



# Guide to Better Block Projects

## Better Block PDX



Photos: Jonathan Maus/Bike Portland (top left, middle right), Greg Raisman (bottom right), Better Block PDX (others)

# What Makes a Good Project?



## Community Involvement

A collaborative process brings people together and reinforces a sense of community while producing an outcome tailored to a community's character and needs. In being actively involved in the project, people are more supportive of permanent change.

## Low Risk, High Reward

While these projects are often temporary and taken down quickly, their purpose is to demonstrate value as permanent improvements. There is little to lose if a pop-up project is unsuccessful at achieving its purpose, but there should be potential to spark long-term change.



## Light, Cheap, and Quick

Giving community members and city leadership a taste of what a place is missing with limited resources raises the question of how a permanent solution can be done even better. A sudden change in the streetscape brings an element of surprise to those who may have taken a place for granted.

## Attention, Curiosity, and Conversation

A good project does not go unnoticed by a passerby. Having eye-catching elements can spark curiosity and conversation, and make it more memorable. It should also be inviting to everyone and allow for a variety of different uses.



## Community Events and Markets

A community event is a good situation to debut a Better Block project. Masses of people who are drawn into such events would be right there to experience the change in streetscape.



Travel Portland

Portland, OR



Travel Portland

Portland, OR

## Block Parties

You may be surprised to learn just how inexpensive it is to obtain a block party permit through the City of Portland. Like larger community events, block parties are a good way to bring a neighborhood together and build community.



PBOT

Portland, OR



Sarasota Police Department

Sarasota, FL

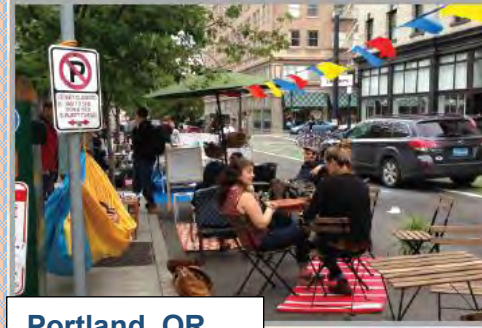
## Street Seats & Parklets

The idea for converting parking spaces into short-term or long term parks or seating areas is attributed to San Francisco-based Rebar Group, and has been implemented in cities across the globe.



Building Active Anaconda Team

Anaconda, MT



Better Block PDX

Portland, OR

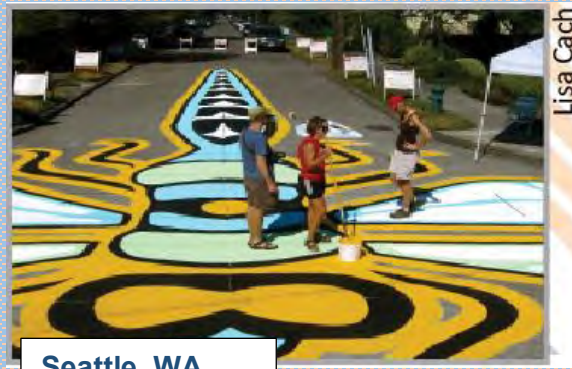
## Intersection Painting

Activities as simple as painting an intersection fosters interaction among neighbors and establishes a sense of community pride.



Greg Raisman - Flickr

Portland, OR



Lisa Cach

Seattle, WA

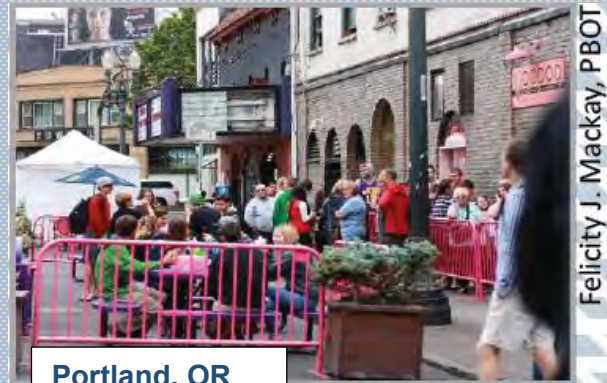
## Pedestrian Plazas

Excess street space where there is a lack of activity are prime for Pedestrian Plazas. They should be designed to promote a variety of activities such as eating or drinking, meeting up, people-watching & passing through.



Jim Simmons  
Living Streets LA

Los Angeles, CA



Felicity J. Mackay, PBOT

Portland, OR

## Bicycle Facilities

Pop-up bicycle facilities attract all types of cyclists, including those who would otherwise feel uncomfortable riding a bicycle in the street. They also give concerned business owners an idea of how it would affect them.



Better Block PDX

Portland, OR



Urban Repair Squad Toronto

Toronto, ON

## Play Streets

Popularized in New York City and London, play streets bring organized and supervised play to areas with otherwise limited recreation opportunities for kids.



Police Athletic League, Inc.

New York City, NY



SDOT

Seattle, WA

## Open Streets / People Streets

Events like Sunday Parkways typically take place on single weekend days. They open up the street to pedestrians and cyclists for a more social environment.



J. Maus, BikePortland

Portland, OR



Bradley P. Johnson

Minneapolis, MN

## Pop-up Crosswalks

Crosswalks are tricky to implement, even as short-term pop-up projects, but they go a long way in making a street more comfortable and accessible for pedestrians.



Alex Garland

Seattle, WA



BikePortland

Portland, OR

# Ideas & Examples

## Signage

A simple arrow with your travel time or distance to destinations highlights walking as a convenient way to get around. Walk [Your City] signs feature QR codes for walking directions on a mobile device.



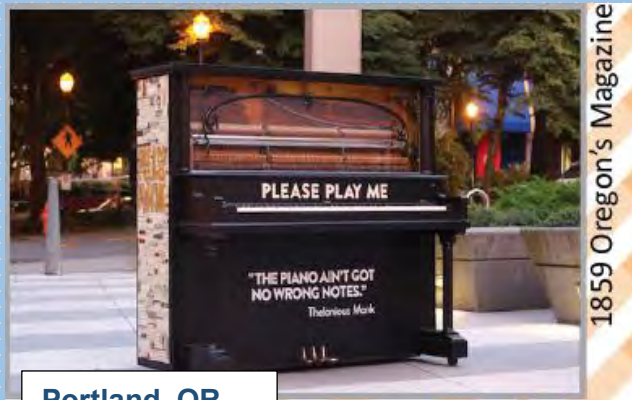
Raleigh, NC



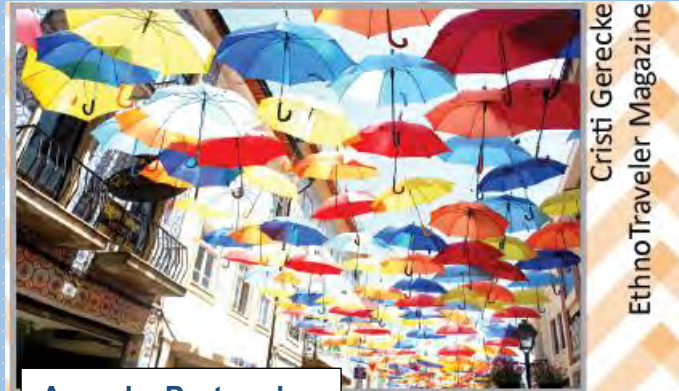
Nashville, TN

## And More...

A Better Block project doesn't need to conform to an above category. It can be unprecedented or unusual. Playable pianos, umbrella canopies, interactive art pieces, and a pop-up tea truck are just a few examples of what can come from originality. Time to get creative!



Portland, OR



Ageuda, Portugal



New Orleans, LA



Portland, OR

# Resources

[Portland in the Streets](#)

[AARP Pop-Up Demonstration Tool Kit](#)

[Crosswalk Guidelines for Portland](#)

[Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Space](#)

[Safe Routes to School Pop-Ups](#)

[Quick Builds for Better Streets](#)

[Street Mix](#)

[Tactical Urbanism Guide](#)

[How to Create Safe Routes to School Pop-Up Projects](#)

*This Guide to Pop-Up Projects was developed by  
Better Block PDX*