

places2040 Implementation Workshops

Fall 2021 Series: Creating Great Places

Analysis

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Placemaking

Related Policies: *Make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive*
Design communities that put people first

Why Focus on This Topic?

Creating Great Places is one of the five big ideas in *places2040*, the Lancaster County comprehensive plan. It's all about maintaining the special places in your community and transforming ordinary places into extraordinary ones. In our fall 2019 workshops, our partners identified two policies under this big idea as a high priority for implementation:

1. Make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive; and
2. Design communities that put people first.

For this topic, we'll look at opportunities to address these policies in this planning area.

Purpose of Discussion

- What we mean by a "great place" and "placemaking"
- Identify some locations in your area that could benefit from placemaking
- Point out some locations in your area that have been successfully transformed
- Discuss how the catalytic tools in *places2040* can be applied in this effort

What Makes a Great Place?

Places2040 says that great places are places that:

- We brag about
- Have a strong sense of place
- Are safe and attractive
- Sustain our economy
- Encourage interaction, promote healthy lifestyles, create a sense of belonging, and spark creativity and investment
- Provide choices in housing, jobs, and transportation

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- Capitalize on new technologies and other assets that are unique to the community
- People want to visit, and where businesses want to be

According to the [Project for Public Spaces](#), most great places (both large and small) share four key attributes. They are:

- Accessible and well connected to other important places in the area
- Comfortable and project a good image
- Attract people to participate in activities there
- Sociable environments where people want to gather and visit again and again

In other words, these places attract people and are people oriented. Places that are “destinations.” Places where you want to linger, and not just pass through.

What is Placemaking?

Mark A. Wyckoff, FAICP, a professor at the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, defines placemaking as “the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in.” It’s a process. Fred Kent says “placemaking is turning a place you can’t wait to get through into one you never want to leave”.

There are many things we can do to create great places, but how about some simple starting points? The Congress for New Urbanism [Project for Code Reform](#) encourages communities to implement the smallest most necessary changes – such as parking, frontages, uses, building form. Focus on the basics. A little change can go a long way! Small changes can make a big difference. You don’t have to do everything all at once. Incremental change is often most realistic from a financial and coordination standpoint.

Placemaking Focus Areas

[Refer to the planning area sheet for specific examples]

Next Steps

We encourage all our partners (municipalities, infrastructure authorities, school districts, and Partners for Place to seek regional and local opportunities to use the tools in *places2040* and other countywide plans to implement the policies in these plans. In addition to policies in *places2040*, it’s important to consider the policies outlined in *connects2040* and the Lancaster Active Transportation Plan.

Applying the Catalytic Tools in *places2040*

Here’s how our partners can use these tools to make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive, and design communities that put people first:

Analysis: Topic 2 – PlacemakingMunicipalities

Complete Streets

- Make streets and sidewalks safer and more enjoyable to use for all users
- Improve connectivity of the street and sidewalk network
 - Add sidewalks and fill in gaps in pedestrian system, and connect places in the community
 - Improve street crossings
- Create mobility hubs that connect different modes of transportation and make these places enjoyable and comfortable places to spend time

Align Resources

- Take advantage of the Economic Development Company's (EDC's) Borough Collaborative program to implement placemaking projects

Collaborate

- Work with adjacent municipalities to coordinate streetscape and frontage standards along corridors

Simplify Zoning

- Review zoning codes and revise as necessary to:
 - Allow permitted uses that make great places (appropriate housing mix, mixed use, flexible uses)
 - Encourage buildings to be built up to the street/sidewalk (zero setback in urban and urban core and minimal setback in Rural Community Core)
 - Locate parking behind the building
 - Require appropriate ground-floor façade transparency (Suggested 50% on ground floor retail, and no blank walls >30' long)
 - Require a functional building entry along the sidewalk

Official Maps

- Identify proposed sidewalks and gaps in the pedestrian system and connect places in the community.
- Locate public spaces that will add a public amenity, and which make your community more vibrant and welcoming to people (residents and visitors)

Partners for Place

Align Resources

- Economic Development Company's (EDC's) Borough Collaborative program can help select and implement placemaking projects

County Planning Department

Simplify Zoning

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- Provide support to municipalities revising or creating new ordinances that make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive

Collaborate

- Provide support to municipalities implementing great places, including technical and visualization support

Other Ways to Create Great Places

Here are some other useful tools to achieve this policy:

- Infill lots (vacant lots, parking lots, corner lots)
 - Heal the street wall
 - Improve the pedestrian experience
 - Popup Parks for interim use
- Provide and/or enhance public spaces
 - Provide an abundance of inviting places to sit and relax
 - Benches, movable chairs, ledges, and steps
 - Maintain a connection to the street/sidewalk
 - Trees
 - Water
 - Fountains, pools, children’s spray fountain)
 - Food
 - Food vendors, food trucks, push carts, or farmers market
 - Need critical mass, so locate appropriately. Ensure nearby mix of housing and uses
- Improve streetscapes and corridors
 - Streetscape standards
 - Street trees
 - Utilize consistent lighting, signage, site furnishings and materials
 - Include green infrastructure

Desired Outcomes

Places2040 provides some ways to measure our progress in achieving this policy:

Borough Growth and Vitality

Population	▲	Increase population in city and boroughs
Businesses	▲	Increase # of businesses in city and boroughs
Employees	▲	Increase # of employees working in city and boroughs
Property values	▲	Increase assessed property value per capita in city and boroughs

Analysis: Topic 2 – Placemaking**Urban Growth Areas and New Communities**

Mixed-use land	▲	Increase amount of new development that is mixed-use
Third places / social gathering places	▲	Increase # of third places in boroughs and Urban Growth Areas
Commercial / industrial vacancy	▽	Reduce vacancy rate for retail, office, and manufacturing

Questions for Discussion

1. How might your region benefit from the improvements we've suggested? How might these proposals make our downtowns more vibrant, safe, and attractive and become places that put people first?
2. What could be done to prioritize and fund these potential projects?
3. How can municipalities, school districts, authorities, and Partners for Place facilitate improvements like these, and to participate in the planning process?