

The Placemakers' Handbook

Leg-in-Boot Square Case Study & Toolkit

CityStudio

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Cohort 9

CITYSTUDIO

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed for people in Vancouver who want to undertake a placemaking process themselves. It includes a basic toolkit for collaborative, community placemaking and provides the detailed report of the CityStudio Placemaking Leg-in-Boot Square (LIBS) project team's work through this process.

CityStudio Vancouver is an innovation hub inside City Hall where staff, university students and community members co-create, design and launch projects on the ground. The central mission of CityStudio is to innovate and experiment with the ways cities are co-created, while teaching students the skills needed to collaborate on real projects in Vancouver with City staff and community stakeholders. These projects improve our city and enrich our neighbourhoods, making the city more livable, joyful and sustainable.

The City of Vancouver has acknowledged the need for greater social and personal connection between individuals, from a perspective of individual health, resiliency and sustainability. To work towards addressing this, the Placemakers focused upon the activation of underutilized public spaces in the city as places for communities to meet and develop.

The team envisioned that in 100 years from now, community members would have a direct means to co-create the activation of their public spaces with support from the City of Vancouver. If this occurred, different community groups and users of spaces would come together to discuss not only their space and personal needs, with the intention of identifying shared values which could be used to tweak and improve the collective experience.



The CityStudio Placemakers – Payvand Razaghizad, Tyler Wong, Cherie Wee, & John Nguyen

The Placemakers team came together with different perspectives of “place”. For John, the hustle and bustle makes him feel alive. Payvand’s love for San Francisco’s parklets is as contagious as the happiness she exudes. Of course, who could argue Tyler on Italy’s grandiose cathedrals and their penchant for awe? For Cherie, people watching right in the heart of Stockholm is as good as it gets. From a cacophony to a melody, we all found something of ourselves at Leg-In Boot Square.

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Lena Soots | *Program Manager*

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Heather O'Hara | *Executive Producer*

Fiona McAlpine | *Communications & Engagement Co-Coordinator*

Sara Blenkhorn | *Communications & Engagement Co-Coordinator*

Learning in the Leaves Student Project Team

City of Vancouver

Jenniffer Sheel | *Viva Vancouver | Street Activities*

Enrico Santamaria | *Streets, Traffic and Electrical Operations*

David Patterson | *Strategic Transportation Planning*

Community, Businesses, & Organizations

Stanley King | *Co-Design Group*

Susan Chung | *Co-Design Group*

Peer-Daniel Krause | *Re*Plan*

Jerry Roy | *Re*Plan*

Richard Evans | *Re*Plan*

Nathan Edelman | *Re*Plan Consultant*

Norma-Jean McLaren | *UBC SCARP Adjunct Faculty*

Ross Moster | *Village Vancouver*

Rosalie Hawrylko | *666 Leg-in-Boot Square Strata Resident*

Ralph Skinner | *666 Leg-in-Boot Square Strata Resident*

Jim Woodward | *Market Hill Strata Resident*

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David Ellis | *Thompson Berwick Pratt and Partners*

Rob McCauley | *Guayaki Yerba Mate*

Nicole Besler | *Ethical Bean*

Yuri Artibise | *Spacing Vancouver*

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WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

“Placemaking is a quiet movement that reimagines public spaces as the heart of every community, in every city. It’s a transformative approach that inspires people to create and improve their public places. Placemaking strengthens the connection between people and the places they share.”

– Projects for Public Spaces

Rooted in community-based participation, placemaking is a process by which community members come together to reactivate, reimagine and improve existing public spaces (Project for Public Spaces, n.d.). By sharing inspiration, resources, and ideas the community is able to transform a public space into a place that is inspired by their needs and shared values (Project for Public Spaces, n.d.).

Throughout this process, placemaking also facilitates a sense of community where individuals are able to foster connections with each other and the place they share (Project for Public Spaces, n.d.). There are many articles which provide examples of how a community's identity could be strengthen and improved: some examples shared from Jay Walljasper, Senior Fellow at On The Commons and Project for Public Spaces, and author of *The Great Neighborhood Book* include: giving people a place to hangout, giving people a place to sit down, and starting with small steps like planting flowers (Walljasper, 2012).

The City of Vancouver has acknowledged the need for greater social and personal connection between individuals, from a perspective of individual health, resiliency and sustainability in their *Healthy City Strategy* (Goal #7 – Cultivating Connections) and *Engaged City Task Force Final Report* (Priority Action #10).



LEG-IN-BOOT SQUARE CASE STUDY

The CityStudio Challenge

The CityStudio Challenge asks students to resolve 5 key problems while designing and executing a real project on the ground in Vancouver:

1. Co-create and collaborate with **Staff** and **Stakeholders**
2. Mobilize funding **Support** and **Resources**
3. Work on a real **Site** in Vancouver
4. Develop relationships for ongoing project **Stewardship**
5. Create the stepping stones for multiplying project impact and **Scalability**

OUR BEACONS OF SUPPORT

Staff

Viva Vancouver's Program Manager and resident "fun-gineer" **Jennifer Sheel** has transformed streets like Robson into vibrant, pedestrian friendly public spaces. Acting as our key City of Vancouver staff, Jenn together with Assistant Planner **David Patterson** provided valuable support and guidance to help inform our public engagement process. Specifically, helping us with our project ideation and decision-making as well as securing resources like street furniture, which we used at our public event.

Support

Stanley King is an internationally recognized and published authority on public design participation, and a pioneer in developing methods of public dialogue. He invented and developed the Co-Design process, where artists enter into a constructive design dialogue with users. The artist and his/her pen become an extension of the users' imagination, creating a vision that is community-based and user-driven. Stanley King and [Co-Design Youth Manual](#) Co-Founder, **Susan Chung** have generously volunteered their time, extraordinary talent, drawing and exhibit materials to help us conduct 2 Co-Design workshops with residents, business and the public. Beyond this, his method also became a guiding principle to make our project as inclusive and democratic as possible.

[Re*Plan False Creek South](#) As a working committee of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, Re*Plan's **Peer-Daniel Krause** became our bridge to the community. Our outreach and engagement strategy was made possible because of the guidance and support of Re*Plan. Through the organization, we were able to interview and speak with residents and various strata councils and co-op members surrounding Leg-in-Boot Square.

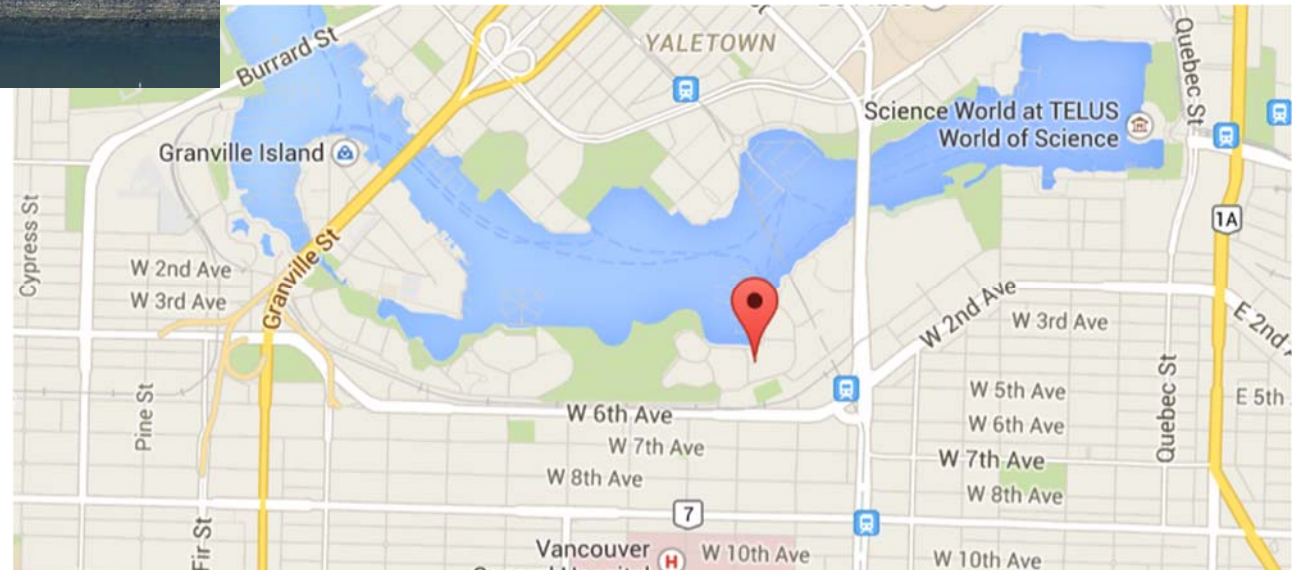
We were very fortunate to receive in-kind donations from [Ethical Bean](#) and [Guayaki Yerba Mate](#) to keep our guests caffeinated and energized. Thanks to [Viva Vancouver](#) we were able to transform Leg-in-Boot Square into a bistro seating social place complete with exhibit tents from [Village Vancouver](#).

LITTLE BIG SQUARE BY THE SEAWALL

Site



Leg-in-Boot Square is an Italian-style cobblestone and brick plaza located in between Olympic Village and Granville Island. We were thrilled to find Leg-in-Boot Square when it was presented to us as a potential site by Jenniffer Sheel. As an underutilized space, our imaginations quickly turned to high gear considering Leg-in-Boot Square's proximity to CityStudio as well as its prime location by the Seawall.



TAKING OUR PROJECT WORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Stewardship

Moving forward, our team is coordinating a presentation with Re*Plan, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and City Staff to discuss the future potential of our findings in the space. Our hope is that the community and users of Leg-in-Boot Square will be able to take over the activation of this space, and make the change that they wanted to see. To date, we have already identified a resident, Taylor Green, who is also interested in continuing any additional work which may be required before change is made in the square. The City of Vancouver, through Jenniffer Sheel, has also shown interest in this work to develop the budget and case for this community's desired changes.

Scalability

Through this toolkit, we hope to provide those in Vancouver with a step-by-step guide in reactivating their public spaces may it be in the form of a mural, planter, playful street art or better seating. The process that we have undertaken (including the Co-Design method) can easily be applicable to other communities; for instance, making sure that you have a key city contact to consult when it comes to permits early in the project.



BY THE NUMBERS

Project Budget

To visualize just some of the support received for this project, we have taken an in-kind approach to the accounting for our project. With the majority of our revenues coming from time or material donations, we costed out our support based on what would otherwise have been paid.

A grant from the CityStudio program allowed us to cover the small expenditures which were not donated to us. These included food costs for our events, activity materials, poster printing, and thank-you gifts.

| REVENUE | SOURCE | Description | QUANTITY | Unit Price | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---|----------|------------|-------------|
| CityStudio Grant | CityStudio | Funding made available for sake of project work | 1 | \$ 257.29 | \$ 257.29 |
| Food & Equipment Donation | Ethical Bean | Coffee & Accessories | 1 | \$ 200.00 | \$ 200.00 |
| Equipment Donation | Village Vancouver | Canvas Tents | 3 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 300.00 |
| Equipment Donation | VIVA Vancouver | Bistro Sets | 10 | \$ 20.00 | \$ 200.00 |
| Donation | VIVA Vancouver | Special Event Permit Cost | 1 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| Major Time Donation | Co-Design Group | Facilitators and Visualizers Stanley King & Susan Chung (hours) | 7 | \$ 175.00 | \$ 1,225.00 |
| Major Time Donation | Co-Design Group | Stanley King Preparation & Meeting Time (hours) | 7 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 700.00 |
| Major Time Donation | Re*Plan | Peer-Daniel Krause Community Coordination and Communication Support (hours) | 25 | \$ 20.00 | \$ 500.00 |
| TOTAL REVENUE : | | | | | \$ 3,482.29 |

| OPERATING EXPENSES | SUPPLIER | QUANTITY | Unit Price | VALUE BUDGETED |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------|------------|------------------|
| <i>Event Expenses</i> | | | | |
| Food Expense (Nov 3rd) | Save On Foods | 1 | \$ 7.57 | \$ 7.57 |
| Food Expense (Nov 14th) | Save On Foods | 1 | \$ 32.97 | \$ 32.97 |
| Food Expense - Contingent (Nov 16th)* | Save On Foods | 1 | \$ 25.00 | \$ - |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | | | | \$ 40.54 |
| <i>Gifts & Recognitions</i> | | | | |
| Budget for Thank-you Gifts | Edible Canada | 1 | \$ 150.00 | \$ 150.00 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | | | | \$ 150.00 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: | | | | \$ 190.54 |

| ADVERTISING EXPENSES | SUPPLIERS | QUANTITY | Unit Price | VALUE BUDGETED |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------|
| 8.5x11 Posters (Gloss Paper) | Made in Print Printshop | 15 | \$ 0.49 | \$ 7.35 |
| 5.5x8.5 Mailslot Flyers (Flat Paper) | Made in Print Printshop | 75 | \$ 0.29 | \$ 21.75 |
| 10% Student Printing Discount | Made in Print Printshop | 1 | \$ (2.91) | \$ (2.91) |
| TOTAL ADVERTISING EXPENSES: | | | | \$ 26.19 |

| MATERIAL EXPENSES | SUPPLIERS | QUANTITY | Unit Price | VALUE BUDGETED |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------|
| Construction Paper for Cut-outs | Michaels | 1 | \$ 4.99 | \$ 4.99 |
| Clothespins | Your Dollar Store With More | 8 | \$ 1.00 | \$ 8.00 |
| Jute Cord | CityStudio | 1 | n/a | |
| post-it notes | CityStudio | 12 | n/a | |
| markers & pens | CityStudio | | n/a | |
| TOTAL ACTIVITY EXPENSES: | | | | \$ 12.99 |



| TOTAL EXPENSES | | |
|-----------------------|----|--------|
| Before tax | \$ | 229.72 |
| After tax | \$ | 257.29 |

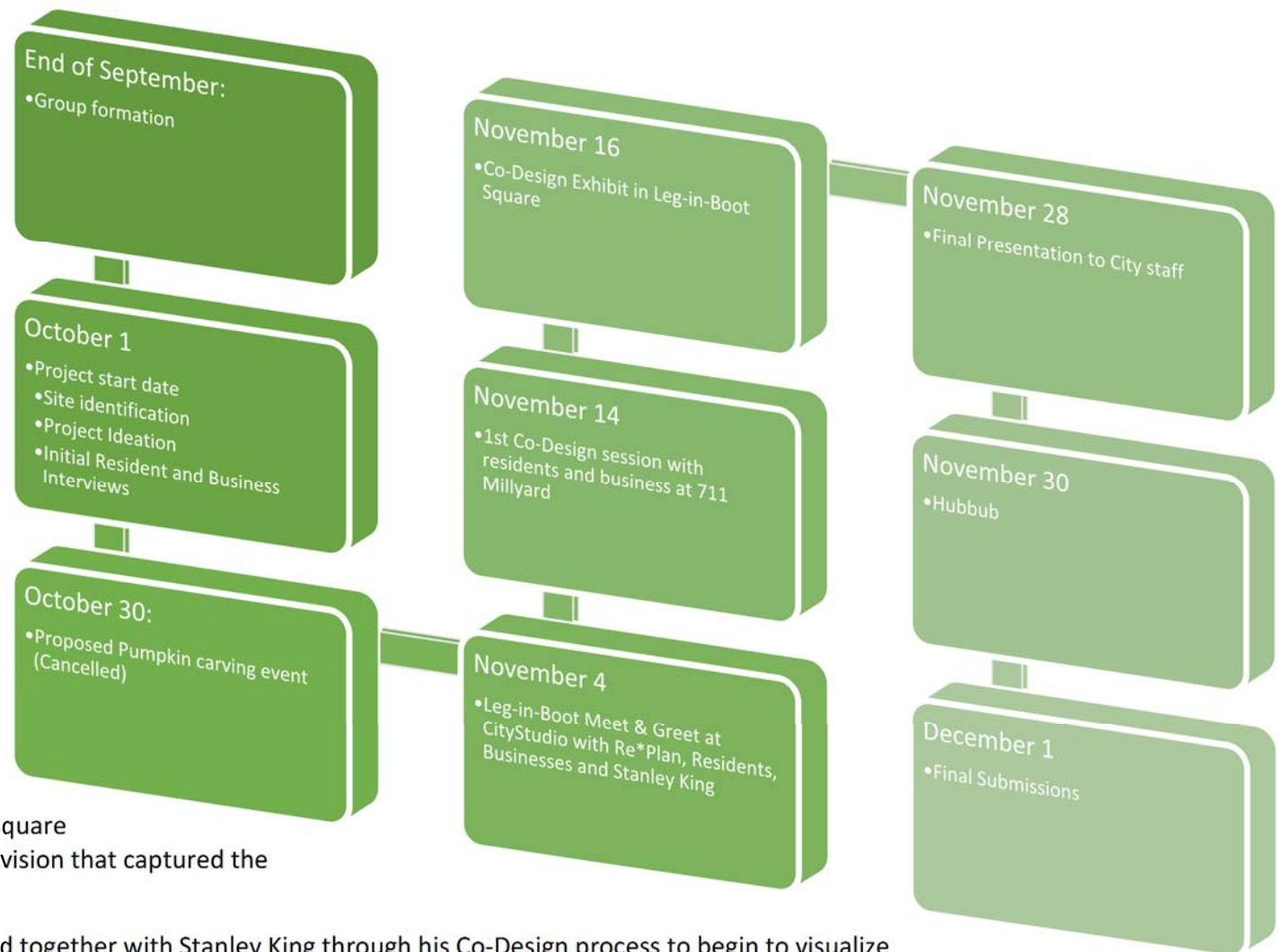
TIMELINE

October was the month of snakes and ladders (it took us a month to finalize our site!) From project formation to ideation we struggled to find what our project truly was. Enter Re*Plan's Peer-Daniel Krause who introduced us to Rosalie Hawrylko and Ralph Skinner. These individuals became key contacts for Leg-in-Boot Square.

After much discussion with residents and business and their varying needs, we decided that instead of a space intervention, what Leg-in-Boot Square really needed was a community vision that captured the shared values of these users.

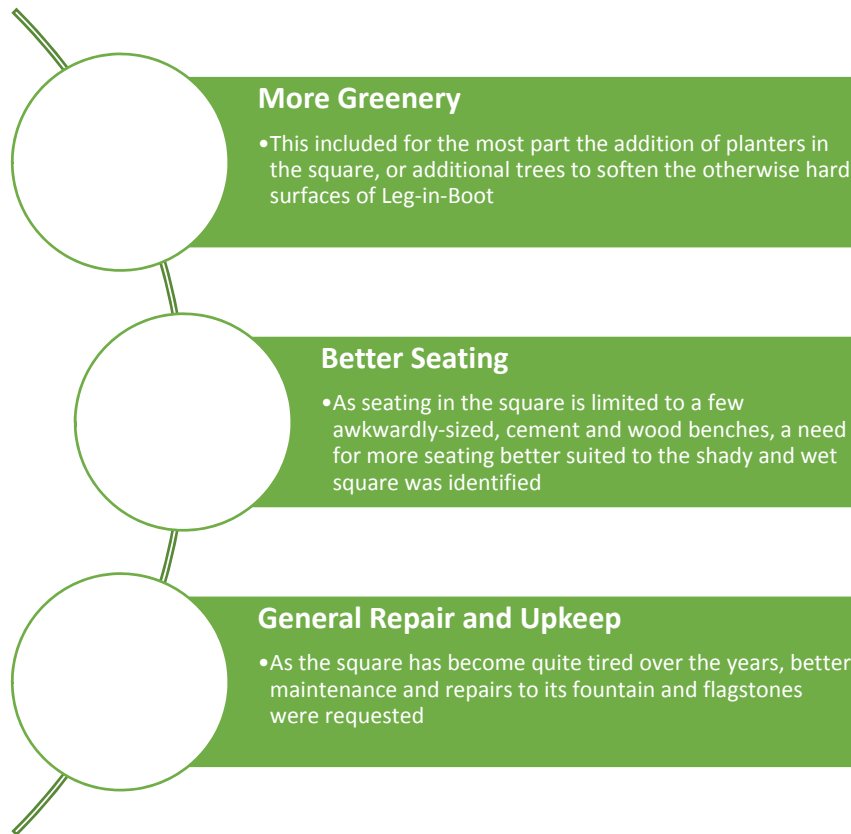
To identify this vision, we worked together with Stanley King through his Co-Design process to begin to visualize users in the space in ideal conditions. We first hosted a small session with just businesses and residents, which was followed by a public event where the broader community was invited to provide their own visions and feedback upon existing sketches.

With these results, we moved into the closing of our project, in which we presented to City Staff & Key Stakeholders and at City Hall. In finishing our work, we are setting up a meeting with Re*Plan and City Staff to discuss the final details of stewardship and the project's future.



RESULTS

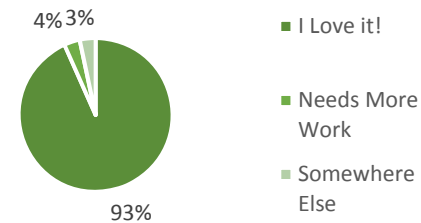
Following our two Co-Design sessions with users of the space and the voting on ideas, three general themes emerged as most popular and shared amongst users. These included a need in the square for:



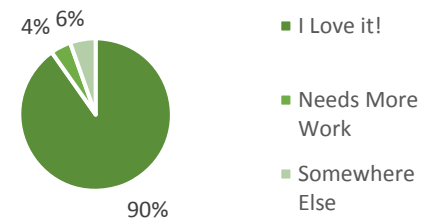
Other feedback included, but was not limited to, a more natural experience, new physical features such as a fountain, more opportunities for conversations and socializing.

These results were identified by grouping similar responses into a number of categories, and taking and comparing the average responses in support of each category. Due to limitations in the sampling process, more sophisticated statistical methods could not be used and the full representative nature of the entire community and user population cannot be ensured.

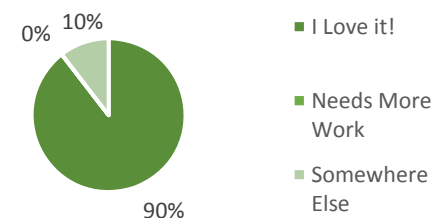
Greenery



Seating



Repair



PROJECT LIMITATIONS & BARRIERS

As excited as we were to start something, we also learned that quick decisions do not always lead to fruitful results. After speaking to residents and businesses, we found out that there were in fact, **different needs** in the space. Therefore, an immediate reactivation of the space would not have been effective. Some residents wanted to keep the square as tranquil and peaceful as possible while businesses wanted to see some activation and improvements.

Reality snuck up on us. The development of our project became less about the activation of public space and became more of an attempt to create a public engagement process. Our limitations became front and center of our project. Moreover, our **Timing** and **Timeline** (of 8 weeks) in terms of reaching out to the community, False Creek South's pending lease agreements with the City and the looming election certainly posed barriers when it came to seeking input.

In truth, time was not on our side. Any public engagement process is by nature, a long and lengthy one. Although we reached out to as many stakeholders as possible, we did not realize how many more we could have heard from until our public event which had over a hundred people in attendance.

Like any public engagement process, there will always be a “yes” and a “no” side. For us, listening to the people who were opposed to the idea of reactivating Leg-in-Boot Square was a commitment to make our project as inclusive and representative as possible. However, when it came to bringing both perspectives together, explaining the premise and philosophy of the Co-Design method became a mechanism to reassure that residents' needs for peace and tranquility will not get lost.

Our own **Group Process** acted as a microcosm for our own project. Like many groups, we struggled with communication (at times, lack thereof), balancing tasks and building our own relationship dynamic as well as hearing each other out in times of stress and breakdown.

Hearing people's stories, perspectives as well as our own experience of Leg-in-Boot Square brought us both joy and frustration. In the end, our project went from a place of divide to a place of unity both for ourselves and the community we were in.

To say that our project was a wheel of lessons is an understatement. In truth, undertaking what is essentially an exercise in urban planning and engagement taught us the value of clarity, transparency and the power of deep listening.

Top Lesson: Never underestimate presence, dialogue and deep listening

REMAINING QUESTIONS

As projects move and stagger, our project has come a long way in terms of addressing our own needs and working to fulfill the CityStudio Challenge and being accountable to the Leg-in-Boot Square community. In the midst of our outcomes and learnings, we ask ourselves a number of questions. Could our model be used to reactivate other public spaces? How can we apply the process of Co-Design to other cities? How can cities use more dialogue and design in planning cities and neighbourhoods? How can we help make it easy for other communities to reactivate and reimagine their own public spaces?

On a macro level, is there room for spontaneous public placemaking in Vancouver? If so, how can we make it easier for people to make the placemaking process as easy as possible?

For future students who wish to undertake our project, know that you have to map out your stakeholders early on in the process. This is not limited to the partnerships outside like Vancouver Public Space Network, rather the change champions and the members of the community who will be integral to your process. Establishing relationships and seeking guidance from groups such as Re*Plan and the neighbourhood associations will make your project run more smoothly. Primarily because they already have the knowledge and the connections necessary for outreach, stewardship and scalability.



THE PLACEMAKER'S TOOLKIT

Placemaking by definition comes with some degree of change: be it a single event one afternoon, a new art installation, or major infrastructure change, there will always be someone who is not excited about the new feature. Our approach has been to address this expected resistance upfront through the co-creation of a place-making plan.

This guide will walk you through a basic process for activating your space around the shared values of your user community here in Vancouver.

Step One: Identify the Need

Step Two: Do Your Research

Step Three: Start the Conversation

Step Four: Facilitate a Co-Creation Process

Step Five: Take it to the Community

Step Six: Present & Develop Your Findings

Step Seven: Budget & Funding

The Process Description

1 - IDENTIFY THE NEED

If you are reading this document, you have probably already finished step one!

With all placemaking projects, there needs to be a space for a place. Be it a public square, a boulevard, lobby or park, different spaces come with different needs. The majority of them will be seen as underutilized or lacking some fundamental aspect which affects its users' experience. It are these underutilized spaces which hold the opportunity for making places

2 - DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before the work can be done, a basic understanding of the site and community is necessary. Questions to consider include:

- What past projects/activities have taken place in the space?
- Does the City have any plans for the space?
- What has, and has not worked in the space?
- What was the original design intention for the space?

A good place to start looking for answers to these questions includes asking your neighbours or neighbourhood association, going online, and calling the City's information line, 3-1-1.

Identifying a City Staff support at this time within City Hall will make your entire process easier.

3 - START A CONVERSATION

By bringing together key, interested individuals from a variety of backgrounds and user types, a team of champions can be created to implement the activation. This doesn't have to be formal: it can be as simple as getting a few people together in your living room for coffee.

This group of individuals can identify the best means of engaging with or facilitating a conversation regarding the activation. This group should also know the best way to communicate with the broader community in a meaningful way as well. Be it listservs or dinner clubs, communities usually have formal and informal networks you might not even know about!

If you can, bring in a key City Staff early in the process to support your work. These individuals can provide your project invaluable experience of the ins-and-outs of City Hall, resources that make your process go all the easier, and understanding of the sort of work you are doing.

4 - FACILITATE A CO-CREATION PROCESS

With representatives from your key community groups participating, hosting your first co-creation session gets some of the first shared visions on the board.

A number of facilitators are available, including the [Co-Design Group](#), [Modus](#), [Vancouver Design Nerds](#), and [City Spaces](#). A consultant is strongly recommended if you know that there are a lot of differing views and opinions amongst your users, but don't think only professionals can do this work: you can do it too! [Design Jams](#) are easy and fun to host and just require paper, markers, and creativity!

5 - TAKE IT TO THE COMMUNITY

Now that you've done some of the initial visioning, take it to your broader community to get their feedback and ideas! A public event in the space you'd like to change works best, but make sure you have the correct City permits before going ahead with the event.

6 - PRESENT & DEVELOP YOUR FINDINGS

Once the visioning exercise is complete, compile your data. If broader values were identified, start to develop a more specific activation which meets your user's needs. This community consultation is meant to inform your activation moving forward, and you should have a wealth of data now to support it.

7 – BUDGET & FUNDING

You may have a plan now, but do you have the funds to support it? Not only does creating a budget help support your case, it will help make this change go a lot faster. Want infrastructure change in your space? Present your findings and budget to a City office such as [VIVA Vancouver](#) or Street Activities: you might be able to find a City budget for the work you want to see. Want something more creative? The Vancouver Foundation's [Neighbourhood Small Grants](#) are invaluable for almost any type of community building activity.

FAQ

What if I already know what I want to do with my space?

If you already have a plan or specific activation in mind, unfortunately this toolkit is not entirely meant for you. This process is meant to take a broader desire for change, and transform it into a change based upon shared values to optimize the collective experience.

How do I get a City Staff member involved?

Check online first to see if you can find any contact information for specific departments, such as VIVA Vancouver. If you cannot find what or who you are looking for, a call to 3-1-1 can connect you with the responsible departments,

Where do I even start? On anything?

When in doubt, call to 3-1-1. In almost all cases, this resource made available to all individuals in the city will be able to direct you in the right direction for all things related to the City.

Where do I get a permit for my event?

The type of special event permit you'll need depends on your location. Different permits are required for street activities and activities in parks, but both can be applied for on the [Vancouver's Event Permit page](#).

How much will this cost?

It depends! Depending on your location and final project plan, your final budget can vary immensely, however don't forget that resources are available!

How long will this take?

Once again, it depends! A project could take anywhere from 6 months to 5 years to fully design with the community, evaluate and implement. Making places takes time and requires patience and a willingness to learn along the way.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The City of Vancouver. (2014). *Mayor's Engaged City Task Force Final Report 2014*. Retrieved from City of Vancouver Web site:

<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/final-report-engaged-city-task-force-2014.pdf>

Importance: Outlines long-term and immediate actions recommended to the City including the integration of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation in engagement work, the investment in more in public engagement resources, the support of community and cultural spaces, and the support for more face-to-face engagement.

The City of Vancouver. (2014, October 29). *The Healthy City Strategy - Phase I*. Retrieved from City of Vancouver Website:

http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20141029/documents/ptec1_appendix_a.pdf

Importance: Outlines long-term goal of cultivating connections in connecting and engaging Vancouverites in places and spaces.

Project for Public Spaces. (n.d.). *What is Placemaking?* Retrieved 11 01, 2014, from Project for Public Spaces:

http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

Importance: Outlines a working definition of placemaking and its importance in building communities, social connections, and resiliency in communities.

Walljasper, J. (2012, 08 13). *25 Tips for Making Your Neighborhood Better*. Retrieved 11 01, 2014, from On the Commons:

<http://www.onthecommons.org/magazine/25-tips-making-your-neighborhood-better>

Importance: Outlines well-researched and clear examples of common, and simple, ways of improving community spaces around the world. These are reflected in the needs identified for Leg-in-Boot Square.

School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC. (2014). *False Creek South Community Atlas*. Vancouver: Re*Plan

Importance: Outlines important site information for the False Creek South Community, including a shadow analysis of Leg-in-Boot Square.