



HIGHLAND PARK

Placemaking Guide

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Spring 2019 Graduate Studio

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Local HP Businesses

Penstock Coffee Roasters
Provident Bank of New Jersey
Pino's Gift Basket Shoppe and Wine Cellar
Rite Aid

Highland Spark Helpers

Adam Conner
Arden Dioslaki
Elizabeth Pietz
Shaylee Zaugg
Prize Giveaways from Keep Middlesex Moving

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The studio team expresses special thanks and gratitude for the assistance provided by the following individuals who provided support, guidance, and insight during the Highland Spark events.

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Dean Vonu Thakuriah, Ph.D., Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy



OUR TEAM

Authors

Silvia Cuevas
Ian Girardeau
Harsheeta Gupta
Christopher Henchey
Daniel Hutton
Edward 'Ted' Metz
Andrew 'Max' Natanagara
Yoga Pratama
Samuel Rosenthal
Qingyang Xie
Chen Zhang
Zhaoming Zhang

Advisors

Leigh Ann Von Hagen, AICP, PP
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

Laura Torchio, AICP and Cailean Kok, AICP
Project for Public Spaces



Above: Bloustein Studio Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report details the work of the 2019 Edward J. Bloustein Placemaking in Highland Park studio course team. This project equips the Borough of Highland Park, New Jersey with a set of tools and recommendations, backed by careful research and outreach, for application to future placemaking efforts made by the Borough.

The report explores the concept of placemaking, the interaction between health and place, background on the Borough of Highland Park, the outreach placemaking events hosted by the Studio Team, recommendations for the Borough, and potential funding opportunities for Highland Park's future placemaking efforts.

The recommendations are intended to serve as tools for use by the Borough of Highland Park in any future placemaking efforts. The engagement strategy findings can also assist the Borough in gathering community input for future initiatives, since stakeholder involvement is crucial for the success of any placemaking project.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The nine chapters of this document cover the following subjects:

1. Introduction: A description of the project purpose and explanation of the concept of placemaking, how it relates to health, and how to engage with the public and potential stakeholders.

2. Demographics and Health Profile: An exploration of the demographics and health of the Borough of Highland Park, with a focus on the social determinants of health and their relationship to place.

3. Highland Park Plans, Policies, and Programs: An evaluation of Highland Park's existing plans, policies, and programs, as well as potential areas of improvement.

4. Best Practices in Placemaking for Health: A summary of the best practices and approaches to placemaking, including the "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" (LQC) concept and how to evaluate placemaking efforts. The examples in this section illustrate how communities across the US are successfully using placemaking to improve economic vitality, health, and overall quality of life.

5. Methodology and Selection Process: An explanation of the site selection process, stakeholder workshop, site audits, and the final site selection. The Studio Team identified areas where great placemaking attributes already existed and based their final selection on stakeholder feedback.

6. Highland Spark: Sparking Creativity: A description of the planning, preparation, and execution of the two Highland Spark outreach events held by the Studio Team. The team held two events, on March 30th and April 6th, to gather community feedback on potential placemaking ideas the Borough may wish to pursue.

7. Findings/Lessons Learned from the Test Site: A summary of the engagement strategies utilized by the Studio Team, including which were most effective, and the results of the community feedback.

8. Recommendations: The recommendations cover potential future sites, stakeholder engagement, design, and healthy programming. The first section details the action plans for potential sites created during a stakeholder meeting, while the following sections detail recommendations from the Studio Team based on the Highland Spark events.

9. Funding: An evaluation of potential funding sources for the Borough to consider for future placemaking efforts.



Above: Woman playing jenga
Below: Young boy painting bench



CH.1

INTRODUCTION

HIGHLAND PARK'S VISION



*Above: Bound Brook, NJ crosswalk
Left: Montclair, NJ Parklet*

“Provide engaging vibrant places in Highland Park that are healthy, equitable, and sustainable.”

PROJECT PURPOSE



The purpose of Bloustein studio courses is to provide clients with products that use best practices in the planning profession. For this studio, students worked with Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to create a Placemaking Action Plan using the “Power of 10+” as a framework to think about what is special about different neighborhoods and the “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC) method of short-term, low-cost interventions that can unite a community vision and serve as a catalyst for larger community-based improvements.

Highland Park anticipates implementing the recommendations put forward in this report and plans to incorporate placemaking into the Master Plan during their re-examination process. In particular, the Highland Park Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (SWACC) expressed a desire to explore the implementation of many of the recommendations, stating, “this report will not sit on a shelf.”

THE HIGHLAND SPARK BRAND

The Studio Team chose “Highland Spark” as a brand for the whole placemaking project in an effort to catalyze higher-level participation throughout the community, inspiring Highland Park residents to work towards creative uses of public spaces. Through a variety of placemaking interventions at test sites, the Studio Team sought to spark neighborhood vitality and jump-start an action plan. In order to motivate community conversations, the Studio Team chose the outdoor living rooms at the intersections of Raritan Avenue with 3rd and 4th Avenues as the focal point for initiating placemaking and community engagement.



*Above: Highland Park chalk art
Left: Student holding Highland Spark logo*

HIGHLAND PARK STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

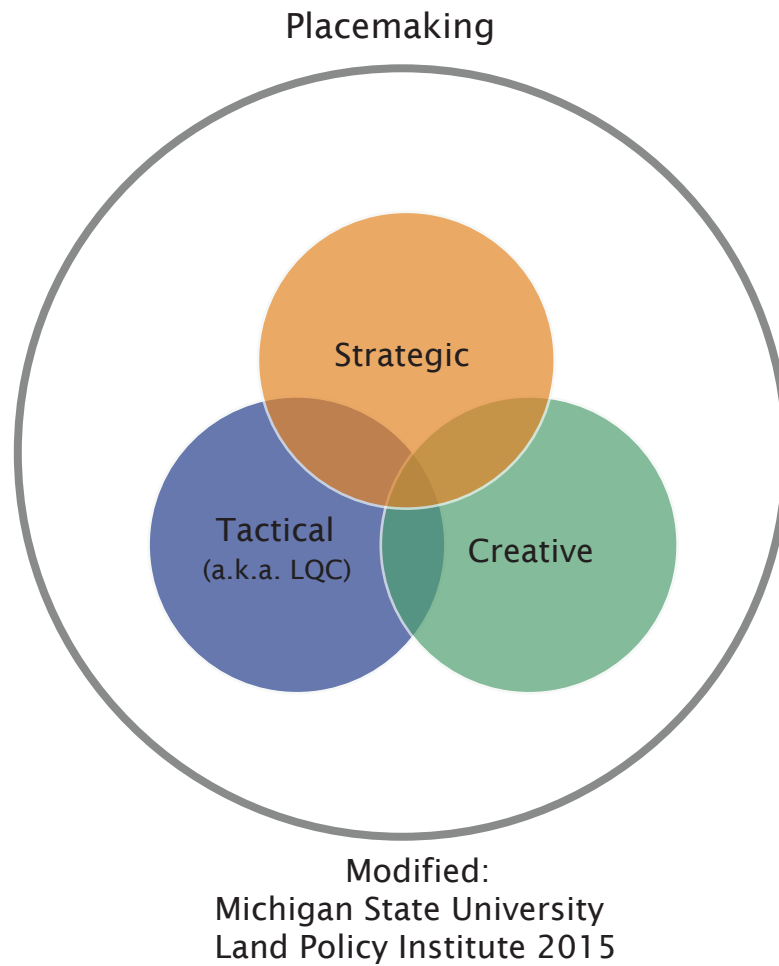
A stakeholder steering committee was established to provide guidance and feedback, as well as assist with project implementation. Main Street Highland Park, SWACC, and the Borough Administrator worked with the Studio Team to realize a placemaking vision for Highland Park, identifying locations in the Borough, both large and small, that are accessible and open to all members of the community. This partnership included the following members representing several groups within Highland Park who will move the recommendations forward:

Susan Welkovits, Highland Park Council
Teri Jover, Borough Administrator
Emma Missey, Assistant to the Borough Administrator
Trish Sanchez, Chair, Highland Park SWACC
Sean Meehan, Vice Chair, Highland Park SWACC
John Marron, Highland Park Arts Commission
Rebecca Hersch, Main Street Highland Park
Javier Zavaleta, Main Street Highland Park
James Nichols, AIA, LEED AP, Main Street Highland Park
Morteza Ansari, Keep Middlesex Moving
Christopher Gonda, Keep Middlesex Moving



Right: Highland Spark participant voting

WHY PLACEMAKING?



Placemaking is about more than simply adding chairs and umbrellas to a public space. Placemaking refers to the collective process of planning for physical spaces, with the community involved at almost every step of the journey. The result is the creation of public spaces that provide improved mobility, opportunities for socialization, and a range of communal activities, thereby fostering a sense of connection between people and the places in which they live.

Today, the term “placemaking” is used in many contexts and can refer to anything from strategies to attract entrepreneurs, to emphasizing arts and cultural experiences, to tactical, do-it-yourself, LQC projects. Michigan State University’s Land Use Policy Institute defines the different types of placemaking as Standard, (the overarching placemaking process as described above), Creative (placemaking around arts and cultural experiences, activities, or installations that address social or economic issues), Strategic (creating places that are uniquely attractive to talented workers, so that they want to be and live in the community), and Tactical (a Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper way to test ideas through temporary, low-cost projects, and installations).¹

This report describes the placemaking process and the benefits of placemaking relative to Highland Park’s vision to provide engaging vibrant places that are healthy, equitable, and sustainable. It also outlines practical uses for the process and recommendations for policy, physical, and programming changes to attain this vision.

PLACEMAKING FOR HEALTHY PLACES

After decades of car-dependent urbanization and suburbanization and poor land use design, communities are facing health-related problems from physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and environmental pollutants leading to obesity and chronic diseases. Among the many factors that have given rise to these issues are inequities in the design and function of neighborhoods, including limited access to parks and healthy food, poor walkability, and lack of civic engagement. This has led many to suggest that our zip code may be a more significant determinant of health than our genetic code. Placemaking can help a community maintain its livability and vibrancy by providing a holistic framework for the creation of healthy places. The Case for Healthy Places by PPS identifies five categories for evaluating the impact public spaces have on health:²

- 1.Social Support & Interaction
- 2.Play & Active Recreation
- 3.Green & Natural Environments
- 4.Healthy Food
- 5.Walking & Biking

These themes will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.



Right: 4th Ave & Raritan Avenue Intersection

HIGHLAND PARK VALUES HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE PLACES

Highland Park continually strives to improve public health. Since no one benefits from a public place that no one uses, the Borough seeks to encourage community-driven collaborative design and management of public spaces, reshape the public realm to reflect the values of the community, and produce positive health outcomes through placemaking for healthy places. Meanwhile, by opening up opportunities for civic engagement and aesthetics improvement, placemaking activities can generate favorable community outcomes, including increased social capital, local economic development, and improved safety and crime reduction.³



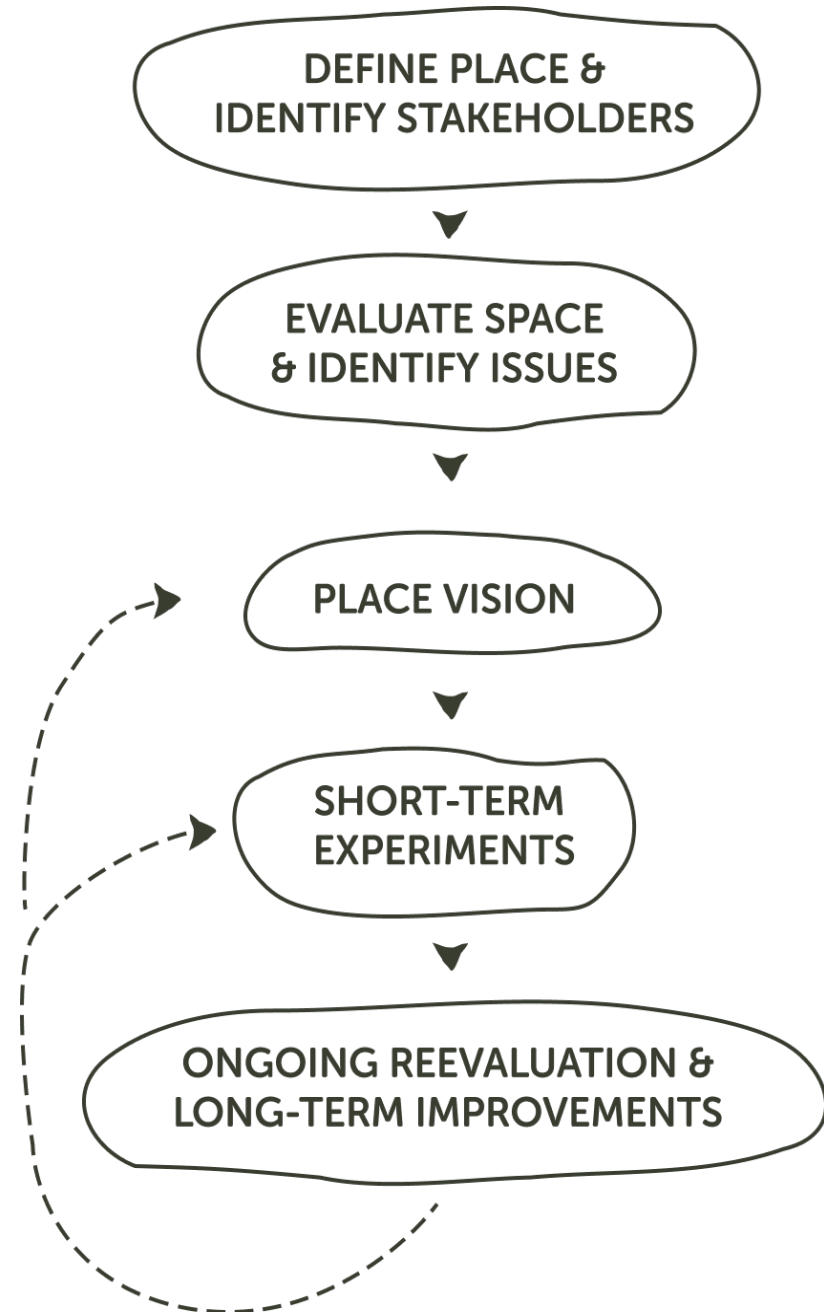
Left: 3rd Ave & Raritan Ave Intersection

APPROACHES TO ENGAGEMENT

Sherry Arnstein's 1969 book "A Ladder for Citizen Participation" identifies different levels of community participation. At the lowest levels of participation, community members are not given genuine opportunities for participation, but are instead "educated" by planners and officials. At the highest levels of citizen participation, community members hold actual power, their ideas are valued, and they are the driving force of the planning process.⁴ Placemaking is inspired by these higher levels of citizen participation. In order to ensure that Highland Park residents are active participants in the placemaking process, every effort should be made to engage all members of the community on an ongoing basis.

The five steps of the placemaking process require stakeholder involvement at nearly every stage. Creating well-utilized healthy and livable spaces is best accomplished through input from those who will, and already do, use these spaces. This section elaborates on community engagement strategies, providing examples used in this project as well as other Project for Public Spaces projects.

Placemaking Process



Source: Project for Public Spaces

ENGAGEMENT AND THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

The following table lists the goals and strategies set by the Studio Team at the start of the Spring 2019 semester. While most strategies were accomplished during the studio, others are included in the recommendations for ongoing engagement in the Action Plan. See Chapter 8 for recommendations on future placemaking efforts.

<i>Step 1: Define Place and Identify Stakeholders</i>	<i>Step 2: Evaluate Space and Identify Issues</i>	<i>Step 3: Place Vision</i>	<i>Step 4: Short-term experiments</i>	<i>Step 5: Ongoing Reevaluation and Long-Term Improvements</i>
The first step of the placemaking process identifies some of the key issues that a community seeks to address. Public meetings, advocacy groups, elected officials, business owners, and anyone that uses spaces can and should be included in this process.	There should be publicly accessible meetings that allow for input and local expertise about the area, as well as opportunities for stakeholders of various backgrounds to work together and share their own information and visions for the space. During this part of public engagement there should be workshops that are brief and at accessible times.	During the place vision step, there should be opportunities to share ideas with the public. As a place vision is assembled, there should be suggestions for the public to examine and provide feedback on.	During this step, short-term experiments should allow for local demonstration projects that encourage the public to engage with placemaking efforts. During this time, community members should be able to physically interact with LQC installations.	The placemaking process continues on even after the initial demonstration projects.
Studio-facilitated Engagement: The Studio Team began with three key community partnerships: Main Street Highland Park, SWACC, and the Borough Administrator. The Studio Team worked closely with these partners to identify issues in the community that could benefit from programming, physical installations, and improved public spaces.	Studio-facilitated Engagement: In February 2019, Stakeholders from Highland Park participated in a student-led placemaking workshop. See Appendix: Highland Park Workshop for more details.	Studio-facilitated Engagement: During the February 2019 Stakeholder Placemaking Workshop, each site audit included a visioning process which culminated in an overall place vision for Highland Park. See Appendix: Highland Park Workshop for more details.	Studio-facilitated Engagement: Short-term site interventions were developed and demonstrated during a two-day site activation for the outdoor living rooms. See Chapter 6 for more details on placemaking efforts.	Studio-facilitated Engagement: Short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations should be included in an action plan.



ENGAGEMENT AND THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

Table 1: Studio Goals & Strategies

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Goal: Engaging stakeholders in the placemaking process	Goal: Obtaining and implementing community input into our final recommendations and/or demonstration project.	Goal: Promoting our studio's project, placemaking, and the potential demonstration project.
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social media and web presence. · Tabling at local events or at local institutions (such as the library or busy retail centers). · Creating easy-to-understand materials that engage the stakeholder. 	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social media and web presence that allows for user comments. Web strategies might allow for public comments or input from populations that might be less likely to attend an event such as millennials or working parents. 	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social media and web presence (Flyers and materials for distribution/posting at local institutions) · Explore putting together a video (Or use existing video from Project for Public Spaces) · Tabling at events
Types of Interactions: Public meetings, social media interaction, tabling	Types of Interactions: response to comments online, space for comments to be included online, tabling events that allow for face-to-face communication.	Types of Interactions: Attending meetings (Making announcements at community events), exchanges via email or social media, going to schools
Logistics: Event coordination, coordination with the library and/or other spaces for events and tabling.	Logistics: Approval of online materials (might not be done in such a short amount of time or might be a series of recommendations).	Logistics: Coordinate with institutions for permission and time to present to groups, details of demonstration project may require working with businesses or government
Target Audience: All types of stakeholders. Events will cater more towards stakeholders that might be actively involved in the community, while more targeted outreach to religious spaces or online could involve groups that might be less traditionally involved. This interaction will be heavy on the dispersal of information so ensuring that the language and/or materials match the target demographics is essential.	Target Audience: Residents who frequent the library or who might turn out for community wide events. It will be more challenging to engage with underrepresented groups. Highland Park residents that are aging, have disabilities, are working parents, of particular religious or immigrant communities, or lower income might feel less invited or involved in public spaces and institutions. Soliciting their input and feedback may require connections with a variety of community leaders.	Target Audience: Building support and excitement for the studio's project/demonstration project may be best targeted to families, seniors, and young people. The community institutions that Highland Park residents are already engaging with will play a key role in getting the word out and giving our studio a platform from which to promote the placemaking message.
Timeline: At least six weeks to prepare for an event. Four weeks to prepare for tabling. Social media would depend on the approval of the borough and Main Street Highland Park.	Timeline: Similar to education component.	Timeline: Flyers for a demonstration project could be made quickly and inexpensively. The timeline might depend on the tactical urbanism/demonstration project.
Cost: Materials will be costly as they will require a lot of time for review and editing.	Cost: Materials might be less costly than education. Opportunities for simple forms of public involvement like writing small ideas at tables or short paper surveys at tables. Online presence would be more time intensive and costly as it would need to be monitored and intensely created.	Cost: Similar to other goals, the cost for materials will be more about time than material cost. Color printed promotional materials will be expensive but web presence, approval of materials, and other areas will be expensive.



CH. 2

DEMOGRAPHICS AND
HEALTH PROFILE

ABOUT HIGHLAND PARK

The Borough of Highland Park, with a total land area of 1.8 square miles, is situated in Middlesex County, New Jersey. First explored by the Native American Lenape people, Highland Park has since developed with diversity, boasting Greek, Jewish, Peruvian, Italian, and Japanese cultures.⁵ As the Borough seeks to celebrate its diversity and create opportunities for a healthier community, it is necessary to examine Highland Park's demographic and health profile.

Demographic and health profile data contained in this report was gathered from various sources, including the United States Census Bureau, the State of New Jersey Department of Health, as well as previous and current Borough plans.



Above: Little girl's dream bicycle
Below: Participants painting bench

HIGHLAND PARK DEMOGRAPHICS

Highland Park's population remained steady for the first ten years of the 21st century, and the population was 14,250 as of 2017. The following represent key findings about Highland Park's demographic features, including data from the U.S. Census 2013-2017 ACS that summarize age, sex, race, income, and commuting patterns:

- Highland Park's population is much younger than that of Middlesex County and New Jersey, with a median age of 35 years (38 for Middlesex County and 40 for New Jersey).
- Highland Park's population has a relatively larger white population (59% of total population).
- Highland Park's population enjoys a significantly higher median per capita income (\$42,180) than the County (\$37,667) and the State (\$40,567), while its poverty rate (10%) is in between the County and the State levels.
- Highland Park's population spends less time (28.7 minutes) traveling to work than County or State residents, and residents of Highland Park are more likely to walk (6%) or bike (3%).
- Highland Park has a larger Jewish community than surrounding areas. There are four Orthodox synagogues and a Conservative Temple in the Borough. The Borough is surrounded by an eruv that permits Orthodox members to travel within its confines on the Sabbath. In addition, there are seven churches of varying Christian denominations within the Borough.

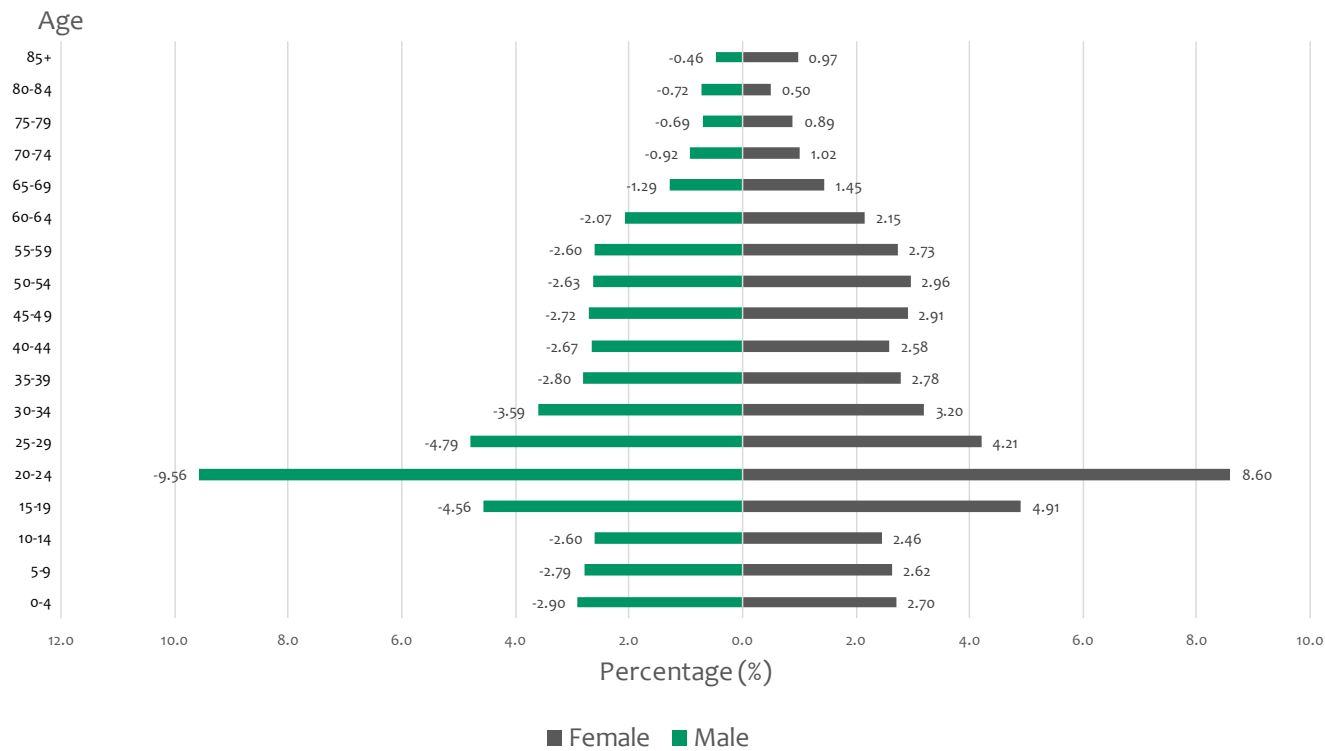
This report seeks to respect the unique characteristics of the Highland Park community by being mindful of the Orthodox Jewish populations' customs in observing the Sabbath, especially in our recommendations and the Highland Spark events. The report also promotes strategies that support the Borough's walking and biking commuters by recommending improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



AGE AND SEX

According to the US Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, the median age in Highland Park is 35.5 years old, which is significantly lower than Middlesex County (38.4) and New Jersey (39.8).

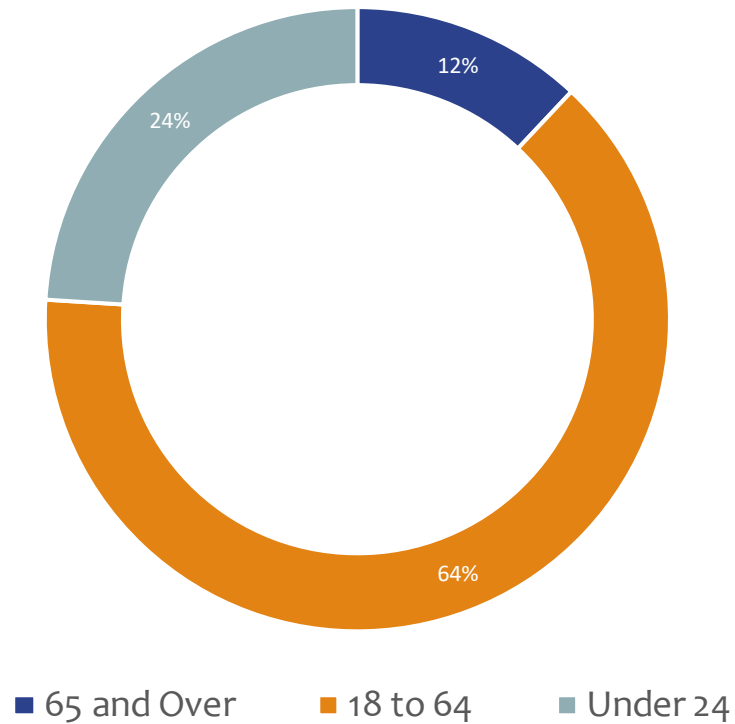
FIGURE 1
Age-Sex Pyramids For Middlesex County, NJ in 2017



AGE AND SEX

The major working age group—persons aged 18 to 64—are estimated to be 65% of the total population. This age group is about the same as Middlesex County (64%) and New Jersey (63%). The gender breakdown of the total estimated population is 52% female and 48% male, which is slightly more skewed than that of Middlesex County (51% female) and New Jersey (51% female).

FIGURE 2
Population By Age Category

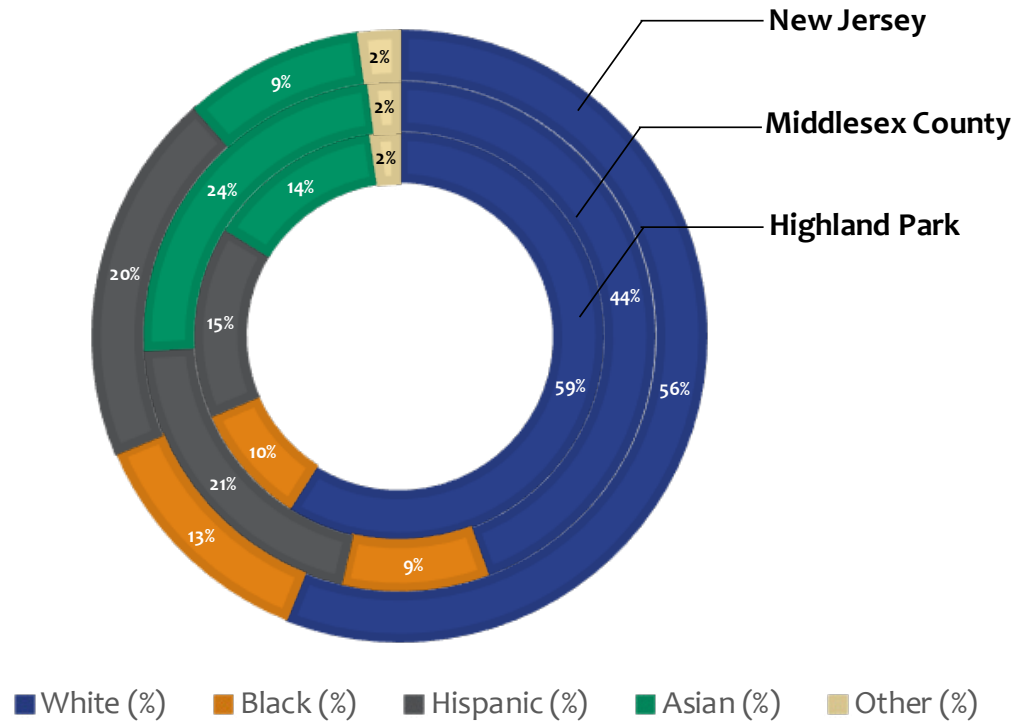




RACE

According to the US Census Bureau 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, white represents the largest race group (59%), followed by Hispanic (15.3%) and Asian (13.9%). Compared to the state, Middlesex County has a larger Asian population (23.9%) and a smaller white population (44.3%), while New Jersey has a larger Black population (12.7%).

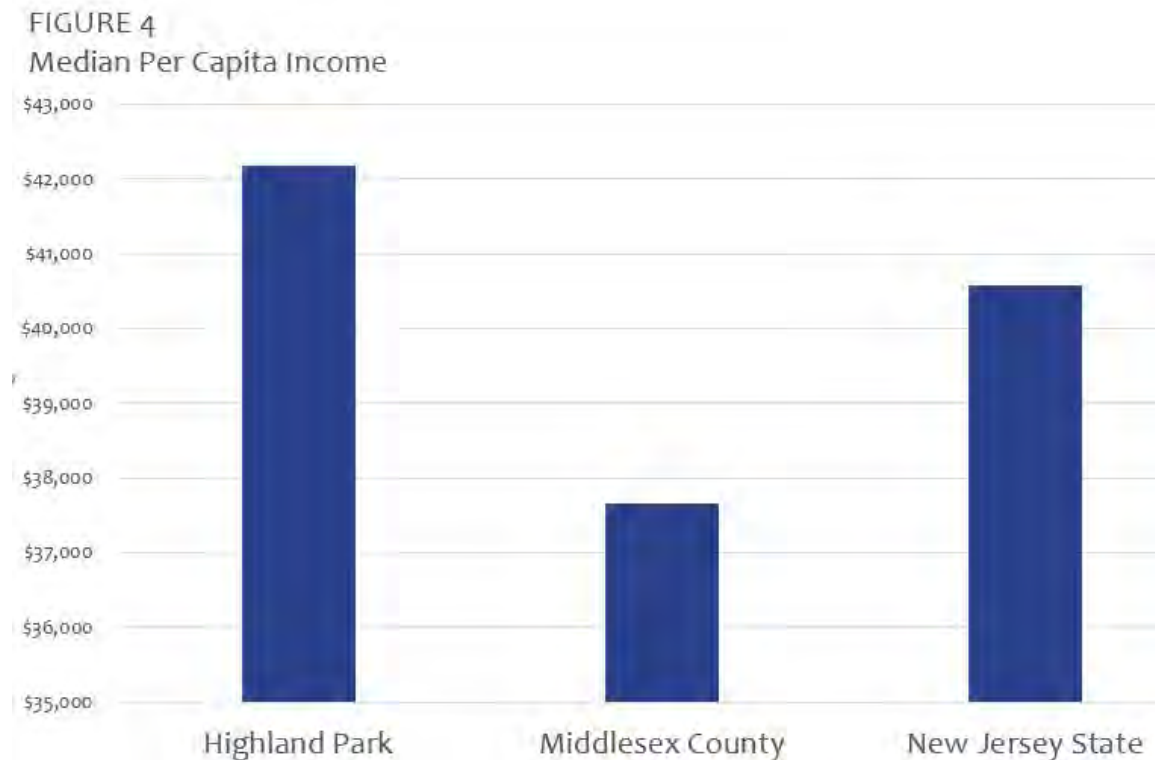
FIGURE 3
RACE COMPOSITION



INCOME

The median per capita income of Highland Park, \$42,180, is significantly higher than that of the County (\$37,667) and the State (\$40,567). The median household income is \$75,913, which is about the same as the amount in New Jersey (\$76,745). (Household income considers the incomes of all people ages 15 years or older occupying the same housing unit, regardless of relation, while the per capita income measures the average income earned by each person in a given area.)

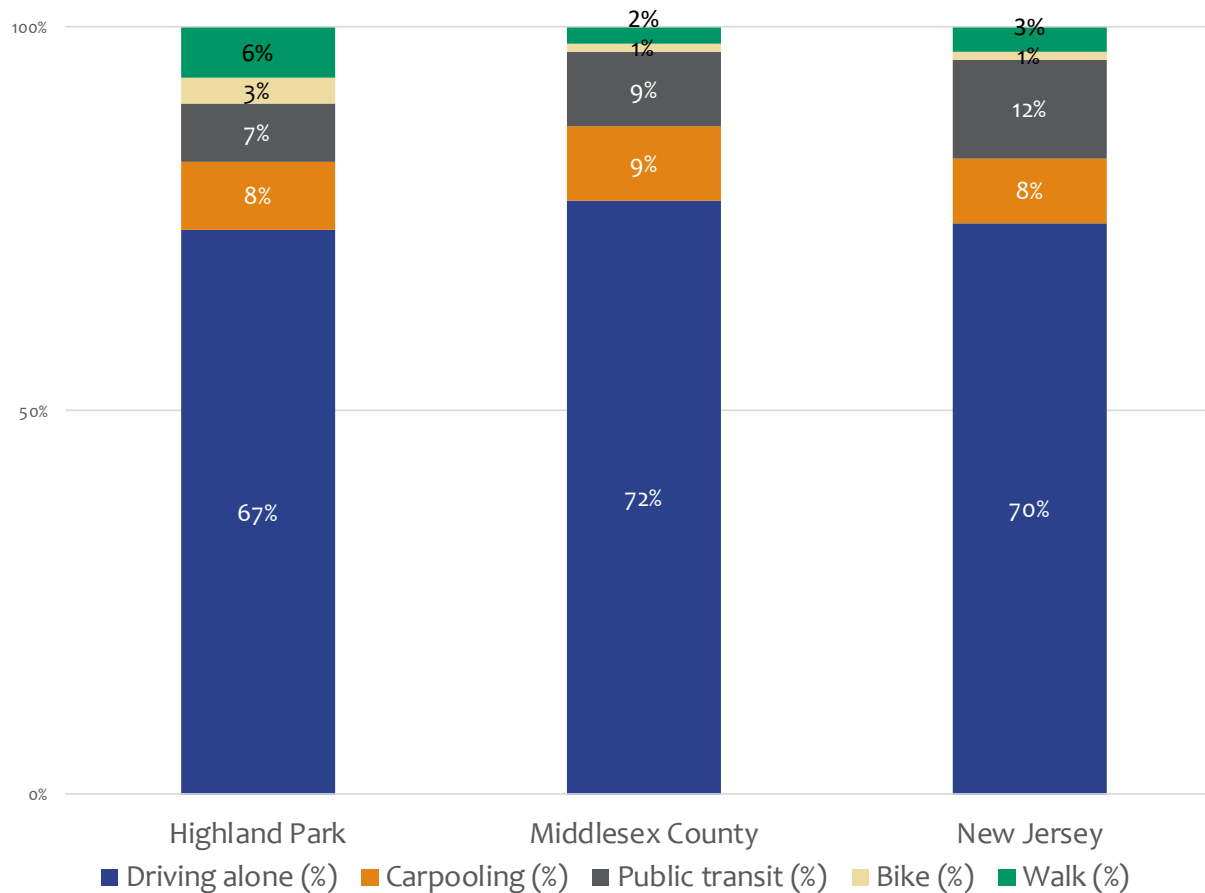
In Highland Park, 10% of the population for whom poverty status is determined (1,420 out of 14,200 people) live below the poverty line. Thirteen percent of children (age under 18) below the poverty line and 10.% of seniors (age 65 or over) in poverty. These numbers are similar to those at the County and State levels.



COMMUNITY PATTERNS

The average travel time to work in Highland Park is 28.7 minutes, much lower than the County level (33.9) and State level (32.1). Driving alone is the most popular way of commuting to work (67%), followed by carpooling (8%) and public transit (7%). Compared to the County and State level, biking and walking in Highland Park constitute a larger percentage of trips.

FIGURE 4
Means Of Transportation



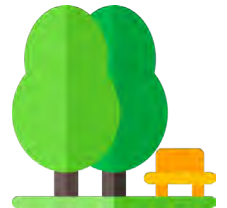
HEALTH PROFILE

Due to data limitations at the municipal level, most of the data in the report is for the County. According to New Jersey State Health Assessment Data (NJSHAD), Middlesex County performs better than both the State and the nation in several health-related categories, such as persons without insurance, infant mortality rate, hospitalizations due to heart attack, heart-related disease, age-adjusted death rate due to heart disease, and age-adjusted death rate due to motor vehicle-related injuries. For Highland Park in particular, the Borough performs well in overall health outcomes, offering strong social support and interaction, opportunities for active recreation, green and natural environments, and good access to healthy food.



HEALTH CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES

Community well-being is a primary concern for Highland Park. In their effort for a healthy and sustainable environment, Highland Park launched the Green Community Plan (GCP) in 2007. This document focuses on five main goals: healthy environment, healthy people, strong community, convenient transportation, and fairness and equity.⁶ Each goal is further broken down into a set of indicators that are necessary to track the progress of goal achievements, and actions to define specific projects or programs to reach the goals. The plan also lists the responsibilities of stakeholders for each action and stage of completion. The stakeholder group includes municipal departments, residents, businesses, schools, and partner/civic organizations. Some proposed actions include ordinance revisions, such as solar access preservation and a tax abatement policy for green improvement initiatives.



MIDDLESEX AND SOMERSET COUNTIES COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)

The Middlesex and Somerset Counties CHIP was created in 2013 as a collaborative effort between Saint Peter's University Hospital (SPUH) and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH). This plan identifies goals and strategies that span four priority areas: coordination and communication among community health partners, access to care and health information, healthy behaviors, and disease-specific issues with a focus on obesity, diabetes, and mental health.

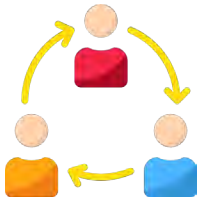


Source: www.flaticon.com

HEALTH PROFILE

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Personal factors such as exercise and nutrition, together with social factors like housing, education, healthcare, and transportation, are the social determinants of health. These factors are embedded in the social conditions of where people live and work. As defined by Healthy People 2020, social conditions interact with a wide range of health issues and can affect community health outcomes. In this context, social determinants of health are interrelated with the Project for Public Spaces Healthy Places framework:



- **Social Support & Interaction:** According to the Green Community Plan (GCP), the Borough envisions a strong and equitable community by weaving through policy actions including green development and construction, attracting businesses, fostering a sense of community, enhancing walkability, and increasing affordable housing options.⁷ Social support and interaction are central to achieve those goals. A strong community has a critical influence on residents' lifestyles, social interactions, and mode choice.



- **Play & Active Recreation:** There is a large amount of land devoted to park space in the Borough. Johnson Park includes a small zoo and Donaldson Park features a playground and multiple sports fields. These two parks offer quality outdoor space for residents' entertainment and active recreation.



- **Green & Natural Environments:** The walking trail along the Raritan River and the new environmental center on River Road provide serene places for residents to engage with nature.



- **Healthy Food:** According to 2015 data from USDA Food Access Research Atlas, most Highland Park access to healthy, nutritious foods. The Borough's residents enjoy a full service supermarket and a seasonal farmers market that features fresh local produce.
- **Walking & Biking:** Convenient transportation has been a concern in Highland Park, as indicated in its GCP. Residents in Middlesex County endure relatively long commutes and often drive to work alone.⁸ Although rates of walking and biking in Highland Park are higher than the County and State average, they are still constrained by the heavy traffic on Raritan Avenue and limited walking trail network. In terms of safety for walking and biking, according to Neighborhood Scout's crime rates data, Highland Park is safer than 51% of US cities and about 58% of New Jersey communities.⁹ Generally, crime is not a pressing concern in Highland Park.



#highland park

CH. 3

HIGHLAND PARK PLANS,
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

In order to provide informed placemaking recommendations, there is a need to understand current policies and programs in Highland Park. The policies described below showcase Highland Park's initiatives to promote healthy, green, and safe living for all of its residents.

A primary focus of this Studio was on health and placemaking. One concept to consider is Health in All Policies (HiAP), which prioritizes the policy-making and planning that guides communities in maintaining a state of "complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."¹⁰ This holistic and comprehensive approach to policy-making underscores the importance of a broad framework for understanding the factors that contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Below: Intersection of 4th Avenue & Raritan Avenue in Highland Park




THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

Since 2006, HiAP has gained momentum in the United States as research showing links between social and economic factors – often termed “social determinants” – has become widely accepted. Citing this research, the HiAP movement has taught policymakers and planners alike to take into account the potential health impacts of everything they do.

By adopting the strategies of HiAP, planners now take into account the health impacts of their recommendations, which leads to healthier communities. HiAP also encourages the collaboration of urban planners and health professionals to inspire development to promote healthy places. Examples include the development of green initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improvement of air quality, encouragement of physical activity, chronic disease prevention, injury prevention, health promotion for older adults and those with disabilities, and air and water quality assurance.¹¹



Above: Shared Street in Copenhagen, Denmark



“Placemaking is one of the most powerful things we can do to address physical and mental health as well as revitalize democracy and add more conviviality to our lives. It supplies us with a sense of belonging, which crates resilience and well-being, according to scientific evidence.”

- Tyler Norris, Vice President, Kaiser Permanente

HIGHLAND PARK PLANS AND POLICIES

In order to provide context for any planned placemaking initiatives, the studio examined prior planning efforts undertaken by the Borough, noting the goals and objectives set forth by each document. Summaries of these documents are included below:

Master Plan (2003) - The Borough of Highland Park adopted a revised Master Plan in 2003 which outlines the goals and objectives of the municipality and highlights an action plan to reach those objectives. The plan emphasizes the need to preserve and enhance the character of the community while still ensuring a vibrant downtown with active commercial corridors. In addition, the plan prioritizes environmentally sensitive areas to ensure a high-quality of life for all residents.

Master Plan Re-examination (2010) - In 2010, the Borough issued a Master Plan Re-examination to address issues related to land development. The plan identified significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives that formed the basis of the 2003 Master Plan, as well as State, County, and municipal policies.¹³



HIGHLAND PARK PLANS AND POLICIES



Highland Park Green Community Plan (2007) - The Borough established a Highland Park Green Community Plan which focused on creating a systematic framework for implementing and supporting sustainability initiatives. The five main goals of the plan include achieving a healthy environment, supporting healthy people, promoting a strong community, providing convenient transportation, and promoting fairness and equity.¹⁴

Environmental Resource Inventory Plan (2012) - The Environmental Resource Inventory Plan serves to guide decision-makers on the relationship between organisms and their environment. This document helps planners to create and maintain an ecologically healthy community.

Capital Improvement Plan (2015) - The Capital Improvement Plan assesses existing infrastructure in the context of current and future development plans. Policy recommendations forwarded by the plan include efforts to improve record-keeping to better link this plan to the Master Plan, coordination of infrastructure improvements, and improving the resiliency of infrastructure systems. In addition, there are efforts to incentivize green infrastructure and insert an annual Capital Improvements Plan line-item into the Borough's operating budget. The plan also encourages sustainable transportation and cooperation between municipal organizations.¹⁵

Community Forestry Management Plan (2018) - The Community Forestry Management Plan represents an effort to sustain and enhance the Borough's existing urban forest lands in a safe, healthy, diverse, aesthetically-pleasing, and functional manner.

Left: 3rd Avenue Rain Garden

HIGHLAND PARK PLANS AND POLICIES

Complete Streets Policy (2013) - The Borough adopted a Complete Streets policy (No. 8-13-248) to incorporate transportation infrastructure that accommodates people of all ages and abilities. The policy infuses Complete Streets into processes and reviews, and states that Complete Streets tenets will be added to the next Master Plan or Master Plan Re-examination.

In addition to the Complete Streets resolution, the Borough also has ordinances that encourage active travel including allowing sidewalk cafes (§340) that do not obstruct the passage of pedestrians, sidewalk maintenance policies that mandate keeping sidewalks free of grass, weeds, obstructions, defects, and nuisances (§368), and a Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (§9-59) dedicated to monitoring policies and programs affecting travel on foot or bicycle in Highland Park. Moreover, the Borough's Municipal Code provides design and performance standards for bikeways and bicycle parking.



Above: Parklet in Montclair, NJ

HIGHLAND PARK PROGRAMS



Above: Highland Park's Arts Street Festival

Source: Main Street Highland Park

Main Street Highland Park

As non-profit community development organization that manages the downtown business district, Main Street Highland Park runs several events that boost economic development. Of the many events that Main Street Highland Park organizes, the best-known are the Friday Farmers Market, the annual Arts in the Park festival, and the outdoor movie theater. In addition to their event planning, Main Street Highland Park also provides assistance to small business owners in the central business district (CBD) to find employees and make other improvements through the design, promotion, organizational, and economic restructuring committees. These committees help to manage the CBD for the benefit of the merchants, business owners and residents.

Sustainable Jersey

Sustainable Jersey is a non-profit organization that provides tools, training, and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability.¹⁶ The Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) Green Team is an official board in Highland Park that meets monthly to assist the Borough in finding solutions to sustainability issues. Meetings are open to the public and residents are invited to come and participate in all sustainability efforts. The SHP's most recent role in this effort is providing education and outreach to businesses, consumers, and students about the Borough's new plastic bag ban.¹⁷

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING PLANS, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

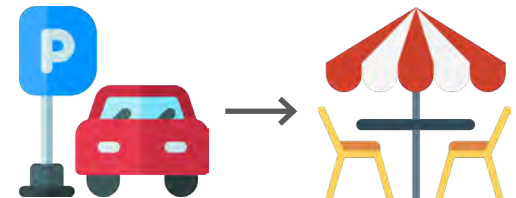
The Studio Team's examination of the Borough's existing plans, policies, and programs has demonstrated that there are opportunities for both enhancement and expansion. The following are topic areas in which opportunities exist:

Addiction & Mental Health - More programs and policies can be created to offer addiction counseling and mental health support to address regionally growing trends of opioid abuse, alcohol addiction, homelessness, and suicide. Programs can take place at the Highland Park Community Center and Teen Center with support from the Borough and regional partners.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety -The Borough can enhance ongoing efforts to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety by including language supporting safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in municipal plans and ordinances and providing bicycle safety workshops and education in the Borough's drivers education curriculum.

From Parking to Pedestrian Space - There is currently no section in the municipal code regarding the allowance of parklets in Highland Park's streetscape. The Borough could benefit from a parklet ordinance that allows the installation of parklets in and around the Raritan Avenue corridor of Highland Park. This new policy may be met with resistance and questions over the availability of parking in the area if a parklet is installed.

Parking - A parking study should be conducted to evaluate parking availability to help determine whether opportunities exist for parklets. A parking study would also provide Highland Park with an opportunity to form a parking management strategy. Presently, the Borough does not charge for any of its parking. This may be contributing to problems like traffic congestion, dangerous walking and biking conditions, and the occupation of parking spots by users of the New Brunswick train station. The Borough can



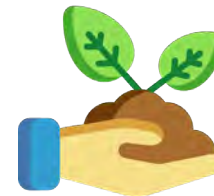
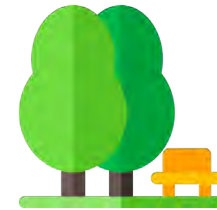
Source: www.flaticon.com

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING PLANS, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

use revenues generated by metered parking to fund improvements to the Borough's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, increasing safety for all non-motorized travelers.

Parks & Recreation - Highland Park is fortunate to have within its borders two large parks owned and managed by Middlesex County. Donaldson Park and Johnson Park both provide a host of amenities to Borough residents such as open space, recreation, and nature. More can be done to create better connectivity between the parks and to the center of the Borough. Both parks are located along the banks of the Raritan River. A better connection through Donaldson Park to the rest of the Borough along Cedar Avenue would improve access and encourage more people to walk and bike.

Community Gardens - Highland Park can enhance community gardening by supporting partnerships between gardeners and food pantries in the Borough. Highland Park can both encourage more community gardens and support healthier food access for those with lower incomes.





CH. 4

BEST PRACTICES IN
PLACEMAKING FOR HEALTH

DESIGN IDEAS

The Studio Team conducted a review of best practices in placemaking for health to prepare for a placemaking project in Highland Park. The examples in this section illustrate how communities across the US are successfully using placemaking both to improve economic vitality, health, and overall quality of life, including design ideas, programming, and evaluation of project success.

“Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC), also known as tactical urbanism, is a popular method for transforming public spaces into vibrant community assets. While traditional top-down planning processes can be time-consuming and can have unpredictable or undesirable outcomes, LQC projects are short-term, inexpensive, and easily implemented. LQC projects are especially beneficial because they can have an almost immediate impact on a space. These projects often serve as experiments, testing whether or not a particular placemaking strategy has long-term potential. If the project shows promise, then more permanent changes can be implemented. If not, adjustments to the strategy can be easily made without the need for substantial infrastructural or financial investment.

There are a range of LQC options with varying costs, scales, and implementation schedules. A few real-world examples of LQC projects are included below:

LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER CASE STUDIES

Ciclovía New Brunswick, New Brunswick, NJ - Ciclovía New Brunswick is an open streets event where the city’s streets are closed to motor traffic and residents can walk, bike, run, skate, and use the streets in a variety of creative and active ways. The concept of a ciclovía started in Bogota, Colombia and has spread around the world as a method of rethinking the use of street space. The event was launched in 2013 and the most recent New Brunswick Ciclovía took place on April 14, 2019. The route highlighted several activity zones with themes centered around art, fitness,



*Above: Ciclovía New Brunswick
New Brunswick, NJ*

DESIGN IDEAS

health, wellness, culture, and safety. It also featured a community market with local vendors, art, and music. This is a collaborative community event, with support from the City of New Brunswick, New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT), RWJUH, Johnson & Johnson, Rutgers University, and over two dozen additional community organizations¹⁸.

The original concept of Ciclovía New Brunswick was developed in 2012, and was aided by \$25,000 in seed funding by NBT. NBT also assisted with community outreach and stakeholder engagement, focusing efforts on reaching residents through K-12 schools, houses of worship, community facilities, and other natural gathering places. The initial event had just over \$85,000 in expenses, but over \$75,000 of this was covered through grants, income from partners, and in-kind & donations¹⁹. The first Ciclovía attracted over 4,000 participants and has grown steadily over the years, with 14,582 participants in the April 2018 event.

Better Block Newark, Newark, NJ - Better Block Newark is a placemaking initiative on Bergen Street in Newark, NJ, aimed at activating the street by incorporating community visions. The initial event took place in June 2015 at the intersection of Bergen Street and Lyons Avenue with a parklet installation as the main activity. A parklet, which is a miniature public space installed on a parking space, seeks to provide amenities and shared green space for residents. The project was a collaborative effort that involved residents, business owners, contractors, local artists, and city officials. The community was asked to provide feedback and ideas on what they would like to see on the block during build days, painting days, and at community meetings.

*Below: Better Block Newark, Newark, NJ
Source: The Urban Prospector*



DESIGN IDEAS

The parklets were designed around three main themes: children's activities, relaxation, and technology.²⁰ The estimated cost of building a parklet is around \$24,750-\$38,600 depending on the size and seating type.^[21] But, for the initial and temporary stage, it costs about \$12,000. Funding options may include municipal pilot, business sponsors, crowdfunding, pro-bono partnerships, and grant funding.²² Safety requirements, street design and amenities, and business compatibility were main considerations to decide the potential location of parklets.²³ Since its inception, Better Block Newark has experimented with other types of amenities and activities, such as wine tasting, pop-up restaurants, bike lanes, curb bump-outs, and a pop-up library.

Grays Ferry Triangles, Philadelphia, PA - Located in the Grays Ferry district of Philadelphia, the Grays Ferry Triangles is a vibrant pedestrian plaza with street furniture, planters, street paint, and a bikeshare station. The space regularly hosts community events and has become a space for residents to come together throughout the year. The Triangles used to be a public right-of-way that connected Grays Ferry Avenue to South Street at an odd angle and provided some parking spaces. The conversion of the space into a public plaza gradually took place over the course of a decade thanks to the consistent outreach and planning by volunteers.

Some dedicated volunteers, together with South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA), leveraged their relationships with local stakeholders and went through extensive planning and outreach to utilize the space for community events and as a gathering place. After consistent efforts, they successfully obtained a three-year temporary street closure permit. The breakthrough came in 2013, when the volunteers and SOSNA were able to host three jazz concerts and a movie night in the space, demonstrating the potential to attract local residents and visitors to the Triangles. These events



Above: *Grays Ferry Triangles, Philadelphia, PA*
Source: *Project for Public Spaces*

DESIGN IDEAS

helped local businesses see the benefits of a permanent plaza and brought the South Street West Business Association on board.

With their costs peaking at \$10,000, SOSNA and the volunteers rode the momentum of the community events and raised funds from local businesses and individuals, who would receive name recognition on the furniture and planters on the plaza.²⁴ The fundraising exceeded the goal of \$10,000, and the additional funds were used to provide continued programming in the space.²⁵

Canalside Buffalo, Buffalo, NY - Canalside Buffalo is a park, neighborhood, and revitalization effort by the city of Buffalo, NY.²⁶ The park is the central focus of the initiative, hosting hundreds of events year-round, from free outdoor concerts and yoga classes to ice-skating and kayaking. Before becoming a popular destination for residents and visitors alike, the Canalside neighborhood was in decline, with a lack of destinations to draw people in to the area.²⁷ Stakeholders came together and created an implementation plan utilizing LQC strategies to activate the park space. In the summer of 2010, over 300 events were held in the park, attracting approximately 500,000 visitors. Since the initial success of Canalside, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation has improved upon the ideas initially put forth, implementing permanent infrastructure and expanding programming.

One of the strengths of the Canalside project is the ability to expand their programming into winter, offering ice-skating, ice-biking, hot chocolate, and other activities for park visitors to enjoy in the colder months of the year.²⁸

The improvements to Canalside Park have spurred development in the area, revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood. The community now boasts a variety of new restaurants and has a new children's museum opening in 2019. The transformation of an unactivated waterfront has created an amazing community destination that brings in tourism in addition to providing locals with an excellent spot in which to spend time outside and take part in their community.²⁹



Warm up with a cup of joe



EVALUATION/PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Small-scale LQC projects require a series of appropriate measures to evaluate their performance. The Little Mekong Night Markets in St. Paul, Minnesota are comparable to the Main Street Highland Park Farmers Market and therefore serve as a best practice for reference.

EVALUATION/PERFORMANCE CASE STUDY

Little Mekong Night Markets, St. Paul, MN - Little Mekong Night Markets is an event that is held every summer in the Green Line Western Station Area in St. Paul, Minnesota. Inspired by the night markets in Southeast Asia, the event aims to provide an opportunity for local businesses to showcase their products and attract visitors to the district. Local artists, musicians, dancers, and vendors come together at the market to display their artwork and food for commercial purposes.

To measure the outcomes of this event, three components are evaluated: physical transformation, social impact, and economic impact.³⁰ Physical transformation can be documented with pictures and videos. Testimonials from the visitors can also be used to evaluate this event. The social impact can be measured by the number of visitors and the number of artists providing showcases. The economic impact can be measured by the number of small businesses created and sustained, sales volume, and market values (level of exposure of the advertisement).

Transportation for America also assigns three goals to those three respective components: creating appealing urban spaces, attracting increased investment, building social capital and trust. On the following page is a matrix of evaluation indicators and methods.³¹



EVALUATION/PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Table 2: Matrix of Evaluation on the Outcomes of Placemaking Goals

Goal	Example	Considerations about measuring	Example indicators	Documentation
Physical: Create appealing urban spaces	Parklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the space being used? How do people respond? How do business benefit? 	Number of people who use that parklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before and after pictures Videos Direct observation Surveys on the impact in revenue and attendance on nearby business or organizations Interviews and testimonials
Economic: Attract increased investment	Street festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has changed from before? How is that an improvement? 	Growth in number of attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head counts Business surveys Tax receipts Land values Economic impact studies Interviews and testimonials
Social: Building social capital and trust	Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who was involved? How were they affected? What did they have to say? 	New participants in the planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants Number of organizations consulted New partnership developed Social capital survey Number of press articles and people reached by media coverage Level of engagement in social media Interviews and testimonials



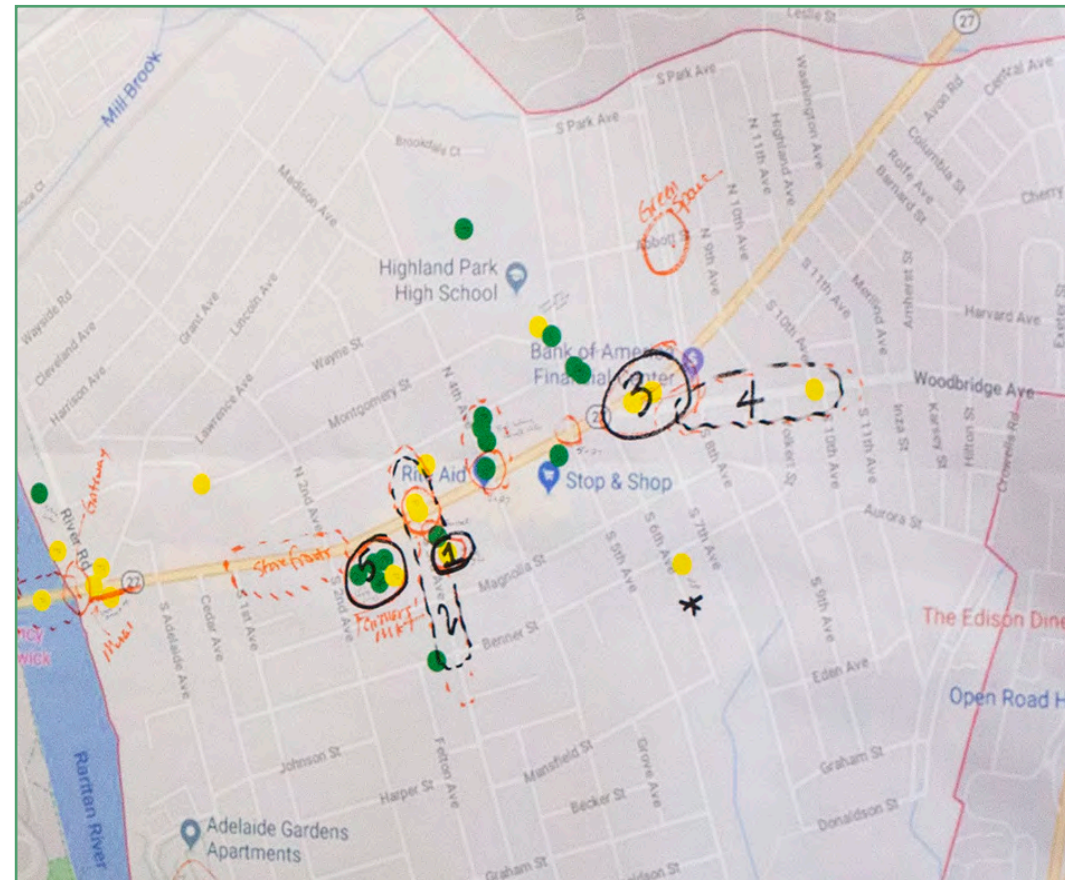
CH. 5

METHODOLOGY AND SELECTION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) recommends that initial ideas for potential sites be generated by stakeholders. In the interest of time, the Studio Team conducted an initial place mapping exercise resulting in a list of 22 potential sites for placemaking. Using a map of the Borough, the Studio Team placed stickers on places that already had great placemaking attributes and places where there was great potential for placemaking. The Studio Team then used the Power of 10+ methodology (explained below) to further explore those areas with the greatest potential and presented these findings to stakeholders from the Borough of Highland Park, the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (SWACC), and Main Street Highland Park those areas with the greatest potential and presented these findings to stakeholders from the Borough of Highland Park, the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (SWACC), and Main Street Highland Park.

The Studio Team identified areas where great placemaking attributes already exist, including the Farmers Market and outdoor seating areas at popular establishments such as Pino's Wine Cellar and Penstock Coffee Roasters. The Studio Team also recognized the potential for even greater placemaking efforts in areas such as Donaldson Park, which already features a variety of opportunities for active recreation, social interaction, and community building. Other areas with a great amount of potential included Veterans Memorial Park at the intersection of Raritan Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue, Johnson Park, the "outdoor living rooms" along Raritan Avenue, and the entrance to Highland Park at the Albany Street/Raritan Avenue bridge.



Above: Map of site selection analysis

INTRODUCTION

In early February, the Studio Team presented the results from the above methodology to Highland Park stakeholders and five spaces were selected for site audits. The five sites, along with initial reactions from the stakeholders, are summarized below:

1. Woodbridge Avenue corridor: Stakeholders were excited to rejuvenate this area of the Borough and provide more opportunities for future pedestrian-friendly development.

2. Third Avenue corridor between Benner and Denison Street: Penstock Coffee Roasters was seen as a model for positive placemaking. The area currently features excellent outdoor seating options, street fairs, and local businesses on all corners of the main intersection.

3. Veterans Memorial Park: Stakeholders were excited by the prospect of traffic calming measures at this busy and often overlooked intersection.

4. Raritan Avenue public parking lot behind Reformed Church of Highland Park: An area currently used seasonally for the Main Street Highland Park Farmers Market and Outdoor Movie Theater. Stakeholders discussed what improvements can be made to this area to encourage more community events and socialization.

5. Public parking lot on Third Avenue between Magnolia Street and Raritan Avenue: Stakeholders brainstormed ideas for LQC improvements to this small lot.



Above: Student participating in site selection

POWER OF 10+ METHODOLOGY

Developed by Project for Public Spaces, the Power of 10+ is a placemaking concept focused on ensuring that a community has various high-quality public places with a diverse range of activities. The goal is for a community to have at least ten destinations each with a minimum of ten activities in which residents and visitors can engage. During the site selection process, the Studio Team used the Power of 10+ to evaluate public spaces in Highland Park, assessing both existing conditions and opportunities for placemaking interventions. The Studio Team used this methodology to kick-start the stakeholder workshop on February 19th. Building on that work, the stakeholders focused on evaluating those sites during the site audit described below.

POWER OF 10+

HOW CITIES TRANSFORM THROUGH PLACEMAKING



City/Region

10+ MAJOR DESTINATIONS



Destination

10+ PLACES IN EACH



Place

10+ THINGS TO DO,
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY



HIGHLAND PARK STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP (FEBRUARY 19, 2019)

The Studio Team hosted a stakeholder meeting at the Highland Park Community Center with the purpose of discussing initial background research and conducting site audits of the five selected locations. In small groups, stakeholders and members of the Studio Team examined the sites in person, noting the opportunities and constraints posed by each location. Each group was tasked with imagining an intervention for their site and presenting its ideas to the other groups. The results of the site audits and proposed action plans are summarized below.

HIGHLAND PARK SITE AUDITS AND ACTION PLANS (5 SITES)

Site audits were conducted with Highland Park stakeholders in five sites mentioned above. The site audits utilized PPS's Place Game: Place Performance Evaluation to assess four key attributes of places, which include the following:

1. **Sociability:** This refers to people's sense of place or attachment to their community.

A good place allows people feel comfortable meeting friends and neighbors as well as interacting with strangers, so that they can enjoy social activities there. In this respect, the sociability of a place can be measured by the number of women, children, and elderly using the space, social networks, volunteerism, evening use, and street life.

2. **Uses & Activities:** A successful place needs to be unique in order to attract people. There should be a good balance in gender participation of different age groups. This aspect can be measured by local business ownership, land use patterns, property values, rent levels, and retail sales.

3. **Access & Linkages:** This refers to the connections of a place to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful place is visible from a distance and up close. It has high parking turnover rate and should be walkable as well as convenient to public transit. Access can be measured by parking usage patterns, pedestrian activities, transit usage, mode split, and traffic data.

4. **Comfort & Image:** This includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and seating availability. It can be evaluated by crime data, sanitation rating, building conditions, and environmental data.



Right: Studio participants auditing sites

MEETING IN HIGHLAND PARK AND SITE AUDIT



Based on the information obtained from these site audits, an action plan matrix was prepared for each site. These action plans list potential activities and amenities for the site, broken down to include information on relevant contacts, implementing partners and organizations, status, funding estimate, and time frame (short-, medium-, or long-term). Potential activities for the Raritan Avenue public parking lot included parking safety, area beautification, and flexible use of the lot as an outdoor performance space and community gathering space. The proposed activity identified at the 3rd Avenue corridor involved the activation of the existing outdoor living rooms in that area. Proposed activities for Veterans Memorial Park included a public art project with Highland Park Schools, opportunities for passersby to stop and sit, and traffic calming measures. The Woodbridge Avenue corridor was identified as having the potential for greater activation and beautification, including the transformation of empty lots and implementation of street safety programs. Potential activities prepared for the Farmers Market parking lot site were March to Borough Square and Farmers Market lot reconfiguration and clean-up. For the detailed action plans, please refer to Chapter 8.

Above/Left: Studio participants working on the action plan for their respective site

FINAL SITE SELECTION

After each group presented their ideas, workshop participants voted on which placemaking proposals they preferred. As a whole, the workshop identified the activation of the outdoor living rooms along Raritan Avenue as the option with the greatest potential given the Studio Team's timeframe and budget, leading the Studio to pursue an intervention at this location.



Bloustein Studio Team and Highland Park's Steering Committee



CH. 6

HIGHLAND SPARK:
SPARKING CREATIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Highland Park's six outdoor living rooms are located along Raritan Avenue at the northeast corner of 2nd Avenue and Raritan, the northeast and southwest corners of 3rd Avenue and Raritan, the northeast and southwest corners of 4th Avenue and Raritan, and the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and Raritan. In their present forms, the living rooms each consist of two permanent benches arranged perpendicularly to each other, a small metal table affixed to the ground, a human-scaled streetlamp, and a blue and green tiled surface. The outdoor living rooms provide an opportunity for residents to sit, eat, or converse with each other in a space that is both public and comfortable. The living rooms also benefit from their proximity to local businesses and foot traffic along Raritan Avenue. For these reasons, the Studio Team identified these outdoor spaces as an ideal setting for a placemaking event.

Two days of placemaking and community engagement were planned for Saturday, March 30th and Saturday, April 6th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event, titled "Highland Spark," sought to activate the outdoor living rooms located at Raritan Avenues intersections with 3rd and 4th Avenues. Through a variety of placemaking activities, the Studio Team would engage with residents and discuss a community vision for a healthy Highland Park.

A member of the Studio Team was assigned to take photographs on both days. Signs were posted at each site informing the public that photos were being taken and could be used in the report and on social media. For those under the age of 18, minor photography release forms were filled out by the children's parent or guardian.

Highland Park has a large Orthodox Jewish community who observe the Sabbath. As such, the Studio Team initially planned to host an event on Sunday, March 31st, to allow these community members to participate in the Highland Spark activities. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate and the event was cancelled due to rain. Because of the limited timeframe of the placemaking project, the Studio Team was unable to schedule a new event.

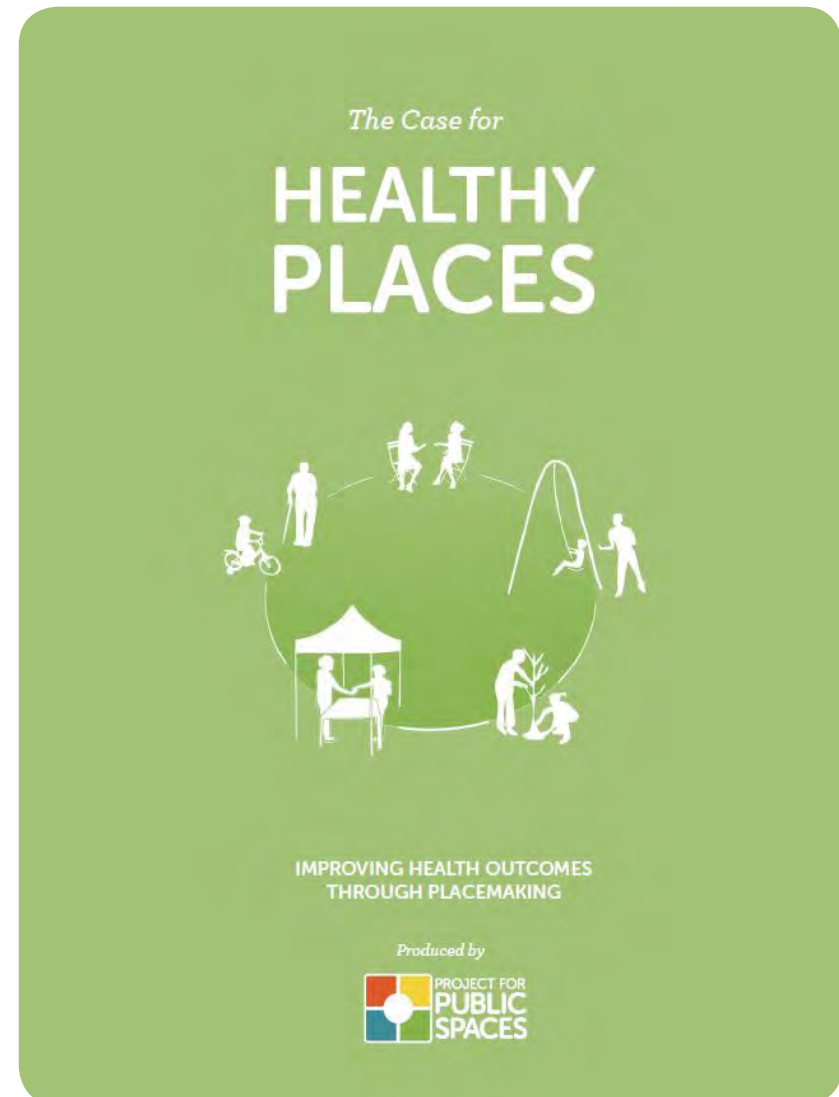


HP OUTDOOR LIVING ROOMS



CORNER THEMES

Each of the four living rooms hosted activities based around one or two particular themes derived from the Project for Public Spaces publication “The Case for Healthy Places.” The 3rd & Raritan southeast corner theme was “social support and interaction,” which explored opportunities for gathering and socializing. The 3rd & Raritan southwest/northeast corner hosted activities related to two themes: “walking and biking” and “green and natural environments.” “Healthy food” was selected as the theme for the 4th & Raritan northeast corner, which sought to increase community awareness and access to healthy and nutritious food. “Play and active recreation” was the theme assigned to the 4th & Raritan southwest corner, which provided the opportunity to discuss ways to add or increase options for various physical activities, with the goal of maintaining and improving health. The engagement tactics used at each corner during the Highland Spark event days are described on page 59.



The Case for Healthy Places

Publication by Project for Public Spaces

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

In preparation for the Highland Spark events, the Studio Team held a brainstorming session, in which team members were assigned to specific living rooms, given one of the Healthy Places themes, and tasked with generating potential activities based around those themes. The teams then generated a list of materials necessary for hosting their events.

Before purchasing the materials, the Studio Team reached out to various stakeholders to ask if any had the ability to lend items necessary for the event. The Borough of Highland Park agreed to provide the Studio Team with a small amount of funding for the events, and was consulted for final approval of the material purchase.

During the brainstorming session, the Studio Team had the idea to place sunshades over the Outdoor Living Rooms as a temporary measure to provide shade and place-identity to help draw people to the space. The sunshades were discussed with the Borough of Highland Park, who agreed to test them during the event, with the potential for permanent installation. Dark blue, triangular sun shades were purchased with the rest of the event supplies, to fit the existing aesthetic style of the Borough.



Left: Participants brainstorming ideas

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

Two weeks before the event, Studio Team members and instructors met with Borough officials and Department of Public Works (DPW) employees to discuss the installation of the shades above the living rooms at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Raritan Avenue. The DPW employees attached the sun shades to the existing light poles and installed two additional poles in planters that were already on-site

Initially, the events were planned to include three days, two Saturdays and a Sunday. Holding events on Sundays in Highland Park is important to include the Orthodox community who cannot participate on a Saturday. However, the one Sunday that was planned was very rainy and it was decided that the event should be cancelled. Due to the limited time of the studio course, a substitute day could not be arranged. The Studio Team designed and implemented activities on the first Saturday, March 30th. The Team then collected feedback and improved upon the activities based on the community response. The feedback from the second Saturday, April 6th, was documented and may be useful for planning future events. This approach allowed more flexibility in programming and offered the opportunity to experiment with a variety of games and activities.



*Left: Testing sunshade
Right: Borrowed checker boards*

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

To market the events, each living room handed out postcards which included the event logo, date and time of the events, and locations of the four living rooms. Event participants could collect one stamp from each living room as an incentive to visit all four corners. The postcards proved to be popular with both children and adults, and served as a tool to engage community members in conversations about the purpose of the events.

#highlandspark

What Fun demonstration projects and engagement activities testing out ideas, working collaboratively, and gathering feedback from community members.

Why Transforming Main Street Highland Park's outdoor living rooms to reach their fullest potential as healthy places.

When Saturday 3/30, Sunday 3/31, and Saturday 4/6
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Where

Visit a corner and get a stamp!

Stamp

Stamp

Stamp

Stamp

#highlandspark

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

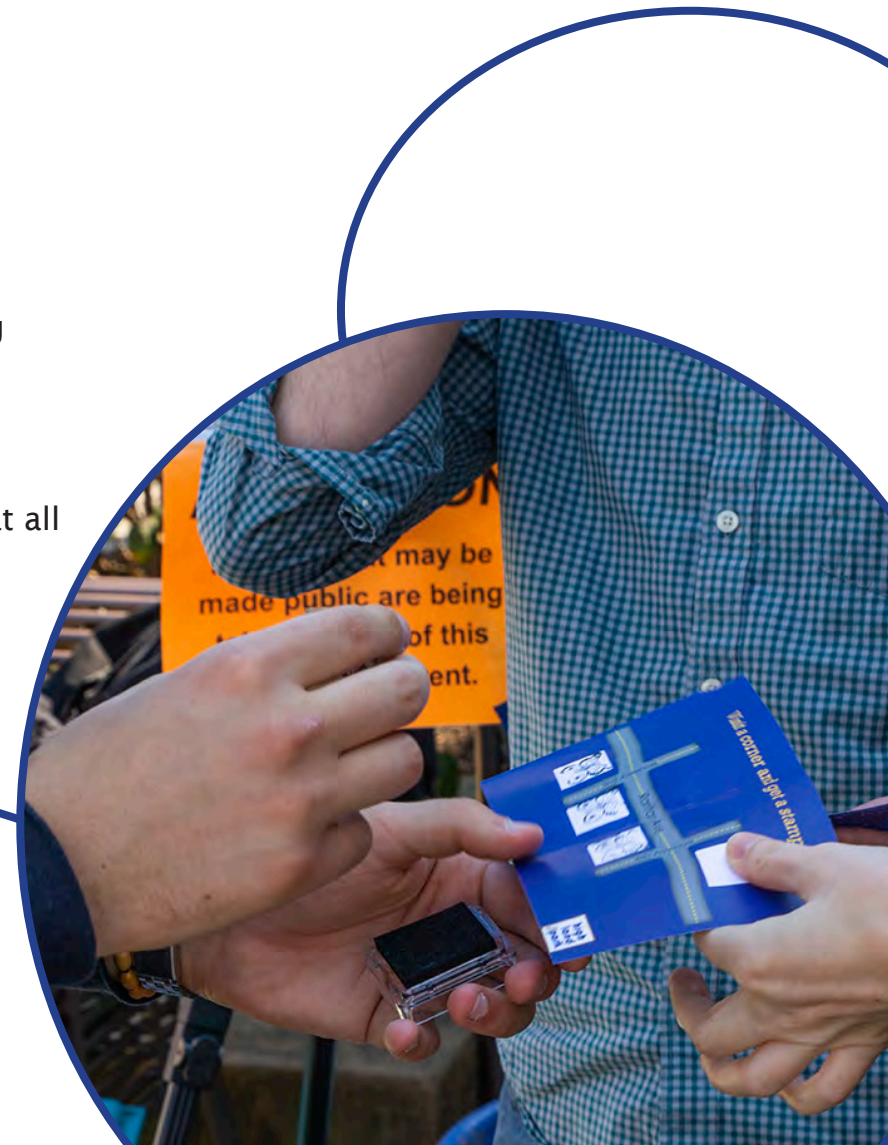
For the activities and games of the event days, most materials were borrowed, with the rest being purchased at a low cost. This is consistent with the “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC) concept for placemaking. The total cost of all items was \$165.20, which excludes paying the DPW for installing sunshades at 4th & Raritan. (See the Appendix: Event Materials Invoice for a detailed spreadsheet of materials invoice). Activities and games implemented at the two events include:

First Saturday, 3/30

- Dream bike coloring page
- Bench painting
- Dry erase boards with prompts about what people would like to see on the brick wall next to Pino’s and what healthy food options they would like to see in Highland Park
- “Pin the Band-Aid on the Boo-Boo” game
- Hula hoops
- Dumbbells
- Jump ropes
- Biking/walking trivia wheel
- Sidewalk chalk (available at all corners)
- Bubbles (available at all corners)
- Dog treats and bowls for water (available at all corners)

Second Saturday, 4/6

- Giant checker boards
- Giant Jenga
- Dominos
- Hopscotch
- Cornhole
- Bench and canvas painting
- Photo booth
- Hula hoops
- Dumbbells
- Jump rope
- Sidewalk chalk (available at all corners)
- Bubbles (available at all corners)
- Dog treats and bowls for water (available at all corners)



DAY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

3RD & RARITAN: SOUTHEAST THEME: SOCIAL SUPPORT & INTERACTION

The outdoor living room at the southeast corner of 3rd Avenue and Raritan Avenue was dedicated to enhancing social connectivity. The Borough provided benches to the Studio Team, which were then placed on the east side of 3rd Avenue in front of Penstock Coffee Roasters. On both event days, the Studio Team successfully encouraged community members and people passing by to help paint the two benches. On the second event day, there was also a canvas on which people of all ages and backgrounds contributed to make an art piece in the style of Jackson Pollock.

This intersection also featured a dot board on which people could vote for which activities or initiatives would lead them to be more social and engaged with their community. Options included more community events, showcasing local talents, inclusion of sun shades to make public spaces more comfortable, free little libraries, and parklets. The results of the dot board surveys are included in Chapter 7.

In conversations at this corner, community members saw the Highland Spark events as a “great way to bring some life back to the street,” and many noted that Highland Park’s walkability as a primary factor in their decision to move to and remain in the Borough.



DAY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

3RD & RARITAN: SOUTHWEST / NORTHEAST

THEME: WALKING, BIKING AND GREEN & NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

The northeast and southwest corners of 3rd Avenue and Raritan Avenue were centered on themes of walking and biking and green and natural environments. The corners featured art and trivia activities for visitors, including coloring sheets, a trivia wheel, chalk art, and a photo booth. There were also games such as checkers, Giant Jenga, hopscotch, and dominoes.

Two dot boards were displayed at this intersection. One asked people what would help them walk and bike more. Options included street beautification, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage. A second dot board asked people about which types of green space they would like to see in the Borough, such as street trees, pocket parks, community gardens, and trails. The results of the dot board surveys are included in Chapter 7.

In conversations, people of all ages and backgrounds provided information related to current community initiatives for green and healthy lifestyles, such as reducing the use of plastic straws, green initiatives by churches, and funding opportunities like grants from Sustainable Jersey for Schools. The interactions with Highland Park residents were very positive and many were appreciative of the Borough investing time to learn about their future needs. In addition to community member engagement, there was also frequent interactions with non-residents who shared their ideas on what would encourage them to visit Highland Park more often.



DAY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

4TH & RARITAN: NORTHEAST THEME: HEALTHY FOOD

The northeast corner of 4th Avenue and Raritan Avenue was focused on healthy food. At this living room, people stopped and engaged with the Studio Team to discuss two key subjects: potential improvements to the outdoor living rooms and ideas for promoting healthy eating options within Highland Park. The Studio Team connected the living rooms to healthy food choices by framing the outdoor spaces as places to bring and enjoy food.

Studio members at this living room dressed as waiters and set up a miniature restaurant with a small table and plastic food. People passing by were asked to stop and discuss their experiences finding healthy food in Highland Park. People were also asked about what they would like to see on the blank brick wall at this corner, and many sketched their ideas on small dry-erase boards.

The dot board at this living room asked about strategies for encouraging healthy eating. Options included green carts, expansion of the Farmers Market, educational programming, and edible landscaping. The results of the dot board surveys are included in Chapter 7.



DAY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

4TH & RARITAN: SOUTHWEST THEME: PLAY & ACTIVE RECREATION

The living room at the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and Raritan Avenue was given the theme of play and active recreation. People were invited to talk about exercise and recreational opportunities they'd like to see at the living room as well as around town. To demonstrate some possible activities and activate the space for people of all ages, the Studio Team offered a variety of exercise equipment and games in the center of the living room, including hula hoops, dumbbells, jump ropes, bubbles, and sidewalk chalk.

On the first weekend, the Studio Team hosted a game dubbed "Pin the Band-Aid on the Boo-Boo." The game was tailored to young children, but also served as a nod to the centennial of the Band-Aid's invention in Highland Park. The game was a success and provided opportunities to talk with the adults who played or watched. On the second weekend, the Studio Team replaced the Band-Aid game with a Giant Jenga set to test out a more collaborative activity, which proved to be a crowd-pleaser. A highly engaged older couple played an extremely competitive game, even discussing the physics of Jenga. They were very creative in putting the blocks back on top both horizontally and vertically at various angles, with the Jenga tower reaching almost six feet before crashing down.

The dot board at this intersection asked about potential infrastructure improvements and active recreation activities, including exercise equipment, open streets events, and exercise programming. The results of the dot board surveys are included in Chapter 7.





CH. 7

LESSONS LEARNED FROM
TEST SITES

SUMMARY

As part of the Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper framework, the studio team reflected on the effectiveness of engagement strategies and the success of the activities to provide insight for future events. The findings are summarized in three categories: engagement strategy, event implementation, and engagement findings.

During the Highland Spark event days, the Studio Team collected feedback regarding future implementation of healthy design and programming in the community. Residents were shown boards with a variety of questions regarding design and programming, and were asked to place dot stickers next to the options that were the most appealing. Residents were also able to make their own suggestions beyond what was displayed on the board. On the second weekend, residents participated in the games and activities held at each corner.

Below: Bench Painting



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Below: Resident selecting a placemaking choice on a dot-board



Dot boards proved to be a successful tool for stimulating feedback and input from members of the Highland Park community. These visually engaging diagrams were printed on foam core boards and displayed using tripods at each site, providing participants with an opportunity to vote on improvements and programming that they would like to see in Highland Park. In many cases, people would ask Studio Team members about the purpose of the dot board. In other cases, they would see other people responding and approach out of curiosity. Different Studio Team members had different rates of success in their attempts initiating conversations with people.

Postcards showing the dates and locations of the Highland Spark events were useful both as branding material and as information, encouraging people to explore more activities and collecting stamps by interacting with the Studio Team. Some people particularly asked about other locations on the postcard or mentioned that they learned about the location from the postcard.

EVENT IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT WENT WELL

A few of the Studio Team members discovered that corners where people were already participating in activities attracted more people. During the second weekend, the Studio Team found that games were an incredibly popular attraction at the corners. The games tended to hold people at the corners longer than other activities, with the exception of bench painting. The most popular games were Jenga, which was a huge hit, and checkers. Cornhole was also modestly successful, particularly favored by Pino's patrons. While the games and activities presented during the Highland Spark events were as simple as hopscotch, it brought many nostalgic memories to the elderly community members and encouraged them to discuss their suggestions to improve public spaces in the borough. Bench painting was very popular with children, who tended to spend more time at the site. At the April 6th event, two young boys happened upon the event and painted for over an hour. They even came up with a bench design that was then followed by other painters. On March 30th, there was a flea market running concurrently with the Highland Spark event, which led to a higher volume of foot traffic in the area.



Above: Two young boys painting a bench

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED UPON

The team encountered various issues throughout the events. Some of the smaller issues included: the original larger hula hoops did not fit the space and were difficult to use by small children, the dominoes were not as popular of a game, and people had difficulty understanding the purpose of the photo booth, thinking it was a purely aesthetic element. Two larger concerns involved the stability of the newly-installed sunshades at the two corners on 4th Avenue and the lack of steady foot traffic during the April 6th event. Strong winds during the March 30th event threatened to blow the sun shades over, and when the Studio Team arrived to set up on April 6th, the sunshades had already been blown over. For unknown reasons, April 6th saw a lower volume of foot traffic than did the prior week, perhaps due to less optimal weather conditions. This led to lower attendance as the majority of participants happened upon the event while walking down Raritan Avenue and the side streets. Ensuring future outreach activities are well advertised and/or aligned with other events would likely increase participation.

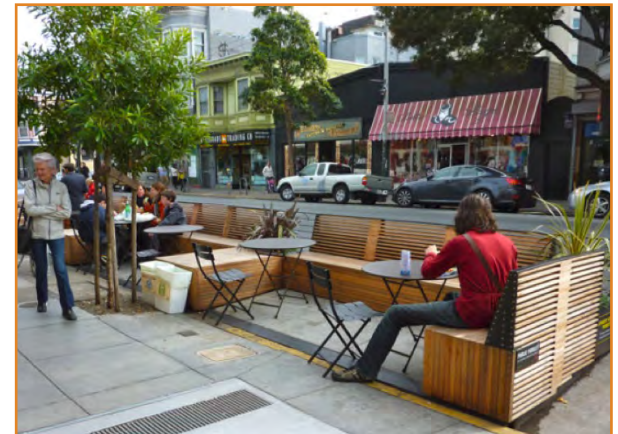
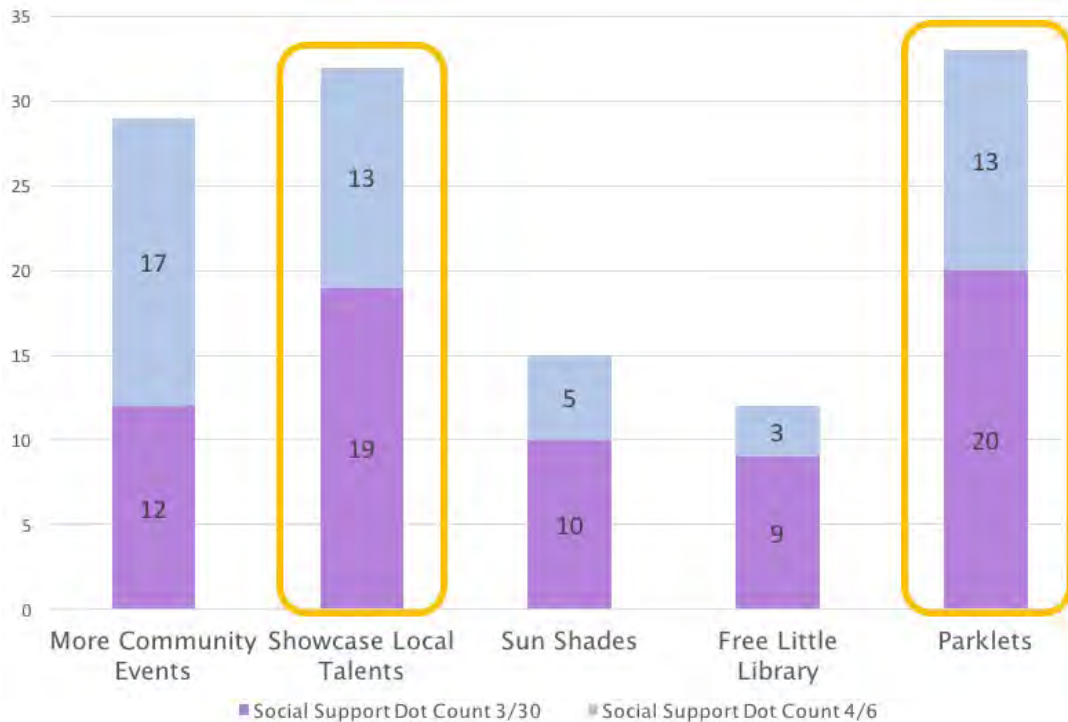
ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS (DOT BOARD SURVEYS)

3RD & RARITAN: SOUTHEAST

Under the theme of “social support and interaction,” engagement questions focused on options for activities and amenities that could encourage residents to be more social. In total, 121 residents were surveyed. Many residents expressed a desire for parklets as spaces for social interaction, as well as more community events, especially ones showcasing local talent.

One respondent was particularly concerned that the parklets be installed with the approval of people of diverse backgrounds, saying “there should be equitable implementation of the parklets...they should be for all community members.” There was also a specific suggestion about building skate parks for skateboarders, which could add more inclusive and diverse public spaces.

Dot board vote result: social support



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS (DOT BOARD SURVEYS)

3RD & RARITAN: SOUTHWEST / NORTHEAST

At the 3rd & Raritan southwest / northeast living rooms, participants were asked about the types of green spaces they would like to see, as well as what would encourage them to walk and bike more. Community gardens and parklets were the most popular types of green spaces amongst those surveyed. Other suggestions included a skate park, a waterfront trail connecting Raritan Avenue and Donaldson Park, and green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and tree trenches. Participants indicated that they would walk and bike more with improved bike lanes and pedestrian-focused play streets. They also suggested attracting more small businesses, creating a shared street to integrate space used for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists, and fixing sidewalks in the residential areas.

Dot board vote result: Walking and Biking



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS (DOT BOARD SURVEYS)

3RD & RARITAN: SOUTHWEST / NORTHEAST, CONT'D

Dot board vote result: Green Spaces



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS (DOT BOARD SURVEYS)

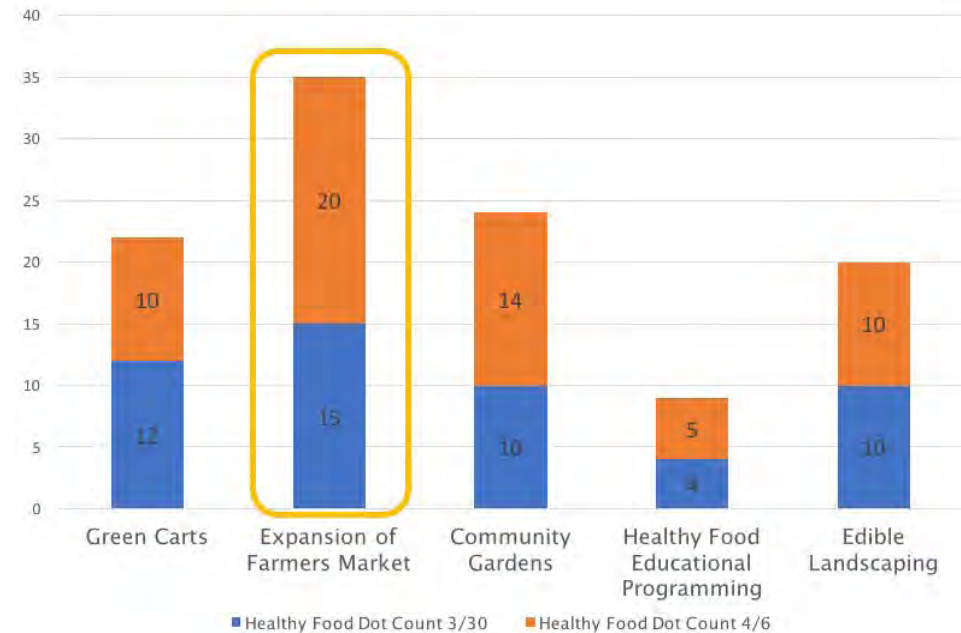
4TH & RARITAN: NORTHEAST

At the northeast corner of 4th and Raritan, Highland Spark participants weighed in on healthy food in Highland Park. The Studio Team asked community members their opinions on how the nutritious food offerings could be improved through changes to the Farmers Market, the addition of fruit and vegetable stalls, community gardens, and educational programming.

Overall, there was a positive reaction from the public about how to expand healthy eating options in the area. There seemed to be a great deal of support for the expansion of the Main Street Highland Park Farmers Market. Many residents and visitors enjoy the Farmers Market, but feel that the hours are too limited. The idea of bringing in green carts was also popular because many people felt that they could function as an extension of the Farmers Market.

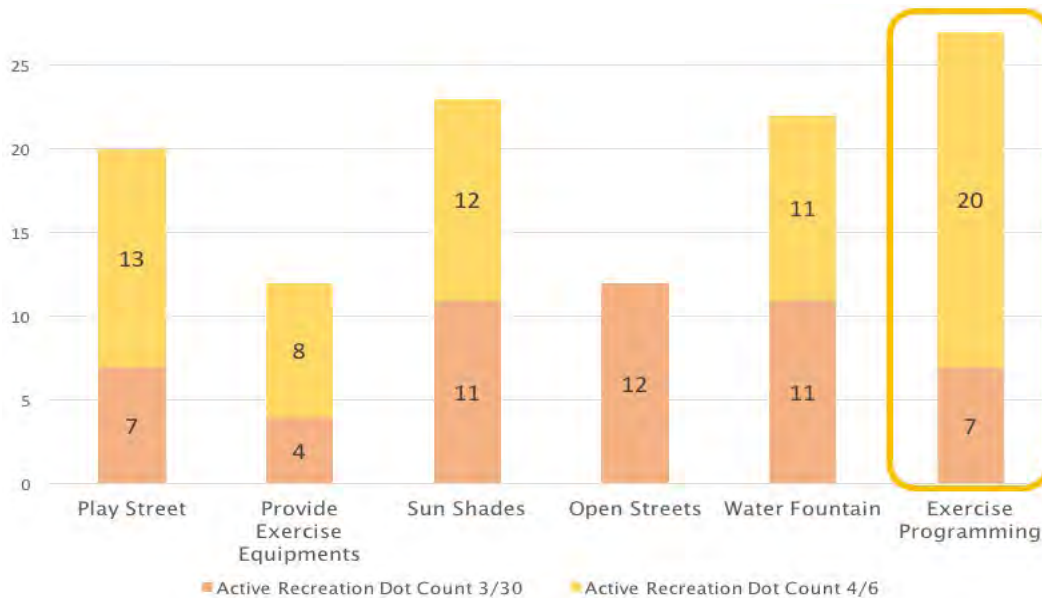
While the dot boards inspired discussion regarding healthy eating in the community, there were also several suggestions on how to make improvements to the physical surroundings of this intersection. These ideas included a green wall, murals with images related to the Borough or healthy eating, connecting the outdoor living room to the outdoor seating area at Pino's, and permanent shade in the form of trees or awnings. One suggestion combined the elements of healthy habits with physical infrastructure: the addition of a water bottle refilling station.

Dot board vote result: Healthy Foods



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS (DOT BOARD SURVEYS)

Dot board vote result: Active Recreation



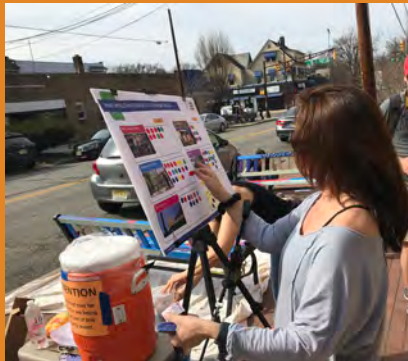
4TH & RARITAN: SOUTHWEST

The southwest corner of 4th and Raritan was given the theme of active recreation. The dot board here showcased potential infrastructure improvements and active recreation programs, inviting people to talk about exercising and write down their suggestions. On the first Saturday of Highland Spark, the creation of pedestrian-focused open streets proved to be the most popular option, followed by requests for sun shades and exercise programming. Among respondents' suggestions, water fountains and a spray park both gained much support, so the Studio Team swapped out the open streets option with a water fountain option for the second weekend.

The voting results demonstrated strong interest in exercise programming, but not very much interest in exercise equipment. Other suggestions included a community pool and spray park. Many people noticed the temporary sun shade added at the corner, commenting that it would allow them to use the facilities more and that they would love to see it at all outdoor living rooms.

The active recreation options on the dot board proved to be an effective conversation starter, eliciting people's comments on exercising around Highland Park and sparking people's imaginations regarding more specific programs such as yoga in the park.





what's your IDEA?

Residents and stakeholders took part in the placemaking practice in Highland Park on two days of placemaking and provided their idea of what they would like to see in the borough in future





CH. 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

FUTURE PLACEMAKING

The recommendations put forward in this chapter cover the following:

- 22 Highland Park sites with opportunities for future placemaking initiatives
- Placemaking action plans for five sites
- A placemaking showcase, featuring detailed action plans for two sites
- Engagement strategies for encouraging community participation in future placemaking efforts
- Evaluation measures that provide a framework for assessing placemaking efforts
- Highland Park policy recommendations and actions to achieve Sustainable Jersey certification

These recommendations are meant to serve as guidance as Highland Park moves forward with future placemaking efforts.



Right: Hopscotch on a sidewalk

PLACEMAKING SITES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LQC

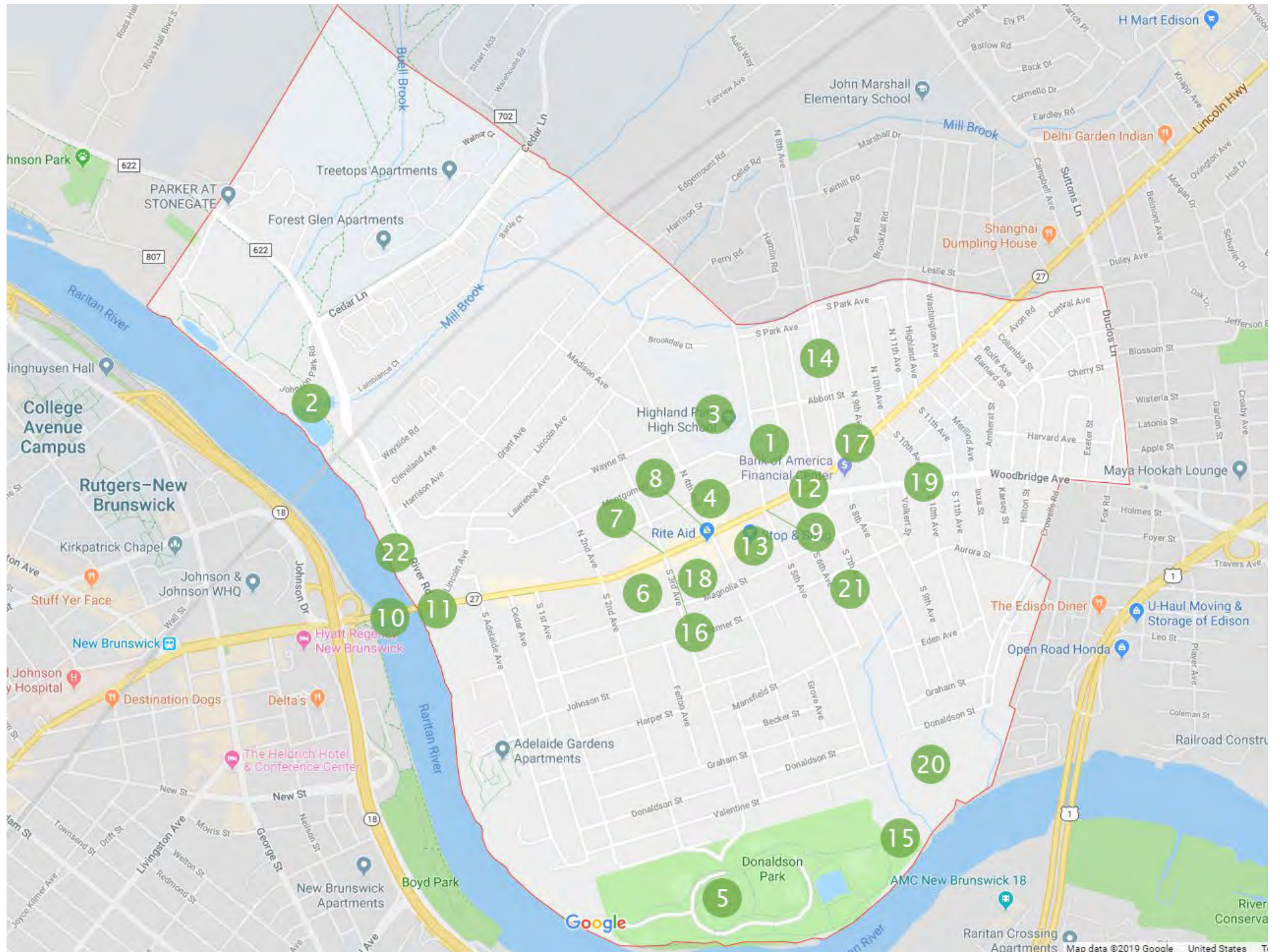
At the beginning of the project, the Studio Team created an inventory of places that had existing assets with the potential for greater activation. The following sites can be connected and mobilized to further the goals and implement the strategies in this Plan, which are displayed on page 77.

1. Highland Park Public Library
2. Johnson Park
3. Highland Park High School
Track
Front Plaza
4. Pino's Gift Basket Shoppe and Wine Cellar
5. Donaldson Park
Picnic Tables
Playgrounds
Waterfront
6. Farmers Market Lot
7. 3rd Avenue & Raritan Avenue
8. 4th Avenue & Raritan Avenue
9. 5th Avenue & Raritan Avenue
10. Route 27 Bridge
11. River Road & Raritan Avenue
12. Veterans Memorial Park
13. Stop & Shop Parking Lot
14. North 8th Avenue Corridor
15. Good Earth Community Garden
16. Penstock Coffee Roasters
17. Dairy Deluxe
18. 3rd Avenue Municipal Parking Lot
19. Woodbridge Avenue Corridor
20. Meadows Trail
21. Highland Park Teen Center
22. Eugene Young Environmental Education Cent

*Right: Word to Your Mother,
sidewalk art during Highland
Spark event*



All potential sites for placemaking in Highland Park



PLACEMAKING SITES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LQC



Above: Resident playing giant Jenga on placemaking days



Right: Bench painting in front of Penstock Coffee Roasters

With these sites in mind, members of the Highland Park Steering Committee were asked which locations had the greatest potential for activation. Based on these comments, the team selected the following five sites, with placemaking ideas for each described in greater detail in the action plans included below:

1. Farmers Market Lot
2. 3rd Avenue Corridor (Outdoor Living Rooms)
3. 3rd Avenue Municipal Parking Lot
4. Veterans Memorial Park
5. Woodbridge Avenue Corridor

While the team felt that the five sites mentioned above had great potential for activation, the concepts behind placemaking can be applied to any location. Future placemaking efforts in the Borough should consider the 22 locations as places that can be connected and mobilized to further the goals and implement the strategies contained within this report.

PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Detailed in Chapter 5, the February 19th workshop produced action plans for each location, including the activation concept, associated amenities, implementing partners, potential project leaders, and a general time frame for implementation, which laid the foundation for recommendations.

For the following plans, specific actions are divided on the basis of time frame and cost. Short-term is 6 months to 1 year, medium-term is 1 to 5 years, and long-term is 5+ years. Low-cost is under \$2,000, medium-cost is \$2,000 to \$10,000, and high-cost is \$10,000+.

Table 3: Farmers' Market Lot

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
March to Borough Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Free-wifi/charging station [med cost] · Painting cones and flower pots [low cost] · Night lighting [med cost] · Yarn bombing [low cost] · Varied seating options [med cost] · Heat lamps [med cost] · Canopy for rain cover [med cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Main Street Highland Park · Art Community · Local Businesses · Knitting groups · Quilting groups · Schools 	N/A	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Farmers Market and Movie Night already exist · Paint murals and mosaics [low cost] · Engage community members to participate in yarn bombing and quilting [low cost] <p>Medium- to long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Install permanent canopies, seating, and lighting [med cost]

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)

Low-cost (under \$2,000), medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and high-cost (\$10,000+)



PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Table 4: 3rd Avenue Corridor

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
Outdoor Living Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal benches [med cost] • Small center “gaming” tables [med cost] • Rain gardens [med cost] • Connections with nearby local businesses selling food, alcohol, and coffee [low cost] • Planters [med cost] • Sunshades [low cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penstock coffee • The Blue Horse • Music School • Pomerantz Professional building owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPW • Teri Jover, Borough Administrator • Main Street Highland Park (specifically the chair of the beautification committee) 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate partnerships with local businesses [low cost] • Implement simple, themed programming [low cost] • Build low-cost, aesthetically pleasing installations [low cost] <p>Medium- to long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add larger tables [med cost] • Add larger planters or trees, especially on the north side of Raritan [high cost]

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)
 Low-cost (under \$2,000), medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and high-cost (\$10,000+)



PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Table 5: 3rd Avenue Municipal Parking Lot

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
Parking Safety and Beautification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Open space · Flat surface · Painted pavement [med cost] · Bike racks [med cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park · Yellow Day Care Center · SpeakMusic Conservatory · Penstock Coffee Roasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Painting [low cost] <p>Medium- to long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Landscaping [high cost] · Lot resurfacing [high cost]
Flexible Lot as Outdoor Performance Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seating/benches [low cost] · Screen [med cost] · Speaker [med cost] · Re-paved surface [high cost] · Lighting [med cost] · Bike racks [med cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park · Yellow Day Care Center · SpeakMusic Conservatory · Penstock Coffee Roasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seating [low cost] · Screen [med cost] · Speakers [med cost] <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lighting [med cost] · Bike racks [med cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lot resurfacing [high cost]
Flexible Lot as Community Gathering Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fire pits [low cost] · Seating [low cost] · Lighting [med cost] · Flex tents or pop-up canopies [med cost] · Vendors (temporary retail) [med cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park · Yellow Day Care Center · SpeakMusic Conservatory · Penstock Coffee Roasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fire pits [low cost] · Seating [low cost] · Flex tents [med cost] <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lighting [med cost] · Vendors [med cost]

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)

Low-cost (under \$2,000), medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and high-cost (\$10,000+)

PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Table 6: Veterans Memorial Park

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
Public Art Project with Highland Park Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public art--primarily red, white, and blue themed [low-high cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highland Park Schools Main Street Highland Park Highland Park Arts Commission DPW Senior Community Center Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art Teachers at Highland Park Schools 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller art pieces, such as pinwheels [low cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger-scale art pieces, which can be incorporated into traffic calming measures [high cost]
A Reason to Stop and Sit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movable tables and chairs [low/med cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street Highland Park Borough of Highland Park DPW Local Veterans Organization" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street Highland Park 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-cost tables and chairs [low cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfacing of the space [high cost] Removal of landscaping to provide more space for people to gather [high cost] Permanent tables and chairs [med cost]
Traffic Calming Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street art [med cost] Curb extensions [med cost] Shorter and wider crosswalks [med/high cost] Make the area more pedestrian-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borough of Highland Park Highland Park Police NJDOT NJ Transit (2 bus routes at the park: 810 & 814) Arts Commission SWACC 	N/A	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial implementation along Woodbridge Avenue, using low cost materials and bollards [low/med cost] <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of project to Raritan Avenue [high cost] Incorporate the NJ Transit bus stops [high cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete street and intersection redesign with permanent materials [high cost]



PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Table 7: Woodbridge Avenue Corridor

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
Corridor Activation and Beautification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Art [med cost] · Benches [med cost] · Planters [med cost] · Bike racks [med cost] · Better signage [med cost] · Better and more creative lighting [high cost] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Local businesses · Middlesex County · Local artists · Main Street Highland Park · DPW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bike racks [med cost] · Planters [med cost] · Seating and tables [med cost] · Temporary signage [low cost] · Lighting demonstration [med cost] <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Art [med cost] · Seating [med cost] · More permanent signage [med cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Permanent lighting [high cost]
Transforming Empty Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seating and picnic benches [med cost] · Places to play [low cost] · Trees and plants [med cost] · Statues and art [high cost] · Pavers with grass or multi-use surfaces [high cost] · Flex space (parking during school pickup and dropoff, public park during other times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Private owner of lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All activities



PLACEMAKING ACTION PLANS

Table 7: Woodbridge Avenue Corridor Cont'd

Place Activation	Amenities & Activities	Implementing Partners	Project Leaders	Time Frame
Street Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Crosswalks and crossing signs [med cost] · Pedestrian signals [high cost] · Closing and eliminating curb cuts [med/high cost] · Better lighting [med cost] · Bike lanes [high cost] 	Middlesex County Borough of Highland Park DPW NJTPA Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough Administrator 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Installation of crosswalks [med cost] · Temporary elimination of curb cuts [med cost] · Lighting [med cost] · Temporary signage [low cost] <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Permanent elimination of curb cuts [high cost] · Bike lanes [high cost] · Permanent signage [med cost] <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pedestrian signals [high cost] · Turning radii adjustment [high cost]

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)

Low-cost (under \$2,000), medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and high-cost (\$10,000+)

OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM RECOMMENDATIONS

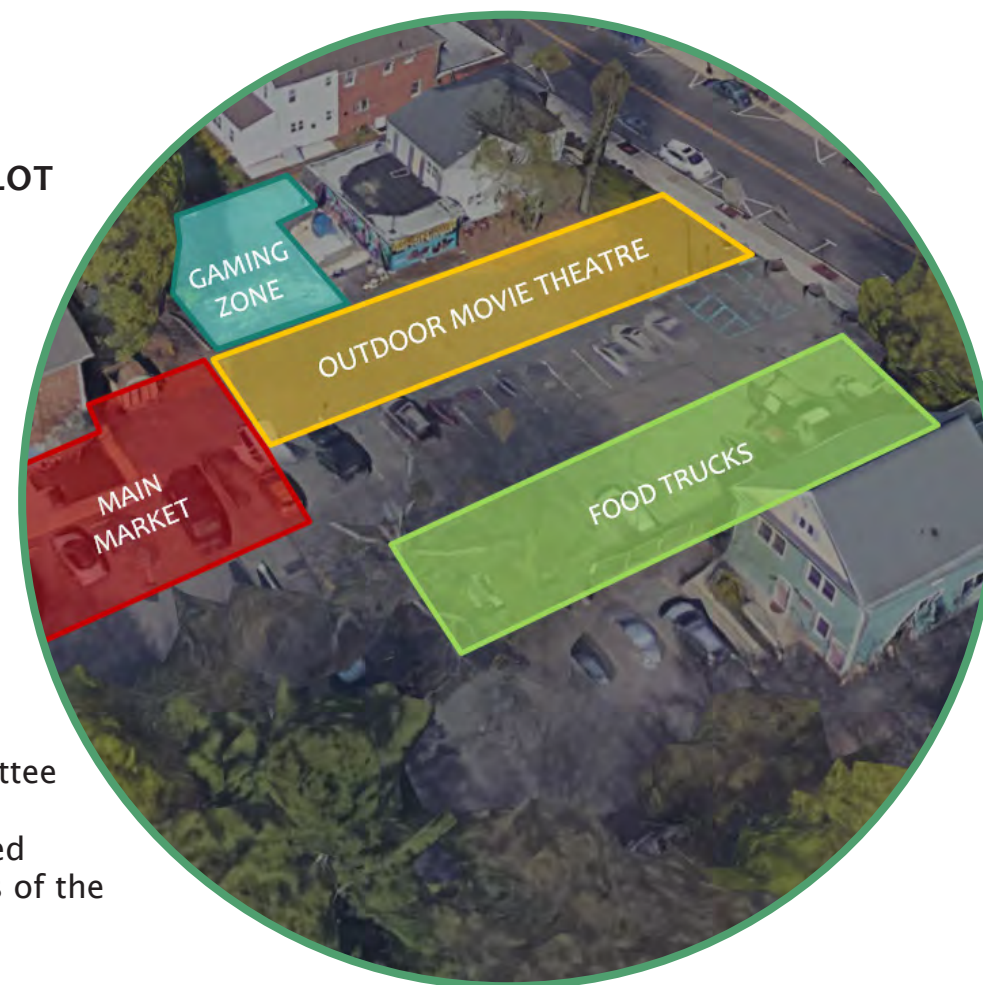


PLACEMAKING SHOWCASE - FARMERS' MARKET LOT

Drawing on input from the project's Steering Committee and feedback from the Highland Spark events, recommendations for two sites, the Farmers Market Lot and the Outdoor Living Rooms, are presented below to demonstrate how to use the placemaking process to implement recommendations.

Many visitors to the Highland Spark events expressed interest in using the Farmers Market Lot as a multipurpose space for public use. Currently, the lot is used for parking, the Highland Park Farmers Market on Fridays from 11:00 am to 5:30 pm from May through December, and several other events like outdoor movie nights. After speaking with the Steering Committee and hearing from Highland Park residents during the Highland Spark events, it was noted that the lot has a potential to be used for additional year-round events and activities on multiple days of the week.

We recommend a low-risk, high-return approach of implementing small improvements to this space in incremental phases. This will allow Highland Park to gradually get pieces of the project up and running and refine elements of the project along the way. Relying on smaller investments instead of large revitalization projects allows for community feedback to be part of the transformation. One comment frequently heard during the Highland Spark events was the idea of creating a public square in this space. Ultimately, phased improvements can work to achieve this goal of creating an active and vibrant destination for Highland Park residents and visitors. The phases are divided on the basis of time frame and cost, where Phase 1 is short-term (6 months to 1 year) and low-cost (under \$2,000), Phase 2 is medium-term (1 to 5 years) and medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and Phase 3 is long-term (5 years+) and high-cost (\$10,000+).



Above: Farmers' Market Lot Space Usage

In Phase 1 (short-term, low-cost), the section of the parking lot closest to Raritan Avenue can be dedicated to seating, using colorful movable chairs and tables with umbrellas. Improvements would include adding to the beauty of the place by installing planters and artwork that would look attractive to people as they walk by, and give them a reason to stop and spend some time in the square.

People also expressed interest in having more events and live music. This can happen gradually and in ways to be considerate of people living near the lot. For example, musicians can be invited to play only during daylight or early evening hours without sound amplification like loudspeakers, megaphones, or stereos. Small amenities like sidewalk chalk, bubbles, or park bench painting can help activate the space and encourage visitors to interact with each other and linger.



PHASE 1

In Phase 2 (medium-term, medium-cost), the activity area of the parking lot can be expanded to the church area. According to the Steering Committee, this lot is already budgeted to be repaved. This provides an incredible opportunity to better define the public space and add art to the lot. For example, the resurfaced lot can be painted to better define areas where visitors are encouraged to stop and relax. The youth in the community can be engaged to design and paint a street mural or other artwork.

In addition, string lights and sting pendants can be added to provide ambiance. Activities like a gaming zone or a flea market can be added to the area to attract more people and expand use of the area to other days of the week.



PHASE 2

In Phase 3 (long-term, high-cost), the entire lot can be used as a public square between Raritan Avenue and Magnolia Street. A covered space such as a gazebo can be added to provide visual interest and be used for music concerts or other purposes. An alternative may be to add a decorative water fountain or active play spray fountain. To complete a town square feel, a clock can be added with an illuminated face and the Borough's name prominently displayed. A decorative message board can be included (or moved from the location on 2nd Avenue and Raritan), to provide an area where community events can be advertised.

In completing the town square area, additional events and activities can include parade kick-off or ending location, yoga or Tai-Chi, dance parties, memorials and tributes, or food events. The result can not only provide an enhanced area for social engagement but provide new economic opportunities for the downtown businesses as more people are attracted to this location.



FARMERS MARKET LOT: PHASE 3 IDEAS

Long-term ideas for Phase 3 of the Farmers Market Lot transformation include an active play spray fountain, dance parties and a town square clock



*The fountain at Vendue Range
Charleston, S.C.*



BeterBlock: Dance Party, Brunswick, Australia

Source: Better Block Foundation



Example for a Town Landmark - Clock

PLACEMAKING SHOWCASE - OUTDOOR LIVING ROOMS

Of the six outdoor living rooms along Raritan Avenue, four were used for short-term activities during the Highland Spark events. The purpose of these LQC interventions was to engage the public and discuss how they want to use these corners in the future.

One of the most popular choices expressed during the Highland Spark events was interest in creating parklets. Typically, parklets are used to convert parking spaces into public seating areas as a creatively designed public space. They often provide needed public areas that include interesting decorative features and opportunities for social interaction. There is also an excitement in the temporary nature of these spaces. They create interest and buzz. Highland Park's outdoor living rooms provide much of the same environment but could be enhanced to create the same type of buzz and activity provided by parklets.

Currently, each outdoor living room contains two benches, a small side table, a human scale lamp, planters, and blue and green colored tiling that helps define the seating area. In short, they are a beautiful amenity to the business district.



Right: Parklet on Walnut Street in Montclair, NJ

PLACEMAKING SHOWCASE - OUTDOOR LIVING ROOMS



*Above: Mom and daughter take a break to play checkers
Right: Free Little Game Library in St. Paul, MN*



The recommended approach to enhancing the outdoor living rooms follows the idea that small changes can make big impacts. Sometimes a catalyst or “spark” is needed to encourage social interaction. Each corner can be used as a testing site for small, fun ideas. For example, adding games like chess, checkers or Jenga can provide an area for folks to take a mental health break. Additionally, setting up a game table or leaving out a box of chalk are simple ways to see if the space is used by children or other residents over time. Installing “free little libraries” that not only include books and newspapers, but also board games, would be an inexpensive addition that creates a welcoming and relaxing environment.

The outdoor living rooms could also be used or “adopted” by civic and school groups. Groups could be invited to host a gaming day, art event, environmental or health education sessions, or other activities. As Highland Spark proved, small events like these attract people to congregate, discuss ideas, and participate in fun projects.

Based on testing and trial at one or two corners, the Borough could go further based on residents’ reactions and use of the space. Implementation could be extended to the remaining living rooms. This would include adding permanent infrastructure like sunshades and drinking fountains, giving residents and visitors a reason to sit and relax at the corners and providing a “spark” for social interaction.

PLACEMAKING SHOWCASE - OUTDOOR LIVING ROOMS

Additional ideas the Studio Team brainstormed for the Outdoor Living Rooms included:

- Chalkboards with Fill-in the Blank Questions. E.g. “Before I die I want to_____”
- Magnetic Poetry
- Geocaching Spot or Treasure Boxes
- Coupons for Local Businesses
- Meet the Mayor (or Visit with a Veteran, etc.)
- Summer Reading Corners
- Health Check (blood pressure, massage stop, etc.)
- Yarn Street Art (a.k.a. yarn bombing)
- Reusable Bag Dispenser
- View the World a New Way using Kaleidoscopes
- Corner Arts & Crafts Creations
- I ❤️ HP Selfie Backdrop



Right: Couple using the painted bench after the Highland Spark events



EXISTING LIVING ROOMS



REACTIVATED LIVING ROOMS



FUTURE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND MOVING FORWARD

Moving forward, public engagement will be a critical component of the placemaking process. As emphasized in previous parts of this report, stakeholders and community members will need to be continuously involved throughout the process. This section highlights strategies that can be used to continue successful placemaking including social media, public demonstration projects using community suggestions, and educating stakeholders on the placemaking process.

An important aspect of future engagement should be inclusivity and the assurance that all demographics are active in the placemaking process. This will require creative solutions that ensure that people who may not typically participate in a traditional community engagement activity will still have opportunities to voice their ideas and opinions. This includes using online platforms, translating materials to languages other than English, creating partnerships with schools, organizations that serve seniors, and religious institutions, and age-appropriate outreach events for seniors or those with physical disabilities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other online platforms can be used to educate, promote, and provide opportunities for anyone to offer feedback and share experiences. Using these online platforms can be highly successful in making community members of varying backgrounds aware of the project. During the March 30th and April 6th Highland Spark events, numerous community members of varying ages and demographics took photos of the the outdoor living rooms and the programs that were occurring. Many of these photos were shared to online platforms, including by the Borough and Main Street Highland Park.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are effectively instant press releases that can be used not just to inform but also--depending on how a public agency or organization allows public comments to take place--as a platform for stakeholders and planners to ask questions of the public and to create an online dialogue.

If needed, each social media platform can be used differently. A 2015 study of North American public transit agencies utilizing social media as a tool for public engagement found that many agencies used Twitter for quick updates, while Facebook was used to post images that were for the public to share and enjoy, or for posts that the public could comment on and in some cases receive responses. The Borough and partner organizations should push their use of social media further so that it can bring more residents into the placemaking process, including those that cannot physically take part.

“Can we do a little more...?”

In a short Facebook post, the Borough was able to promote the event and bring to light the purpose of the placemaking exercise...

Image courtesy of the Borough of Highland Park official Facebook page.



Highland Park, New Jersey

March 29 at 8:33 AM · 🌐

Can we do a little more with these corner spaces, to draw residents downtown & attract visitors?

In January, the Borough of Highland Park partnered with a Rutgers Bloustein School studio class to implement a "lighter, quicker, cheaper" placemaking exercise in Highland Park. The class and Borough representatives explored many options and settled on the "living room" areas on the corners of 3rd and 4th & Raritan Avenues. To activate those areas and make them more vibrant, the class will be hosting live installation days on Saturday & Sunday March 30th and 31st and Saturday, April 6th.

We welcome you and your family to join us on Raritan Avenue on any of those three days, between 1 and 4 pm, to learn about the project and see firsthand the improvements that can be made to these spaces with just a few innovations. Activities include the painting of benches, recreational activities, and live art installations.

Thank you to Councilwoman Susie Welkovits Brown for championing this activity and helping us imagine how our downtown could become more of a magnet, with some small changes.



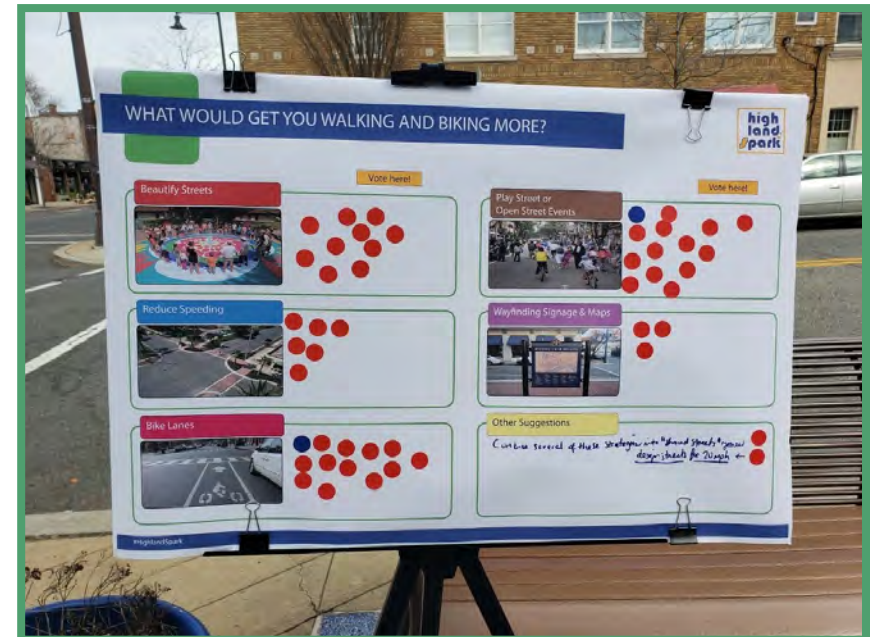
FUTURE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND MOVING FORWARD

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

Future public engagement strategies should incorporate the ideas and feedback from previous public engagement events. The dot boards featured in the outdoor living rooms provided an excellent opportunity for members of the Highland Park community and those who simply enjoy using the amenities of Raritan Avenue to express their opinions on future programming in Highland Park. Future placemaking should use some of those ideas, or at the very least further the discussion on some of those ideas.

EDUCATION

Future placemaking processes can be run by community members so that they are continually used and implemented by those that are experts on the needs of the community. Borough officials, Main Street Highland Park, the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (SWACC), religious organizations, council members, and business owners should be educated on aspects of the placemaking process. Future placemaking events will be led by members of the Highland Park community who hold some of the best local knowledge pertaining to placemaking.



Above: Dot Board of Walking and Biking

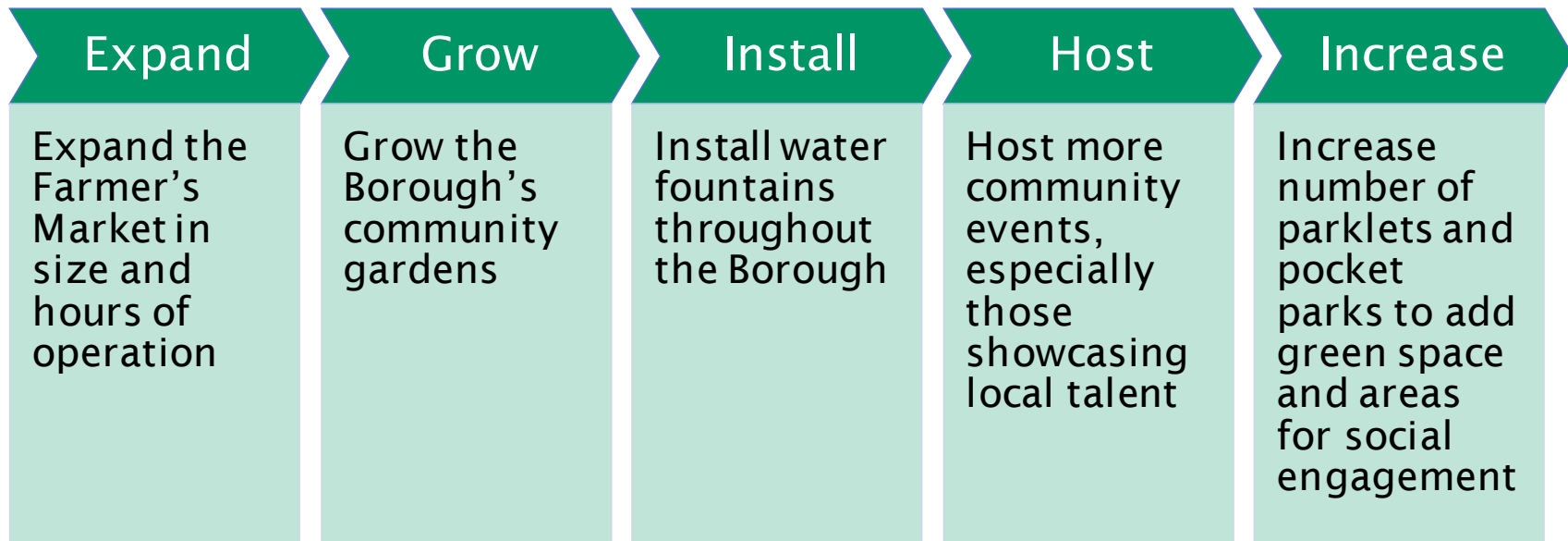
At the Third Avenue and Raritan, the public suggested that they would enjoy bike lanes, open street events, or beautification efforts. Future placemaking tactics should incorporate these ideas.

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND MOVING FORWARD

SCHEDULING

Future outreach efforts should consider when community members are available. The Studio Team initially planned an event on Sunday to reach the Orthodox Jewish community in Highland Park, but this was cancelled due to rain. Ensuring that future efforts allow all residents to take part is important to equitable and successful placemaking projects.

Programming and Design Recommendations



FUTURE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND MOVING FORWARD

RECOMMENDATIONS

The matrix below outlines a path for Highland Park to utilize future engagement strategies.

Table 8: Recommendations for Future Engagement Strategies

Strategy	Next Step (Prep)	Target Group	Lead Person/organization	Cost (low, medium, high)	Time Frame (short, med, long)
Educate stakeholders on placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Host events · Social media and online outreach 	General public	Borough of Highland Park	Low	Short
Obtaining community input to increase sense of investment in places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Polls, surveys, interviews · Tactical urbanism 	General public, business owners	Borough of Highland Park Main Street Highland Park	Medium	Medium
Encourage community collaboration to make great places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cleanups, semi-permanent construction projects · Volunteer organizations 	General public	Borough of Highland Park Main Street Highland Park	Medium	Long

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)

Low-cost (under \$2,000), medium-cost (\$2,000 to \$10,000), and high-cost (\$10,000+)



EVALUATION MEASURES

Building on the case study of evaluation measures in Chapter 4, the Studio Team established a framework for evaluating the outcomes of LQC placemaking projects. Given the theme of placemaking for health, these recommendations follow what Project for Public Spaces has identified as the five measures to evaluate how places can impact health. Besides those five elements, economic impact and equity are also key concerns. Thus, categories related to economic outcomes and equity are added to provide a comprehensive matrix of measures. Note that equity is critical in evaluating such projects, given that our event days ended up missing the Orthodox Jewish community, and their opinions were not reflected in the community engagement feedback.

Table 9: Evaluation Measures for Placemaking Actions

Strategies	Example of Actions	Considerations about Measuring	Indicators	Measurement Methods
Social support and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More community events Showcase local talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved? How many different types of activities are occurring? What are communities' feedback regarding these events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of residents involved Number of partnerships developed Level of engagement in social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct observation Social media Interviews and testimonials
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse activities catering to residents of diverse background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved? Who are underrepresented? Do people voice their ideas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of residents from different groups involved Advocacy from each group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head counts Social media Interviews and testimonials
Economic outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot chocolate event Green cart Beer garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has changed from before? How is that an improvement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in number of attendees Growth in retail sales Growth in property values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head counts Business surveys Tax receipts Land values Economic impact studies Interviews and testimonials
Play and active recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved? What are communities feedback regarding these events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of residents involved in the physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct observation Before and after pictures Surveys on the impact in communities become more active Interviews and testimonials



EVALUATION MEASURES

Table 9: Evaluation Measures for Placemaking Actions Cont'd

Strategies	Example of Actions	Considerations about Measuring	Indicators	Measurement Methods
Play and active recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installing water fountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the water fountain being used? What has changed from before? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people who use the water fountain 	
Green and natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community gardens Parklets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the green space being used? How is that different? How do communities respond? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people who use those community gardens or parklets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before and after pictures Direct observation Interviews and testimonials
Healthy food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of Farmers Market Green carts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved? How has the healthy food concerns changed from before? How do communities respond? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of residents involved Number of partnerships developed Level of engagement in social media related to healthy food concerns Number of people who are more likely to eat healthy food due to the expansion of Farmers Market and the presence of green carts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct observation Surveys on the impact in communities become more likely to eat healthy food Social media Interviews and testimonials



EVALUATION MEASURES

Table 9: Evaluation Measures for Placemaking Actions Cont'd

Strategies	Example of Actions	Considerations about Measuring	Indicators	Measurement Methods
Walking and biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has changed from before? How do communities respond? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of residents involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before and after pictures Direct observation Surveys on the impact in communities become more likely to walk and bike Interviews and testimonials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike lanes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of bikers who use those bike lanes Number of new bikers (shifting from other modes) 	

Evaluation methods can utilize quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative evaluation aims to measure how a placemaking project changes after interventions are made. The methods of collecting quantitative information include direct observation, tracking, and surveys.³⁵ Direct observation is a method of gathering quantitative data by recording the number of participants in a particular time and place. One of the tools that could be utilized is the SOPARC, which is generally used to monitor park projects. Tracking is conducted to quantify the number of attendees or the number of people engaged in certain activities or events.

Surveys are an important means of capturing people's perceptions and experiences of a particular project. Qualitative evaluation is intended to observe people's behavior and capture their opinions on how successful a placemaking project is. Qualitative evaluation may include interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and oral histories. Interviews and FGDs are usually conducted to ask questions regarding specific issues in a group setting, while oral histories are employed to engage certain people with knowledge of past conditions.³⁶

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the on-site audits and recommendations for future LQC, the following policies for placemaking in Highland Park were identified.

Table 10: Policy Recommendations

Future Policy	Next Step(s)	Lead Person/ organization
Permitting installation of parklets through an ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Define permitted designs and amenities of parklets and their limitations · Check for possible locations where parklets may be installed · Show these locations on a map to assist applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park
Installing “Free Little Libraries”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Check for possible locations where Free Little Libraries could be installed along Raritan Avenue and in residential neighborhoods · Look for several organizations and individuals who can donate books for free or at minimum cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park · Highland Park Public Library
Include “Placemaking” and or “Tactical Urbanism” in the job descriptions of planners and staff positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Look for several placemaking and tactical urbanism strategies and skills required to be added in the job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Main Street Highland Park · Borough of Highland Park
Include a Borough Square on the Farmers Market Parking Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Look for case studies on public squares and plazas which can be used as a potential source of reference for designs and amenities · Conduct a survey and public consultation meetings to know the views of the public about the idea · Consider resident feedback on public amenities provided in this report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park
Include “placemaking” as an objective of the Fund for Highland Park in Master Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Revise the Master Plan · Determine costs to implementing placemaking projects and programs in Highland Park · Pursue grant funding for placemaking projects and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park

Short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 5 years), and long-term (5+ years)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Future Policy	Next Step(s)	Lead Person/ organization
Incorporate the “Highland Park Downtown Redevelopment Plan” into the Master Plan Land Use Element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Revise the Master Plan · Consider adding items found in resident feedback on public amenities and infrastructure provided in this report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park
Install reusable bag dispensers in and around the CBD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Disseminate information on how to procure reusable bags to residents through multifaceted outreach approaches (social media, newsletters etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Highland Park Green Team · Main Street Highland Park · Borough of Highland Park
Update Complete Streets Policy to include green streets and green infrastructure and equity objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consult with New Jersey Complete Streets Working Group to determine language of amendments to existing Complete Streets Policy (No. 8-13-248). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park · NJ Complete Streets Working Group · Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center
Creating a stormwater utility to fund green infrastructure and new Complete Streets Policy objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Talking with Highland Park Green Team to create goals and objectives of utility · Engaging with residents to communicate benefit of a new utility · Identifying areas where a utility can fund beneficial improvements · Partnering with organizations and developers to support development of greener infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jersey Water Works · NJDEP · Highland Park Green Team · Highland Park DPW · NJDOT · Borough of Highland Park
Coordinate with APA-NJ to create a tactical urbanism lending library to be housed in the Borough’s DPW; library items can be used and or rented by organizations/municipalities interested in tactical urbanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Partner with APA-NJ to generate interest in NJ planning community · Explore funding opportunities · Partner with Main Street Highland Park to administer and maintain library resources · Explore additional partnerships to help share costs and increase knowledge of library · Review best practice examples from TrailNet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · APA-NJ · Borough of Highland Park · Main Street Highland Park · NJ Future · Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center · Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM)
Review current policies, plans, and programs for opportunities to include health as described in Section 4: Highland Park Plans, Policies, & Programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assemble task force to address existing policies · Review best practices and possibly incorporate into policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Borough of Highland Park



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EARNING POINTS FOR SUSTAINABLE JERSEY

Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for both New Jersey municipalities and public schools that want to go green, conserve resources, and take steps to create a sustainable community. By enrolling and certifying through the Sustainable Jersey program, schools and communities have access to tools, training, financial incentives, and grants for support toward becoming more sustainable including reducing waste, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and improving environmental equity. By completing this placemaking plan, Highland Park should qualify for 10 points towards Sustainable Jersey certification for the Creative Placemaking Plan action as long as the prerequisite is approved by Sustainable Jersey.

Table 11: Sustainable Jersey Actions

Action	Points	SJ Submission Requirements
Establish a Creative Team	10	The HP Arts Council meets the requirements for a Creative Team. Submission requirements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role of team/committee 2. Committee member list 3. Organizational structure & relation to municipality 4. Geographic area the committee covers 5. Past & planned activities summary 6. Resolution, ordinance, or meeting minutes that substantiate how and when the Creative Team (Arts Council) was established
Creative Placemaking Plan	10	Prerequisite: Establish a Creative Team Submit a Placemaking Plan. Report sections that meet criteria are in brackets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of project partners and what led to the plan [Section: Steering Committee] 2. A vision statement that summarizes important outcomes the community could gain from the plan [Sections: Vision Statement, Action Plan] 3. A statement of values that identify the principles that leaders and stakeholders should use in determining strategies [Section: HP Values Healthy, Inclusive Places] 4. Set of goals and strategies this plan seeks to accomplish through arts and culture. Include opportunities for and challenges to meeting these goals. [Section: Action Plan] 5. Goals & strategies to enhance economic opportunity for people through arts & culture [Section: Action Plan] 6. Goals and strategies to enhance the climate for individual creativity and collective cultural expression [Section: Action Plan] 7. Description of distinct qualities of the community [Section: Demographics & Health Profile] 8. Description of resources - people, buildings, environment - that can be connected to further this plan [Sections: Future LQC/Placemaking & Placemaking: Two Site Examples] 9. Discussion how the plan can be implemented and by whom as well as who will be responsible for updating the plan as the community changes [Project Purpose]



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 11: Sustainable Jersey Actions Cont'd

Action	Points	SJ Submission Requirements
Creative Assets Inventory	10	<p>Prerequisite: Establish a Creative Team Submit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of all assets that exist in HP, including associations, organizations, community gathering spaces, environmental assets, cultural activities, arts organizations and individual artists. 2. Documentation of stakeholder involvement
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy	10	<p>The Adopt a Complete Streets Policy action and its companion action – Institute Complete Streets – will be revised for the 2020 certification cycle based on new best practice found in the forthcoming Complete and Green Streets for All, Model Complete Streets Policy & Guide – Making New Jersey’s Communities Healthy, Equitable, Green & Prosperous. For more information contact the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center at the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University for guidance. Email: srts@ejb.rutgers.edu</p>
Institute Complete Streets	10	



CH. 9

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDING SOURCES

While the Studio Team's suggestions fall under the umbrella of "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper," it is understood that program funding can be overwhelming. To continue future Highland Spark initiatives, use this matrix to assist with initial research of potential funding opportunities. Many of these organizations pride themselves in promoting placemaking projects to create equitable and culturally diverse spaces. The Borough is encouraged to visit this initial list and to continue researching other potential funding programs.

Program Name	Program Description	Eligibility	Source	Details (link, document etc.)
ArtPlace America (ArtPlace)	ArtPlace is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions. We began our work as an organization in 2011, and will finish in 2020. Our mission is to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development. To this end, ArtPlace provides a web portal with reports and articles offering funding, partnership and guidance opportunities to communities.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments?	ArtPlace America	https://www.artplaceamerica.org/questions/finding-funding
Placemaking Program & Grant	NAR's Placemaking Grant is available to REALTOR® associations to help them plan, organize, implement and maintain these types of Placemaking activities in their communities.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments?	National Association of Realtors (NAR)	https://realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach/placemaking
Creative Placemaking Fund	NJCC's Creative Placemaking Fund (CPF) deploys capital to arts and culture based enterprises and neighborhood development efforts that celebrate the character, diversity, and livability of New Jersey communities.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments?	New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC)	https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Funds & Grants	Challenge America - These grants support projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations. Matching grants are for \$10,000. A minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount is required. Total project costs must be at least \$20,000 or greater.	Organizations, Non-Profits	National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)	https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/grant-program-description
	Art Works - These grants support artistically excellent projects that celebrate our creativity and cultural heritage, invite mutual respect for differing beliefs and values, and enrich humanity. Matching grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. A minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount is required.			https://www.arts.gov/grants/apply-grant/grants-organizations#challenge%20america
	Our Town - is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grants program. These grants support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Successful Our Town projects ultimately lay the groundwork for systemic changes that sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into strategies for strengthening communities.			https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction



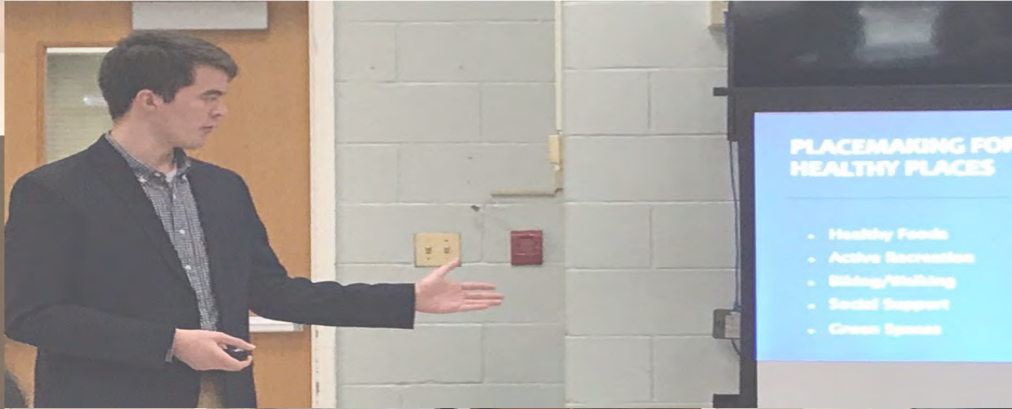
FUNDING SOURCES

Program Name	Program Description	Eligibility	Source	Details (link, document etc.)
Arts & Culture Program	Local Systems - Through grants and investments, we seek to identify and unlock municipal-level barriers to creative community development approaches in these systems.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments	The Kresge Foundation	https://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture/local-systems-0 https://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture/place-based-initiatives-0
	Placed-based Initiatives - Through these investments, we fund organizations and comprehensive neighborhood-based demonstration initiatives that support equitable community development outcomes.			
Heart of the Community	Heart of the Community is a signature outreach program of Southwest Airlines with a mission to build connections that bring people together and strengthen communities for a more resilient future.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments?	Southwest Airlines/Project for Public Places	https://www.pps.org/heart-of-the-community
Community/ Grassroots Grants	When people can implement the small acts of community they dream of, neighbourhoods and communities thrive. Grassroots Grants help people implement their own small acts of community, right in the communities where they live, by offering small amounts of money for project expenses.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments?	Calgary Foundation	https://calgaryfoundation.org/grantsawards-loans/types-of-grants/grassroots-grants/
Health Program	Community-Driven Solutions - Through community-driven solutions, we will support communities to improve housing quality and stability, environmental conditions and food systems.	Organizations, Non-Profits, Local Governments	The Kresge Foundation	https://kresge.org/programs/health/community-driven-solutions https://kresge.org/integration-of-health-and-human-services
	Integration of Health and Human Services - In partnership with the Human Services Program, we bridge the health and human services sectors to create more seamless, effective, and sustainable interventions that advance social and economic mobility and improve the health and well-being of people and communities.			
Partners for Places	National funders invest in local projects to promote a healthy environment, a strong economy, and well-being of all residents. Through these projects, Partners for Places fosters long-term relationships that make our urban areas more prosperous, livable, and vibrant. The grant program will provide partnership investments between \$25,000 and \$75,000 for one year projects, or \$50,000 and \$150,000 for two year projects, with a 1:1 match required by one or more local foundations.	Organizations, Non-Profits	Funders' Network	https://www.fundersnetwork.org/partners-for-places/



FUNDING SOURCES

Program Name	Program Description	Eligibility	Source	Details (link, document etc.)
W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grants	Available grants in the focus areas of 1) equitable communities 2) thriving children 3) working families.	Organizations, Non-Profits	W.K. Kellogg Foundation	https://www.wkkf.org/grants
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grants	Health Systems - Catalyzing fundamental changes in health and health care systems to achieve measurably better outcomes for all.	Organizations, Non-Profits	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	https://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/grants-and-grant-programs.html
	Healthy Children, Healthy Weight - Enabling all children to attain their optimal physical, social and emotional well-being, including growing up at a healthy weight.			
	Healthy Communities - Creating the conditions that allow communities and their residents to reach their greatest health potential.			
	Health Leadership - Engaging a diverse array of leaders in all sectors with the vision, experience, and drive to help build a Culture of Health.			
Knight Foundation Grants	Communities - We work to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy.	Organizations, Non-Profits	Knight Foundation	https://www.knightfoundation.org/grants
	Arts - Connecting people to place and each other. Our approach is to simultaneously fund major arts institutions and talented local artists.			





ACRONYMS

Program Name	Program Description
ACS	American Community Survey
CBD	Central Business District
CHIP	Community Health Improvement Plan
DPW	Highland Park Department of Public Works
ECHDC	Erie Canal Harbor Development Company
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GCP	Green Community Plan
HiAP	Health in All Policies
HP	Highland Park
LQC	The “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” concept
MLUL	Municipal Land Use Law
NBT	New Brunswick Tomorrow
NJDEP	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NJDOT	New Jersey Department of Transportation
NJSHAD	New Jersey State Health Assessment Data
NJTPA	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
PPS	Project for Public Spaces
RWJF	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
RWJUH	Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
SHP	Sustainable Highland Park
SOPARC	System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities
SOSNA	South of South Neighborhood Association
SPUH	Saint Peter’s University Hospital
SWACC	Safe Walking and Cycling Committee
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

EVENT MATERIALS INVOICE

Which Sites?	Material	Quantity	Price	Total Price	Borrowing or Purchase
4th and Raritan	8.5 x 11 dry erase boards (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
4th and Raritan	dry erase markers (Dollar Tree)	2	\$1.00	\$2.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	Wet Wipes (Dollar Tree)	2	\$1.00	\$2.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	Paint Brushes to paint benches (Dollar Tree)	8	\$1.00	\$8.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	disposable gloves (Dollar Tree - 100 gloves)	1	\$1.00	\$1.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	Sand Paper (Dollar Tree)	3	\$1.00	\$3.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	Buckets of water for cleaning paint brushes (Dollar Tree)	3	\$1.00	\$3.00	Purchased
3rd and Raritan	Tarpaulin (Dollar Tree)	1	\$1.00	\$1.00	Purchased
4th and Raritan	Flower plates (Dollar Tree)	1	\$1.00	\$1.00	Purchased
All	Bin for items at each corner (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
All	Zip ties - Large (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
All	Bubbles (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
All	Painters Tape (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
All	Water bowls for dogs (Dollar Tree)	4	\$1.00	\$4.00	Purchased
All	Sidewalk Chalk (8 Packs Sidewalk Chalk Set - Dollar Tree)	8	\$1.00	\$8.00	Purchased
All	Garbage Bags (Dollar Tree)	1	\$1.00	\$1.00	Purchased
All	Dog biscuits (Dollar Tree)	2	\$1.00	\$2.00	Purchased
Engagement/ Programming	Foam Core (12 - Dollar Tree)	12	\$1.00	\$12.00	Purchased
			w/o tax	\$68.00	
			w/6.625% tax	\$4.50	
				\$72.50	
3rd and Raritan	Latex exterior paint with stirring sticks (house paint)	1	\$25.98	\$27.70	Purchased (incl. Tax)
4th and Raritan	Sunshade (Blue 9'10" x 9'10" x 9'10")	2	\$27.71	\$55.42	Purchased (incl. Tax)
4th and Raritan	Flowers (Stop & Shop)	1	\$8.99	\$9.58	Purchased (incl. Tax)
			Grand Total	\$165.20	

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Highland Park Stakeholder Workshop (February 19, 2019)

The studio conducted a meeting with Highland Park stakeholders on Tuesday, February 19 at the Borough's community center. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the initial project background research and to obtain input and come to a group consensus on the placemaking site. In attendance were representatives from the town's Safe Walking and Cycling Committee (SWACC), the Borough Administrator and her staff, the placemaking subcommittee, and Studio Team members and instructors.

The meeting began with an introduction by Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Senior Researcher and Adjunct Professor with the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center and one of the Studio Team instructors. This was followed by a student-led "ice breaker" to welcome everyone and to encourage discussion. In the ice breaker activity, participants introduced themselves and shared words and phrases that came to mind when thinking about Highland Park. Members of the Studio Team then delivered a brief overview of the group's objective, relevant demographic research, the concept of placemaking, and the Power of 10+ process. The presentation concluded by identifying five potential locations for placemaking initiatives within Highland Park that had been selected by the Studio Team and the Steering Committee. Following the presentation, the group transitioned into smaller groups and explored a few specific areas of the Borough, by conducting a PPS "place audit."

Small groups of Studio Team members and stakeholders walked to five separate locations: the 3rd Avenue public parking lot, the 3rd Avenue corridor between Benner Street to Dennison Street, Veterans Memorial Park at the intersection of Woodbridge and Raritan Avenues, the Woodbridge Avenue corridor between South 8th and 11th Avenues, and the Raritan Avenue public parking lot behind the Reformed Church of Highland Park.

Prior to exploring these locations, Laura Torchio and Cailean Kok--representatives from Project for Public Spaces and Studio Team instructors--explained how to conduct a place audit. Each group was asked to identify unique physical characteristics, places of interest, potential challenges, potential activities, and more in their place audit. This information would then be used to brainstorm potential activities and amenities in the site including point of contact, implementing partner or organization, status, funding estimate, and time frame. Each group then outlined a short-term activity with sufficient potential as a placemaking project in Highland Park.





STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The first place audit group aimed to develop a more flexible use of the public parking lot, which they dubbed the “flex lot.” The flex lot is ideal both for its available space and its proximity to the center of the Borough. The lot could be activated as a performance space, a venue for community group socials, or creative painting to beautify the asphalt and concrete. This could all be done without taking away the existing parking, while simultaneously slowing down cars entering and exiting the lot.

The second group presented a broad plan to activate the outdoor living rooms on 3rd Avenue and Raritan Avenue by incorporating some chairs and tables, as well as having different themes and activities for each corner. One idea was to install a blackboard with chalk and a magnetic poetry board. This plan aims to include and partner with the small businesses located nearby.

The third group drafted a plan to implement design features in and around Veterans Memorial Park to slow down traffic. Traffic-calming measures would include street art and bollards alongside the park. These installations would serve both as beautification and traffic calming for the busy intersection where Raritan and Woodbridge Avenues meet.

The fourth group shared their idea of activating the Woodbridge Avenue corridor between 8th and 11th Avenues to attract more pedestrians and emulate the success of the Borough’s main street, the Raritan Avenue corridor. These improvements could be accomplished by installing public art, benches, planters, bike racks, and better signage for cars and pedestrians. This project would involve some key partners, such as local businesses, local artists, and Main Street Highland Park.

The fifth group explained their idea to reconfigure the existing parking lot used by Main Street Highland Park Farmers Market to ensure better pedestrian and bicyclist accessibility. For the short term plan, chairs, tables, and street lights will be added to the site and installations such as “yarn-bombing” of light posts or nearby infrastructure will be explored. Main Street Highland Park could serve as a strong partner and continue this plan after this studio’s conclusion. In the long term, this site could be revitalized as a town square and permanent plaza for large gatherings in the town.

Following the presentations, each meeting representative had the opportunity to cast three votes via sticker choice.

The activation of the outdoor living room on 3rd Avenue was selected as the final project. The Studio Team then planned to reconvene and discuss the potential activities and design elements that can be done in a timely manner in the outdoor living rooms. Once the potential activities and promotional events are identified, the Studio Team worked to communicate these ideas to the committee and other stakeholders.

HIGHLAND PARK WORKSHOP

Date: February, 19, 2019
Time: 1:10 pm - 04:00 pm
Location: Highland Park Community Center,
220 S. 6th Avenue
Highland Park, NJ 08904

List of Participants:

Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Instructor
Laura Torchio, Instructor
Cailean Kok, Instructor
Rebecca Hersch, Main Street Highland Park
Trish Sanchez, Chair, SWACC
Sean Meehan, Vice Chair, SWACC
Susan Welkovits, Councilmember
Teri Jover, Business Administrator
Javier Zavaleta, Main Street Highland Park
Emma Missey, Borough of Highland Park
Silvia Cuevas, Student
Ian Girardeau, Student
Harsheeta Gupta, Student
Christopher Henchey, Student
Daniel Hutton, Student
Ted Metz, Student
Max Natanagara, Student
Yoga Adhi Pratama, Student
Samuel Rosenthal, Student
Qingyang Xie, Student
Chen Zhang, Student
Zhaoming Zhang, Student



Above: Bloustein Studio Team



RESOURCES

There are many resources for placemaking, creative placemaking, tactical urbanism, etc. The following highlights several state of the practice publications.

Project for Public Spaces: [What is Placemaking](#), [The Case For Healthy Place](#), [Using Streets as Places](#), [The Power of 10+](#), [Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Spaces](#)

Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey: [Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center](#)

Center for Active Design: [Assembly: Civic Design Guidelines](#)

Gehl Institute: [Inclusive Healthy Places A Guide to Inclusion & Health in Public Space: Learning Globally to Transform Locally](#)

Main Street America: [Build a Better Block](#)

Michigan State University School of Planning, Design and Construction: [Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool: A Placemaking Guidebook](#)

National Endowment for the Arts: [How to do Creative Placemaking](#)

Policy Link: [Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer](#)

Regina Urban Ecology: [Planner's Guide to Tactical Urbanism](#)

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: [Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America](#)

Street Plans Collaborative: [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#), [Tactical Urbanism 2](#)

Transportation for America: [The Scenic Route](#)



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- [14] <http://www.hpboro.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/167>
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Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
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