

San Francisco State University Student Project:

Placemaking Examples in the Bay Area

Project/ Problem Description/ Significance of the Project: Public places—plazas, parks, streets—are equally significant for people seeking connectedness and a sense of community, and for persons looking for quiet. Both groups of people seek a sense of belonging, long-term or ephemeral, within the cities they live or visit. And public places anchor that sense of belonging.

While elected officials, designers and planners facilitate the process of making those places happen, ultimately they must echo the values of the users. Places must embody the diversity of populations using them, and also of their cultures or simply, their ways of being. In that vein, places must accommodate a range of people's needs—proximity to nature, expression for art and performances, allowance for walking and mingling—and myriad other forms that people reach for in these public gathering places.

Through its multitude of places, the Bay Area is fortunate to offer several of these dynamic and diverse opportunities to the region's peoples. There are stories embedded within the making of each of these places though that we must hear and learn from before we can stitch and sprinkle such places throughout the region's cities, urban and suburban, big and small. Essentially, they are stories of transformation and there have been several pioneers. There is a story of a parking lot in a neighborhood that transformed into a park for kids and another that transformed into a community garden for seniors. Sidewalks and plazas transformed, for a few days, with dance performances, and also parks with mime artists. Temporary transformations on streets, such as farmers markets and parklets, all evoke users' identity, and their connectedness and individuality. They also hold a potential to extend their power as residents and visitors in the process of shaping the places.

Through a Regional PlaceMaking Initiative, cities and communities can embark on a collective process in creating vital places in their neighborhoods.

Student Consulting Team Role/Task:

- A) Field Visit/ documentation of the physical attributes of the place through Photographs/Videos
- B) Historical Research of the Place including political, economic and social context
- C) Interviews with Elected Officials/Planners/Designers/Community who were involved in the PlaceMaking process.
- D) Interviews/surveys with a few users with diverse backgrounds.
- E) PlaceMaking Story in coordination with the Ambassadors (Elected Officials/Planners/Designers/Community)

Specific deliverables expected:

Compilation of 6-8 PlaceMaking Case Studies in coordination with ambassadors. Work will result in a report and website with graphic and video documents.