

MEMORANDUM



TO: VICTOR CARDENAS, INTERIM CITY MANAGER
FROM: BARBARA MCBETH, AICP, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING STRATEGY TRAINING
DATE: MARCH 20, 2014

The City of Novi has been invited to take part in "Placemaking Strategy Development Training" offered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the MSU Land Policy Institute and the Michigan Municipal League. There is no cost to the City for these training sessions, but the City is asked to provide the venue, logistics and send invitations to participants. Only fifteen communities across Michigan will be offered the opportunity to participate in the training this year. Of that, only five communities the size of Novi will be offered the opportunity to participate.

The purpose of the training is to assist the community in the development of "Placemaking Strategy". The description of the training is as follows:

The MiPlace Partnership Initiative is a statewide initiative that seeks to help Michigan communities more quickly return to prosperity by effective use of process known as placemaking. It's a simple concept. Communities that offer a high quality of life and amenities that are important to talented workers can be very competitive in the global economy. Communities that don't have these features and do not enjoy these economic benefits can create them through a process called placemaking. The goal is to help communities re-examine the importance of everyday settings and experiences that shape our lives – the downtowns, parks, plazas, main streets, neighborhoods and markets that influence where we live, work and play, and how we interact with each other.

The training involves 2, 3.5-hour evening meetings, spaced a few weeks apart. At the first meeting, the trainers will cover Modules 1-3 of the MiPlace Placemaking Curriculum (see attached information). At the second meeting, facilitators will be present to assist the community in developing a placemaking strategy. This meeting would also involve review and feedback from state agency representatives on the draft strategies. Within 2 months of the second meeting, local staff will finalize the strategy and send it to the Land Policy Institute.

The intended audience is the City Council, Planning Commission, and other appointed boards and commissions. Also attending would be city staff, and representatives from adjoining communities. Two dates have been tentatively identified for the training sessions: **Thursday, May 8 and Thursday May 22nd. Sessions would be held in the evenings starting at about 6 p.m.**

Moving forward, as the dates and locations are confirmed, invitations will be sent to the City Council, appropriate boards and commissions, surrounding communities, and other interested parties. The intent is that the training from the first session will lead to

development of a placemaking strategy at the second session, so participants will be asked to attend both sessions. The program coordinators anticipate that 30 to 50 participants will be attending the two sessions.

A document from the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and MI Place is attached to further explain the concept of placemaking.

Once the placemaking strategy is developed, Novi would be in a competitive position for funding from MSHDA to further develop a "Place Plan", a separate undertaking that is intended to help communities design and plan for transformative placemaking projects. Communities that have developed a "Place Plan" already, include Allegan, Alpena, Dearborn and Sault Ste. Marie (first round); and Cadillac, Detroit, Flint, Holland, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Marquette and Midland (second round). "Place Plan" projects have ranged from revitalizing an historic block in Cadillac, to transforming a key commercial corridor in Detroit. Please see attached press release related to the "Place Plans" developed for these communities.

Planning staff believes this first step will be a good opportunity learn about the program, develop a placemaking strategy, and to review the strategy against the recommendations of the recently completed Town Center Area Study, the Master Plan for Land Use, the Zoning Ordinance, and other plans and documents that that define a sense of place in Novi.

Please watch for additional information, and invitations to these sessions as Planning staff proceeds with the coordination of these sessions.

C Charles Boulard, Community Development Director
Jason Mangum, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Lauren Royston, Economic Development Director

MICHIGAN PLACEMAKING CURRICULUM

Placemaking

The Context for Placemaking in MI
 Definition of Place
 History of Development Patterns
 Definition of Placemaking
 Elements & Characteristics
 Scale & Intensity
 What is Not Placemaking
 Tactical Placemaking
 Mipace Partnership Initiative
 Barriers
 Leadership
 Resources

Module 1
 People, Places, and Placemaking

Module 2
 Economics of Place

Module 3
 Neighborhoods, Streets, and Connections

Module 4
 Form Planning & Regulation

Module 5
 Collaborative Public Involvement in Placemaking

Module 6
 Applied Placemaking

Prosperity

Elements of Form
 Neighborhood Structure
 Role of Neighborhood Elements
 Importance/Role of Connectivity
 Health & Safety

Why this is important?
 MI Economy Improving
 New Economy Model
 Regional Focus
 Ways to Restore Prosperity
 Public Opinion
 Research Supporting Placemaking
 Measuring Impacts of Placemaking

Public Involvement
 Engagement Strategies
 Elements of Charrettes
 Charrette Basics

Place-Based Coding
 Human Scale Coding Concepts
 Place/Form Elements for Code
 LEED ND
 Components/Steps to Prepare Form-Based Codes
 The Regulating Plan
 Steps to Prepare Form-Based Code
 Implementing/Administering Codes
 Legal Issues

Strategic Growth Process
 Local - Regional Alignment
 Placemaking Places & Strategies
 Building Place & Applying Tools

Talent Attraction

MIplace Partnership Initiative
 Placemaking Strategy Development Workshop #1
 Community

AGENDA
 5:30-9:30 PM
 Date
 Location

Time	Activity
5:30-6:00 30 mins.	Dinner (if applicable)
6:00-6:05 5 mins.	Welcome, Introductions
6:05-6:10 5 mins.	Purpose & Structure of Two Workshops
6:10-7:00 50 mins.	Module 1: People, Places, and Placemaking
7:00-7:05 5 mins.	Module 1: Complete Survey
7:05-7:55 50 mins.	Module 2: Economics of Place
7:55-8:20 15 mins.	Module 2: Hands-On Exercise & Complete Survey
8:20-8:30 10 mins.	Break
8:30-9:20 50 mins.	Module 3: Neighborhoods, Streets, and Connections
9:20-9:30 10 mins.	-Complete Survey -Fill out card with 5-10 assets that exist in your community for placemaking and leave it at your table
9:30	Adjourn

MIPlace Partnership Initiative
 Placemaking Strategy Development Workshop #2
 Community

AGENDA
 5:30-9:00 PM
 Date
 Location

Time	Activity
5:30-6:00 30 mins.	Dinner (if applicable)
6:00-6:10 10 mins.	Welcome, Introductions Purpose & Structure of Workshop
6:10-6:20 10 mins.	Review of Placemaking Curriculum Modules 1-3
6:20-6:50 30 mins.	Review of Community & Region (handout & map) Exercise 1: Mapping Existing Assets
6:50-7:25 35 mins.	Exercise 2: What's Missing in Downtown to Make it More Attractive to Talented Workers & Visitors?
7:25-7:35 10 mins.	Break
7:35-8:35 60 mins.	Exercise 3: Using Local Assets to Identify 3-5 Potential, Strategic Placemaking Projects
8:35-8:55 20 mins.	Report Out of Prioritized Projects
8:55-9:00 5 mins.	-Collect Materials -Fill out Surveys
9:00	Adjourn

Press Release

Contact:

Matt Bach, Director of Media Relations
Michigan Municipal League
(734) 669-6317
mbach@mml.org; www.mml.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2013

Eight Michigan Communities Selected for PlacePlans Work: Cities to Receive Economic Development Assistance

Eight Michigan cities have been selected to receive technical assistance with key economic development projects designed to attract and retain residents and employers.

Cadillac, Detroit, Flint, Kalamazoo, Holland, Jackson, Marquette, and Midland will participate in PlacePlans, the Michigan Municipal League announced today. The eight were selected as part of a statewide application process.

PlacePlans is a joint effort between the League and Michigan State University to help communities design and plan for transformative placemaking projects. The PlacePlans are done with support from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and Governor Snyder's Mlplace Partnership.

This is the second round of the PlacePlans work. The first round concluded earlier this year and involved projects in Allegan, Alpena, Dearborn, and Sault Ste. Marie. [Go here](#) to view the press release about the initial PlacePlans work.

"We are extremely pleased to not only offer the PlacePlans assistance again, but to double the number of communities that will be involved," said Dan Gilmartin, CEO and Executive Director of the Michigan Municipal League. "The League has long supported the concept of placemaking, which is creating communities where people want to live, work and enjoy. The PlacePlans actually create realistic, tangible designs to make placemaking possible."

Gary Heidel, Chief Placemaking Officer for MSHDA, said the eight communities selected are from all areas of the state and the projects involved range from revitalizing a historic downtown block in Cadillac to transforming a key commercial corridor in Detroit.

"What I like best about these projects is that the passion and dedication already exists in these communities," Heidel said. "What's missing is a little bit of a kick-start to turn that potential into reality or to take work that is already underway to the next level. The design and technical assistance being provided through PlacePlans will give them that extra incentive and direction they need."

Here is a look at the eight PlacePlans projects:

Cadillac: A historic downtown block which fronts Lake Cadillac is undergoing several distinct new investments including the addition of new residential space, a brewpub, a regional trailhead, and an upgraded arts pavilion. A unified physical design plan for this key portion of Cadillac's downtown can synthesize these positive changes, leading to the creation of a memorable and lively place to live, work and relax—while providing the structure for coordinated investments in the future.

Detroit: The Southwest Detroit Business Association's plan for the Vernor Livernois Project will support the redevelopment of a vacant and blighted property in the heart of one of the city's strongest commercial districts. The plan will design a new neighborhood center area on what is currently a 6.9-acre brownfield site at West Vernor Highway and Livernois Avenue in the heart of southwest Detroit. The Vernor Livernois Project will become a focal point for this vibrant and diverse community, providing a public square, locally oriented retail and community meeting space as well as new employment opportunities.

Flint: The Grand Traverse Greenway Plan turns a 3-mile segment of former CSX Railroad corridor into a dynamic multi-use trail, creating a new and needed link between downtown, the Flint River, and neighborhoods to the south. The planned Greenway would connect with Flint's universities, medical centers, schools, recreation areas, and two major redevelopment sites. In addition, the Greenway would connect to the existing trail system north of downtown.

Holland: The Western Gateway project would create a strategic plan connecting Holland's downtown, lakefront and historic residential areas. Planning the revitalization of the 8th Street corridor would create new opportunities for infill development and adaptive reuse projects while providing residents, employees and visitors seamless access between the lakefront and downtown. Holland's food-related infrastructure, including a successful farmers market and a collective kitchen space, could form the backbone of a Food Innovation District within the Plan.

Jackson: A municipal alley located in the heart of downtown provides the potential for a new north-south connection between an existing farmers market, a cluster of open and planned restaurants and entertainment venues, and major employers. A new physical design for an inviting and interesting pedestrian connection in this corridor would assist in creating a seamless downtown fabric as well as enhance walkability, giving the area greater potential to attract and retain new residents and businesses.

Kalamazoo: Thanks to several major projects either planned or underway—including a new Healthy Living Campus for Kalamazoo Valley Community College, a redeveloped Upjohn Park and farmers market, and the cleaning of Portage Creek—the Edison neighborhood southeast of downtown is seeing new investment. The Healthy Living Corridor Plan would connect these areas with the existing neighborhood fabric and create a single distinct and fun place for work, play and exercise.

Marquette: Baraga Avenue, though no longer separated physically from downtown by railroad lines, is still a barrier for pedestrian activity due to an uninviting streetscape and breaks in the city's urban fabric. The Baraga Avenue Enhancement Project would develop a physical design plan to overcome these obstacles, designing for Marquette an interesting, walkable street that connects downtown with the lakefront while providing new opportunities for business investment.

Midland: A city with downtown assets including a busy Main Street, a baseball stadium and recreational areas, a large base of skilled employment, and the potential for new mixed-use development, Midland lacks the physical and psychological connections between these key areas. A new strategic plan for placemaking in downtown Midland would provide both potential and existing residents with a unique and vibrant place in which to reside and work—by planning for a walkable downtown with increased opportunities for entertainment, culture, entrepreneurship and commerce.

Now that the communities and projects have been selected, the next step will be to identify key stakeholders in each community. Then, multiple public meetings will be scheduled in each city to gather public input on the projects. From those meetings, conceptual plans with specific implementation goals and guidelines will be formed. Regular updates and information about the projects will be posted at <http://placemaking.mml.org/place-plans/>. "It is hoped that the implementation of these conceptual plans will help the community leverage place as an economic driver, creating vibrant, attractive and successful public spaces that add value to the community and local economy," Gilmartin said.

Michigan Municipal League advocates on behalf of its member communities in Lansing, Washington, D.C., and the courts; provides educational opportunities for elected and appointed municipal officials; and assists municipal leaders in administering services to their communities through League programs and services.

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PLACE

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Stories that illuminate our profession's commitment to building 'sense of place' in places all over Michigan.





Placemaking, Parks and Partnerships

Placemaking is gaining steam and attention as Michigan communities and regions strive to be vibrant, healthy and attractive places to live and work. Endeavors led by the State of Michigan's MI-Place Partnership Initiative, the Michigan Municipal League and others build even more momentum for this infectious movement underway in all corners of the state.

As parks and recreation professionals, we have always known the invaluable contributions parks, open space and recreational activities make to create "place". We wholeheartedly embrace this relatively new focus on placemaking as a strategy central to our mission and purpose. In doing so, we want to share our own stories, the stories that best illustrate our profession's commitment to building 'sense of place' in places all over Michigan. Stories that demonstrate the vision, leadership, and experience we bring to projects that are both ground-breaking and place-making. Stories that we hope inform and inspire others to pursue placemaking in their own communities with parks and recreation taking center stage.

To that end, the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) Board of Directors has identified placemaking as a priority for the Association and to show it in action. We are delighted to team up with our friends at Heart of the Lakes to bring you four such stories, or case studies, selected to provide just a glimpse into the breadth and diversity of placemaking initiatives led by the parks and recreation community at the county, city and township levels.

How do we define placemaking? There is no one standard definition, but perhaps the Project for Public Spaces best captures its essence, "A process that capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and well-being. It is both a process and a philosophy." It is also "both an over arching idea and a hands-on tool for improving a neighborhood, a city or region."

The best way to show how we define placemaking is by example. With thanks to our member contributors, MRPA is very pleased to present four outstanding case studies of placemaking in action. They are all led by parks and recreation professionals whose projects embrace the principles of placemaking, not the least of which are listening to their communities and collaborating with diverse partners. Building place around natural resource protection is a common theme in most of these examples, but as placemaking can vary widely in scope and scale, it is the lessons learned that are universal and we hope of help to all who are working to save, re-imagine, connect or discover "place".

These are the only the first of many placemaking stories we hope to share in the weeks and months to come, and we welcome your ideas and recommendations for others.

Enjoy!

Ann Conklin
Chief Operating Officer
Michigan Recreation and Parks Association



North Ottawa Dunes – *A Place Saved*

Ottawa County Parks & Recreation

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North Ottawa Dunes
Photo credit: D. Fogel



North Ottawa Dunes Donor Plaque
Photo credit: Ottawa County Parks & Recreation



North Ottawa Dunes—Lake Michigan Vista
Photo credit: Ottawa County Parks & Recreation

The Place:

Landscapes can define place, and no other natural feature does so quite like the coastal sand dunes of West Michigan. In the northwest corner of Ottawa County, between Grand Haven and Muskegon, over 500 acres of spectacular dune parkland extend two miles and serves as a greenway connector between two local parks and the 1,200 acre P.J. Hoffmaster State Park to the north.

The property had once been slated for sand mining and then for a large housing development, subsequently the local community rallied for its defense many times over the years. So when the property owners quietly gave Ottawa County Parks a short window of opportunity to acquire the property, the county and the community were ready to step up.

Even with an agreement to sell below market value, the availability of some Park millage funds, and the prospect of grants from such sources as the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the \$7 million asking price was daunting and would require additional funding from outside sources. Ottawa County Parks turned to its partners for help, including the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the Grand Haven Community Foundation, and key community leaders. Together, they launched a blistering fast campaign that ultimately raised over \$1.4 million from 700 individuals and businesses in a few short months.

The 513-acre North Ottawa Dunes acquisition was completed in 2005 but community engagement did not end there. With funding from the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, a public master planning process resulted in extensive community input and involvement. Preserving the unique natural character of the land was a strong theme.

The result is nine miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing that create a popular destination for hikers, bird watchers, trail runners and people just wanting to explore a vast wooded area. There are also viewing decks high in the dunes with scenic vistas of Lake Michigan and the surrounding country-side, as well as trail links to the neighboring state, city and county parks, which offer secluded beaches and other amenities. The City of Ferrysburg is working on new trails to connect North Ottawa Dunes to residential areas and Lake Michigan. Organized runs, hikes and interpretive programs are conducted annually in the park.

Why is it Placemaking?

The tremendous response from the community made North Ottawa Dunes possible, resonating with their desire to see a treasured asset protected for the public and to participate in planning for its management and use. It is significant expanse of open space that enables a rare southern Michigan opportunity to hike and explore for hours on end in beautiful, forested terrain with exceptional scenic vistas of Lake Michigan. Its location and links to city, county and state parks connect West Michigan, the second most populous area in the state, to its most iconic landscape—Great Lakes sand dunes and the Lake Michigan shore—a landscape that contributes to region's reputation as an attractive and thriving place to live and work.

Essential Placemaking Partners:

Ottawa County Parks and Recreation; Committee to Acquire North Ottawa Dunes, which included many community leaders as well as the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan; local philanthropists and businesses; neighboring communities such as Spring Lake Township and the City of Ferrysburg; Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund; and the Coastal Zone Management Program.

Placemaking Lessons:

- The large scope captured the imagination of the community and supporters—don't be afraid to think big
- The short time-frame for fundraising created a sense of urgency recognized by the community
- The community values preservation of high quality natural lands and is willing to put up the funds to get the job done, but leadership is needed to structure the opportunities for people to participate
- Partners are essential, and partnering with the local land trust, in this case the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, provided expertise, contacts and credibility to the project
- Connectivity, linking state, county and city parks, is highly valued by the public and the result is truly greater than the sum of the parts

Contributor: John Scholtz,
Director, Ottawa County Parks & Recreation
<http://www.miottawa.org/Parks/dunes.htm>



The Headlands International Dark Sky Park –

A Place Reimagined

Emmet County Parks and Recreation

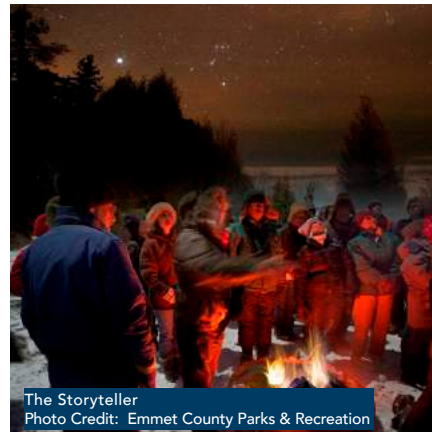
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Transit of Venus
Photo Credit: Emmet County Parks & Recreation



The beach at The Headlands
Photo Credit: Emmet County Parks & Recreation



The Storyteller
Photo Credit: Emmet County Parks & Recreation

The Place:

Emmet County has owned and operated the Headlands since the mid-1990s, a 600-acre parcel at the northwestern tip of Michigan's Lower Peninsula with 2.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. A recreational asset to the region because of its pristine natural features, development has been limited to five miles of trails and two houses to rent out for quiet events. Consequently, the absence of bright lights in the park and surrounding area made it an important naturally dark wilderness for many species of birds and animals.

A vision stemming from the desire to protect this singular natural resource ultimately created something much, much more. Several community members came together with Emmet County Parks and Recreation staff with the idea of seeking International Dark Sky Park designation. With full backing from the Board of Commissioners, the idea was launched—with results as brilliant as the Headlands sky at night.

Since the Headlands received designation, only the sixth in the nation to do so at that time, the County has welcomed thousands of visitors at all times and during scheduled programs for a glimpse of something that is increasingly harder to find—unobstructed views of the night sky. Eight hundred guests came to view the once-in-a-lifetime Transit of Venus in June of 2012. On clear nights, dozens of people can be found along the shoreline taking in the view, gazing through telescopes or photographing celestial wonders. Due to the success of designation, The State of Michigan protected an additional 23,000 acres of neighboring state land as night sky protected area.

Even park staff admit to being taken off guard by the tremendous public interest in a natural resource all too often taken for granted, and they certainly did not expect the growing economic impact of having a designated Dark Sky Park in the county. Nearby businesses in Mackinac City report an increase in foot traffic and overnight hotel stays, including extended stays, related to the presence and marketing of the park. Local merchants sell sky-related items, and one local ferry service created Dark Sky Cruises.

The Headlands offers monthly programs, led by a Dark Sky Park program director, that cover a variety of topics related to the night sky and the park in general. A new walking trail, the Dark Sky Discovery Trail, interprets the stories of the dark sky for each planet, through various stations, mediums and cultural docents. As now just one of seven International Dark Sky Parks in the United States and 12 in the world, the Headlands is an extraordinary regional and state natural asset, with a novel recreational focus that helps drive the local economy.

Why is it Placemaking?

The Headlands embodies the essence of Northwest Michigan as “place”. Natural resources are recognized as an invaluable asset to the region, and the park embraces protection instead of trying to be something else. And while “keeping it natural” is the biggest reason behind its success, a “can do” parks team puts people first with their programs and plans with the recognition there is a longing for connection to the earth, water and sky, despite the pressures and advancements in the world. The property is significant to the members of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians as it has always been their gathering place on the Straits for hunting, gathering, fishing and socializing. Recognizing this historical significance is paramount to the “sense of place” the Headlands provides to tribe members and the greater community.

Essential Placemaking Partners

Emmet County Parks and Recreation, Emmet County Board of Commissioners, International Dark Sky Association, State of Michigan, National Park Service Dark Sky Management Team, Little Traverse Conservancy, The Straits Area Audubon Society, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa, Mackinaw Chamber of Commerce, Historical Village of Mackinaw, Central Michigan University, and many more.

Placemaking Lessons:

- Think out-of-the-box and inventively, it can reap great rewards
- Learn from naïve enthusiasm
- Leverage partner relationships that extend beyond the boundaries of the initiative to support and create a diverse set of recreational experiences for the user in a region, so that we are not creating or striving toward a monoculture from one place of recreation to the next. The goal should be to support others in developing the unique quality of a given area. A Dark Sky Park may not be the right fit for every community but the nature of the relationships and broad range of partnerships will help no matter the focus.
- Take a human based approach to recreational programming to increase accessibility for the broader public, especially in this case where there is a scientific element (astronomy) that might otherwise limit experiences to only one type of user
- Listen to others in the community and keep an open mind

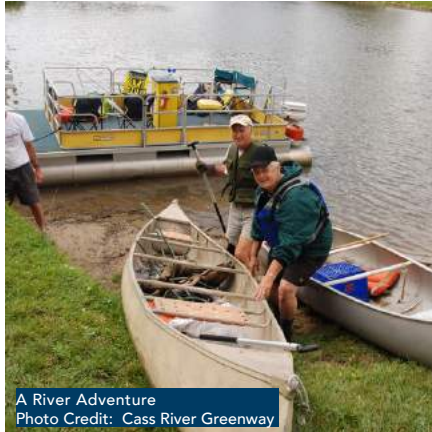
Contributor: Laurie Gaetano,
Director, Emmet County Parks and Recreation
<http://www.emmetcounty.org/headlands/>



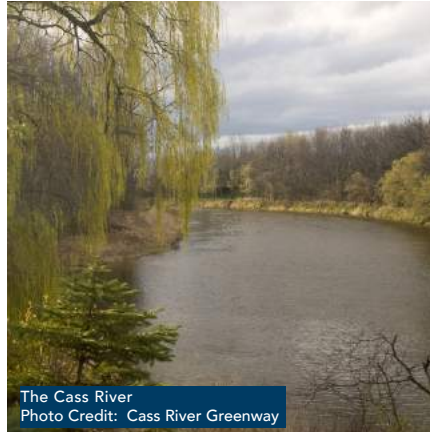
Cass River Greenway – *A Place Connected*

Frankenmuth Parks and Recreation

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A River Adventure
Photo Credit: Cass River Greenway



The Cass River
Photo Credit: Cass River Greenway



Celebrating New Access to the River
Photo Credit: Cass River Greenway

The Place:

The Cass River Watershed, located in the Thumb area of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, flows through six counties and at least nine communities before it joins the Saginaw River and eventually Saginaw Bay. For years, many communities along the Cass River "turned their backs" on the river, perceived to be dirty and contaminated. Few appreciated its value until a visionary group saw its potential and formed the Cass River Greenway Committee in 2007.

The group of local volunteers, assisted by professional resources and municipal leaders, is taking a regional approach to meet its objectives of enhancing recreational opportunities and the environmental well-being of the Cass River Corridor. They had three goals:

- development of recreational opportunities that enhance local quality of life and support ecology based tourism
- promotion and preservation of wildlife habitat and natural lands
- improvement to water quality

Each designed to engage and educate local residents, property owners, and visitors about the abundance of natural assets the region offers that support and strengthen the community and local economy.

Significantly, the Greenway Committee recognizes that planning for recreation, water quality, trails and open space can end at county, township and municipal borders, resulting in a patchwork landscape that makes little sense to the user and greater separation of communities. Instead, the Committee works to connect communities, enable cooperation across borders, and strengthen regional ties with the river as the vital link.

Taking a lead role in the Committee, Frankenmuth Parks and Recreation developed a bike route map for the lower Cass River. They also provided technical assistance to two other communities and coordinated three successful applications to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for universally accessible canoe and kayak launches. With the development of just a few launch sites, there are more recreational activities on the river than ever. Recreational boating, commercial river tours, fishing, hunting, bird watching, and nature viewing are growing in popularity as people turn to the river as a vital recreational resource, with a deeper "sense of place" and caring for all who explore the river.

Why is it Placemaking?

The Cass River Greenway Committee brings communities throughout the Cass River watershed together through a natural resource they all share. They recognize that by making the river the centerpiece, new recreational opportunities can be made available for local residents and visitors. When combined with efforts to improve wildlife habitat and water quality, all elements work together to build a deeper appreciation for the river, its environs and the multiple benefits it provides as a place to enjoy and celebrate.

Essential Placemaking Partners:

City of Frankenmuth Parks and Recreation; volunteers and local residents; local governments; University of Michigan-Flint; National Park Service: Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program; Michigan Department of Environmental Quality; Saginaw Bay RC&D; Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy; Conservation Districts; Road Commissions; and Saginaw Area Stormwater Authority

Placemaking Lessons

- Cooperation from local governments is vital for success along a waterway like the Cass River. If lacking, there would be gaps in the Water Trail, plans for improvements to larger issues like water quality would not be as effective, and an overall sense of concern for the river would be greatly diminished.
- Identifying or developing a grassroots volunteer group, who bring selfless motives to the work, a sense of pride and ownership about the project and usually work tirelessly to see it through
- Placemaking may not be so much about the place itself, but more about the process and sense of community, identify or ownership in that place
- Collaboration, coordination and building upon activities in neighboring communities are crucial—rather than competing with each other, the end result is better for everyone if communities work together.

Contributor: Daren Kaschinske,
Director, City of Frankenmuth Parks and Recreation
<http://www.cassriver.org>
<http://www.frankenmuthcity.com/outdoor-activities/boating>



North Oakland Placemaking Group –

A Place Discovered

PLACE
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Independence Township Parks, Recreation & Seniors



The Community Focuses on Placemaking
Photo Credit: Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce

The Place:

In 2013, a new placemaking initiative was launched in North Oakland County with a committee of energized individuals called the North Oakland Placemaking Group. Independence Township Parks staff served as the catalyst, first inviting representatives from the Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Village of Clarkston representatives, and Independence Township Trustees to attend a Placemaking Training offered by the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA). Each entity had been doing elements of placemaking before to improve the quality of life for its residents, but each in their own sector and only occasionally together on a specific project.

The idea to work more collaboratively had been discussed between the communities for many years. But it was only after the training that it was decided to make placemaking the framework for more regional cooperation. Rather than just looking for partners for a specific event, community building, or other need, the North Oakland Placemaking Group is about restructuring the way businesses, schools, parks and recreation, government planning and zoning work together on the shared goal of making a place better. Hence, the emphasis is as much on process as it is about individual projects.

The Group meets monthly with help from a designated staff person from the Chamber of Commerce. They held a focus group session and invited over 200 community members to analyze the community in terms of assets and needed improvements in five categories: Natural Space, Art and Culture, History, Recreation, Events/Sense of Discovery. Ideas generated by the community focus group and the Placemaking Group to date include a new Council of the Arts and improving event timing to avoid heavy loading of events in one season. Placemaking is catching on as the Group now fields calls from potential volunteers who want to get involved.

Why is it Placemaking?

The Group is establishing a regular process for multiple governments and agencies to jointly generate and pursue projects with the specific purpose of making the greater community a more attractive place for current and future generations. The Group seeks input from the community and considers potential projects through a regional lens. Parks and recreation kick-started the initiative with their well-established connections and partnerships, and the Chamber's staff support keeps it moving.

Essential Placemaking Partners:

Independence Township Parks, Recreation and Seniors; Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce; City of the Village of Clarkston; and Independence Township Trustees.

Placemaking Lessons:

- A multidisciplinary team from different organizations attending placemaking training was key
- Getting decision-makers from the various government units on board and attending meetings is crucial
- Dedicated staff time to the Placemaking Group is invaluable
- Finding a way to get community input was needed and the focus group approach worked well

Contributor: Ken Elwert,

Director, Independence Township Parks, Recreation and Seniors
<http://www.twp.independence.mi.us/Services/ParksRecandSeniors/Overview.asp>



General Information

The preceding projects demonstrate how parks and recreation makes a valuable and tangible addition to placemaking. MRPA knows that our industry is more important than ever, but to ensure a seat at the table, we need to be well-versed in the “how” and “why.” Read on for additional resources and information to gain a better understanding of how to get involved, to make placemaking a reality in your community.



MI Place | miplace.org

MI Place is a “statewide initiative with the purpose of keeping Michigan at the forefront of a national movement known as placemaking. It’s a simple concept that people choose to live in places that offer the amenities, resources, social and professional networks, and opportunities to support thriving lifestyles.” The site, Miplace.org, is designed as “the gathering place to showcase” placemaking work, where people can interact about projects, progress, and inspiration.



MML Placemaking | placemaking.mml.org

Part of the Michigan Municipal League website, this Placemaking area showcases articles, videos, plans, and other resources that seek to capitalize “on the distinctive assets of community to integrate a mixture of uses that connect people and places on a human scale.”



Project for Public Spaces | pps.org

“PPS is a nonprofit planning, design, and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities.” Their “Placemaking approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation, and serve common needs.” PPS.org contains information about services, training, and projects devoted to Placemaking, as well as resources and a blog.



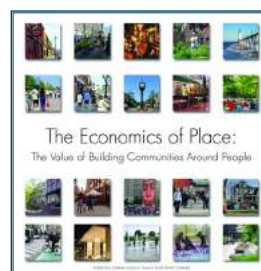
MRPA Placemaking Resource Center mrpaonline.org/placemaking

MRPA strives to keep an updated resource area dedicated to placemaking – so that our members can be on the forefront of this movement – and work to improve their communities through collaboration.



Michigan Main Street Program michiganmainstreetcenter.com

“When a community participates in a comprehensive revitalization effort, its downtown or traditional neighborhood commercial district can experience a return of economic vitality.” The Michigan Main Street Program offers a Four Point Approach™ to encourage “economic development through historic preservation in ways that are appropriate for today’s marketplace.” The four points include design, economic restructuring, promotion, and organization.



The Economics of Place: The Value of Building Communities Around People

The Michigan Municipal League and Center for 21st Century Communities has worked together to create a book that “focuses on placemaking as an economic development tool.” The text features stories and research from urbanists, practitioners, and entrepreneurs that help tell the story of challenges specific to our state, as well as lessons learned around the country.





PLACE *Making*

Credits:

A Publication of the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association
Proving Parks And Recreation Matter
www.mrpaonline.org

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