ACTIVATING DEMAREST PLACE

REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HACKENSACK STRATEGY LAB

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CITY OF HACKENSACK AND THE HACKENSACK PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
The Hackensack Creative Placemaking Strategy Lab was an initiative of the New Jersey Creative Placemakers in partnership with the National Consortium for Creative Placemaking and the Northern New Jersey Community Foundation’s ArtsBergen initiative. The program took place on October 17, 2017 at 4:30pm on Demarest Place in Hackensack, NJ. Fifty members of Hackensack and surrounding communities teamed up to brainstorm ideas of art, cultural programming, and tactical urbanism strategies in order to activate Main Street and this unique pedestrian connection between the bus stop on Demarest Place and the Hackensack Performing Arts Center.

The following is a summary of the brainstorming efforts. It is a combination of ideas written and sketched onto maps by the 50 participants and includes physical design, programming, and short- and long-term strategies for making downtown Hackensack a more vibrant and activated arts hub of northern New Jersey.

This program was made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.
Planters prevent flow or gathering spaces
Feels dark and uninviting
Dead / dying plant material
Broken infrastructure
Lacks a sense of “place”
Underutilized space
Feels dark and uninviting
Dying significant trees
Evidence of littering
Missed opportunity to engage Main Street
Requires crossing a busy street
Entrance to Demarest is dark and uninviting
Difficult to navigate
Underutilized space
Poor first impression to visitors
**WHAT HAPPENED?**

The Strategy Lab
Thursday October 19
Demarest Place
Hackensack, NJ

The group of about 50 participants was divided into four teams:
- Team A: Bus Stop Connection
- Team B: Demarest to Main St.
- Team C: Mural Alley
- Team D: Programs and Events

Each team was given either a map or a pad of paper to take notes on. Challenges of their sites were to be written in red colored pencil. Opportunities and ideas were to be recorded in blue. The teams were encouraged to think about what the spaces could become with short and long term intervention and programming.

The maps and notes were collected and ideas were shared later on. A brief conclusion was made about the relatively simple, cheap, and easy ways to transform these underused spaces into something inviting, entertaining, and beautiful.

**METHODS**

![Bus Stop Connection](image1)

![Demarest Place](image2)

![Mural Alley](image3)
By creating better gathering spaces and implementing a more soothing palette of colors and textures, this alley can become a moment to get away from the noisy street. Programming can include educational activities, games, quieter performances, yoga, and crafting. Art should be more subtle and calming.

This central space can be utilized as a more active gathering space for Main Street and beyond. By removing the existing trees and adding brighter colors and lights, this street can become instantly activated and exciting. Programming should include large social events like food or cultural festivals and performances.

This crosswalk and set of bollards can serve as a threshold for Hackensack for those traveling by bus. By creating better and more creative signage, visitors can be instantly welcomed into the downtown and now activated spaces north of the bus stop. Colors should be bright and fun.

Based on the feedback given by the different teams, a trend emerged along the connection from the bus stop, through Demarest Place, all the way down the mural alley. By assigning general uses to each of these distinct areas, separated by major roads, there can be a stronger sense of place and purpose.

Activating these spaces requires programming and physical interventions, all of which can be done in a short and long term fashion. The goal is to connect newcomers, traveling by bus, to Main Street and beyond through this otherwise underused series of spaces.
WHAT'S THAT?
Mural Alley

PASSIVE

Mosaics and Murals with Cultural Theme
Planters and Plantings
Water Feature for Sound and Focal Point
Small Performance Space to Connect Main St
Making Space for Small Seating Areas
WHAT'S THAT?

Demarest Place

ACTIVE

MURALS ON WALLS

CREATIVE LIGHTING

FOOD TRUCKS / SMALL CRAFT MARKET

WATER FEATURE ON THE GROUND

SIGNAGE OR STREET PAINTING FOR CIRCULATION

FOOD TRUCKS OR SMALL CRAFT MARKET

WATER FEATURE

BETTER SIGNAGE
WHAT'S THAT?

Bus Stop
Connect

INVITING

LIGHTING ART
CREATIVE BOLLARDS
GATHERING SPACES
PAINTED CROSSWALK
INVITING ARCHWAY

GATHERING SPACE
ARCHWAY
PAINTED CROSSWALK

BUS STATION
PARKING
Within the next year, consider using Tactical Urbanism strategies to begin making a quick and cheap impact on your site. Using simple supplies like paint, shipping palettes, cones, and potted plants, a space can be instantly transformed into a much more inviting and creative place.

Another easy way to activate space is through seasonal programming. By initiating events like craft fairs, food truck festivals, learning activities, chalk drawing days, cultural festivities, and more, your previously underused space becomes an artistic and cultural hub for Hackensack.

As you begin to experiment with these different temporary structures and events, you can to inventory what the community enjoys or doesn’t enjoy. From this information, you can start to make plans for permanent infrastructure like seating, planting beds, water features, lighting, and more.
OTHER IDEAS

MURAL ALLEY - OTHER IDEAS
- Public Wifi
- Painting ground plane
- Master Gardeners involvement
- “Green” or sustainable art
- Unifying Brand with other locations
- Youth Design / Programming Committee
- Creating better connection to businesses
- Destination or signage for opposite end

DEMAREST PLACE - OTHER IDEAS
- Joggers pathway
- Seating areas
- Performance spaces
- Garbage cans
- Banners
- Cutting down evergreens
- Children’s activity center

BUS STOP CONNECT - OTHER IDEAS
- Map of area
- Solar powered lighting
- Mosaics and murals
- More sculpture
- Banners or signage
- Planters and/or gardens
- Sponsorship through benches or bricks
Appendix

EXAMPLES

What: "Indian Land Dancing" public mural
Where: Chicago, IL
When: 2009
Web: https://www.theclio.com/web/entry?id=37096

What: "Link"
Where: Chicago, IL
When: 2013
Web: http://www.andersonville.org/eco-andersonville/people-spots-placemaking/

What: Gourmet Food Truck Festival
Where: Kohler, WI
When: 2015

What: Make It Splashy!
Where: The High Line, NYC
When: 2016
Web: http://www.thehighline.org/activities/make-it-splashy

What: Street Painting #9
Where: Luzern, CH
When: 2017
Web: http://www.langbaumann.com/?project_id=378

What: The Heart of the City
Where: Sydney
When: 2015
Web: http://www.anaisafranco.com/heartofthecity/

What: Best Bollards in Scotland
Where: Glasgow
When: 2006
Web: https://weburbanist.com/2014/09/28/posts-with-the-most-12-cool-creative-traffic-bollards/2/

What: Parklets for Placemaking
Where: Grand Rapids, MI
When: 2014
Web: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/parklets_for_placemaking

What: Gebratón
Where: Puebla, Mexico
When: 2015

What: Archway
Where: Ft Myers, FL
When: 2006

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

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