

Implementing **CREATIVE PLACEMAKING** in Real Estate

Creative placemaking can be used to engage residents locally, enhance public space, and contribute to healthy, sustainable communities. It is a strategy to improve community well-being and prosperity while also fostering conditions for cities to define, draw attention to, and distinguish themselves on a global scale.

—Artspace Toronto



The Strand American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco, California.

Creative placemaking brings art and culture, in tandem with great design, to a real estate development project. This helps shape not only the physical but also the social, cultural, and economic identity of a place.

The Kresge Foundation is supporting a two-year creative placemaking effort as part of ULI’s Building Healthy Places Initiative. Rip Rapson, its president and CEO, defines creative placemaking as “the intersection between arts and culture and community revitalization.”

Creative placemaking is as much about the process as it is about the outcome—creative placemaking done well involves early and ongoing engagement with artists and the surrounding community. It can help attract and connect people, promote health, catalyze economic development, and add real estate value.

Creative placemaking strategies apply broadly across many facets of the built environment. These strategies can

be used in the design of housing and commercial spaces, public plazas, bike paths and pedestrian walkways, transit systems, and more.

Real estate development projects—ranging from mixed-use transit-oriented development in dense urban cities, to affordable housing, to neighborhood revitalization projects in small rural towns—can lead with arts and culture, and deliver promising returns.

Bringing art and culture to a real estate project and applying creative placemaking best practices will contribute to successful outcomes that benefit all stakeholders, and create healthy, economically thriving, and culturally vibrant places.

ULI's Long History with Placemaking

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE helped coin the term *placemaking*. One of ULI's founders, J.C. Nichols, gained national acclaim for his ground-breaking project, Country Club Plaza, located four miles from downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The successful development fostered an exciting sense of place—it was an upscale shopping center with 18 separate buildings designed to be reminiscent of the romantic city of Seville, Spain.

ULI has helped advance the notion that placemaking adds value to real estate and urban environments. Starting in 1999, ULI convened a series of placemaking conferences, where members and others learned about placemaking benefits and strategies.

Today, we recognize creative placemaking as an innovation of traditional placemaking approaches, one that requires collabora-

tion with local artists and cultural leaders as well as members of the community, from the start of the project and throughout the project's life cycle. The Institute's awards program regularly recognizes excellence in the development of projects with a core creative placemaking focus.

Real Estate Benefits of Creative Placemaking

REAL ESTATE LEADERSHIP IS CENTRAL to bringing art and culture—along with great design—to the start of the development visioning and planning process, engaging artists and communities early and often, and working with local government, community leaders, and partners to establish policies that foster an equitable environment of mutual gain for all.

Case Studies

The Strand American Conservatory Theater

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



One of four projects recognized by ULI's Global Awards for Excellence in 2016, the new Strand American Conservatory Theater complex includes a 285-seat theater, educational spaces, a public lobby and café, and a black-box theater and rehearsal space. This project transformed a century-old movie theater into a nonprofit

experimental performance space. The revived theater, with features that hark back to its past, is a critical component of the neighborhood's revitalization. Since the theater's opening in 2015, artistic programming has attracted more than 50,000 visitors to a once-desolate block on Market Street in San Francisco.



Sugar Hill Children's Museum and Development

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Thinking outside the box, Broadway Housing Communities' Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling in New York City's Harlem neighborhood may be the first children's museum situated in an affordable housing complex.

The impressive 13-story complex, Sugar Hill Development (SHD), was designed by architect David Adjaye, known for his design of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. The building contains over 190,000 square feet of space and houses 124 apartments, the Sugar Hill Museum Preschool, and the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling.

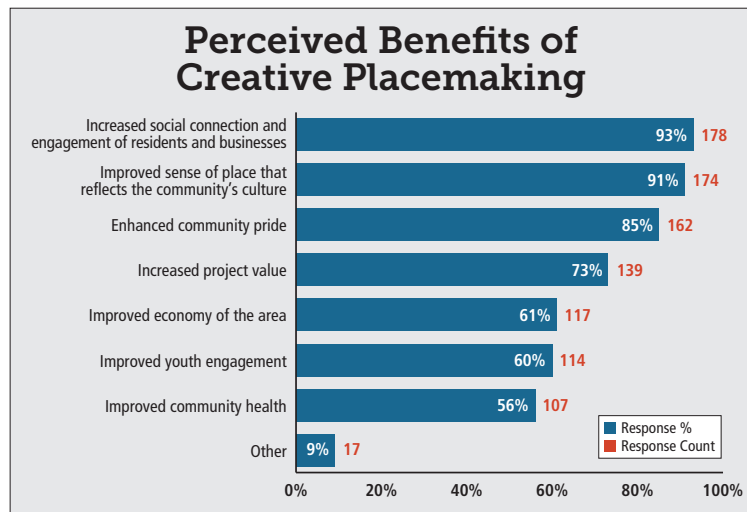


SHD project funding, totaling \$84.5 million, was pieced together from 13 sources, including private lenders, philanthropy, low-income housing tax credits, HOME funds, and New Markets Tax Credits.

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Real estate leaders, local governments, and communities can all benefit from effective creative placemaking strategies. Community benefits include enhanced social cohesion, greater well-being, and safer neighborhoods. Economic benefits include increased patronage of local businesses and increased tax revenues. Real estate developers have reported faster lease-ups, streamlined approvals, and lower overall project costs.

Real estate industry leaders believe that creative placemaking has many benefits. In an August 2016 survey of ULI members, respondents indicated that creative placemaking adds value to real estate development projects and can have a positive impact on project value and market success. Most respondents associated creative placemaking with enhanced community cohesion, pride, and health—all attributes of thriving communities. Ninety-seven percent agreed that the real estate industry has an important role to play in enhancing arts and culture in communities.



Fairmont Park Conservancy

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The Fairmont Park Conservancy in Philadelphia is “using creative placemaking strategies to enrich parks and their communities, and to sustain a vibrant civic realm in Philadelphia.” This work is supported by a \$3 million ArtPlace America Community Development Investments grant to support the incorporation of arts and cultural strategies into the core work of community development organizations.

Through this program, organizations are asked to develop a series of projects that

follow ArtPlace’s four points of creative placemaking:

- defining a geographic community,
- identifying a change that people living and/or working in the community want to see,
- using art- and culture-led initiatives aimed at realizing that change, and
- developing ways to assess if change is happening.

In this model, artists are prioritized as early codesigners and creators for interventions that seek to achieve community goals.



Mill Hill Arts Village

MACON, GEORGIA

In Mill Hill—the birthplace of Macon, Georgia—residents are undertaking a neighborhood revitalization effort to transform blighted properties into an arts village that will connect community members to resources and economic opportunities. The Mill Hill Arts Village includes artist live/work spaces, a park, and a community art center with a culinary art school, which was added after it was discovered that many residents like to cook.

The Mill Hill Community Arts Center is expected to be completed in the fall of 2017. Conversion of some of the dilapidated housing into artist live/work space is well underway, with three of four houses complete, one occupied, and three more scheduled for renovation to

start in June. Created with community input, the park concept is expected to be completed in 2018.

Organizers initially brought in artists from outside the state, unwittingly creating an atmosphere of distrust with the community. Leaders had to work hard to rebuild relationships. On the brighter side, the project is a model of cross-sector partnerships with a variety of local, state, and federal partners, including the Macon Arts Alliance; the Urban Development Authority; Macon-Bibb County; local hospitals; the White House Council’s Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Knight Foundation; and others.



Creative Placemaking and Health

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES animate public and private spaces—bringing people together and providing opportunities for physical activity and community interaction, strengthening individuals, families, and neighborhoods.

An example is CicLAvia, in Los Angeles, California, an initiative that temporarily transforms public roads into auto-free zones, enabling people to walk, run, skate, or bike freely on city streets. The program has helped promote physical activity, improve air quality, and foster diversity and inclusiveness by bringing people of different backgrounds together. About 45 percent of surveyed attendees indicated that, had it not been for CicLAvia, they would not have been physically active that day.



Participants in L.A.'s CicLAvia.

SEBASTIAN AUER

Best Practices in Creative Placemaking

Optimizing the benefits of creative placemaking, and ensuring that all stakeholders share in its rewards, requires the skillful application of best practices. Ten best practices for real estate leaders and practitioners, gleaned from lessons learned on many projects, include the following:

1 BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND. Envision what you would like to see—artfully designed buildings, an inclusive community, gathering places that promote health, for example—but also what you do not want to see, such as displacement of existing residents, a lack of diversity, or exclusionary housing. Set no limits on the possibilities for combining art and culture with the built environment.

2 BRING IN ARTISTS AND THE COMMUNITY EARLY. Timing is everything. Art and culture need to be central and core to the project's design. Early engagement of these essential resources will facilitate a project that is well designed and inclusive and that meets the needs of the larger community.

3 "MINE" LOCAL ART AND CULTURAL ASSETS. Understand what jewels exist in the community. Creative placemaking works best when it is used to amplify local community assets, fostering a sense of pride. Learn about the community's history and aspirations. Practice radical listening.

4 ENGAGE LOCAL ARTISTS. Find and recruit artists in the local community, including visual artists, performing artists, poets, writers, musicians, designers, chefs, and other "creatives." Consult local arts organizations and local and state government art councils to find local artists.

5 UNDERSTAND AND ARTICULATE STAKEHOLDER BENEFITS. Explore how art and culture can contribute to both the social and economic vitality of the project. Be prepared to discuss benefits from various points of view. Focus on community-driven outcomes and what is meaningful to the local community, but also focus on the hard facts needed to sell the project to investors and others.

6 FORM CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS. Include artists, community members, local government, philanthropy, and community organizations in project planning and development.



7 IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL SKILLS NEEDED TO DELIVER ON PROJECT GOALS AND OUTCOMES. In addition to the skills provided by designers, architects, and artists, what other skills are needed? Collaboration with the right skill mix is critical to the success of a project.

8 LOOK FOR EARLY WINS TO GENERATE EXCITEMENT, VISIBILITY, AND BUY-IN. For example, use pop-ups to draw people in and community gatherings to get people engaged.

9 MAINTAIN A LONG VIEW. Don't stop when a project is built. Incorporate ongoing programming that keeps the community engaged and the place alive and exciting.

10 PURSUE CREATIVE FINANCING. Where there is a will, there is a way. Money can come from unforeseen, unexpected places. If your vision is the right one, for the right reasons, with appropriate stakeholder benefits, the money will come. Persevere.

ULI is grateful to the Kresge Foundation for its support of the ULI Creative Placemaking Project.