

TACTICAL URBANISM VOL. 1

Short Term Action || Long Term Change

tac·ti·cal

adj: \tak-ti-kəl\

1. of or relating to small-scale actions serving a larger purpose
2. adroit in planning or maneuvering to accomplish a purpose

The Street Plans Collaborative 



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PARK(ing) Day participants temporarily reclaim an on-street parking space for a more productive use. Credit: [Parking Day FLICKR pool](#)

THE CHALLENGE

City planners and public leaders are frequently preoccupied with making large-scale, transformative change in the built environment. While stadiums, museums, large waterfront parks, and convention centers are all big-ticket items with measurable curb appeal—for some—such projects require a substantial investment of time, as well as political, social, and fiscal capital. Moreover, their long term economic or social benefit cannot be guaranteed.

In the pursuit of progress, citizens are typically invited to engage in a process that is fundamentally broken: rather than being asked to contribute to incremental change at the neighborhood or block level, residents are asked to react to proposals that are often conceived for interests disconnected from their own, and at a scale for which they have little control. In the pursuit of resilient neighborhoods, cities, and metropolitan regions, surmounting the challenges inherent to this “public” process continues to prove difficult. Fortunately, alternative tactics are available and ready for deployment.

TACTICAL URBANISM

Improving the livability of our towns and cities commonly starts at the street, block, or building scale. While larger scale efforts do have their place, incremental, small-scale improvements are increasingly seen as a way to stage more substantial investments. This approach allows a host of local actors to test new concepts before making substantial political and financial commitments. Sometimes sanctioned, sometimes not, these actions are commonly referred to as “guerilla urbanism,” “pop-up urbanism,” “city repair,” or “D.I.Y. urbanism.” For the moment, we like “Tactical Urbanism,” which is an approach that features the following five characteristics:

- A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
- The offering of local solutions for local planning challenges;
- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
- Low-risks, with a possibly a high reward; and
- The development of social capital between citizens and the building of organizational capacity between

public-private institutions, non-profits, and their constituents.

While the term is not our own, we do believe it best describes the various initiatives surveyed herein.

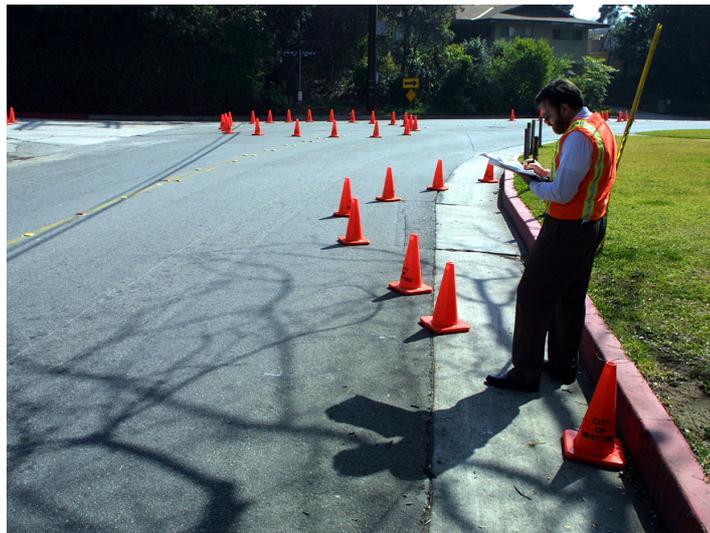
EXPERIMENTATION INFORMS DESIGN

In short, tactical urbanism interventions create a laboratory for experimentation. Case studies from across North America reveal the benefit of taking an incremental approach to the process of city building. To be sure, long term change often starts with the process of trying something small. Upon implementation, results may be observed and measured in real time. And when done inexpensively, and with flexibility, adjustments may be made before moving forward. Indeed, there is real merit in a municipality spending \$30,000 on temporary material changes before investing \$3,000,000 in those that are permanent. If the improvement doesn't work as planned, the whole budget will not be shot, and future designs can continue to be calibrated to meet the needs of a particular, and dynamic context.

If done well, such small scale changes may be conceived as the first step in realizing lasting change. Thus, tactical urbanism is most effective when used in conjunction with long term planning efforts.

Food carts, for example, are used in Portland, Oregon to incubate small businesses, and to mask surface parking lots. The most successful entrepreneurs either continue to upgrade their "cart" structures, or move up and out to more permanent restaurant space, which makes space for new vendors. The presence of the carts also makes it easier to imagine the eventual intensification of each surface parking lot into mixed-use, walkable urban development, perhaps with some of the same micro-restauranters at the ground level.

If included as part of a public charrette process, some examples of tactical urbanism may more quickly build trust amongst disparate interest groups and community leaders. Indeed, if the public is able to physically participate in the improvement of the city, no matter how small the effort, there is an increased likelihood of gaining public support for larger scale change later. Additionally, involving the public in the physical testing of ideas can yield unique insights into the expectations of future users and the types of design features for which they yearn; truly participatory planning must go beyond drawing on flip charts and maps.



Temporary experiments can test physical improvements prior to implementation. Credit: Edward Erfurt IV

CASE STUDIES

Tactical urbanism is also a way to build public awareness among those not directly involved with the physical intervention. Again, in Portland, Oregon, a "guerilla crosswalk" was painted across a busy street with inexpensive white paint and rollers. Although the city typically removes unauthorized signs and pavement markings in short order, the temporary improvement directly communicated the need, and a real desire for better pedestrian infrastructure.

Similarly, the Toronto-based Urban Repair Squad maintains a website that gathers images of D.I.Y. urban repairs in public spaces. They recently featured images of symbols painted on ordinary roads indicating the need for future extensions of the city's bicycle network.

In some cases, cities follow the lead of their citizens by implementing short-term, low-budget livability improvements initiated by citizen-activists. In other cases, it's the city who takes the lead.

New York City, for example, is currently designing and implementing more permanent changes to its many street design "pilot projects." Such project have cost very little and have largely been deemed a success. Numerous other cities are now undertaking a similar approach.

A few of the above examples, and more, are included in this survey of tactical urbanism interventions. While not comprehensive, the efforts described herein do provide numerous ideas and resources for transforming our towns and cities into better places to be together.

BUILD A BETTER BLOCK

FAST FACTS

IN BOTH DALLAS AND FORTH WORTH A FEW OF THE TEMPORARY BETTER BLOCK IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MADE PERMANENT BY THE CITY. FORT WORTH'S INITIAL BETTER BLOCK WAS "BUILT" USING ONLY \$500 WORTH OF MATERIALS.

LEADERS: Local advocates, local businesses

SCALE: Street || Block || Building

PURPOSE: To promote livable streets, and potential neighborhood vitality.

OVERVIEW: The Build a Better Block project was launched by local community activists in the Dallas neighborhood of Oak Cliff. Spearheaded by Go Oak Cliff, the organization relied upon cheap or donated materials, and the work of many volunteers to transform a single underutilized urban block.

Local artists, musicians and potential business owners joined together to temporarily program vacant storefronts and reclaim public space. Food vendors and sidewalk cafe tables were added and became places to congregate. "New York style" cycle tracks were painted along the curb, pushing cars outward to reduce the number of travel lanes. Finally, native landscaping and street furniture helped improve the block's sense of place.

A key element of the Build a Better Block project was engaging existing vacant retail space. Working with property owners, temporary "pop-up" shops demonstrated the presence of an unmet retail market demand in the neighborhood.

To date, the Build a Better Block effort has had a substantial spin-off effect: the momentum gained from the project led to the permanent use of formerly underutilized retail space, and garnered a commitment from both the City of Dallas and the City of Fort Worth to permanently implement street improvements. It has also spurred a new consultancy firm endeavoring to advise other organizations and cities on how to conduct their own such experiments as a way to incite change.

Finally, the Better Block Project continues to capture the attention of urbanists and advocates across the



Before and after: Dallas Build a Better Block
Credit: Go Oak Cliff



Fort Worth, TX Build a Better Block.
Credit: fortworthology.com

country. Indeed, similar efforts have now taken place in Fort Worth, TX, Oyster Bay, NY, Oklahoma City, OK, and Memphis, TN where 15,000 participants helped reinvigorate a stretch of Broad Avenue.

A final lesson associated with the Build a Better Block initiative is the use of social media. By using such web-based communication tools as blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, the organizers continue to draw not just local participants, but national attention as the initiative expands to other cities. A How To Guide is now available at the Build a Better Block website (cited in then Sources page).

PARK(ING) DAY

FAST FACTS

MORE THAN 700 PARK(ING) SPOTS HAVE “POPPED UP” IN 140 CITIES, ON SIX CONTINENTS. IN 2010, TEHRAN, IRAN; HANGZHOU, CHINA; PARIS, FRANCE, AND MANY OTHER CITIES JOINED IN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

LEADERS: Advocates, Non-Profits, Community Groups

SCALE: Street || Block

PURPOSE: To reclaim space devoted to automobiles, and to increase the vitality of street life.

OVERVIEW: PARK(ing) Day is an annual event where on-street parking spaces are converted to park-like public spaces. The initiative is intended to draw attention to the sheer amount of space devoted to the storage of private automobiles.

The initiative first occurred in 2005 when an interdisciplinary design group called Rebar converted a single San Francisco parking space into a mini-park by laying down sod, adding a bench and tree, and feeding the meter with quarters. Instantly garnering national attention, PARK(ing) Day spread rapidly amongst livable city advocates.

At its core, PARK(ing) Day encourages collaboration amongst local citizens to create thoughtful, but temporary additions to the public realm. Once reclaimed, parking spaces are programmed in any number of ways; many focus on local, national, or international advocacy issues, while others adopt specific themes or activities. The possibilities, and designs, are endless.

While participating individuals and organizations operate independently, they do follow a set of established guidelines. Newcomers can pick up the *PARK(ing) Day Manifesto*, which covers the basic principles and includes a how-to implementation guide.



Rain or shine, PARK(ing) Day brings creativity to city streets. Credit: The I'on Group



A simple PARK(ing) Day installation. Credit: Park(ing) Day FLICKR Pool



A group of non-profit and neighborhood organizations hosted a 2011 PARK(ing) Day after party below the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Credit: FLICKR User Brodowski

PLAY STREETS

FAST FACT

MANY CITY NEIGHBORHOODS LACK ADEQUATE PARK AND OPEN SPACE. PLAY STREETS FILL THIS NEED BY PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY INTERACTION.

LEADERS: Neighborhood/Block Associations, Advocates, Municipality

SCALE: Street || Block

PURPOSE: To make safe spaces for people of all ages to be social and active.

OVERVIEW: Play Streets, popular in New York City and London, are streets closed to motor vehicles and repurposed for recreational activities. In essence, Play Streets create a public playground within otherwise car-dominated areas. They often occur seasonally, during the warmer months and are typically located in neighborhoods where open space is scarce. When implemented in low-income neighborhoods, these initiatives often serve children of families who cannot afford to send their kids to summer, or day camps.

In New York City, a 'play street' is made possible when 51% of the residents living on a one-way residential block sign a petition and offer it to their local police and transportation officials, who then send it to the local community board for review. Once the community board approves the idea, the initiative can take shape and the city provides youth workers to supervise the program. Approximately 75% of these initiatives are organized by the New York City Police Athletic League.



Play streets give kids space to move.
Credit: uptownflavor.com



Car free space provides carefree play space.
Credit: Clarence Eckerson



Play streets provide playgrounds where they don't currently exist. Credit: New York Times

OPEN STREETS

FAST FACTS

40 OF THE 50+ KNOWN OPEN STREETS INITIATIVES IN NORTH AMERICA BEGAN WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

LEADERS: Municipality, Politicians, Advocates, Non-Profit

SCALE: City || District || Corridor

PURPOSE: To temporarily provide safe space for walking, bicycling, and social activities; promote local economic development; and raise awareness about the detrimental effects of the automobile on urban living.

OVERVIEW: Open Streets initiatives are increasingly common in cities seeking innovative ways to meet environmental, social, economic, and public health goals. Open streets are often referred to as “ciclovias,” which in Spanish translates literally as “bike path.” The origin is largely thought to be Bogota, Colombia, a city known worldwide for being a leader of the ciclovía/open streets movement. However, before there was Ciclovía in Bogota, there was “Seattle Bicycle Sundays,” which first launched in 1965, predating Bogota’s Ciclovía by more than a decade.

While the benefits of Open Streets initiatives are widely recognized, perhaps the most tangible benefit is the social interaction and activity that develops—thousands of people of all ages, incomes, occupations, religions, and races have the opportunity to meet in the public realm while sharing in physical or social activities. In doing so, participants develop a wider understanding of their city, each other, and the potential for making streets friendlier for people.

The resulting vibrancy therefore enables people to experience their city’s public realm in a different way, which helps build broader political support for undertaking more permanent pedestrian, bicycle, and/or other livability improvements. In this way, open streets are a tool for building social and political capital, while having very real economic impacts for businesses, vendors, and organizations along the chosen route.

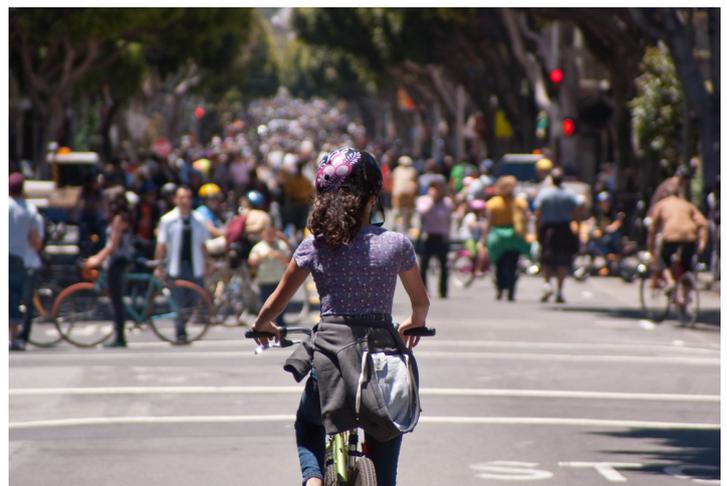
North American Open Streets Initiatives: 2010



North America’s Open Streets Initiatives.
Credit: The Street Plans Collaborative



Bike Miami Days
Credit: Mike Lydon



San Francisco’s Sunday Streets
Credit: Sunday Streets FLICKR Pool

PAVEMENT TO PLAZAS

FAST FACTS

FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW TIMES SQUARE PEDESTRIAN PLAZA, INJURIES TO MOTORISTS AND THEIR PASSENGERS DECLINED BY 63%. SIMILARLY, PEDESTRIAN INJURIES DECREASED 35%, EVEN WHILE PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC INCREASED.

LEADERS: Municipality, Business Improvement Districts

SCALE: Street || Block

PURPOSE: To reclaim underutilized and inefficiently used asphalt as public space without a large outlay of capital.

OVERVIEW: Pavement to plaza programs, popularized recently in New York City, but echoed in city's like San Francisco, seemingly define tactical urbanism as led by a municipality. Typically, these interventions start by using temporary, inexpensive materials to re-assign excessive motor vehicle space for the use of pedestrians or bicyclists. Because these efforts do not require large outlays of capital, they are able to provide a new vibrant public space virtually overnight. While the city funds the design and the construction, partners from the local business or advocacy community are usually asked to operate, maintain and manage the new plazas.

Following the immediate closure of Times Square, the center piece of New York's wildly successful "Greenlight for Midtown" street improvement project, Tim Tompkins of the Times Square Alliance realized that people might want to sit somewhere. So, he bought 376 rubber folding chairs for \$10.74 apiece and "instantly — millions of people have a new way of enjoying the city."

By taking this experimental, "lighter, quicker, cheaper," approach, the City and public-at-large are able to test the performance of each new plaza without using up scarce public resources. If successful, the intervention can then transition into a more permanent design and construction phase, as is happening currently in several of New York City's new plazas and sustainable street "pilot" projects.



Phase 1 of the new Times Square simply added lawnchairs. Credit: New York City Department of Transportation



San Francisco's Pavement to Parks. Credit: City of San Francisco



NYC's Greenlight for Broadway provides more space for people. Credit: New York City Department of Transportation

POP-UP CAFES

FAST FACT

POP-UP CAFES ARE ESPECIALLY USEFUL ON STREETS WITH SIDEWALKS THAT ARE TOO NARROW TO ALLOW CAFE TABLES IN THE FURNISHING ZONE OF THE SIDEWALK.

LEADERS: Local Restaurant, Municipal DOT

SCALE: Block || Street

PURPOSE: To promote outdoor public seating in the parking lane (during the warm months) and to promote local businesses.

OVERVIEW: First seen in California, and now being applied in New York City, pop-up cafés serve to create public outdoor seating along city blocks that are home to one or several restaurants.

In New York City, a restaurant must agree to cover the design, construction and maintenance of the pop-up café in front of their business. If such agreement is reached, the City's Department of Transportation provides technical assistance and may make street improvements, such as applying traffic markings or placing bollards.

In city's with a short supply of space and a need for more publicly accessible seating, pop-up café's are fast becoming a valued addition to the public realm. If successful, they can also prove the need for permanently expanding city sidewalks.



A narrow sidewalk limits the possibility of outdoor seating. Credit: DNAinfo.com



Trading parking space for outdoor seating that can be used by restaurant patrons or passersby is a win-win. Credit: DNAInfo.com



New York City now sanctions what used to be done by advocates. Credit: DNAinfo.com

POP-UP SHOPS

FAST FACT

THE TERM 'POP-UP SHOP,' WAS COINED IN LATE 2003 BY TRENDWATCHING.COM

LEADERS: Local Entrepreneurs, Artists, Corporations

SCALE: Street || Building

PURPOSE: To promote the temporary use of vacant retail space.

OVERVIEW: From big airlines and fashion companies to local neighborhood activists and vacant building owners, pop-up shops are used to temporarily activate vacant retail space or building lots. Most often, this is done to promote products or retail concepts. Yet, the primary beneficiaries are not always private interests, but the general public as formerly dead spaces becomes occupied, thereby creating a more active and safe street.

A rapidly spreading trend, pop-up locations are used strategically by a variety of interests, in a seemingly endless number of permutations. They are often associated with events, such as the World Cup or Tour de France, or holidays like Christmas or Halloween. They allow for a bit of surprise, and provide an opportunity for testing new retail concepts or products. And due to the fallout from the Great Recession, affordable retail space is not in short supply, which makes the proposition of trying new retail concepts, or simply activating vacant storefronts a smart option.

More than just marketing ploys for large retail corporations, pop-up stores genuinely bring vitality and help businesses transition to permanent spaces.



Pop-up tent-based retail helps activate this vacant lot.
Credit: Google Street View



A Pop-Up Shop,
Credit: Limite Magazine



A Pop-Up Shop,
Credit: Freshnessmag.com

CHAIR BOMBING

FAST FACT

BY TAKING DISCARDED SHIPPING PALLETS AND CONVERTING THEM INTO QUALITY PUBLIC SEATING, THE URBAN WASTE STREAM CAN BE REDUCED, AND STREETS MADE MORE WELCOMING.

LEADERS: Community Activists, Local Property Owners, Small Businesses

SCALE: Street || Building

PURPOSE: To improve the social well-being of neighborhoods by salvaging waste materials and activating the public realm.

OVERVIEW: Chairbombing is the act of removing salvageable material from the local waste stream, and using it to build public seating. Chairs are placed strategically in areas that are either void of social activity, or conversely, those that are rich with life, but lack comfortable places to sit.

In general, chair bombing calls attention to the general lack of public seating in the urban environment. It also indicates locations where further physical improvements may be made by the municipality, or other change agents.

Chair placement begins by retrieving discarded materials, such as shipping pallets from dumpsters, construction sites, or other locations where solid waste is found.

DoTank: Brooklyn, an interdisciplinary collective comprised of neighborhood activists turn pallets into Adirondack chairs, which are then placed in public spaces. In the past year the group has placed chairs in six locations throughout northern Brooklyn.

The entire process of building and placing the chairs requires attention to the design and construction, but also a thoughtful approach as to where they are needed most, and where they would be able to support existing social activity, or serve as a catalyst for community gathering.

Whether to rest, socialize, or to simply watch the world go by, increasing the supply of seating almost always makes a street, and by extension, a neighborhood, more livable.



Step 1: Collect used shipping pallets.
Credit: Ted Ulrich Design



Step 2: Make chairs.
Credit: Aurash Khawarзад



Step 3: Place chairs where needed.
Credit: Aurash Khawarзад

GUERRILLA GARDENING

FAST FACT

GUERRILLA GARDENING FIRST BEGAN IN 1973 WHEN NEW YORK CITY ACTIVISTS THREW CONDOMS WITH LOCAL SEEDS, WATER, AND FERTILIZER INTO VACANT LOTS.

LEADERS: Neighborhood Advocates

SCALE: Block || Lot

PURPOSE: To introduce more greenery and gardening into the urban environment.

OVERVIEW: First coined by Liz Christy and her Green Guerrilla group in 1973, guerilla gardening is now an international movement. Although there are many permutations, guerrilla gardening is the act of gardening on public or private land without permission. Typically, the sites chosen are vacant or underutilized properties in urban areas. The direct re-purposing of the land is often intended to raise awareness for a myriad of social and environmental issues, including sustainable food systems, improving neighborhood aesthetics, and the power of short-term, collaborative local action.

When applied to contested land, guerilla gardeners often take action under the cover of night, where vegetables may be sowed, or flower gardens planted and cared for without running the risk of being caught.

Guerilla gardening is an excellent tactic for instantly improve an urban neighborhood. Often times, gardens are cared for years after they are first created, illegally. Indeed, the first garden started in a vacant New York City lot by the Green Guerrilla's became so loved that it is now maintained by volunteers and the New York City Parks Department. This exemplifies how tactical urbanism is intended to work.



Guerilla Gardening offers an outlet for creative energy.
Credit: Lorealee Edwards, Lethbridge Guerilla Gardening



Green Guerrillas at work.
Credit: Guerilla Gardening Development Blog

STREET FAIRS

FAST FACT

IF WELL ORGANIZED, STREET FAIRS HIGHLIGHT THE BEST CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS IN WHICH THEY ARE HELD.

LEADERS: Municipality, Local Businesses (ideally), Community Groups, Non-Profits

SCALE: Neighborhood || Street || Block

PURPOSE: To showcase the products and services of local community businesses, activate public open space and offer opportunities for socializing and interaction among citizens.

OVERVIEW: Street Fairs are a traditional aspect of community life in many American cities. Typically organized as annual events, these initiatives bring together a wide variety of organizations and institutions from the local community and allow them the opportunity to showcase their products and services.

Street Fairs are the type of event where people become familiar with each others skills and learn what their community has to offer. Often, street fairs take place within a community's main street, or at larger sites, such as the village green or a centrally located plaza. This can raise the visibility of the city's premier public space and offer entertainment to citizens of all ages: many well-programmed street fairs feature musical performances, art exhibitions, interactive entertainment, and local food vendors. Street fairs can also provide the opportunity for communities to organize political support for local improvement initiatives.



One of New York City's many street fairs.
Credit: wasanny.wordpress.com



Street fairs help bring communities together in the public realm.
Credit: Mike Lydon



Street fairs add vitality, even on minor streets.
Credit: Unknown

FOOD CARTS/TRUCKS

FAST FACT

PORTLAND'S FOOD CARTS ARE REGULATED LIKE NORMAL RESTAURANTS.

LEADERS: Micro-Entrepreneurs

SCALE: Block || Street || Building

PURPOSE: To activate public spaces and offer small business opportunities for entrepreneurs.

OVERVIEW: From construction sites to industrial parks, hospitals to local neighborhood centers, cities large and small continue to witness a surge in gourmet street food vending activity.

Long before the Twitter-induced food truck craze, noted urbanist William H. Whyte acknowledged that street food serves as a people magnet. Food carts and trucks not only stimulate entrepreneurial activity, they serve a critical role in the activation of the public realm. Indeed, few people know where people tend to congregate as well as a good food vendor, as his or her success relies upon high pedestrian volumes. In turn, a good food vendor, or groups of vendors quickly become an additional destination within already successful places of congregation.

In Portland, Oregon, food carts take on a unique character. Typically housed in stationary trailers, RVs, or self-made shacks, the City encourages vendors to cluster their fare. With each new arrival, each food vendor's prosperity increases. And because they mask surface parking lots, they activate otherwise harsh street edges typically devoid of human activity. In many cases, porches, bar stools and garden seating is added, resulting in an even more inviting streetscape. Interestingly, Portland's food carts are regulated as normal restaurants, including semi-annual inspections. They also pay rent for the off-street parking spots they occupy. Today, the city's most successful food cart entrepreneurs are able to move into more permanent locations, which allows opportunity for the next entrepreneur.

From Los Angeles to Miami, smart cities not only lower the barriers to entry, but also nurture such businesses, as they they contribute to the city's local economy and enhance its sense of place.



Food carts in Portland, OR
Credit: New Urban News



Food carts offer low start-up costs for any entrepreneur.
Credit: Sara Hines



Food carts line Seaside, FL's central square.
Credit: Mike Lydon

MOBILE VENDORS

FAST FACTS

STREET VENDORS SELL A VARIETY OF GOODS BESIDES FOOD, INCLUDING ART, PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOTHING AND VARIOUS OTHER MERCHANDISE. VENDING IS OFTEN A SECOND SOURCE OF INCOME FOR URBAN HOUSEHOLDS.

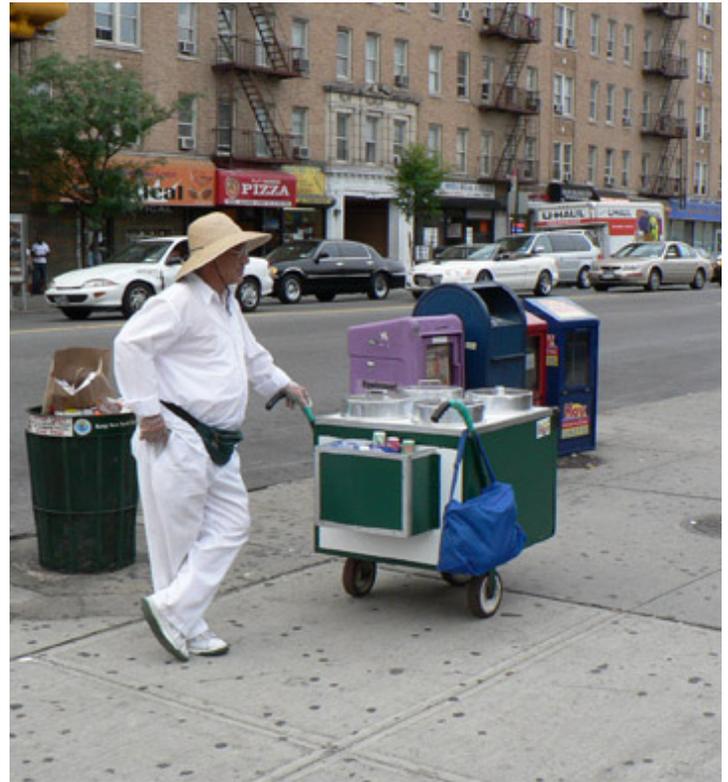
LEADERS: Micro-Entrepreneurs

SCALE: Street || Block

PURPOSE: To promote entrepreneurship, offer needed commercial services, and to temporarily activate public spaces.

OVERVIEW: As with food carts, small-scale street vendors attract people and help activate public spaces. Overseas, and increasingly in North American cities, inventive street vendors use a variety of low-cost mobile means to transport and hawk their wares. Bicycles in particular have become quite popular in some cities. Hiroyuki Shinohara, a Japanese architect has conducted a study of the various roles bicycle-based vending play in the streets of Chinese cities. He found that bicycles were being used as mobile bookshops, ice cream vending stations, mobile garbage collectors, and even as mobile water tanks.

According to Shinohara, vendors play a key role in animating the various spaces of a city. This “Custom Bike Urbanism [...]” suggests a possibility of constructing urban spaces that are individualistic and dispersed, yet able to accommodate a multitude of dynamic forms. With the inherent characteristics of mobility and ephemerality, it brings vibrancy to redundant urban space and enhances the function of the existing city.”



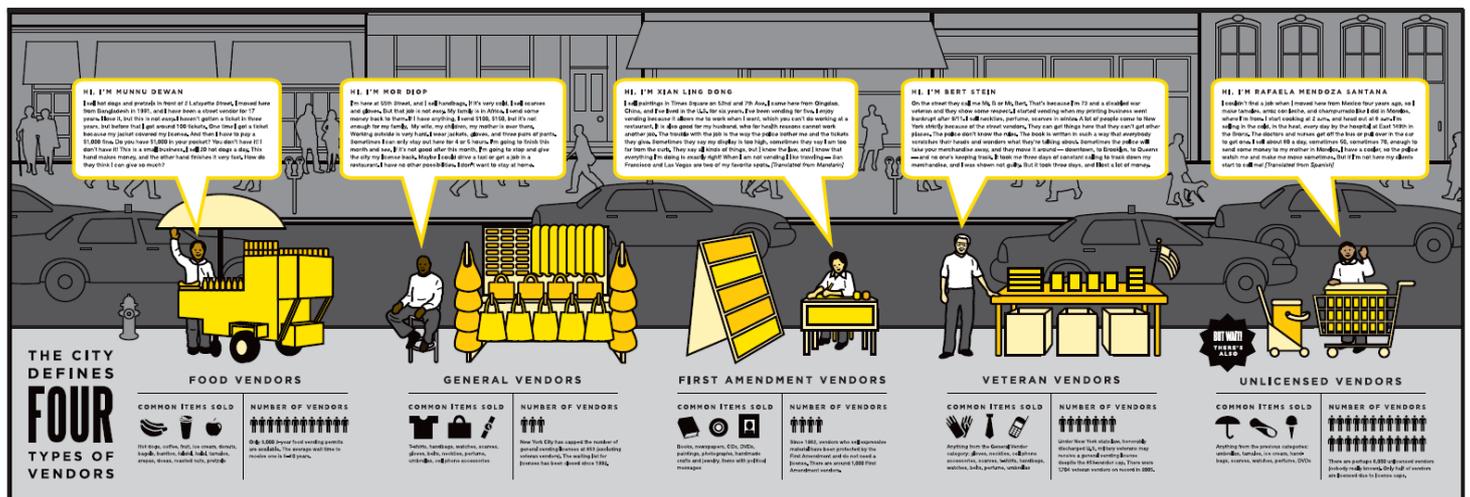
A New York City Street Vendor
Credit: NYbits.org



MOBILE RESTAURANT



Above and below: Mobile vending continues to increase in popularity.
Credit: streetvendor.org



CONCLUSION

Short-term livability improvements demonstrate that improving the built environment is possible, and sometimes, only requires proactive policies and a little gumption. When executed well, such efforts help generate demand for even more substantial livability improvements.

In the case of mobile vending or food carts, the municipality only needs to allow such activity to take place. In others, like the Better Block project, the identification and activation of local social capital is the only “investment” needed. But whether top-down, bottom-up, or both, tactical urbanism is just another way we urbanists can help make a more pleasant, varied, and dynamic human habitat.

SHARE YOUR TACTICS!

The tactical urbanism survey includes several strategies employed by individuals, local community groups, and municipalities. However, it’s by no means exhaustive. The Tactical Urbanism Project is only going to get better through reader contributions.

If you or someone you know has an addition to make, please email info@streetplans.org with a write-up that includes all the pertinent information included in each description, as well as any/all images, citations, and credits.



SOURCES

TACTICAL URBANISM

The Interventionists Toolkit

<http://www.places.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=24308>

BUILD A BETTER BLOCK

Dallas Better Block Project

<http://www.betterblock.org>

Fort Worth Better Block Project

<http://bit.ly/b2TshQ/>

A New Face for Old Broad

<http://bit.ly/cgncl1>

PARK(ING) DAY

<http://www.parkingday.org>

PLAY STREETS

Play Street Becomes a Sanctuary

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/02/nyregion/02ritual.html>

Summer Play Streets

<http://www.palnyc.org/800-PAL-4KIDS/Program.aspx?id=30>

Reclaiming The Residential Street As Play Space

<http://www.ecoplan.org/children/general/tranter.htm>

OPEN STREETS

Streetfilms

<http://bit.ly/33nTam>

PAVEMENT TO PLAZAS

NYC Plaza Program

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/sidewalks/publicplaza.shtml>

When Design Gets in the Way

<http://observatory.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=8767>

SAN FRANCISCO PAVEMENT TO PARKS

<http://bit.ly/G2ACF3>

POP-UP CAFES

NYC DOT Pop-UP Cafes

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/sidewalks/popupcafe.shtml>

POP-UP SHOPS

http://www.trendwatching/trends/POPOP_RETAIL.htm

CHAIR BOMBING

DoTank:Brooklyn

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GUERRILLA GARDENING

Guerilla Gardening.org

<http://www.guerrillagardening.org>

Wikipedia

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STREET FAIRS

New York City Street Fairs

http://www.nyctourist.com_fairs_calendar.htm

Seattle Street Fairs

<http://bit.ly/fcyibl>

FOOD CARTS

Portland Food Carts

<http://www.foodcartsportland.com>

The Architectural Maturation of Portland Food Carts

<http://bit.ly/aUpSE9>

STREET VENDORS

The Street Vendor Project

<http://streetvendor.org/>

Custom Bike Urbanism

<http://popcity.net/2010/11/custom-bike-urbanism/>

The Street Plans 
Collaborative



TACTICAL URBANISM BETA

Short Term Action || Long term Change