members can come and share their opinions about the demonstration proposal and location. This walk-and-talk is seen as a best practice for community engagement, and can be integral to a project's success. Once community input is gathered, the next step is to solidify the concept plan for the pop-up intervention, and this section of the guide offers the elements of pop-up interventions that have worked well in the past. The other steps that the document offers guidance on is determining a budget including making sure that the proper permits are procured for the event.

Implementation

The remaining portion of the document focuses on the implementation phase of a project, including the physical build out of the pop-up intervention and programming of the space through events. The toolkit details how to go about starting to build a project, with specifics on scheduling, volunteer care, and maximizing attendance times. Hosting an event is seen as the last step of a community driven pop-up project, and the document lists a few options for events such as hosting outdoor games and other group activities that will attract visitors to the project and demonstrate how it can be an asset to the community. The recipe portion of the document goes into greater specifics around particular types of projects, the typical materials and supplies needed for the project, and tips and recommendations for successful completion. One beginner recipe talks about how to implement a temporary green bike lane, and includes a list of materials needed for a bike lane, such as a push broom, measuring tape, traffic cone, water source and more. There is a page that shows each part of the process, from sweeping the street, to mixing and laying down the paint, and finally striping the bike lane with white duct tape.

Relevance

The Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit operates as both an introduction to placemaking projects, as well as an instructional guide on how to develop a project from start to finish. It is successful in laying out the steps required for the successful completion of a pop-up intervention, with details on both the steps to engage the community and pay for the project. The recipes for the intervention are a useful tool in helping a reader visualize potential projects, with the recipes listing out the detailed steps and materials needed to complete the project. This level of detail is not seen in many of the other guides, but still, there is not much focus on programming the space or greater detail provided on where to obtain the materials or what they may cost.

References

The Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit

City Walk Demonstration Project Photo: Street Plans

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Better Block in a Box, 2020

City: Anywhere

Sponsors/Partners: Better Block

Focus: Materials for placemaking events

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Yes, detailed



Better Block in a Box shipping container in McKinney, Texas

Overview

The Better Block in a Box is a placemaking tool created by the non-profit Better Block. The box is a shipping container full of all the materials needed to create a placemaking event, and can be rented from Better Block and shipped to the community. It includes all of the elements to create a successful event, such as places for people to sit, string lights, shade, and places for people to play such as a corn hole set and a giant game board. Once all of the elements are emptied from the box, Better Block suggests using the block to create a makeshift bar, check-in kiosk, or gallery.
Implementation

The town of McKinney, Texas rented the container from Better Block as a way to increase local foot traffic and sales to downtown merchants through the creation of 'pop-up' events. The town of McKinney partnered with Better Block for a six-month partnership to host the box and to plan activations using the elements inside the box. The box is residing in the town on a local street, but the plan is for it to be used by city departments and non-profit organizations. The box was funded by the McKinney Community Development Corp. for \$66,000. Using the elements inside of the box, the town was able to host a pop-up beer garden and as a check-in station for the city's wine and music festival.

Relevance

The Better Block in a Box offers a model for materials distribution that could be replicated in the District. Renting the box and having it shipped to a neighborhood seems like it would be a barrier for underserved communities, this idea would be better replicated at the local level with the box centrally located in each ward. The price of the box also seems quite high and at an inaccessible price point for community groups looking to stage quick and small scale events. However, the idea of having all the elements needed for an event at one easily accessible location is unique.

References

<u>Block in a Box</u>

Better Block Foundation Stops by Frenchtown, Tallahassee McKinney adds activated spaces with Better Block in a Box program McKinney's downtown feature is geared towards pedestrians

São Paulo Centro Aberto Pilot Projects, 2013

City: São Paulo, Brazil

Sponsors/Partners: Gehl, NGO Cidade Ativa, Superintendence of Landscape Design at São Paulo Urbanismo, Municipality of São Paulo

Focus: Pilot project implementation and public life surveys and engagement

Materials + Equipment Guidance: No



Centro Aberto Plaza intervention

Overview

In 2013 the Municipality of São Paulo worked with Cidade Ativa to install public space interventions in two plazas in the central downtown area of the city. Two squares, Largo São Francisco and Largo Paissandu were transformed with decking, bicycle parking, crosswalks with pedestrian protection, a playground and moveable furniture. The space was then activated with temporary activities with bands coming to play, artistic performances, and film screenings, as well as activities for children. Cidade Ativa worked on the project site for two months evaluating the project and collecting data on the usage of the space, as well as talking to visitors about their vision for the space.

Implementation

The project team used Gehl's Public Space, Public Life methodology to understand how the spaces were being used. The team counted people crossing the street outside of designated crossings, and observing what people did when they entered the newly designed spaces. The project team found that the changes to the spaces improved people's impressions of the public spaces, and places that were found to be problematic before the intervention were viewed positively afterwards. The team emphasized careful furniture selection was important to the success of creating identity around the spaces, such as the selection of beach chairs that invoke a feeling of fun and playfulness, while also giving the space a feeling of a place to relax and linger. They also made sure to invest in high quality and durable materials for the space. Each plaza was assigned a local manager that became responsible for maintaining the space, including caring for the movable furniture, talking to and answering questions of users, and helping to plan and support the activities. The project team also worked on creating thoughtful activations of the space, such as hip hop battles, and an open-air cinema that was hosted in the plaza as a way to bring people together in the evening, during a time when the downtown is viewed as less safe.

Relevance

The public space installation in São Paulo shows the importance of activating public spaces as a way to bring people and life to a public space. Both the selection of the materials, as well as the selection of the activity in the space are important, as the right material will indicate to a passerby that they are invited to linger in the space, and the right activation will increase the public perception of the area as a place to stay after hours. However, both the space and the activities were planned by the government without community input, and it did not seem like the materials in the plaza were available for people to rent or use for their own ideas.

References

<u>São Paulo Pilot Project - Behind the Scenes</u> <u>Centro Aberto</u>

Berkley Tool Library, 1979

City: Berkeley, CA

Sponsors/Partners: Berkeley Public Library

Focus: Lending library for tools

Materials + Equipment Guidance: Not relevant



Tool Lending Library

Overview

A lending library inside of Berkeley Public Library's South Branch where Berkley residents over the age of 18 can check out a variety of tools. The library was established through a federal grant in 1979, and was first established in a portable trailer with around 500 tools inside. The tools inside were available to low-income residents for free, and between 50¢ and \$3.00 for those at higher income levels. Once it expanded to the library, all the tools became free for any Berkeley resident 18 years of age or older to borrow. Residents are allowed to borrow up to 10 tools at a time.

Implementation

The tools must be reserved online through their tool lending catalog. On the library website, they have a published list of available tools, and also a search bar method to locate different types of tools that you may be looking for. Residents are also able to place holds on the tools, and the library will send notifications when the item is available for pickup. There are online instructions on how to place a hold on an item using a library card through a separate tool catalog.

Relevance

The Berkeley lending library model has proved to be successful, and could be adapted for the rental of public space activation materials. The lending library attached to a public space already associated with borrowing, a public library, helps to make it accessible for those who may not be familiar with many other public programs. Working within an already established lending system lowers the barrier to entry on lending and makes it clear both what the tool library is and what it is for.

References

<u>Berkley Public Library - Tool Lending Library</u> <u>Berkeley Tool Lending Library</u>



DC Open Streets, Georgia Ave, 2019 Photo: DC Office of Planning See.

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Process

Street Plans and the DC Office of Planning conducted interviews with eight organizations in DC to better understand public space activations within the District. The goal of these interviews was to find out what events organizations put on within their community, the barriers the organizations face during the planning and execution of events, and how the DC Office of Planning can better assist community organizations in creating public space activations. Street Plans also sought to learn if activity creators would use a materials resource library, what materials would be most useful in a library, and accessible library locations for each organization and neighborhood. Each of these interviews will guide the Your City, Your Spaces document, as well as influence the materials and locations of the resource library.

Street Plans and the DC Office of Planning talked to three types of organizations to understand how public space activations are created, consumed, and regulated at the community and government levels. The public space activity creators we spoke to were both large-scale and well-resourced organizations, such as the Mount Vernon Triangle Community Improvement District (CID), and smaller scale and less-resourced organizations, such as the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (NCA). The four creator organizations were located in four different areas of the city, including Ward 5, Ward 7, and Ward 8. The DC Pedestrian Advisory Council was interviewed as consumers, to understand how pedestrians and vulnerable groups use and Governmental regulators of public space were also interviewed to provide information about how the District's different governmental bodies work with the community to help them plan activities for public spaces within the confines of the District's regulations.



Creators:

Mount Vermon Triangle CID

Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

Marshall Heights Community Center

Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation

Consumers:

DC Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC)

Regulators:

The District Department of Transportation Mayor's Office of Community Affairs

Summary

Creators



Farmer's Market Photo: Mount Vermont Triangle

The four creator organizations were each asked about what types of public space activities they put on in their neighborhood, and while each one of these organizations ranges in size, location, and level of resources, they all responded with similar typologies of events. Fairs, music, outdoor movies, and farmer markets were all listed as events that these organizations put on during a normal year. As for DC specific events, half of the organizations named Art All Night as an event they participate in regularly. Each organization had some events specific to their organization and neighborhood needs, such as a yearly yard sale and gardening show put on by the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association, Ward 7 Day and Marshall Heights Day hosted by the Marshall Heights Community Center, and Springfest put on by the Mount Triangle CID. While all these activities vary in size and scope, each organization emphasized how events are a key part of their work, and how important they are to bringing the community together.

When asked about issues or barriers to creating public space activities in the District, all four organizations shared similar concerns. Half of the organizations mentioned issues with understanding the permitting process for events, as well as how coordinating with the different government agencies involved in creating an event can be difficult and cumbersome. All four of the organizations mentioned that lack of space was a barrier to creating public space activities, with the Mount Vernon Triangle CID, Marshall Heights Community Center, and Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation (CDC) mentioned that their neighborhoods have limited open space, and Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association stated that there is a lack of good environments for events in their community. Other issues mentioned were access to electricity and necessary infrastructure for events, issues with securing funding to put on events, and security issues. Brookland NCA, located in Ward 5, stated that struggles with people experiencing homelessness and the ongoing opioid crisis in their community are barriers to the creation of community events, as it reduces the feeling of safety in their neighborhoods.

Creator organizations from Wards 5, 7, and 8 emphasized that they could use greater resources from the DC Office of Planning to help plan and execute public space activities. From requesting a specific person to reach out to with questions, to needing staff support for events, the three organizations all expressed that having more direct assistance from the Office of Planning would go a long way in bringing successful events to their community. Both Congress Heights CDC and Mount Vernon Triangle CID stated that execution would be beneficial. Streamlining the permitting process was also mentioned, as well as help with finding funding for events. Mount Vernon Triangle again emphasized the need for power, and wifi access was mentioned by multiple organizations as a need. Overall, under-resourced neighborhoods would benefit from a direct connection to someone at the Office of Planning to connect them to resources and answer questions around permitting issues.

All of the organizations interviewed were interested in borrowing materials from a resource library. Most mentioned locations in their similar neighborhoods that would be accessible to a wide variety of people, such as local libraries, recreation centers, public plazas, and Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) centers. Materials that the organizations are interested in seeing available are seats, chairs, projectors, generators, bounce houses, stages, tents, and a mobile hotspot. Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association mentioned that games such as large chess boards and pieces, bubbles, and badminton sets would also be nice to have easily accessible. Power and wifi were seen as consistent issues, so access to both would be key for all future events.

Consumers



DC Pedestrian Advisory Council Photo: DC PAC As for the consumers of the space, the DC Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) had a different set of programming concerns from the creators. Their key points throughout the interview were that activated spaces, such as slow streets and streeteries, do not effectively communicate that they are pedestrian spaces and can be confusing for people with vision impairments. The barriers to creating activated spaces the DC PAC identified were that streetscape changes are disorienting for people with vision impairments and people with permanent vision loss, as they operate with a mental map. They mentioned that the inclusion of contrasting colors, flyers explaining what is happening, and cane detectable infrastructure are all key elements in a pedestrian friendly event for the vision impaired. As for desired materials for a resource library, the DC PAC stated that they would like to see tents and umbrellas for shade during the hot summer months, seating areas, and coolers to provide water. They also mentioned the importance of branding and marketing to explain what is going on and how pedestrians are allowed to use the space.

Overall, they continued to emphasize the importance of inclusion and ensuring the safety and prioritization of pedestrians, especially visually impaired pedestrians, in all public space activations.

Regulators



Re-imagined 18th Street in Adams Morgan Photo: ggwash.org

The public space activation regulators assist community organizations in both activating the public realm, and also provide the framework for what can be done in public spaces. The Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (MOCA), including the Office of Nightlife and Culture, and the Office of the Clean City stated that they create outdoor dining opportunities through the new streeteries program implemented during the pandemic, and also host the Adopt-A-Block program and focus groups with residents. DDOT stated that they do not work with communities to activate public spaces, but instead issue permits for events such as block parties, street eateries, art in the right of way, sidewalk cafes, and holiday markets. When asked how the Office of Planning could better assist communities in creating public space activities, both MOCA and DDOT mentioned that regulatory agencies need to move away from the notion of 'no' and think outside the box because the bureaucratic mindset is a hindrance to getting things done. They emphasized the importance of political will for advancing things quickly, and how the pandemic has made it clear that agencies can quickly pivot when need be, and that attitude should be applied to future improvements to the public realm. Both regulatory agencies were excited by the idea of a materials library and thought that a resource library full of pre-approved materials would assist communities in quickly creating events, as would an understanding of the permitting process. DDOT mentioned that it would be best for communities to work within the current permitting structure to plan events, such as the block party permit, which can be easily adapted to many types of activations.

Key Findings

Finding 1: Permits

The current permitting process and the requirement to coordinate with multiple government agencies to plan an event is a barrier for many communities in activating their public spaces.

Finding 2: Selecting Spaces

The lack of availability of quality public space in each neighborhood is a barrier for communities in activating their public spaces.

Finding 3: Materials

Community organizations, especially underfunded ones, would benefit from greater resources from the Office of Planning to create public space activities in their neighborhoods.

Finding 4: Storage Models

Both creators, consumers, and regulator organizations would benefit from improved intergovernmental coordination in the planning and execution of public space events.

Finding 5: Lending Library

All of the organizations we interviewed thought that their organization would benefit from a materials resource library where they could rent materials and equipment.



Riverside, CA Public Space Activation Materials Photo: Street Plans

Materials, Tools, + Equipment Matrix

This matrix organizes how 64 different materials, tools, and pieces of equipment may be used to support and/or implement a wide range of neighborhood-led activities. While not definitive, each facing page coordinates how each may be applied to each type of neighborhood activity category and public space type.

Material	Cost	Source	Durability
Duct Tape	\$3 - \$5 per roll	Hardware Store, Craft Store	Low
Painter's Tape	\$3 - \$5 per roll	Hardware Store, Paint Store	Low
Electrical Tape	\$3 - \$10 per roll	Hardware Store	Low
Reflective Tape	\$8 - \$10 per roll	Hardware Store, Craft Store	Medium
Traffic Tape	\$55 - \$60 per roll	Traffic Supply Company	Low
Tempera Paint	\$10 - \$15 / gallon	Craft Store	Low
Spray Chalk	\$7 - \$12 / can	Hardware Store	Low
Sidewalk Chalk	\$20 / pack	Craft Store	Low
Plastic Buckets	\$3 - \$10 / bucket	Hardware Store, General Store	Medium
Plastic Dropcloth	\$2 - \$7 / unit	Hardware Store	Low
Astro Turf	\$.75 - \$3.50 / sq. ft.	Gardening Supply or Hardware Store	Medium
Sod	\$.25/sq. ft.	Gardening Supply or Hardware Store	Low to Medium
Garden Soil	\$8 - \$12 / bag	Gardening Supply or Hardware Store	Low to Medium
Plants/Flowers	Varies	Gardening Supply or Hardware Store	Low to Medium
Hay Bale	\$10 - \$40 / bale	Gardening Supply or Hardware Store	Medium
Cinder Block	\$1.25 - \$4 / block	Lumberyard or Construction Supply	High
Shipping Pallets	\$1 - \$10 / pallet or free	Reclaim for parks, construction sites, or big box stores	Medium
Wooden Crate	\$9 - \$15/ crate	Home Depot, Craft Store	High
Milk Crate	\$5 - \$15 / crate	Online	High
Signs	Varies	Print Shop	Low to High

Neighborhood Activity Applications	Sidewalks + Plazas	Parklets	Alleys	Street Closures	Other/Interim Open Spaces	Parks
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CH =	Culture	÷	Heritage
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D = Demonstration PS =

PS = Play + Socialization

SSC = Small Scale Commercial

= Appropriate

Tools	Cost	Source	Durability
Chalk Line	\$5 - \$20 / unit	Hardware Store	Medium
Tape Measure	\$10 - \$30 / unit	Hardware Store	High
Scissors	\$5 - \$10 / pair	Hardware Store	Medium
Roller Frames	\$7-\$25/unit	Hardware Store	High
Roller Tray	\$3 - \$8 / unit	Hardware Store	Low
Stencil	\$50 - \$200 / stencil	Printer, Fabricator	Medium
Broom	\$10-\$20 / broom	Hardware Store	Medium
Push Broom	\$10 - \$25 / broom	Hardware Store	Medium
Trash Can	\$40 - \$110 / can	Hardware Store	Medium
Power Cleaner	\$150 - \$1,500 / unit	Hardware Store, Industrial Tool Supply Company	High
Hammer	\$10 - \$20 / hammer	Hardware Store	High
Mallet	\$5 - \$12 / mallet	Hardware Store	High
Power Drill	\$20 - \$80 / unit	Hardware Store	High
Trowel	\$5 - \$10 / trowel	Hardware Store	High
Shovel	\$5 - \$10 / shovel	Hardware Store	High
Zip Ties	\$5 - \$14 / bag	Hardware Store, Craft Store	Medium

Activation Type	Sidewalks + Plazas	Parklets	Alleys	Street Closures	Other/Interim Open Spaces	Parks
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CH, D, PS, SSC						
CH, D						
CH, D						
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Equipment	Cost	Source	Durability
Performance Stage	\$300 - \$3,000 / stage	The Stage Depot	High
Microphone	\$50 - \$100 / microphone	Electronics Stores	High
Speaker	\$170 - \$400 / unit	Electronics Stores	High
Generator	\$800 - \$2000 / unit	Hardware Store	High
Power Strip	\$5 - \$40 / unit	Electronics Stores, Online Retailer	High
Extension Cord	\$5 - \$50 / unit	Hardware Store, Electronics Stores	High
Wifi Hotspot	\$150 - \$1,500 / unit	Electronics store, Big Box Retailer, Computer Store	High
Projector	\$80 - \$550 / unit	Electronics Stores, Online Retailer	High
Screen	\$20 - \$90 / screen	Electronics Stores, Online Retailer	Medium
String Lights	\$20 - \$50 / box	Hardware Store, Online Retailer	Medium
Charcoal Grill	\$90 - \$180/ grill	Hardware Store	High
Cooler	\$25 - \$200 / unit	Hardware Store	High
Games (chess, checkers, cornhole, etc)	\$25 - \$250 / game	Specialty Store, Online Retailer	Medium
Bounce House	\$400 - \$3,000 / unit	Online Retailers, Big Box Retailer	High
Bubble Machine	\$30 - \$1,000 / unit	Electronics Store, Big Box Retailer, Party Store	High
Hose	\$30 - \$1,000 / unit	Hardware Store, Garden Supply Store	High
Water Mister	\$10 - \$70 / unit	Hardware Store, Big Box Retailer, Online Retailer	High
Chairs	\$15 - \$120 / chair	Outdoor Furniture Supplier, Big Box Retailer	High
Folding Table	\$20 - \$165 / table	Outdoor Furniture Supplier, Big Box Retailer	High
Movable Umbrella	\$50 - \$120 / umbrella	Outdoor Furniture Supplier, California Umbrella	High
10' x 10' Tent	\$60 - \$350 / tent	Outdoor Furniture Supplier, Hardware Store	High
Traffic Cone	\$12 - \$22 / unit	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium
Wave Delineators	N/A	Saris	Medium
Type 2 Barricade	\$35 - \$60 / unit	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium
French Barricade	\$70 - \$100 / unit	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium
Flexible Delineator	\$30 - \$50 / delineator	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium
Delineator Tube	\$15 - \$18 / delineator	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium
ADA Ramp	\$90 - \$170 / ramp	Traffic Supply Company, online	Medium

Activation Type	Sidewalks + Plazas	Parklets	Alleys	Street Closures	Other/Interin	n Open Spaces	Parks
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CH = Culture + Heritage	e D = Demonstration	PS = Play ·	+ Socialization	SSC = Small Scal	e Commercial	= Appropriate	



