Place Making

The Role of Infrastructure Improvement Projects in Branding and Pedestrian Place Making
Fostering Partnerships with a Spirit of Ownership By Karl B. Browning, INDOT Commissioner

Much of what INDOT does has a great impact on our friends, partners, and fellow citizens in so many of Indiana's cities and towns. Because at INDOT we know that all of our work is local, a principal requirement of each of the six District Deputy Commissioners is collaboration with local partners. Their job is to bring the available resources of INDOT to your communities. Two programs to highlight are Public Art and Landscaping and the federal aid program.

Increasingly cities and towns are looking to personalize and enhance gateways and corridors within their communities. To facilitate this effort and provide guidance for these requests, INDOT has established a Public Art and Landscaping Policy. This policy can be used by engaged citizen’s groups, local public agencies, or neighborhood associations to provide visual interest along roadsides, make unique statements about community character, and create positive public response. In addition, there is flexibility for communities to maintain INDOT right of way to their own desired standard and frequency. The policy can be found on the Permits page of INDOT’s website at: http://www.in.gov/indot/2727.htm. You may also call the District Deputy Commissioner in your area and she or he will discuss it with you.

Assuring that federal aid money is available to those who qualify has also been an agency focus within recent months through efforts to lock-down the local federal aid program for fiscal years through 2016. The goal of this activity is multi-faceted, but is primarily intended to ensure that local federal aid money is used for the local communities. To accomplish this, it is necessary to limit the program with projects that have a high degree of probability of delivery within established timeframes, to clear out legacy projects that are no longer desired by communities or that have no matching funds available, and to set the stage for future calls for projects. We are currently in the process of evaluating project applications for fiscal year 2017 and anticipate another call for projects for fiscal year 2018 in the near term. As we move forward with the federal aid program, local ownership of the projects and accountability for delivery will be vital to make the most of available federal funds. INDOT Local Program Directors and Project Managers will continue to work with local public agencies to help maximize predictable outcomes.

I continue to challenge INDOT’s six District Deputy Commissioners to reach out to local partners across the state and am optimistic regarding their participation in mayors’ roundtable events and other outreach opportunities provided by IACT. Please feel free to contact your INDOT district with questions, issues, or help in realizing the transportation vision you have for your community.
What do we know about place making?

- Green3 is prequalified with INDOT

- Worked on many CSS, roadway, trails, and streetscapes

- Understands the INDOT process and FHWA requirements
What makes a place a place?

People Do!
How would your project be different if you thought of your task as designing a place for people not just cars?

Believe it or not cars are not the most important part of any community.
The way it used to be
Small Town Commercial Corridors
Suburban Streets
City Streets
Rural Roads
People Places

- Small Town Commercial Corridors
- Suburban Streets
- City Streets
- Rural Roads
Get into the place-making mind set

- Commit to leveraging public investments to stimulate private growth and investment
- Commit to sustainability and long term efficiency
- Visualize the outcomes you want to realize and identify a shared vision
Visualization plans provide a way to share a common vision and set a framework for phased implementation.
Vision plans set the stage for fundraising project prioritization
Visualization image examples
i.e. Mt. Vernon
Ft. Square
Newburgh
CTS
Neighborhood Entrance
Taking a different attitude toward deliverables is the first step in place-making.

Doing more than just building a road or bridge. Produce public improvements that can be used to leverage private investments.

Create places not just construction plans. CSS, Complete Streets, Road Diets, these are all approaches aimed at better integrating roadways into places.

No need to split road from streetscape or trail - less effective and costs more. In place making quality is more important than quantity.
Understand the basic features people want in their communities

Everybody wants pretty much the same thing no matter where they live.

- Safety
- Walkability
- Wayfinding
- Authenticity
- Landscape & Lighting
- Identifiable Community Image
Sketch illustrating a community’s priorities – you get the same answer everywhere
Specific place making features to consider as part of road and bridge projects

- Build or leave room for bike/ped facilities
- Include landscape and use “green” drainage
- Consider alternative slope treatments
- Include wayfinding signs and features
- Identify and demarcate gateways
- Provide utility infrastructure to support local events and the arts
- Public parking areas and access sites
- Highlight scenic views and historic features
The team approach

- Teaming is already part of almost every project. Build based on strengths.

- Place making information is already obtained as part of the NEPA process and through public input.

- It doesn’t take any longer to design place making features into the project if it is part of the project from the beginning.

- Creativity is the cousin of value engineering – place making adds value.

- INDOT policy for public art and landscaping already available for use.
Place making one piece at a time

- Work cooperatively across projects and across disciplines within a community.

- Ask for input on place making even if it is outside your comfort zone.

- Authenticity is important – cut and paste is almost never the best answer, but creative use of a kit of parts is.

- Work to Integrate unique items that are 100% locally funded or by others
Which comes first – the brand or the place making?
Pedestrian friendly features can set the tone and create momentum

The inspiration for the new Muncie Arts and Culture Council brand evolved from exploring various ways of relating to the organization’s initials and coming away with the desire to highlight its ‘Arts’ and ‘Culture’ focus. The simplified shapes of the letters ‘A’ and ‘C’ create an engaging graphic that is contemporary and artistic. The shape of the ‘C’ echoes the curves of Muncie’s existing signage.

The iconic logo is versatile and can move seamlessly between two- and three-dimensional formats. As a reflection of the important regard glass has in Muncie, signs can incorporate glass or durable glasslike resins in a highly visible way by having the material form the iconic shapes of the ‘A’ and ‘C’. For trail markers, other materials could be used based on the site being identified, such steel to relate to the studio of a metal sculptor.
Color, form, image, and other local context elements should inform place making design decisions.
Fountain Square – the idea

Ralph Hill Memorial Fountain.
Re-introduce the stone octagonal form of the original 1834 fountain basin and lower the mound height of hymn's "Pioneer Paddy". Bring the brooding sculpture cluster for people to view. Most fountain in west side of square in new protruding friendly space which invites people to linger by the fountain or arcade with their children or friends, safely removed from the threat of traffic.

Lady of the Fountain.
Near its original location install an elaborate Victorian-era replica cast-iron fountain. Replacing one destroyed in 1919. The newly-basin fountain, featuring Lady Spray (Hera, goddess of youth), will be placed within a large sculptural holding limestone reach-backs assembled to form a traffic circle to both protect and enhance the setting of the replica.

Fountain Square.
Modify the existing, overbearing influence of cars or fences which intrude into the Square. Remove traffic signs, re-locate traffic lights, reduce length of pedestrian crosswalk, and regulate fuelled- or semi-truck traffic in an effort to make the Square a more pedestrian-friendly Space. Capture access street pavement for people, re-install a pair of fountains - both visible on Virginia Ave - to frame a new, re-structured, people-oriented and beautiful Square.
Planning the pieces
Shared vision
A people place
So on your next job, in the next town, try a little place-making

- Bicycle & pedestrian facilities – provide connectivity
- Landscape and lighting – green design
- Sustainable design – promote efficiency
- Authentic enhancements – brand integration
- Arts infrastructure – options for “plug and play”
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Thank You!