Tactical Urbanism and the Role of Planners

IT'S A 16 MINUTE WALK TO SEABOARD STATION

IT'S 17 MINUTES BY FOOT TO OAKWOOD CEMETERY

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Abstract

Many planners and policymakers work to improve the public realm in cities, yet the cost of making improvements can be prohibitive and strategic planning processes with long-term implementation horizons can make it difficult for planners to be responsive to local social and economic changes. In the last decade, short-term citizen-led interventions, popularly known as tactical urbanism, have sprung up across North America to improve local neighbourhoods (guerilla gardening, Park(ing) day). These informal initiatives driven by citizens have also inspired planners and municipal officials to experiment with low-cost, temporary projects (pop-up parks, temporary use zoning). Tactical and temporary interventions may allow planners to make improvements to local neighbourhoods that are low-risk and can provide an opportunity for planners and residents to collaborate on planning projects. However, while the momentum around tactical urbanism in North America is growing, the place for these initiatives within professional planning practice and the role of the planner is unclear. Semi-structured interviews with citizens, organizations, and officials who have participated in tactical and temporary projects in the U.S. and Canada were used to better understand the ways in which these initiatives are being integrated into planning, as well as the challenges and considerations for professional practice. The planners interviewed identified common issues of liability and safety, as well as the need to ensure that projects were acceptable to the public. They also noted the importance of developing strong working relationships with other municipal departments and agencies. Many interviewees identified benefits to using temporary projects within the practice of planning; however, the ideal role for planners was not conclusive. Some felt that planners should be proactive in integrating tactical and temporary projects into planning practice and providing opportunities for citizens to lead projects in their communities. Others thought it was important to maintain the tension between sanctioned and unsanctioned projects and felt that planners should instead respond to issues identified by citizen-led projects. Tactical and temporary projects appear to offer an opportunity to improve the resilience and adaptability of both planning processes as well as policies that are created. The specific role of planners with respect to these initiatives is likely to be affected by municipal administrative structure, the accommodation of uncertainty and risk within the planning culture of each municipality, as well as the perceptions and desires of community stakeholders.

Résumé

De nombreux urbanistes et décideurs publics travaillent à améliorer le domaine public des villes. Toutefois, le coût de ces améliorations peut être élevé et le processus de planification stratégique inhérent aux mises-en-œuvres de projet à long terme peuvent prévenir les urbanistes d'être sensibles aux changements sociaux et économiques locaux. Au cours de la dernière décennie, des interventions à court terme menées par des citoyens, communément appelé urbanisme tactique (de l'anglais tactical urbanism), ont vu le jour en Amérique du Nord afin d'améliorer certaines communautés locales (guérilla jardinière, Park(ing) Day). Ces initiatives informelles poussées par des citoyens ont inspiré des urbanistes et des fonctionnaires municipaux à expérimenter avec des projets à court terme et à faible coût (parcs contextuels, zonage temporaire). Des interventions tactiques et temporaires pourraient permettre, à faible risque, aux urbanistes d'améliorer certains quartiers tout en créant une opportunité de collaboration avec des citoyens. Toutefois, bien que ce phénomène soit en croissance en Amérique du Nord, la place que pourrait occuper ce genre de projet dans la pratique formelle de l'urbanisme et le rôle que pourrait y jouer les urbanistes restent flous. Des entretiens semi-structurés avec des citoyens, organisations, et fonctionnaires ayant participé à des projets tactiques ou temporaires aux États-Unis et au Canada ont été utilisés afin de mieux comprendre comment ces initiatives sont intégrées à la planification et l'aménagement, et également, afin d'identifier les principaux défis et considérations pour la pratique. Les urbanistes ont mentionné comme principales problématiques leur niveau de responsabilité et la sécurité entourant ce genre d'exercice, ainsi que la nécessité de s'assurer de l'acceptabilité sociale de ces projets. Ils ont également mentionné l'importance de maintenir de solides relations de travail avec les autres départements et agences municipales. Plusieurs entretiens ont identifié des bénéfices à l'intégration de ce genre de projet à la pratique de l'urbanisme, toutefois, la définition du rôle que devrait prendre les urbanistes demeure incertaine. Certaines personnes interrogées ont affirmé que les urbanistes devraient être proactifs dans l'intégration de projets temporaires et tactiques et devraient fournir l'opportunité aux citoyens de mener ce genre d'action dans leur communauté. D'autres croyaient qu'il était important de maintenir la tension existante entre les projets sanctionnés et ceux qui ne le sont pas et que les urbanistes devraient plutôt répondre aux problématiques soulevées par les projets menés par les citoyens. Les projets temporaires et tactiques semblent offrir une opportunité d'augmenter la résilience et l'adaptabilité du processus de planification et des politiques qui en sont issues. Le rôle spécifique des urbanistes en regard à ces initiatives est vraisemblablement influencé par la structure administrative municipale, l'accommodation des incertitudes et des risques à l'intérieur de la culture de chaque municipalité, ainsi que les perceptions et désirs des parties prenantes.

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CHAPTER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This first chapter provides an introduction to this student research project as well as information about the document's structure.

As planners and policymakers work to improve the public realm in cities, the task can seem daunting. The cost of making improvements in cities can be prohibitive and there is often a lack of resources allocated for this task in municipal budgets. Meanwhile, new planning and design strategies that are implemented may come with unforeseen costs and impacts, and completed projects may fail to properly address the concerns of local stakeholders. Strategic planning processes with long-term implementation horizons can also make it difficult for planners to be responsive to local social and economic changes and to actively engage citizens in the process of planning.

Temporary interventions have emerged as an important way to make improvements to local neighbourhoods that are low-risk for both citizens and municipal administrations. Numerous citizen-led initiatives have sprung up across North America, following examples in Europe, to improve public spaces using low-cost, temporary measures (e.g., guerilla gardening, Park(ing) Day). Initiatives to improve public space through informal means driven by citizens have also inspired planners and municipal officials to experiment with low-cost, pilot projects, such as pop-up parks and temporary use zoning. This report is an examination of the role of

urban planners with respect to these low-cost, temporary interventions – popularly known as "tactical urbanism" (sometimes also referred to as DIY urbanism, guerilla urbanism, and pop-up urbanism).

The temporary nature of "tactical" and pilot projects allows planners and citizens to observe interventions on the ground and make adjustments before committing to long-term costly improvements. Pilot projects that gain community and municipal support can then be made permanent. In this way, temporary projects may provide an opportunity for planners and residents to collaborate on local projects. However, the ways in which temporary projects should be incorporated into the practice of planning, and the relationship that planners should have with various other tactical actors, remain unclear.

Resources concerning tactical urbanism exist but are often directed toward informal actors (e.g., citizens and non-profit organizations). The objective here is to gain a better understanding of the current role that urban planners play with respect to tactical urbanism and the potential challenges that planners may encounter while engaging in temporary and tactical projects. By understanding the potential challenges and

opportunities inherent in tactical urbanism, planners will be able to determine the extent to which they can take advantage of these projects to collaboratively work with citizens in the process of city-building.

Document Structure

For this Supervised Research Project I wanted to create a product that would be of use to practitioners and not only serve as an academic exercise. As such, I chose to present the case study research within the context of a guidebook aimed at professional practitioners who may be interested in tactical projects. While directed towards practitioners, I have attempted to write the guidebook in such a way that it also remains accessible to other stakeholders that are commonly engaged in tactical urbanism and planning processes (e.g., citizens, community organizations, designers). Chapters Two through Four provide an introductory preface to the guidebook (Chapter Five) articulating key theoretical and practical implications of tactical and temporary urbanism for urban planners. Chapter Two is a review of the literature on tactical urbanism including a definition of the movement (common actors, types of projects), a brief review of previous theoretical writings and movements that have inspired many tactical

actors, and current drivers of tactical and temporary projects. Chapter Four examines a number of practical considerations and challenges that arise when planners engage in tactical or temporary projects. Semi-structured interviews with citizens, organizations, and officials who have participated in tactical and temporary projects across North America are used to better understand these conditions and the ways in which these projects are currently being integrated into planning. Chapter Three presents this interview method and the interview guide.

"The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism" is presented in Chapter Five and includes a plain-language introduction to the topic, followed by a series of case studies of projects across the U.S. and Canada that highlight the different roles and perspectives of planners who have been actively involved. The case studies are presented under a set of themes and provide recommendations for planners interested in tactical and temporary planning projects. Chapter Six offers a summary of the recommendations as well as a concluding discussion regarding the role of planners and the usefulness of tactical and temporary projects within planning practice.

CHAPTER

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on tactical urbanism including a definition of the movement and current conditions that may account for the recent increase in these interventions.

Over the last 10-15 years, numerous citizen-led initiatives have sprung up across North America and Europe that aim to improve our cities. Guerilla gardening and yarn bombing have been used to beautify public spaces, while the creation of temporary parks in on-street parking stalls (or Park(ing)) offers a larger commentary on the provision (or lack thereof) of neighbourhood greenspace. These interventions have also inspired a larger discussion around incremental planning and the involvement of informal actors in planning processes. Increasingly, cities are incorporating temporary interventions and uses into official planning processes as planners and municipal officials see the potential that temporary and low-cost projects hold for responding to constantly changing social and economic conditions (Gerend 2007, Greco 2012). However, while the momentum around these projects is growing, the place for these initiatives within professional planning practice and the role of the planner is unclear. At first glance, the role of professional planners and the potentially unsanctioned acts of temporary initiatives appear to be at odds with one another.

In order to examine the role that urban planners may play with respect to temporary initiatives in North America, I have chosen to focus on the "tactical urbanism" movement. Tactical urbanism is a form of city building employed by a variety of actors that focuses on small-scale, low-cost, often temporary interventions as a means to improve local neighbourhoods. While the Berlin-based Studio Urban Catalyst explored tactical and temporary uses in post-industrial Europe in the early 2000s (Studio Urban Catalyst 2003), the term "tactical urbanism" came into common use in 2010-2011 when a group of young urbanists compiled case studies of temporary public space improvement projects, primarily from North America, in Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action, Long-term Change, Volume 1 (Lydon et al. 2011). These authors define tactical urbanism as small-scale, short-term interventions meant to inspire long-term change, adding that tactical urbanism as a city-building approach features five characteristics:

• A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;

• An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges;

• Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;

• Low-risks, with possibly a high reward; and

• The development of social capital between citizens, and the building of organizational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit/ NGOs, and their constituents (p. 1).

From the perspective of these authors, interventions considered under the umbrella of "tactical urbanism" vary greatly and include projects led by citizens and community groups, non-profit organizations (e.g., Business Improvement Areas), and professionals (e.g., municipal administrators, planners, architects); projects include those that are sanctioned as well as those undertaken in contravention of municipal bylaws and ordinances (Fig 1).

Figure 1: Graphic showing the range of tactical urbanism projects sorted by tacticians and types of tactics used (source: Lydon et al. 2012; p. 7)

The intentions behind tactical projects are diverse – some projects are intended to boost economic revitalization while others are aimed at improving pedestrian safety or bringing community members together to socialize. The way in which tactical projects are manifest also varies greatly, with projects at different physical and temporal scales; however most projects are incremental or temporary in nature, with implementation at a local scale – block, street, or building (Lydon et al. 2011). In their critical discussion of temporary uses, Bishop and Williams (2012) include uses that are accidental and spontaneous, though it is important to note that most tactical projects are done with a specific intention to improve the public realm. Tactical urbanism is sometimes also referred to as DIY (do-it-yourself) urbanism, guerilla urbanism, and pop-up urbanism. Lydon (2011) makes the distinction, however, that DIY urbanism (and likely guerilla urbanism) may focus on communicating a social or political message while most tactical projects focus on testing temporary solutions with the intention of creating permanent change.

Tactical urbanism as a movement has gained momentum and visibility in popular culture and discourse. It was named one of the top planning trends of 2011-12 on the planning blog Planetizen (Nettler 2012) and was a focus of the official U.S. pavilion at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. This exhibition, Spontaneous Interventions: Design actions for the common good, featured 124 design projects from across the U.S. including numerous tactical and DIY projects, some, like the collective act of yarn bombing, without a specific creator (Lang Ho 2012). Andres Duany, a co-founder of the Congress for New Urbanism has also recently said that tactical urbanism is an important tool for "new" New Urbanism – shifting the practice to one that is more frugal and adaptable (Chantry 2013). Online and print publications on urban affairs such as The Atlantic Cities (Lepeska 2012), Planetizen (Lydon 2012), [polis] (Malhotra 2012), The Urbanist (Arieff 2011), Next American City (Brooks 2012), and Spacing (Robinson 2012) have reported on tactical projects as well as the overall increase in temporary urban interventions in cities. Local media outlets are attracted to projects in which citizens actively improve their communities, and projects that touch on issues relevant to urban areas more generally (e.g., improvements to walkability) have gained media attention on an international scale.

There is also growing academic literature examining the potential to incorporate temporary projects and uses within planning practice. Recent books, articles, and academic papers focus on the conditions that have led to the rise in tactical and temporary projects and specific facets of the movement, such as the value of temporary uses within development cycles (Earls 2011, Graham 2012, Sarkar 2012). There is also interest in flexible master planning and site planning processes that allow sites to develop in phases based on "a loosely defined end vision, rather than a fixed state" (Bishop and Williams 2012, p. 179). Within North America, there is a growing sense that planners should start to consider the evolution of cities and make allowances for uses that are the "highest and best for now". Some have identified tools that planners may use to encourage and support interim and temporary uses in cities (Blumner 2006). However, there is little academic literature that examines the practical considerations for planners who are interested in tactical and temporary initiatives. While Lydon et al. (2011) include planners and officials as tacticians in their definition of tactical urbanism, it is useful to consider what is meant by the terms "tactic" and "strategy" and clarify who is to be considered a "tactician".

TACTIC VS. STRATEGY

A number of questions arise when trying to differentiate between tactics and strategies. Who employs strategies and tactics (i.e., who are the actors)? What is their motivation and in what ways do they operate? Haydn and Temel (2006, p. 16) define tactics and strategies in the glossary to *Temporary Urban Spaces* stating:

"Tactics: Tactics is, like 'strategy', a term from a military context, where it refers to short-term battle planning in contrast to long-term, less flexible war planning. 'Tactics' means an approach from the weaker place, which is not in a position to dictate conditions to an opponent but is compelled to try to exploit relationships to its advantage, and by waiting for an opportunity and exploiting it flexibly and quickly. Tacticians have to work in others' locations.

Strategy: Strategy is, like 'tactics', a term from a military context, where it refers to long-term war planning in contrast to short-term, more flexible battle planning. 'Strategy' means an approach that emerges from the planning desk and the sand table; it works from a position of power that is in a position to force its opponents to accept its conditions and to ignore limitations imposed by circumstances.

Strategy plans for its own space, and that is a space of autonomy, where the objects, whether enemy soldiers or one's own, can be maneuvered at will."

These definitions stem from the writings of Michel de Certeau (1980), who first made the distinction between strategies and tactics based on the ways in which they operate. Strategies operate based on place – the identification of a physical or institutional place from which to manage changes, threats and opportunities. Strategies are the "manipulation of relations of force" and are signified by a "mastery of places by vision" alluding to them being long-term in nature (de Certeau et al. 1980, p. 5). Tactics, on the other hand, operate based on time – and instead respond to places operated by other actors (strategists). Tactics must "play within the terrain imposed upon it" (ibid., p. 6). From this basis of understanding, it follows that people with power – those who have the ability to assert control over place – work within a strategic framework. In contrast, de Certeau (ibid.) notes that tactics are the "art of the weak", a position supported by Haydn and Temel in their definition of tactics (2006, p. 16). Tactics are often seen as subversive actions that counter the more orthodox and institutional position of strategies.

Eve Blau (2011), in her work on transitional planning and architecture practice in post-communist Europe, presents tactics and strategy in a slightly different light. She states that strategy is "a highly organized plan of action devised in response to conditions that are unstable or otherwise uncertain… [u]ncertainty is the fundamental condition of strategy, just as agility is its mode of operation" (2011, p. 61). Citing the work of Carl von Clausewitz, she describes tactics as "an activity concerned with individual acts [or engagements] …Strategy, by contrast, is concerned with the use and significance of the totality of engagements" (ibid., p. 61). In this way, tactics likely have a place within larger strategies. Instead of being in opposition, they may simply be different aspects of the same process.

Who are tacticians?

In the most basic sense, people who engage in tactics are considered to be tacticians. As was mentioned, tactics are considered to be the work of those with little power or money, operating from "a weak state". However it could be argued that many actors work from a weak state. Tacticians may operate in the margins of sanctioned activities and respond to changing circumstances. Arlt (2006) notes that guerillas

are classic tacticians – those who operate at the local level and who are very familiar with local conditions. We tend to think of tacticians as individuals with culturally subversive interests – political activists, culture jammers, those who re-appropriate public spaces, and those who turn away from "mainstream" society (Arlt 2006; Temel 2006). From this perspective, officials and planners likely are not considered tacticians as they are professionally bound to work within specific legal and political guidelines.

However, we increasingly see that temporary and tactical acts are not always subversive or unsanctioned and are not only employed by those who we would normally associate as being in a weak or marginalized position. Many tacticians who spearhead interim uses are artists, small businesses, and entrepreneurs: they may have few resources and therefore look to occupy sites of little interest and exploit gaps between long-term uses. While these tacticians are motivated in part by monetary interests, Arlt (2006) makes the important point that they are also driven by the opportunity to see their ideas put into action. Organizations and businesses are attracted to temporary projects as they allow more flexibility to respond to local economic conditions. Arlt (ibid., p. 39) stresses, "interim use is one of the fundamental classical principles of the market economy" as every business is created or disbanded depending on the level of success the market provides. There are also an increasing number of professional architects and designers who incorporate temporary projects into their work: Pop-up City, a website run by two Amsterdam-based designers, focuses on "flexible urbanism and architecture" (Pop-Up Cities, undated), and Project for Public Spaces, an urban design group inspired by the work of William H. Whyte, actively promotes public space interventions that are "lighter, quicker, and cheaper" as a way to generate momentum for public space improvements (Projects for Public Spaces, undated). Increasingly, citizens are also

Credit: Miguel Sternberg

engaging in temporary and tactical acts with a desire to improve their communities – while one could argue that they are acting as "tacticians", they often resist seeing the work they do as subversive or radical (Douglas 2011).

Can urban planners be tacticians?

Many likely consider urban planners to be strategists as their work involves creating official documents and policies to shape the development of a city over the long-term. Haydn and Temel (2006) support this idea asserting that master plans, a key tool of planners, are equivalent to strategies – long-term planning that has a position of autonomy – while temporary uses are equivalent to tactics – short-term in nature requiring the collaboration of multiple partners. However, Arlt (in Haydn and Temel 2006) believes that strategic planning, which relies on both power and money, is no longer possible. The alternative, he suggests, is tactical urban planning where "goals must be formulated and partners sought for their implementation who have similar, or at least compatible, goals" (in Haydn and Temel 2006, p. 16). This suggests that planners can be considered tacticians and that tactics and strategies are simply different aspects of the same process. Blau (2011) supports this view, noting that tactics take advantage of opportunities while

strategies generate opportunities: "strategy – by imagining, planning, and rationally projecting actions and their consequences onto existing conditions – transforms those conditions into possibilities" (p. 61). Larger strategic planning may be useful for establishing a framework within which more immediate tactical planning can function. Many planners already engage in "tactical planning" as they often work on short-term projects that fit within larger strategic goals. Further, while a number of urbanists and academics (Jacobs 1961, Sennett 1970), have historically critiqued institutionalized planning and planners for operating in a rigid, top-down manner, many planners today are increasingly experimenting with collaborative models of planning to engage diverse stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of plans.

Returning to the initial definition of tactical urbanism put forth by Lydon et al. – that of using short-term actions to inspire long-term change – "tactical" planning may not be at odds with official planning processes at all. Instead, "tactics" may be just another tool planners can use to develop or fulfill longer-term plans and strategies (Blau 2011; Klayko 2012). In Tactical Urbanism, the authors choose to identify all actors who engage in short-term, temporary projects as

tacticians with the distinction being the degree to which a project is sanctioned, with planners working on more sanctioned projects. In contrast to DIY urbanism, which rarely includes projects led by officials, tactical urbanism "allows both bottom-up and top-down initiatives to proliferate" (Lydon 2011). While it appears that urban planners likely can be considered "tacticians", in a more practical sense, they may prefer to call the short-term initiatives they work on "temporary urbanism" as the term "tactical" can still carry political or subversive connotations.

In this report, projects that have been referred to as "tactical urbanism" as well as "temporary urbanism" are examined. Tactical and temporary projects include those led by citizens, organizations, and officials that are temporary in nature and are intended to improve public spaces. Interventions are locally focused, mostly small-scale, and comparatively low-cost. While this includes both sanctioned and unsanctioned projects, actions that are considered particularly subversive or illegal are not examined in detail.

TEMPORALITY AND INCREMENTALISM

Since tactics are seen, in part, as a function of time, it is important to briefly comment on the temporary nature of tactical interventions. Defining something as temporary is complex – a space, use, or action that lasts two hours or two years may be considered temporary. Bishop and Williams (2012) note that "[a] use is not temporary until it has proved to be so, by disappearing" (p.5). Robert Temel (2006), in defining temporary uses, also makes the distinction between ephemeral uses (those uses with a short lifespan) and provisional uses (substitutive or a stepping stone to more permanent uses). He argues that temporary uses lie half-way between these two concepts and asserts that while temporary spaces and uses may be provisional or interim in nature, they should not simply be seen as stop-gap measures on the way to realizing a different end. He notes that temporary uses have their own inherent qualities that permanent uses cannot exhibit.

Bishop and Williams (2012, p. 5) feel that the intention of the user or creator is important. Put simply, an intervention that is created with the intention of being temporary will inherently vary from an action meant to be permanent.

While it is true that temporary uses have an intrinsic value, it is important to acknowledge the value of temporary uses and interventions as stepping stones towards more permanent ends – a more incremental approach to planning. The case for incrementalism was made over 50 years ago by Charles Lindblom (1959) who argued that the rational comprehensive model of decision making was too time and resource intensive to be truly comprehensive. Instead, his writings on "muddling through" argued for an incremental approach to decision-making that was more realistic given existing decision and policy-making practices (Lindblom 1959; Lindblom, 1979). He asserted that, "[d]emocracies

change their policies almost entirely through incremental adjustments. Policy does not move in leaps and bounds" (1959, p. 84). Recently, incrementalism has also been incorporated into design strategies, allowing physical spaces to evolve and develop in a gradual manner before realizing the highest and best use of a site (Blackson 2012). A temporary use or space may provide the opportunity to take intermediate steps towards projects that are not immediately feasible. Mellauner (in Haydn and Temel 2006) argues that "temporary spaces are models for a form of appropriation based on civic initiative; ...knowledge something can be implemented mobilizes sleeping giants" (p. 16). In this way, cities may use temporary projects to demonstrate and test new planning ideas before committing resources towards permanent implementation. Temporary projects may provide planners with the opportunity to learn through practice.

Credit: Victoria Park BRZ

TACTICAL URBANISM FOUNDATIONS

While there has been a recent increase in tactical and temporary projects in cities, the fundamental intentions of these projects are not unique to the movement. Many actors cite, in part, writings about the Right to the City, the Open City, and the work of the Situationist International movement as inspiring and informing their own work. Many also draw on more recent architectural and design dialogues such as Everyday Urbanism. It is useful here to briefly cover past movements and theoretical writings that inform current tactical projects.

The Right to the City

Henri Lefebvre first articulated the idea of The Right to the City in his 1967 seminal work. The idea of the Right to the City was a response to issues of inequality, isolation, exploitation, and oppression in cities; it was a definition of the rights of citizens as urban inhabitants but also as those who use and access services in the city (Lefebvre 1996). Examining Lefebvre's vision, Purcell (2002) details the two principal rights embodied in the citizen's right to the city. The first is a right for people to participate in the way in which urban space is produced including physical space (perceived), mental constructions of space (conceived), and a mixture of the two

(the experience of everyday life). The second is a right to access and occupy space, "to be present in the space of the city" and "to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants" (Purcell 2002, p. 103). More generally it is a right "…to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete usage of these moments and places…" (Lefebvre 1996, p. 179).

In his analysis of Lefebvre's work, Marcuse (2009) explains that the "right" is not merely a checklist of legal rights that can be addressed individually. It is "not just a right to public space, or a right to information and transparency in government, or a right to access to the center, or a right to this service or that, but the right to a totality, a complexity, in which each of the parts is part of a single whole to which the right is demanded" (Marcuse 2009, p. 192-193). Harvey (2009), expanding on this idea and drawing of the work of sociologist Robert Park, says that the "right" is not just the kind of city we envision but is a larger commentary on "what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish…what aesthetic values we hold…it is a right to change and

reinvent the city more after our hearts' desires… a collective rather than an individual right"(p. 4).

The Open City

The concept of the Open City relates to the impact of physical form on social relations, and is presented as a counter to the Brittle City. As Sennett (2008) presents it, the Brittle City is a closed system with a focus on "over-determination" of visual form and social function – one that hampers experimentation with little allowance for growth and evolution of space. He credits Jane Jacobs for first conceiving the idea of the Open City, a city which allows for experimentation and adaptation through complexity and diversity in both public and private spaces. Indeed, Jane Jacobs was a champion for urban complexity. She argued that cities are themselves complex systems and often critiqued urban planners for trying to address urban problems without acknowledging this complexity (1961).

Sennett (2008) argues that the Open City is manifest through three elements: passage territories (a certain porosity at the edges between uses, communities, and districts); incompleteness of form (buildings and spaces that can be revised and adapted over time); and

development narratives (an understanding of how each intervention or development will shape the future). In this way, the Open City promotes a more "democratic …physical experience" that allows strangers to encounter and interact (Sennett 2008, p. 296). The focus is on shaping a process of exploration and discovery as opposed to creating a pre-determined outcome. Expanding on this idea, Rieniets (2009) highlights the place of equity and social sustainability within the Open City, stating that it also "has to provide equal access – spatial as well as non-spatial – to all the urban resources and opportunities available; and, consequently, it has to facilitate coexistence of the diverse groups and individuals sharing it" (p. 14).

The Situationist International Movement

From the late 1950s to early 1970s, the political and artistic group the Situationist International was active in France. Though individuals, such as Guy Debord, were identified as leaders of the Situationist movement, the group largely functioned as an anonymous collective. Debord introduced the notion of psychogeography – the influence of the physical environment on one's emotions and actions; however, Wood (2010) notes that Kevin Lynch was examining similar ideas at the time

through more mainstream planning theory. Much of the work of the International Situationists was a response to the rise of functionalism as well as a growing consumer culture at the time. Their work often involved the creation of "situations" (cultural happenings and diversions) to disrupt the patterns of daily life (Debord 1957). Using tactical approaches to deflect, remix, and reinterpret the elements of everyday life, the work of the International Situationists was a critique and sabotage of dominant culture and the norms of society. From their perspective "[t]he most persuasive evidence that everyday life has been homogenized is the fact that the slightest deviation sometimes reverberates far beyond its space of emergence" (Ball 1987, p. 32).

Everyday Urbanism

Transforming the lived experience in cities continues to be an active area of research and practice for numerous architects and designers who, working with citizens and communities, "challenge the conventional, codified notion of public and the making of space" (Hou 2010, p. 2). While there is vast literature with respect to the appropriation and shaping of space by informal actors, the extent and breadth of this material could constitute a separate research paper. Here

I will briefly discuss the current architectural and design practice of "Everyday Urbanism" as it is often cited with respect to temporary uses and tactical urbanism. Further, many of the considerations and themes present in Everyday Urbanism are relevant to how urban planners may engage with other actors in temporary and tactical projects.

Everyday Urbanism as a design and architectural movement is rooted in the works of Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord and their examination of and reaction to elements of everyday life – the understated and banal aspects of the lived experience. While related to their work, Everyday Urbanism diverges from these theories as it accepts the incompleteness and fragmentation present in life as a given as opposed to a transition to a new state or totality (Crawford 2008). As an architectural practice, Everyday Urbanism examines vernacular architectures of modest, common spaces – those for shopping, working, and commuting – and responds to the patterns and interactions that emerge. Building off the work of Lefebvre, there is a belief that in the process of defining the city, the "lived experience should be more important than physical form" (ibid., p. 7) and that design

action in everyday spaces starts from a strong understanding of what already takes place.

Everyday Urbanism is meant to challenge existing design hierarchies by bringing together the professional and the user and shifting power towards the citizen. There is a focus on how local communities transform space to meet their individual needs and an exploration of opportunities for everyday spaces to become places of "creative resistance". Putting it succinctly, Crawford (ibid.) states, "everyday urbanism seeks to release the powers of creativity and imagination already present within daily life as the means of transforming urban experience and the city" (p. 11). While Everyday Urbanism projects have not spurred a significant shift in traditional architectural practice, unexpected (and playful) interventions may successfully provide others with the "permission to act" (Merker 2010) and cause us to reconsider for what purpose a space can and should be used.

Tactical urbanism projects often address similar themes present in these previous movements and writings: supporting the democratic creation of space by multiple actors (those in power and those with little power), designing spaces and uses that allow people to encounter and collaborate, and

integrating flexibility, adaptation and playfulness into the urban landscape. However, the degree to which tacticians associate their work with these movements varies. While those who created the first Park(ing) installation, members of design firm Rebar, openly acknowledge that they "position

[their] approach within the Situationist tradition of detournement, the creative repurposing of familiar elements to produce new meaning" (ibid., p. 51), many tacticians cite the previously discussed theorists and movements more generally as source of inspiration.

Credit: Team Better Block

CURRENT CONDITIONS

While temporary uses and spaces have been presented as a means to respond in a more immediate way to current trends and physical conditions in cities, short-term actions and temporary uses of space are not a new phenomenon or even outside of the realm of traditional planning practice. In North America, annual street festivals and temporary markets are common in most cities, and the use of vacant land for interim uses, like parking lots, is not a radical idea. However the recent increase in tactical and temporary projects, in particular those that do not go through official processes and channels, warrants an examination of the current conditions that may be motivating the rise in these types of projects.

In Temporary Cities, Bishop and Williams (2012) outline a number of conditions they consider to be driving the recent interest in temporary uses and locally-led interventions in cities. Increasing political, economic, and environmental uncertainty, the deindustrialization of cities that has led to an increase in vacant spaces, and emerging trends in the ways in which we use space (e.g., increasingly mobile workforce and telecommuting) all support the desire for flexible and adaptable spaces and uses (Bishop and Williams 2012). Lang Ho (2012) cites a

"generational shift, with Millennials and their heightened expectation of immediate results and collaborative exchange" as a characteristic of many projects found in the Spontaneous Interventions exhibit. Adding to this generational aspect, Lydon et al. (2012) draw attention to the role of technology (the Internet and social media) in quickly connecting citizens with ideas and resources they can use to actively change their communities.

The slow nature of planning and the inefficiency of bureaucracy have also been identified as reasons citizens may be taking local improvements into their own hands. There is an increasing awareness that traditional planning processes may not be adaptable and resilient enough to keep pace with social and economic change and respond to local needs. Within discussions aimed at increasing institutional flexibility and adaptability, concepts such as "strategic urbanism" (Steffen 2012), "messy urbanism" (Collective Research Initiatives Trust 2012), "ephemeral urbanism" (Toft 2011), "the elastic city" (Lempel 2011a), and "the entropic city" (Lempel 2011b) have been explored. Planning processes that are flexible, iterative, experimental, and which engage many different actors to respond to changing local

circumstances are clearly topics of growing interest. Tactical and temporary projects may be seen as particularly useful for municipal planning departments to create immediate results and also seed permanent, long-term change of policies and practices.

Another important aspect of the increase in tactical projects is the desire of citizens to respond actively to local situations and improve their communities. In reviewing projects included in Spontaneous Interventions, the curators identified overarching themes of citizenship, equity, protest, and participation and noted that many projects were intended to make an improvement in "community" (Lang Ho 2012). Rieniets (2009) notes an increasing push to "rethink the legal, institutional and political frame of urban planning to make way for more transparent and inclusive planning processes" going on to say that "after decades of liberalization and privatization, institutions and tools of urban planning have become fragmented, incoherent and opaque" (p. 22).

With this growing interest and expectation by citizens to have a greater say in the way their communities develop, the manner in which this involvement is manifest is also evolving. Some still

choose to affect their communities by engaging in traditional planning processes – attending planning consultations, sitting on community associations, boards, and commissions. However, many citizens are choosing to directly impact their communities by spearheading local initiatives. Bishop and Williams (2012) find that "while people are turning away from formal political involvement, there is little evidence that they are any less active in local community groups…People remain willing to engage in issues that are perceived to concern them directly, and are no longer willing to be the passive recipients of government services or decision making…" (p. 138). Citizens appear to feel a local responsibility to contribute to the ways in which their communities develop.

Over time, the value of citizen participation within planning has also grown. In contrast to planning practices from 50 years ago, many cities now highlight the importance of citizen participation and engagement in planning processes. Tracing how planning practices and the role of public participation have evolved, Lane (2005) states, "Whereas participation was previously considered a decision-making adjunct, all schools of the contemporary [planning] era view participation as a fundamental element

of planning and decision-making" (p. 296). This shift came about due to the writings and work of a number of urbanists and academics in the 1960s and 1970s. Jane Jacobs (1961) championed the role of citizens as experts in their neighbourhoods and Sherry Arnstein (1969) criticized many aspects of citizen engagement for being mere tokenism, highlighting the need for citizens to have a greater level of control in decision-making. Academics Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard (1987) also identified the need to design urban environments that engage citizens in a larger public life; "[i]t is through this involvement [of many participants] in the creation and management of their city that citizens are most likely to identify with it and, conversely, to enhance their own sense of identity and control" (p. 120).

Nonetheless, there may be resistance from planners to support tactical projects because of their official capacity and traditional role with respect to regulation. Existing bureaucratic structures and processes may make planners unwilling or unable to condone unsanctioned actions that occur at the margins of legal and regulatory frameworks. There may also be a personal resistance to new planning methods and a lack of comfort working with projects that

have increased levels of risk and uncertainty (real or perceived). Similarly, actors who operate in an unsanctioned, potentially illegal, manner may resist the involvement of officials in temporary and tactical projects. Those who oppose institutional planning practices all together may see this involvement as urban tactics being subsumed within 'planning as usual'. However, it must be stated that many recent temporary and tactical projects do not exist at the extremes. Instead of "radical" or "guerilla" actors, many recent projects are led by average citizens who wish to make local neighbourhood improvements and desire more agency in the way their communities develop. These actors are likely more supportive of collaborative planning practices that include official actors. Planners, though they may be resistant, need to acknowledge this desire and examine in what ways they can or should be involved in citizen-driven projects.

The growing momentum and support for improvements led by local actors requires planners to examine the best way to engage with citizens. Some suggest that planners can play a key role in organizing resources and staff to support temporary projects (e.g., develop inventories of available land, facilitating stakeholder discussions) (Blumner 2006; Killing

Architects 2012). In contrast, Lehtovuori and Ruoppila (2012), while acknowledging the need for support from public officials with respect to establishing temporary projects, feel that policy interventions should be minimal and that formal actors should remain at a distance. Groth and Corgin (2005) meanwhile highlight the need for informal actors to be active in the process of agenda-setting early on and for officials to create more participatory planning approaches. Lang Ho (2012) sees a new understanding and balance between formal and informal actors developing saying, "[t]hese micro urban moments – vast in numbers, ephemeral, situational, intelligent, idiosyncratic – can't replace the effectiveness and reach of top-down planning. But somewhere in between, the two seem to be finding common ground." In addition to providing citizens with the agency to change their neighbourhoods, planners must find more meaningful ways to work with citizens on larger planning issues and find a balance where officials and community stakeholders can collaborate.

Given these current conditions – increased economic uncertainty, an acknowledgement of the slow pace of planning and inefficient nature of bureaucracy, and the desire from and agency of citizens to actively shape their communities – tactical urbanism is emerging as a useful tool for planners to improve the responsiveness of planning processes and find more meaningful ways to engage citizens in planning. However, while short-term and incremental projects appear to hold potential for improving planning processes, the ways in which they are integrated into planning practice and the role that planners can or should play is important to examine. Reflections by planners and officials on these issues are presented in Chapter Four, while the guidebook presented in Chapter Five provides case studies that detail the involvement and perspectives of planners with respect to specific projects in the U.S. and Canada.

CHAPTER

3.0 METHODS

This chapter provides information regarding the selection of tactical projects and the interview structure used in this research project.

Tactical and temporary urban interventions have emerged as an important way to make improvements to local communities that are low-cost and low-risk. While citizens and informal actors have typically led these projects, there is growing interest on the part of planners and officials as these projects may provide an opportunity to increase flexibility within planning and experiment with new design strategies. Temporary projects may also provide an opportunity for planners and citizens to collaborate on local planning projects. While resources exist for informal actors who are interested in these projects, few resources are aimed at planners. The purpose of this research project is to gain a better understanding of the current role that urban planners play with respect to tactical urbanism and the potential challenges that planners may encounter while engaging in temporary and tactical projects. The goal is to create a guidebook featuring case studies of existing projects, advice from planners who have engaged in tactical and temporary projects, and recommendations for planners.

Tactical and temporary projects are inspired by the local context and conditions in which they are undertaken. The way in with each project is carried out is also influenced by the different perspectives of individual actors. For these reasons it is challenging to directly compare projects. To better understand these diverse perspectives and approaches, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with both informal actors (citizens, organizational representatives) and formal actors (planners, officials) who have been involved in tactical and temporary projects.

I conducted an initial search for tactical and temporary projects that had been implemented in cities across North America (those that were short-term, comparatively low-cost, and were intended to make some local improvement). Projects in which planners and officials had been active in some capacity were of particular interest, including both those that were initiated by bottom-up actors as well as top-down actors. All projects consisted of temporary interventions

in publicly-owned spaces. Though some were specific actions and events that lasted for a limited time (one weekend or a few weeks), a number of the projects have been formalized within municipal practices and have been in place for many years.

Individuals who had been involved in these projects were contacted via email with an official request to be interviewed for the project. While some chose to not be interviewed or did not respond to the request, many were interested in sharing their perspective and experience about the project with which they had been involved. In total, 23 individuals were interviewed including 14 planners and municipal officials, 5 citizens, and 4 organizational actors. All interviews were conducted between February and April 2013. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Most interviews were conducted over the telephone or by using internet-based software (Skype, Google voice), with one interview conducted in person. If participants agreed,

the interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. Participants also indicated the level of confidentiality they wanted to maintain in their responses. Most interviewees chose to reveal their names and agreed to be quoted directly. One interviewee chose to maintain complete anonymity.

I conducted interviews using a semi-structured interview format in which the interviewer prepares a set of questions but may also deviate from the script to probe responses by the interviewee to get further clarification. This interview format provides flexibility with respect to how questions are phrased and the order in which questions are asked to each interviewee. Berg and Lune highlight the advantage of this technique stating, "the flexibility of the semistructured interview allow[s] the interviewers both to ask a series of regularly structured questions, permitting comparisons across interviews, and to pursue areas spontaneously initiated by the interviewee" (2012, p. 114). Semi-structured interviews thus

allow the interviewee to guide the conversation and discuss topics they feel are important.

The flexibility of this style of interview technique was useful for discussing tactical and temporary projects due to the diversity of local contextual circumstances, perspectives, and motivations of the individual actors – an issue that may arise during the course of one type of project may not be relevant for another. Actors were allowed to speak freely about topics and conditions they found most important and relevant with respect to their project.

The interview guide included a set of general questions for all actors to answer (e.g., describe the project in which you were involved and your role in this project) as well as a set of questions specific to the different types of actors. Key topics covered in the interviews included a) The role of different actors in the specific project; b) Municipal policies and processes that enabled or hindered the project; c) The usefulness of temporary and

tactical projects with respect to urban planning practice; and d) the role planners and officials should play with respect to these projects. While the guide was used to structure the interviews, the exact wording of questions and the order in which they were asked varied depending on topics on which the interviewees chose to focus as well as their responses to previous questions. The recruitment script, consent form, and interview guide are reproduced in the Appendix.

Interviews were transcribed and reviewed to identify common themes, lessons, and strategies that may be useful for planners interested in tactical and temporary projects. Twelve projects were selected as case studies for the guidebook (Chapter Five) and serve as examples of different aspects of tactical projects relevant for planners (e.g., how to work with/respond to citizen initiatives, ways to utilize existing resources). The case studies include a description of the project, the actors involved, the process through which the project came to be, and insight from planners and citizens. Three of the case studies present projects in Canadian cities, while the remaining nine are from cities in the United States.

There are some limitations of this research project. In particular, actors and tactical projects that would be considered more "subversive" and that oppose existing regulatory planning structures were not interviewed for the project. In part this is because members of groups I contacted did not wish to be interviewed or identified. Additionally, since the focus of this project is primarily directed towards the roles and actions of planners, projects that may exist on the margins of the legal and regulatory framework are likely incongruent with actions planners can take. However, the perspective of those who wish to act outside of regulatory frameworks would be of value with respect to understanding the role that planners can and should play and ways in which they interact with these informal actors.

Additionally, due to the limited time frame and scope of this project, it was not possible to be exhaustive in the search for tactical and temporary projects in North American cities. Projects included in this report therefore do not represent an exhaustive list of existing tactical and temporary projects. Instead, they are a sample of the hundreds of projects and actions currently taking place and are meant to showcase the various ways in which temporary and tactical projects are influencing planning processes and outcomes.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this project was the practical challenge of researching a very current and growing movement. The practice of tactical urbanism is still relatively new and evolves daily. During the course of my research, new temporary planning projects led by both informal and formal actors were brought to light. Further, a number of updates and advancements to case study projects were also announced and updates to the guidebook were needed. To the extent possible, new articles, books, and project advancements were incorporated into this project. The guidebook presented in Chapter Five also includes a section dedicated to additional resources and projects that may be of interest.

Credit: Benicchio (creative commons)

CHAPTER

4.0 TACTICAL URBANISM IN PLANNING PRACTICE

In this chapter, planners and officials provide insight on the practical considerations of integrating tactical and temporary projects into planning practice

Credit: Better Block OKC

In Chapter Two, the theoretical background of tactical urbanism was discussed as well as an overview of current conditions that may be leading to an increase in tactical and temporary projects in cities. While these projects are gaining popularity, with numerous municipal actors incorporating tactical and temporary projects in a more formal way, the integration of tactical urbanism into planning practice is still a grey area. This chapter focuses on the practical considerations for planners with respect to bringing tactical interventions to bear on planning practice. Drawing on the interviews I conducted with formal and informal stakeholders (citizens, organizations, officials), I have organized these issues and challenges into common themes and topics. In the following chapter, "The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism", interviewees provide more perspective on the specific projects on which they worked.

In interviewing officials, non-profit actors, and citizens who have been involved in tactical projects, the use of tactical and temporary urbanism as a planning tool appears to have potential. In some cities, temporary spaces and short-term uses are already being integrated into planning including the simplification and streamlining of permitting for short-term projects (e.g., short-term street closures) as well as embedding more flexibility into existing zoning codes (e.g., temporary use zoning). Some planners and officials I spoke with also commented on the benefit of using tactical and temporary projects as part of their planning method. In some instances, temporary projects are being used to test the impact of a potential intervention. Additionally, temporary projects are seen as a new avenue for community consultation – allowing citizens to experience a project as opposed to being shown site plans and architectural renderings.

There are, however, several practical considerations for planners and officials with respect to integrating these short-term, temporary projects into official planning processes. To gain a greater understanding of these practical considerations, interviewees were asked to reflect on the process of their own project including potential hurdles and opportunities. While it is difficult to compare projects directly – each is very context specific and the process through which each project came to fruition is informed by local regulatory policies, politics, and relationships – a number of common themes did arise.

With respect to the overarching issues related to temporary and tactical projects, planners and officials cited risk management and liability issues as a key consideration for all projects. Additionally, planners must often coordinate with other municipal departments who have jurisdiction over public spaces. Working through bureaucratic processes, which are often slow, may also limit their ability to make changes happen quickly. Further, it can be difficult for planners to balance the need for a robust level of citizen engagement with the desire from community stakeholders to implement a project quickly. Many planners and officials highlighted the need to ensure safety and acceptability of projects as well as the importance of building strong working relationships with other municipal departments as key for creating successful temporary and tactical projects.

Credit: Paul Krueger (creative commons)

LIABILITY AND RISK

Liability and safety were the most common issues planners commented on with respect to tactical and temporary projects. Since many tactical projects take place within the public right-of-way, official actors need to be involved, as the city can be held liable if someone becomes injured. While it is safe to assume that a municipality owns and is held liable for issues of safety within the public right-of-way, there may also be other public and private actors involved. Mitchell Silver, Planning Director for Raleigh, recalled standing on a street corner with a local citizen who had installed pedestrian way-finding signs on light poles to discuss some of the complexities associated with liability in the public right-of-way. In Raleigh, a number of different organizations were in some way responsible and liable for one utility pole including the City, the electrical utility company, and the local business organization (Silver, personal communication).

Planners and officials often stressed the need to ensure that projects on which they worked conformed to a certain level of safety. For projects located in spaces managed by multiple actors (e.g., private lots or storefronts as well as the public right-of-way), it was common for liability to be shared amongst the different actors. For example, the municipality would carry general liability insurance to cover accidents within the public right-of-way, property owners had insurance to cover their building or the vacant lot, designers of particular structures sometimes needed to carry professional insurance, and groups who ran programs or occupied the space (e.g., pop-up shops) were usually required to carry insurance similar to that you would obtain to host a temporary event (though the specific arrangements varied from city to city).

Many cities already have policies and processes to accommodate temporary events (street festivals, markets); however, due to the unique nature of many tactical and temporary projects there can be confusion on how they should be categorized for insurance purposes. Jason Roberts, creator of the Better Block Project, which transforms city streets to allow temporary bike lanes, on-street patios, and pop-up shops, has found that although challenging, obtaining insurance is not an insurmountable obstacle: "[Many insurance companies] don't know to handle [our work]… there's not a form for that. But they know how to do a block party…they've seen those before, and sometimes those have got cars still going through them…it's not outside of their frame of reference" (Roberts, personal communication). Most officials consulted with their municipal risk management departments to address potential issues and noted that while working with these departments was rarely a significant barrier, it was important to make the connection early and educate these departments about their project. Krisztina Kassay, a planner who works on the Viva Vancouver initiative, which includes the creation of temporary pedestrian streets and curbside parklets, noted that working with the City's Risk Management Department early to identify potential issues made the City's program stronger in the end (personal communication).

Another important topic for planners and officials was that of risk – in particular, professional risk related to a project failing. Perhaps it is unsurprising that most planners and officials I interviewed were not overly concerned with this issue and were generally optimistic, as they had chosen to take part in temporary projects to some degree. Presumably, if they were not willing to accept the risk that a project might fail, they would not have become involved in the first place. However, the culture of planning within their municipal departments appeared to play an important role in creating this level of comfort. In some cases, planners noted their department was supportive of taking measured risks and understood that failure was part of creating new

and innovative programming. Kimberly Driggins, Associate Director of City-wide Planning for the City of Washington DC, commented that, "It starts at the top in terms of what your level of tolerance [to risk] is…[our head planner] isn't afraid to fail… she wants to promote creativity and innovation. If there are no failures, that means you're not pushing the boundaries enough…failure is part of success" (personal communication). In these instances, the focus became that of failing quickly, learning from mistakes and making any necessary adjustments.

Numerous planners also felt that the failure of a project was acceptable as long as it was not related to public safety. Andres Power, the planner who created San Francisco's well-known Pavement to Parks program, which facilitates the conversion of excess roadway into pedestrian spaces, stated that, "if the failure is based on the fact that it's not a space that's used, if it's based on the fact that the design just wasn't appropriate for the location, that ultimately people just didn't want it…that kind of failure is good and I think acceptable, and important" (personal communication).

Image modified by Laura Pfeifer; original source unknown

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Another set of considerations planners and officials identified were those related to public acceptability of projects and citizen engagement. Most planners would agree that citizen engagement in planning processes is important; however, the method of engaging with the public and ensuring that projects are suitable to their needs can be challenging. During the interviews, there was an overall acknowledgement that temporary and tactical projects were most successful when they had strong support from community stakeholders – this was true in relation to projects driven by city officials as well as those spearheaded by citizens. In many cases, planners and officials tried to ensure a certain level of support before moving forward.

For projects led by the City or a local agency, it was common to hold public consultations. When the Downtown-Yonge Street Business Improvement Area was developing plans for Celebrate Yonge, a four-month pilot project to redesign the right-of-way in downtown Toronto, it held numerous meetings and consultations with local residents and businesses (Weinberg, personal communication). In some cases, planners presented the idea of piloting new projects within a larger master planning process. During consultation sessions related

to the Buffalo Green Code, the City's new land use and zoning code, there was support from community stakeholders to integrate temporary uses into local land use and zoning codes, and to develop permits for new uses such as mobile vendors: "We've had engagement with the community over the past few years leading up to the unveiling of the draft code…and all that input will be directly incorporated into the code so that when these types of [temporary] projects pop up we have some predictable way to respond to them without having to create a public process in every instance… in other words, [we're] trying to build the community's expectations directly into the process" (Hawley, personal communication). Some felt that while community meetings and consultations were essential for projects led by officials, it was less pressing when projects were lead by local actors: "It seems…when a project is community driven, the planning is less front-and-centre…the trust has already been built within the neighbours…they're making it happen…[the plan] doesn't have to go through [a] long, tedious process" (Pacello, personal communication).

For officially sanctioned programs, citizen leaders often were required to gain support from neighbours, in particular those who live or own property within close proximity to a proposed

intervention. For Intersection Repair projects in Portland, which allow residents to paint murals on local residential intersections and use them as a form of public square, project leaders are required to obtain 100% support from residents who live adjacent to the intersection and 80% support from residents within 400 ft of the intersection before they receive their permit (Raisman, personal communication). The Ruelle Vert (green alleyway) program in Montreal similarly requires residents to obtain ~75% support from neighbours along an alleyway before they transform it into a green corridor (Demers, personal communication). In addition to minimizing potential conflict and resistance to the interventions, planners and officials saw this first step as an important aspect of building relationships among community stakeholders and facilitating a collaborative dialogue between neighbours.

It was also important for planners to ensure that projects were a larger reflection of community interests and not driven by a particular interest group or individual's point of view. Planners often addressed this concern through community meetings and requirements for local support, though some projects also actively engaged citizens in the process of designing the

intervention. The New York City Department of Transportation (NYDOT) Public Plaza Program promotes the creation of temporary pedestrian plazas throughout the city using excess paved surfaces to increase the provision of public open space. Citizens who desire to have a plaza in their neighbourhood must show strong local support from residents, businesses and the local community council. However, the DOT also actively engages the public in the design process to ensure that the outcome is acceptable to residents. Further, the temporary nature of the plazas allows the City to adapt the design to reflect local community interests. If concerns arise about the design, the project team works with local residents to make adjustments (Weidenhof, personal communication).

As such, a number of planners saw potential for temporary interventions to be used as a method of community engagement. The physical nature of the intervention could provide a platform for citizens to work directly with officials – acting as a form of community consultation in real-time. Temporary projects allow citizens to experience a space and have a tangible discussion about how to adapt a project to address local concerns or values. Some planners noted that temporary installations often helped to reduce

the fear associated with uncertainty and that vocal opponents of a project often became supporters once they could see and experience the interventions.

While many officials interviewed received positive support for tactical projects in the communities where they worked, there was an acknowledgement that this is not always the case and could not be taken for granted. It is common and understandable for citizens to be wary of change and new projects that happen in their neighbourhoods. NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) and public concerns, due to fear or uncertainty, can prevent projects from starting or cause them to be delayed and increase overall costs. A few planners and officials mentioned instances where public resistance to a temporary

project was so great that the intervention was not installed or was moved to a new location. In these instances, the decision not to move forward was in part due to the desire of planners to avoid creating an adversarial relationship with stakeholders. Rachel Szakmary, a transportation planner for the City of Boston, recalled strong resistance to the installation of one parklet as part of their initial pilot program: "politically, that's not something you want to do... especially for a pilot program" (personal communication). Additionally, most planners interviewed felt that temporary projects were as much about building relationships with local actors as they were about making physical improvements. There was an understanding that temporary interventions were most successful, and served their intended purpose when they had local support.

Credit: donkeycart (creative commons)

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

With respect to integrating tactical and temporary projects into planning practice, planners stressed the need to develop good working relationships with employees in other municipal departments. While this is not a surprising finding – planners should always strive to create strong connections with other departments, it is interesting to note how the structure and nature of each local municipality dictated which departmental actors need to be involved. While some planners said that working in small departments and teams helped them cut down on institutional inertia, temporary projects often require collaboration with multiple municipal departments and agencies due to their location. The public right-of-way is usually under the jurisdiction of Roadway and Engineering Departments and thus any project that is to be located in this space must receive their approval and conform to their safety standards. Evan Weinberg, a planner who worked on the Celebrate Yonge project in Toronto, highlighted this disconnect: "it's the planners that are putting together the higher[-level] visioning documents, but they are a bit removed in terms of the actual implementation of these projects" (personal communication). Additionally, though a planner may see the need or potential for a new type of public space (e.g., a parklet), it is often employees in the Public Works

Department who will be responsible for building or installing the structure. For these reasons, the nature of these inter-departmental relationships becomes paramount when experimenting with new policies and projects.

Given these conditions, one challenge for planners is gaining inter-departmental buy-in. In the most basic sense, this may simply require a planner to communicate their project effectively with other departments in terms they can understand. Planners must also acknowledge

what other departments may require in order to provide the necessary permits and staff support. For most planners, finding employees in other departments who could support and promote the project was helpful. For Krisztina Kassay at Viva Vancouver, the advantage to being located within the engineering department is working in close proximity to the people who regulate key spaces for projects: "What helped me was to be paired with an engineer that spoke everyone's language. All I had to do was convince one person...they have the existing relationships with

Credit: Laura Kaminski

the street crews...that has been absolutely critical to this working" (personal communication). These working relationships between staff could also impact the extent and the nature of support that a project received. Planners who built positive inter-departmental relationships and demonstrated the potential to address community interests received necessary permits and authorization and often found employees willing to take additional steps. Working on local economic development and community revitalization in Memphis, planner Thomas Pacello found that directors and workers in other City departments were supportive of activating vacant lots when they understood the project and the intention: "They got really excited about what they could bring...they understood the neighbourhood clean-up aspect of it and jumped on board" (Pacello, personal communication). Several planners also noted the importance of building these relationships, not just with respect to tactical or temporary projects, in order to create a network of trust and support.

In some cases, planners and officials worked within special municipal agencies (e.g., The Mayor's Office) and had an over-arching mandate to bring new programs and initiatives forward. This position allowed them to bring together different departments to work collaboratively on a common goal. While having a mandate from the Mayor's Office often made it easier to show that a project had merit, planners also stressed the need to promote trust and compromise with other departments and agencies (including police and fire) as safety concerns could easily prevent a project from being completed.

Issues related to risk and liability, community stakeholder support, and institutional buy-in were commonly cited as important considerations for planners and officials wanting to experiment with new temporary uses and projects. However, in the interviews I conducted, no planners presented these issues as insurmountable challenges or barriers. They instead focused on the process through which they dealt with these concerns to move projects forward. There was a certain level of acknowledgement that concerns and challenges related to new planning ideas and practices were simply part of the process of creating robust, successful programs.

In the following chapter, "The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism" is presented. Twelve case studies provide specific examples of tactical and temporary projects in cities across North America, with insight on how planners addressed these and other considerations. The case studies are presented under a series of common themes and recommendations for planners are provided. The guide has been designed as a stand-alone document and thus includes a plain-language introduction to the topic and its own conclusion. A concluding discussion to this project and recommendations are presented in Chapter Six.

5.0 THE PLANNER'S GUIDE TO TACTICAL URBANISM

The following guidebook is a stand-alone document aimed at professional practitioners interested in tactical projects. The guidebook has been written to remain accessible to other stakeholders who commonly engage in tactical urbanism and planning processes.

The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism

IT'S A
16 MINUTE
WALK TO
SEABOARD
STATION

IT'S
17 MINUTES
BY FOOT TO
OAKWOOD
CEMETERY

Laura Pfeifer
Montreal, Canada 2013

INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover photo: @dtraleigh (Leo Suarez)

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PURPOSE

As planners and policymakers work to improve the public realm in cities, the task can seem daunting. The cost of making improvements in cities can be prohibitive and there is often a lack of resources allocated for this task in municipal budgets. Meanwhile, new planning and design strategies that are implemented may come with unforeseen costs and impacts, and completed projects may fail to properly address the concerns of local stakeholders. Strategic planning processes with long-term implementation horizons can also make it difficult for planners to respond to local social and economic changes and to actively engage citizens in the process of planning.

Temporary interventions have emerged as an important way to make improvements to local neighbourhoods that present fewer risks for both citizens and municipal administrations. In the last decade, numerous citizen-led initiatives have sprung up across North America, following examples in Europe, to improve public spaces using low-cost, temporary measures. These informal initiatives, popularly known as "tactical urbanism", have also inspired planners and municipal officials to experiment with low-cost pilot projects as a tool to make local improvements.

Current resources regarding tactical urbanism are often directed toward informal actors (citizens, non-profit organizations). The purpose of this guide is to offer insight to urban planners and municipal administrators who are interested in incorporating low-cost, temporary interventions into planning practice. It provides case studies of how planners and officials have engaged in tactical and temporary projects and have addressed some of the common issues inherent in tactical urbanism. By understanding the potential challenges and opportunities of tactical and temporary urbanism, planners will be able to determine the extent to which they can take advantage of these projects and collaboratively work with citizens in the process of city-building.

SCOPE

The guide begins with an introduction to tactical urbanism, including a definition of the movement and current drivers of tactical and temporary projects. This is followed by a brief discussion of the practical considerations of incorporating tactical urbanism within planning practice*.

Most of the guide is dedicated to presenting case studies of tactical and temporary projects from across the U.S.A. and Canada, highlighting the different roles and perspectives of planners and officials who were involved. The case studies are presented under five themes with associated recommendations for planners. The guide concludes with general commentary on the role of urban planners with respect to tactical and temporary urbanism and the usefulness of these projects as a tool to incorporate within planning practice. A list of additional resources that may be of use to planners and other official actors is also included.

Credit: Rebar/Andrea Scher

* A more thorough examination of these topics is available in the full research project.

WHAT IS TACTICAL URBANISM?

The term tactical urbanism is often used to refer to low-cost, temporary interventions that improve local neighbourhoods. Although the Berlin-based Studio Urban Catalyst explored tactical and temporary uses in post-industrial Europe in the early 2000s[1], the term "tactical urbanism" came into common use in 2010-2011 when a group of young urbanists created the publication *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action, Long-term Change*, which showcased temporary public space improvement projects from across North America. The authors define tactical urbanism as small-scale, short-term interventions meant to inspire long-term change, adding that tactical urbanism as a city-building approach features five characteristics:

- A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
- An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges;
- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
- Low-risks, with possibly a high reward; and;

- The development of social capital between citizens, and the building of organizational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit/ NGOs, and their constituents.[2]

The intentions behind tactical urbanism projects are diverse – some projects are intended to boost economic revitalization while others are aimed at improving pedestrian safety and offering opportunities for citizens to connect with one another. The way in which tactical projects are manifest also varies greatly, with projects at different physical and temporal scales, though most projects are designed to be temporary in nature and be implemented at a local scale – block, street, or building.

Tactical urbanism as a movement has gained momentum and visibility in popular culture and planning discourse. It was named one of the top planning trends of 2011-12[3], and was a focus of the official U.S. pavilion, *Spontaneous Interventions: Design actions for the common good*, at the 13th International Architecture

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1)   Studio Urban Catalyst, Strategies for Temporary Use: Potential for Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises, 2013.

2)   Lydon, Mike, Dan Bartman, Ronald Woudstra and Aurash Khawarzad, *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term action Long-term change (Vol. 1)* (New York City: The Street Plans Collaborative, 2011).

3)   Nettler, Jonathan, "Top planning trends of 2011-12," *Planetizen*, 27 February 2012.

Credit: Team Better Block

Credit: Team Better Block

Credit: Julie Roth

Credit: Alanah Heffez

Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2012.[4] Online and print publications on urban affairs consistently report on tactical projects as well as the overall increase in temporary urban interventions in cities.[5,6,7] Local media outlets are attracted to projects where citizens actively improve their communities and projects that touch on issues relevant to cities more generally (e.g., improvements to walkability) have gained media attention on an international scale.

These citizen-led interventions have also inspired a larger discussion around incremental planning and the involvement of informal actors in urban planning processes. Temporary interventions are starting to be incorporated into official planning processes in some cities – making improvements to the public realm in a way that is low-cost and low-risk. The temporary nature of tactical projects may also provide an opportunity for planners and citizens to collaborate on local projects. Both can observe an intervention on the ground and make

adjustments before committing to long-term, costly improvements. If successful, temporary and pilot projects that gain local support can be made permanent over time.

A number of conditions are considered to be driving the recent interest in tactical urbanism and locally-led interventions in cities. Political, economic, and environmental uncertainty; the deindustrialization of cities that has led to an increase in vacant lots and buildings; and an increasingly mobile workforce all support the desire for more flexible and adaptable spaces and uses.[8] The 'Millennial' generation has a heightened interest in cities, and the ease of sharing new ideas and resources via the Internet and social media applications has increased the visibility of projects and raised awareness among citizens that they can actively impact their communities[9].

The inefficiency of bureaucracy has also been identified as a reason citizens may be taking local improvements into their own hands. There is an increasing awareness that traditional planning processes may not be adaptable and resilient enough to respond to local needs. Planning processes that are flexible and engage many different actors in the process of responding to local issues is a topic of growing interest.

Citizens are also interested in actively responding to local situations. Although some still choose to contribute through traditional processes – attending planning consultations, sitting on community boards and commissions – many are choosing to directly impact their communities by spearheading local initiatives. This increased sense of responsibility among citizens to contribute to their communities as well as the growing recognition of the value of citizen participation in official planning processes has provided an opportunity for planners to find more meaningful ways to empower citizens and work together to address larger planning issues.

4)   Lang Ho, Cathy, "Introduction," Spontaneous Interventions: Design actions for the common good, 2012.

5)   Lepeska, David, "The rise of the temporary city," *The Atlantic Cities*, 1 May 2012.

6)   Arieff, Allison, "The rise of tactical urbanism," *The Urbanist*, 508, 1 December 2011.

7)   Pamela Robinson, "The city of no fun," *Spacing*, Winter 2012/2013, 34.

8)   Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams, *The temporary city* (London: Routledge, 2012).

9)   Lydon, Mike, "Tactical urbanism: A look back at 2012," *Planetizen*, 30 December 2012.

TACTICAL URBANISM IN PLANNING PRACTICE

Planners are starting to see the potential that temporary and low-cost projects hold for responding to local conditions and making incremental changes in cities. Although the momentum around tactical and temporary projects is growing, the place for these initiatives within professional planning practice and the role of the planner is still unclear. This may simply be a condition of the recent increase in popularity of these projects; tactical urbanism as a 'movement' is still new to many municipal administrators.

Yet, the use of tactical and temporary urbanism as a planning tool appears to have potential. Temporary spaces and short-term uses are already being integrated into planning through the simplification of permitting processes for short-term projects and embedding more flexibility into existing zoning codes. Additionally, planners are seeing the potential for using tactical and temporary projects within planning methodology - measuring the impact of an intervention and using pilot projects as a form of community consultation where citizens can experience a project as opposed to being shown a rendering.

There are, however, several practical considerations for planners with respect to integrating short-term, tactical projects into official planning processes. Risk management and liability are important considerations for all municipal projects. The slow pace of bureaucracy and need for support from other municipal departments may also limit a planner's ability to complete new projects. Further, planners must balance the need for a robust level of citizen engagement with the desire of community stakeholders to implement projects quickly.

To better understand how tactical and temporary projects are being integrated into planning, I conducted semi-structured interviews with citizens, non-profit organizations, and municipal officials who have engaged in these projects. I focused on projects from cities across North America in which planners and officials had been active in some capacity. This included projects initiated by bottom-up actors as well as top-down actors. The following case studies provide insight into the role of planners with respect to tactical urbanism.

Credit: Miguel Sternberg

CASE STUDIES

It can be difficult to compare tactical urbanism projects – each is very context specific and the process through which each project comes to fruition is informed by local regulatory policies, politics, and relationships. However, a number of common themes arise with respect to the role that planners and officials should play and the actions they can take to make tactical and temporary projects successful. The following case studies provide examples of how planners and officials in cities across North America are engaging in tactical and temporary projects.

The case studies have been organized into the following themes:

1. Working with citizen initiatives – responding to and learning from informal citizen-led tactical projects

2. Demonstrating what's possible – using temporary projects to highlight opportunities for other actors

3. Getting internal buy-in – championing tactical projects and working with other municipal departments

4. Adapting ideas to your context – integrating tactical projects and ideas from other cities

5. Using existing resources – leveraging current policies and publicly owned resources to support and advance new ideas

FEATURED PROJECTS

United States:

Better Block Project (Dallas TX)

Buffalo Green Code (Buffalo NY)

Innovation Delivery Team (Memphis TN)

Intersection Repair (Portland OR)

Parklet Program (Philadelphia PA)

Pavement to Parks (San Francisco CA)

Public Plaza Program (New York City NY)

Temporary Urbanism Initiative (Washington DC)

Walk Raleigh (Raleigh NC)

Canada:

Celebrate Yonge (Toronto ON)

Pop-Up Places (Calgary AB)

Viva Vancouver (Vancouver BC)

Map generated by Laura Pfeifer, at http://maps.stamen.com

WORKING WITH CITIZEN INITIATIVES

Citizens often lead tactical urbanism projects – both those that are sanctioned and those that are not. While officials and planners have a professional responsibility to manage risk and ensure public safety, there can be value in considering how the ideas and intentions behind citizen actions can inform planning practice. The Walk Raleigh project is a good example of how planners can harness the momentum and enthusiasm of an unsanctioned project and avoid being reactionary. Portland's Intersection Repair project shows how officials embraced and formalized a citizen-driven community building activity.
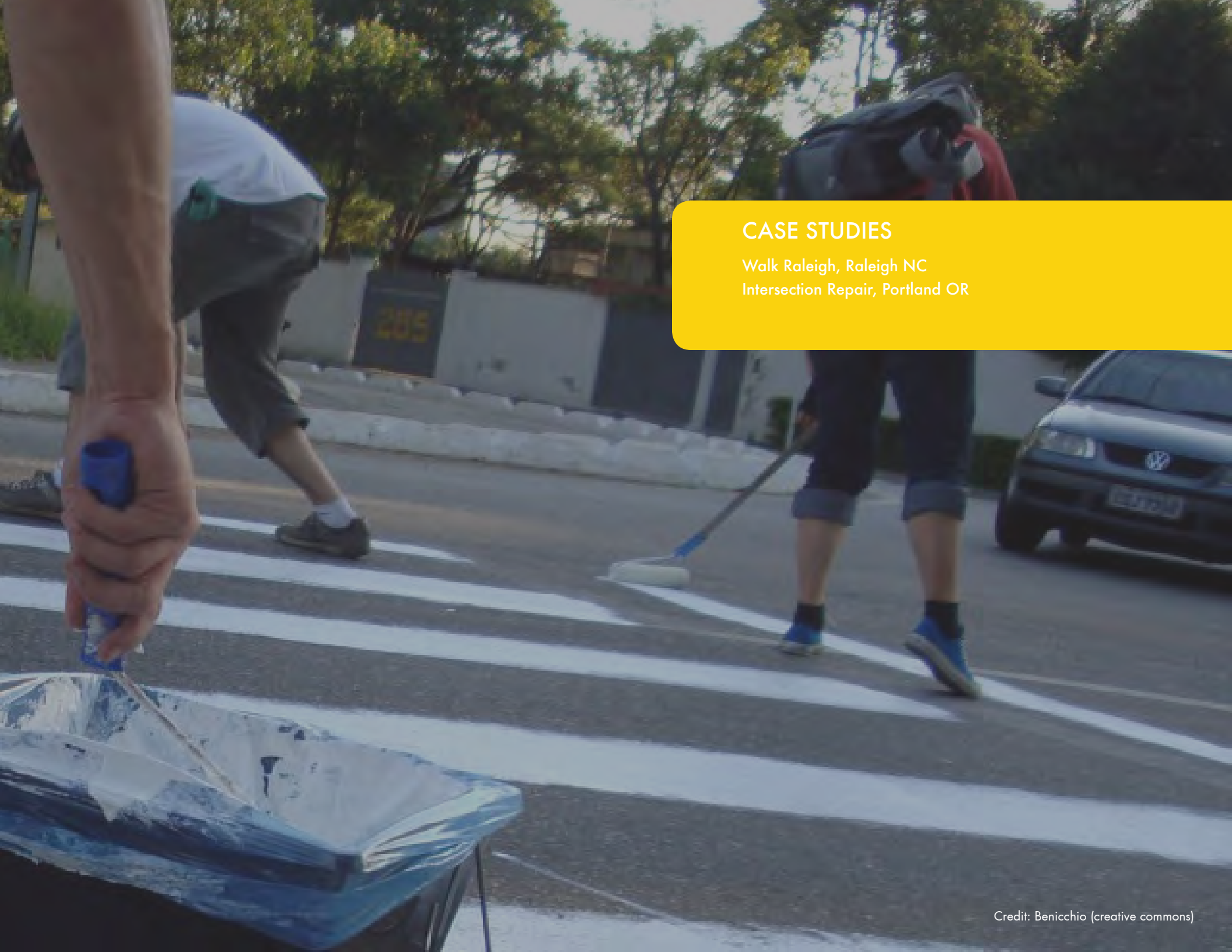
CASE STUDIES

Walk Raleigh, Raleigh NC
Intersection Repair, Portland OR

In 2012, Matt Tomasulo, a former urban planning student, started The WalkRaleigh project. Though Raleigh is a largely auto-oriented city, Tomasulo observed that neighbourhoods in the downtown were quite walkable. To lower the perceived barriers to walking in downtown Raleigh, Tomasulo produced 27 corrugated plastic pedestrian way-finding signs directing people to local landmarks and public spaces and providing estimated walking times. The signs were placed at three intersections selected to target different mixed-use communities: a neighbourhood near NC State University, a commercial centre with grocery store and post office, and an area near the Central Business District.

The project generated local and international media interest and gained support from local citizens. The signs did not initially draw attention from City staff, in part because they were well designed and some mistook the signs to be City-issued. Further, since they did not advertise a business, the signs did not raise immediate concern. "We typically remove a sign if there is a complaint. Since nobody complained, I didn't take [the signs] down," says Mitchell Silver, Chief Planning and Development Officer and Planning Director for the City of Raleigh. However, with increasing media attention, City officials were

Credit: Nicole Alvarez

prompted to respond: "A news anchor asked if the signs were illegal…and asked why they hadn't been taken down. This was taken as a formal inquiry and complaint… at that point we had a responsibility to respond."

As the signs were unsanctioned – to legally post the signs in the public right-of-way, Tomasulo

would have had to apply for an encroachment permit – the Planning Department had to remove the signs. However, Silver worked with City staff to build on the positive momentum of the project. "I liked the creativity of the program, so my staff and I came up with a way of getting [the signs] back up as quickly as possible…If [Matt] donated the signs to the City, then they would be ours and

we wouldn't need an encroachment permit to allow them to be placed on City property."

The Planning Department prepared a proposal to use the signs as a three-month pilot educational program to determine if they could be incorporated into the City's way-finding system. A community petition to support the proposal was circulated online and presented to City Council; 1255 people signed within three days. Since the proposal supported a number of objectives in the City's Comprehensive Plan and had support from community members, City Council approved the pilot program and the signs were reposted within a few weeks.

WalkRaleigh has provided an example of how planners can create an atmosphere of collaboration and support between citizens and officials. "[Mitchell Silver] has been recognized through all of this as being very tolerant and accepting that things are changing," says Tomasulo. "[Officials are] having to figure out how to operate in these grey areas."

Silver feels that officials can use the emergence of unsanctioned tactical and temporary projects as an opportunity to examine current policies and practices and increase flexibility in rules

Credit: Nicole Alvarez

and regulations: "I asked my staff...did Matt do something wrong or are our codes out of date?... Are our rules becoming an obstacle or are they addressing 20th century issues?"

The Raleigh Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission is currently examining ways to incorporate the WalkRaleigh concept into the City's way-finding system. "[That impact] is next to impossible to initiate from our end. It was

What role should planners play with respect to tactical projects?

"In my opinion it would be a supporter, but also being flexible when it comes to code enforcement... look at [a] rule or code... to find out if it needs to be changed, [if it's] really meeting its intended purpose... not just be a regulator and an enforcer. Sit back and question what's being done."
- Mitchell Silver

"...it's [supporting] a cultural shift in values...figuring out ways to amend [temporary permits]so that [communities] can [lead] a proactive, tactful project...that has a mission versus just entertainment.."
- Matt Tomasulo

pretty great to see that the City acknowledged the potential and actually formally wrote [WalkRaleigh] into their vision," says Tomasulo.

Building on the success of his project, Tomasulo recently launched Walk [Your City], an online resource allowing individuals to create and print the way-finding signs for use in their own communities.

Intersection Repair, Portland OR
Year Started: 1996
Instigator: Citizen

City Repair is a non-profit organization whose focus is empowering citizens to build community connections and transform the places they live. They are well-known for their Intersection Repair projects, citizen-led initiatives that transform local residential intersections into public gathering spaces including painting on the roadway. The first Intersection Repair project took place in 1996 led by Mark Lakeman, founding member of City Repair. Lakeman started to build an alternative gathering place in his childhood neighbourhood including the creation of a small tearoom in a neighbour's yard and planting sunflowers and corn to define the edges of the space. "I wanted to see how people would respond if they were able to create their own experience on their own terms...it was really important to just start," says Lakeman.

Credit: City Repair

Initially, the City's Bureau of Transportation opposed the project and was concerned with the violation of existing codes. Eventually, after communicating back and forth with the Bureau and receiving threats of fines, members of City Repair met with the mayor. She was ultimately supportive of the initiative and advised the group to organize the goals and objectives of the project and to create an official proposal to present to City Council. The project ultimately gained support and within a few months, a municipal ordinance was developed that would allow citizens to create intersection repair projects throughout the city. To date there have been approximately 30 intersection repair projects.

Currently, the City's Bureau of Transportation administers the permitting process to facilitate Intersection Repair projects. While the City does not initiate or fund the projects, they have a standard set of rules that allow community members to deliver projects safely and with strong local support. The permits are issued at no cost and are active unless and until they are revoked, though this has never happened. "The projects really are not ours, they are the community's...[the] projects are wonderful for building community, building relationships between people, [and] helping people own where they live," says Greg Raisman, a planner

with the Portland Bureau of Transportation. Lakeman agrees that the intent of the projects is to build strong connections, "What it ends up looking like is really not nearly as important as how you've done it."

Intersection Repair projects are installed during an annual event run by City Repair called the Village Building Convergence. Approximately three months prior to the Convergence, the City provides opportunities for community groups to present their proposals to staff for feedback. "[These groups] need to go through the process… so that [they] are confident that [they] have a project that is building community that does have community endorsement," says Raisman. At the initial meeting, community members present a

basic draft design and proposed location for their project on which Transportation staff provide feedback. The intersection must be located on residential streets with no public bus service and where traffic flows are low. The City also requires the paintings to be easy for all citizens to execute and that the proposed designs are an accurate reflection of how the final project will look once completed.

Once a City traffic engineer feels the design and location do not pose safety issues, the City provides a petition for the applicant group to present to local residents. Intersection Repair projects must show a high level of community support prior to receiving a permit. All residents adjacent to the intersection and 80% of residents

within 400ft of the intersection along each intersecting street must approve of the proposal befor the City will issue the permit. The applicant is then responsible for providing the supplies, liability insurance, and must also apply for a permit to close the street for painting. With such a high level of local support required, Raisman is confident that intersection repair projects are successful, "The level of community buy-in is so high, and the level of community consensus…is so great that we know we have a solid program."

Credit: donkeycart (creative commons)

"Portland prides itself on being open-minded and forward leaning and wanting to explore what's possible… we are careful, but we also are willing to try new things… it's that kind of [openness] that really sets the playing field for this kind of [project] to work."

– Greg Raisman

"The role of the planner…is to be facilitative. Not just to accomplish a project, but to facilitate the development of the literacy of the population so that everyone can start to become familiar with design principles and design practices… they become better participants."

– Mark Lakeman

IT'S AN
18 MINUTE
WALK TO
GLENWOOD
SOUTH
←

IT'S A
7 MINUTE
WALK TO
RALEIGH CITY
CEMETERY
→

Credit: Nicole Alvarez

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Resist being reactionary to citizen-led actions:
Consider that a citizen-driven project may be responding to an unmet need or desire in the community

2) Educate citizens about existing bylaws:
Create a guide to highlight existing municipal processes or facilitate a citizen planning education program

3) Harness the energy and creativity of citizens:
Build upon existing civic participation and encourage citizens to work with fellow residents on local issues

4) Find ways to accommodate citizen initiatives:
Pilot community-led initiatives within existing policies (include citizens in this process)

5) Create a standardized process:
Ensure new formalized or semi-formalized programs outline the role and responsibility of all actors involved

6) Designate a central contact or community liaison:
Identify a staff person to answer questions and help citizens navigate regulatory and policy issues

DEMONSTRATING WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Private and non-profit actors are not always willing to invest time and resources into piloting projects. Cities wishing to encourage new models of community and economic development and promote temporary uses may need to experiment and show other actors the opportunities and benefits of temporary spaces and uses. The Better Block project helps public and private actors rethink existing spaces at the block level, and actively involves citizens in the planning process. On a larger scale, the Memphis Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team and the Washington Temporary Urbanism Initiative are City-run programs that showcase economic and community development opportunities through temporary uses.

CASE STUDIES

Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team, Memphis TN
Temporary Urbanism Initiative, Washington DC
Better Block Project, Dallas TX

Temporary Urbanism Initiative, Washington DC
Year Started: 2008
Instigator: Officials

After the US economic downturn, the DC Office of Planning began to examine new economic development strategies to address the many vacant lots and abandoned retail spaces throughout the city. Two previous studies, the Creative DC Action Agenda and the Retail Action Roadmap, contained objectives related to activating commercial corridors, supporting entrepreneurs, and boosting local neighbourhoods. The Office of Planning began to engage community partners to find new ways to leverage private and public resources to implement these objectives.

The actionomics[dc] forum in 2009 brought together 150 public, private, and non-profit stakeholders to address topics related to economic development and to create working groups to find local solutions. One working group focused on temporary urbanism and identified a set of locations within the city where temporary projects could take place. The Temporary Urbanism Initiative (TUI) was created to focus on transforming vacant spaces throughout the city, highlighting their potential to provide services and activities to local residents and to boost economic development.

The Office of Planning began piloting temporary projects to act as a catalyst and to demonstrate

Credit: Daniel Rosenstein

opportunities for non-municipal actors to become involved. Planners first looked at quick-win projects that could be addressed with existing public resources– using spaces that were municipally owned and did not require extensive resources or time to make them operable. One of the first projects was a Digital Pop-up Lab, a space for computer code programmers participating in Digital Capital Week to meet up and work. The Lab was hosted in an unused City-owned library kiosk from the 1970s. Staff in

the Department of General Services completed minimal improvements to the site and helped develop a contract agreement to ensure the City was not taking on unnecessary risk by allowing people to use the space. This first project helped the Office of Planning to define what they wanted to achieve through the TUI and allowed them to demonstrate what was possible to community stakeholders.

After the initial Pop-Up Lab, the library kiosk was presented as a contracting opportunity and became the TUI's "Temporium" project. The "Temporium" was both a retail shop for local designers and artists, as well as an event space for musicians and community-based initiatives. The project spanned four weekends in 2010 and was well received by citizens. In 2011, the Office of Planning won a grant from ArtPlace America to focus on creating four Arts and Culture Temporiums to active vacant lots and underutilized storefronts to promote artist entrepreneurship and community building. As part of the ArtPlace Grant, the Lumen8Anacostia arts event was created which showcased performances, art installations, gallery shows and events over a three-month period. The festival is currently in its second year.

As a result of the Temporary Urbanism Initiative, local Business Improvement Districts are starting to take the lead and employ pop-ups and temporary projects to bring programming and events to their areas. Private actors are repurposing a number of marginal sites around the city for other uses: One neighbourhood created a rolling park to address the lack of green space while another has transformed a vacant site into a mini park and hosts a summertime movie series.

For the Office of Planning, the transition towards private and community-driven leadership of projects is exactly what they were hoping for by creating the Temporary Urbanism Initiative. They knew they didn't have the capacity or mission to run events, and instead wanted to champion new ideas, show what was possible, and open the door to new initiatives. By working through the process of implementing temporary projects, the Office of Planning has been able to develop a framework that allows others to lead.

Credit: David Y. Lee for ARCH Development Corporation

"[As planners,] we've got the tool in the toolbox... now the tool is out there and others are using it in an exciting way"

\- Planner, DC Office of Planning

Better Block Project, Dallas TX
Year Started: 2010
Instigator: Citizen

Jason Roberts, an IT consultant in Dallas, started the Better Block project in April of 2010. He noticed a mixed-use block in his neighbourhood that contained a cluster of older buildings that were vacant; however zoning in the area prevented retail uses. At the time he had also been reading about different design and planning ideas that contribute to the creation of great urban spaces. "I wonder[ed] how many of these things I could put into this block and try to recreate this great place," Roberts says. He approached friends and neighbours with the idea of trying to create their ideal block – one that included bike lanes and wider sidewalks to accommodate cafe seating and uses such as bookstores, art galleries and fruit stands: "The goal really was just to create that dream, European-looking block in our part of town."

The group knew that doing the project in a more sanctioned manner would require zoning changes – a process that could take years and likely significant expenditures. Instead, they decided to proceed without City approval. Over one weekend, the group leveraged their collective resources and contacts to implement their ideas: painting bike lanes on the roadway, providing patio seating, and opening the vacant buildings for pop-up shops. "We were just trying

Credit: Girls' Club Collection, Fort Lauderdale

to show what happens if we just did something on the fly... it was to illustrate why [the existing] zoning ordinances were bad," says Roberts. The group posted copies of all the rules and local ordinances they were breaking – ones they felt were overly restrictive to redeveloping and improving the area. City staff and council members were invited to the event and many were supportive of the interventions.

Two years after the first Better Block project, a number of the old ordinances are undergoing

revision to meet current needs. The modifications represent a handful of smaller policy changes including easing restrictions on cafe seating, allowing merchandize to be sold by street vendors, and lowering permit costs for installing awnings and landscaping.

Roberts says it's important for citizens to actively advocate for the changes they want and show City administrators what is possible: "Often times I've found that many people at City Hall are actually your advocates... [but] they have a

playbook they have to go by and they are forced to play by those rules even if those rules no longer make sense...it is the public's job to try and get those things changed."

After completing a number of other projects and gaining international attention for their work, the Better Block team has taken on a mentorship role. They've open-sourced the tools they use and provide "how-to" information on their website, allowing others to lead similar projects. They also work as consultants to design and implement projects with cities across North America – getting citizens actively involved in creating projects and advocating for change, and working with officials to find ways to make the changes permanent. By building a cooperative relationship between government and community stakeholders, they are able to address issues in both the public and private realm. Further, by actively involving community members in the process of creating spaces (both conceptually and physically) they help citizens gain a sense of responsibility and ownership over their local neighbourhood.

Roberts says it is important for officials to understand the need to maintain a certain level of tension between sanctioned and somewhat unsanctioned actions. If a project becomes too controlled or over-regulated it can lose momentum and be off-putting to community members. He says officials need to honour that tension and allow citizens some freedom to experiment with new ideas and take ownership: "Having cities be open to the idea of flexible, temporary space and peeling back the rules a bit – almost creating a bureaucracy free zone...because an area has been under-utilized...It's a chance for a city to say to the public...show us what you've got."

Credit: Team Better Block

"The Better Block process does away with a lot of the fear that you would see in a typical planning process...Our goal is to institutionalize experiential planning. Allow these things to be put on the ground and tested...[for planners] to better illustrate [their] point".

- Jason Roberts

In 2012, Memphis was chosen as one of five U.S. cities to receive sponsorship through Bloomberg Philanthropies' Government Innovation program. Each of the five cities is to focus on transforming local government by bringing innovation to bear on decision-making and the delivery of services, and to address two local issues. Responding to the challenge of attracting people back to the core of the city, the Memphis Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team is focusing on innovative ways to generate neighbourhood economic vitality.

"For the past 60 years there has been a severe disinvestment in the core of Memphis right along the same time that this next generation, the Millennials, are gaining a new interest in cities…it comes right at the time that the federal government…state government…local government are out of money…so how do we transform these dead spaces?," says Thomas Pacello, a member of the Innovation Team. There was a desire at the City to shift the local mindset towards residents having more agency and being active in addressing city problems. "We started to look at some of these tactical projects… [it made] a lot more sense for us to stop relying on silver bullet answers… and instead…test some basic, small ideas, see what works and then double down on those things that work".

Credit: Troy Glasgow

The Innovation Team was inspired by a project in 2010 where community leaders and business owners rallied around a local thoroughfare, Broad Street, and launched a project called "A New Face for An Old Broad". The project included painting crosswalks and bike lanes and temporarily activating vacant store spaces with retail shops over a weekend. Two years later, eight new businesses had opened, there had been 12 million dollars in private investment, and the City was installing a two-way cycle track. The Innovation Team wanted to experiment with projects like this to see what could be learned before making large investments. "We said let's take the same idea and expand it out to other commercial corridors and neighbourhood centres," says Pacello.

Credit: Memfix

"A lot of what we're trying to do now is proof-of-concept. The first group we reach out to is the neighbourhood...let us know if you're on board with [new ideas for the neighbourhood] and...if you want to go out and execute them... we'll run through the bureaucracy for you."
-Thomas Pacello

The Innovation Team developed three initiatives to increase neighbourhood economic vitality: MEMshop, a pop-up retail project to temporarily activate vacant storefronts; MEMmobile, to promote mobile retail including food carts and dry goods; and MEMfix, a program to allow temporary street events that help revitalize blocks with temporary uses and low-cost materials.

For the first MEMfix project, the Innovation Team acted as the applicant on all of the permits – they felt it was important for them to experience the process citizens would go through in order to understand the potential challenges. Working through the system, they saw what worked, identified bottlenecks in the process, and educated other City departments about these new types of events. Now, MEMfix events are transitioning to leadership and organization by community members, with the Innovation Team shifting to a role of facilitatoin. The Innovation Team now works with City departments to see what resources can be made available, while also working to streamline the permitting process and reduce the number of meetings applicants need to attend. They have been documenting the lessons learned from the projects and are formalizing a toolkit to help community leaders establish a budget, address issues related to permitting, and run safe and successful events.

The Innovation Team is also currently creating a framework for both City officials and citizens to understand the potential for temporary projects with respect to investing more permanently, strategically, and effectively. The hope is to create a policy document to show what tactical interventions are, the impact they can have on a neighbourhood, and how the local government can experiment with them and support them.

At the same time the Innovation Team is developing a policy to engage local residents to develop new ideas for their communities and support neighbourhood projects through volunteer hours and crowd-funding. Pacello sees opportunity in creating "a platform...a system in which Memphians can be disruptive on their own and in a positive way within their neighbourhoods".

Credit: zflanders (creative commons)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Foster communication and connections between actors:
Host a meeting of private, public, and non-profit sector actors to discuss new ways to address local needs

3) Work through your official permitting process:
Collaborate with other City departments to problem solve regulatory bottlenecks and address local ordinances

5) Share what you learn:
Develop a framework of the lessons learned and share it with public and private partners so they can lead projects more successfully

2) Offer to be the test case:
Pilot the first few projects in City-owned venues or on publicly-owned land

4) Partner with relevant groups in the community:
Pilot projects with citizens and non-profit groups to gain their insight as well as increase credibility and local interest

6) Look for quick wins while planning:
Find actions that are easy to accomplish and act on them to build momentum and gain community support

GETTING INTERNAL BUY-IN

Sometimes the challenge for planners wishing to pilot new projects is not getting acceptance from community stakeholders, but rather getting support from other municipal departments and agencies. As many tactical and temporary projects take place within the public realm, a number of actors need to be involved. Securing that internal buy-in can be a challenge. Viva Vancouver provides an example of how building inter-departmental relationships can help projects move forward, while San Francisco's Pavement to Parks program highlights the importance of having a champion within the City to progress new ideas.

Credit: Laura Kaminski

Viva Vancouver, Vancouver BC
Year Started: 2009
Instigator: Officials

In 2009, Vancouver City Council approved a planning process to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world by 2020. One of the quick implementation ideas that came forward as part of the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan was the temporary closure of certain commercial corridors to promote the use of streets for different community activities. In contrast to previous street closures associated with a specific event, this initiative focused on closing the street to allow more space for pedestrians. The City piloted the Summer Spaces program to test the closure of four commercial streets every Sunday during the summer of 2009. The City waived the road closure cost and provided funding for community groups to run activities. Additionally, a planner was assigned to manage the promotion, coordination and implementation of the program.

The following February, the City established a series of pedestrian corridors in downtown Vancouver as part of the 2010 Winter Olympics. The downtown Vancouver BIA expressed interest in returning one corridor as an active space that summer. Building on their experience with the Summer Spaces program and the interest in pedestrian corridors, the City rebranded these initiatives as Viva Vancouver in 2011. The Viva Vancouver program focuses on

Credit: Vancouver Public Space Network (creative commons)

temporarily transforming streets into public spaces and raising the profile of active forms of transportation. As part of this initiative, the City has launched a number of creative public space projects in downtown Vancouver including Picnurbia, an undulating pop-up park, and Pop Rocks, a series of large beanbags that provide temporary seating.

The process of implementing the program has highlighted the importance of building strong inter-departmental relationships to help facilitate the learning process that comes with any new program. "The approach for Viva has been

implement…and figure out policy later," says Krisztina Kassay, the urban planner working on Viva Vancouver projects. "It's hard work to write policy and integrate [it]… but the really hard work is changing the mindset."

Since the Viva Vancouver program is not run out of the City's Planning Department, Kassay found it essential to communicate planning considerations to other City departments. Street closures, typically administered through the Engineering Department, are often evaluated on the basis of public safety or of providing a core service. In contrast, projects led by Viva Vancouver are often motivated by other community interests. For Kassay, the working relationships she established with other departments proved essential to building inter-departmental support. As a planner working within the City's Engineering Department, she was able to work closely with staff members that regulate road closures and work through the logistics of the projects. "What helped me was to be paired with an engineer that spoke everyone's language."

Through developing the program, Kassay found the City's existing approach to special events on the street to be both a help and hindrance. It was useful to have an existing model to build

from, but also created some confusion when trying to develop the new program. "There is always a desire to liken [Viva Vancouver] back to a special event," says Kassay. Determining how the new projects fit within existing municipal policies and how to categorize them was also a challenge for the City's Risk Management Office. However, Kassay found that by taking the time to thoroughly explain the different elements of the

project, they were able to develop a strategy that satisfied all departments.

Building on these first experiences, Viva Vancouver has now created a formal process for posting requests for expressions of interest from non-profits, community associations, and residents to host projects. The goal continues to be getting projects on the ground quickly. "Viva

is the platform for innovation… we innovate, we incubate, and then we try to integrate," says Kassay. Now that the program has become more established, staff are focusing on writing the policies and guidelines for these projects to be successfully integrated and supported within City policies. They recently unveiled a new guide for business and community leaders to create parklets in the city.

Credit: Krista Jahnke

The working relationships planners establish with people in other departments can make or break a project:

"It is a communication exercise of managing the mind shift. It is all about finding the right person in the other department…with projects like this, they can be very inspirational…people get really excited and want the project to succeed."

- Krisztina Kassay

Pavement to Parks, San Francisco CA
Year Started: 2008
Instigator: Officials

In 2005, design firm Rebar created the first Park(ing) installation in San Francisco – a small park that occupied an on-street parking space for two hours. A local loophole, which did not mandate that parking spaces could only be occupied by vehicles, inspired the group to "lease" the space and use it for a more community-focused purpose. The idea quickly spread to other cities and culminated in the annual global event, Park(ing) Day. The City of San Francisco had been supportive of Park(ing) Day and City planners were interested in exploring temporary projects in their work. In 2008, a challenge from Jeanette Sadik-Khan (New York City's DOT commissioner) motivated the City to establish an official program to convert excess roadway into pedestrian and public space.

Credit: Søren Schaumberg Jensen (creative commons)

Andres Power, then a planner with the City of San Francisco, was asked to bring together various departments and community stakeholders to develop a program through the Mayor's Office. Initially, Power looked to areas in the city that had a documented expression of need for improvement (e.g. pedestrian and bike safety concerns). From the initial list, four locations were chosen to pilot the creation of pedestrian plazas. The City legitimized the pilot plazas by going through an established review process with the Municipal Transportation Agency, Department of Public Works, and the Public Utilities Commission as well as other relevant agencies (fire, police). For most on the review board the plazas were different from traditional projects they'd seen and there was apprehension and resistance to permitting this new type of public space.

Power argued that codes and regulations for permanent installations shouldn't apply to temporary projects. For him, it was important to frame the project as being a trial and reversible if it didn't work. "The goal really was to get something on the ground almost overnight, and then to use the installation itself as an element to continue to engage the community… have the space itself be the planning exercise," says Power.

The first pilot plaza was eventually approved and installed with paint, cardboard bollards, and donated landscaping. The project was received

positively and enhancements were made to make elements of the space more permanent. At this time the program was officially named Pavement to Parks and the City installed the remaining three pilot plazas.

After receiving an expression of interest from a local business owner to create a similar project at a smaller scale, Power decided to build on the momentum and support of Park(ing) Day, to pilot the creation of "Parklets", small temporary sidewalk extensions that convert on-street parking stalls into public spaces. Power worked with Rebar and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association to develop an initial design for Parklets as part of Pavement to Parks.

The Parklet model went through the same review and permitting process as the plazas. "The goal

"I look at planners as our collaborators and as advocates for looking for new responsible ways to produce space in a city that don't necessarily take as long as they have in the past."

— Matt Passmore, Rebar

was, again, to prove that this was something that could be done… even though it may not necessarily fit every single code section of various City departments," says Power. For Matt Passmore of Rebar, the idea of implementing first was refreshing: "Instead of having the design process slowed down by objection after objection, parklets allow us to test ideas at full scale and in real-time. Let's not let the process get shot down when it's still in a theoretical stage." The first six pilot Parklets were organized by Power, including securing funding to cover the cost of materials. At this time, planners at the City also started developing an official streamlined process to allow businesses, non-profits, and community groups to apply to create Parklets.

In addition to ensuring suitability of location, the City requires applicants to work with local

stakeholders to develop a Parklet design that will have support and ultimately be more successful. "The model lends itself to that ultra-localized planning and design, that, in my mind is… much more responsive to the immediate needs than anyone in City government could be," says Power. To date, 38 Parklets have been installed and 35 are at various stages of the City's approval process. San Francisco's official Parklet Manual was released in February of 2013.

"You have to be smart and informed about what you do, but it's better to try and succeed 80% of the time then to not try at all because you're afraid of failing with that 20%."

— Andres Power

Credit: Jeremy A. Shaw (creative commons)

Credit: Vancouver Public Space Network (creative commons)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Do your homework:
Educate yourself on the needs of individual City departments with respect to new projects (permit requirements, liability considerations)

2) Approach other departments early and be inclusive:
Don't wait until a project is in the ground to ask for the support you need

3) Communicate larger planning goals to other departments:
Demonstrate how a project will respond to a demonstrated community need or planning concern

4) Use failure as an opportunity to learn:
Where safety isn't compromised, take measured risks and learn from the experience

5) Promote dialogue:
Host interdepartmental discussions to share new projects and promote innovative thinking; Work together to address concerns and find solutions

ADAPTING IDEAS TO YOUR CONTEXT

Planners and officials are often inspired to experiment with innovative projects they see in other cities. Learning from tactical and temporary projects in other cities is important; however planners need to consider how a project can respond to local conditions and the context of their own city – the conditions that make a temporary project successful in one city may not be present in another. Examples from Buffalo and Philadelphia show how planners are integrating temporary projects from elsewhere into their own programs and policies. The Celebrate Yonge project meanwhile highlights the experience of being the test case and the process of working through local constraints.

CASE STUDIES

Buffalo Green Code, Buffalo NY
Parklet Program, Philadelphia PA
Celebrate Yonge, Toronto ON

Credit: Square 1 Sandwiches

Celebrate Yonge, Toronto ON
Year Started: 2012
Instigator: Non-profit; Officials

Celebrate Yonge was a four-week festival that involved the temporary redesign of Yonge Street in downtown Toronto in the late summer of 2012. The event was an initiative that developed out of the 'Yonge Street Planning Framework', an initiative spearheaded by City Councilor Kristyn Wong-Tam to address challenges along the street. The Framework touched on many aspects of the street (built form, heritage, signage) and presented an overall vision of the area including a focus on public realm improvements. One of the recommendations from the Yonge Street Planning Framework was to widen sidewalks on Yonge Street over time to accommodate the high level of pedestrian traffic, and to conduct an immediate pilot of the idea to test the potential impacts.

Observation had identified that Yonge Street wasn't functioning well for pedestrians or vehicles. Though the street had four lanes, service vehicles and delivery trucks often blocked one lane in each direction and narrow sidewalks didn't properly address the high level of pedestrian traffic. "The intent of [the Celebrate Yonge] initiative was ...to improve the conditions for everybody," says Evan Weinberg, former planning and development manager for the Downtown Yonge BIA. The redesign for

Celebrate Yonge included wider sidewalks with patios for businesses, a reduced number of traffic lanes (wide enough to accommodate cyclists and emergency vehicles), and designated lay-bys for service vehicles.

Though the Downtown Yonge BIA lead the process of implementing the pilot project, they worked closely with different City departments (transportation, public realm, operations) to consider all aspects of redesigning the street. Since this was a new type of project for Toronto – previously streets had only been completely closed to vehicles for street festivals – there was no set process to follow. The City was interested in using the event as a learning experience. As part of the process, the BIA was required to develop a traffic management plan, in addition to a physical plan for the site, to understand how traffic flow would be affected within a 20-minute walking radius of the site. "This was a precedent setting initiative and I think that's, in part, why we were asked to look beyond the scope of our work," says Weinberg.

In addition to the consultation that came out of the initial Planning Framework, the BIA conducted consultation events including surveying people in the event area, and inviting local residents

and business owners to discuss challenges and opportunities early on. As the plans were developed, a series of block-by-block meetings were also held to discuss and map specific issues. After incorporating feedback from community stakeholders and the results of the traffic management and road layout study, the BIA submitted their design for the street to the local community council and subsequently City Council, where it was approved.

This project was intended to be part of a larger process for the City to consider what a planning policy for temporary street redesign projects could look like. In this way, the process

Credit: Sam Schachar (TCAT)

of planning the design and coordinating with multiple partners was important as it helped to identify the potential complexities of translating the temporary project into a long-term permanent change. Here, during the four week event it was feasible for the City to change garbage pick-up schedules and locations; however, curb side collection would likely return and need to be considered in the final design if the installation were made permanent.

The choice to use the project as a catalyst to test how the City may address and incorporate temporary interventions in the public right of way appears to have been successful. It remains to be seen if the City will create an official policy to allow for the temporary redesign of streets for festivals, and if these projects will be used to promote more permanent change.

Credit: Craig James White

On the disconnect between planning and implementation:

"Planners are often asked to create the high-level tools, but they're not necessarily the ones who are going to be implementing [the projects], which is often challenging because it's through the implementation that you actually get to see the change...often, we as planners work as mediators...bringing people together."

– Evan Weinberg

The Buffalo Green Code, a comprehensive rewrite of the City of Buffalo's land use plan and zoning codes, is a current planning effort by the City of Buffalo to focus on implementing smart growth and sustainability principles originally outlined in the City's 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Buffalo has seen a considerable downturn in growth and development in the last few decades. Officials have chosen to see this situation as an opportunity to rethink the way the City functions and look for new ways to shape the outlook for the future. Since the previous zoning code and land use plan were outdated (both over 40 years old), planners felt it was necessary to make these documents reflect the current conditions and ideals of the city.

Credit: Zandria Marcuson

Chris Hawley, a city planner in the Mayor's Office, says the changing culture in City Hall is rooted in a growing interest in exploring new options. "Buffalo is currently a bit of a frontier for new and interesting ideas and is attracting a lot of people... there is a culture here that is open-minded to new ideas," says Hawley. This includes examining best practices for mobile retail, ways to re-purpose the public right-of-way, and promoting the use of under-utilized spaces: "We're taking a look at a lot of the trends that are popular around the country and are trying our best to integrate them into the framework of the Green Code".

A few years ago, food trucks emerged in Buffalo, but there was no licensing process in place. There was initially some resistance from local restaurants, however the idea gained support from the public. The City felt it was something they could accommodate and wanted to ensure there were no unreasonable regulatory barriers to potential vendors. In order to evaluate their impact and address potential concerns, the city ran a pilot project with a basic licensing process. After legitimizing their existence, interest in food trucks increased and there are now approximately two dozen operating in the city. Under the new zoning code, the permitting

process will be simplified to make it easier for vendors to understand and apply for permits. The ordinance will also be reworded to permit "mobile retail" so as to not limit the concept to food vendors.

There has also been increased support from citizens and officials for projects that repurpose the public right-of-way. Working with Go Bike Buffalo, a cycling and pedestrian advocacy group, the City hosted their first 'Play Street' in the summer of 2013 to provide more public space for pedestrians. The City has also looked to examples of creative reuse of the right of way such as pedestrian plazas and parklets in other cities to see how the new zoning code may incorporate some of these ideas. They hope that by simplifying and streamlining the permitting process for citizens and businesses wishing to do projects in the public right of way, there will be more flexibility to accommodate new types of uses that emerge.

While this mindset shift originally started with younger residents, members of the development community and government are also seeing potential in temporary projects. Larkin Square, a gathering space on a former parking lot in an industrial area of the city, was created to increase

the development potential of surrounding buildings. The developer attracted a restaurant to fill an abandoned gas station and brought food trucks, entertainment, and a temporary market to the space. Now, Larkin Square is to be a permanent feature in the neighbourhood that will continuously evolve. Planners recognize the project as a good example of how developers can lead temporary efforts and instantly activate under-utilized spaces. Learning from this experience, the City's Green Code will include modifications to better integrate temporary uses such as open-air markets into the zoning code. Hawley says all of these new ideas have been well-received by citizens: "We've tried all the other silver bullets before and they didn't work. The big convention centre, big stadiums... we're over [that] era and folks in the community are much more interested in these smaller, incremental, higher-impact projects than the large, government-funded official projects which, in the past, have not succeeded in delivering on their promises."

BUFFALO
greencode

Credit: Larkin Development Group

"Our basic job is to help facilitate the revitalization of Buffalo... [We] like to call ourselves change managers... As these new concepts come on board, it's our responsibility to make sure that the practices and policies we have in city hall are ...responsive to both these trends and the health, safety, and welfare of the community."
- Chris Hawley

Parklet Program, Philadelphia PA
Year Started: 2010
Instigator: Non-profit; Officials

In 2010, the University City District in West Philadelphia approached the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities with a desire to create parklets (small public spaces that extend from the sidewalk into the roadway, typically the size of 1-2 parking spaces) in their neighbourhood. The Mayor's Office had been examining these temporary uses and decided to work with community stakeholders to test how this new type of space could be implemented in Philadelphia.

In 2011, two parklets were created on a pilot basis in conjunction with the University City District. One, located across the street from a public park, was well-received. The other was not well used due to minimal foot traffic in the area and was not continued the following year. The initial pilot program provided the City with an opportunity to examine how people were using the parklets and what physical and neighbourhood characteristics made them successful. "You can't expect a parklet to build walkability or to build pedestrian traffic – they help pedestrian traffic," says Ariel Ben-Amos, a planner with the Mayor's Office. Through this pilot, the city also observed the impact parklets could have on community economic development. During the initial pilot, one business hosting a parklet saw revenue increase by 15-20%.

Building on the initial pilots, in 2012 the Mayor's Office partnered with the City's Commerce Department to provide six $5,000 mini-grants for community groups who wanted to build neighbourhood parklets. The City chose not to provide the grants directly to local businesses, instead wanting to focus on working with community groups, though the community groups were able to partner with a local business to build a parklet. Today all six funded parklets have been installed. In addition, the University City District has installed four new parklets using a standard design to strengthen the local neighbourhood identity and another has been installed in a low-income neighbourhood in North Philadelphia. Through the pilot program and mini-grants the City has been able to develop a program for creating parklets with community groups as opposed to private businesses, a model more common in cities like San Francisco. Such a model means that Parklets can be located in underserved communities and can be developed in conjunction with neighbourhood institutions such as schools and libraries. Here, they often function as spaces for creative community

Credit: Conrad Erb

programming (movie nights, farmers markets). "We've learned to recognize the [different local] market[s] for parklets," says Ben-Amos.

In developing their program, the City has created a set of criteria for applicants to follow. Parklet designs must be approved by the City's Streets Department to ensure the design meets safety standards and each partner must provide general liability and workers compensation insurance for their parklet. Applicants are also required to show local support for projects including letters of support from the adjacent property owners, the local councilor, and a petition of support indicating 51% of residents, business or property owners on the block support the project.

As part of their work, the City is conducting an impact study to gather comprehensive data including counting pedestrian traffic before and after parklet installation and surveying local businesses: "We know communities want [parklets], they are coming to us for them and we need to be able to make the case [in front of Council]," says Ben-Amos. "We think it's really important to be able to measure the impact of our more innovative work."

Responding to interest from community members, the City is looking at opportunities to simplify their process for creating parklets. Currently, each parklet requires a temporary lane closure license, but the Mayor's Office is considering a modification to the City code to allow the creation of parklets as an as-of-right use.

Credit: Dan Reed (creative commons)

Credit: Payton Chung (creative commons)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Critically evaluate innovative projects in other cities:
Consider if a project is relevant to your context and if it will address a local need or desire that has been identified

3) Consult citizens when creating and testing new programs:
Assess local interest in and support for projects; Determine if modifications are needed to make them meet local needs

5) Measure the impact:
Collect data on different indicators to see if projects are meeting their intended purpose (e.g. street liveliness, impact on traffic and businesses)

2) Think about the logistics:
Examine how similar projects have been incorporated within another city's bylaws and municipal programming

4) Pilot projects with interested community groups:
Monitor how pilot projects function and make necessary adjustments

USING EXISTING RESOURCES

Creating new municipal programs and policies often requires time and resources and is not always conducive to getting projects on the ground quickly. The slow pace of bureaucracy can discourage and disenfranchise both private and public actors who wish to innovate. Calgary's Pop-up Places initiative provides an example of how planners can use existing policies and land use designations to accommodate new temporary uses and events. Similarly, New York City's Public Plaza program showcases how a simple shift in how planners and officials manage the public right of way can provide new opportunities to meet the needs of residents.

CASE STUDIES

Pop-Up Places, Calgary AB
Public Plaza Program, New York City NY

Credit: Nina Munteanu

Pop-up Places, Calgary AB
Year Started: 2012
Instigator: Non-profit; Officials

The City of Calgary is currently experimenting with an idea called Pop-Up Places, a collection of temporary uses and activities to make use of vacant spaces throughout the city. The idea of Pop-up Places came about due to increasing interest from private actors and Business Revitalization Zones (similar to BIAs) looking for ways to enliven city streets and districts. The Victoria Park BRZ, located in an older area on the edge of downtown Calgary, started to examine ways to activate vacant lots in their district – over two dozen vacant lots were sitting in a holding pattern as surface parking and inactive construction sites.

The BRZ started working with property owners to get access to the vacant lots on a temporary basis with the intention to repurpose them for uses that could provide a local benefit. After being approached by the BRZ with the idea, City planners started to examine how they could support these projects. They found that existing bylaws already accommodated these new uses, allowing them to move projects forward quickly.

The first Pop-up Place was created on a lot sitting vacant as part of a stalled development. A two tower development had been approved; however, due to the downturn in the economy, the second

Credit: Victoria Park BRZ

tower has yet to be built. In the meantime, the developer has allowed the Victoria Park BRZ to sponsor a temporary private park on the unused site. To create the park, the City only required the BRZ to submit a Change Of Use Development Permit, a relatively simple process. Since the park is not public property, liability for and maintenance of the site remain the responsibility of the BRZ and the property owner.

Pop-up Places are meant to be temporary and occupy spaces that will not create a drastic impact on use or traffic. As such, the Planning Department has been comfortable with processing these types of applications through the change of use permit. Though the City notifies the local community association of the projects, a full consultation is not conducted. "We expect that [pop-up parks] are usually small in footprint

and nil in impact, so we are going to be able to process them very quickly," says Mark Sasges, Chief Development Planner with the City of Calgary. The first pop-up park application was received and processed within 21 days. The length of each permit will necessarily be project and site-dependant. The first Pop-up Park was issued a change of use permit for five years, though Sasges feels that is optimistic.

Building on the first successful project, the Victoria Park BRZ wants to host pop-up events that can take place when weather and time permit. Again, the City feels it has the tools in place to allow these projects to happen quickly. City planners reviewed potential uses proposed by the BRZ (movie screenings, markets) and found that the City's existing Special Function Use could accommodate most pop-up events.

The City hasn't had the opportunity to fully observe how the Special Function Use designation will accommodate pop-up events as the BRZ is still engaging with parcel owners to get access to the desired sites. However, the City wants to see if their current rules are robust enough to support these projects. "Right now, I don't see the need for [updating our bylaws]...I [am] as happy about that as anyone," says Sasges.

The City is excited by the opportunity for BRZs across the city to host pop-up places using the existing permitting framework: "This is their way to enliven the whole community, and they are targeting these mundane sites or blighted sites... so they can do something in those spaces for both the look but also for community activity," says Sasges. To help with the application process, the City has offered to pre-screen proposals for pop-up places city-wide before businesses and non-profits invest the time and money to submit a final application. In the last year, approximately 20 inquiries have been made.

On permitting a new project within 21 days:

"Everyone was surprised, in the community and in the political executive...that we didn't have to go away and re-write the bylaw to accommodate [these projects]... What we found ourselves doing was convincing people that we already had all of it listed, and this was how [they could] access...and navigate the system."

- Mark Sasges

Credit: Victoria Park BRZ

In 2007 PlaNYC, a long-term plan for sustainability within the City of New York was developed. Each City department was given the overall goals of the plan and was asked to figure out ways in which they could achieve them. One goal of PlaNYC was to ensure all residents lived within a 10-minute walk of quality open space. In response, the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) developed an application-based program where community groups and non-profits in all five boroughs could apply to turn a piece of underused street into a public plaza.

"About 25% of the land in New York City is public right of way owned by the Department of Transportation," says Emily Weidenhof, NYC Plaza Program Director, whose mission is to rethink how the public realm can be used as spaces for people: "The reason the program found a structure and mechanism within DOT is because we do have all of this property that we own, manage, maintain, and a lot of it is overbuilt... we don't need it all to be roadbed."

Initially, the plaza program triggered a larger capital project for the creation of a permanent plaza; however the design and engineering process to create permanent plazas was long (> 2 yrs), and required significant resources (~$1.5-2 million). In response, the DOT created temporary plazas that would allow them to use expense funding (instead of capital funding) to provide a toolkit of materials to create the spaces.

Working with agency engineers and others at DOT, the Public Spaces Unit developed a set of design standards for the temporary plazas that engineers felt was safe. The temporary plazas are quick to design and build (5-6 months from application to completion), inexpensive (<$100,000), and since they are temporary and represent a minor physical change to the right of way, lengthy design and environmental review processes are avoided.

By changing the way they thought about their existing resources, the DOT was able to innovate and create a design and program that would be less expensive and quicker to implement. "We give [the street] a restricted use designation so that means that it is closed to [regular] vehicular traffic...limited vehicular access is permitted. For us, it is still a city street. It is still public right of way...we're just managing it for tables and chairs versus painting stripes for vehicle flow," says Weidenhof. "In a lot of ways, it was that [mindset] that enabled us to do what we do because we didn't actually have to create a brand new designation... we could just use things that were already in place."

Credit: Kate Hinds (New York Public Radio)

The Public Spaces Unit receives approximately 10 - 12 applications for plazas each year: 2 - 3 receive capital funding and 5 - 6 receive expense funding for the temporary materials. Applicants include Business Improvement Districts and Merchant's Associations, local school groups, non-profits, and developers. Applicants are expected to be active in the success of the plazas. They sign a plaza partner agreement to take responsibility for physical maintenance of the space (trash removal, watering planters, locking up street furniture) as well as programming.

Local community groups instigate the creation of the plazas, so there is inherently a certain level of local support and input. However, applicants are also required to provide letters of support from adjacent landowners, civic organizations, council members, as well as the local community board. The DOT notifies residents of the proposal and holds a series of workshops to discuss issues, opportunities, and design ideas that will reflect the character of the surrounding neighbourhood. After receiving citizen feedback, a final plan is created and presented to the community board. If approved, the project moves forward. After a temporary plaza is built, the DOT continues to monitor the area in order to learn how people use the space.

Since the plazas are temporary, there is less fear associated with trying new ideas and putting the projects on the ground to be tested. The focus instead is providing a mechanism for communities to actively discuss and build the kind of public space that they want. "Having these quick temporary plazas that we can call pilots – that we can say ...we can test it and we will learn from it and decide together how to move forward... – is the catalyst for making things happen," says Weidenhof.

"We see ourselves as a resource and a mechanism for community groups. We provide a certain set of expertise regarding the design of the public realm and the funding to build public space. But then we want to step out of the way and allow each community to take charge in making their plaza meet their local needs."

- Emily Weidenhof

Credit: New York City DOT
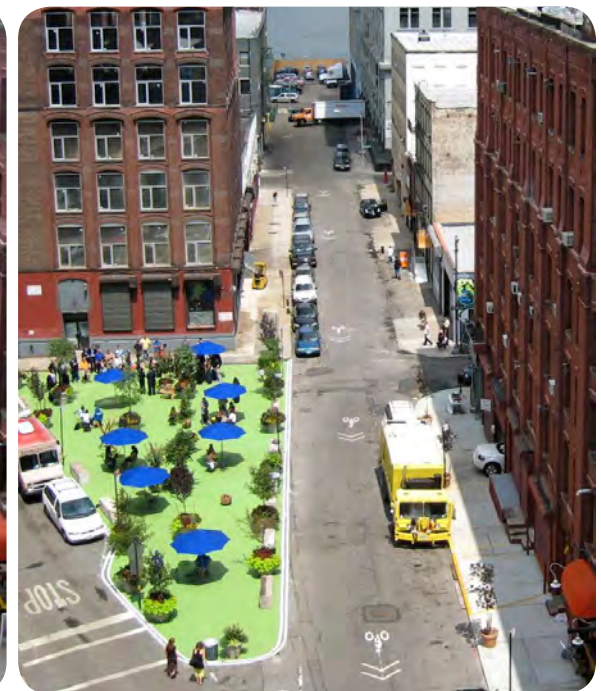
Credit: nycstreets (creative commons)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Assess existing under-utilized public resources:
Identify City-owned land and public facilities that can accommodate pilot projects

2) Look for opportunities to adapt the management of City-owned resources:
Determine if public land can be managed differently to meet the needs of the community

3) Find opportunity in existing regulations:
Examine whether current permits and bylaws can cover new uses and activities

4) Lower the barriers:
Identify the minimum modifications or actions needed to allow a space to be used or a permit to be issued

5) Communicate opportunities:
Inform citizens and community organizations of new opportunities and how to access them

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Working with citizen initiatives

1) Resist being reactionary to citizen-led actions
2) Educate citizens about existing bylaws
3) Harness the energy and creativity of citizens
4) Find ways to accommodate citizen initiatives
5) Create a standardized process
6) Designate a central contact or community liaison

Demonstrating what's possible

1) Foster communication and connections between actors
2) Offer to be the test case
3) Work through your official permitting process
4) Partner with relevant groups in the community
5) Share what you learn
6) Look for quick wins while planning

Getting internal buy-in

1) Do your homework
2) Approach other departments early and be inclusive
3) Communicate larger planning goals to other departments
4) Use failure as an opportunity to learn
5) Promote dialogue

Adapting ideas to your context   1) Critically evaluate innovative projects in other cities

2) Think about the logistics

3) Consult citizens when creating and testing new programs

4) Pilot projects with interested community groups

5) Measure the impact

Using existing resources   1) Assess existing under-utilized public resources

2) Look for opportunities to adapt the management of City-owned resources

3) Find opportunity in existing regulations

4) Lower the barriers

5) Communicate opportunities

CONCLUSIONS

Tactical and temporary urbanism appears to hold potential to be incorporated within professional urban planning practice. Small-scale, temporary projects allow planners to observe interventions on the ground and make adjustments before committing the time and resources needed to complete long-term projects. Planners can also use temporary projects as a mechanism to actively engage citizens in the process of city-building. Further, temporary and pilot projects can improve the responsiveness of planning departments, allowing projects to develop incrementally and to make use of local resources more effectively and creatively.

Successfully incorporating tactical and temporary projects into the practice of urban planning does require consideration of planners' professional responsibilities, and the underlying practices of good planning should always lead the way. As planners seek to improve local communities and support the well-being of citizens, temporary interventions should be adapted to address the local context and conditions of where they are being placed. Projects are also likely to have more support from community stakeholders, and politically, if they are grounded in the

vision statement of a City or respond to an expressed policy goal or need. Planners also need to be conscious of the limitations of tactical and temporary urbanism as tool; however, an incremental and experimental approach to planning can be useful for improving public space design, fostering citizen leadership, and encouraging new forms of community and economic development.

Overall, tactical and temporary projects appear to offer planners an opportunity to respond to local needs by improving the resilience and adaptability of both planning processes as well as the policies they create. However, the role that planners play with respect to tactical and temporary urbanism is not one-size fits all. The degree to which planners are active in the implementation of projects and their comfort with leading projects involving some uncertainty can inform how they might perceive their role. Further, the expectations of local stakeholders, the structure of municipal bureaucracy, and the degree to which uncertainty and risk are accommodated within the planning culture of each municipality will likely impact how a planner engages with these projects.

Credit: John Locke

CASE STUDY RESOURCES

Better Block Project (Dallas TX)
http://betterblock.org/
http://teambetterblock.com/
http://www.livablecities.org/blog/city-city-block-block-building-better-blocks-project

Buffalo Green Code (Buffalo NY)
http://www.buffalogreencode.com/
http://larkinsquare.com/

Celebrate Yonge (Toronto ON)
http://www.celebrateyonge.com/
http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-59523.pdf
http://completestreetsforcanada.ca/examples/downtown-yonge-street-toronto

Intersection Repair (Portland OR)
http://cityrepair.org/about/how-to/place-making/intersectionrepair/
http://vbc.cityrepair.org/
http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/450138?archive=yes

Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team (Memphis TN)
http://www.innovatememphis.com/
http://crosstownarts.org/memfix
http://www.memshop.org/

Parklet Program (Philadelphia PA)
http://phillymotu.wordpress.com/2012/03/30/motus-parklet-pilot-program/
http://phillymotu.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/parklet-guidelines-2013.pdf

Pavement to Parks (San Francisco CA)
http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/
http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/activating-street-space/parklets/
http://rebargroup.org/

Pop-up Places (Calgary AB)
http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/DBA/Pages/Permits/Pop-Up-Places.aspx
http://www.victoriapark.org/sites/default/files/popup3_0.pdf

Public Plaza Program (New York City NY)
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/publicplaza.shtml
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2013-nyc-plaza-program-guidelines.pdf

Temporary Urbanism Initiative (Washington DC)
http://dc.gov/DC/Planning/Across+the+City/Other+Citywide+Initiatives/Temporary+Urbanism+Initiative
http://planning.dc.gov/DC/Planning/Across+the+City/Other+Citywide+Initiatives/Temporary+Urbanism+Initiative/Temporium+Report

Viva Vancouver (Vancouver BC)
http://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/reducing-cars-on-city-streets.aspx
https://www.facebook.com/VivaVancouver
https://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/parklets.aspx

Walk Raleigh (Raleigh NC)
http://cityfabric.net/pages/walk-raleigh
http://walkyourcity.org/
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17107653

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TOOLKITS & GUIDES

Cleveland Pop-up Handbook
http://www.cudc.kent.edu/gallery/downloads/pop_up_handbook.pdf

Interventionist Toolkit
http://places.designobserver.com/feature/the-interventionists-toolkit-part-3/29908/

Reclaiming the right of way – parklet toolkit
http://www.its.ucla.edu/research/parklet-toolkit.pdf

San Francisco Parklet Manual
http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/docs/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_1.0_FULL.pdf

Tactical Urbanism vols 1 and 2
http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol.1

http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final

Urban Repair Squad Toolkit
http://web.net/~lukmar/UrbanRepairSquadManual.pdf

READINGS

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Temporary urban spaces: Concepts for the use of city spaces. Florian Haydn and Robert Temel (eds). Basel: Birkhäuser. 2006.

The spontaneous city. Tess Broekmans, Sjoerd Feenstra, and Gert Urhahn (eds). Amsterdam: BIS Publishers. 2010.

The temporary city. Bishop and Williamson. Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams. New York: Routledge. 2012.

Urban catalyst: The power of temporary use. Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer, and Philipp Misselwitz (eds). Berlin: DOM Publishers. 2013.

Urban interventions: Personal projects in public spaces. Robert Klanten and Matthias Hubner (eds). Berlin: Gestalten. 2010.

Urban pioneers: Temporary use and urban development in Berlin. Klaus Overmeyer (ed). Berlin: Jovis. 2007.

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Actions: What you can do with the city, Canadian Centre for Architecture. http://www.cca-actions.org/

DIY Urbanism, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research. http://rebargroup.org/diy-urbanism-testing-the-grounds-for-social-change/

Spontaneous Interventions, Institute for Urban Design. http://www.spontaneousinterventions.org/

WEBSITES

Pop-up city
http://popupcity.net/

Tactical Urbanism Salon
http://tacticalurbanismsalon.com/

BMW Guggenheim Lab – 100 Urban Trends
http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/100urbantrends/#!/new-york-city/

Studio Urban Catalyst
www.studio-uc.de

Urban tactics. Killing Architects
http://www.killingarchitects.com/news/urban-tactics-final-repor

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CONT'D

PEOPLE & PROJECTS

Candy Chang
   http://candychang.com/

Cleaveland Urban Design Collaborative
   http://www.cudc.kent.edu/pop_up_city/
   index.html

Do Tank
   http://do-tank.com/

Dublin City Beta Projects and DCC Studio
   http://dubcitybeta.wordpress.com/
   http://dccstudio.wordpress.com/

Halifax Intersection Repair
   http://www.halifax.ca/culture/Community-
   Arts/Placemaking.html

Ideas City Festival
   http://www.newmuseum.org/ideascity/
   about/#projects

IOBY
   http://ioby.org/

Montreal Ruelle Verte (french)
   http://www.ecoquartierduplateau.org/wp-
   content/uploads/2012/03/GUIDE-RUELLES-
   VERTES-2012.pdf

Neighborland
   https://neighborland.com/

Place Partners - Doing it differently
   http://www.placepartners.com.au/ps/doing-
   it-differently

Providence Art Windows
   http://providenceartwindows.blogspot.ca/

Public Interest Design
   http://www.publicinterestdesign.org/
   pid100/

Renew Newcastle
   http://renewnewcastle.org/

SF Art in Storefronts
   http://www.sfartscommission.org/CAE/
   category/art-in-storefronts/central-market-art-
   in-storefronts/

San Francisco Urban Prototyping Festival
   http://sf.urbanprototyping.org/

Street Seats
   http://www.streetseats.org/

The City 2.0
   http://www.thecity2.org/

Urban Repair Squad
   http://urbanrepairs.blogspot.ca/

Urban Omnibus
   http://urbanomnibus.net/ideas/

72 Hour Urban Action
   http://www.72hoururbanaction.com/

100 Interventions in 1 Day:
   http://www.100en1diabogota.com/

6.0 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a concluding discussion is presented including reflections on the usefulness of tactical and temporary projects in planning practice and the role of planners.

The purpose of this research project was to explore how tactical and temporary urbanism projects are being addressed within planning practice, examine the role of urban planners with respect to such projects, and look at the potential for further incorporation of such projects within official planning processes. Chapter Two presented a review of literature regarding the theoretical basis of tactical urbanism, past movements that have inspired current tactical actors, and conditions contributing to the recent increase in these interventions. Interviews with planners and officials involved in tactical and temporary projects were presented in Chapter Four; the discussion highlights practical considerations for planners interested in these types of projects. "The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism" (Chapter Five), a stand-alone document aimed at planners, included case studies of tactical projects from across North America with insight from planners, non-profit actors, and citizens who have led the projects. The guidebook presented the case studies thematically, with associated recommendations. A summary of these themes and recommendations are presented in Table 1. In this concluding chapter, I draw on the literature and interviews discussed in previous chapters to assess how planners may engage in tactical projects and the usefulness of tactical interventions for planning practice.

Before discussing the role of tactical urbanism in planning practice, it is important to return to the distinction between tactics and strategies presented in Chapter Two. Some literature views tactics as advantageous actions. While strategies operate from a place of power and impose a set of conditions, tactics respond to those conditions and find new and innovative ways to be manifest using existing opportunities (space, resources). However, tactics and strategies, while seemingly in opposition to each other, may be complementary with respect to planning. As Blau (2011) noted, strategies create opportunities and tactics take advantage of them. While some feel that strategic planning is no longer possible (Arlt 2006), the research presented here began with a different premise: both longer term strategic urban planning and short-term tactical urban planning are valuable. Strategic planning is useful for identifying long-term trends and goals and establishing a framework within which more immediate tactical planning can function to address immediate concerns and issues.

Credit: New York City DOT

Table 1. Themes and recommendations identified in "The Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism"

Theme	Recommendation
Working with citizen initiatives	1) Resist being reactionary to citizen-led actions: Consider that a citizen-driven project may be responding to an unmet need or desire in the community
	2) Educate citizens about existing bylaws: Create a guide to highlight existing municipal processes or facilitate a citizen planning education program
	3) Harness the energy and creativity of citizens: Build upon existing civic participation and encourage citizens to work with fellow residents on local issues
	4) Find ways to accommodate citizen initiatives: Pilot community-led initiatives within existing policies (include citizens in this process)
	5) Create a standardized process: Ensure new formalized or semi-formalized programs outline the role and responsibility of all actors involved
	6) Designate a central contact or community liaison: Identify a staff person to answer questions and help citizens navigate regulatory and policy issues
Demonstrating what's possible	1) Foster communication and connections between actors: Host a meeting of private, public, and non-profit sector actors to discuss new ways to address local needs
	2) Offer to be the test case: Pilot the first few projects in City-owned venues or on publicly-owned land
	3) Work through your official permitting process: Collaborate with other City departments to problem solve regulatory bottlenecks and address local ordinances
	4) Partner with relevant groups in the community: Pilot projects with citizens and non-profit groups to gain their insight as well as increase credibility and local interest
	5) Share what you learn: Develop a framework of the lessons learned and share it with public and private partners so they can lead projects more successfully
	6) Look for quick wins while planning: Find actions that are easy to accomplish and act on them to build momentum and gain community support

Theme	Recommendation
Getting internal buy-in	1) Do your homework: Educate yourself on the needs of individual City departments with respect to new projects (permit requirements, liability considerations)
	2) Approach other departments early and be inclusive: Don't wait until a project is in the ground to ask for the support you need
	3) Communicate larger planning goals to other departments: Demonstrate how a project will respond to a demonstrated community need or planning concern
	4) Use failure as an opportunity to learn: Where safety isn't compromised, take measured risks and learn from the experience
	5) Promote dialogue: Host interdepartmental discussions to share new projects and promote innovative thinking; Work together to address concerns and find solutions
Adapting ideas to your context	1) Critically evaluate innovative projects in other cities: Consider if a project is relevant to your context and if it will address a local need or desire that has been identified
	2) Think about the logistics: Examine how similar projects have been incorporated within another city's bylaws and municipal programming
	3) Consult citizens when creating and testing new programs: Assess local interest in and support for projects; Determine if modifications are needed to make them meet local needs
	4) Pilot projects with interested community groups: Monitor how pilot projects function and make necessary adjustments
	5) Measure the impact: Collect data on different indicators to see if projects are meeting their intended purpose (e.g. street liveliness, impact on traffic and businesses)
Using existing resources	1) Assess existing under-utilized public resources: Identify City-owned land and public facilities that can accommodate pilot projects
	2) Look for opportunities to adapt the management of City owned resources: Determine if public land can be managed differently to meet the needs of the community
	3) Find opportunity in existing regulations: Examine whether current permits and bylaws can cover new uses and activities
	4) Lower the barriers: Identify the minimum modifications or actions needed to allow a space to be used or a permit to be issued
	5) Communicate opportunities: Inform citizens and community organizations of new opportunities and how to access them

The research presented here suggests that planners need to function in a more flexible and tactical way. Traditional urban planning processes based around regulation are not always adaptive and resilient enough to address the constantly changing social and economic conditions in cities. Current economic, political, and environmental uncertainty requires new methods of operating. Tactical urbanists cite previous movements such as the Right to the City and the Open City as inspiration for their work. This suggests an ongoing desire for city-building processes that allow for the democratic creation of space by all citizens and a need for flexible spaces that foster exchange and allow for the unexpected. Further, the growing desire of citizens to have more agency in the ways their cities develop cannot be ignored by planners. While planners may be limited in their ability to participate in highly unsanctioned interventions, they can find ways to lower the barriers for citizens who wish to actively improve their neighbourhoods.

Planners that I interviewed felt there was a benefit that temporary and tactical projects could offer to the practice of planning. Some felt it was useful to pilot public space improvements to determine the preferred design of a space before making major infrastructure investments. Others saw the potential for temporary uses to promote economic development in struggling areas. A number of planners and officials also saw temporary projects as a useful tool to incorporate into their data collection and consultation processes – using pilot projects as a planning exercise.

While most official actors thought tactical and temporary projects were a useful tool to incorporate into planning processes, they identified a number of challenges for planners with respect to engaging with tactical and temporary projects. Liability and risk were noted as important issues for planners, though most felt it was possible to address liability and safety concerns while still experimenting with new planning and design strategies. Many felt that taking measured risks was part of creating new and innovative programming. Planners also identified the importance of citizen involvement to ensure that tactical and temporary interventions were responsive to local needs. Similarly, planners must also build positive working relationships with other municipal departments and agencies in order to bridge the gap between the planning and implementation of successful projects.

For tactical and temporary urbanism to be of use within planning, the underlying principles and tenets for good planning should remain the same. Principally, planning initiatives should address the local context and conditions. Temporary projects are likely to have more traction when they are grounded in the vision statement of a City or respond to an expressed policy goal or need (e.g., improve pedestrian safety, increase economic opportunities for local artists). Additionally, planners need to be conscious of the limitations of potential tools and know when they are most effective. Planners seek to improve local conditions and support the well-being of citizens and community stakeholders. Using any planning tool without consideration of its limitations can be dangerous and counter-productive.

It is also important to acknowledge that tactical and temporary projects do not have to satisfy all needs to be beneficial. Incremental and experimental approaches to planning can be very useful for improving public space design, fostering citizen leadership and local community development, and encouraging new forms of economic development. More broadly, tactical

and temporary projects appear to be useful for improving the ability of planners to respond to local needs with more flexibility and adaptability in both planning processes as well as the policies that are created.

While planners can be considered tacticians, albeit those who work in a more sanctioned manner, the exact role that planners can or should play is harder to assess. All interviewees were asked what the role of planners should be with respect to tactical and temporary projects. Responses were diverse and there was no clear distinction between what citizens thought the role of planners should be and what planners and officials considered acceptable. Some thought planners should act as supporters of citizen-led projects while others felt they should play a leadership role, providing opportunities and creating programs that encourage citizens to lead projects in their communities. A few respondents saw an opportunity for planners to take advantage of tactical and temporary projects to reinforce a culture of "doing" while planning. They felt that being active in project implementation allowed planners to connect their higher-level plans with on-the-ground action.

Some interviewees thought that planners had a responsibility to legitimize temporary and tactical projects within planning practice and municipal bureaucracy. Planners were seen as key facilitators and mediators able to communicate projects effectively to other departments and increase collaboration between the City and citizens. Others, however, thought it was important to keep tactical urbanism from becoming bureaucratized and instead maintain the tension between sanctioned and unsanctioned activities and actors. They felt that if planners were too involved, there was a risk of "unraveling" tactics, and that the intention and positive momentum created by tactical projects might be subsumed in 'planning as usual'. Here, the planner was seen as an actor that should stay on the sidelines and instead respond to the needs that citizen-led tactical projects brought to light.

Simply put, the role of the planner with respect to tactical urbanism is not one-size fits all. The interest and ability of each planner to lead projects, their personal and professional level of comfort working with uncertainty and risk, and the degree to which a project is sanctioned inform how a planner might perceive their role.

Further, expectations of community stakeholders, the structure of the municipal government and bureaucracy, and the way in which uncertainty and risk are accommodated within the planning culture of each municipality all impact the way in which planners might engage with these projects. Though the role of planners may not be the same in each city, this research suggests that there is opportunity for planners to take advantage of tactical and temporary projects to make incremental improvements in cities and collaborate with citizens in the process of city-building. Research that monitors the evolution of tactical urbanism projects over time will be useful to determine if these projects are able to address community interests long-term and whether or not the projects themselves remain adaptive and flexible over time. Further, research examining the level of uptake of tactical urbanism projects by official actors and the level of community engagement in such projects may help to better understand their usefulness as a tool within professional practice.

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Hawley, Chris. Planner in Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo. Interviewed on February 21, 2013.

Kassay, Krisztina. Planner, Viva Vancouver, City of Vancouver. Interviewed on February 20, 2013.

Khan, Sakina. Senior Economic Planner, City of Washington DC. Interviewed on February 22, 2013.

Lakeman, Mark. Co-founder, City Repair Project. Interviewed on February 18, 2013.

Lydon, Mike. Principal, Street Plans Collaborative. Interviewed on March 7, 2013.

Morier, Jan. Co-chair, North Central Community Gardens (Regina). Interviewed on March 11, 2013.

Pacello, Thomas. Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team, City of Memphis. Interviewed on February 19, 2013.

Passmore, Matt. Co-founder, Rebar Art and Design Studio. Interviewed on March 7, 2013.

Power, Andres. Legislative Aide, City and County of San Francisco. Interviewed on February 22, 2013.

Raisman, Greg. Planner, Bureau of Transportation, City of Portland. Interviewed on March 12, 2013.

Roberts, Jason. Founder, Better Block Project. Interviewed on March 12, 2013.

Sasges, Mark. Chief Development Planner, City of Calgary. Interviewed on April 24, 2013.

Silver, Mitchell. Chief Planning & Development Officer and Planning Director, City of Raleigh. Interviewed on February 15, 2013.

Solomon, Janice. Coordinator of Social Development, City of Regina. Interviewed on March 11, 2013.

Szakmary, Rachel. Transportation Planner, City of Boston. Interviewed on February 21, 2013.

Tomasulo, Matt. Creator, Walk Raleigh and Walk [Your City]. February 13, 2013.

Weidenhof, Emily. Project Manager, Department of Transportation, City of New York. Interviewed on March 22, 2013.

Weinberg, Evan. Policy and Advocacy Manager, Toronto Financial District. Interviewed on March 12, 2013.

Zingsheim, Patricia. Associate Director, Revitalization and Design, City of Washington DC. Interviewed on February 22, 2013.

* One interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Good afternoon Mr./Ms. _____,

My name is Laura Pfeifer and I'm a masters student in urban planning at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. I am currently working on my final graduate project examining the role planners play with respect to tactical urbanism projects (both those that are sanctioned and those that are not). I'm hoping to produce a guidebook that explores ways in which planners can participate in and support tactical projects (e.g. policies that support citizens to lead community initiatives; streamlining permitting processes; and spearheading temporary planning and design projects).

For this project I will be interviewing individual citizens, organizations, as well as officials who've been involved in tactical urbanism projects to get a better understanding of how planners work with citizens and organizations on tactical projects, and the potential challenges that arise.

I am interested in interviewing you for this project regarding [PROJECT NAME]. Please note that all interviewees will be ensured confidentiality unless they indicate otherwise. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any questions or comments about this project you can contact me at the information listed below or the project supervisor, Lisa Bornstein, at 514-398-4077.

Sincerely,

Laura Pfeifer
Master of Urban Planning Candidate (2013)
McGill University School of Urban Planning

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

A Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism
Informed Consent Form

Student Researcher: Laura Pfeifer, laura.pfeifer@mail.mcgill.ca, 438-881-0735
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Bornstein, lisa.bornstein@mcgill.ca, 514-398-4075

My name is Laura Pfeifer and I am a Masters student in the School of Urban Planning at McGill University in Montreal. Thank you for volunteering to be interviewed as part of my student research project.

I hope to understand the role planners play with respect to tactical urban projects (both those that are sanctioned and those that are not). I am interviewing three different types of actors (individual citizens, organizations, and officials/planners) to understand where tactical projects are currently being performed and the role of planners. From this information I will create a guidebook that offers a summary of tools that allow planners to take advantage of temporary and tactical projects to improve physical spaces in cities and collaboratively work with citizens in the process of city building. Your participation will help create a better understanding of how planners work with citizens and organizations on tactical projects, and potential challenges that arise.

As part of our interview today, I will ask you a few questions about the tactical project in which you were involved including the impetus for the project and how it proceeded. I will conclude by asking you a few questions about the role of planners in the project in which you were involved. The interview will take one hour, at most. You are under no obligation to participate, and you are free to not answer any question, or to end the interview completely, at any time and without giving a reason. In addition, you may withdraw your consent from this study at any time and withdraw all or part of your response data if you wish.

The information obtained from this interview will be used for my student research project through the McGill School of Urban Planning. The project will be presented as a guidebook, with the potential for the research to be published in an academic journal if warranted and/or disseminated through policy briefs, public presentations, and conferences. All interview transcripts will be coded and stored on a school computer as password-protected files within a password-protected folder. The code key will be located in my supervisor's office.

Informed consent

If you have been involved in a tactical project and are concerned about potential legal implications, note that your responses will be presented in a way that protects your identity to minimize any potential risk. Your responses will be kept confidential unless you indicate otherwise on this consent form (please see the **Confidentiality** section of this consent form below).

The interview can take place by phone, by Skype or Google voice, or in person at your workplace or a mutually agreeable location. Please note that if this interview is conducted via the internet (Skype, Google voice), I cannot provide an absolute guarantee that the data will not be intercepted.

I agree to participate in the interview. _____

A Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism
Informed Consent Form

Tape-recording

If you agree, I will record our interview so I can return to it later for transcription purposes only. If you prefer not to be tape-recorded, I will take paper notes only. Your name will not be recorded directly on any of the tapes or notes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the notes and recordings, and they will be used for this research project only. They will be stored in a locker at McGill until the completion of the project, when they will be destroyed. Do you agree to be tape-recorded during this interview?

I agree to be tape-recorded. _____   I do not agree to be tape-recorded. _____

Confidentiality

Responses will be kept confidential unless you indicate otherwise on this consent form. If you choose to maintain confidentiality, your responses will be stored and presented in a manner that protects your identity. Only my supervisor and I will have access to identifiable data. If a translator is present at the interview, they will have signed a confidentiality agreement with me to maintain confidentiality of participants as well as their responses.

Please select one of the following options:

☐   All responses are to be kept confidential. My name is not to be identified in any research, reports, presentations, or publications.

☐   All responses are to be kept confidential. My name and job title may be identified as among those interviewed, however any research reports, presentations, or publications will maintain the anonymity of specific responses.

☐   I consent to the release of information provided in the written notes or recording. My name and job title can be linked to specific responses in reports, presentations, or publications arising from this research.

_____
Respondent's name

_____
Respondent's signature

_____
Researcher's signature

_____
Date

We thank you for your collaboration and welcome any thoughts you have that might improve our research. You can contact the researcher with any questions or comments you have about this project by emailing laura.pfeifer@mail.mcgill.ca or contact the project supervisor, Lisa Bornstein, at 514-398-4077. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix B: A Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism
Interview Schedule

Respondent ID: _____

Informed consent done _____ Date & Location: _____

For the REB review

Research question: In what ways can planners support and collaborate with citizens on tactical urbanism projects?

Key topics:
- *Role of planners in tactical urbanism projects*
- *Existing municipal policies that enable or prohibit tactical projects*
- *Changes to current policies/procedures that would support tactical projects led by citizens and organizations*

Intro: I am researching tactical urbanism projects (lower-cost, temporary interventions led by citizens and officials) and the role planners play with respect to these projects (both those that are sanctioned and those that are not). With this information, I hope to create a guidebook that offers a summary of tools for planners to take advantage of temporary and tactical projects and collaborate with citizens in the process of city building.

My questions are framed by my own research and experience. If you think I've missed something important in my questions, I would appreciate if you would suggest other topics we should discuss.

General questions for all participants:

- What was the tactical project in which you were involved?
  - What was your role in the project (leader, organizer, participant)?
  - How many people were involved in executing this project?
  - What was the impetus for the project (what inspired the project)?

Questions for citizen actors:

- Did you research official means by which you may have completed your tactical project (e.g. municipal bylaw or permit requirements, community programs, municipal officials/planners)?
  - If yes, did you receive useful information or support for your project?
  - If no, was there a particular reason for not researching more official channels for the project?
- Did you experience any barriers with respect to completing this tactical project (institutional/policy, financial, personal)?
  - How did you address these barriers?
- Did you complete your project with support from official channels (financial, administrative)?
  - If yes, did you find this collaboration helpful?
- What was the role of planners (if any) in your project?
- Do you feel there are any policies or actions from officials/planners that would have improved your ability to complete your project or impacted the success of your project?

Questions for organizational actors:

- Did you research official means by which you may have completed your tactical project (e.g. municipal bylaw or permit requirements, community programs, municipal officials/planners)?
  - If yes, did you receive useful information or support for your project?
  - If no, was there a particular reason for not researching more official channels for the project?

- Did you experience any barriers with respect to completing this tactical project (institutional/policy, financial, personal)?
  - How did you address these barriers?

- Did you complete your project with support from official channels (financial, administrative)?
  - If yes, did you find this collaboration helpful?

- What was the role of planners (if any) in your project?

- Do you feel there are any policies or actions from officials/planners that would have improved the success of your project or that would support organizations who lead tactical urbanism projects?

Questions for planners/official actors:

- What existing municipal policies enabled the completion of this tactical project?

- What existing municipal policies were a barrier to completing this project?

- Did you have to alter existing policies to promote/allow this project to proceed?
  - What changes to current policies do you think should be prioritized to support tactical projects?

- Did you have to put in place measures to ensure low-risk, safe outcomes with this project?
  - In what way did you achieve this?

- Did you consider how the project would achieve acceptability to a wide range of the populace?
  - In what way did you consider this?

- Did you involve citizen/community/organizational actors in this project (why or why not)?
  - If yes, in what way did you involve these other actors?

- What do you feel the role of planners should be with respect to tactical projects?