

# **CREATIVE PLACEMAKING: MARKETING COMMUNITIES AND SUCCESS METRICS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Creative placemaking (CP) is a transformative revitalization initiative for cities, small and large. It's described as the coming together of various disparate community sectors to strategically shape the physical and social character of a town through the arts (Schupbach, 2012). Writers and researchers, Jane Jacobs, Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, and Ann Markusen, are the most notable names within the field of creative placemaking. Interested communities often collaborate with arts' organizations, like ArtPlace, Artscape, and the National Endowment for the Arts, to begin planning any art-centric community revitalization project. Successful creative placemaking communities reap the rewards of enhanced marketability through greater visibility and destination-location designation. Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland, Ohio underwent such a process and, as a result, attracted new businesses, new residents, and tourist dollars; all helped stabilize the once-declining city. The purpose of this paper is to synthesize available materials and share replicable examples of successful creative placemaking through leveraged arts.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States, since its inception, is associated with terms, like innovation, art, and entrepreneurship. Similarly, these words also describe the creative placemaking phenomenon. Ann Markusen of Economic Research Services and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Arts' Consultant, coined the term, 'creative placemaking' in late 2000. It is defined as "public, private, not-for-profit, and community sectors partnering to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities" (Schupbach, 2012). Simply put, creative placemaking or CP is the revitalization of a town or community through its culture, creativity, and arts. By leveraging and appreciating the creative and innovative individuals within a community, a once-stagnant city is able to grow and transform. A CP revitalization initiative involves the partnership of artists (all mediums), community leaders, local and state

governments, cultural and civic organizations, and educators. Essentially, creative placemaking “animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired” (Schupbach, 2012). Ultimately, creative placemaking is about bringing a community together to further enhance its relationships, pride, economy, and opportunities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Leading Writers and Researchers

Communities, specifically, “downtowns” are looking for ways to revitalize tired buildings, lackluster streetscapes, and dwindling spending/revenues. Jane Jacobs, now deceased, is credited with creating new, community-based approaches to city planning. She was *not* an urban planner, rather a writer whose keen observations and common sense led her to rally community leaders toward more place-based, community-centered urban planning. In other words, find the talented people in the community and get them involved in the revitalization. Construction companies renovate, carpenters detail, painters showcase art on building, spaces feature local artists, painters and sculptors design way-finding signs, and cafes emerge eclectic. Jacobs once said, “lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves” (Project for Public Spaces, 2010). As an urban writer and activist, Jacobs published works, such as *Downtown is for People* (1958) for Fortune Magazine and *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (Project for Public Spaces, 2010).

Ann Markusen is known for years of research, expertise, and consulting in the area of economic restructuring. Economist, Ann Markusen, has been conducting over a decade of research on creative placemaking and its successes. She focused on how individual CP projects developed the length of time the project took, and its overall economic impact on its community. Markusen is a Principal Partner of Markusen Economic Research Services (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010).

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, a Principal Partner at Metris Arts Consulting, is a leading voice on arts and community revitalization. She is an expert in the arts, focusing mainly on creative placemaking’s cultural enhancement in communities. Metris Arts Consulting provides “data, analysis, and planning support to help communities strengthen the arts and help arts activity strengthen communities” (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010). Nicodemus actively participates in conversations at conferences and universities, nationwide and internationally. Since 2012, Nicodemus has also held a spot on the nation’s ‘50 most influential people in the nonprofit arts’ chart (Metris Arts Consulting, 2018).

## Leading Arts' Organizations

Arts organizations also play a vital role in the idea of CP. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), ArtPlace, Artscape, and many other organizations are dedicated to not only the art industry, but also how to bring that industry into a place where a wider breadth of people can appreciate it. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1965 to fund and support the American people through their ever-expanding creative ideas, imagination, and participation within the arts community. This organization collaborates with various agencies, local leaders, and philanthropic organizations to assist in providing learning, preserving the diverse American cultural heritage, and allowing the arts to be available to all communities across the nation (NEA, 2018a).

ArtPlace, created in 2011, has a ten-year collaboration with foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that strive to position arts and culture as a focal point in comprehensive community marketing and enhancement. The main and ongoing focus of ArtPlace is in creative placemaking, where they strive to strengthen the physical, social, and economic fabric of communities. ArtPlace works under a 50-cell matrix within which they believe the community planning and development field fall. Their goal is to reveal the unique value that culture and arts can add to each of the components within each cell. This matrix consists of government, commercial, nonprofit, civic, social and faith, and philanthropy stakeholders that can help within the agriculture and food, economic development, environment and open space, health and human services, housing, immigration and social justice, public safety, transportation, workforce development, and youth and education sectors. ArtPlace takes action in four different sectors: (1) national grant programs; (2) community development investments; (3) field-building strategies; and (4) continual research strategies. National grant programs help communities with creative placemaking projects, no matter how large or small the community. Community development investments occur within six place-based community planning and development organizations. Field building strategies assist with the connection and growth of field practitioners. Continual research strategies further knowledge, document, and carry out successful creative placemaking methods (ArtPlace America, 2015).

Artscape is a Toronto-based organization dedicated to sharing their creativity and placemaking experiences with communities everywhere (Artscape, 2017). This organization has over 30 years of experience within creative placemaking and research. Artscape has developed a mentorship and coaching program to assist organizations with their placemaking projects. By partaking in this program, an organization would work directly with senior specialist staff to expand capacity in areas such as: project vision development, community and stakeholder engagement and project governance, cross-sector partnership activation, business planning, marketing testing and feasibility analysis, funding, finance, planning and fiscal tools, and so much more (Artscape, 2017). Overall, Artscape is a wonderful tool for initiators to utilize when putting together a plan for a creative placemaking project. It is a great starting point for the economic and social revitalization of a community.

## Arts' Contribution to the U.S. Economy

The United States boasts a robust creative economy. According to a report from the NEA, in 2015 the contribution of Arts and Cultural Production in the U.S. economy was \$763.6 billion, which was 4.2 percent of the GDP. In 2015, consumer spending on admissions to performing arts events alone was \$31.6 billion, \$1 billion more than projected (NEA, 2018b).

In 2015, the arts and cultural sector contributed more to the economy than some other sectors, such as agriculture, transportation, and warehousing, exceeding some by more than \$200 billion. The main participants of the arts and cultural sector are comprised of the following: broadcasting (excluding sports); motion picture industries; publishing (excluding internet); arts-related retail trade (such as art galleries, book stores, and music stores); performing arts companies and independent artists, writers, and performers; and creative advertising services. The annual growth rate for the arts and culture as a whole was 2.6 percent, which exceeded the growth rate of the nation's overall economy. The arts and cultural sector provided employment to 4.9 million wage and salary workers in 2015 and they collectively earned \$372 billion (NEA, 2018b).

On the state-level, there are examples of the Arts adding value to a state's economy. In Illinois, graphic design, an art medium, contributed \$589.5 million to its GSP, which is 69 percent above the national rate. In Rhode Island, handcrafted jewelry contributed \$224 million, which was 33 times the national rate. In California alone, the value that arts' artisanship added to the state's economy topped \$174 billion and employed over 700,000 people (NEA, 2018c). Jason Schupbach is a firm believer that CP is a *strategic* way to incorporate the arts into economic resurgence (2015).

## Creative Placemaking through the Arts

Arts and culture can act as an economic, community, and environmental *change agent*, bringing economic and social well-being to a community. The arts can be leveraged for seven functions: overall aesthetics, cultural agglomeration, workforce investments, city building, amenities and livability, creative regions, and community development (Delconte, et. al, 2016).

Jamie Bennett, Executive Director of ArtPlace America, stated *four* necessary *strategies* for successful creative placemaking: (1) anchoring; (2) activating; (3) fixing; and (4) planning (ArtPlace, 2018).

Anchoring - an arts organization plays the key role in developing the community identity and creating business. Restructuring a movie theatre or renovating a museum to attract local residents and tourists to spend time and money there is a good example of anchoring.

Activating - the community brings visual and performing arts to public places, thereby making the place more attractive, active, and charming. A community organizing types of fairs, carnivals, or festivals to enhance the attractiveness of a location for example.

Fixing - re-visualizing the use of empty and eroded spaces through art and design, thus helping the community use these spaces for developing business opportunities.

Planning is to actively involve community stakeholders through the arts and seek their thoughts and advice in community design.

One particular outlet that can utilize these strategies best is the idea of *crowd mapping*. Essentially, the neighborhood residents are the main participants in the activity. Residents scour the neighborhood on foot, searching for existing creative and cultural assets. They also mark places and particular spots on the map where they identify potential for creative placemaking to occur. An advantage to crowd-mapping is the fact that one can observe how the community is moving around itself, where they are congregating, which streets have the most pedestrian traffic, and popular points of interest. Another positive that comes out of this is that community residents may feel empowered by participating in the activity, giving them a personal stake in future projects in their area. One of the great aspects of crowd mapping is how different humans are, meaning that they all perceive and see things differently. This allows for ideas and spaces, unseen by some, to be utilized by the masses. Leo Vazquez, Executive Director of the National Consortium for Creative Placemaking, had this to say:

Crowd mapping is a great tool for creative placemaking, or even any kind of community development issue [because] it helps gather important data and crowdsource information about a place. When the groups bring their maps together into one large map, you can see a lot of new connections, opportunities, and gaps. People see this, and come up with even more ideas—it is a social activity that brings people together to learn from one another. (Tianga, 2017)

Art can act as a strong device to engage the community to develop social capital and create a sense of belonging. It can provide a platform to the neighboring people where they can interact with each other, exchange views and opinions, and develop skills and knowledge on various social and economic issues. It can remove the hindrance to active participation and create intense relationships and a strong network within the community. Arts-related activities transform the community into a great place where local, imaginative people can turn their creativity into a productive purpose. It changes the social and physical features of the community all while raising the economic activity that benefits the community at large (Prakash & Spinelli, 2016).

### **Creative Placemaking in Community Design and Revitalization**

Creative placemaking helps in shaping community identity. It is not a mere restructuring of spaces, but fueling collective imagination and thinking, enhancing confidence, and marketing strengths by identifying local assets. CP seeks to bring macro-environmental change to a community (Prakash & Spinelli, 2016). CP focuses on creating people-centered and productive livelihoods through synergistic growth of the creative sector and small entrepreneurial businesses. It ensures social equity and better lives for the local inhabitants, provides an engrossing experience to tourists, and downtown businesses see an upward economic spike (Borup, 2016). Steele stated the appearance of a small town with empty storefronts in the main street reveals the decay and diminishing state

of that town; the entrepreneurs would not foresee establishing a flourishing business there. Artists can make the place interesting to attract curious shoppers and travelers, thus increasing their attraction in local food, authentic experience, and the tranquility of life there (Steele, 2011).

A long-suffering, ailing, and deprived community is often burdened with the lack of job opportunities, public security, affordable housing, and equal social development. Comprehensive community development requires artists, development practitioners, and people from all sectors (economy, education, housing, public security, infrastructure and transportation sectors) to work in the same table and use their skills and proficiency towards community revitalization. Artists, with their elaborate imaginations and creative thinking, can resolve and redesign neighborhood revitalization in a more meaningful way to meet current and future needs of the inhabitants, as they remain in close contact with the local people (Hughes, 2016). CP can enhance mutual trust, respect, and social cohesion in the neighborhood. It can create buzz to attract the younger generation to become an integral part of the new development plan. Cultural programming, creative urban design, and public art have a strong power to draw attention from media, developers, and concerned authority; they can make the place safer and more vibrant, causing an increase in the amount of foot traffic, which can act as a catalyst to the progress of local businesses and the economic revitalization in that community (Zindell, 2017).

Community resurgence through strengthening the quality of its place is crucial to long-term sustainability. If community leaders and local inhabitants do not care about the place in general, then there is no positive outcome in trying to strengthen the community. The idea of sustainability is thrown by the wayside in situations like these where it is simply irresponsible to take the initiative to try to make a certain place a distinctive and socio-culturally developed entity that would erode the neighborhood in the long-run (Benfield, 2013).

### **Creative Placemaking Challenges**

Uniting people under one umbrella to revitalize and develop the community is not easy. It requires collaboration, mutual support, and enthusiastic participation from all groups of people in the community. People differ in their culture, identity, political ideology, emotional belongingness etc. Therefore, connecting traditional practitioners of planning and community development with arts and cultural development practices is a challenge in implementing creative placemaking (Borrup, 2016). This coupling can be difficult to both forge and sustain. Partnerships require listening, accommodations, sharing of information, and teaching others skills. If these qualities are not present, then a sound partnership does not exist. It is also quite beneficial to know when to abandon unfruitful and conflict-ridden relationships that are hindering or halting progress (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010).

Another aspect to be wary of is the idea of community skepticism, which can make it much harder to earn public endorsement and resources. It can be hard at times to portray creative placemaking in a positive manner to some people. The real problem is that a creative placemaking program for community development does not ensure the generation of equitable economic outcome across all members in the neighborhood. It might lead to income inequality, cultural conflicts, and

gentrification in the community (Borup, 2016). This could include neighborhoods, organizations, and even art forms that, when left out could possibly complain of inequity, causing the opposition of public support.

One of the main challenges faced in CP is assembling and securing adequate financing to complete the project. Even the very successful Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland had trouble finding the required funding. Due to the size of the three small organizations that were looking for funds for the project, it was much harder to secure anything. They are not large enough to run capital campaigns and do not have wealthy people working within the organizations. Rather, they had to look to the city, state, and federal governments, along with the foundations and organizations that have provided money for projects like these in the past. Even then, it took nearly a decade to secure all of the needed funding (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010). Financing is a main inhibitor of the success of creative placemaking, and it takes hard work and persistence to push through over the course of many years.

Regulatory hurdles also pose a threat to the success or progress of a project. Zoning codes could forbid mixing residential and commercial use. In other cases, like that of Seattle's City of Music initiative, problems arose with public safety and anti-music ordinances. It can take time, thought, and capital to change these regulations to better suit the project at hand (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010). Additionally, maintenance and sustainability need addressed. As hard as it is to finance these projects, it is even harder to *maintain funding* for maintenance and operating expenses in the time that follows completion. Murals, sculptures, and other arts projects need monitoring over time, to ensure proper maintenance to the façade to keep them attractive. The displacement of life-long residents and artists could be an unforeseen drawback of creative placemaking. Regenerating new place-identity and enhancing economic worth of the place would attract the real estate developers toward profitable businesses, which may increase the tax burden for the locals. The poor inhabitants, senior citizens, and local artists could feel they no longer belong in their community and it would result in their displacement (Borup, 2016).

Faulk stated that the effectiveness of a community revitalization program can be measured by descriptive analysis like, the number of new jobs created, the number of people attending a festival, the spending generated, or the number of buildings rejuvenated (2006). The main problem is that measuring the effectiveness of revitalization programs often lacks proper data. Ashley (2015) stated that many cities have no explicit definition of downtown and they have not collected data as the outcome of revitalization programs. Therefore, data is often unavailable or difficult to collect for evaluating the growth and development of the downtown areas (Faulk, 2006). It does not help that these projects are not occurring in a controlled environment. There are many different things influencing the environment all at the same time, which just increases the difficulty of measuring much of anything.

## **Creative Placemaking Implementation**

Although it may sound easy to paint the side of a building with a beautiful mural or host festivals within a community, CP takes a large amount of planning before events open. The whole process

begins with an initiator; this could be anyone ranging from a business owner who has an idea that could create more foot traffic, an artist who has a vision for a particular sector of the community, or even an organization searching for ways to raise awareness about a certain issue. The initial idea for a creative event or structure becomes the grounds for what could turn into something much bigger. Once an idea is established, the initiator needs to find others who are interested and willing to join and help build momentum to carry out the project. It can be very challenging to get a team together because some ideas may seem too large and can be daunting. It is a constant marketing effort to gain members of a project board that believe in the movement as much as the initiator. The established project board will then devise a plan and prospective results they wish to see from this project. The planning step could range from a few months all the way to a couple of years before any action is taken because becoming financially stable enough to complete the project could prove difficult. This group of planners is the most important part of the entire project, because they lay the foundation for the rest of the project. All of the hope, belief, ideas, and work come from this group of planners, so it is crucial that this group remain strong throughout the whole process. If one cog comes loose or out of place within the group, the whole project could fail.

Groups require financial assistance to see fully a project through to completion. This is where local and state governments, business owners, and grants can help. Most local governments do what they can to help because hearing about new ideas on ways communities can be livened up, generate more business, or gain more residents is something in the forefront of all local leaders' minds. Business owners who are seeking more business and growth within their communities also prove to be adequate providers in projects. Owners can supply space for events or functions to happen, some financial backing, and overall support to the project. Fundraising is another avenue of gaining enough financial backing to complete the project. Engaging civic leaders to pursue this route has proven effective, local chambers of commerce or Rotarians (NEA, 2018d).

In the past decade, grants have become more popular and have helped many communities. ArtPlace has currently invested over \$100 million in community development through supporting artists. ArtPlace invested that money in 279 creative placemaking projects within 208 communities, alongside investing in six different community development organizations (ArtPlace, 2018). The National Endowment for the Arts realized the need for community revitalization and began a grant program alongside ArtPlace in 2011, 'Our Town.' Our Town is a grant program that requires at least two primary partners: a nonprofit organization and a local government entity. On top of that, one of the primary partners must be an arts or design cultural organization. Since the implementation of Our Town in 2011, 478 projects were supported totaling more than \$36 million in all 50 states and the District of Columbia (NEA, 2018e). Design projects, arts engagement, and cultural planning projects constitute clear quality and character of their communities. Projects that fall into this segment could be awarded a grant ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 to help fund a project and must have the required partnership. Other grants are awarded to arts and design service organizations, university organizations, or industry organizations that provide technical assistance to the groups or organizations putting the place-based work into action. These organizations can receive \$25,000 to \$100,000 (NEA, 2018d). Although there are many other organizations that provide funding to put a project into action, a project plan that is well written and provides many details is required by all organizations before receiving any funds. After funding is acquired, a project can then move to the next step. A project can be a mural on the side of an older building in

the community, restoration of an industrial building that is transformed into an art gallery or creative space, or creation of a festival park with sculptures and space for festivities.

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus believes that, within smaller communities, it could be easier to have a successful creative placemaking project. She uses the example of Arnaudville, Louisiana. This small town did not necessarily have enough funding itself, but the community reached out to its parish tourism offices and the French Consulate in New Orleans and attempted to build bridges in order to receive resources and assistance to fulfill their project. Smaller communities are not always looking to just bring in crowds from outside, but rather serve the local residents. Local residents can help projects tremendously when they see the vision the initiator has and realize how it could benefit their community (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010). Ann Markusen has stated that, “most good creative placemaking grounds itself on distinctive features and capabilities of the community, and service for the community” (Schupbach, 2012). Some projects, by design, can intend to help the community itself and this will appeal to local residents, business owners, and governments.

### **Creative Placemaking and Measuring Profitability**

Gauging the ‘success’ of any project is dependent on what the end goals were as stated within the original plan. Did this project generate more traffic through the community? Did it bring together arts and everyday life? Did it move anyone in any kind of way? What were the economic effects on the community as a result of the project? These are all questions that can and should be asked, but the answers can only be evaluated as a success by the planning team.

When measuring the economic value to a community of investing in any asset, ‘Return on Investment Percentage’ (ROI %) is a measure used [ $ROI \% = (Net\ Profit/Investment) 100$ ]. The investment is generally plant, property, or equipment and is readily quantifiable. The ratio represents the relationship between the net profit generated from the investment and the original investment made. As a performance measure, the higher the ROI % the more favorably the investment is considered in relation to its cost. The ROI % as described here (as with other popular profitability metrics) is a short-term measure and not ‘present value’ adjusted. It also presents problems when trying to compare two or more investments of vastly varying size. However, with limitations in mind, community leaders can still utilize it as a benchmark to identify the efficiency of an investment or a group of different investments with significant confidence.

When assessing the profitability of any project, such as a large-scale ‘creative placemaking’ undertaking, the immediate benefit (sales or profits) from it is not clear. Whether the benefits are clear or not, project initiators, often marketers, are expected to provide direct evidence that, their expenditure-decisions contribute directly to the generation of profits. Traditionally, the ROI % is utilized when evaluating plant and equipment, as opposed to any marketing project, like a CP venture, that has always been considered an operational expenditure and expensed in the period in which it is incurred. In very recent decades, attempts to measure the profitability of investments in marketing have been made using the ‘Return on Marketing Investment’ (ROMI) and adapting the ROI % metric [ $ROMI = (net\ profit\ attributable\ to\ marketing\ project/marketing\ amount\ invested\ or$

risked)] (Luo and Kumar, 2013). If the ROMI is positive, the marketing expenditures are generally considered justifiable. The term ROMI has become more acceptable since the publication of *Return on Marketing Investment* (Powell, Groves & Dimos, 2011).

Project Initiators have traditionally attempted to track a market's response to a 'project' in terms of sales and profits. However, there are still major concerns that sales and profits measured, in the short term, may not completely or fairly assess all aspects of marketing 'projects.' Projects, like CP initiatives, typically have a range of objectives, where the 'return' may not be reflected immediately in sales or profits. In the case of creative placement projects, the investment may aim to change the perception of an area of a city or town. This alone will take many months to determine success. In addition, even then, it is very difficult to quantify. Correctly measuring an investment in a CP project with many objectives would require complex formulas and algorithms to factor dozens of different variables. Of course, towns in need of revitalization may not have access to such sophisticated measures.

It would be the ideal situation to have solid data to support revitalization efforts. Expecting that one can measure and track all CP investments and potential quantifiable returns in the short and long-term may simply *not* be doable. A mid-ground may be to have a general idea of the project's success by attempting to measure and track as much as one can. One can add more measures as time progresses. The worst scenario is for these CP projects to go un-evaluated. One may 'think' the project has worked, but has no measurements in place for verification. Thinking of CP, like a business project, one would consider the marketing *expenditure* an 'expense' and not an 'investment,' and, therefore, not expected to 'return' anything to the community stakeholders. With ill-informed stakeholders today, that approach will certainly not garner more money in the future.

## **CASE STUDIES IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING**

### **Creative Entrepreneur Project: San Jose, California**

The Silicon Valley is known as a great technology hub with its many technology-based museums and theatres, but San Jose wanted to make its downtown the city 'center.' The ZERO1 Biennial festival joins art and technology, while actively engaging local art organizations and artists to share their works and spaces (Schupbach, 2012). This event is designed to allow locals to view their location as arts-rich and diverse, rather than just "geeky." As a partnership between forty Silicon Valley arts organizations and ZERO1, the festival encompasses visual and performing arts, theater music, and public art installations offered to the public at little or no cost (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2010). Specifically, San José's ZERO1 directly addresses Silicon Valley's lopsided concentration of innovative scientists and engineers and underrepresentation of artists, seeking to link these creative occupations to spur new ideas and animate the city.

The festival, a CP project, has brought thousands of visitors to the area including artists, filmmakers, architects, engineers, designers, and many more from all over the world. In just the

first few years, ZERO1 Biennial was attracting 55,000 people and generating millions in local sales, all while creating jobs and furthering cultural industry businesses through projects based in both art and technology (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2014). This successful festival showcases how diverse and wonderful the Silicon Valley is and locals are reaping the financial rewards. These goal-oriented outcomes make the locals feel more involved with their own community.

### **Revolve Detroit: Detroit, Michigan**

Revolve Detroit is an ArtPlace America-funded project which was undertaken in the year 2013. This program aimed to exhibit art in empty storefronts and underperforming public places on a stretch of Livernois Avenue, between Seven and Eight Mile Roads in Detroit. It intended to entirely change or creatively rethink the image and potential of Detroit's historic neighborhoods through the active engagement of art and entrepreneurship. The local residents had worked to fill up these storefronts with different types of pop-up shops and art installations. It was an effective approach to build a lively, attractive community hub where people could join and interact on a regular ongoing basis. It integrated arts into broader community revitalization and placemaking efforts. The program was viewed as such a success that many of the initial pop-up retailers have actually moved into a permanent retail space. These pop-up venues included an art studio, theater productions, design festivals, and an old-fashioned soda fountain shop. These programs supported the growth and development of local businesses, art, and culture, which strengthened the community and promoted social welfare (Project for Public Spaces, 2015). Besides Revolve Detroit, a multitude of other arts projects took place around a similar time. Festivals and celebrations such as the Detroit Design Festival, DLECTRICITY, and Art X-Detroit showcased many different forms of art that attracted thousands of people to Midtown Detroit to participate. Power House Productions reclaims land and houses for a small amount of money and transforms them into energy sources, cultural spaces, art installations, and community centers. Young Nation transformed an alley in Southwest Detroit into a permanent outdoor exhibition space for street art through the Alley Project (Rapson, 2014). Overall, many efforts are being taken to utilize the arts in Detroit to rebuild the city and attract newcomers.

### **Rebuilding the Center: Pendleton, South Carolina**

Pendleton, South Carolina is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is comprised of 3,000 residents. Like many other traditional towns, this small rural community was gradually decaying over the years as they faced a lack of investment. The adjacent properties of the historic town square were identified as 'disadvantaged' and the community was devoid of a strong focal point. A master plan had been designed to restructure the town square. The NEA had provided financial assistance to help the community become stronger and more alive. The Clemson Little Theater and five local organizations are working with landscape architects and urban designers to develop the plan. It incorporates designs for adjacent streetscape, public art, and performance places to raise cultural programs. Although the community is only 3,000 strong, Pendleton attracts around 50,000 visitors each year, making the project worthwhile (Benfield, 2013). Two projects

that fall under this downtown master plan are Mechanic Street and Exchange Street. Mechanic Street, a street directly parallel to Exchange Street, was a streetscape project that was completed last year. The project resulted in new sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, public seating, plantings and the repaving of the whole street. Exchange Street is a project currently in progress that will add a multitude of features such as more parking for motorcycles and disabled persons, a patio and other outside furniture, new stairs, and revamped crosswalks (Town of Pendleton, 2018).

### **Gordon Square Arts District: Cleveland, Ohio**

The Gordon Square Arts District (GSAD) located in Cleveland, Ohio underwent a \$30 million revitalization plan that was intended to generate over a half-a-billion in economic development in a Cleveland inner city neighborhood (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2014). The project was launched during the 2008-2009 recession under a collaborative effort from the Cleveland Public Theatre, Near West Theatre, and Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization to collectively raise the money rather than go at it alone. The project was led by the community development corporation and funds were raised from philanthropic and public sources to renovate two theaters and to build a new home for a third. Approximately \$9.5 million came from public sources with the following breakdown: \$5.4 million from the city of Cleveland, \$3.1 million from the state of Ohio, and \$1 million from the federal government. The private funding came from a multitude of different foundations as well as individuals and corporations. This neighborhood beautification project was successfully completed in 2014 and added parking, created a Cleveland Public Theatre campus, formed the first Special Improvement District in Cleveland beyond downtown, reopened a long-shuttered Capitol Theatre, and built a fully accessible, passive-design theater for Near West Theater (Americans for the Arts, n.d.).

From this \$30 million revitalization project, new residents were attracted, more than 75 new businesses found a home, and attendance at arts events throughout the year is upwards of roughly 100,000 (Litt, 2014). Population has stabilized, while the trend in the rest of the Cleveland area is on a downslope. The addition of hundreds of new housing units have been added with hundreds more to come. An influx of young professionals and young families have been seen as a result of this revitalization along with this area being named the number one housing market in Cleveland. This project took many years and a very strong core team to make it happen. The partnership therein was so successful because each partner was able to recognize their skills and resources and learn how those could be leveraged in terms of the project as a whole. Lead staff of each partner had to actually devote around a third of their time just to this project for as long as five years (Markusen & Nicodemus, 2014). The Gordon Square Arts District is now an economic cornerstone of Cleveland's West Side, creating new jobs for residents by its combination of housing and new business with arts at the core (Americans for the Arts, n.d.). What is now a nationally recognized model of how arts can increase economic development and job creation, many would consider the Gordon Square Arts District a very successful creative placemaking project. Even the nationally known Anne Markusen stated that Gordon Square was an example of how "most good creative placemaking grounds itself on the distinctive features and capabilities of the community, and service for the community." The National Endowment for the Arts former-Chairman Rocco Landsman had this to say: "I wish I could transplant what is happening in Gordon Square all around

the country, because not only are they engaging their own artists and their own artistic ethos, but they are transforming a neighborhood, a community (Litt, 2014).

Moving forward, Gordon Square organizations will work with Columbus urban design and MKSK, a planning firm, to formulate new ideas on how better to enrich the community. More specifically, the district has stated that the plan will “explore opportunities for physical, economic and artistic growth of the District, and connectivity with nearby areas” (Litt, 2014). Gordon Square was such a success that in 2013, Governor Kasich, alongside Mayor Jackson, announced the state would be giving \$20 million to fund the Cleveland Waterfront District Plan that was announced back in 2002. When complete, the project will show a multitude of results. A plethora of new intersections, roads, walkways, and bike paths will be installed. There will be more waterfront and usable space available, along with new marinas, beaches, industrial property, and parkland. The potential for new and current neighborhood development will be higher than ever. In terms of sustainability and growth, there are increased opportunities across the board, especially regarding the ideas of economic growth and the opportunity to become a “green city” (City of Cleveland, 2006).

Gordon Square Arts District is now thriving, creating and maintaining initiatives that support the arts. Starting at the beginning of 2018, the Gordon Square Artist Residency program was created to support the artist and projects they look to fulfill. Four artists will be hosted in 2019, one each quarter. Looking to expand these types of programs, Gordon Square will host its first musician over the course of 10 weeks, who will provide free music programs and performances to the surrounding community. In fact, the musician, Ariel Clayton Karaś, was found saying that the work will be, “Impactful. Beautiful. Interesting. Always free. Always public” (Gordon Square Arts District, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Creative placemaking (CP) is by no means a cookie-cutter method for community revitalization and has no set way of working for every community. Rather, it is a process that takes great planning, time, and commitment. The end-results could be life changing for a CP community. Creative placemaking is a cultural shift in the way communities self-identify. CP creates communities that promote coming together, enjoyment, and fostering charm. No matter the community’s size, whether large or small, creative placemaking can be implemented anywhere.

Typically, the CP process intends to build a distinctive downtown, which attracts new development and allows diverse socio-economic people to come downtown on evenings and weekends with family, friends, kids, and others to enjoy spending time and money. Community gatherings lead to increased community involvement and cooperation, new business formation, transformation of the image of the downtown to a livelier, family-friendly, and more welcoming place, which helps to retain current inhabitants and attract new residents. It acts as the center of gravity for the community and brings in diverse tourists who might never have traveled there (Delconte, Kline & Scavo, 2016). Creative placemaking makes a community vibrant, enhances its aesthetic beauty,

and rejuvenates the economic activities within, thus making the community a happy and great place to both work and reside.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES

Communities that successfully implement creative placemaking reap benefits. These benefits include such things as increased foot traffic from both residents and tourists, new job creation, and a greater visibility, regionally, even nationally. The economic benefits for communities include rejuvenated sales in the CP-designated area and visibility as an attractive place for people to live and work, thus generating the need for new housing and business locations. In general, the money spent inside the CP city increases. By engaging artists of all mediums in the creation of CP-related projects, communities are transformed into almost unrecognizable new entities. Community pride is restored or burgeons.

Examples of successful creative placemaking projects, like those herein, exist. However, discovering and studying the projects that have fallen short of the predicted goals would be beneficial as well. Project managers can learn from both successful and unsuccessful CP ventures. Additionally, communities will need more dollars in the future and accountability is the key. In the end, project initiators must find better ways to evaluate CP ventures, not traditionally considered “investments.” Whether funded through tax dollars, donations from the public or non-profit organizations, project managers must be good stewards of the funds and provide reliable evidence that the money was well spent.

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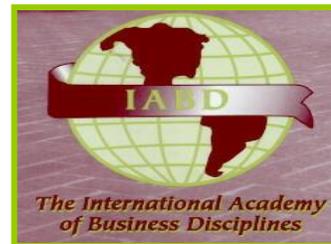
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