

BETTER BLOCK

Greenfield Better Block

WHAT:

In April, members of Better Block visited Greenfield to explore the issues in downtown and help the community brainstorm rapid and unique solutions.

WHO:

Jason Roberts, Founding Director, Better Block

Patrick Blaydes, Senior Project Manager, Better Block

Members of the Greenfield Community

WHEN:

April 10 and 11, 2018

WHERE:

Warren Cultural House, Greenfield Public Square, The Corner Shop, Nodaway High School, Greenfield City Hall

Greenfield

Keynote and Mini-Build Project

The evening started off with a keynote presentation by Jason Roberts to members of the Greenfield community. This was followed by a mini-build project.

The mini-build project came from the merging of two different issues in Greenfield. First, that downtown had a certain sterile feel to it. Second, the people complained about a lack of parking, even though there is a parking lot on the square.

For the mini-build project, we interjected art and spontaneity into downtown while highlighting the proximity of parking to the businesses on the square. We took five stencils that were based on businesses in and on the square and used kid's finger paint to paint paths from the parking lot to the businesses.



Community members injecting art into their community.



Community members paint notes leading to the Warren Cultural Center.



Community member posing with a stencil directing people to the movie theater.



Stencils led to dentist offices, the Warren Cultural Center, the movie theater, jewelry shops, and hair salons.

Summary of Day Two Meetings

Four meetings were held on Thursday with community members including high schoolers, long-time stakeholders in downtown, and the community at large.

The purpose of the meetings was to explore the issues in Greenfield and then, using Better Block's process of rapid prototyping and quickly moving mountains, discuss potential ideas in the community for a framework to accomplish them.

The three biggest issues that were brought up by community members were that teenagers and young adults lacked a third place, the community lacked semi-regular gathering events, and the downtown square felt too rigid or sterile. The term third place refers to a social settings that is not the home (first place) and not the workplace/school (second place), and is the spot where there is a sense of place and community members feel they belong. For years, Greenfield had semi-regular community gathering events, including the Farmer's Market, the Courthouse Capers, Community-sponsored meals, and more. Community members talked about those events being more than just economic drivers for the community, but events that increased civic pride, brought community members together, and allowed them to see their neighbors that they might not ordinarily see.



Pop-Up Basketball

What - Students mentioned that there was no place to play basketball outside, and parents talked about having more things for children to do. Popping up basketball courts in downtown would be a quick win, and give kids something to do downtown.

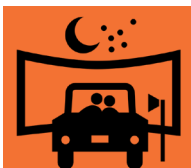
How - Use the "Food Land" parking lot for the court. Borrow or buy mobile basketball goals, bring food and drinks, task a group with initial tournament.



Old Firehouse Rec Center

What - Use the old fire house on the Square as a hang-out spot for high school kids. Opening the space up and allowing high schoolers and other young adults to make it their own would help to create that third place they are looking for.

How - Open the doors to students, provide Wifi, let students have ownership of the space, and decide what happens there. Seek donations for couches, TVs, and more.



Drive In Movie

What - One idea that came up with both 16-year-olds and 60-year-olds was that a drive-in movie would be a benefit to many in the community and as a regular gathering event.

How - Use the Fair Grounds as the location and utilize their PA system. Work with the owner of the movie theater on movies and concessions, show public domain movies.



Community Gathering Events

What - Hosting semi-regular weekly or bi-weekly events on the Square can bring back a small town community gathering feel to town.

How - Empower community members seeking to do Courthouse Capers, community meals, or other gathering events. Support them in early efforts.