

COMMUNITY LED PLACEMAKING

Lessons from the trenches



Goal: Use short-term improvements and temporary uses for recreation, retail and entertainment events, and to test viability of long-term, permanent installations.

Recommendations:

- The private developer, WMATA, and the Montgomery County Department of Parks should explore the potential for the following:
 - Ways to continue pop-up retail activities at the proposed Civic Green, Metro entrance plaza and other public spaces.
 - Creation of temporary "Green Space" and parklets within the WMATA surface lot if excess parking becomes available through the various phases of the development at the Metro site.
 - Weekend programming at the WMATA surface lot with activities such as "Touch a Truck", "Bike Rodeo", etc.
 - Deploying a movable "Placemaking Kit of Parts", including movable chairs and tables, planters, table tennis kit, chess, board games, shade structures, skate tracks etc.



Garage rooftop that is used for concerts during off peak hours



Temporary activities to energize public spaces

Creative Placemaking in Streets



Source: bettercities.net (above), Inhabitat (below)

Medians, parklets and sidewalks are great opportunities to transform streets into truly public spaces for play, gathering and relaxing. Active streets can become destinations, enhance foot traffic to local businesses and provide additional outdoor spaces for residents of all ages.

Creative Placemaking in Parking Lots and Underutilized Spaces



Source: Sasaki

Portions or all of parking lots can be transformed into pop-up public spaces for interim or seasonal use or on weekends. Adding food trucks, seating, lighting and color can make parking lots and other underutilized spaces inviting and invigorate districts in the downtown that have less street activity, like the emerging Pearl District.

BEFORE



AFTER





POST FESTIVAL EVENTS



A FEW SIMPLE LESSONS



#1 CREATE A DETAILED PROCESS



FROM PARKING LOTS TO PLACES.



SPRING 2018

KICKOFF MEETING & SITE TOUR

The Montgomery County Planning Department partnered with Montgomery Parks, Better Block Foundation, Randolph Hills Civic Association and Kronstadt Realty to collaborate and create the White Flint Placemaking Festival in 2018.



SUMMER 2018

OUTREACH & PLANNING

Planners and the Better Block team helped residents brainstorm ideas for their vision of a community gathering space at the shopping center.



OCTOBER 8-11 2018

COMMUNITY LEAD CONSTRUCTION

Community members and volunteers came together and worked at the neighborhood shopping center to build their version of a gathering space on an underutilized green space and part of the parking lot.



OCTOBER 13-14 2018

PLACEMAKING FESTIVAL

More than 1,000 people participated in the region's first placemaking festival with local food, music, arts and activities for all ages.

WINTER 2019 THROUGH 2019

ONGOING USE

The Randolph Hills Civic Association and Kronstadt Realty, the property owner, continue to improve the gathering space and use it for events, such as holiday community caroling and a winter beerfest.



ABOUT THE DESIGN

Based on community feedback, the following placemaking elements were incorporated into the design of the community gathering space. Crosswalks were painted, murals drawn, a performance stage erected, furniture built from scratch and trees moved around to create a place that people love. Local vendors supplied food, art and fitness activities.



BANDSHELL



PICNIC TABLES



FIRE PITs



FOOD TRUCK & VENDOR TENTS

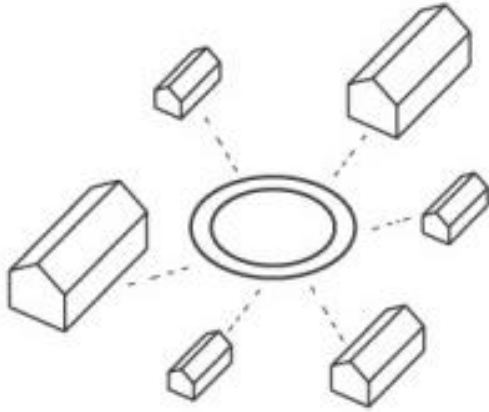


PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



RECREATION AREA

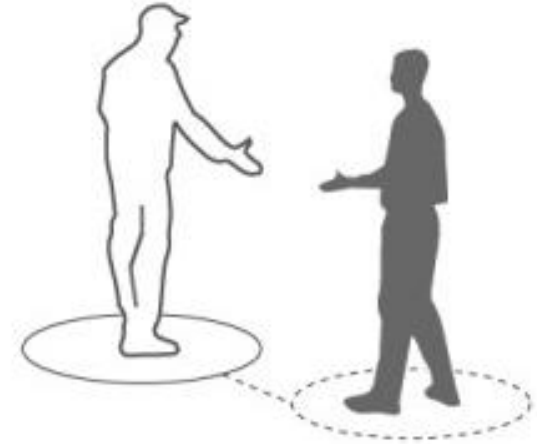
#2 GET THE BASICS RIGHT....FAST



NEIGHBORHOOD
PROXIMITY



MOTIVATED
COMMUNITY



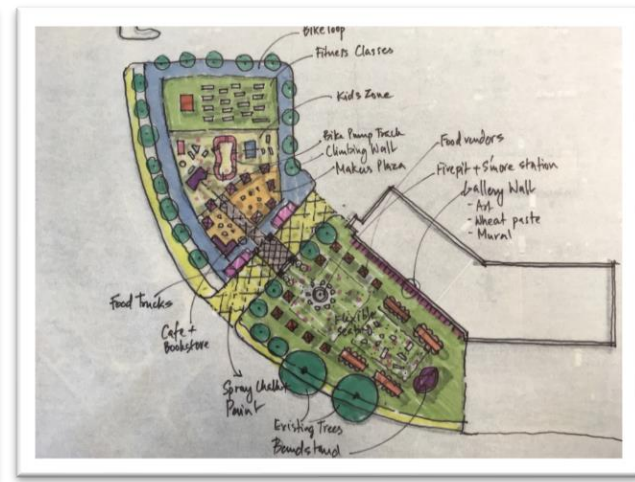
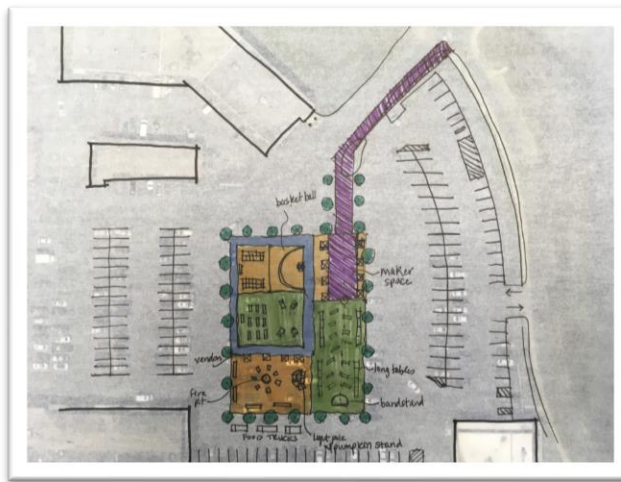
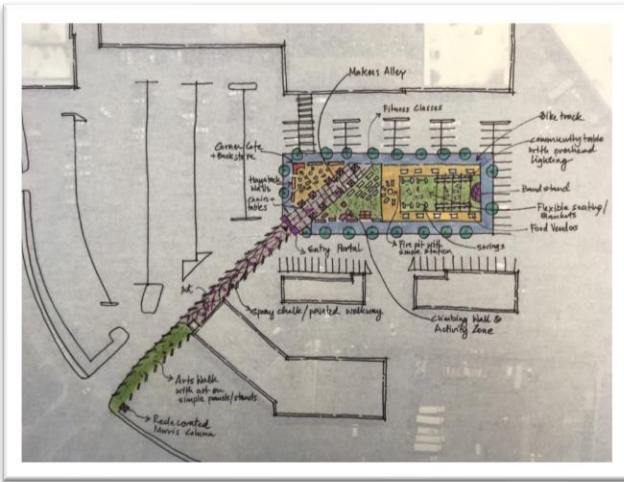
WILLING
PROPERTY OWNERS

Source: Better Block

#3 ASSEMBLE A DEDICATED CORE TEAM



#4 CREATE OPTIONS



#5 ACTIVITIES FOR ALL



#6 GET INTERACTIVE!



#7 BRING IN PARTNERS



#7 BRING IN PARTNERS

Local Businesses and Residents

County Agencies

Montgomery Parks

MCDOT

MCPS

Regional Services Center

Non Profits

Friends of White Flint

Washington Area Bicycle Association

Rockville Bicycle Hub

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Sierra Club

Local Area Advisory Committees



White Flint
PLACEMAKING
FESTIVAL

Join us for local food, arts, music and fitness activities in an amazing pop-up park!

Randolph Hills Shopping Center | 4900 Boiling Brook Pkwy, Rockville, MD 20852

October 13, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.
October 14, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Local Bands
The Randolph Hillbillies
Flor de Maracuja
Nell Rumbaugh
Tifford Cello Studio
Macon Music
Eric Wisotzky
Marty Zombro
Ken Kopczyk
Mark Nensel
Youth Strings
Youth Brass Quintet

Local Vendors
Kuya Ja
Vignola Gourmet
7 Locks Brewing
Donut King
Violet Red Art Studio
Cafe 20/20
Tslion Hummus
Armand's Pizzeria and Grille
True Respite Brewing

Programming Partners
Montgomery Parks
Badlands
Dynamite Gymnastics
KOA Sports
Bolt Parkour and Free Running
Washington Area Bicycle Association
Rockville Bike Hub
Friends of the Library
Z Sweat
Maryland School of Dance
Bmore Houseful
Extend Yoga
Friends Of White Flint

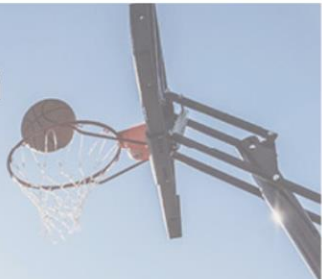
And Many More!

montgomeryplanning.org/wfplacemaking

Randolph Civic Association   **Montgomery Planning** 

#8 EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, REPEAT

COMMUNITY LED PLACEMAKING A Guide For Montgomery County Draft - December 2018



Steps to Organize

The following section includes guidance for implementing a planning event in a community. This guidance can be adapted to a variety of efforts, such as gathering spaces, street design, transit options, improving existing structures, and dog parks. Potential sites determined by the community include a park and play area, a community garden, a sidewalk, a street, a parking lot, or property. This document may need to be updated depending on the planning effort. Additionally, included at the end of the section are sample survey and evaluation used for the White Flint Placemaking Festival. The surveys provide an example of questions organizers may want to ask community members prior to, during, or after the planning effort. Questions may need to be revised depending on organizer needs.

Step 1: Select a Site

In selecting a site for the planning event, look for areas that meet the following requirements:

- Edges that define the space
- Consider the boundaries of the site. Can the site have edges that make it feel enclosed? Will people have to be created as part of the project to create an enclosed space?
- Interest from local partners
- Accessible and available buildings that present opportunities for temporary business development
- Potential for multi-modal street infrastructure
- Proximity to a neighborhood

For example, to host the White Flint Placemaking Festival, the Better Block Foundation and

Montgomery County Planning chose the Randolph Hills Drapping Center based on recommendations from the White Flint sector 3 Master Plan. Randolph Hills Drapping Center was identified as an area that would benefit from the creation of a 2.5-acre neighborhood or street green space. Within the Drapping Center, the unutilized green space proved to be the best option for the project because of its proximity to the neighborhood and its potential for long-term use. After fundraising, the property owner was very supportive of the project and the community's vision of the site. The local neighborhood association, the Randolph Civic Association, was a very important partner for the project. They were extremely on-site engaged and were willing to work to make the planning event happen.

Step 2: Kickoff and Survey

Once the project dates are set and the site is chosen, host a kickoff event. This will serve as the community's introduction to the project and help gather excitement. The kickoff event will help to identify community organizers and potential partners for the project.

At the kickoff, start your community surveying. Bring short-form paper surveys to handout to attendees but also have long-form online surveys available and ready to go. Ask the community what works well about a meeting, what did not work as well as possible in the community, and who is not at the table who needs to be engaged. These results will inform your committee's goals, vision, interventions, and project partners.

During the surveying process for the White Flint Placemaking Festival, residents overwhelmingly responded with requests for a community green space. However, it was pointed out during the design discussions that there is an existing green space on the property, but it is unutilized. This is a good sign to welcome neighborhood residents who designed the Better Block Foundation



Surveying the site with Randolph Community Members



Community members auditing the Randolph Alliance Center during Kickoff Event

encouraged and supported the Randolph Hill community members to work with the property owner to take ownership of the space and create a more community-oriented park.

For reference, a Sample Survey has been provided at the back of this chapter. The sample questions were developed for the White Flint Placemaking Festival. Questions may need to be revised for future use depending on organizer needs.

Step 3: Organize

After the site has been selected, a team must be organized. Community-led planning efforts require substantial input and volunteer efforts by the community. Identifying individuals who are engaged with the local community is crucial to the success of the project. Typically, engaged stakeholders and neighborhood organizations can be found at community meetings, in neighborhood associations, and at town hall meetings. They are also frequently associated with ongoing "barrier" activities, park requests, and local community group committee roles to give team members to oversee that all of the tasks are covered.

For the White Flint Placemaking Festival, members of the Randolph Community Association served as our local partners. Each team member lived in the neighborhood and had close personal relationships with many of the residents and partners. They provided recommendations for programming, which included various, educational site design, marketing and coordinating volunteers. The engagement and ownership of the project by the community was the reason the White Flint Placemaking Festival was so successful.

The following committees were formed:

Figure 2.43: Community Led Placemaking Level Organizational Chart



- A. Vendor Recruitment**
 - Find and track vendors for the event to host our pop-ups
 - Develop a plan for vendors in conjunction with our design plan
 - Determine the permitting needs for each vendor
- B. Programming**
 - Work with partners to find and schedule programming (art, fitness, music, etc.)
 - Develop a program that can be marketed
 - Be ready to help performers set up and provide everything needed to perform
- C. Volunteer Recruitment and Allocation**
 - Handle all recruitment and outreach to the community
 - Run social media and reach out to press
- D. Community-Public Agency Outreach**
 - Work with the County on permitting
 - Identify connections and stakeholders
- E. Property Owner Representative, Site Preparation**
 - Represent the property owner's interest
 - Help with logistics on-site (electrifying, bathrooms, signage, etc.)

