



tactical

placemaking for

tompkins county

tompkins county x cornell university design connect



photo by <http://www.claudecormier.com>

a special thank you to

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executive summary

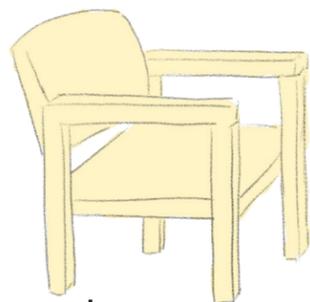
Everything you need to know in a few pages.



DIY tactics to improve neighborhood quality of life



cheap materials to upcycle and use for interventions



countless creative solutions

Maybe cars go too fast down your street. Maybe you and your neighbors have been looking for a community gathering space. Maybe, there is an ugly, cracking slab of concrete on your block that is hurting the neighborhood character.

If you're looking for solutions, you've come to the right place.

This is the Tactical Placemaking Guide for Tompkins County. In it, we will explain how any citizen can become an agent of positive change in their neighborhood. All you need are some low cost materials, this guide, and a whole lot of enthusiasm for civic hacking.

We hope that this book will help you investigate into the problems your community faces and come up with creative solutions. We hope that in the process, neighbors will become partners, and local officials will become friends. More than anything, we hope that this toolkit won't collect dust on a shelf— but get worn and torn, accidentally dropped in paint, covered in soil, and used as a coaster in some parklet somewhere in the world.

Good luck, and have fun!

What is Tactical Placemaking?

Let's say there's an issue in your neighborhood that hasn't been addressed.

Odds are, you aren't a city planner or public works engineer. But you're still a citizen that is affected by the physical environment around you. So you need the problem solved, but you aren't sure how to solve it. What happens next?

You try telling the neighborhood association, government, or formal entity in charge...

...but it isn't effective this time. Whether it's because of a lack of money or lack of responsiveness, the problem won't be fixed as soon as you would like (or sometimes, need!).

And you learn that it *doesn't matter* that you aren't a city planner or engineer: **you can make your neighborhood better** using the information in this guide.

So, you grab this book, and flip through it.

But you don't have a lot of time or money to spend doing it.

Which is why this guide focuses on LQC tactics, meaning that all the interventions within this book are meant to be *lighter, quicker, and cheaper*, and usually temporary!

And with a little planning, a few dollars, and some help from your neighbors and friends...

You bring one of the interventions in this book to life. If it's a success, your problem has been solved and you and your party of civic minded tactical placemakers learned a great deal in the process. If it doesn't work out as intended, you learn more about the issue and those lessons will better inform your next try— all for very little money and time.

a tactical placemaker's dictionary

space

Any physical environment at the pedestrian level. In this guide, we call something “space” when it is rather unremarkable, lacks life or investment, or is empty or neglected.

place

The opposite of space: a physical environment that has its own character, is somewhere that is often used as a geographic reference point (“meet me next to the ‘___’”), or a place that people want to spend time in or around.

urban/city planning

The study of cities and towns, or any unit that is the physical expression of social organization.

intervention

An action or project that promotes desired changes by altering an environment. In this book, we call tactical placemaking projects (like parklets, chairdrops, and pop-up parks) *interventions*.

precedent

Past examples of tactical placemaking that serve as a model for an intervention.

tactical placemaking

The use of low-cost, temporary materials to make improvements to the physical environment, particularly with the intent of bringing people together.

toolkit

A resource containing a set of guidelines with specific interventions and necessary supplies to conduct tactical placemaking.

charrette

A process of surveying community members and relevant stakeholders to assess the needs and desires of a community.

connectivity

The ease and enjoyment at which a person can travel between two or more points in a city or town.

charrette

A process of surveying community members and relevant stakeholders to assess the needs and desires of a community.

walkability

The ability to accomplish common errands on foot. Typically a product of dense and well-connected cities and towns.

elements of the city

node

A place of connectivity, where paths intersect or meet, often where people congregate, or where there is a noteworthy punctuation in the physical environment.

path

A well-used way or track to get from one point to another, or several, point(s).

district

A large area that encompasses a single, cohesive environment or neighborhood, typically composed of many smaller units or buildings.

edge

Any facet of the physical environment that marks the end of one area and the start of another; a break in the continuity or flow of a place.

landmark

A feature of the physical environment that is easily seen from any distance, particularly that someone could use to establish their location.

theoretical framework

Throughout this guide, we'll be referencing two big ideas: "Tactical Urbanism" and the idea of city elements. Tactical Urbanism is a new movement pioneered by urban planner Mike Lydon as a practice of "short-term action, long term change". In his book, he writes that Tactical Urbanism is "an approach to urban change that features the following five characteristics:

1. a deliberate, phased approach to instigating change
2. the offering of local solutions for local planning challenges
3. short-term commitment and realistic expectations
4. low-risks, with a possibly high reward
5. and the development of social capital between citizens and the building of organizational capacity between public-private institutions, nonprofits, and their constituents"

Mike Lydon's ideas advocate for sustainable buildings, streets, neighborhoods, and cities through grassroots activism. This movement arose as a way to put more power into the hands of the people that live, work, and play in cities and towns every day.

The second idea comes from a book called "The Image of the City" by an urban theorist named Kevin Lynch. In his book, he studies some of the biggest cities in America in the attempt to understand how we, as everyday people, navigate our physical environments.

After five years of study, he concluded that we make "mental maps" of our cities and towns, and that those mental maps can always be broken

down into five elements: nodes, paths, districts, edges, and landmarks. We dive a little deeper into this idea in Chapter Two: Identifying Areas.



Park(ing) day photo by iomarch; Flickr Creative Commons

tactical placemaking

Our primary goal for this project was to create a citizen's guide to tactical urbanism with an emphasis on placemaking. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces; it is both a process and a philosophy. It is a process in that it uses low-cost, temporary materials to exhibit what a space could be in the future, with the hopes of garnering public support, investment, and (most importantly) input. Placemaking is a philosophy in that it capitalizes on a local community's assets and aspirations with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being. In placemaking, it is people (not cars, highways, or 30-story glass towers) that are the most important thing in a city.

CityLab, a popular urban planning magazine, describes it as "Guerrilla gardening. Pavement-to-parks. Open streets. These are all urban interventions of a sort – quick, often

temporary, cheap projects that aim to make a small part of a city more lively or enjoyable. These types of projects have grown in popularity in recent years, and they even have a new name: tactical urbanism, as in tactics used to improve the urban environment. These tactics tend to be replicable across cities, and in certain instances have become worldwide phenomena."

This guide is a compendium of materials, best practices, resources, and specific site suggestions, all in the hopes that you use the contents to create your own ideas and interventions.

Short term Action, Long Term Change

When you think of the word "toolkit" you probably envision a box of wrenches, screws, nuts, bolts, hammers, and nails, used for fixing broken things and creating new things altogether. This "toolkit" for tactical placemaking is no different. In it lies all the "tools" you need to pull up your sleeves and make an intervention on your own. With this guide, we wanted to assist the engaged citizens of Tompkins County and influence the decision-making process of county legislators so that the county could be better together.

With a focus on enlivening specific places in the county with small scale tactical projects, we hope to bring immediate benefits to the spaces themselves and the people who use them. This toolkit will help readers identify problems and arrive at solutions.

Design Connect is a multi-disciplinary, student-run, community design organization based at Cornell University. We are rooted in collaborative, democratic, and sustainable principles for the advancement of towns in upstate New York.

Founded in 2008, Design Connect provides design and planning services for local municipalities and nonprofits that may not have the resources to hire professionals while offering practical experience to students.

Our team consisted of thirteen members, both undergraduate and graduate students, from Cornell University. The team was comprised of a variety of disciplines, from urban planning to art & design, and even health and biology.



identifying areas

The first step to a successful intervention is picking a good spot. The following chapter explains the best way to do just that.

So, first things first. Before we get into *how* to do tactical placemaking, a more important question to ask is *where*. The success of your intervention depends heavily on how appropriate the space is.

Think of each intervention like a flower you are planting in a garden. There is good soil, where any flower planted would thrive. Then there is bad soil: places where, no matter what you plant, you will have difficulty. In this same way, some places are better suited for tactical placemaking interventions than others.

For example, putting a parklet on the side of a 65-mph freeway isn't going to make the space any more pedestrian friendly. But putting a parklet on a well-used street that just needs a little T.L.C. to make it blossom is a good use of this kind of practice.

In this chapter, we'll show some examples as well explain as the general philosophies they follow.

the image of the city

In 1960, urban theorist Kevin Lynch wrote a book

called "The Image of the City". In his book, he studied Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles trying to figure out how every day people navigated their environments. After five years of study, he concluded that we make mental maps of cities using just five elements: nodes, paths, districts, edges, and landmarks. We often use this method to break any place, whether big or small, down to the human level. Here are each of the elements explained a further:

nodes

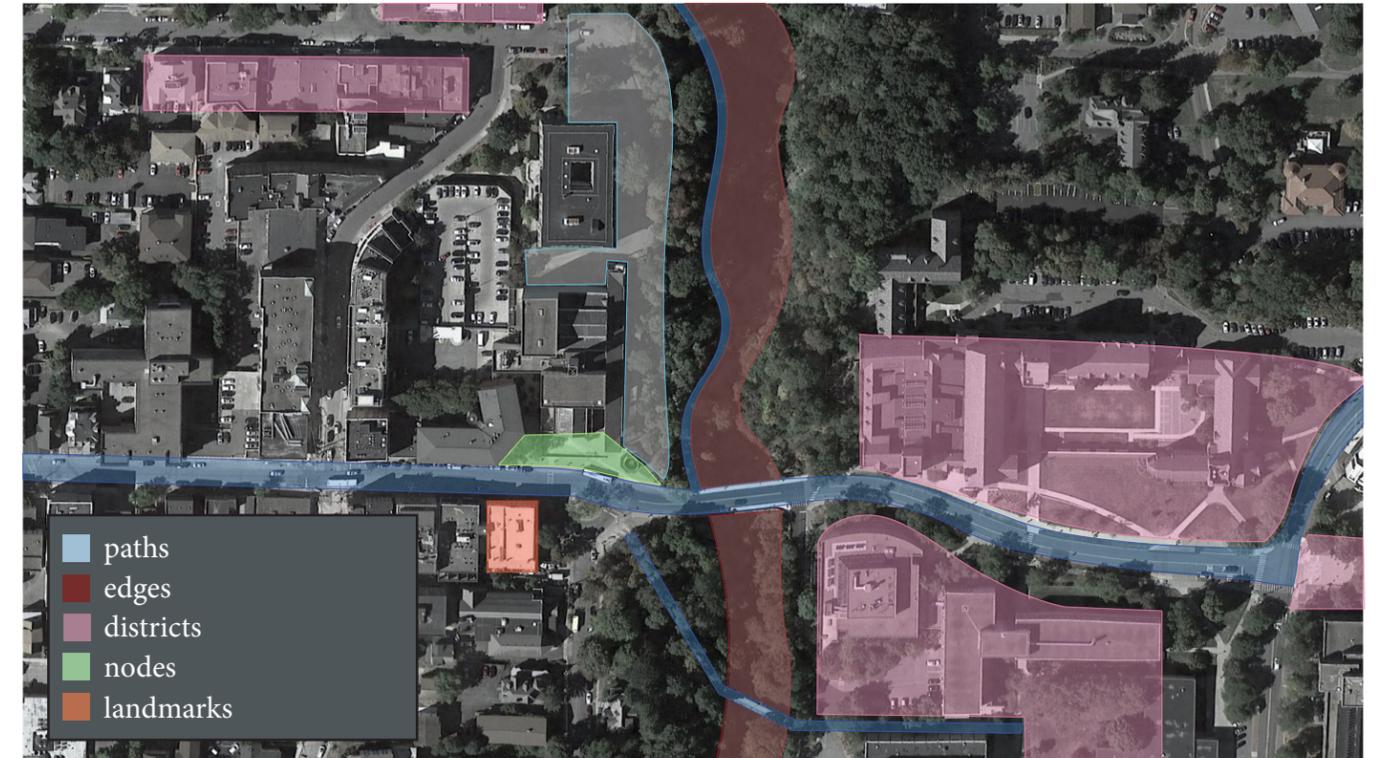
Think of a node as a major point of life, where paths cross and people tend to meet and greet one another. A node is a noteworthy place; a focal point of connection. Examples include: a busy street intersection with lots of sidewalk cafes and people about, a bustling plaza in the heart of a city or town, a gathering space for activities.

paths

A path is a well-traveled route between one point and another (or several other) point(s). The way you get to work, what ways you use when you walk through a park, or how you maneuver through a city or town are all paths.

districts

Districts are large areas composed of smaller buildings or units that all share a common



an image of ithaca: collegetown organized into paths (blue), nodes (green), districts (pink), edges (red), and landmarks (orange). The slice in white, outline in turquoise is the location of our intervention example.

characteristic, whether that's their purpose (an arts and entertainment district, for example), or just their proximity to one another (a neighborhood, or collection of neighborhoods, could be a district).

landmarks

Any building, statue, public plaza, park, tree, or any significant physical attribute that somebody could use to establish their location could be a landmark. If you find yourself commonly using some aspect of your physical environment as a reference point ("meet me next to ____") its most likely a fitting landmark.

edges

An edge is any barrier, boundary, or interruption in the physical environment. A wide road or highway that cuts off one pedestrian-friendly area from another, a river or gorge, an empty parking lot, or simply a part of a district that ceases to flow, are all edges.

identifying areas: ithaca

Because the team lives in Ithaca, we were able to scan the city for underutilized spaces with greater context. And as far as underutilization goes, nothing is quite a missing tooth like Eddy Gate.

Eddy Gate was built in the early 1900s as a way to mark the entrance of Cornell’s campus, but it has since then become a rather strange addition to the streetscape that itself has the look of a lost and confused traveler. The grandeur of the ornate brick and metal workings seem to welcome visitors into a great place- however, there isn’t much beyond it besides neglected asphalt and landscaping.

This is particularly unfortunate because of the area that surrounds it. The intersection where the Eddy Gate pathway begins is the joining node of many other vital paths, including College Avenue coming off the bridge from Cornell and into Collegetown (arguably the most trafficked connector between campus and the neighborhood), the Fall Creek walkway coming from the Commons, the bridge from the Engineering Quad, and the Collegetown Bagels and Schwartzman plazas. On the other end (where the gate stands) is met by “Restaurant Row”. Walk by this intersection at any point of any day and you will find one of the liveliest streetscapes in Tompkins County.

The Eddy Gate is a major hole in an otherwise well connected urban landscape. At best, it is a dreary short cut to lower Collegetown. At worst, it is an

unlit alley that many people avoid after dark. The good news is that it has incredible potential, and it hasn’t gone unnoticed: Cornell University and the City of Ithaca have looked at Eddy Gate as a potential investment for years. But for one reason or another, despite plans and renderings, the money just hasn’t been available.

That’s where tactical placemaking comes in.

The Eddy Gate space passes a few of our benchmarks: an improvement to the space would also be a massive improvement to neighborhood connectivity, there are already successful people-attracting spaces nearby, and low-cost, temporary materials are appropriate here. This is an intervention that wouldn’t require too much bureaucratic maneuvering. In the photo to the right, you see a rendering of what that could look like: a dark corridor turned comfortable pop-up park.

We found Eddy Gate the same way you have found (or will find) spaces near you: we live, work, and play in Collegetown every day. This power of this kind of wisdom- the wisdom of the every day citizen- should never be underestimated.



identifying areas: trumansburg

The team visited Trumansburg on a Monday evening. We walked down the main street in the downtown area, which primarily consisted of commercial shops and restaurants. We encountered parts of the gorges and creeks incorporated into the town. Many of the stores were within the Business Improvement District (BID), and the streets were very well-maintained with flower pots and other decorations that embellished the overall look of the town.

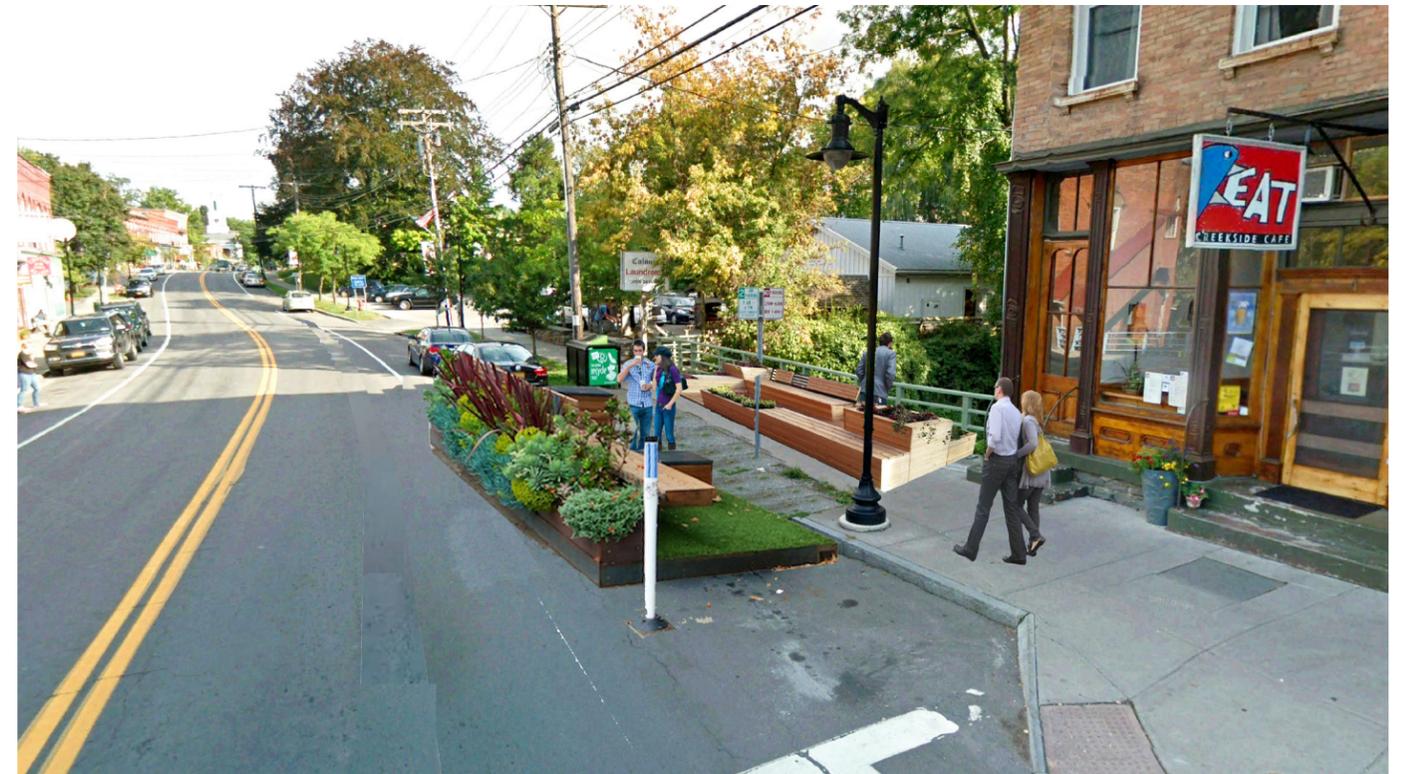
There were relatively few people outside in the town, which may have been a consequence of the time and day of the initial site visit. We did encounter bicycle riders but failed to see any bicycle lanes. We had the opportunity to speak with two local residents, who spoke about a program conducted within the elementary schools that provided a walking tour of the town to expose students to the architecture of different buildings.



In choosing areas to implement tactical placemaking, we sought to incorporate the unique aspects the town could readily offer. We decided to make more use of the creek that passed through the main street. It was a severely overlooked natural landscape that could be celebrated by a larger number of residents if seating was available and the overall atmosphere permitted.

Secondly, there exists a large, vacant plot of land behind a coffee shop off of Main Street. We chose to utilize this space such that residents who were eating could enjoy outdoor seating as well as other food options. We felt that individuals would feel comfortable sitting and eating in this particular space, as there is less vehicular traffic on this street. We saw that these two aspects could promote more residents to be outdoors while appreciating the previously underutilized spaces within their own town.

In our examples for Trumansburg, we focused on in-fill development: placemaking in the forgotten spaces in-between. Not only does this make a landscape more rich, but it also improves connectivity for the entire town. In the first intervention (right), we transformed a parking lot into a gathering space. In our second intervention (below), we chose an often overlooked natural asset (Trumansburg Creek) to celebrate while also giving some car space back to people, making a parklet/sidewalk cafe.



identifying areas: dryden

The team visited downtown Dryden Village on a Sunday afternoon. We noticed much open space such as the Time Square as well as the large lawn near the church and Dryden Town Historical Society building. The town center, which was decorated with plants and benches, was located on the crossroads of the Main Street and the North-South Street.



We encountered problems when attempting to find another crosswalk along the North-South Street and had to walk a great distance before we could cross the busy street. On our visit, we witnessed a dog run into traffic and get hit by a car, demonstrating the need to slow traffic. The area also accommodates a senior living home and lacks paved sidewalks.

The issues facing Dryden were clear, it lacked connectivity and safety, there were long roads where there were no crossroads as well as areas that

were really poorly connected together with poor sidewalks.

A few areas stood out to us, such as the old-folks home being disconnected from the rest of main street despite being close to it. There was an open area near the old folks home where a potential playground could be built that would allow the elders, parents and children to mingle.

In our first example (top right), a fallen log and gravel patch become a pop-up playground for children, using mostly existing materials.

In our second example, we target the fast traffic and lack of crosswalk and connectivity (in fact, on Dryden's main road, crosswalks are 1000 feet apart). 3-D painted crosswalks are unique in that, if done right, they appear flat from the pedestrian perspective but raised from the drivers perspective, slowing traffic. In the distance, the empty patch of grass becomes a playspace. This field is well maintained and underutilized, and being in close proximity to many community areas, could serve as a node.



identifying areas: groton

Upon arrival in Groton, the team noticed a absence of street life. Signs of activity were certainly present within the town, as there were many local businesses, particularly concentrated within one corner of the town, as well as a public library. There was also an updated sign listing the town's events. However, no foot or automobile traffic was present.

Behind the more populated corner of town, the team discovered a cozy wooden bridge that led into a isolated but quite comfortable park. We immediately considered how we might best increase the connection between the main road and the park.

Groton presents a contrasting case for tactical placemaking. It has a number of interesting, developed public spaces, which either due to their location or lack of dense population, remain



underutilized. However, things like the Halloween-themed tire-art showed considerable promise in terms of citizen investment and engagement.

In order to activate the streets of Groton, it would be necessary to understand how the vacant public spaces can be tied to daily activities of the residents. The Gazebo on Conger Boulevard is strategically located as an open space extension to the Groton Town Building. A strong connection to the city center, such as the intersection of Main St and W. Cortland Street can be helpful in drawing people to an available open recreation space.



We concluded that the parking lot in between the Main Street and the bridge was could be a stronger link. The parking lot already boasted a elegant sitting area and the community board, so it was certainly already a place of importance. Capitalizing on this to increase the flow of people from street to park was a low cost intervention with big benefit.



interventions

The recipes for positive change



photo from <http://greenbookpages.com/blog/291217/>

guerrilla gardening

or, gardening on land that the gardeners do not have the legal rights to cultivate, typically neglected sites or public right-of-way.

purpose

Guerrilla gardening aims to reclaim or assign new purpose to land that is perceived to be neglected or misused. It can be used to beautify or draw attention to a space.

how to

- Pick an appropriate plot of land, like an abandoned parking lot or the strip between a sidewalk and road.

- Note the condition of the land: is there rocky or

clay-like soil? Will you need to remove a lot of trash and/or weeds?

- Figure out what plants to use in your garden
 - Select hardy plants that can survive without too much care (or with lots of variation in watering, etc.)
 - Choose plants that are native to your area that will thrive on the naturally
 - Prepare the soil for planting (dig / aerate)

- Plant and water plants

- Clean the area thoroughly

- Keep watering, weeding, and maintaining the garden routinely after it is planted!

materials

- Plants: some hardy plants that are not too sensitive to environmental or weather conditions include:

- Sheep fescue
- Dwarf sea buckthorn
- Cushion phlox
- Buffalo grass
- Grape hyacinth

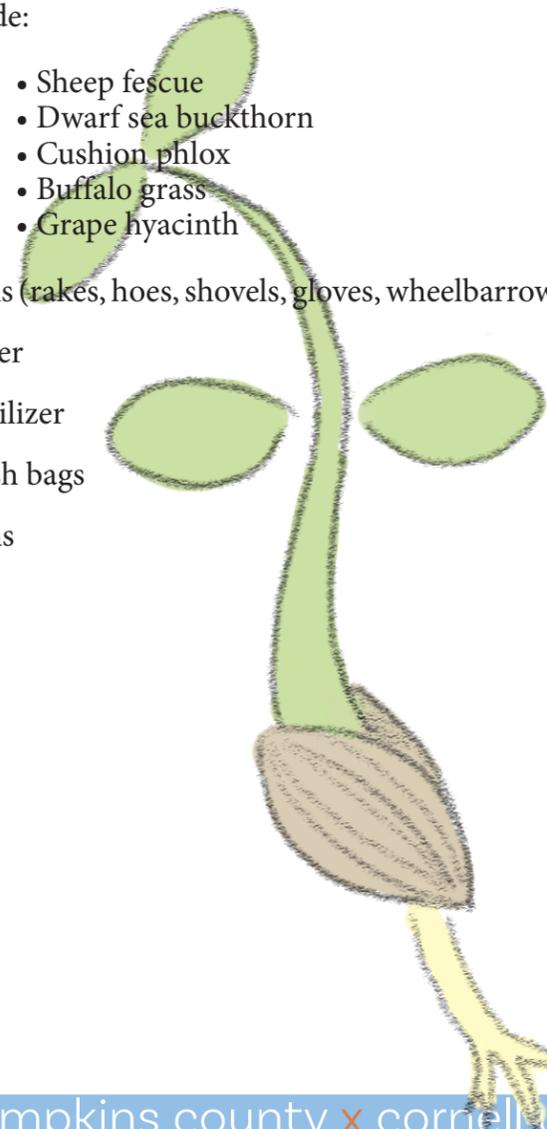
- Tools (rakes, hoes, shovels, gloves, wheelbarrows)

- Water

- Fertilizer

- Trash bags

- Signs



types of use



Transforming a dead or grey space into a garden is a great way of letting people know that there is activity in the area, or that there is a “place” very nearby. Connecting two “places” by creating a greenspace in between can be very effective, as often too much dead or grey space can discourage pedestrians from continuing any further for fear of “nothing left to see.”



Nothing invites people to stop and smell the roses like, well, roses. A well maintained garden or flower bed does wonders in piquing people’s curiosities, especially if the garden was previously an abandoned or neglected site. Planting a small wooden sign in the soil with a clever name or phrase can further that curiosity, and establish a feeling of “something interesting is happening here.”



Gardens, flowers, and greenery are pleasant interruptions from the typical pattern of concrete and grey. With enough trees, vines, shrubs or other plants, you can create an environment that makes people forget they’re in an urban area. Even just a small collection of vibrant greenery is enough to provide a little relief and a lot of comfort.



photo from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/>

chairdrops

Placing (often homemade) seating in public spaces, thereby creating a place for people to gather, rest, and talk (also known as chairbombing).

purpose

Encourages public sitting to improve comfort, social activity, and sense of place. outdoor concert.

how to

- Select an area that is adequately spacious and at a safe distance from traffic, like an underused parking lot, a patch of grass, or a wide sidewalk. It is often beneficial to choose an area that lacks sufficient seating, like near a food truck or an outdoor concert.
- Place chairs in the space, either facing each other or facing a particular location or event.
- Sit and hang out!

materials

- Chairs
 - Steel, aluminum, wood, or other durable material
 - Choose a color that will go well with the surface treatment and nearby buildings and structures
- Can also use logs or other structures that are comfortable for sitting

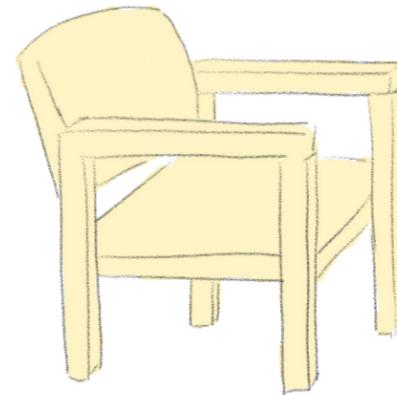


photo from <http://victoriaplacemaking.ca/>

types of use



Though chairs aren't normally thought of when you say the word "entertainment," they have enormous power to get people to stay in an area (whereas interventions labeled with the magnet only catch people's attention). The best situation is a combination of both: if you want to transform a space into a place, have something interesting or out-of-the-norm get people to investigate. Then, provide a place where people can hang around.

There is always a lack of public seating. This is particularly true for children, mothers, the elderly, and people with mobility disabilities, who cannot walk great distances without periodic pauses of rest. Not only will you make the greater area around your chairdrop more accessible, but you will also create a place where people interact and congregate.



It's no coincidence that the heart of every home is a living or "sitting" room, where chairs are typically faced into one another or around a fireplace or coffee table. Humans naturally feel more at ease when they are sitting and resting, and it is no different in urban environments.

Great public spaces are made of enclosed areas and lots of seating, so when creating your chairdrop, aim for an "outdoor living room" feeling. A word of advice: because of our evolutionary psychology, we tend to be uncomfortable with our backs towards big openings or centers of activity. Keep this in mind as you placemake!

types of use



photo by <https://louisville.edu/artsandsciences/news/all/patrick-piuma>

pop up parks

A pop up park is an underutilized space transformed into a temporary place where people can gather and sit, play games, eat, and whatever else one can imagine.

purpose

The goal of pop up parks is to show people the potential of a space in their community. Oftentimes, parking lots, alleys, and other similarly underutilized spaces lay bare and barely used.

Pop up parks act as an opportunity to show a community a way to reimagine an empty space to turn it into a place people want to interact with. Pop up plazas can be used as an opportunity to connect different areas of activity and use through an area

that was previously unused.

where

The beauty of pop up plazas and play spaces is that they can be built virtually anywhere! They can be created in parking lots, alleys, empty fields, vacant properties, any space you can envision a park.

how

- Expand sidewalks with parklets, add bike lanes to calm traffic near your plaza, provide a variety of moveable seating, provide shade, offer lighting so people can use the space after daylight hours.
- Use the existing built environment to incorporate the pre-existing space into your new plaza.
- You can build or borrow ping pong tables and other games like corn hole, can jam, hoola hoops, bocce, shuffle board, ping pong, mini golf, life size chess, or any other game.
- You can host free yoga and tai chi classes, invite local businesses and restaurants to test their wares and foods.
- Incorporate elements that work for people who are 8 and people who are 80. You can add a free library, book swap, or reading corner to attract people and do public readings.

materials

- Planters
- Turf grass
- Paint/chalk
- Traffic cones
- Tires
- Wood Pallets
- Potted shrubs/trees/plants
- Moveable furniture
- Food trucks
- Tires
- Games
- Hay Bales
- Ply wood



There is nothing as entertaining to human beings as other human beings. Fortunately, pop-up parks capitalize on this by essentially being people magnets (discussed below). The strength of pop-up parks (besides usually being loaded with people) is that they hedge their bets: typically, there is something for everybody. In your textbook pop-up park, you'll find seating, vegetation, food, and sometimes music and life-sized games. The magic of a well designed pop-up park is that it often ceases to be a place that one visits, and becomes more like a place one experiences.



Pop-up parks are typically enclosed venues (whether by actual walls or rows of food trucks), topped with string lights, and filled with people, food, and places to sit. This satisfies almost every innate survival desire for a human searching for habitat: safe, enclosed space, food, and social interaction.



We are constantly searching for novel and enjoyable experiences in our lives. It's what keeps us going. A good pop-up park is a posterchild for this search. Each component that makes it what it is maximizes the level of interaction one has with their environment. When you walk down the street on an average day, there is very little you can change: the walls and sidewalk are immobile, and the trees and benches are planted firmly in the ground. But when you see a pop-up park full of movable chairs, games, and mobile restaurants, it feels like a playground was placed in the fabric of the otherwise static city.



photo by Cristina Ferreira at <https://hiveminer.com>

canopies

The use of lights, balloons, umbrellas, or objects that can be strung up above a space such as an alley, road, or walkway. They are often beautiful, colorful, and provide, shade, or distort light.

purpose

Canopies transform the aesthetic of an area, beautifying it and making it more attractive to passerbys. They often play with color and/or light

how to

- Select a space that would benefit from light, shade, color, beauty, or enclosure, such as a street, pathway, or alley.

- Look for built or natural features that can be used to support a canopy:
 - Near buildings: windows, signs, lamps, lamp posts, poles, doorways
 - Around a path: trees, lampposts, sides of buildings
 - Streets: lamp posts, fronts of buildings, flagpoles
 - If none of these apply, install posts or poles
- Determine what the canopy will be made of

- Consider what the area lacks- light, shade, color
- If it needs shade- use large objects like umbrellas or large balls, discs, or anything of the sort, that will block sunlight from the area
- If it needs more light, use lights, or use smaller objects that will still allow sunlight to enter the area
- If it needs color, use translucent colorful materials such as umbrellas or balloons
- Consider weather and climate- if your area experiences a lot of wind or precipitation, choose materials that won't be affected by those
- Stick to lightweight objects- heavy items may be difficult to attach, unsafe for users of the space, or may weigh down the canopy or make it collapse.
- Get creative and choose carefully - remember that the material used to make a canopy is the main factor in determining how the canopy will affect the space, and that you are not limited to balls, umbrellas, lights

- Plan the layout of the canopy
 - Will the objects completely cover the space?
 - Will they be strung up in parallel strands? Or zig-zag across the space?
 - Will they be strung up across the space? Or lengthwise from the start to the end of the space?
- Choose a string material to use- rope, fishing wire, twine, string, ect.
- Cut the pieces of string or rope to be a bit longer than the distance they will be traversing and string the objects on to it. Secure them with knots or hot glue
- Install the canopy and attach the ends of the pieces to the objects you have designated for them to be hung onto

materials

- Objects to be strung:
 - Balloons, balls, umbrellas, nylon or other fabric, rubber ducks, lanterns, discs, string lights, ect. The possibilities are endless!
- String material:
 - Nylon rope, cotton rope, cotton string twine, fishing wire, ect

types of use



We tend to like feeling secured and protected from all sides, including from above (though not always: open blue sky is nice too). Brief canopies, like the one pictured on the left, can transport visitors into another world. This “enclosed” feeling is one that makes a place comfortable



Though it can become difficult to extend a detailed canopy over great distances, connecting nodes that are closer to one another (but perhaps not obviously so) with a canopied passage can add a sense of adventure and accessibility to a place. This works particularly if there is grey, uninteresting space in between the two nodes that would otherwise discourage travel between.



Canopies, by nature, make us look up. They are big, bold, and several feet in the air. Anything of this nature is bound to get heads to turn. Because of this, canopies often make great entrances.



<https://tinyhousefestvermont.com/parklets/>

parklets

“The love child of underutilized parking spaces and raised architectural platforms to create newly habitable public zones.”

purpose

Parklets reclaim spaces created for cars and give them to people. They extend the pedestrian landscape beyond sidewalks into small parks in parking spots.

where

Parallel parking spaces next to sidewalks.

where

- As long as you keep filling the meter you can use the spot for whatever you want! And don't limit yourself to one spot; you can use as many as you'd like.
- Use traffic cones, potted plants, furniture or any other materials you can think of to create a barrier between your park and vehicular traffic.
- Create a space that people want to stop in, having features that allow people to interact with each other

and their environment is a great draw.

- You can even use mirrors to make the space seem bigger! Provide a free library, book swap, or reading corner to give people another reason to stop in your space.

materials

- Planters
- Turf grass
- Paint/chalk
- Traffic cones
- Tires
- Wood Pallets
- Potted shrubs/trees/plants
- Moveable furniture (lawn chairs, pool blow ups)
- Tires
- Mirrors (to make the space look bigger that it is)
- Hay Bales
- Plywood
- Books

types of use



Unfortunately, the majority of cities in the U.S. are fiercely dominated by cars. Think of parklets as little ways of giving cities back to people (to whom they rightly belong). Shrinking road widths by using conspicuous parklets slow down traffic and cause drivers to be more careful going down any given roadway. Be cautious though, and select your road carefully: a parklet beside a 75 mph expressway won't likely be a success.



Parklets are essentially mini pop-up parks, with all the qualities and effects that entails. This is because parklets tend to have all the hallmarks of placemaking that get people to hang around: seating, vegetation, interesting art or design, and often, food nearby. A well placed parklet can magnify the life on a street.



<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/government/o/PBN/OurOrganization/PlanningZoning/parklets/index.htm>



<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/transportation/article/Colorful-Midtown-crosswalk-a-study-in-art-and-6260952.php>

Painted crosswalks and intersections

Painted crosswalks are modifications to existing pedestrian crossings or the addition of new paintings of crosswalk lines. The additions can range from standard walk lines to creative artwork.

purpose

The purpose of painted crosswalks is to improve walkability of a space by slowing down traffic. Drivers tend to slow down when looking at the artwork or cross lines painted on the road, and pedestrians feel safer walking when they are provided with walking paths across streets.

where

intersections of roads where both vehicle and foot traffic tends to be high.

types of use

how

- Identify areas on a street where there is a need for slowing down vehicular traffic.
- Using caution and traffic cones if necessary, paint artwork or simple cross lines on the strip of the road connecting opposing sidewalks. Designs can include patterns using various colors or even creative art pieces specific for the community.

materials

- Paint
- Chalk
- Tape
- Traffic cones



Painted crosswalks or intersections make cars drive slower and more carefully. The sheer uniqueness of a painted intersection throws drivers out of passive thinking and into more cautious, active thinking. Painted crosswalks and intersections scream “this is a street for people, too” and often, cars will pay attention.



An intersection is a sea of asphalt and is about as uninteresting as it gets. But painted intersections/crosswalks like the one pictured below are completely transformational.



<http://wpb.org/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Art-in-Public-Places/Gallery>

4 materials



photo by <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org>

traffic cones & other arriers/cylinders

best use	edges or walls, outlining a place, creating safe/pedestrian zones, warning signs (informing about dangerous or inaccessible places)
types	Traffic Cones, free-standing delineators, flexible delineator post, lane standing separator, delineator post, traffic control barricades, concrete jersey barrier, plastic barrier
cost	\$10.25 to 83/ unit. Maybe availed on loan by the city or traffic control providers
where	hardware stores, online
tags	Attractability: creative adaptive reuse Enclosure: creating safe enclosures, demarcating a region Safety: acting as warning signs Accessibility: warning about accessible and inaccessible areas/ spaces



photo by Kellie Reynolds of <http://www.dallasobserver.com>

food trucks

best use	attractions to bring life to any intervention, temporary solutions to food deserts, great companions to areas with a lot of seating
types	food trucks, stalls, carts, booths, or any other mobile unit able to vendor food and drink in public space
cost	Price: \$50,000 or more to build and run your own food truck. Of course, we don't recommend doing this (unless you have culinary dreams of crafting street tacos and livening up urban landscapes). Rather, do a Google search for food trucks that might already exist in your area. Remember that food trucks want to be where people are, and that they do better when there are multiple vendors in one spot.
tags	Attractability: if there's anything that brings people together, it's food. In the daytime, place a food truck along an area where people are looking for lunch; at night, near nightlife Enclosure: Putting food trucks around the perimeter of a parking-lot-turned-park gives people the impression that they're "in" a space Accessibility: temporary solutions to food deserts; can provide food access to neighborhoods



photo by <http://www.claudecormier.com>

life sized games

best use	making places out of spaces, getting people to stay or gather, calling attention to interventions in an area, prompting strangers to interact, node creation
types	Nearly any game can be purchased or created from spare materials. Some examples of life sized games include chess, checkers, jenga (with wooden 2x4s), connect 4, tic-tac-toe
cost	varies
where	hardware stores, thrift stores, junkyards
tags	Attractability: Life sized games are great for drawing people to a space. Their size makes them easy to see from a distance, and they can provide a reason for people to return to the space, and invite others to the space Entertainment: Life sized games provide intrigue and fun. They also encourage socializing.



image via No Studio

street furniture

best use	making an area more pedestrian friendly, encouraging more street life, increasing accessibility
types	Street furniture is not limited to buying chairs and tables, you can construct your own chairs and benches with bricks and planks of wood; milk cartons and pallets, the sky's the limit!
cost	\$15-\$1,000+
where	IKEA, Wal-Mart, Target, second hand stores, furniture stores
tags	Attractability: can be used to revitalize spaces, create new spaces, and allow people to rest and sit down. Enclosure: furniture will allow an area to have a certain character, people are more likely to sit down and get comfortable in that area.

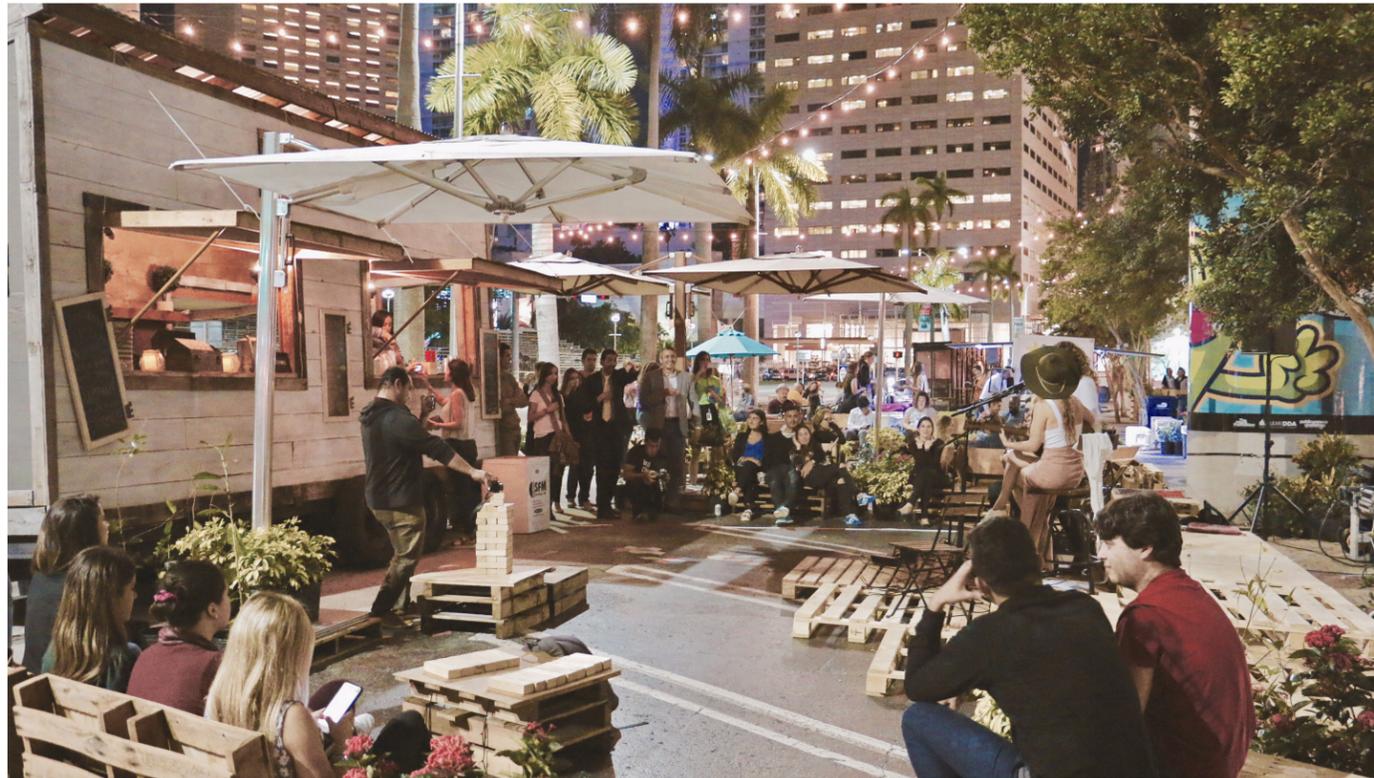


photo from <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>

wooden pallets

best use	walls, seating, planters, infrastructure for parklets– nearly anything
types	Wooden pallets have infinite potential as building materials. They can be used to build a platform, planters, tables, chairs, vertical gardens, etc. For safety purposes, look for pallets with a “HT” (Heat treated) stamp on the side, not “MB” (chemically treated with methyl bromide).
cost	Free-\$10
where	Used (free) or new from Home Depot, Lowes, used (free) from food and pet stores
tags	Enclosure/Safety: Pallets can also be used to enclose a space -- to provide a sense of safety or give an area more designation as its own space. Attractability: If arranged in an interesting, eye-catching way, they could attract people to the scene.



photo by Kenneth A. Wilson from Flickr

paint / chalk

best use	making edges, calling attention to an area, creating safe/pedestrian zones, warning signs
types	Use chalk for more temporary interventions: a parklet that will only be around for a few hours doesn't need the permanence of paint. And when you do use paint, we recommend using washable paint- a principle of tactical placemaking is being temporary!
cost	\$2 - \$100
where	Wal-Mart, Target, hardware stores
tags	Safety: bright paint can warn or caution citizens Accessibility: painted signs can help people get to an area they otherwise wouldn't visit Enclosure: painting around or within a perimeter can help mark a place. A visitor will know they are truly “in” when they are inside the bounds of the box.



photo by <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com> and Melendrez

planters

best use	Making space more inviting and lively (space into place), serving as a boundary
types	Anything can be used as a planter: old tires, bowls and pots, cardboard boxes, sliced milk jugs. They don't have to be fancy to get the point across: a little goes a long way. The bigger they are, the better suited they are to serve as a boundary of any sort. For example, a big enough planter might be a good wall between a parklet and the road.
cost	\$10-\$50
where	Wal-Mart, hardware stores
tags	Attractability: They can be used to beautify an area, so that the community is attracted to your design. Enclosure: Planters can be used to mark paths, and to block off areas from your site. Connectivity: Planters can be used to fill spaces within a site, and to connect your placemaking intervention to other areas within your community.



<http://naturalnasprawa.blox.pl/2012/03/Opony-letnie.html>

tires

best use	seating, planters, play areas, and barriers.
types	All tires are useful, but obviously bicycle tires and car tires serve different purposes. While bigger tires might be better for stationary things, bike tires can be used for games or other mobile things.
cost	\$0-\$50
where	Junk yards, some second hand stores, auto shops, hardware stores, Wal-Mart
tags	Safety: tires can be used as relatively safe play equipment Attractability: painted tires can be incredibly eye catching! Enclosure: large tires set around a space will go far in making visitors feel like they're enclosed Entertainment: bicycle wheels can be used as spinning wheels for games of chance- think of roulette!



photo by www.lodo.org

string lights

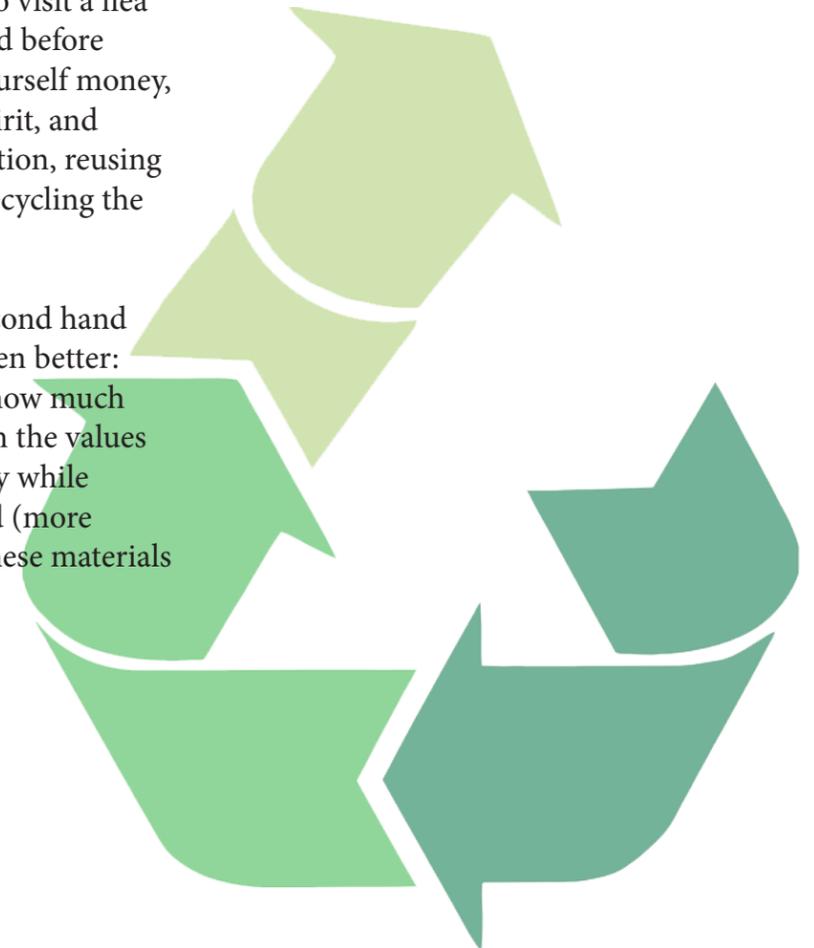
best use	attracting people from far distances, adding magic to any nighttime scene, cheaply making a streetscape safer while avoiding the harsh, unflattering light that typical lampposts exhibit
types	mini (think of Christmas lights), fairy (thin, small, intimate lights), globe (bulbs on a string), and novelty (lights enclosed by festive plastic figurines- think of Halloween pumpkin string lights). The ones in the photo above are between fairy and globe lights.
cost	\$10-\$100
where	Wal-Mart, Target, hardware stores, online retailers
tags	Attractability: installing a canopy of lights over a street, wrapping trees up in a net of them, or hanging them from a central pole in a pop-up park can add magic that transforms a space. Particularly at night, the sight of such a thing is enough to let anybody know that they've arrived somewhere special. Enclosure: Adding an element above a space can suggest an upper limit, and can make large spaces feel much smaller. Combined with the soft light, a space can feel much cozier.

a word about gathering materials

Tactical placemaking is meant to be experimental, often temporary, and almost always a “lighter, quicker, cheaper” solution. The reason why the gears of government tend to grind so slowly is that full scale civic projects, with brick and concrete and construction crews, are frequently quire expensive.

Fortunately for tactical placemakers, there exists a great many unique secondhand materials available for use. We encourage you to visit a flea market before a Wal-Mart; a junk yard before IKEA. Not only will you be saving yourself money, but you will be fostering a creative spirit, and most importantly, reducing consumption, reusing already made goods, and hopefully recycling the products after.

There is a word for turning second hand or discarded items into something even better: *upcycling*. We cannot stress enough how much the practice of upcycling lines up with the values of tactical placemaking. Save your city while also doing your part to save the world (more information on where you can find these materials in the “Resources” chapter).



precedents



photo by <http://michellelandstrom.blogspot.com>

trumansburg farmers market

time: Every year from mid May to the end of October

location: Trumansburg Village Park

goals: To offer a venue where local farmers, food producers and crafters can sell their goods to community residents

organizer: Trumansburg Farmers' Market Board

financial support: Vendors from Trumansburg

design elements: Seating, musicians, vendors

Trumansburg Farmers' Market is a local "lively, smaller market with live music." It is formed by local vendors with their products grown, produced, or handmade by membership within 30 miles. Meanwhile, it also include events like summer movie nights, paper making courses, and cooking workshops. Feature local musicians are also invited to play music every week.



photo by Jolene Almendarez of <https://ithacavoices.com>

collegetown pop-up park

time: 2016

location: Near the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road

background: 10 construction projects happening nearby, making navigating the area by vehicle a nightmare and worrying business owners that the already slow summer season will be even worse than usual for them.

goals: Entice people to come to this area and to promote local business.

organizers: Local business owners and fourth ward alderperson Stephen Smith.

financial support: Smith worked with the city to budget \$5,000 for the project. The Tompkins Trust Company was also recruited as a sponsor, and proposals to Cornell University and local businesses are also in the wings.

design elements: an array of temporary lawn games, a bocce court and tables with chairs meant for outdoor dining and relaxing. Soon, organizers hope to arrange live music and an outdoor movie screening in the space.



Press Bay Alley, Ithaca, NY

press bay court pop-up plaza

year: Sept. 29 – Oct. 30, 2017

location: 114 West Green St., Ithaca

goals: It's the first step in permanent conversion of the former parking lot into an urban outdoor space providing delight to the Ithaca community and serving the adjacent businesses. To explore many possibilities, hear the ideas and reactions of many people.

organizers: Urban Core LLC, the Ithaca developer of award-winning Press Bay Alley.

financial support: Entirely privately funded.

design elements: some tables & chairs, manmade lawn, small plants



photo by Jade Cardichon of The Ithacan

porchfest

year: 2007- Present

location: Fall Creek and Northside Neighborhoods of Ithaca, NY

goal: The concept of Porchfest was born of a conversation between two neighbors who love music, and was created to do just that increase community relationships through music. Porchfest gathers twenty artists every September that play in the front yard and porches of homes throughout Ithaca, reimagining porches, lawns, and sidewalks as community gathering spaces and performance stages. Porchfest has been replicated in more than 60 cities around the country because of its ability to bring people together and creatively use their neighborhood spaces through a shared love of music.

financial support: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Thompson Park

design elements: Chairs and seating, musicians, decorations.



<https://streetsaliveithaca.wordpress.com/>

streets alive

year: 2012 - Present

location: Various locations in Ithaca, past locations include Fall Creek, Southside

goals: Streets Alive! Ithaca closes the streets to vehicular traffic for the weekend and the community gathers to walk, bike, play, and participate in activities held by community organizations. The event seeks to reimagine streets as healthy, community-oriented spaces that are friendly to sustainable modes of transportation. Streets Alive! offers an opportunity for residents to meet their neighbors and friends, strengthening community trust and relationships over activities that range from zumba to taiko drumming.

organizers: Bike Walk Tompkins (a company of Ithaca CarShare)

funding: Supported by variety of local organizations- C.S.P Management, Fingerlakes Wealth Management, Ithaca Carshare, Taitem, WVBR 93.5

design elements: Street art, Community booths, DIY seating



wizarding weekend

year: 2015 - Present

location: Ithaca Commons

goals: To celebrate Halloween in a family-friendly way and transform downtown Ithaca into a magical world of whimsy.

organizers: Press Bay Alley, with help from Downtown Ithaca Alliance and a wealth of non-profits and local businesses

funding: Supported in part by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

design elements: Street art, community booths, DIY seating, food trucks, pop-up parks, life sized games, pop-up plazas,

resources

how to apply for grants, where to get materials, and what governments or organizations to work with



grants

Funding is going to be a key part in bringing together your tactical placemaking project. In this section, information on where to find grants, tips to write them, and a glossary of useful jargon will help guide applicants through the process of getting grants.

grant terms

fiscal agent

An established IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that agrees to accept donations on behalf of a group that does not have IRS tax exemption. Under this arrangement, a charitable group can get more funding to perform its mission.

matching grant/ matching funds

Funds that were acquired from a different source than the grant you're applying to in order to match the amount of money a funding organization would give you.

request for proposal (RFP)

A document that solicits proposal, often made through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service, or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit business proposals.

Rolling deadline:

There is no set deadline for applications that call for rolling deadlines.

For a more comprehensive list terms you may encounter while filling out a grant application refer to this source http://www.spangrud.com/PDF/spangrud_terms.pdf

ArtPlace American National Creative Placemaking Fund

This grant doesn't require a fiscal agent; no matching funds required; the FAQ section is very helpful and comprehensive:
<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/national-creative-placemaking-fund/introduction>

City of Ithaca Mural Street Art Program

Rolling Deadline – 2nd Monday of each month
<http://www.cityofithaca.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1458>

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) Grants

There are several grants listed on this webpage that tactical placemaking projects could be eligible for
<http://www.artspartner.org/content/view/CAPGrants.html>

Sustainable Tompkins: Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program

Quarterly application deadlines
<https://sustainabletompkins.org/programs/neighborhood-mini-grant-program/apply/>

ArtPlace American National Creative Placemaking Fund

This grant doesn't require a fiscal agent; no matching funds required; the FAQ section is very helpful and comprehensive:
<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/national-creative-placemaking-fund/introduction>

Tompkins County Tourism Capital Grants

Mid-March application deadline
http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/tourism/TCGdescriptionTCwebsiteFeb2016A_1.pdf

Tompkins County Rural Beautification Grant

Rolling basis; Matching grant
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.cce.cornell.edu/attachments/12864/2016-rural-grant-guidelines.pdf?1452803759>



photo by Sam Newberg of <https://streets.mn>

The Tompkins County Grants Development and Management Center

is a great starting resource with an easy interface to find new grants. You can search by federal, state, or foundation level grants. There is also a button that links you to a page where you can search by category to narrow down your search options more easily. For up to date grant listings and funding opportunities follow the link below. This website also lists great resources for grant writing strategies and tips.

<http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/Grants/index>

tips for finding and writing grants

When selecting grants to apply for look at details on who they have provided grants for in the past. If they generally do not award grants to applicants in similar settings or project types to yours, it is likely you will not be awarded the grant.

It is important to read about the application and what they are asking for before you start applying. Make sure you have the resources to complete the application (sometimes they ask for data that might not be readily available).

Start the application process at least 4 weeks in advance of the application due date.

If a grant is “rolling” that means there is no specific deadline. It can be applied to at any time.

Reach out to local government or nonprofits to help you write the grant. Some applications may require government or non-profit status of applicants, so having them as a partner will be helpful. They have resources and data that may be helpful to your application. They may also have access to grant databases that you would not be able to use otherwise.

Think of the big companies in Tompkins County (for example, Walmart, Target, Wegmans, etc...). These companies often have foundations that provide money to local projects

Leveraging funds is a useful tactic. Some grants require matching funding, but in other instances, it could help an application to show that you have diverse funding sources. Money from one grant can be used as leveraged or matching funds for another grant.



photo by Mike Fields of moderncities.com

materials

Some things every good tactical placemaker might need:

Raw Construction Materials: Steel, Aluminum, Wood, Paint, Signs

Functional Materials: Trash bags, Plants, Fertilizer, Water

Tools: Rakes, Hoes, Shovels, Gloves, Wheelbarrows

Now, where to get them...

Finger Lakes ReUse

<http://ithacareuse.org/>

Building or raw materials, computers, electronics, household goods, appliances, and furniture

If they don't have a material you want available, you can request items on their online wishlist, and they will notify you if they have something that would meet your needs.

Phone: (607)257-9699

Email: info@fingerlakesreuse.org

Ithaca ReUse Center

214 Elmira Road, Ithaca NY-14850

Triphammer ReUse Center

Address: 2255 N Triphammer Road, Ithaca, NY-14850

Significant Elements

<http://www.significantelements.org/>

reuse of architectural elements from demolition of structures

Phone: (607) 277-3450

212 Center St, Ithaca, NY 14850

Salvation Army

Household items, furniture

(607) 273-3872

381 Elmira Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850



photo by <https://www.pugspdx.com/tactical-urbanism/>

governments and organizations

pending

pending

crowdfunding and petitioning

ioby

<https://www.ioby.org/>

Ioby takes the crowd-funding model and applies it on a block-by-block basis. By implementing a process they call crowd-resourcing, community leaders and people who are interested in creating neighborhood-scale projects with funding, resources, and volunteers. This crowd-funding platform is the most tactical-urbanism specific, recently having been used to build the Permaculture Park in Ithaca, NY.

kickstarter

<https://www.kickstarter.com/>

Kickstarter is a broad, popular crowd-funding site that can be used for both large scale and small scale projects. On Kickstarter, projects are posted with information about said project and a posted cash goal. Users can choose to back projects or post their own projects, with Kickstarter taking a 5% fee out of the total funds raised. Kickstarter is founded on an all-or-nothing principle, where either the full amount of the fundraising goal is raised, or there is no payoff at all. This is so that there is a reduced amount of risk for backers. The platform is structured so that if the project is not completed and does not deliver, the project members will be required to refund the Kickstarter backers.

gofundme

<https://www.gofundme.com>

GoFundMe is a crowd-funding site that can be used for various projects. GoFundMe runs on a donation model, meaning that the platform takes 0% fee out of the funds raised and that project starters have immediate access to the cash that is donated. This platform is more effective if there is an existing, strong network of people with whom the project starter has personal relationships with.

change.org

<https://www.change.org>

An easy to use website, Change.Org provides a simple, straightforward way to create an accessible, shareable petition that protects the information of people who sign it. Creating a petition is free, and can easily be shared through various social networks. Upon signing the petition, the user is prompted to share a post on Facebook saying that they have signed, increasing exposure of the cause. This is an easy and powerful way to gather consensus on a local issue that can then be brought to governing bodies.



photo by Cristina Ferreira at <https://hiveminer.com>

code of ethics

there's a creed for every party and practice. as a new tactical placemaker, here is yours.

Like so many other things, much of any tactical placemaking intervention's success depends on all the people behind it. Accordingly, it's important to realize that though yes, tactical placemaking is a medium of "civic hacking" to improve your community, the improvements should not be limited to enjoyment by you (or the few people that help you). This really just means one thing: placemake with everybody in mind.

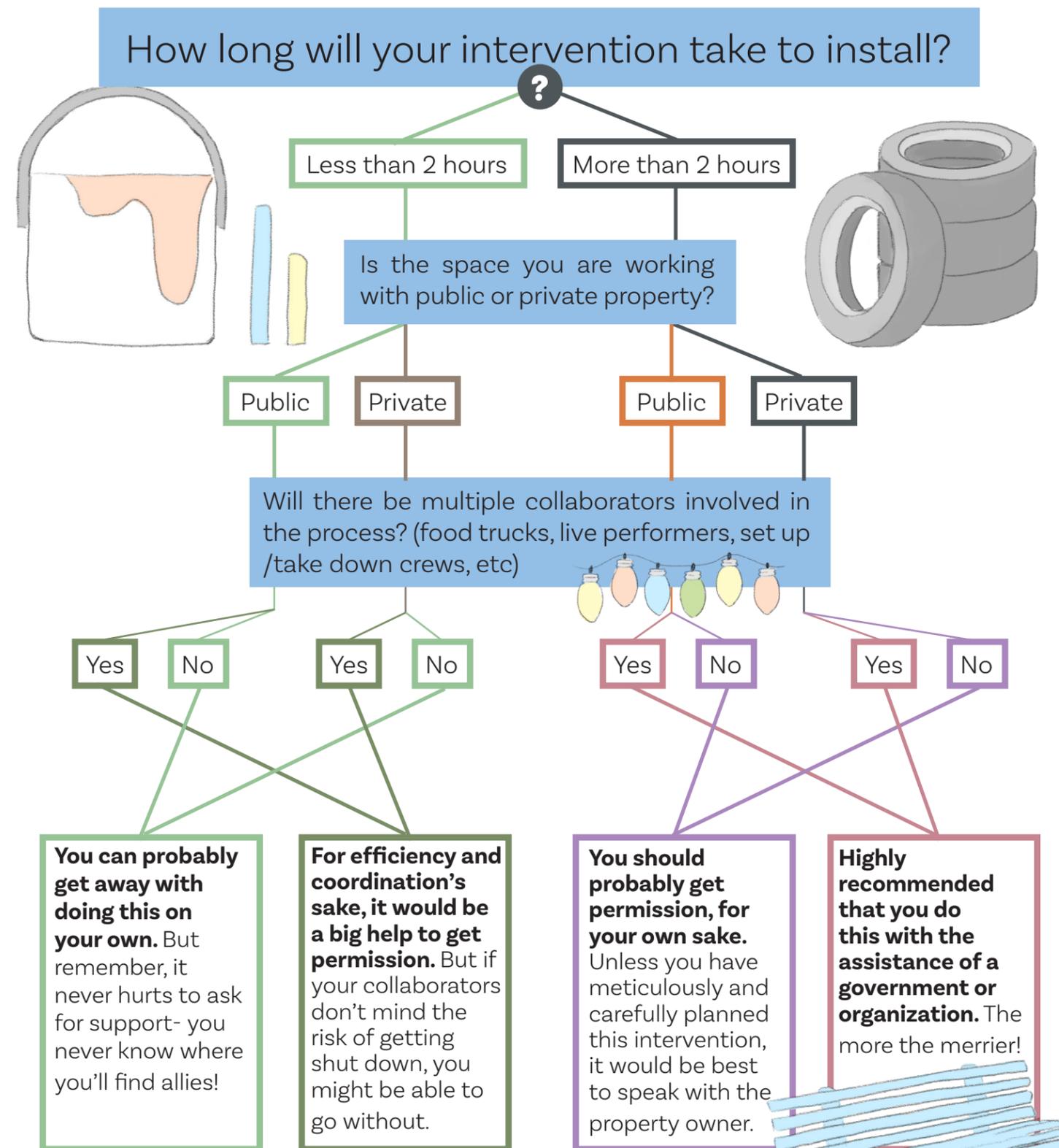
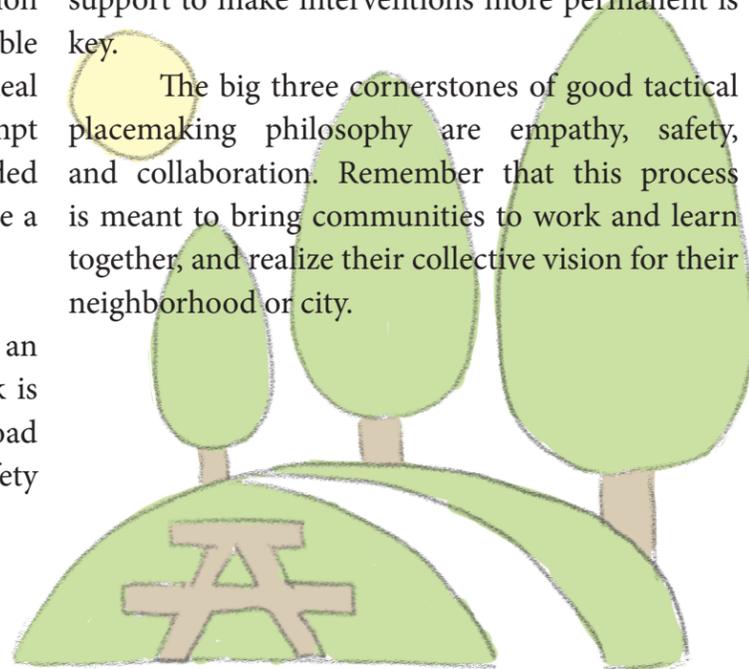
In the city planning world, professionals hold events called "charrettes" to gauge public sentiment about a project, as well as allow feedback from stakeholders (in this case, anyone who lives, works, or plays in the community). Tactical placemaking is very much like a charrette in the sense that it too is a significant learning process. As was mentioned in the opening chapter, whether your intervention works the way you'd hoped or not, you are still able to walk away from the experience with a great deal of new information that will make your next attempt even better. For this reason, it is recommended that your first foray into tactical placemaking be a temporary one.

The most important part of planning an intervention is safety: though there is little risk is a chairdrop, painting an crosswalk on a busy road can be a dangerous thing. It is so crucial that safety measures be pursued in any intervention.

Another important aspect to all of this is legality. All interventions exist on a spectrum of legality, ranging from perfectly legal to, well, entirely illegal. With this in mind, working with local government or local organizations is encouraged, particularly if your intervention will take an extended amount of time (more than 1 - 2 hours) or will involve several parties collaborating (a pop-up park, for example, takes a great deal of coordination and space).

In fact, this is why we included in this guide a chapter completely dedicated to utilizing those resources (chapter 6). While applying for a grant or taking a visit to city hall might seem daunting, reaching out can pay off in the long term. Tactical placemaking tends to be temporary; securing the support to make interventions more permanent is key.

The big three cornerstones of good tactical placemaking philosophy are empathy, safety, and collaboration. Remember that this process is meant to bring communities to work and learn together, and realize their collective vision for their neighborhood or city.



tactical placemaking for tompkins county



tompkins county x cornell university design connect

