Works In Progress: Size Up Your Placemaking Opportunities

Richard Murphy, Michigan Municipal League
Where is your favorite place?
What do you like about this place?
What do you like about this place?
Where would you rather be on a Saturday evening?

Here?
Or here?
So, what’s placemaking?

Our definition: the process of creating places people love
“Turning a place you can’t wait to get through...

...into one you never want to leave.”  Fred Kent, PPS
Quality of place is quality of life—and that has economic impacts for our communities.
Housing supply mismatch

Home A: (attached, walkable)
Own/rent an apartment/townhouse, and you have an easy walk to shops/restaurants & have a shorter commute

- Silent/Greatest Generation (Born 1944 or before) 41% vs 47%
- Baby Boomers (Born 1945 to 1964) 44% vs 51%
- Gen X (Born 1965 to 1980) 51% vs 43%
- Millennial (Born 1981 or later)

Home B: (detached, conventional)
Own/rent detached, single-family house, and you have to drive to shops, restaurants, & have a longer commute

Q18. Imagine for a moment that you are moving to another community. These questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community where you would prefer to live.

National Association of Realtors
Portland State University

We love where you live.
We have too much of some housing types
...And not enough of others
When demand exceeds supply...

“city centers will continue to see growth even where regional prices have been stagnant” – Fitch Ratings
Walkable urban places attract investment

The Last Three Real Estate Cycles:
Share of Michigan Metros' New Income Property Delivered in WalkUPs & Walkable Neighborhoods
Income Property – Office, Retail, Rental Apartment, Hotel

Average Annual Rents by Land Use Category

We love where you live.
So...what do we do about it?
Start with the right-of-way

Charlotte, NC; Urban Street Design Guidelines
The public realm defines place
...or the lack thereof.
Pedestrian Scale – Commercial Sidewalks

Bad
Marquette; Neumann

Better
Birmingham; Wooten

Best!
Traverse City; Schindler
Complete Streets

• All modes of travel are accommodated within the transportation network.
  – Based on urban context where there is a complementary relationship between thoroughfare and urban character.

Hamburg, NY; Dan Burden
Building Placement

City of Dearborn
Building Height

90 feet width

45 feet high
Building Height

30+/- feet

60+/- feet
Welcoming Form

Enclosure

Transparency

Charlevoix; Schindler

Traverse City; Schindler
Transparency

This

Not This

Grand Rapids, Schulz
Focus on building form, not use
Don’t have space? Fake it.
Then give people a reason to use it.
Resources

- Mlplace partnership: www.miplace.org
- Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org
- PlacePOP: placemaking.mml.org/PlacePOP

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