
Creative Placemaking 101

A Tool for Community-Centered Revitalization



Agenda

- Introduction to Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties
- Placemaking efforts in Syracuse, New York and Reading, Pennsylvania
- Discussion with Placemaking Practitioners
- Question and Answer



Photo credit: Bridge of Grace
Compassionate Ministries Center



Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties



**Systemic Vacant,
Abandoned, and
Deteriorated
Properties**

Equitably, Effectively, and Efficiently

Ensure
Lasting
Community
Benefit

Cultivate
Property
Owner
Compliance

Transition
Property
to New
Ownership

Temporarily
Hold and
Maintain
Property

**Vacant,
Abandoned,
and Deteriorated
Property Remediation
and Prevention**

Policies, Practices, Processes

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Placemaking Essential Elements



Integrate arts and culture into reinvigoration efforts

Strengthen

Community

Participatory Properties

**CANNOT WORK IF
RESIDENTS ARE NOT
CENTERED IN PROCESS**



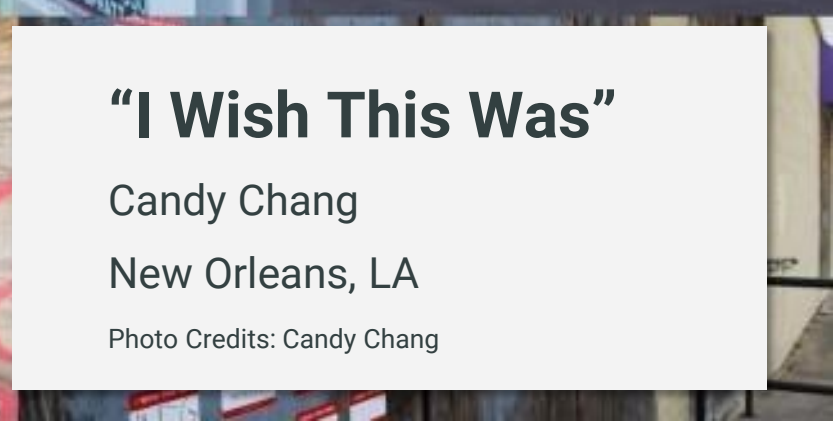
Place-Based Impacts

- Renewed purpose for VAD properties
- New investment (health, wealth, economic opportunity)

People-Centered Impacts

- Amplify community's local culture
- Redefine community's narrative among residents and outsiders
- Provide space for hope, inspiration, and renewed pride





“I Wish This Was”
Candy Chang
New Orleans, LA
Photo Credits: Candy Chang

I WISH THIS WAS

a grocery ! Locally
owned !

www.iwishthiswas.com

I WISH THIS WAS

AN AFFORDABLE
FARMER'S MARKET

www.iwishthiswas.com

I WISH THIS WAS

A place for All to
hang out and enjoy

www.iwishthiswas.com

I WISH THIS WAS

A techno dance
club

www.iwishthiswas.com

Placemaking in Syracuse, NY and Reading, PA



Building Generational Wealth and a Pocket Park Through Placemaking

Syracuse, New York

The Empty Lot

The lot at 484 South Salina Street in downtown Syracuse sat vacant from the early 1970s but had the potential to connect and revitalize 9 of the city's neighborhoods:

- North Side
- Downton
- Highway Exchange
- University and Hospitals
- Syracuse Housing Authority
- South Side
- Rescue Mission
- Near West Side
- Army Square



Syracuse Can Be _____.

SYRACUSE CAN BE _____.

“Vibrant.”

“Diverse.”

“Inclusive.”

“Successful.”

“Great.”

“Resilient.”

“Spectacular.”

“Even greater.”

“Original.”

“Creative.”

“Inspirational.”

“Connected.”

“A leader.”

“Thriving.”

SYRACUSE NEEDS _____.

“Inclusion.”

“Embrace diversity.”

“Art.”

“Community.”

“More jobs.”

“Better roads.”

“Positivity.”

“Safe parks.”

“Public art.”

“Something strange.”

“Parking.”

“Partnerships.”

“Sitting areas.”

“Co-working.”

What We Heard

FAMILIARITY → DISCOVERY

WHAT WE HEARD (INSIGHTS)

"Having something that's the carrot - they're going to come because it's new. What's going to keep them coming back? People support what's new - we will check it out once (and then decide if we come back)."

"I want to learn little snippets of information, but not be bombarded."

"We have been so comfortable for the past 10 years. Going to places to have experiences where we are comfortable. Discomfort has to happen now, we need to mix people up now."

"We hold onto Syracuse being this one historic land, but there's so many cultures here with different skills to showcase."

"Syracuse has a love affair with its history. We love to hold onto the past, maybe to the detriment of our future."

"There's half that's really excited about new things and wants to experience food. Then there's half that is stuck in the 1970s."

"Give some guidance - what foods go well together?"

"Could there be some type of cultural center in there where people could come downtown to visit, to see, to learn more about their culture or other cultures?"

DOWNTOWN SYRACUSE

WHAT WE HEARD (INSIGHTS)

"This was the place to be; now this serves as my pass-through. When I'm passing through, I'm hauling ass, I'm not dawdling, I'm not hanging around."

"The culture is cold. I can see the disparities between the downtown and the suburbs."

"Destiny (Mall) killed downtown."

"I have seen a strong demand for people wanting to take back pride in this section of town."

"I am a tourist in my own community. I look for opportunities to come downtown and engage."

"This place dies on Sunday night."

"Right now I think downtown caters to the white people from the suburbs."

"Syracuse is made of islands, so disconnected and the corridors are uninteresting."

"This thing downtown could be a tourist opportunity. You're going to have people down there just visiting Syracuse."

Market/Food Hall

- 10 food stalls
- Grocer
- Coffee shop and bar
- Community kitchen and meeting space

Office Space

- 13,500 sq ft for Allyn Family Foundation
- 6,500 sq ft for nonprofit agencies

Mixed-Income Housing

- 27,000 sq ft (across two floors)
- Twenty-six 800-1000 sq ft units





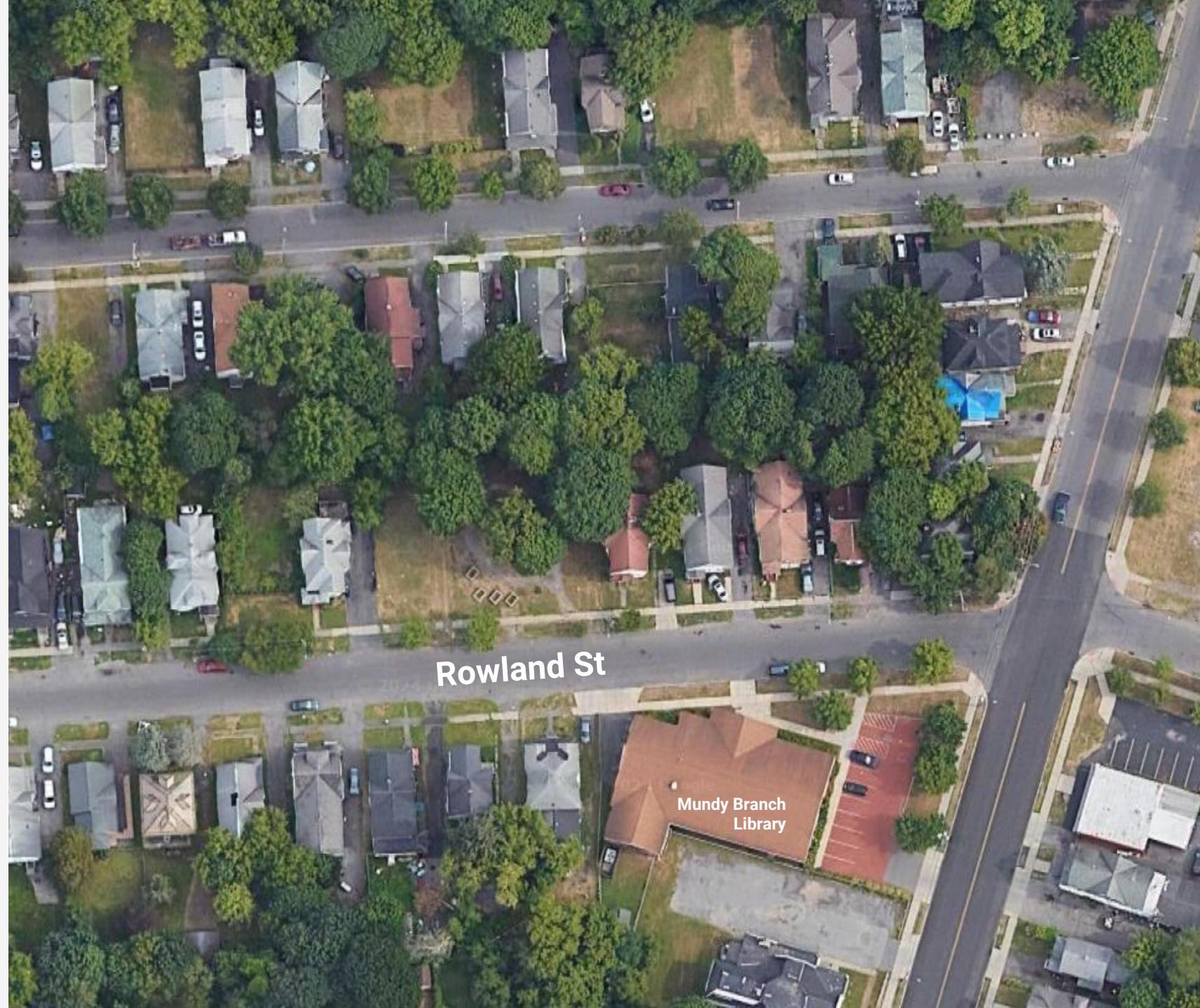
Rowland Street Pocket Park

Process began in March 2017

Three Environmental Science and Forestry Architecture students facilitated a participatory design process with library staff and community members.

Opportunity: To create a space adjacent to the library for community program. It is a large site with great existing trees.

Constraints: Neighbors are very close to the space.



Vision

Provide opportunity for kids of all ages to gather, relax and play.

Expand library programming outdoors.





The Possibilities

Sustainability

Salt City Market will continue to offer opportunities for community residents to start businesses and build generational wealth and be a space for community to gather and eat amazing food.

Rowland Pocket Park will soon offer community programming, sensory equipment and be a safer space for children and families to and the library to partner together.



Thank You!



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Using Creativity to Dream of a New Barrio

Stories from Reading, Pennsylvania





Lucky's Lane

- Neighbor-led
- Connected to the story
- Meaningful engagement



Riverfront Park

- Became a nuisance
- Parking was closed
- Life is coming back

Lessons Learned

- Community building is messy and takes time
- It is very rewarding
- Use art to deal with issues
- Always be open to suggestions
- Make intentional choices that go beyond what you know
- Redefine (using an equitable lens) who your partners are
- Be courageous!
- Have fun!





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Reading, PA 19601

<https://www.facebook.com/barrioofhappiness>
<https://www.instagram.com/barrioalegrico/>

Thank You!



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Discussion and Q&A



Thank You!



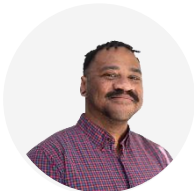
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