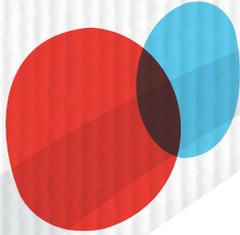


Center for Community Progress | Metris Arts Consulting

TRENDS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ON PROBLEM PROPERTIES: 2019 National Survey Findings



Center for
**COMMUNITY
PROGRESS**

Vacant Spaces into Vibrant Places



AUTHORS

Metris Arts Consulting: Rachel Engh

Center for Community Progress:
Elizabeth Kozub, Courtney Knox, Chelsea A. Allinger

ABOUT CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS

The mission of Center for Community Progress is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. Founded in 2010, Community Progress is the leading national, nonprofit resource for urban, suburban, and rural communities seeking to address the full cycle of property revitalization. The organization fulfills its mission by nurturing strong leadership and supporting systemic reforms. Community Progress works to ensure that public, private, and community leaders have the knowledge and capacity to create and sustain change. It also works to ensure that all communities have the policies, tools, and resources they need to support the effective, equitable reuse of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

ABOUT METRIS ARTS CONSULTING

Metris Arts Consulting's mission is to improve and measure cultural vitality. We believe in the power of culture to enrich people's lives, help communities thrive, empower communities, and cultivate belonging. Our clients span the country and globe. They include government agencies, community and arts nonprofits, philanthropic foundations, and developers. We help them equitably advance cultural vitality (planning), fill knowledge gaps so that they can effectively incorporate arts and culture into their work (program development), and understand what difference their efforts make, why, and how (evaluation). We use a range of research and communication skills to advance understanding (research for field building). Our work in the realm of creative placemaking launched our practice. Over our ten years in operation, we've grown and diversified our services. Our team brings a combined 61 years of experience, spanning government, municipal arts, nonprofit arts administration, research, evaluation, and planning.

Center for Community Progress

111 E. Court Street, Suite 2C-1 Flint, MI 48502
(877) 542-4842 www.communityprogress.net

© Copyright 2019, Center for Community Progress. All rights reserved.

This project was supported in part by the The Kresge Foundation.

COVER PHOTOS

Top Left: Bridge of Grace CMC

Top Right: Courtney Knox, Center for Community Progress

*Bottom Left: Averell Mondie
Artist: Kenneth Wayne Alexander II*

Bottom Right: Community Design + Architecture



Designed by BLANK (blankblank.com)

CONTENTS



Above, Photo credit:
Hinge Collective

INTRODUCTION	4
Why This Report—and Why Now	5
Research Methodology	
Creative Placemaking: Community at the Center	7
Defining Creative Placemaking	
The Difference Between “Creative Reuse” and “Creative Placemaking”	
SURVEY FINDINGS	10
Goals of Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties	11
Building Relationships Among Residents and Empowering Them to Lead	
Revitalization of Physical Spaces	
Support Larger Revitalization Efforts	
Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties in Action	13
Gardens, Parks, and Murals	
Transforming Vacant Structures	
Varying Cost and Complexity	
Leaders of Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties	16
Organizational Stakeholders: Local Nonprofits and Arts Entities	
Resident Involvement Throughout the Process	
Ensuring Equitable Outcomes through Sustained Engagement	19
Sustained Resident Engagement	
The Need for Local Government’s Involvement	20
Why Does Government Involvement Matter?	
CONCLUSION	22
APPENDICES	23
Appendix A: Case Studies	24
Appendix B: Methodology	34
Appendix C: Select Survey Results	35
Appendix D: Survey Questions	41



INTRODUCTION

*Photo credit: Liz Kozub,
Center for Community Progress*

A vacant lot sits on the corner of your block. It is overgrown and trash piles up along the rickety fence. It has been like that for years. Every day, you walk by the lot on your way to work and wonder, “What if...?” What if you could grow herbs here to make the dishes your grandmother taught you? What if the teenage girls who practice their dance moves in the street had a safe place to perform?

One day, you receive a flier in your door. Everyone on your block is invited to a picnic at your neighbor’s house to talk about what to do about that lot. The day of the picnic, you walk out your door with a bowl of potato salad. You see one of the teenage girls who dances in the street, and she has a bowl in her hand, too. You’re excited to hear your neighbors’ “what-ifs.”

Creative placemaking, at its heart, is about transforming those what-ifs into reality.

Community Progress seeks to strengthen the relationship between the community-driven process of creative placemaking and vacant property revitalization. We view creative placemaking, described in more detail below, as a critical tool to support equitable revitalization.



Why This Report— and Why Now

Creative placemaking is a growing field. In the last decade, philanthropic and government entities have invested millions of dollars into creative placemaking endeavors. In addition to on-the-ground projects, entire organizations, conferences, and publications have sprung up to support the field. At the same time, social and racial equity have become some of the most dominant themes in the field of community development. Creative placemaking, if done right, supports these equitable outcomes.

Within this broader field of work exists a subset of creative placemaking efforts: those taking place on vacant, abandoned, and underused properties, especially in neighborhoods struggling with significant numbers of these “problem properties.” Community Progress’ work over the last several years suggests that these efforts face unique challenges—and also perhaps unique potential for major positive impact—and deserve further dedicated study and support. That is the motivation behind this report, and the national survey upon which it is based.

This report builds on the programming and research captured in *Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities* (2018)¹. That publication explored efforts in four communities: Kalamazoo, Michigan; Macon, Georgia; Newburgh, New York; and Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania. Each place intentionally engaged in creative placemaking on problem properties, with varying levels of intensiveness, strategy, and community engagement. From murals featuring neighborhood residents to vacant house storytelling tours to major rehab projects converting vacant properties into community arts spaces, the initiatives were wide-ranging. While each of these communities had demonstrated an interest and made efforts to implement creative placemaking on vacant properties, they were all at different stages of implementing and institutionalizing these practices. Our intention in the 2018 publication was to develop a clear understanding of how creative placemaking was being used as a revitalization and engagement tool and to share valuable lessons learned with the field.

Five preliminary themes emerged through the examination of these diverse, impactful efforts:

- 1. The importance of partnerships:** By definition, creative placemaking involves engagement and therefore partnership is imperative. However, forming and maintaining successful partnerships can be difficult. Creative placemaking projects often require three- or four-way relationships among city government, artists, residents and community developers.

¹ <https://www.communityprogress.net/publications-pages-396.php>



*This report builds off of programming and research captured in **Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities (2018).***



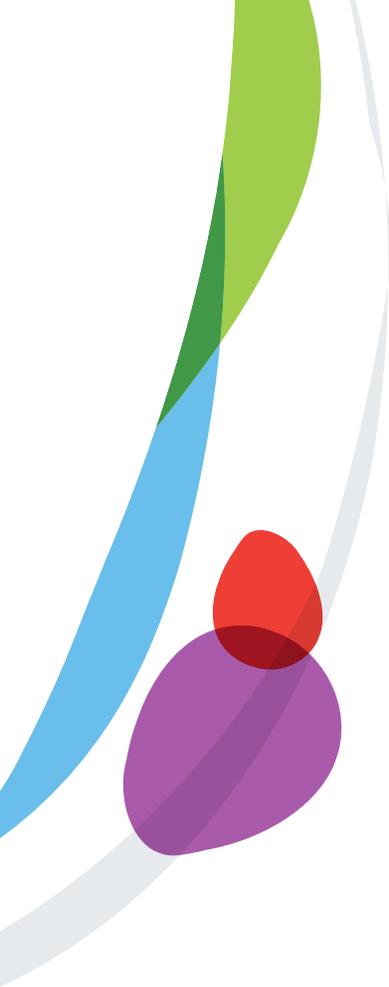
Photo credit: Liz Kozub,
Center for Community Progress

2. **Ways to generate momentum:** Practitioners must strike a balance between actively engaging in short-term, temporary projects and crafting and pursuing a long-term plan. All four projects engaged in temporary activities, adopted a hyper-local focus, and cultivated leadership to pass creative placemaking activities on to partners.
3. **Engagement of residents and other stakeholders:** Creative placemaking projects need to serve the people, in addition to serving the place. This includes providing a variety of entry points for engagement, identifying key people who can help achieve goals, and/or involving youth to attract more participation.
4. **Identifying regulatory barriers:** Regulatory requirements can serve as a barrier to implementing creative placemaking projects. While there are limited prescribed solutions, building trust is essential. Building trust happens through identifying, cultivating liaisons for this work, setting transparent expectations and communicating clearly, being open to possibilities, and giving each other the benefit of the doubt.
5. **Creative means of funding projects:** In order to successfully fund projects, local leaders must demonstrate the value of creative placemaking on problem properties. This often involves cultivating cross-sector partnerships. Most projects piece together funds from a variety of sources.

Though it was illuminating, *Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities* surfaced new questions. Do the themes identified in that publication hold true for a broader swath of communities across the country? How can communities sustain their creative placemaking efforts over the long term, particularly when it comes to resident-driven projects? And what more can be learned about how communities navigate the regulatory challenges that can impede these efforts?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Thanks to support from The Kresge Foundation, the Center for Community Progress undertook this first-of-its-kind national survey of creative placemaking on problem properties to begin to answer some of these questions. Community Progress, with guidance from Metris Arts Consulting, developed survey questions and disseminated it to our national email list and network of partner entities in January 2019. In addition to this widely disseminated survey, we also conducted a series of interviews with eight survey respondents who are working on projects with potential to be models other communities could learn from. The goal of these interviews was to gain a more detailed and nuanced understanding of these projects than survey responses alone could provide. Our methodology is discussed in greater detail in [Appendix B on page 34](#).



In total, 170 people responded to the survey, representing 31 states plus Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. Ninety percent of respondents work in urban areas.² One third of respondents work for organizations that are not arts-specific but which focus on specific local geographies, such as community development corporations. About twenty percent work for community-based arts organizations, while about fifteen percent work for local government. A handful of respondents work for consulting firms, philanthropic organizations, or higher education institutions.

Creative Placemaking: Community at the Center

DEFINING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

In this report, “creative placemaking” is defined as an arts and cultural based practice with three essential components:

- 1. Projects are place-based.** True to its name, creative placemaking practitioners root their work in a specific place and serve the people of that place. This includes making sure projects reflect the physical, social, and economic priorities of the community.
- 2. Creative Placemaking is integrated with other strategies.** Creative placemaking is one tool that can and should be used alongside other strategies like housing preservation or development, economic development, and resident-serving programs. When applied to vacancy in particular, creative placemaking can serve as a valuable approach alongside more traditional strategies like code enforcement, demolition, and resale.
- 3. The process is community-centered.** Community-centered efforts engage residents and business owners to brainstorm what the place can or should be, to inform what it is and how it should remain. Placemaking worth emulating is not about buildings and blocks, but about the people who experience the place.



*Photo credit: Liz Kozub,
Center for Community Progress*

² We counted a respondent as “working in an urban area” if the town, borough, parish, or city is within a county where at least 50,000 people live.



Photo credit: Hinge Collective, Photographs by Chris Baker Evans Photography

Leading practitioners of creative placemaking emphasize intentional and strategic practice rooted in comprehensive community development.³ Take ArtPlace America's definition, which makes clear that communities define creative placemaking for themselves:

“Creative placemaking happens when artists and arts organizations join their neighbors in shaping their community’s future, working together on place-based community outcomes. It’s not necessarily focused on making places more creative; it’s about creatively addressing challenges and opportunities...We believe creative placemaking at its best is locally defined and informed and about the people who live, work, and play in a place.”⁴

In keeping with its mission, Community Progress is focused on creative placemaking on *problem properties*. “Problem properties” are properties that are vacant, abandoned, deteriorated, and underutilized. While most neighborhoods have at least a few problem properties, Community Progress is particularly focused on the places where problem properties are numerous enough that they begin to have a noticeable negative impact on quality of life, safety, property values, and other aspects of a neighborhood's wellbeing. Often, but not always, these are places where properties are so low-value that traditional rehabilitation or redevelopment isn't feasible – the costs outweigh the property's resale value. In other cases, residents may feel that looming development pressures and property speculation are threatening the neighborhood's cultural and social fabric. In each situation, creative placemaking can be a valuable tool.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “CREATIVE REUSE” AND “CREATIVE PLACEMAKING”

Our research revealed that the phrase “creative placemaking” takes on different meanings for different people. As mentioned previously, creative placemaking in the context of this report is a practice with three essential components: projects are place-based, projects are integrated with other strategies, and the process is community-centered.

³ Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking,” White Paper (Washington, D.C.: Mayors' Institute On City Design, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010), <http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>; National Endowment for the Arts, How To Do Creative Placemaking: An Action-Oriented Guide to Arts in Community Development (National Endowment for the Arts, 2016), https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/How-to-do-Creative-Placemaking_Jan2017.pdf; “Creative Placemaking,” Local Initiatives Support Corporation, accessed May 31, 2018, <http://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/economic-development/creative-placemaking/principles/>.

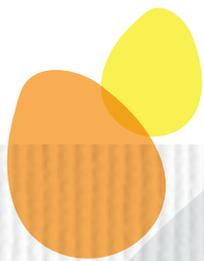
⁴ “About ArtPlace,” ArtPlace America, June 27, 2019, <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction>.

To determine the community-centeredness of a project and to understand the depth of residents' involvement, we need to ask, "How are residents and community members involved in the project's process?" We also need to ask, "Who is involved? And who makes decisions?" As described above, a project is considered creative placemaking only if residents and community members take leadership roles and are routinely involved in decision-making throughout the process.

What about projects that don't involve residents and community members in that way? One might call those projects "creative reuse." Creative reuse projects can still bring value to communities. Residents can enjoy the final product of an artistic or cultural project that transformed a space without being actively involved in the process. Creative reuse projects can repurpose a vacant property, reduce crime, and beautify spaces, all for the betterment of the community.

This report, however, intentionally focuses on creative placemaking as a process that centers community members as the decision-makers for the future trajectory of their neighborhood. A long history of unjust laws, policies, and planning decisions, including redlining and urban renewal practices, caused low-income communities of color in the United States to bear an unfair share of the burden of problem properties. People in these communities have typically been excluded from decisions about their own neighborhoods and even their own homes. In order to ensure revitalization is equitable and that it will work to rectify past injustices and meet the needs and preferences of current residents, those residents need to be included as decision-makers from the very beginning.

*Photo credit:
Janell O'Keefe,
Center for Community
Progress*



WE ARE HERE



SURVEY FINDINGS



TRENDS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ON PROBLEM PROPERTIES: 2019 National Survey Findings

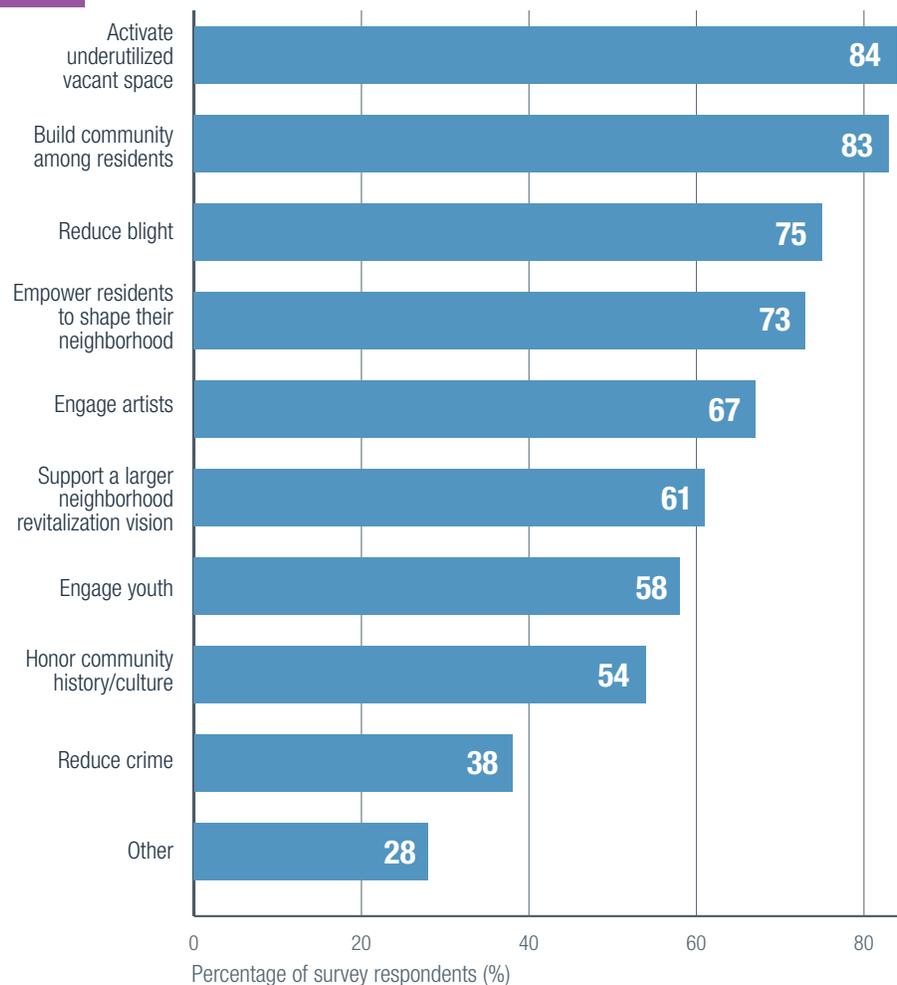
*Photo credits, Left: Beyond Walls.
Right: Linda Steele, Artist: NJ Woods*

The questions in our national survey of creative placemaking projects on problem properties were designed to help us understand who is leading these projects, the problems they are intended to address, the project's goals, and information about the problem property. A full list of the questions included in our survey is included in [Appendix D on page 41](#). Here is what the survey reveals.

Goals of Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties

Survey respondents typically cited multiple goals for each creative placemaking project. The most commonly stated goals were: building relationships among residents and empowering them to lead; revitalizing physical spaces; and supporting larger revitalization efforts (see Figure 1, below).

FIGURE 1
Goals for Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
(n=109 Responders)





In the Design Dash program, neighborhood teams in Oakland, California receive seed funding and pro-bono professional services to complete self-designed projects that benefit the physical environment in their community.

[More about this project on page 24 >](#)

Photo credit: Open Architecture Collaborative



Orange Mound Gallery (OMG), is an exhibition, community-gathering, and flex arts space in a storefront of the Lamar Airways Shopping Center in Orange Mound, Memphis, Tennessee.

[More about this project on page 25 >](#)

Photo credit: Linda Steele

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG RESIDENTS AND EMPOWERING THEM TO LEAD

Through their creative placemaking projects on problem properties, 83 percent of respondents hope to build community among residents and 73 percent aim to empower residents to shape their own neighborhoods. One respondent explained, “Residents had become engaged in their community by doing small creative projects that they could fund and do themselves, such as the park upgrade and litter pickup.” Engaging in one creative placemaking project can deepen residents’ engagement in other community-based activities.

REVITALIZATION OF PHYSICAL SPACES

Communities engage in creative placemaking projects to turn problem properties into neighborhood assets. Through their work, 84 percent of respondents hope to activate underutilized vacant space and 75 percent hope to reduce blighted properties in their neighborhood. “Blighted properties” are properties that have fallen into disrepair, are unsafe, or unsightly. Respondents pointed to examples like demolishing vacant houses and using the newly created vacant lots for community space; taking responsibility of unmaintained publicly owned pocket parks; rehabbing derelict commercial properties for co-creating spaces, and gathering spaces for immigrants, among many other projects.

SUPPORT LARGER REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

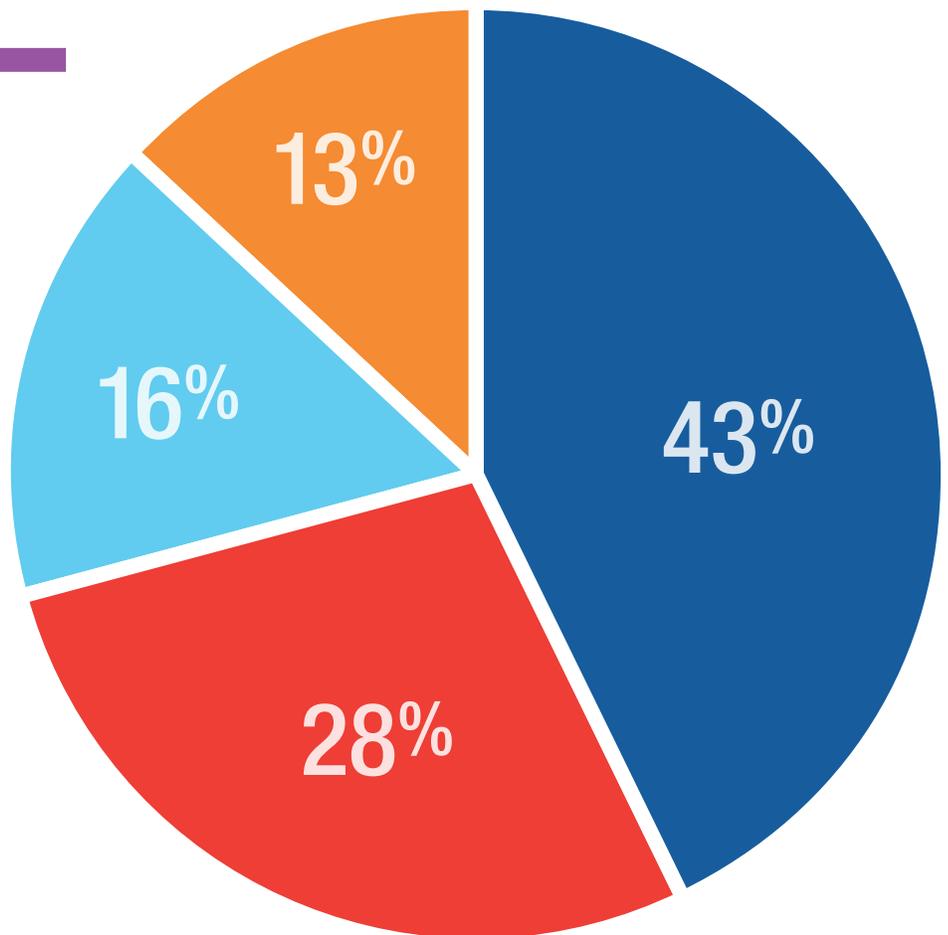
Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62 percent) engage in creative placemaking to support larger neighborhood revitalization efforts. This finding aligns with one of the key themes from *Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities* described earlier: short term wins can provide momentum for long-term gains. Specifically, survey respondents wrote about projects that demonstrate ideas and show what is possible. Neighborhood revitalization usually takes significant time and sustained energy, so celebrating small wins can help bring people on board and signal momentum. Philadelphia’s Hinge Collective engages in “incremental placemaking,” as Hinge principal Alexa Bosse explained in one of this project’s interviews. “[It’s about] bringing people along so that they can see that there is hope.”

Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties in Action

According to respondents, 43 percent of their creative placemaking projects take place on vacant lots without structures, while 28 percent take place in vacant commercial structures (see Figure 2, below). Revitalizing vacant structures, planting gardens, building parks, and painting murals were the most common projects highlighted. These most common projects are not just about painting a mural or creating a new park, both of which add value to a community. Understanding the depth of residents' involvement and how these projects tie to other revitalization strategies is imperative to determine if the project reflects the physical, social, and economic priorities of the community. Through respondents' descriptions of their projects, it is clear that creative placemaking on problem properties looks different from project to project and from community to community.

FIGURE 2
Type of Property Used for Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
(n=102 respondents)

- Vacant Lots
- Vacant Commercial Structures
- Vacant Residential Structures
- Underutilized Neighborhood Parks





GARDENS, PARKS, AND MURALS

About 30 percent of respondents said their communities have created parks, gardens, or orchards on vacant lots, often with native plants and storm water management components. Murals are another popular choice: about 20 percent of respondents included murals in their project descriptions. Some communities paint one mural, while others have initiatives that engage multiple artists and result in a series of murals. Many respondents noted that their projects incorporate murals and other public art within their gardens and parks.

TRANSFORMING VACANT STRUCTURES

Creative placemaking is also being used to transform vacant structures, such as vacant churches, high schools, and storefronts, according to the survey responses. Nearly one third of respondents said their project occurs in a vacant commercial structure. Orange Mound Gallery (a case study included in [Appendix A on page 25](#)) is one good example. The gallery now occupies a once-vacant storefront in a shopping center.

In addition to commercial structures, 16 percent of respondents engage in creative placemaking on vacant residential structures. For example, in the Exchange House in Akron, Ohio, community members gather for concerts and dance classes on the ground floor, and the upstairs functions as an Airbnb unit.

VARYING COST AND COMPLEXITY

Survey responses indicate that creative placemaking projects vary widely in terms of complexity and cost (see Figure 3, on page 15). One community, for example, created an artistic board-up program to cover broken windows of vacant houses with artistic images, a project that cost less than \$5,000. Other projects, such as transforming entire buildings, cost more than \$100,000. Despite the higher price tag these larger projects often achieve a level of efficiency and, to an extent, economies of scale: they support a variety of compatible uses, such as art studios, a coffee shop, and a performance venue, all under one roof.

Survey respondents most commonly reported that their projects cost more than \$100,000 (43 percent of respondents). The second-most common response, however, at 15 percent of respondents, indicated project expenses of \$0-5,000.

“In addition to growing food, the Pegasus Garden serves as a spot for neighbors to sit and visit, kids to play, and where we sometimes hold potlucks, campfires, and neighborhood meetings” said one Prospect Park Neighbor.

[More about this project on page 27 >](#)

Photo credit: Prospect P.L.A.C.E. neighbors



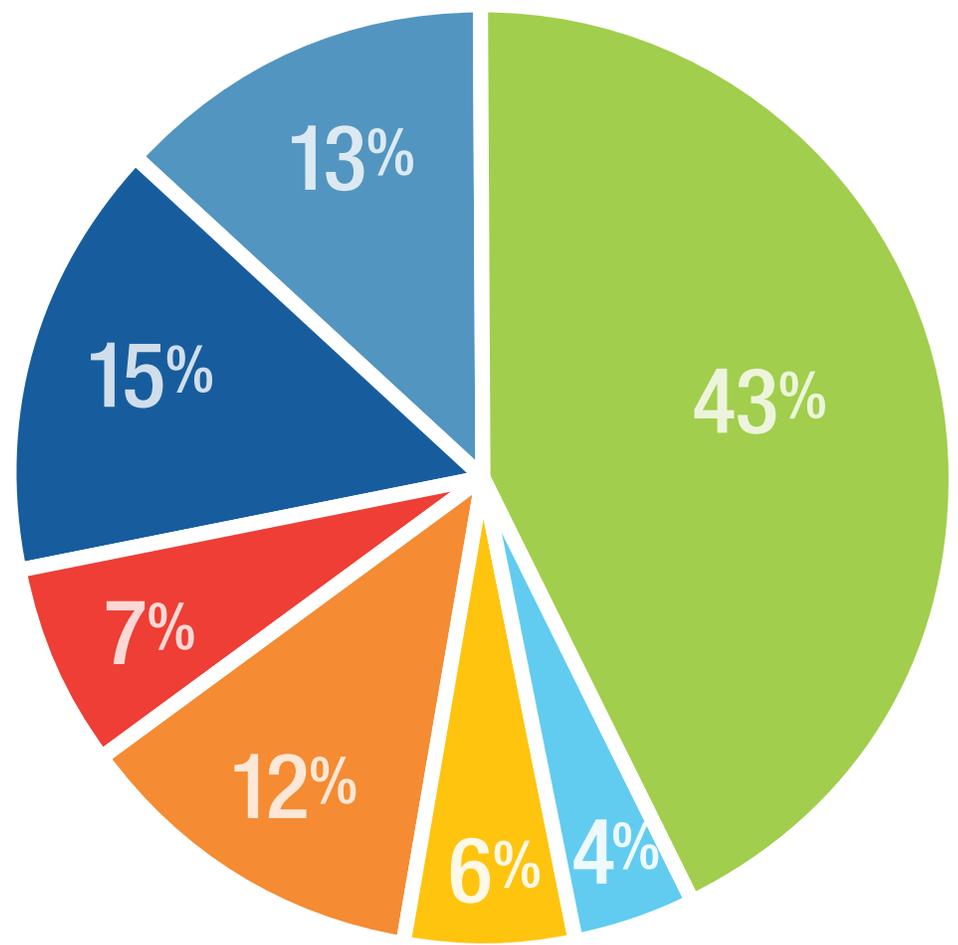
The nonprofit organization Beyond Walls, has activated several underused spaces in Lynn using different types of art.

[More about this project on page 28 >](#)

Photo credit: Creative Collective for Beyond Walls

FIGURE 3
Approximate Total Cost for Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=108 respondents)

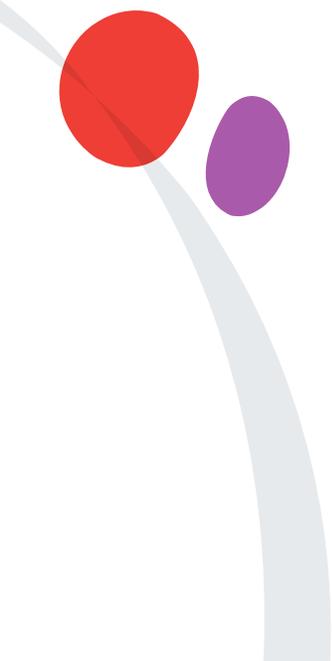
- \$100,000 + ■
- \$50,001 - \$100,000 ■
- \$25,001 - \$50,000 ■
- \$10,001 - \$25,000 ■
- \$5,001 - \$10,000 ■
- Under \$5,000 ■
- Do Not Know ■



This difference in cost could signal that for some projects, the focus is on low impact or temporary uses, while for others, the goal is to transform a vacant structure for long-term use.

Navigating the relationship with a problem property's owner can also add to the complexity and cost of a project. The survey revealed that communities commonly engage in creative placemaking projects on publicly owned (31 percent of respondents), nonprofit-owned (29 percent), and privately owned (26 percent) properties.

Respondents sometimes struggle to identify the property owner to ask permission for, or convince the owner of the value in, a creative placemaking project. This is consistent with findings from Community Progress' work on vacant property challenges more broadly across the country. Identifying and contacting the private owner of a long-vacant property can be an all but impossible task — and even identifying the appropriate local government department or official regarding a publicly held property can often be a significant hurdle.



Leaders of Creative Placemaking on Problem Properties

Survey respondents affirmed a key theme that first emerged in *Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities*: partnerships are key to making creative placemaking projects happen on problem properties, often out of necessity. The person with the idea, with the property, and with the funding are rarely all the same individual or group. The person who needs to sign off on permits or review proposed zoning changes is someone else entirely. An artist may need to rely on community-based organizations that have trust within the neighborhood to ensure a community-centered process; and a community-based organization may need to rely on an artist for their professional expertise.

Local organizations and residents tend to be most commonly involved in creative placemaking on problem properties. Below is more information about the stakeholders most commonly involved in these projects.

ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS: LOCAL NONPROFITS AND ARTS ENTITIES

Of all the types of stakeholders involved in creative placemaking on problem properties, 85 percent of respondents pointed to local nonprofits as playing a role, and 61 percent identified art organizations, typically also nonprofits (numbers add up to greater than 100 percent because respondents could select all involved stakeholders). These two types of stakeholders are also most likely to lead this work: 55 percent of respondents said community nonprofits lead this work, and 52 percent of respondents attribute that role to arts and culture nonprofits (see Figure 4 on page 17).

One survey respondent described why a local arts organization served as the lead partner in a creative placemaking project: “[The arts organization] has a great, nonpartisan reputation and it really helped people engage in ways that would not be possible if it were a public sector planning process or a chamber of commerce event.”

Often, community-based organizations have nurtured deep ties within their communities that engender trust. Alexa Bosse of the Hinge Collective sees their partnership with the New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) as essential. “When [NKCDC] said something, there was an understanding [in the

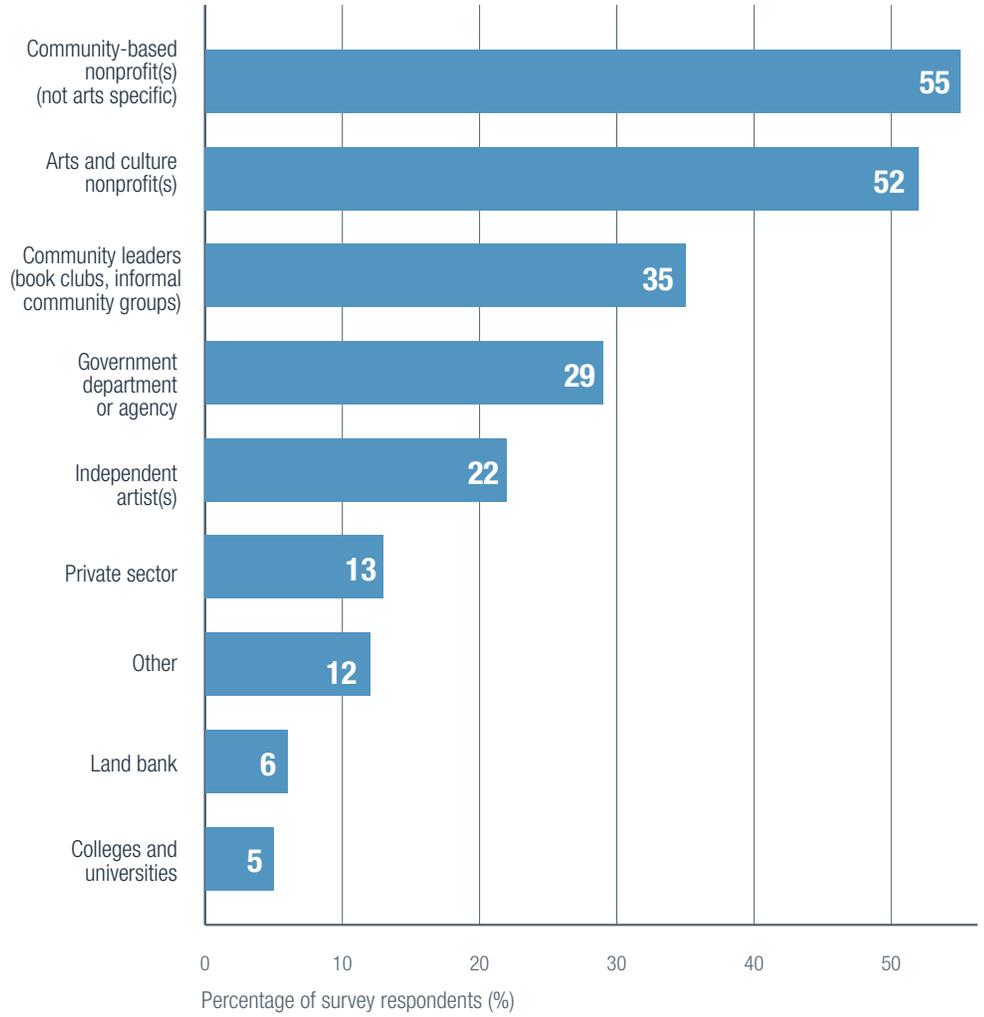


Alexa Bosse, principal of Hinge Collective, writes: “What began as a graduate level design studio at The University of Pennsylvania taught by Hinge Collective principals, Alexa Bosse and Ari Miller, has become a flagship effort in understanding the role of community engaged design in working with communities affected by the national opioid epidemic.

[More about this project on page 29 >](#)

Photo credit: Hinge Collective

FIGURE 4
Leaders of Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)



|||||

The lack of resident involvement throughout the entire process could signal a blurring of the definition of creative reuse from creative placemaking.

community] of follow through,” Bosse explained in our interview with her. Perhaps another reason why nonprofits lead this work is that nearly one third of respondents (29 percent) said that their projects happen on property that nonprofits own.

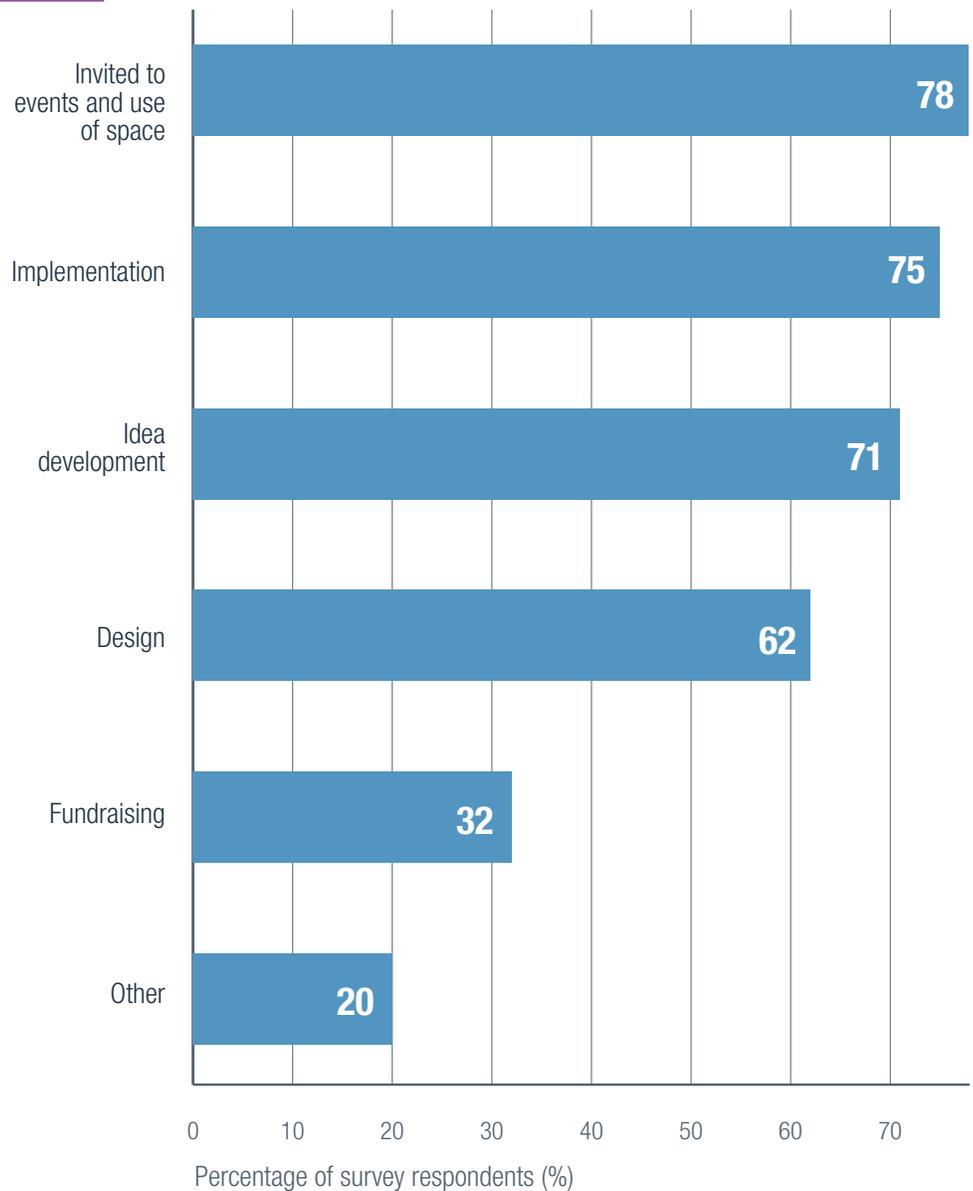
RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

As discussed previously, “building community” and “empowering residents” are the two leading reasons communities engage in creative placemaking on problem properties. It is not surprising, therefore, that many projects engage residents throughout the process, from project design (62 percent of respondents) to implementation (75 percent of respondents). Seventy-eight percent of respondents note that residents are invited to use the space after completion. Thirty-two percent of residents are involved in fundraising for the project, yet 65 percent of respondents noted funding as a challenge for project implementation, the most

frequently identified challenge (see Figure 5, below). These findings beg the question: can communities more effectively involve residents in fundraising efforts to help overcome one of the most-often cited challenge to engaging in this work?

Despite the high percentage of resident involvement in individual phases of the project, only 20 percent of the respondents said that residents were involved in all phases of the creative placemaking project. In other words, 80 percent of creative placemaking projects have clear room for improvement when it comes to ensuring a community-centered process (and, of course, the other 20 percent likely have opportunities to improve, as well). The lack of resident involvement throughout the entire process could signal a blurring of the definition of creative reuse and creative placemaking.

FIGURE 5
Stages in Which Residents Were Involved in Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
(n=109 Responders)



Ensuring Equitable Outcomes Through Sustained Engagement



Hope Community (Cool Cities) Park sits on an abandoned filling station property in Detroit, Michigan.

[More about this project on page 30 >](#)

Photo credit: Focus: HOPE!



The Colorado Trust, a private health equity foundation in Colorado Springs, partnered with a grassroots community organization to offer the Photo Voice Project.

[More about this project on page 31 >](#)

Photo credit: Joe Mahoney, with permission from Colorado Trust

This report endeavors to lift up projects that, based on survey responses and follow-up conversations, center residents in decision-making. As noted above, survey respondents cite people-oriented goals for this work: 83 percent of respondents said one goal is to build community among residents and 73 percent said one goal is to empower residents to shape their neighborhoods. Responses also suggest that communities achieved these goals: 82 percent of respondents reported that their creative placemaking work fostered connections among residents (the most commonly reported impact) and 72 percent of respondents said their work deepened resident engagement in community initiatives.

SUSTAINED RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

“People support what they create,” said Réna Bradley, Community Development Director of Bridge of Grace Compassionate Ministries Center, in our interview with her. In addition, when residents engage in a creative placemaking project, they may be inspired to participate in other community projects as well.

Resident engagement can also give participants the power to make improvements happen—often after feeling helpless to tackle longtime neighborhood challenges. One survey respondent said their project “gave... quick-wins for the residents that have had to deal with these trouble lots for many years. The idea that something can happen and they were a part of pointing out the problem was a big win for neighborhood pride and hope.”

To sustain resident engagement, respondents mentioned the importance of building relationships and trust through good communication, making processes transparent, and slowing down when necessary.

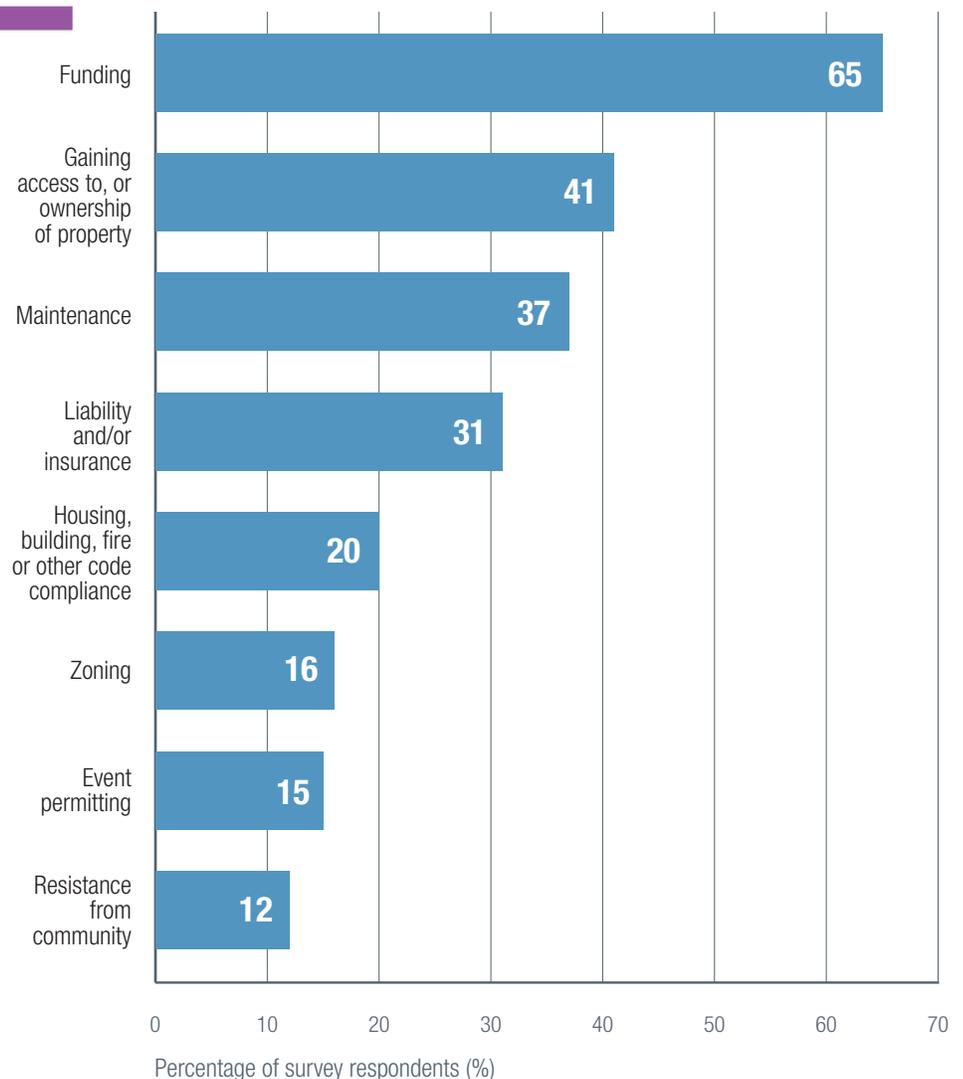
Survey respondents also spoke to the importance of residents’ sense of ownership of the creative placemaking process as well as the final product. Alexa Bosse of Hinge Collective defined success as “creating a space where people feel ownership in their community.” This sense of ownership can help overcome a common challenge of this work: maintenance. More than one third of respondents (37 percent) noted that maintenance of their creative placemaking project was a challenge.

Survey respondents also called out the importance of youth involvement as both a catalyst for the work as well as a way to sustain it. This finding is in line with the theme of engagement of other stakeholders, including youth. “If we can get the kids involved, we can get to the adults,” said Mia Ramirez of The Colorado Trust in our interview with her.

The Need for Local Government's Involvement

Problem properties come with a unique set of challenges that may not be present on privately owned properties with supportive owners.⁵ Survey respondents brought more clarity to these challenges (see Figure 6, below). Respondents reported struggling to navigate certain junctures of their projects, including gaining access to or ownership of properties (41 percent), liability and/or insurance (31 percent), zoning (16 percent), and event permitting (15 percent).

FIGURE 6
Challenges Encountered When Implementing Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
(n=109 Responders)



⁵ For additional information on why working with vacant properties presents unique challenges compared to other kinds of property see Page 42 of *Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties: Lessons Learned from Four Cities* (2018) <https://www.communityprogress.net/publications-pages-396.php>



In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Mount Vernon Park Neighborhood Association runs the Tired-A-Lot project and studio for neighborhood kids to involve youth in the transformation of vacant properties.

[More about this project on page 32 >](#)

Photo credit: Bridge of Grace CMC



The City of Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) piloted the Paint the Town program in 2017 “to encourage community ownership of public space by facilitating resident-designed, resident-organized mural projects on the pavement.

[More about this project on page 33 >](#)

Photo credit: Community Design + Architecture

WHY DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT MATTER?

Returning a vacant property to productive use, creative or otherwise, is often far more complicated and technical than one would expect. It often involves navigating the bureaucratic laws and policies that govern property. Even if a property is privately owned, if it is deteriorated government agencies will likely be involved in enforcing property maintenance and safety standards. If it is abandoned, government agencies will likely be involved to find the owner or transfer that property to public ownership.

Even in the most straightforward situations, stakeholders who are pursuing a creative placemaking project will run into bureaucratic processes like gaining access to property, insurance, and permitting. Local governments are a necessary player in situations like this. In the best cases, local governments are a helpful, solutions-oriented, and supportive partner.

Similar to sustaining resident engagement, survey respondents noted that relationship-building is key to developing positive partnerships between government and the community. Sixty-six percent of respondents said that their creative placemaking work has strengthened relationships between arts and/or community organizations and local government. Local government support can come at varying levels, from traditional support like helping to navigate bureaucratic departments or walking through an event permit process, to approving plans for a new project. Local government can also serve as a thought partner, innovator, and policy changer to encourage the use of creative placemaking as a revitalization tool.

Working together, residents and governments can use creative placemaking to transform individual properties as well as advance broader revitalization-focused reforms. Paint the Town in Oakland, California is a great example of this, and more about this project is included in [Appendix A on page 33](#).

Concrete steps by local government demonstrating their willingness to proactively partner on creative placemaking efforts are relatively unusual among survey respondents. Fewer than one third (31 percent) of respondents said that local government supports creative placemaking on problem properties and has approved policies or processes to facilitate creative placemaking as part of its revitalization strategy. Many survey respondents also noted that they navigated regulatory red tape through “trial and error” and “tenacity and will.” Additional research is needed to develop a more nuanced understanding of regulatory challenges that impede creative placemaking on problem properties, and how communities attempt to overcome those challenges.

CONCLUSION

Through this survey Community Progress sought to explore the relevance and importance of five key themes about creative placemaking on problem properties: the importance of partnerships; ways to generate momentum; engagement of residents and other stakeholders; identifying regulatory barriers; and creative means of funding projects. We also aimed to understand more about creative placemaking projects in a much broader range of communities.

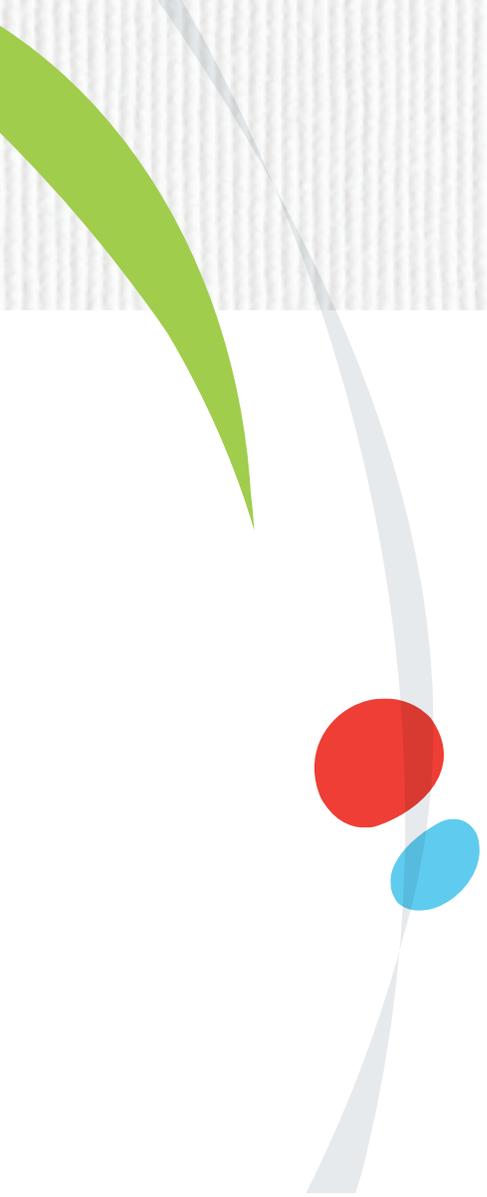
This survey makes it clear that communities across the country are engaged in creative placemaking as a tool to revitalize their vacant properties. It also shows that the themes we set out to explore about creative placemaking on problem properties do indeed hold true in communities across the country.

This survey also revealed that in some cases, the line between “creative reuse” and “creative placemaking” is blurred. Many respondents pointed to projects that, while having impact and value in communities, lack a clear measure of how the project’s process is community-centered — one of the three elements that we consider to be definitive of “creative placemaking.”

In addition, while many communities say that regulatory barriers can impede creative placemaking projects, a systematic understanding of how communities can overcome those barriers is still unclear. Surveys are limited tools that can miss nuance. Additional research and in-person exchange is needed to more fully understand how communities and municipalities navigate regulatory issues.

Throughout the course of this project we heard about kids who advocated for their project before a zoning board, and about neighbors learning from a master gardener on how to maintain their community park. We heard about residents who are paid a living wage to staff a gallery where artwork by community artists graces the walls. And we heard about a transportation department that created a public art initiative that centers equity and community ownership of public space.

All of these are creative placemaking projects that are transforming problem properties into new places for community, expression, and growth. And at some point, every single one of them started out with someone asking, “What if...?”



“People support what they create” Réna Bradley, Community Development Director of Bridge of Grace Compassionate Ministries Center.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Case Studies



**TRENDS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING
ON PROBLEM PROPERTIES:
2019 National Survey Findings**

*Photo credits,
Left: Bridge of Grace Ministries CMC.
Right: Creative Collective for Beyond Walls*



Design Dash

Oakland, California

Photo Credits

Left: East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation

Top Right: Google Earth

Bottom Right: Open Architecture Collaborative

IN THE DESIGN DASH PROGRAM, neighborhood teams in Oakland, California, receive seed funding and pro-bono professional services to complete self-designed projects that benefit the physical environment in their community. Design Dash is a project of the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation and the San Pablo Area Revitalization Collaborative (SPARC), in consultation with the Open Architecture Collaborative. The three organizations started Design Dash together in 2015 to support SPARC's goals of "Fewer blighted houses, parks, streets and medians, more friendly community spaces, and increased resident participation and leadership."⁶ SPARC identifies motivated residents of three neighborhoods who can rally other neighbors to complete projects. Then, architects and other professionals coach program participants on how to develop and execute a project idea. Six projects received Design Dash support in 2017, including a pedestrian safety advocacy campaign, a pop-up library, and murals. A recent evaluation found that community participants felt heard and empowered because they made decisions over a pool of money and they felt more confident about their ability to make change in their neighborhood. "Sometimes people [participate in a Design Dash project] and find their voice as a leader," said Annie Ledbury, Creative Community Development Manager at East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, in our interview with her as part of this project.

⁶ East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, San Pablo Area Revitalization Collaborative, and Open Architecture Collaborative. "Design Dash 2017: A Creative Placemaking Initiative," 2018.



Orange Mound Gallery (OMG)

Memphis, Tennessee

Photo Credits

Left: Averell Mondie

Artist: Kenneth Wayne Alexander II

Right: Linda Steele

ORANGE MOUND GALLERY SERVES as an outstanding example, of creative placemaking that addresses a vacant property while also leading equitable opportunities for African American artists and community members. “OMG, Orange Mound Gallery, is an exhibition, community gathering, and flex arts space in a storefront of the Lamar Airways Shopping Center in Orange Mound, Memphis, Tennessee,” said Linda Steele, CEO and Founder of ArtUp, in an interview for this project. “The Orange Mound neighborhood has a rich history of being one of the first communities in the nation for African American home ownership prior to experiencing decades of disinvestment. That particular storefront was a liquor store for many years, attracting loitering and crime. Today, the structure is an art gallery that provides a platform for under-resourced artists and artists of color to show and sell their work. Artists work side by side with residents who help promote the shows and are paid a living wage to work as gallery attendants. I am especially proud of this project because of the organic way in which it evolved: residents, artists, and individuals with longtime ties to the community identified the space, negotiated with the owner, and assisted in space activation. OMG has continued to improve the safety and community involvement in affairs relating to the shopping center. We were nominated Best Gallery by the Memphis Flyer two years in a row and made the top three in 2018.”



Sprinkler Beach

Sullivan County, New York

SPRINKLER BEACH WAS A POP-UP STYLE project led by a coordinated effort of the Sullivan County Planning Department, Village of Monticello Department of Public Works and Fire Department, and Center for Workforce Development's Youth Program. On an underutilized municipal parking lot in a downtown commercial district, youth painted an ocean and beach. Coordinators then set up beach chairs, lawn sprinklers, and "cabanas" where people could learn about and taste healthy foods. The project "was a way of demonstrating the potential of the space," wrote Freda Eisenberg, Sullivan County Planning Commissioner, in her survey response. She continued, "and a low-cost way of making something happen while we keep searching for the more than \$3 million it will take to achieve the placemaking vision of a parking lot transformed to community commons." One cabana served as a central point for community visioning to develop ideas and plans for transforming the parking lot into a community asset.

*Photos Credit:
Freda Eisenberg*



Pegasus Garden

Lansing, Michigan

PEGASUS GARDEN IS LOCATED IN THE PROSPECT PLACE neighborhood in Lansing, Michigan. Jennifer Grau is a Prospect PLACE Neighborhood resident. She describes Pegasus Garden in a survey response: “In addition to growing food, the space serves as a spot for neighbors to sit and visit, kids to play, and where we sometimes hold potlucks, campfires, and neighborhood meetings. We even held a free community concert adjacent to the space. The garden is also the site of our communal compost bin, memorial flower bed, tool shed (from which neighbors can borrow tools), and our little free library. Several factors prompted neighbors to create this place. A house was demolished, creating a vacant lot. Drug activity was believed to be taking place across the street from this location. Neighbors wanted to create a colorful space for gathering and gardening that would signal to those who live here and those passing by that we live in a connected, vibrant, and caring community. Over the years we have improved our garden adding a paved path and ‘really raised beds’ so that when we had neighbors in wheelchairs they could garden with us...Our garden is unique in that it is communal; there are no individual plots. Anyone can plant, weed, water and/or share in the harvest...The Pegasus Garden has become a bright and colorful community asset.”

Photos Credit:

Prospect P.L.A.C.E. neighbors



Beyond Walls

Lynn, Massachusetts

Photo Credits

Top & Bottom Left: Creative Collective

Right: WASP Beyond Walls

LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS IS A POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY just outside Boston where leaders have worked for decades to overcome an unfair reputation as a dangerous city. “Much of the Boston-based media only comes to Lynn when something bad happens,” said AI Wilson, Founder and CEO of Beyond Walls. In 2016, Wilson assembled a committee of residents and business owners to share what they wanted in their community. Neighbors talked about wanting to make downtown more walkable through better lighting and more public art. “If we could get more people walking around downtown,” he explained, “perceptions of it being unsafe would decrease. We’d see an increase in spending in local businesses and residents would have a greater sense of community pride.” From those conversations, Beyond Walls was created and is now a nonprofit organization that activates underused spaces in Lynn using different types of art. “What started from community input has now turned into a movement,” Wilson notes. Beyond Walls’ first project was The Beyond Walls Mural Festival. The event features both internationally renowned street artists as well as local talent whose backgrounds match the cultural makeup of downtown Lynn. The 2017 Mural Festival jump-started three additional initiatives: the installation of 12 pieces of vintage neon artwork throughout the downtown, the illumination of three underpasses utilizing 600 feet of dynamic LED lighting, and a new sculpture paying homage to Lynn’s industrial heritage. Beyond Walls has now overseen three years of street art festivals, installed more than 60 pieces of large-scale street art, and has won several awards including MassINC’s Gateway City Innovation Award, the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, and MIT’s Boston-based HubWeek Impactful Public Art Award, among others.



Urban Action

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*Photos Credit:
Hinge Collective*

URBAN ACTION IS AN INITIATIVE OF HINGE COLLECTIVE that pairs community organizations with graduate students to develop thoughtful, community-informed designs for public open spaces. Alexa Bosse, principal of Hinge Collective, writes: “What began as a graduate level design studio at The University of Pennsylvania taught by Hinge Collective principals Alexa Bosse and Ari Miller has become a flagship effort in understanding the role of community engaged design in working with communities affected by the national opioid epidemic. Working with students to perform outreach and develop initial proposals for a small vacant lot in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia, Hinge Collective was able to gain the trust of residents as well as the large homeless population to identify avenues for healing. With the realization of the student proposal for a healing space as the end goal, Hinge and the New Kensington Community Development Corporation have been facilitating a series of incremental improvements with support of the Knight Foundation. In the summer of 2018 Hinge students constructed a community message board prototype and brought it to community meetings to ask residents to share their memories of and wishes for their home. The success of these interactions in identifying shared aspirations led to the ‘Wish Gallery’ installation at the site of the design proposal, where aspirations were paired with professionally taken portraits and arranged in an outdoor gallery, making publicly shared values. The next phase of the project, completed in the fall of 2018, seeks to shift perceptions of the space through small strategic design moves implemented through a community build event.”

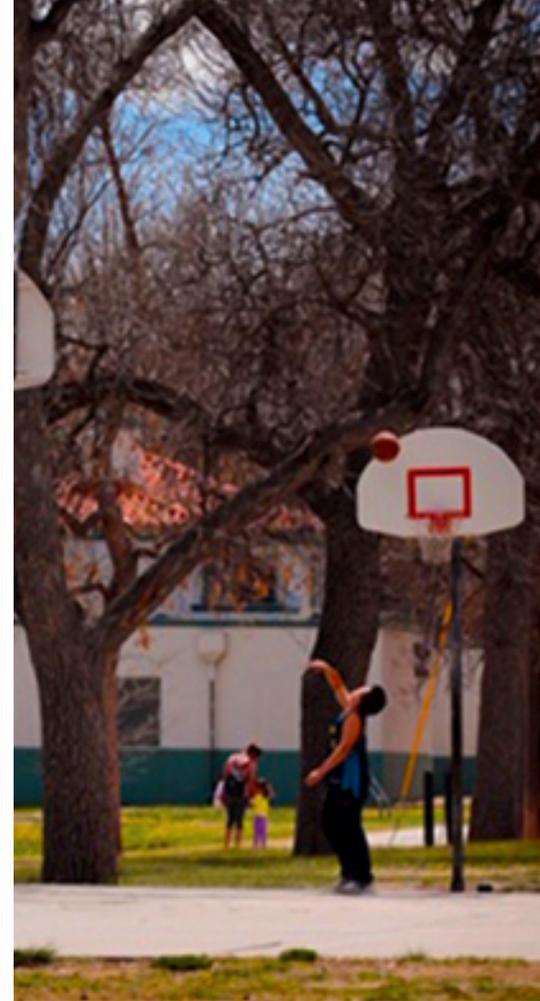


Hope Community (Cool Cities) Park

Detroit, Michigan

HOPE COMMUNITY (COOL CITIES) PARK is located on the site of a former filling station property in Detroit, Michigan. The park has become a central community gathering place: it hosts a community farmers market, weekly spoken word performances, and an annual photography festival. “Through a neighborhood fellowship program, we recruited residents to work with a master gardener to create and maintain a beautiful set of gardens,” wrote Debbie Fisher of Focus: HOPE in her survey response. “Key aspects of this solution were motivated residents and a skilled volunteer willing to invest his time and resources in training and assisting.”

*Photos Credit:
Focus: HOPE!*



Hillside Photovoice Project

Colorado Springs, Colorado

IN 2017 THE COLORADO TRUST, a private health equity foundation in Colorado Springs, partnered with Leaders Engaged and Amazingly Determined (LEAD), a local neighborhood youth group, to create a Hillside neighborhood youth “photovoice” project. The project team gave cameras to several young people in the neighborhood and asked them to take photographs of things they liked and things they wanted to change in their communities. Through this exercise, the youth identified a few places they wanted to make better, including a local basketball court. “Eventually the youth started asking, ‘Why can’t we just make the changes?’” explained Mia Ramirez of The Colorado Trust in an interview for this project. The young adults got their parents involved, and one weekend a group of volunteers came together to rehabilitate and renovate the basketball court. It cost less than \$500 to make the courts fully functional once again. It was an early ‘win’ and gave people a sense of what’s possible. “People were on a real high, Ramirez explained, “seeing how they can make these things happen.”

Photo Credits

Left: The Colorado Trust

Right: Joe Mahoney



Tired-A-Lot Studio

Fort Wayne, Indiana

IN FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, the Mount Vernon Park Neighborhood Association runs the Tired-A-Lot project and studio for neighborhood youth to involve them in the transformation of vacant properties, explained Réna Bradley, Community Development Director at Bridge of Grace Compassionate Ministries Center, in an interview. Several years ago, a community listening tour surfaced four priorities: safety, recreation for kids, a welcoming environment/community pride, and beautification. Youth worked with local architects to redesign a vacant lot, and were even the ones who took the project to the Zoning Land Use Board to advocate for the needed zoning changes and special use permit. They were present when the Board approved the request, laying the foundation of what would eventually become the Tired-A-Lot studio.

Photos Credit:

Bridge of Grace CMC



Paint the Town

Oakland, California

Photos Credit:

Community Design + Architecture

THE CITY OF OAKLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (OakDOT) piloted the Paint the Town program in 2017, “to encourage community ownership of public space by facilitating resident-designed, resident-organized mural projects on the pavement. . .In launching the Paint the Town pilot program, OakDOT sought to minimize historical barriers to community participation in government programs. The department developed a toolkit outlining guidelines and held application clinics for interested neighborhood and community groups.”⁷ “To advance OakDOT’s equity goals, the department wanted to ensure this program was accessible to underserved communities. The program set a goal to approve projects on a 2:1 ratio, facilitating two projects in neighborhoods of medium- and high-disadvantaged communities for every project approved in a low-disadvantaged community (as defined by the Metropolitan Transit Commission communities of concern index).⁸ The final ratio was 9:1, exceeding the department’s goal.”⁹ Although OakDOT has not decided how to move forward after the Paint the Town pilot project ends, it boasts that the pilot has been a “huge success to-date.” And Annie Ledbury, Creative Community Development Manager at East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, shared in that she hopes the pilot “turns into something more permanent that other communities can replicate.”

⁷ Oakland Department of Transportation, “‘Paint the Town’ Mural Comes to West Oakland with a Tribute to Music History at the California Hotel,” August 25, 2018, <https://www.oaklandca.gov/news/2018/paint-the-town-mural-comes-to-west-oakland-with-a-tribute-to-music-history-at-the-california-hotel>.

⁸ “For Plan Bay Area 2040, the definition of communities of concern will include all census tracts that have a concentration of BOTH minority AND low-income households at specified thresholds of significance, or that have a concentration of three or more of six additional factors if they also have a concentration of low-income households.” More information at <https://www.planbayarea.org/2040-plan/plan-details/equity-analysis>.

⁹ “Paint The Town!,” City of Oakland, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/paint-the-town>.

Appendix B: Methodology

SURVEY

To collect the information included in this report, the Center for Community Progress and Metris Arts Consulting designed survey questions aimed at better understanding the breadth of creative placemaking projects on problem properties in the United States. We invited anyone with knowledge of creative placemaking projects on problem properties in their community to fill out the survey. Community Progress widely publicized the survey through our email list and across our social media channels. Community Progress and Metris also sent targeted invitations to our networks, and asked our broader community to share a link to the survey with others who might know about or engage in this type of work.

Respondents filled out the survey via the online tool SurveyMonkey. The survey was open for approximately six weeks, from January 7 to February 20, 2019. A total of 170 people completed the survey. When we analyzed the results for the type of respondent (e.g., community organization, local municipality) as well as geography (urban or rural), we counted everyone who included this information in their responses. However, in all other analysis we included only respondents who completed the survey *and* described a creative placemaking project(s) on problem property that meet our definition (projects are place-based, projects are integrated with other strategies, and the process is community-centered). In some cases, we struggled to determine whether projects met our definition and in those cases we used our best judgment. A total of 109 respondents completed the survey and described a project(s) that met our definition. In Appendix D on page 41, we include all the survey questions as well as graphs that describe respondents' answers.

While we are pleased with the number of responses, this cannot be considered a representative sample of all communities that are engaged in creative placemaking. Instead we take these individual responses as a more varied and more detailed set of perspectives on projects in their communities.

INTERVIEWS

In addition to the public survey, the Center for Community Progress conducted a series of interviews with eight survey respondents. Through these interviews Community Progress hoped to understand projects in a more detailed and nuanced way than what could be understood in their survey responses. Community Progress chose to interview people who described projects we wanted to know more about, or that we thought might make exemplary projects for other communities to learn from. Community Progress conducted these semi-structured interviews by phone and they lasted approximately 60 minutes. Interviewees are listed below.

ALEXA BOSSE, Founding Principal, Hinge Collaborative (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

RÉNA BRADLEY, Community Development Director, Bridge of Grace Compassionate Ministries Center (Fort Wayne, Indiana)

LINDSEY AKENS, Creative Placemaking Facilitator, and **RYAN A. BUNCH**, Communications & Outreach Coordinator, The Arts Commission of Toledo (Toledo, Ohio)

ANNIE LEDBURY, Creative Community Development Manager, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (Oakland, California)

STEPHANIE LEONARDI, Founder // Director, Summit Lake Build Corps; and Jose Delgado Jr. and Tom Ghinder of Build Akron, (Akron, Ohio)

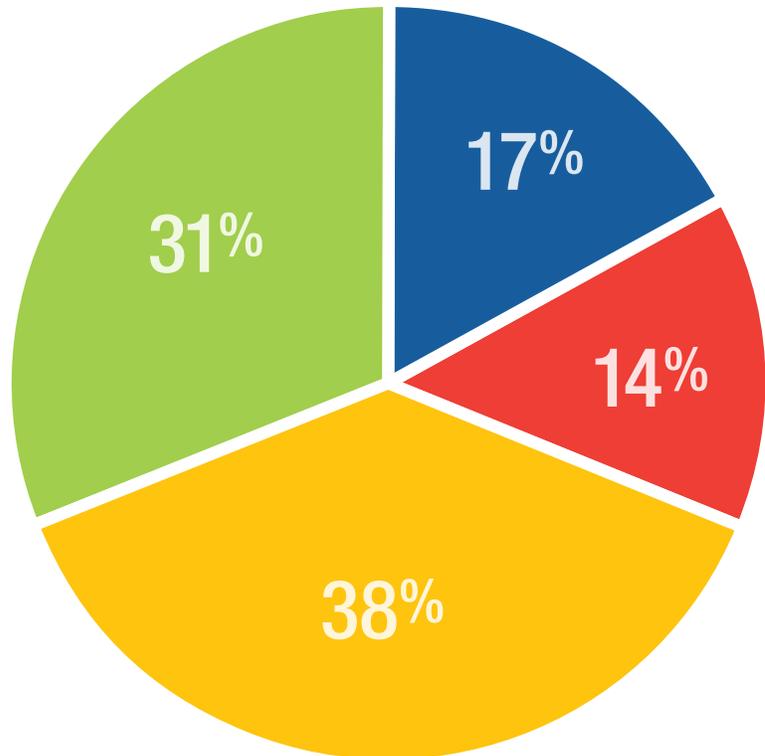
MIA RAMIREZ, Community Partner at The Colorado Trust (Colorado Springs, Colorado)

LINDA STEELE, Founder + CEO, ArtUp and OMG Gallery (Memphis, Tennessee)

AL WILSON, CEO, Beyond Walls (Lynn, Massachusetts)

Appendix C: Select Survey Results

FIGURE A1
Statements That Best Describe the Use of Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties as a Revitalization Strategy
(n=109 Responders)



-  One creative placemaking project implemented on a problem property, but not as part of a local revitalization strategy
-  More than one creative placemaking project implemented on problem properties, but they are not part of a coordinated effort
-  There are a few groups and stakeholders working together to ensure creative placemaking on problem properties is used to support revitalization; however, the work is not incorporated into a local government revitalization strategy
-  Local government supports creative placemaking on problem properties and has approved policies or processes to facilitate creative placemaking as part of its revitalization strategy

FIGURE A2
Leaders of Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

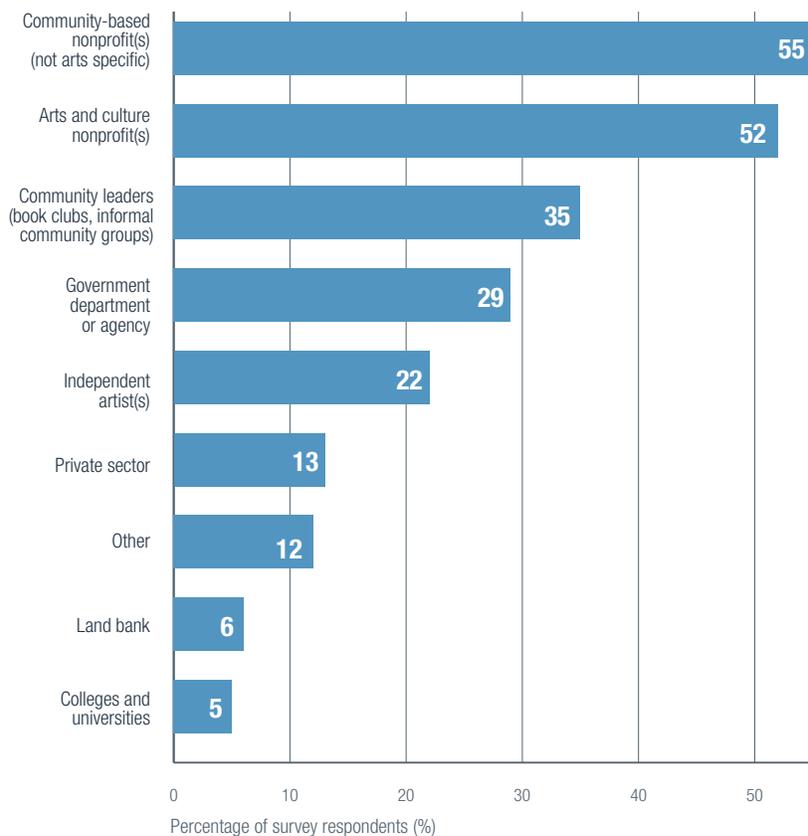


FIGURE A3
Goals for Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

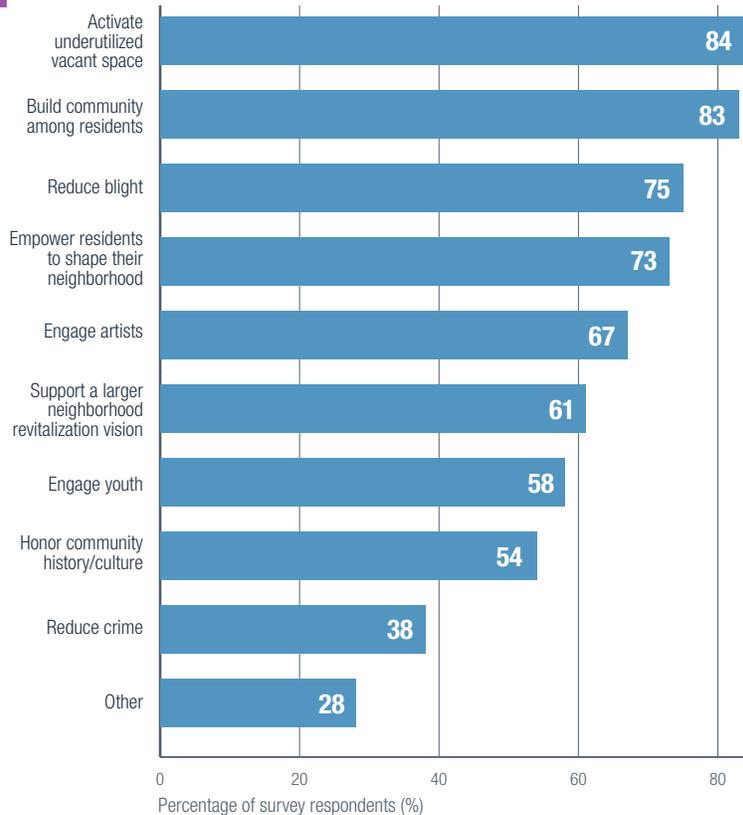


FIGURE A4
Type of Property
Used for Creative
Placemaking Projects
on Problem Properties
 (n=102 Responders)

- Vacant Lots ■
- Vacant Commercial Structures ■
- Vacant Residential Structures ■
- Underutilized Neighborhood Parks ■

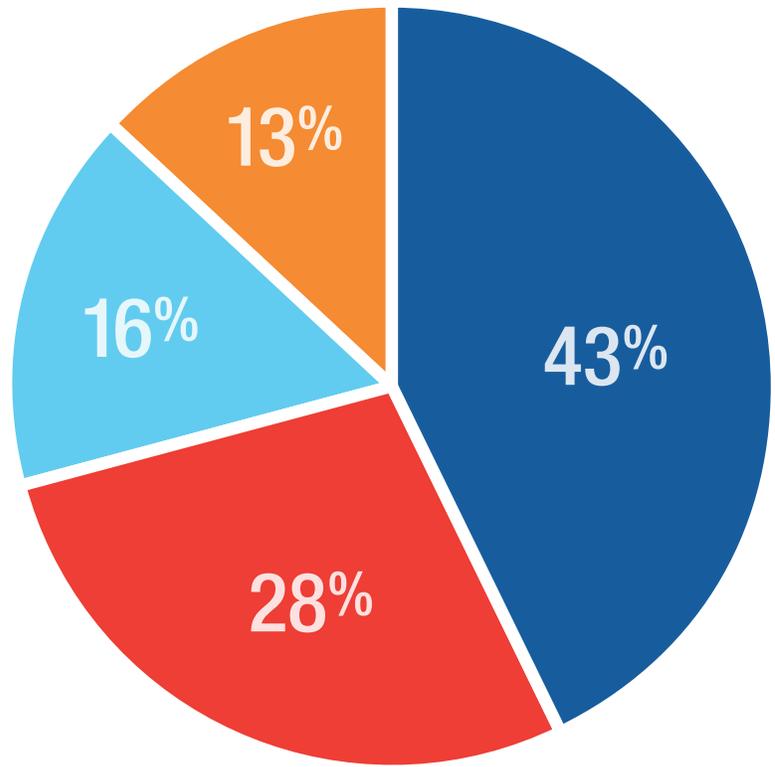


FIGURE A5
Owner of Property
That Was Used for
Creative Placemaking
Projects on Problem
Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

- Local or County Government ■
- Nonprofit ■
- Private Owner ■
- Other Public Entity ■
- Land Bank ■
- Do Not Know ■

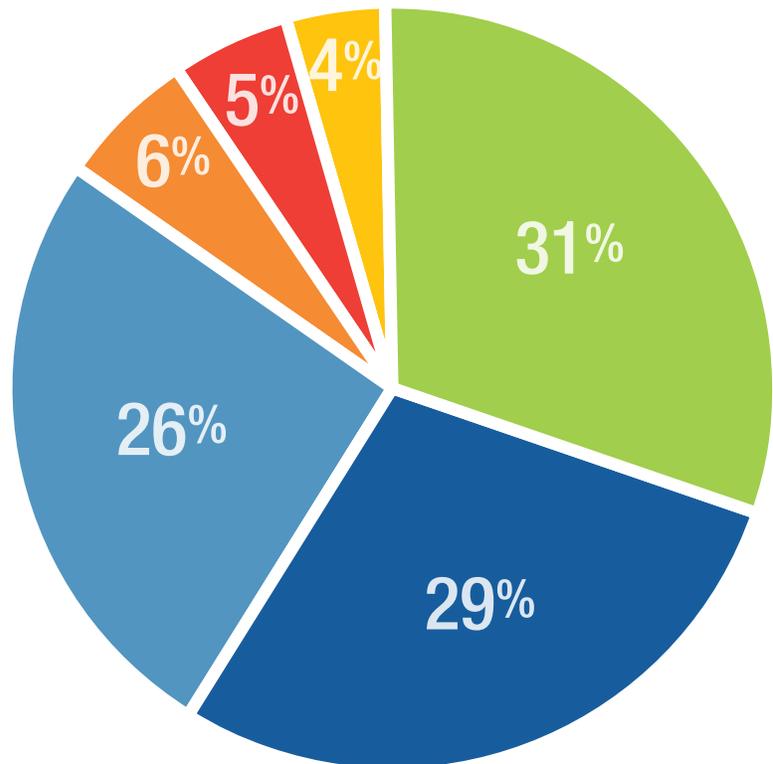


FIGURE A6
Approximate Total Cost for Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=108 Responders)

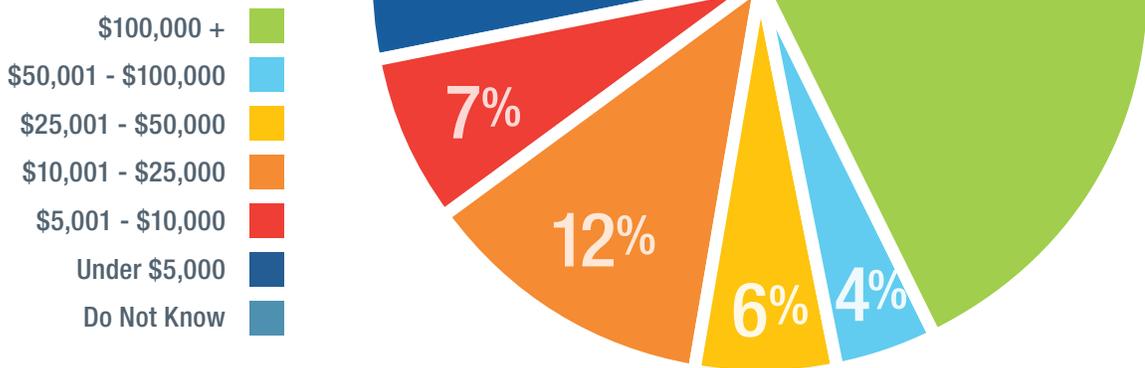


FIGURE A7
Organizations, Agencies, or People Involved in Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

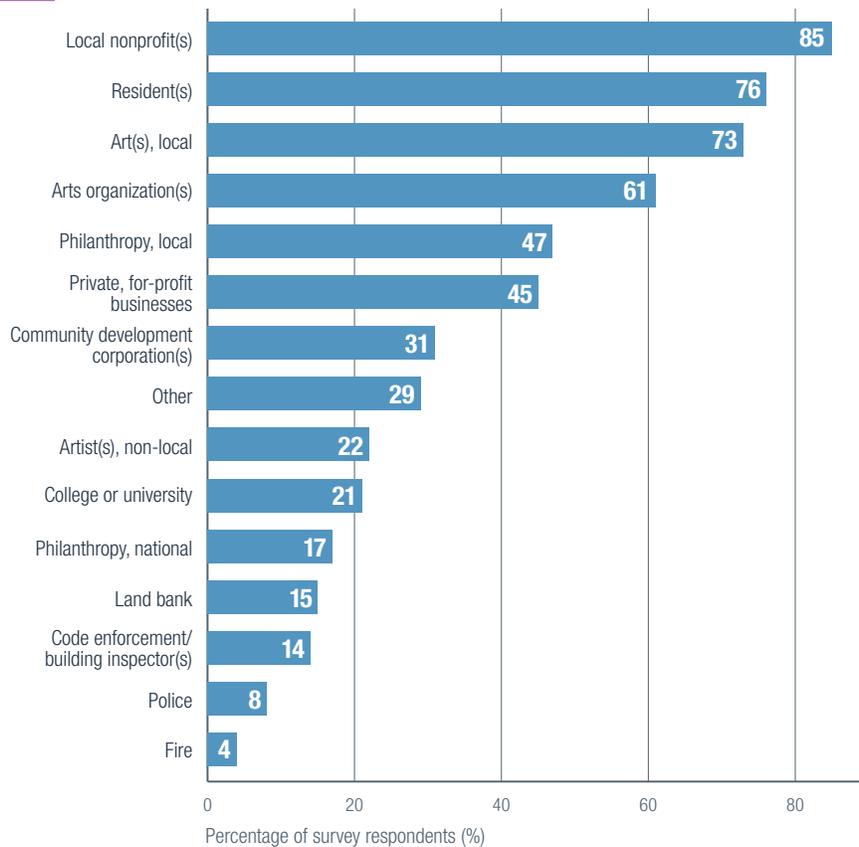


FIGURE A8
Stages in Which Residents Were Involved in Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

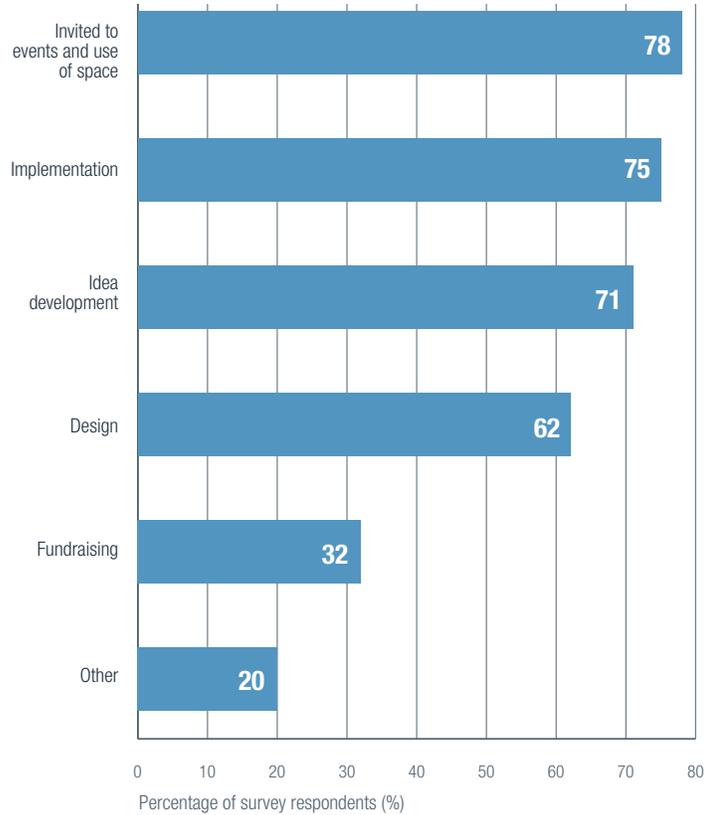


FIGURE A9
Challenges Encountered When Implementing Creative Placemaking Projects on Problem Properties
 (n=109 Responders)

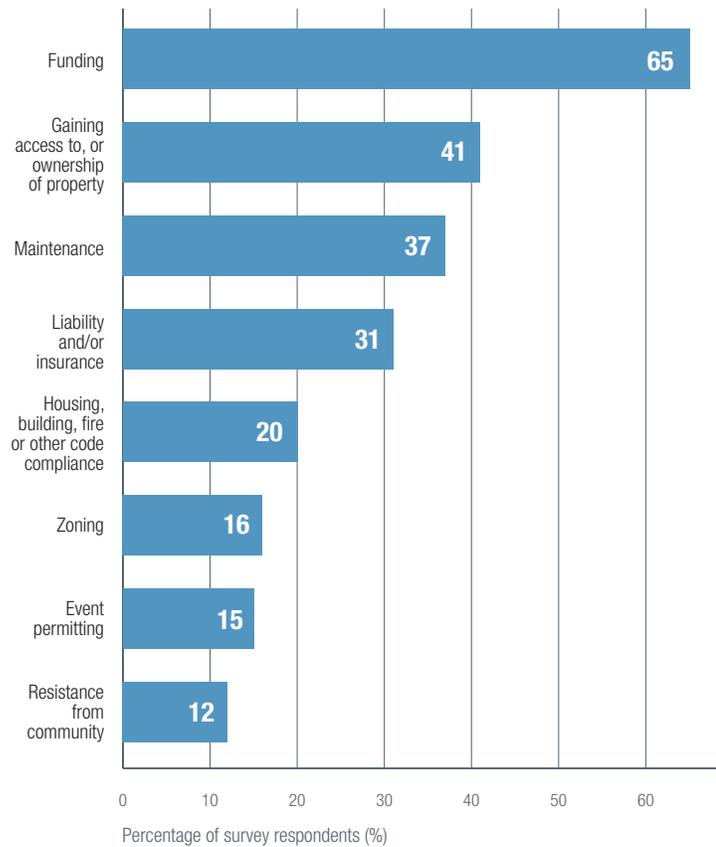
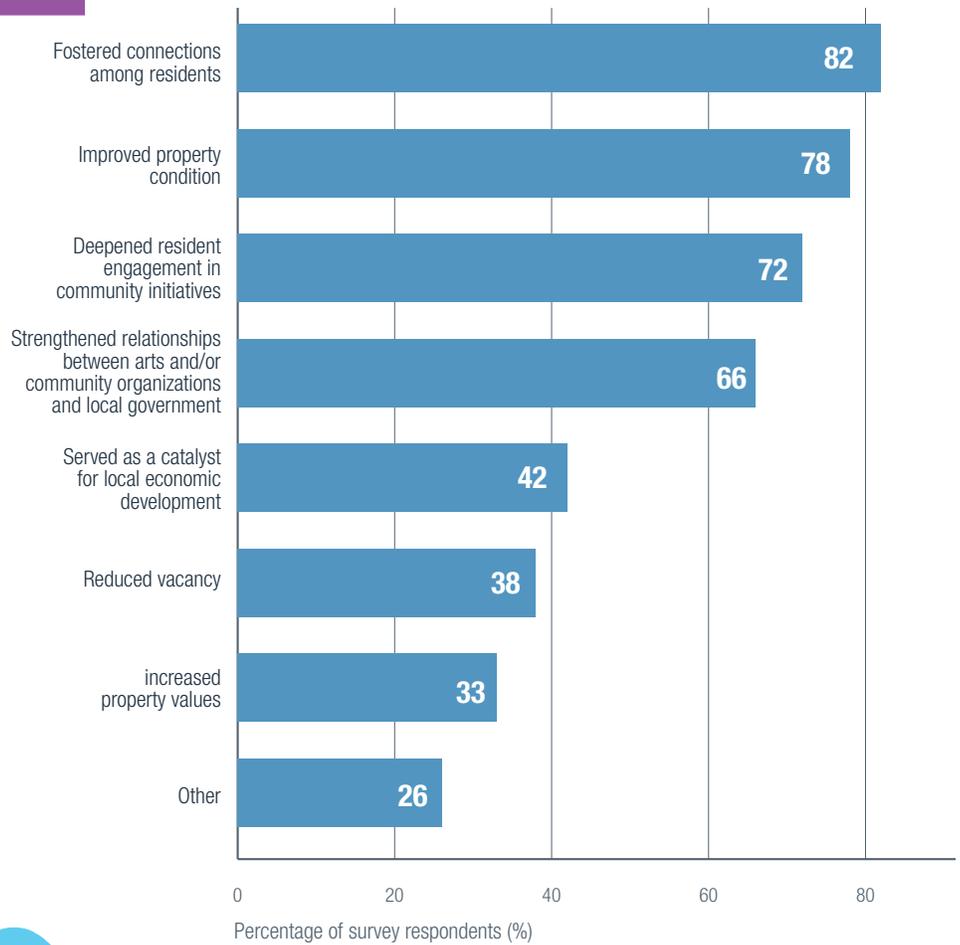


FIGURE A10
**Community Impacts of
 Creative Placemaking
 Projects on Problem
 Properties**
 (n=109 Responders)



Appendix D: Survey Questions

The following is the original text of the survey made available to respondents by the Center for Community Progress in January 2019.

The Center for Community Progress is conducting a national survey to better understand how communities are using arts and culture to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into community assets. We refer to this work as "creative placemaking" in this survey. When we say "problem property," we mean vacant, abandoned, and/or deteriorated property.

To gather input, we invite people involved with or aware of creative placemaking on problem properties in their communities to fill out this survey. We hope to gain a broad understanding of the types of organizations engaged in this work, how it is integrated into broader revitalization strategies, levels of resident engagement, project goals, and regulatory challenges.

We are specifically interested in learning more about creative placemaking projects that incorporate all three elements of creative placemaking on problem properties:

- Takes place on vacant, abandoned or deteriorated properties.
- Uses a community-centered process in which residents are engaged in shaping decisions in a meaningful way.
- Integrates with other local strategies for equitable neighborhood revitalization.

By completing this 15-minute survey, your community may be selected to be featured in a publication reaching a national audience or in other educational programming or materials. Your responses will be analyzed collectively with other responses to help shape the Center for Community Progress' creative placemaking research and programming. Your time and participation are very much appreciated.

1. Contact Information

- Name:
- Organization/Affiliation:
- Title:
- City/Region:
- State:
- Email Address:
- Phone:

2. Please select the statement that best describes your community's use of creative placemaking on problem properties as a revitalization strategy:

- One creative placemaking project implemented on a problem property, but not as part of a local revitalization strategy.
- More than one creative placemaking project implemented on problem properties, but they are not a part of a coordinated effort.
- There are a few groups and stakeholders working together to ensure creative placemaking on problem properties is used to support revitalization; however,

the work is not incorporated into a local government revitalization strategy.

- Local government supports creative placemaking on problem properties and has approved policies or processes to facilitate creative placemaking as part of its revitalization strategy.

3. Who is leading the creative placemaking on problem properties work in your community? (Choose up to three)

- Arts and culture nonprofit(s)
- Independent artist(s)
- Community-based nonprofit(s) (not arts specific)
- Community leaders (block clubs, informal community groups)
- Governmental department or agency
- Land bank
- Private sector
- Colleges and universities
- Other (please specify)

4. Name of organization(s) leading the work:

For the following questions, please discuss one creative placemaking project on a problem property that you are most proud of:

5. Please briefly describe the creative placemaking project on a problem property, including its name and any links that can help us better understand the project. Don't worry, we'll connect with you for more detail if we plan to reference specifics of your project in our future work!

6. What were the goals of the project? (choose all that apply)

- Reduce blight
- Engage youth
- Reduce crime
- Activate underutilized vacant space
- Empower residents to shape their neighborhood
- Build community among residents
- Engage artists
- Honor neighborhood history/culture
- Support a larger neighborhood revitalization vision
- Other (please specify)

7. What type of property was primarily used for the creative place-making project?

- Vacant lot(s) (no structure)
- Underutilized neighborhood park(s)
- Vacant residential structure(s)
- Vacant commercial structure(s)

8. Who owns the property that was used?

- Local or county government
- Land bank
- Other public entity (e.g. school district, housing authority)
- Private owner
- Nonprofit
- Do not know

9. What was the approximate total cost for the project?

- Under \$5,000
- \$5,001-\$10,000
- \$10,001-\$25,000
- \$25,001-\$50,000
- \$50,001-\$100,000
- \$100,000 +
- Do not know

10. Please select the organizations, agencies, or people involved in the project (choose all that apply):

- Local nonprofit(s)
- Arts organization(s)
- Landbank
- Police
- Fire
- Resident(s)
- Artist(s), local
- Artist(s), non-local
- Community development corporation(s)
- Private, for-profit businesses
- Code enforcement/building inspector(s)
- College or university
- Philanthropy, local
- Philanthropy, national
- Other (please specify)

11. At what stage(s) were residents involved? (choose all that apply)

- Idea development
- Fundraising phase
- Design phase
- Implementation phase
- Invited to events and use of space
- Other (please specify)

12. Which of the following challenges, if any, did you encounter when implementing your project? (choose all that apply)

- Housing, building, fire or other code compliance
- Event permitting
- Zoning
- Gaining access to, or ownership of property
- Liability and/or Insurance
- Maintenance
- Funding
- Resistance from community

13. If you were able to successfully overcome any of these challenges, please describe so here:

14. How has this project impacted your community? (choose all that apply)

- Fostered connections among residents
- Deepened resident engagement in community initiatives
- Strengthened relationships between arts and/or community organizations and local government
- Improved property condition
- Reduced vacancy
- Increased property values
- Served as a catalyst for local economic development
- Other (please specify)

15. If there is someone other than you who could best speak about this project in more detail, please include their name, email address, and phone number here:

TRENDS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING ON PROBLEM PROPERTIES: 2019 National Survey Findings

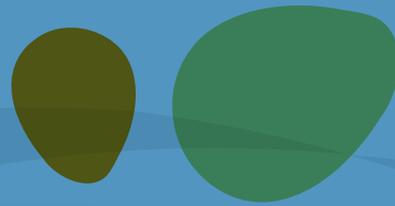
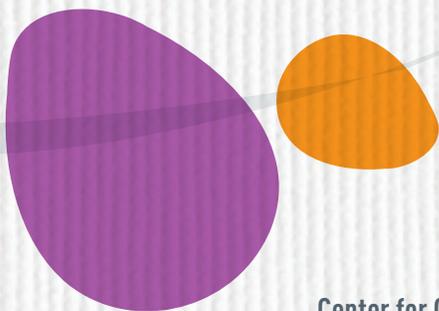


Photo credit, Left: Freda C. Eisenberg;
Right: Linda Steele, Shotgun House; Artist, Paul Thoma

Photo credit, Left: Creative Collective
Right: WASP Beyond Walls



Center for Community Progress

111 E. Court Street, Suite 2C-1 Flint, MI 48502
(877) 542-4842 www.communityprogress.net

© Copyright 2019, Center for Community Progress. All rights reserved.

This project is supported in part by awards from the The Kresge Foundation.



Designed by BLANK (blankblank.com)