



Langdon Street Alive: Public Arts & Creative Placemaking

LANGDON STREET ALIVE, 2016

STEPS FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS WORK

Creative Communities Exchange Workshop, by Ward Joyce, AIA

Ward Joyce Design, Montpelier VT www.langdonstreetalive.org www.wardjoycedesign.com

Executive Summary

Our urban fabric generally stinks for pedestrians, simply because it was designed for cars – we all know that. But we're finding that proposing creative improvements is being readily embraced by our communities. Develop a great idea and it's surprisingly easy to get it done!

Who does this work best?

Community members are the experts on what's needed in their downtowns. Experts/designers can provide a framework for these projects, but the community benefit is greatest when projects are defined, created and managed by local stakeholders. Municipalities have limited bandwidths so local coalitions are often needed to spearhead projects on the public's behalf. This has proven very effective across the country, and countless examples can be gathered for your inspiration.

What types of projects are possible?

Depending on the community and context, the most valuable community-building project will vary in scale and character. Creative Placemaking takes many forms, from parklets to pocket parks, from artistic crosswalks to street art and Complete Streets demonstrations, from street parties to Build a Better Block events, from individual works of art to city-wide public arts programs, from food truck events to Community Dinners on Main Street.



Parklets

For public seating, as is the case here, or for outdoors seating for a restaurant or bar, parklets animate streets with "social stickiness" where cars would otherwise be parked. They can be also be quite artistic



This parklet in Montpelier was designed as a bike parking amenity for non-motorized commuters replete with landscaping and a tire pump

What are the critical steps needed for success?

1. Develop a Great Idea:

- * Find an underutilized space: an empty storefront, a street worthy of attention, a worn-out public space, and work with creative individuals to shape an idea.
- * Creativity within the rules: outlandish works, but make it feasible.

2. Vet the Idea for its Likelihood to Succeed:

- * Gather a team to determine the feasibility & scope of different ways to approach the challenge.
- * Approach the city to make sure there are no road blocks, get them engaged
- * Determine permitting schedule
- * Partnerships: determine which local groups could assist or thwart your ideas.
- * Share your ideas with the critical groups

3. Build a Team w/ Tons of Energy and Knowhow:

- * Find the local zealots excited to work on the project.
- * Use this group to determine the scale/scope of project that you can tackle together

4. Develop Great Graphics to Tell the Story:

- * Engage or hire a designer, architect or student to help develop and illustrate your ideas. 3D images are extraordinarily valuable for so everyone is able to envision the big idea. Building a vision that others can see clearly develops consensus.
- * Sketch Up is the easiest 3D program for this purpose – anyone can learn it.



5. Build Local Consensus & Start Raising Money:

- * Meet with local officials to get their buy-in: the City Manager, Fire Chief, Director of Public Works, the community Development Board. Request letters of support once you've satisfied them
- * Hold public meetings to share your vision. Take your drawings around town to local businesses and speak with local residents to build excitement and a volunteer force
- * Get someone with strong community connections to explore ways to raise money from a diversity of funder types: crowd-source platforms, arts grants, foundational grants, community development grants, City contributions



Public Events

To seed a public space, bring it to life with events that include food and music – it's important that activities be programmed to bring it to life.



6. Permitting and Design Review Boards

- * Blow the community away with your project and they will hopefully step aside to let you do the work with appreciation

7. Build it with the Community's Help

- * Go to the high school, the local college, the Rotary Club and find groups willing to help you build it with volunteers. Reach out to the hardware store for donations



8. Program the Space

Don't let a creative space languish! It's essential to activate a Creative Space. Program activities that bring it to life. This is, after all, this is the beginning of a legacy project, right?



Activities in place of cars

There's no better way to slow traffic than putting activities in the road and inviting folks to have fun!

Community Dinners

Events designed to occupy the street not only "take back the street" for an evening, which are very empowering, but can be joyful events that create a sense of community pride and connection.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Ward Joyce

Ward Joyce Design

WARDJOYCE1@HOTMAIL.COM
WWW.LANGDONSTREETALIVE.ORG
WWW.WARDJOYCEDESIGN.COM

802-522-0150