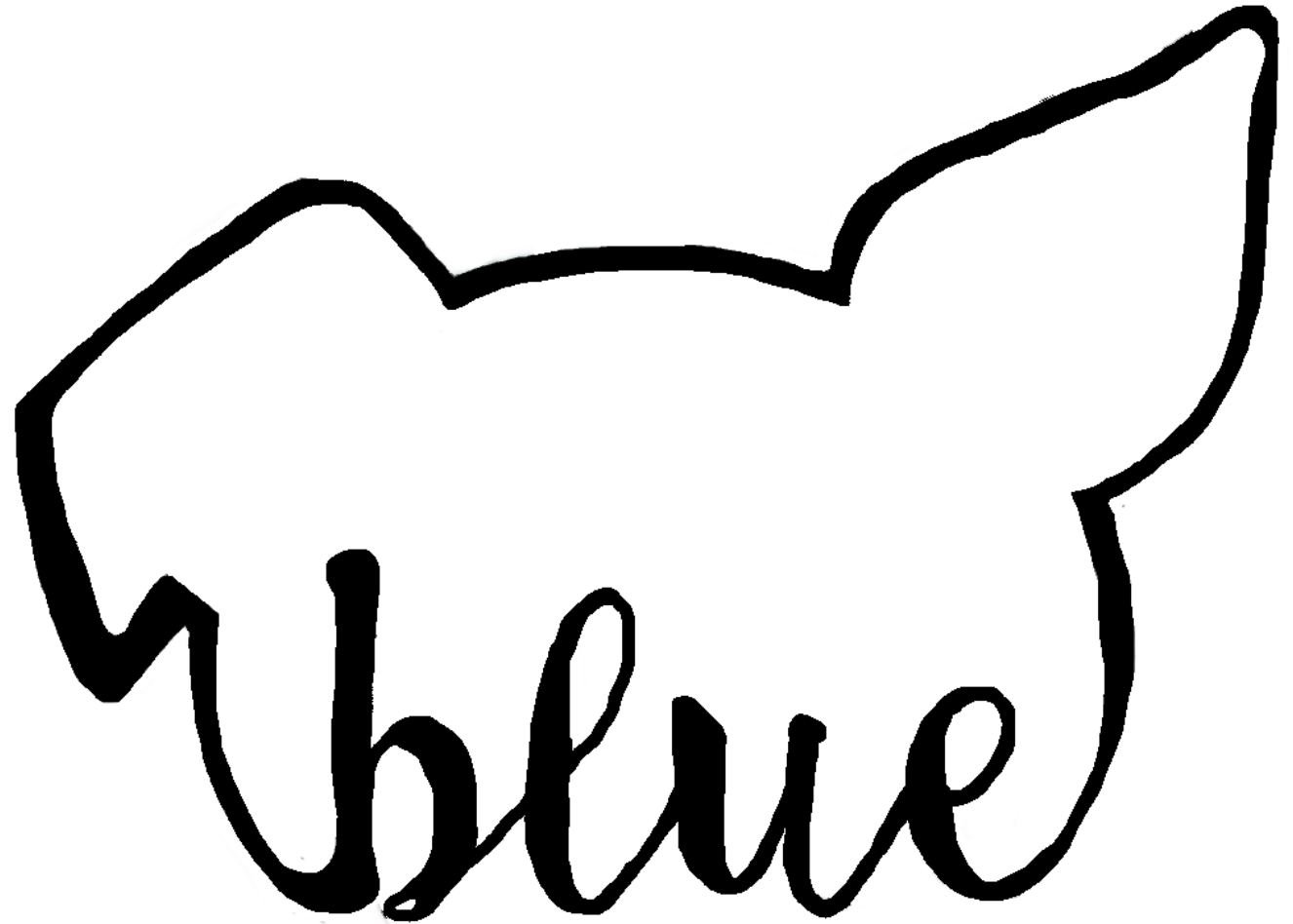


EXPRESS TORRINGTON PHASE 1

Torrington Connecticut



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Torrington is in the process of revitalizing its downtown area in an effort to attract residents and visitors to the city's shopping and cultural opportunities. These redevelopment plans are currently underway.

To support and maximize the impact of public and private investments, Torrington is seeking an entity to assist with placemaking, activations, and business attraction, retention, and expansion in their downtown business district.

OVERALL GOALS

- Promote available retail spaces in area
- Activate and promote public spaces
- Promote and support new housing
- Create a downtown fabric that connects various assets in the district
- Increase pedestrian traffic
- Spur new business development

PHASE I GOALS

- Identify potential activation sites
- Identify relevant stakeholders in the district
- Authentically engage with stakeholders about the district
- Set outcomes for each space as it relates to improving downtown engagement and walkability

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the desired goals of Phase I, we worked with the Economic Development department to identify relevant stakeholders in the district. Over the course of the past months we've connected with local stakeholders via email, phone and in-person meeting.

In addition to our conversations, we've biked, walked and driven the area on multiple occasions under varying conditions to better understand the target area's opportunities and challenges. The perspectives and observations that we gathered have allowed us to establish outcomes for the spaces selected as they relate to perceptions and observations relating to engagement and walkability downtown.

IDENTIFYING THE SITES

In identifying sites, we focused on 3 types of interventions:

Underutilized outdoor space – These locations serve as spaces that encourage chance interactions between businesses, residents and guests

Space suitable for public art – Public art is a staple of creative placemaking which can animate public & private spaces while improving local business viability and public safety while bringing diverse people together. It's also a great way to move people between anchors.

Vacant indoor space for temporary use – Temporary use in vacant spaces is a great way to encourage entrepreneurship by establishing proof of concept. When the process is guided, it can lead to an intentional and articulated experience for the end user by the implementation of triangulation.

Each of these types of space serve a unique purpose in attracting individuals downtown and providing a more cohesive downtown fabric.

IDENTIFYING THE SITES

We began with the concept of identifying existing assets and triangulating around the them; meaning our goal was to identify 3 points/amenities that when activated would encourage social interaction and increase the likelihood that the existing assets near them would be used more frequently.

Our 3 points were Franklin Plaza in the south, Railroad Square in the west the Torrington Historical Society to the north.

TRIANGULATION POINTS



EXISTING ANCHORS

Coe Park

Library

Five Points

Downtown Restaurants

Kids Play Museum

Nutmeg Conservatory

Warner

YMCA

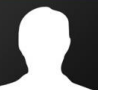
Bad Dog Brewing



SK3

Existing Assets

Tim Moore
Jan 27, 2021



POTENTIAL INTERVENTION SITES

Underutilized outdoor space

Franklin Plaza

98 Main St. Alley

Railroad Square

Torrington Historical Society

Space suitable for public art

Main & E. Main Intersection

Yankee Pedlar Walls

15 Water Street Pass Through

Vacant indoor space for temporary use

Downtown Partnership space

Yankee Pedlar retail space

Warner retail space

97 Main Street



UNDERUTILIZED OUTDOOR SPACES



FRANKLIN PLAZA

The recently completed Franklin Plaza is a great example of strategic placemaking. It serves as a accessible and scenic location that will create pedestrian access to the Penrose Development and serve as a public gathering space for individuals.

Franklin Plaza has the best chance to remain relevant with the following interventions:

- Infrastructure: The addition of temporary and/or permanent infrastructure (e.g. wifi, tables, umbrellas) to induce additional uses
- Programming: Consistent programming on the plaza to develop it into a destination downtown





Original art: Whyte Ave Alley, CityLab

THE ALLEY AT 98 MAIN ST

Extending down Main Street The Alley at 98 Main Street is a beautiful location a tactical intervention. It's location on Main Street and high visibility provide it the ability to pique the curiosity of pedestrians and commuters alike.

The wide thruway leads to an abundance of parking in the back, transporting people from Main Street to destination or vice-verse.

The concept for this space would be a recurring outdoor market under our Commonage™ model.



Original art: Umbrella Sky, Avignon South of France



**LETS GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO
TALK ABOUT**



Commonage™ Market is our outdoor platform.

We're reshaping the expectations of outdoor markets and creating a new experience for consumers. We're updating the concept of flea markets and benchmarking experience you can expect from it.

We use the Space Frame model, developed by Zoe Roane-Hopkins as the base of our outdoor platform

FOOD PICKUP

Takeout counter

Plexiglass partition with cutout windows reduces germ spread at the take out counter

Hand sanitizing



DINING

Partitions

Panels can be used as signage to remind people to stay safe and follow guidelines



6'

6'

38"

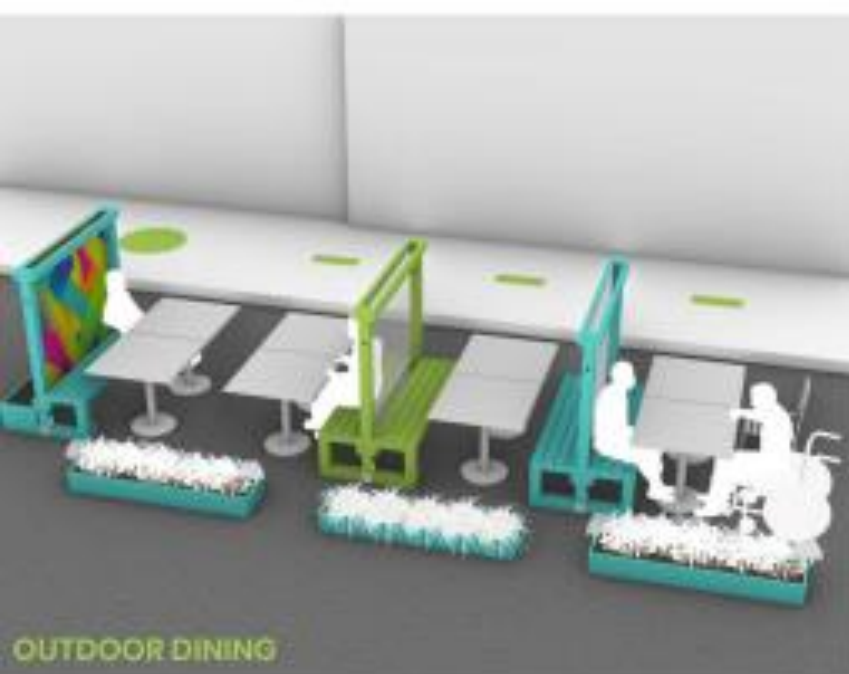
Markings
6' apart

Painted murals



RETAIL





FRAME COMPONENTS

Plywood or plexiglass partition

Attached to inside of cross braces with bolts and wingnuts. Plywood can be painted by local artists. Two sheets of material works if suggested sizes are unavailable.

Bolts with wingnuts

Major components are attached with bolts and wingnuts through pre-drilled holes for easy assembly and disassembly

Planter

6 ft long and rests on the frame's feet

Foot of frame

Frame is movable but may be heavy. Can be transported with a dolly and is compatible with caster wheels.

Frame

Made with pressure treated 4x4s and 2x4s and painted with bright colors

Hanging rod

Provides retail clothing store display racks, can be used to hang a decorative partition

Standing counter

Use for food takeout or retail display

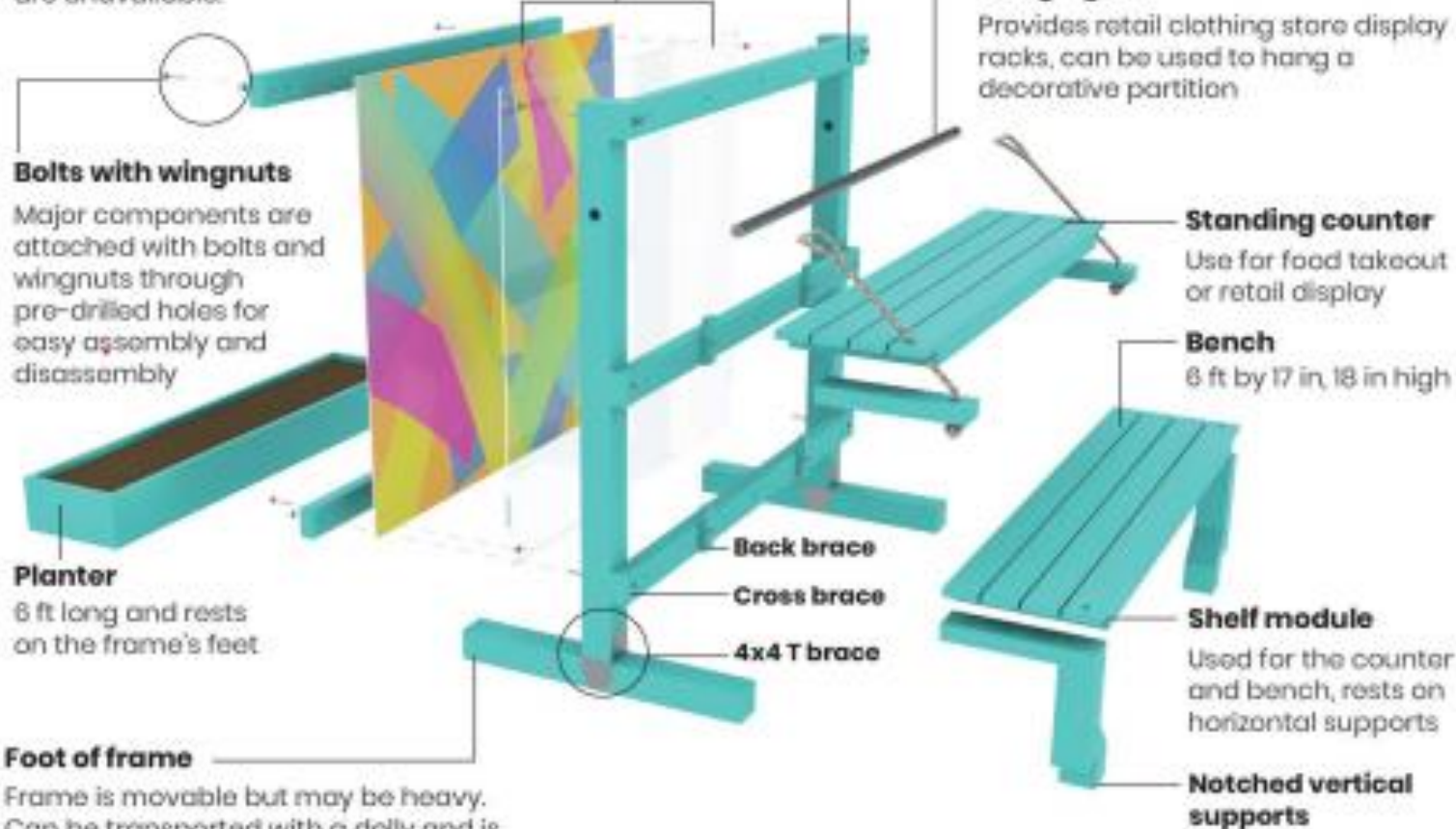
Bench

6 ft by 17 in, 18 in high

Shelf module

Used for the counter and bench, rests on horizontal supports

Notched vertical supports



TORRINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Our most northern location for intervention is the Torrington Historical Society. The grounds of this location make it ideal for warm weather interventions. Our initial concept has been to collaborate with the CT Wine Trail, local restaurants and Torrington Historical Society to produce a series of outdoor wine garden experiences.

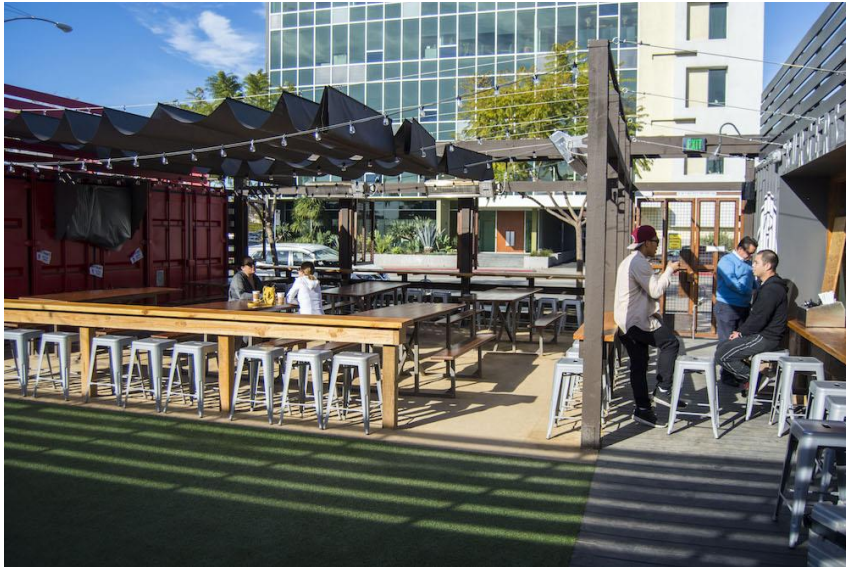
RAILROAD SQUARE

Our westernmost location for an intervention originally brought us to the Register Citizen building, but after further consideration and discussion we moved it back to Railroad Square.

Railroad Square is primely located for a creative activation. It's programming will provide a complimentary destination to the brewery. While it's location allows us to explore more creative uses, it's proximity to downtown still keeps it accessible.

For this area, we focused on a food truck park/container park due to the flexibility these concepts provide.

CONCEPT EXAMPLES



SteelCraft, Los Angeles



Arbor Food Park, Austin

NEXT STEPS FOR BRINGING **LIFE** TO THESE SPACES

The next steps with these locations should include identifying:

- Further understand what people want to see in the locations via public outreach
- Where our objectives meet theirs
- What strategies we'll use to get there and implementing the strategies
- Measuring our results

**SPACE SUITABLE
FOR
PUBLIC ART**



MAIN & E. MAIN INTERSECTION

The Main and E. Main Street intersection (for discussion purposes will include the bridge also) serves as the gateway to the downtown.

As the intersection currently stands, it is oversized and daunting for pedestrians.

In an attempt to draw individuals from Coe Park and to increase the connectivity from Franklin Plaza to Main St; we recommend the following interventions:

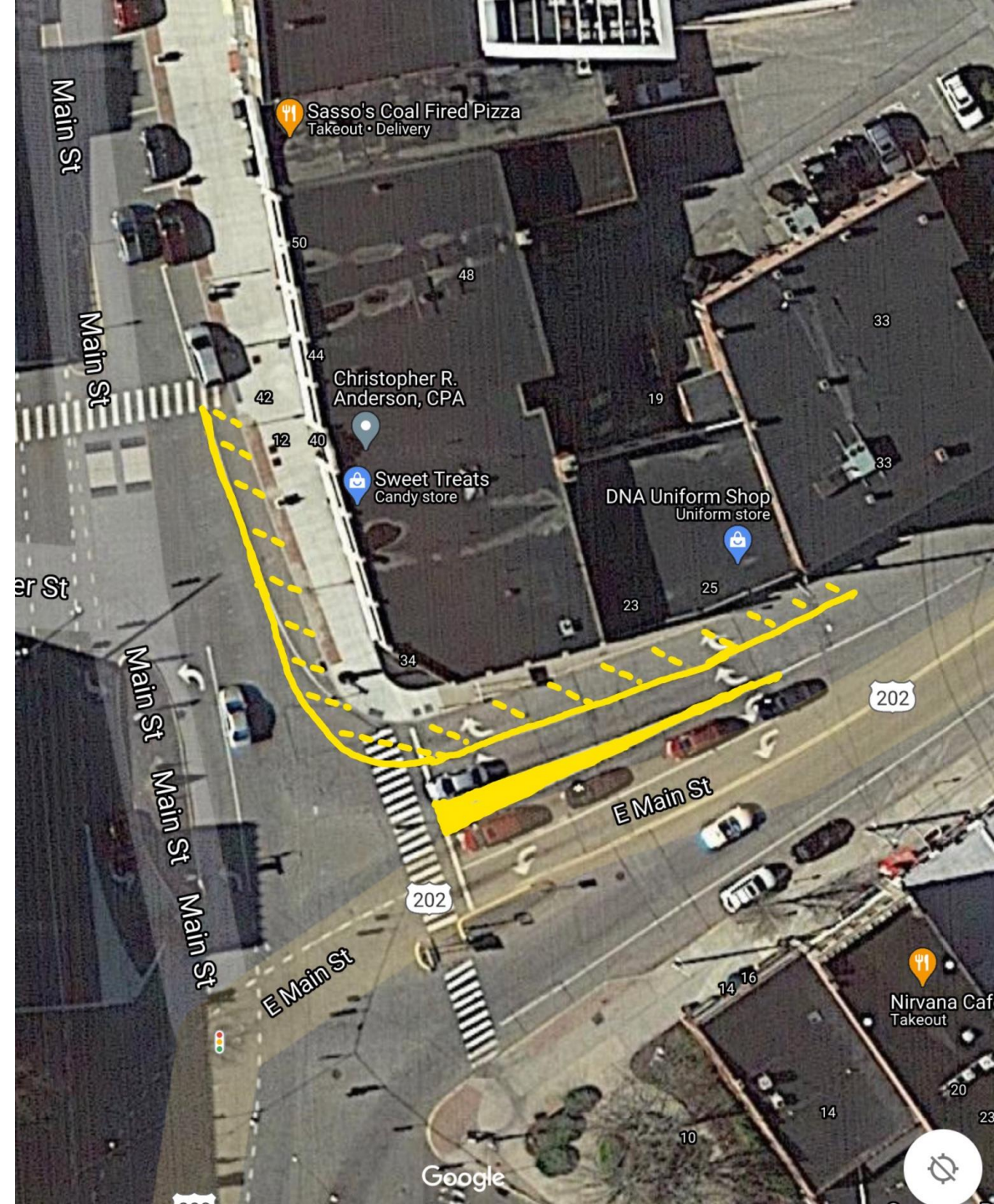
TACTICAL PEDESTRIAN BUMP OUT

In this use, the tactical pedestrian bump out serves two purposes

- Decrease road width on the E. Main St corner to provide friendlier pedestrian access by temporarily removing the double right hand turn lane
- Increase sidewalk width for activation of the corner

This temporary intervention is in line with the long term plan as described in the E. Main Street Corridor traffic study while activating a prime corner downtown.

TACTICAL PEDESTRIAN BUMP OUT



INTERSECTIONS DEFINE THE SOCIAL LIFE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Torrington is fortunate to have exceptionally wide sidewalks. By activating the sidewalks with outdoor dining – downtown will appear and sound more lively, inducing more demand.

Increasing the likelihood for unplanned social interactions will contribute to the vibrancy of downtown.



CREATIVE PUBLIC ART GATEWAY

By introducing public art into this intersection, it serves to provide a visual transition/connection from Litchfield St and South Main drawing individuals into downtown.



Original art: Exquisite Corpse, 2017 Fannie Allie

SELECT PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES



NEXT STEPS FOR BRINGING ART TO THESE SPACES

The next steps with these locations should include identifying:

- Further understand what people want to see in the locations via public outreach
- Where our objectives meet theirs
- What strategies we'll use to get there and the implementation of these strategies
- Measuring our results

INDOOR SPACE FOR TEMPORARY USE

Every temporary use has its starting point in an empty building.

Temporary spaces are great areas for entrepreneurs to use as a springboard for the realization of an idea.

With little capital, concepts can be tested and if successful, further established and expanded.

INDOOR SPACE FOR TEMPORARY USE

Temporary uses typically benefit from the presence of similar activities nearby (other temporary use spaces).

Main Street Torrington is positioned well for temporary use shops for a number of reasons:

- Potential for high pedestrian traffic due to the presence of service providers e.g. restaurants and cafes
- Numerous cultural institutions
- Proximity to major intersection

BENEFITS OF TEMPORARY USE

The benefits of temporary use:

- New and positive image for the location
- Creation of identity
- Increased public awareness of the site
- Prevention of vandalism and decay

Things to consider for designated temporary use locations

- Façade improvements – Have a plan to make it cute. People should be able to see something in the space, even before it exists. Clean decluttered windows and fresh paint are key.
- “Sticky Versus Slippery Edges” – Porous and deep storefronts to attract walkers and lingerers e.g. appropriate storefronts & lighting to connect the interior to the exterior sidewalk. Outdoor seating, sidewalk displays, and awnings all create places to linger.

SELECT TEMPORARY USE OPPORTUNITIES



SELECT CONCEPTS FOR TEMPORARY USE

- Torrington Connects – With a potential location in the former retail at Yankee Peddler, Torrington Connects pairs local makers with temporary storefront spaces in the building. This can be paired with a Bricks and Clicks campaign to provide small scale startups with an online platform also to sell their wares online.
- One day pop up shops – Draw in businesses to activate one day spaces to expand their brand in your downtown.
 - Pie shop
 - House plant shop
 - Cupcake shop

NEXT STEPS FOR BRINGING BUSINESS TO THESE SPACES

The next steps with these locations should include identifying:

- Which spaces are available for temporary use
- What people want to see in the locations
- Where our objectives meet theirs
- What strategies we'll use to get there and the implementation of the strategies
- Measuring our results

TYING IT TOGETHER

WE ARE HERE

These 7 principles are a starting point for further work preparing specific local development plans working with the community

- **The Community is the Expert:** The important starting point in developing a concept for any public space is to identify the talents and assets within the community.
- **Create a Place, Not a Design:** To make an under-performing space into a vital "place," physical elements must be introduced that would make people welcome and comfortable, such as seating and new landscaping, and also through "management" changes in the pedestrian circulation pattern and by developing more effective relationships between the surrounding retail and the activities going on in the public spaces.
- **Look for Partners:** Partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space improvement project.
- **You Can Learn a Lot Just By Observing:** We can learn a great deal from others' successes and failures. By looking at how people are using (or not using) public spaces and finding out what they like and don't like about them, it is possible to assess what makes them work or not work.
- **Start with Petunias; Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper:** The best spaces experiment with short term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years.
- **Triangulate:** The process of arranging elements intentionally to create more activity than would happen if the elements were located separately.
- **They Always Say "It Can't Be Done":** Creating good public spaces is inevitably about encountering obstacles, because no one in either the public or private sectors has the job or responsibility to "create places".

*Source: ELEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING GREAT COMMUNITY PLACES. <https://www.pps.org/article/11steps>

A Fresh Look

Blue Haus Group is a private real estate and economic development firm with a focus on creating dynamic urban cores within secondary and tertiary markets.

We specialize in the creation and redevelopment of public spaces, neighborhood streetscapes and pop-ups.

We work for real estate developers, government agencies, and non-profit organizations (and often a combination of the three) on revitalizing urban space and creating clean, safe, and active places that create value and stimulate economic development.





With a focus on innovative design and creating
a sense of place, our projects contribute to the
development of thriving communities.



GROWTH BY DESIGN