To: Placemaking Leadership Council
    Architecture of Place Working Group Members

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Re: Notes from the Placemaking Leadership Council Architecture of Place
Working Group

First of all, many thanks for your participation and contributions to this group. We
really appreciated your creativity, ideas, and diverse experience. While there will be
more follow ups for the Detroit event itself, this memo attempts to capture some
highlights from our group's conversations over the two days we spent together.

Also, we are considering the whole range of suggestions about how to best facilitate
the emerging network and group discussion that started in Detroit, there will be
more from us on that soon as well.

Please feel free to e-mail any and all comments and suggestions to Philip
(pwinn@pps.org).

*Day 1*

We opened with a discussion on the question "What is an Architecture of Place?" As
a prompt we looked at a variety of images of places provided by the group as
examples of a successful "Architecture of Place."

We then broke into sub-groups to brainstorm lists of key **obstacles** to implementing
a successful Architecture of Place, and key **strategies** for overcoming those
obstacles.

At the end of the session we summarized our thoughts for the end of day report
back to all groups.

**Obstacles**

The key obstacles we chose to report back at the end of the session:

- Pressure for traditional economic development above all else
- Lack of enlightened leadership
- Fragmentation of interests and goals ( designer / developer / contractor / government / citizen )
- Lack of understanding of the benefits of Placemaking

Other obstacles that came up in our discussion:

- Finances: Lack of funding for investment in the public realm
- Too many plans, not enough execution.
- Planning and design without context: Over-dependence on outside experts and competitions.
- Problems of Scale: Zoning regulations and existing lot sizes that prevent diversity of ownership and uses on the ground floor of buildings.
- Silver Bullet Thinking: The idea that one large project will solve many problems once and for all.
- Nimby-ism
- How do we measure success?


**Strategies**

The key strategies we chose to report back at the end of the session:

- Utilize local talent (process)
- Better sharing of tools, templates, and practices.
- Quantify and articulate the benefits of successful public spaces.
- Framing change as Placemaking
- Food Trucks

Other strategies that came up in our discussion:

- Placemaking itself is the strategy – frame strategies around placemaking
- Create a Placemaking curriculum and education process for elected officials
- Design for seasonal changes
- Expanded design review process through planning, show space activation connection to other buildings, criteria for development should be there in planning process from beginning
- Push for achievable timelines from when plans should be executed
- Need a more robust process to bring together stakeholders

- Scenario modeling tools to look at different outcomes from different plans
- More inclusive placemaking approaches: people tend to look at place from their perspective, conflict results from this, approach should start with bringing people together to develop a common language of understanding

## *Day 2*

We looked at 4 key areas in our conversation on Day 2: **Messages** that can change how people think, defining the **role** of the Leadership Council, **tools** that could be developed or supported by the Leadership Council, and making personal and organizational commitments to action.

## Messages*

*We agreed that the need for a communications strategy for the Leadership Council is essential, as well as an understanding of which messages are best for which audiences*

The key messages we chose to report back at the end of the session:

- Placemaking has multiple inherent benefits
- Anyone can be a Placemaker
- There are assets in <u>every</u> community
- Everyone has the right to good places (access to good places is a universal right)

Other messages that came up in our discussion:


## Possible Roles of the Leadership Council*

*We agreed that the relationship between PPS and the Leadership Council needs further definition*

The key possible roles we chose to report back at the end of the session:

- Assembler / Curator
- Translator / Communicator
- Convener
- Change Maker
- Liaison / Advisor / Bridge
- Not your typical trade association
- Research Body

Other roles that came up in our discussion:

- The example of the USGBC (Us Green Building Council) was discussed as a possible model. USGBC has had success at changing the conversation about building technology through establishing metrics. Placemaking metrics would need to be sensitive to the broad range of projects and what constitutes success.
- We discussed the potential for the LC to serve as an advisor and support system for members with active projects who need assistance
- Architecture for Humanity mentioned as a model
- Need for hierarchy in the way the LC shares information, move from an easy level of entry for beginners to high level of detail for experts
- Idea of LC facilitating connections: A "need local help" button on the PPS or LC website, for example

## Tools

Examples of possible tools we chose to report back at the end of the session:

- Placemaking Wiki
- Interactive Placemaking App ( record and share information about places )
- Educational Website / Curriculum
- State / Local level groups
- Placemaking guidelines that are transferable and recognize context

Other tools that came up in our discussion:

- *http://www.afar.com/* described as a potential template for a Placemaking Wiki
- The idea of a peer-review process for Placemaking
- LEED style rating system for evaluating built projects
- A Placemaking Award system
- We liked the idea of an Open Source or Wiki approach to digital tools
- Active Design Guidelines were mentioned as an example of a successful tool: http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/html/design/active_design.shtml
- A widely shareable curriculum developed by the LC but used by many was discussed

## Examples of commitment to action

We asked group member Jim Tischler of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to describe www.MIplace.org , a statewide Placemaking intiative.