



# Dubuque Better Block

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## **WHAT:**

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

## **WHO:**

Jason Roberts, Founding Director, Better Block  
Colin Amos, Project Manager, Better Block  
Members of the Dubuque Community

## **WHEN:**

April 17 and 18, 2018

## **WHERE:**

Heartland Financial, 1800 Block Main Street

# Dubuque

## Keynote and Mini-Build Project

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

The inspiration for the mini-build project came from the issue of Central Avenue being too wide of a road for pedestrians to comfortably enjoy. Traffic speeds were also too fast on Central to feel safe while walking down the street.

For the mini-build project, we created a pop-up plaza for pedestrians. The plaza was buffered using plants, hay bales, and metal troughs. Local kids painted the street with tempera paint to provide a differentiation between the pedestrian area and the open street as well as to inject art and creativity into the space. A musician and food and drinks were brought out for people to enjoy while they were in the newly created plaza.



Community members enjoying the pop-up plaza in the street.



Local kids help paint the street.



Community Members enjoy barbecue sandwiches and sit in Wikiblock cafe sets.

## Summary of Day Two

Meetings were held on Thursday with community members ranging from business and property owners to city officials to discuss how to move forward with the upcoming Dubuque Better Block in September 2018.

The purpose of the meetings was to explore the issues in Dubuque and then, using Better Block's process rapid prototyping and quickly moving mountains discuss potential ideas in the community and a framework to accomplish them. The meetings also worked to guide the local organizers in their process of planning the upcoming Dubuque Better Block.

One of the main concerns raised during the meetings was the state of the road on Central Avenue. The road is currently a one-way, two lane road that is approximately 40-feet-wide. The size of the road is not conducive to public life on the block. Another issue specific to the planning of the Better Block was having too many pop-up businesses to fill the available spaces. Finally, the community determined that having people continuously visiting the block during the week of the Better Block could prove to be a challenge.



### Streetscape

What - Central Avenue is too wide and cars are too fast to have a comfortable and safe street life.

How - Use the intersection of Central and 18th to create a larger pop-up plaza than the mini build, close one lane of Central to accommodate a bike lane and wider sidewalk.



### Pop-Up Shops

What - Installing pop-up shops in vacant store fronts during the Better Block.

How - Allow the shops access to the buildings at least a week before, place compatible businesses in the same building space, charge a returnable deposit to vendors.



### Attendance

What - How to incentivize people to come to the Better Block throughout the week.

How - Give coupons to the pop-up businesses, provide a bike-share program to allow people to access it from further away.



### Programming

What - How to continually activate the space throughout the whole week.

How - Music performances, art shows and exhibits, paint by numbers mural, classes for both arts as well as business skills, cook offs, activities for kids.