

CONCEPT PLAN

WINTER HILL BETTER BLOCK

Introduction

Team Better Block is a community engagement and planning consulting firm that specializes in rapid transformation of public and private places using the open-sourced Better Block process developed by its founders. The Winter Hill Better Block will take place in partnership with City of Somerville to grow the vibrancy of the intersection of Broadway and Temple in Winter Hill. The weekend intervention will transform the walkable but patchy area into a fully occupied district, complete with pop-up businesses, community space, outdoor amenities, public art and improved transportation options for biking.

On September 28th Team Better Block surveyed the study area as illustrated below for opportunities to enliven it. A community walk and talk identified the defining elements of the area to include cultural diversity, easy access to the beach and light rail, and local businesses.



Team Better Block Presentation at 328 Broadway

Methodology

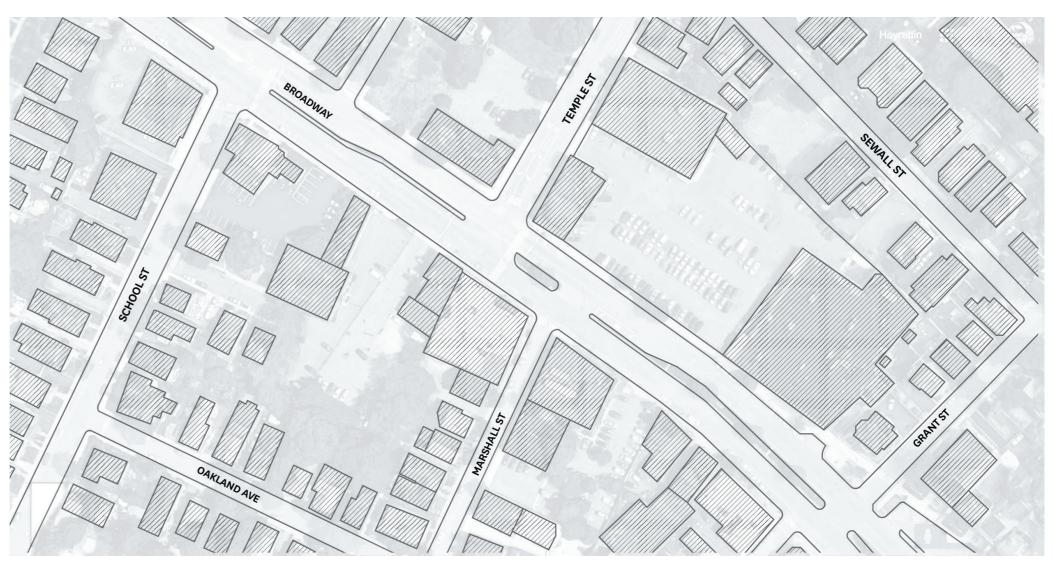
Team Better Block determines which project elements are to be included in the final Concept Plan by applying criteria that take into account community needs and appetite.

Project elements are chosen for inclusion in the Concept Plan when they **address concerns** of community stakeholders heard during Community Walk & Talk and previous assessments.

We analyzed current zoning and permitting requirements for the City of Somerville, and met with the City to discuss permissible projects. Are the proposed projects covered under their special event permit or will we have to request additional permits or approvals?

From an initial list of project ideas, we then meet with private property owners to assess willingness to participate in the Better Block. Will they allow interior use of their buildings or exterior improvements to their property?

In addition, we take into account the **unique abilities** of local volunteers/stakeholders, such as entrepreneurs or performers. The talents and dreams of its people are what makes each Better Block distinct to its community!



Study Area

Better Block Concept

Working with key property owners, advocates, designers and residents the Team uncovered ideas to add art, landscaping, storefront facade improvements, and programming to the area. The concept plan below highlights areas for temporary interventions using materials that can be borrowed, built and bought for a weekend intervention to reveal the true potential of the district. Actual placement of items should be verified in the field and use the human scale for guidance.





Shop









Sculpture Garden Market





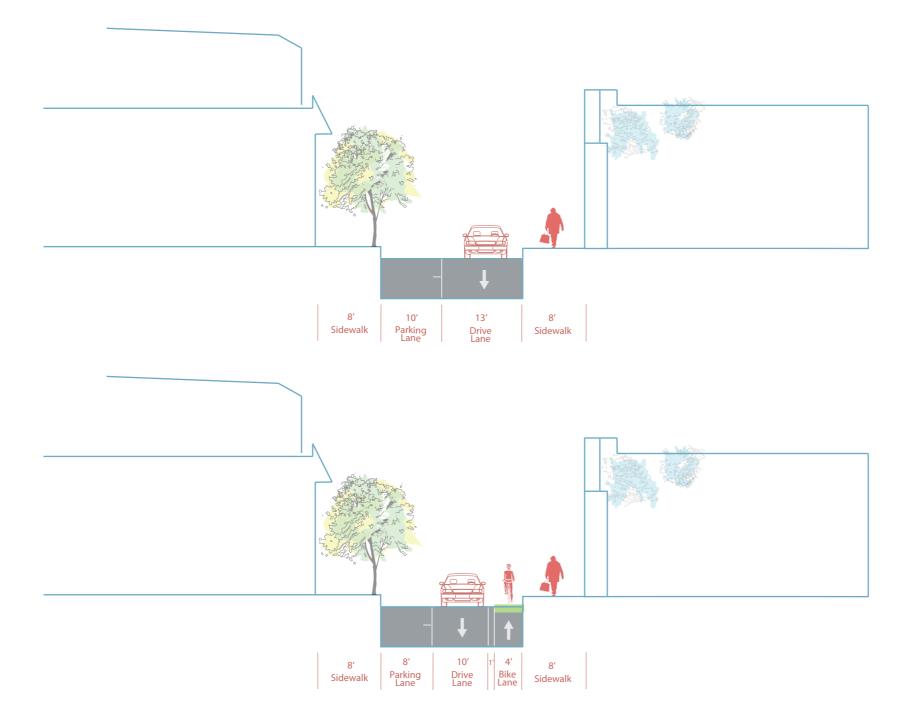






Street Alignment

Connecting the Better Block area to the neighborhood is its key to the success. By making it safer and more intuitive for pedestrians and bicyclists, there will be less stress on parking, reduced pollution, less noise and less heat transfer. Plants will be added to sidewalk and parklet areas to create an additional buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.



Original Street Section
— Marshall Street

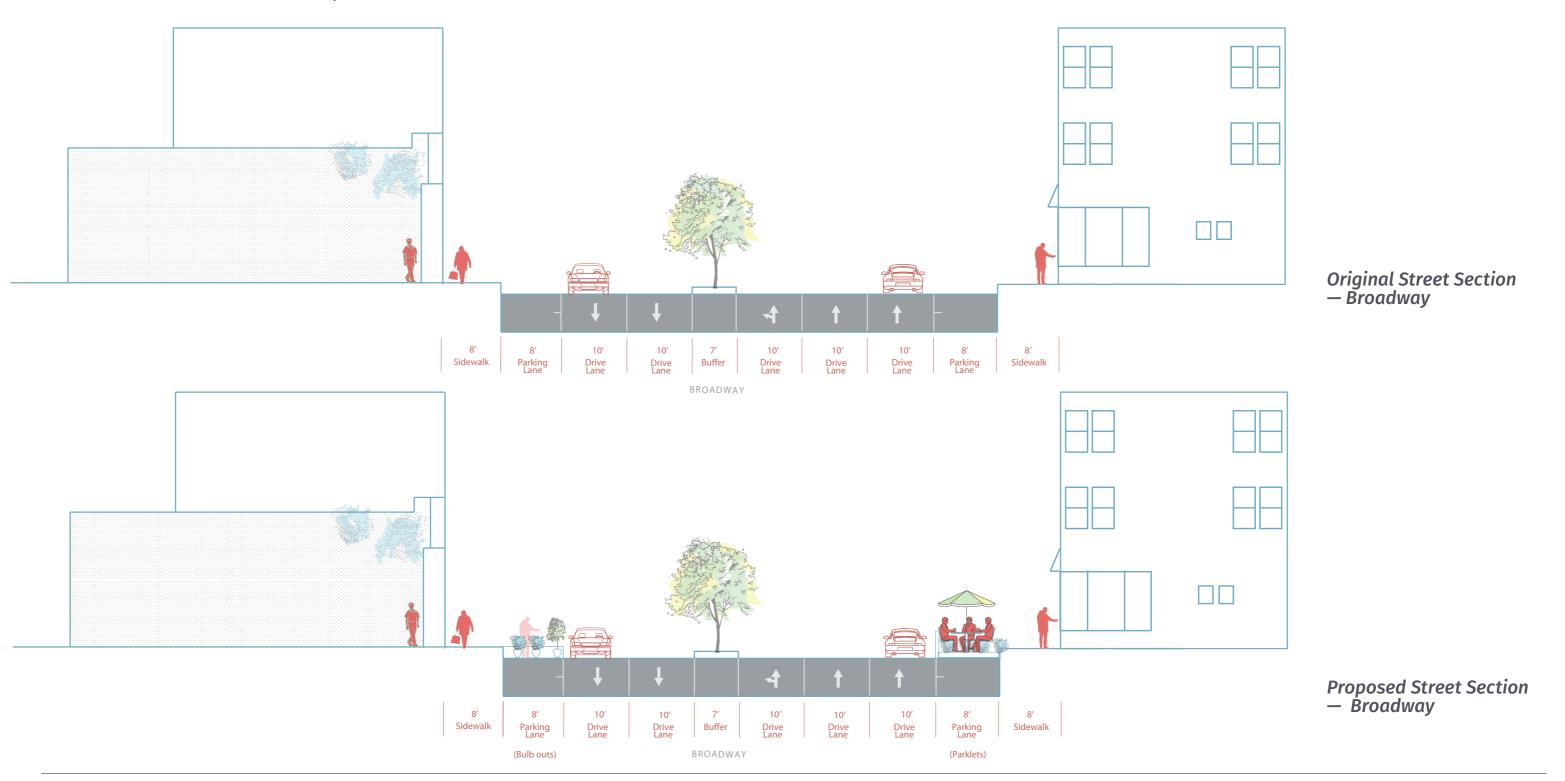
Proposed Street Section

— Marshall Street

Street Alignment

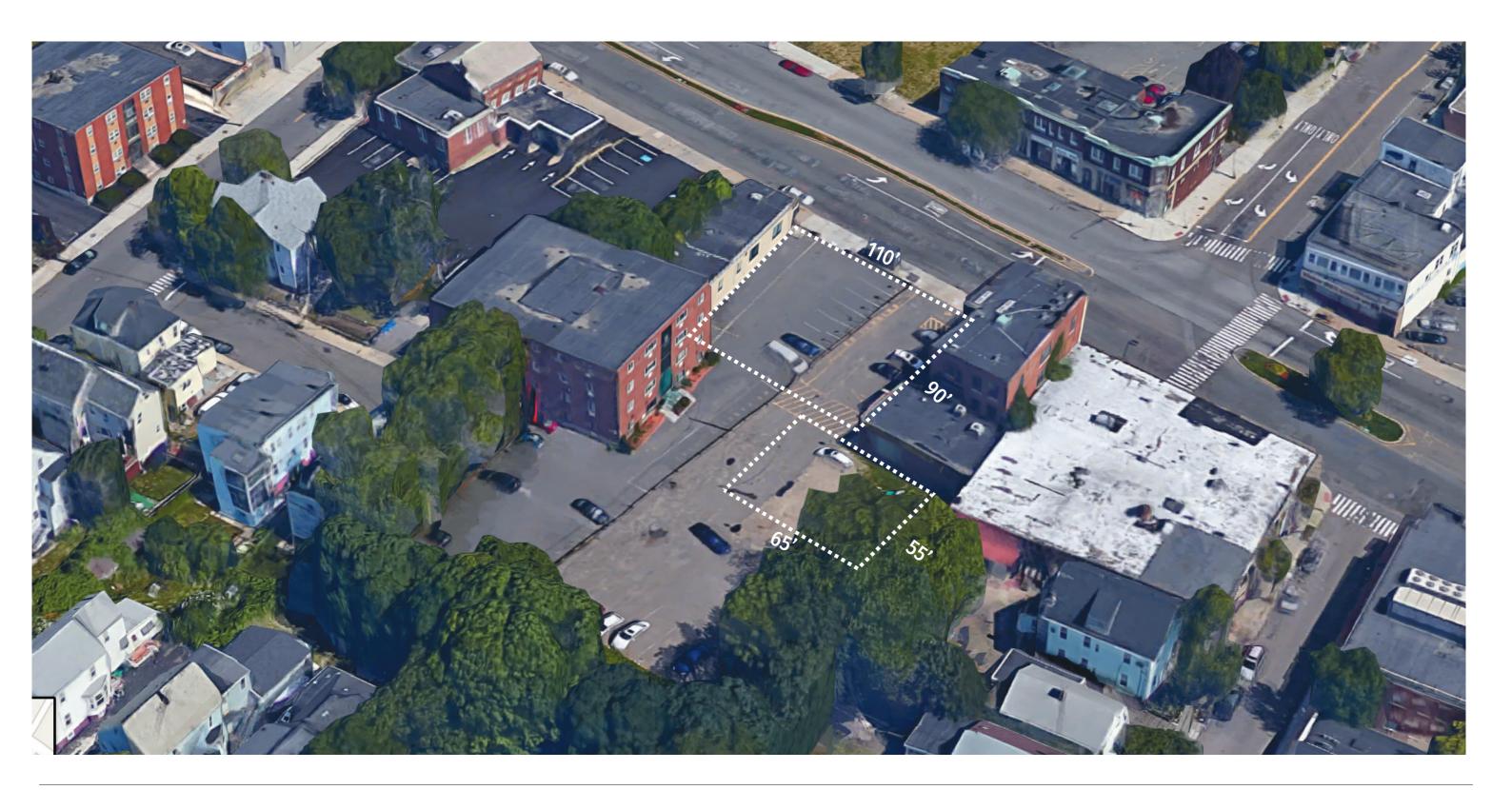


Connecting the Better Block area to the neighborhood is its key to the success. By making it safer and more intuitive for pedestrians and bicyclists, there will be less stress on parking, reduced pollution, less noise and less heat transfer. Plants will be added to sidewalk and parklet areas to create an additional buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.



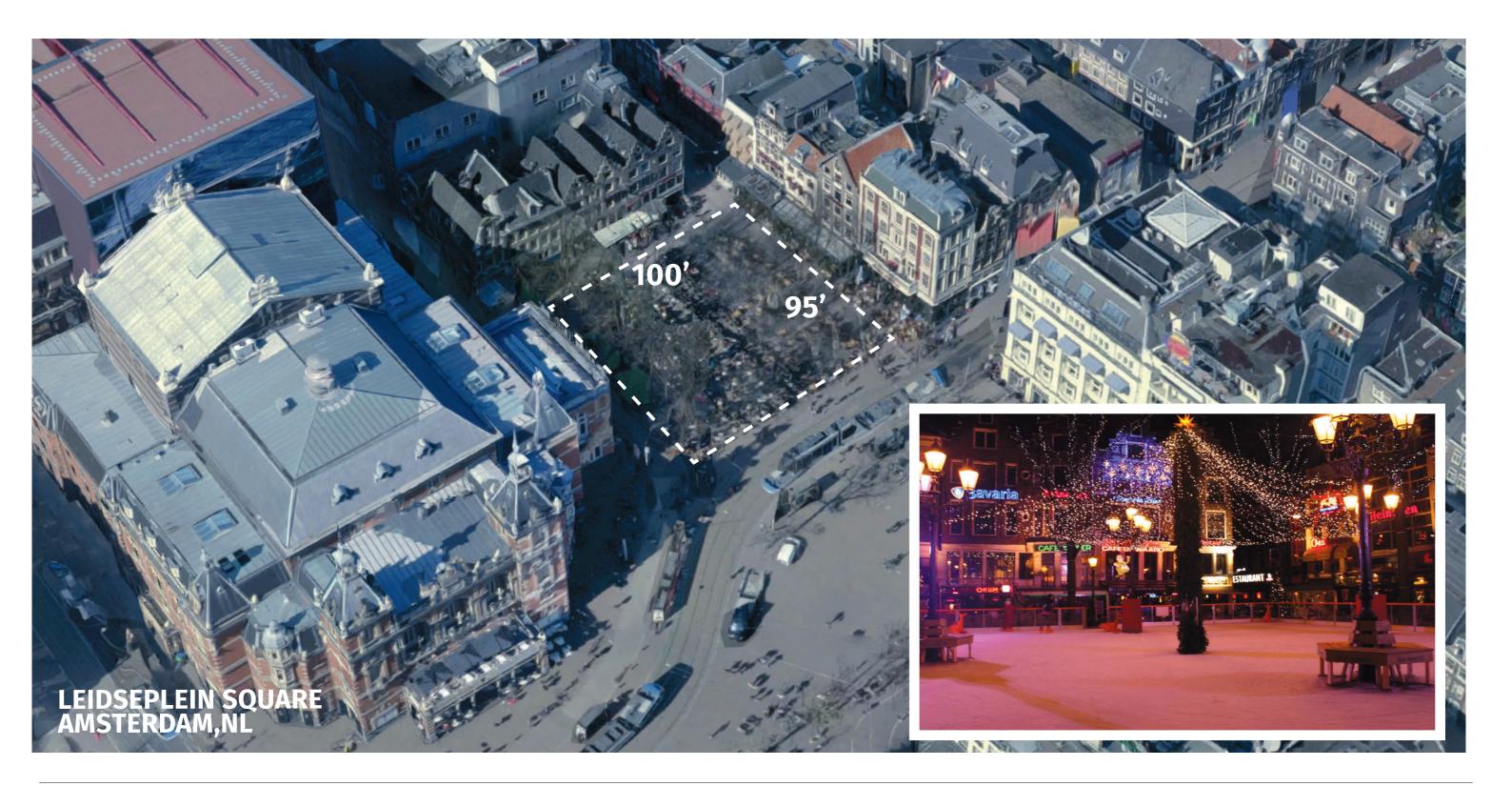
05.

Winter Plaza

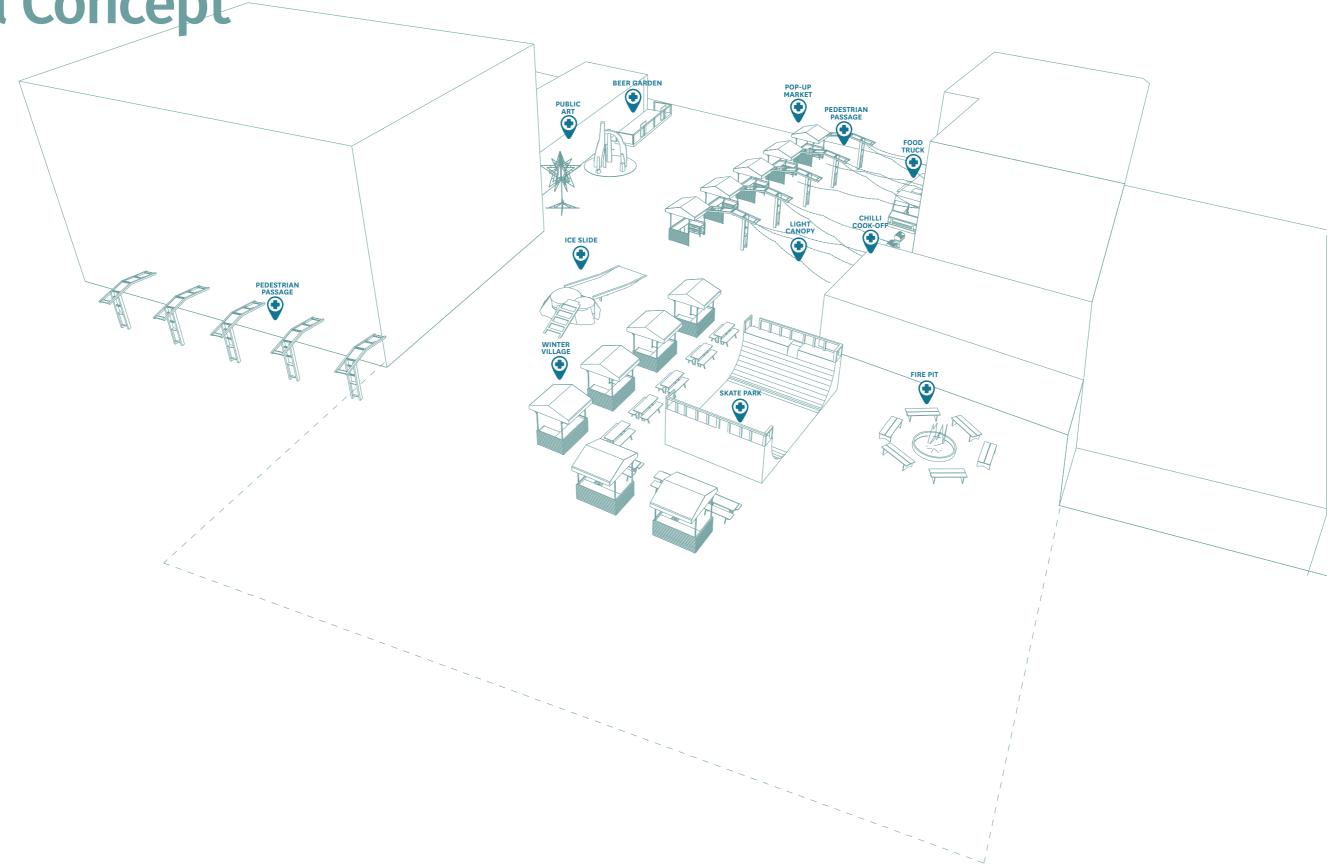


06.

Leidseplein Square (for scale reference)



Plaza Concept



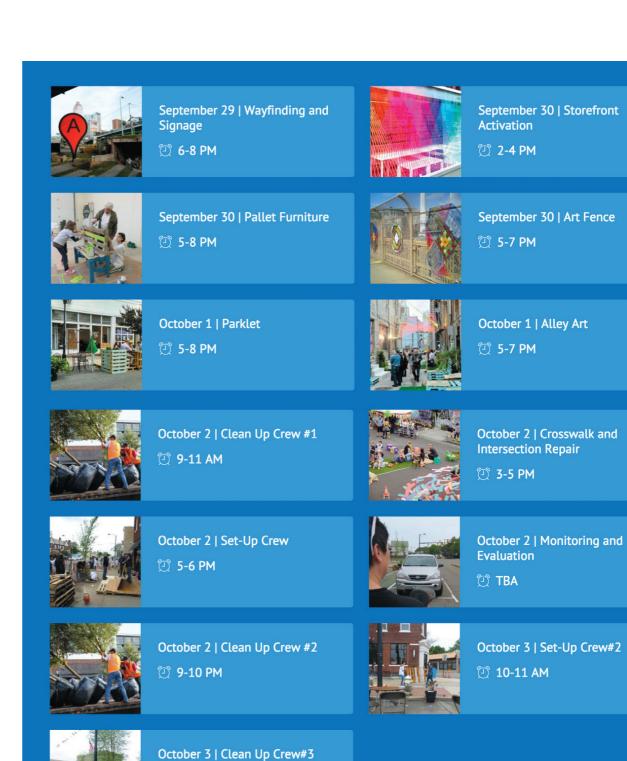
Workshops Workshops

How are we going to do all this? The key is co-responsibility. Many people need to own small parts of this project. A central web site with a volunteer portal will be essential to organizing people's time. Leading up to the Better Block, matchmaking will need to be done between volunteers, materials and designs. Hold short, two-to-four-hour workshops... After participants sign up for the workshops, a lead organizes the tasks and materials and everyone comes together to create the installation. Use the tenet of borrow, build and lastly buy to accomplish tasks. You will be amazed at what resources will emerge from within the community.





Example of Better Block Buildshops from previous project in Revere, MA.



② 2-4 PM

Contra-Flow Bike Lanes

Contra-flow bicycle lanes are bicycle lanes designed to allow bicyclists to ride in the opposite direction of motor vehicle traffic. They convert a one-way traffic street into a two-way street: one direction for motor vehicles and bikes, and the other for bikes only. Contra-flow lanes are separated with yellow center lane striping.





Bike Station

GREEN BIKE LANE RECIPE

- Obtain ROW WidthsReview traffic accident historyAssess existing bike facilities

ZDESIGN

- Street mix cross-section
- Sketchup model
- Traffic control plan

- Traffic Control: Rental
- Materials

MATERIALS

per 180'

- (3) Tempera Paint: \$10 /unit
- (1) White Spray Paint: \$5/can
- (4) Tape: \$15 / Roll (1) Stencil



TapeProTapes Pro Duct 110
PE-Coated Cloth General Purpose Duct Tape,

60 yds Length x 4" Width

White



Tempera Paint

Sargent Art 22-7166 1-Pound Art Time Powder Tempera,

1 unit produces 1 gallon.

1 gallon Covers approximately 300sf applied through sprayer.

- Total Price for 180' (5' painted bike lane including striping & 2' buffer): 95\$, labor and traffic control not included

CLEAN SURFACE	2 people	Use push brooms, collect & dispose of debris
MEASURE & GUIDE MARKS	3 people	Use marking spray, measuring tape & pull string. Measure dimensions off the existing road center line
PAINT SPRAYER	3 people	Apply spray with a brisk walk, 1 person pushes machine, one person guides path, one person tapers edges with cardboard
APPLY TAPE STRIPPING	At least 2 people	Person 1 holds end on ground, second person walks ~ 6' in advance ensuring tape is pulled straight. Person 1 walks along tape securing it to the road
BIKE STENCIL	2 people	Person 1 holds stencil in place. Person 2 sprays white paint using hand spayer or spray cans









Fire Pit and Seating



Great winter design would make public spaces easier to access in the winter. On a wintry day, a fire pit is a great way of bringing people together. You can sit outside, enjoy a coffee, and meet some neighbours. To create multiple points, The Swedish Fire Torch, also known as a Canadian Candle, is a simple and efficient method to make a fire using a single log. In addition to being easy to ignite and control, it is small and compact, and burns for a long amount of time.





Ice Slide



Pedestrian Walkway



Adding playful elements to your design will help the process of engaging the community, especially the kids. Installing an ice slide will not only create a enjoyable ride for the people but will also be a spectecle for people to gather and watch.

In winter cities around the world, there has been an increased attention on solutions and techniques to create better pedestrian mobility. In order to achieve a decent street level animation and life, it is essential to link hub points/buildings together to create a walkway system.







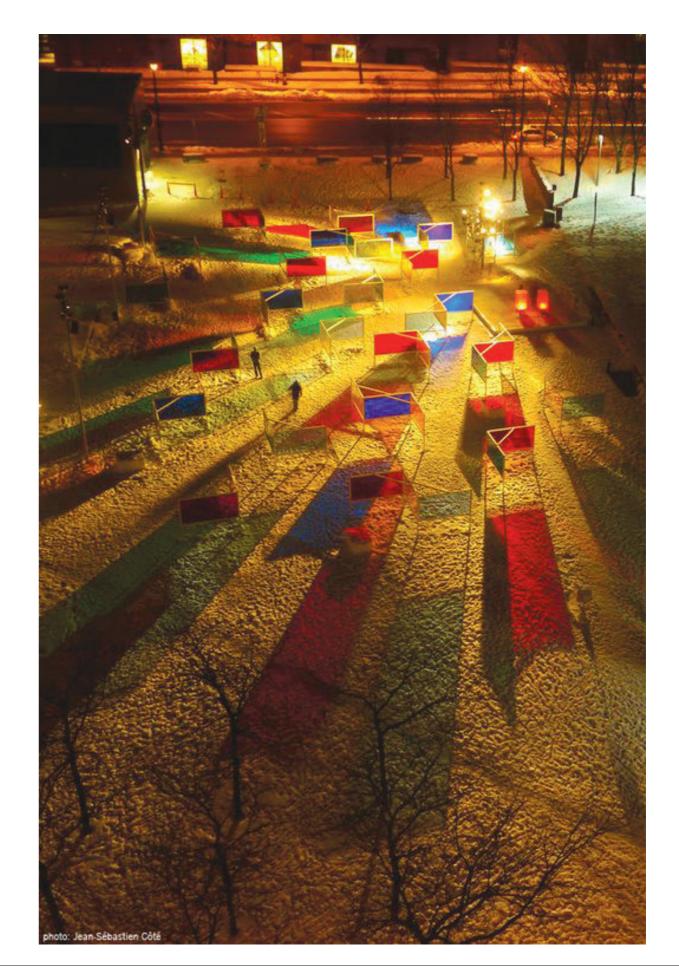
Public Art





Repurpose, reuse, and remake found objects to create beauty in the form of arts and crafts. Set parameters and materials for local artists to inspire their work, such as ephemeral outdoor installations. Set a short deadline for production to ensure completion. Invite artists to an information session and set guidelines for the art installations, including requesting outcomes or products and defining materials. We like to keep the materials simple and local, such as bamboo, twine, pallets, paint and fabric. Assemble said materials the week of the project and have the artists assemble at a temporary workshop area to work together in public view, ideally on-site. Beyond tasking artists with street needs like shade, seating, or fences, collaborative art can be commissioned to bring attention to new focal points through murals and installations.





Winter Market/Village 🗎 🖴 🗎







Creating a pop-up Winter Market with cafes, retail shops, and service centers gives aspiring entrepreneurs an opportunity to try out new concepts with very little risk. The shops will also allow others to see the value of the vacant properties in the neighborhood. Try to place doors facing the street and emulate a storefront with the design. Accept applications for temporary businesses and give locals priority in using these spaces. As formerly dead spaces become occupied, it will help businesses to make a transition to permanent spaces.







POP-UP RECIPE



- Identify potential business concepts and willing individuals as part of the initial Better Block survey.
 Identify potential vacant spaces and willing property owners.
 Assess spaces and identify potential needs.
 Assign spaces to operators.

- Coordinate safety inspections with local authorities.
- Coordinate access to space for shop operators at least two weeks prior to event to begin to prepare the space.
- Assist operators with necessary permits.

-Approximate cost is \$150, The items that are listed below will be provided by Better Block Organizors

- Generator when space does not have electricity
- Fire extinguisher
- Exit signs
- Fire evacuations sign
- Occupancy limit sign
- Assistance with permitting process

PARKLET RECIPE



-Pallets (6 pallets per stage, 13 per parklet) - Potential pallet sources include local grocery stores, Home Depot & Lowes check with store managers in advance. Blue painted pallets are o limits. Pallets can also be purchased directly from pallet renshers but I may cost up to \$8 a pallet. Renishers can supply delivery - Measuring tape otherwise, plan on renting a Uhaul truck to transport pallets to the site. - Drop Cloth Ideally, use pallets of all the same size 48"x48" are common.

- 1.5" Deck Screws
- (3) 4x8 sheets of OSB Plywood
- Paint Discounted paint can be obtained from paint shops by requesting 'mis-tints'
- Sandpaper pads
- Hammer
- 1" Medium weight deck nails
- Paint Brushes & Rollers (4" preferred)
- Painter's Paper
- Cordless Drill
- Circular Saw
- Safety glasses
- Work Gloves

-Approximate price per parklet \$50, Take down- pallets can be returned to original source or picked up by pallet salvage company.

FOUNDATION

4 people

Place pallets at on the ground. For parklets, place pallets flush with the curb. Place two rows of 3 pallets parallel to the curb. Set plywood on top of pallets. No cutting plywood or pallets should be needed. Secure plywood to pallet with deck screws.

SIDES & CANOPY

4 people

For parklets secure pallets vertically along edge of foundation to create a boundary fence. Leave sidewalk side open. For more embellished parklets create a canopy using 2x4s as posts. Landscape fabric or burlap make create shade material. Use heavy duty stapler and 1 x1 trim boards to create support structure for shade

PAINT

4 people

Paint exterior side of fencing





PALLET FURNITURE RECIPE



- Pallets (2 pallets per bench)

- Potential pallet sources include local grocery stores, Home Depot & Lowes check with store managers in requesting 'mis-tints' Sandpaper advance. Blue painted pallets are o limits. Pallets can also be purchased - Hammer zirectly from pallet renters but l may - 1" Medium weight deck nails cost up to \$8 a pallet. Renishers can - Measuring tape supply delivery otherswise, plan on - Paint Brushes & Rollers (4" renting a uhaul truck to transport pallets to the site. Ideally use pallets of all the same size 48"x48" are common.

- 1.5" Deck Screws
- (3) 4x8 sheets of OSB Plywood
- Paint Discounted paint can be obtained from paint shops by pads
- preferred)
- Drop Cloth
- Painter's Paper
- Cordless Drill
- Circular Saw - Safety glasses
- Work Gloves
- Pallet building is best done in a workshop setting. Promote the workshop in advance and have an online signup form. On workshop day assemble volunteers and break them up into teams depending on skillsets. Establish 3 stations cutting station, assembly station and paint station. Create at least one model item in advance of workshop for furniture to be based on. Many design options are available online.

CUTTING STATION	3 people	Limit access to circular saw to dedicated users. Cut pallets into necessary dimensions
ASSEMBLY STATION	4 people	Assemble pallet pieces into furniture using drill and screws
SAND & PAINT STATION	4 people	Sand & Paint nished furniture

Approximate price per bench \$10. When placing furniture out for the event ensure the paint is dry for sitting on. Place painters paper on wet spots as necessary.





Color Crosswalk



Colored Crosswalks leverage street design to change driver behavior. Turn dangerous intersections into safe spaces shared equally by people and cars by painting an intersection with colorful designs. Residents can slow down traffic and create new public space over the course of one fun day involving the entire community and several buckets of paint. Previous experiments showed that removing signs and other traffic indicators from specific intersections forces drivers and pedestrians alike to be more aware while using the road.



CROSSWALK RECIPE



- Review traffic accident history
- Assess existing businesses and identify potential croswalk locations
 Coordinate safety inspections with local authorities.
 Use push brooms, collect & dispose of debris

- Measure and mark the points where strips are going to be positioned...
- Person 1 holds end of one strip/tape, second person holds the other end and ensure strip/tape is pulled straight. Person 1 starts securing it to the road.

- -Approximate cost is \$50,
- (1) Tape: \$15 / Roll
- Chalk Spray Strips of waste sticker paper from Printshops.
- -(2) Safety Vests



TapeProTapes Pro Duct 110
PE-Coated Cloth General Purpose Duct Tape,

60 yds Length x 4" Width



Chalk Spray Streetwise Chalk Pigment

Available as 400ml cans in 10 colours.

Programming

Gather the talents in Winter Hill and give them access to public space. Assign someone to be in charge of the stage and program segments in hour lengths. Mix it up with youth and a diverse line-up.









Metrics 18.

You need proof in the form of hard data to convince skeptics and achieve permanent changes in your community. That's why metrics are invaluable, why we recommend dedicating some volunteers to surveying. Better Block trains people to acquire the data and interpret results to drive change in the long term.

METRICS RECIPE



1 PROCESS

- Identify items to be measured. Typical items include trac speed, noise levels, bicycle & foot trac, and participant surveys.
- Measure existing conditions in advance of event.
- Create teams of survey takers through a workshop oering.
- Send measurement teams out in groups of two people. Measure factors at same time of day as baseline measurements.

2ITEMS

- Radar Gun
- Decibel Reading Phone App
- Clip Boards & Pens
- Safety Vests



TELL US ABOUT YOUR BETTER BLOCK EXPERIENCE

1. How did you FIRST learn about participating in the Better Block? Team Better Block Website Another organization or group. Please provide name Personal (family, friend, Neighbor) Another organization or group. Please provide name Personal (family, friend, Neighbor) Personal experience with Team Better Block TV, Newspaper or radio Please provide name City Staff	5. If you were a vendor please tell us how much revenue you generated? \$ 6. Was this above or below your expectations? Above Below 7. Would you participate in a Better Block Project again? Why? / Why not?
2. What area did you participate in?	8. Were you given adequate information for the Better Block? Yes No A little but not all I needed
3. Which day did you participate? Friday Saturday Both Friday and Saturday 4. What could have been done to improve the Better Block?	9.What was your general impression of Better Block? Excellent Good No opinion Needs some work Not good at all 10. Of the demonstrations, which would you like to see more of?
	☐ Seating ☐ Shade ☐ Plantings ☐ Street Narrowing ☐ Activities ☐ Bicycle lanes
Additional Information Name Gend	er Age

Income

Registered Voter

19.

Next Steps

If Better Block is a GO:

- AGREE TO REQUIREMENTS

60 days before Better Block

Local volunteers and organizations must commit to Requirements (see Appendix A) for a Better Block to be successful.

- FINALIZE CONCEPT PLAN

60 days before Better Block

Team Better Block and Private-Owner Organization Lead meet with property owners to assess willingness to participate.

- CREATE NEEDS LIST

45 days before Better Block

Based on property owner feedback, Team Better Block determines final projects. Materials, equipment, and volunteer needs are defined for each project. Begin asking to borrow materials and equipment among community stakeholders.

- APPLY FOR PERMITS

60 days before Better Block

Begin process of applying for special event permit and any other required permits from City. This will include coordinating and receiving permissions from traffic control.

- ADVERTISE BETTER BLOCK

60 days before Better Block

Community Organization Lead and Team Better Block produce and share poster, create Facebook event, and invite people to sign up to volunteer for build workshops on the Better Block Revere website. Specifically focus on artists and entrepreneurs who want to test their business ideas.

- HOLD BUILD WORKSHOPS

1-7 days before Better Block

- TRAIN SURVEY TEAM

1-7 days before Better Block

- BETTER BLOCK

If Better Block is a NO-GO:

INFORM STAKEHOLDERS

Write memorandum to explain why leadership team decided against Better Block. Send via email to workshop participants.



Winter Hill Better Block

Requirements

Local volunteers and organizations must commit to the following items for a Better Block to be successful:

Community Organizing

Assist with organizing volunteers to execute pop-up shops, public spaces, traffic calming, complete streets and cultural and entertainment programing of the Better Block. Advertise volunteer opportunities with community and identify talent for it.

Deliverables

Advertise project and volunteer opportunities using social media, newsletters, flyers and posters.

Provide feedback on placemaking elements and generally what is missing from the community. Bi-monthly conference calls during the two month planning phase not to last more than one hour.

Partners

Existing organizations such as community development corporations, merchant associations or start-up groups looking to improve an area.

Past Outcomes

In Norfolk, VA the community group that helped organize the Better Block became the civic league and now programs the area regularly with assistance from city grants and memberships.

Private Sector Organizing

Coordination with local property owners and businesses is essential for success. Having a local make those first introductions to key owners, operators and Real Estate professionals makes the process of borrowing space much easier.

Deliverables

Identify property and business owners and make first introduction. Follow-up with selected owners for participation in project.
Assist with matchmaking between vacant property and local talent for pop-up shops.

<u>Partners</u>

Realtors® are excellent partners for this and the National Association of Realtors® even has a grant program. Councilmembers, merchant associations and main street groups also make excellent partners.

Past Outcomes

Memphis, TN reports that vacancies decreased from 80% to 10% within months of the better block and four years later over \$20,000,000 has been invested in the area.

Public Sector Organizing

Local government plays a critical element to the success of the project and it does not have to be a drain on precious staff time. The project will use the existing special event permit, but extra care could be required to meet prototype elements of the project. These may include relaxing health codes, finding work arounds for pop-up businesses, and meeting fire and building codes with temporary fixes.

Deliverables

Be open to a special event permit with exceptions.
Building and Code Inspectors time to walk Better Block area and vacant buildings.
Fire Inspector time to inspect vacant buildings and provide recommendations for safety.
Traffic engineer to be open to testing street changes and review plans

Partners

Local government is a must, with regional and state government being less needed at this stage.

Past Outcomes

Dallas, TX adopted the Better Block as a way to stimulate master plans and street changes throughout the city. Many codes and policies have been changed to reflect local desires and stimulate private investment.



