

# Building community resilience through placemaking.



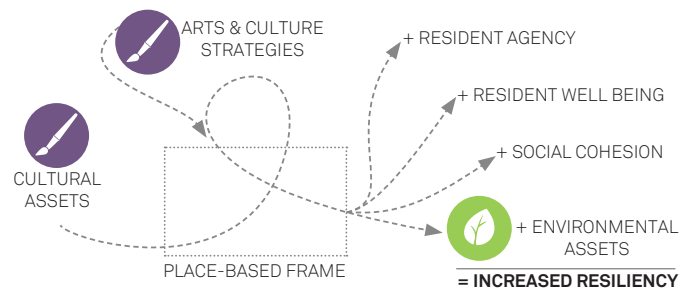
## The Challenge of Resiliency for Low Income Communities

Low income communities are often on the front lines of today's biggest challenges. They are especially vulnerable to long term stresses such as changing economic contexts and sudden shocks such as Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Katrina. According to the Stockholm Resilience Institute, long-term success for low-income communities requires the resilience to adapt to changing conditions and to not just bounce back but to bounce forward.

Social cohesion—the strength of ties and bonds among community members—is an asset that increases resilience. A study of Japanese communities by Northeastern University professor Daniel P. Aldrich showed that communities with stronger social networks had fewer deaths during the 2011 earthquake. Resilience is composed of multiple interrelated components—economic, physical, cultural and environmental. Not every low-income communities will face climate-induced flooding and storm events, but all have the potential to mitigate their climate and environmental impact to lessen the intensity of future stresses. While technical systems like solar energy and cogeneration can provide an ongoing source of power and infrastructure investments such as relocating mechanical systems or building sea walls can help protect communities and buildings from damage, behavior is an essential component of community resilience. Strategies that build social cohesion can impact behavior at a community-wide scale.<sup>1</sup>

## Creative Placemaking: A Key Tool

Place is a key asset we can leverage to increase resilience. Our buildings and open spaces are the contexts in which stronger bonds, trust and human networks are built. The shape of space can increase the likelihood of social interactions and places can



reflect the identity of a neighborhood, increasing pride and identification with place.

Creative placemaking is a set of strategies that leverage the arts, culture, creativity, and design to improve communities. Creative placemaking can activate places that are under-utilized, generate interaction and buy-in, increase community pride and connectedness, and spur local economies. When creative placemaking activities are bottom-up and community driven, they can build resident agency. Creative placemaking strategies can also have great impact when they are tied to a longer-term vision—for example a community-scale bike ride and festival may become a catalytic component of a planning and advocacy effort for city bikeways and biking clubs and repair programs. We are in a new era of community development that requires holistic investments and interconnections between our physical and social systems. Creative placemaking is a key strategy to build communities that are connected to opportunity and support residents' long-term well-being and success.

1. Aldrich, Daniel P. and Michelle A. Meyer. American Behavioral Scientist, October 1, 2014 (p. 4) The online version of this article can be found at: <http://abs.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/10/01/0002764214550299>

# Why Do Creative Placemaking



## 1. Creative Placemaking Builds Trust

By integrating cultural and creative tactics, CDCs can tap into the soul of their communities and build trust with residents. It is both a long game and a project-level investment.



## 2. Creative Placemaking Builds Social Cohesion

Neighborhood events and art help form and strengthen community identity and build stronger relationships and social networks—key assets of resilient communities.



## 3. Creative Placemaking Gets People Engaged

“While tactics like door knocking are still important in civic engagement, often only a narrow slice of the population is responsive to this. We try to think of more creative ways to get people involved in their community,” says Mickey Northcutt, director of North Shore CDC in Salem, Mass. The arts are an especially successful tool for engaging youth who are less likely to participate by traditional means.



## 4. Creative Placemaking Protects Your Neighborhood Identity

Artists and culture bearers can “lift up the stories of existing stakeholders by using creative storytelling techniques” says Chris Appleton, executive director of Atlanta arts organization WonderRoot. Proactively investing in this can help resist for-profit real estate speculation that seek to displace existing residents.



## 5. Creative Placemaking Can Counteract NIMBYism

Investing in arts and culture demonstrates to residents that beauty and expression are valuable to a community developer. This serves as a promise to maintain and care for properties.



## 6. Creative Placemaking Creates Buzz

Arts and culture draw attention—especially from developers, media and elected officials. That attention can be used to generate buy-in and support for more holistic efforts.



## 7. Creative Placemaking Can Change Neighborhood Perception and Make Places Feel More Safe

Arts can attract interest and investment into your neighborhood. Public art, creative urban design, and cultural programming can make a space feel more safe or vibrant and invite more pass-through traffic.



## 8. Creative Placemaking Can Spur Economic Development

Safer neighborhoods can drive up foot traffic, supporting local businesses. Investing in cultural assets, hiring local creatives, and providing a platform for artists and culture bearers to engage with community issues can also support their role in the neighborhood and the larger creative economy.

“CDCs are perfectly situated to do this work because the skillset of creative placemaking blends our real estate and community engagement experience. The project management skills in real estate development can be nicely applied to getting placemaking projects accomplished.”

MICKEY NORTHCUTT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
NORTH SHORE CDC



MARK MATEL

### MORE ENTERPRISE RESOURCES ON CREATIVE PLACEMAKING & ENGAGEMENT

- Made with Love  
[WWW.ENTERPRISECOMMUNITY.ORG/SOLUTIONS-AND-INNOVATION/DESIGN-LEADERSHIP/DESIGN-GRANT/MADE-LOVE-RECIPES-COMMUNITY-CHANGE](http://WWW.ENTERPRISECOMMUNITY.ORG/SOLUTIONS-AND-INNOVATION/DESIGN-LEADERSHIP/DESIGN-GRANT/MADE-LOVE-RECIPES-COMMUNITY-CHANGE)
- Community How to Guides  
[COMMUNITYHOWTOGUIDES.ORG](http://COMMUNITYHOWTOGUIDES.ORG)
- Participatory Design Toolkit  
[WWW.ENTERPRISECOMMUNITY.ORG/DOWNLOAD?FID=9750&NID=13221](http://WWW.ENTERPRISECOMMUNITY.ORG/DOWNLOAD?FID=9750&NID=13221)

# Where Can You Start with Creative Placemaking?

Not sure where to start with creative placemaking?

Here are some easy ways to integrate it into your community development work.

## YOUR ORGANIZATION



### Hire Artists On Staff

North Shore CDC of Salem, Mass. and PUSH Buffalo both have staff members that love the arts and are creative in their own right. Organizational investment in murals, performing arts, and changemaking tools is natural and easy as a result.



### Get on Each Others' Boards

A simple way to dip your toe into integrating the arts into your CDC is to recruit artists onto your board. You can also encourage your CDC staff to join the board of local arts organizations.



### Start an Artists' Advisory Council

Thunder Valley CDC in Porcupine, S.D. established a council of artists to provide insight and guidance on the design of the buildings, green spaces and community elements to make sure they reflect their Lakota culture.

## Unlocking Creativity & Inviting Artists In

Arts and culture are not just museum activities—they can be parts of everyday life. Invite residents, CDC staff and partners to participate through interactive activities. However, take care to make sure you are not taking advantage of artists. Artists need to be fairly compensated for their work and contribution to community development.

## THE PLANNING & DESIGN PROCESS



### Gather Information to Make Planning Decisions

Working with Konkuey Design Initiative, Coachella Valley, Calif. youth designed a research station in a public park that captured community stories and data that influenced the design of a new park.



### Show What's Coming Soon

Little Tokyo residents in Los Angeles identified needed improvements for a neighborhood alley. A series of "activations" with lighting, shade, art and vegetation made the case for long-term upgrades and built community networks.



### Engage Youth

Bartlett Events, a large scale outdoor street arts installation and events series in Boston was organized in part by Neustra CDC reached youth, which make up a large percent of the local residents yet are typically underrepresented in planning processes.

## FUNDING SOURCES FOR CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

- ArtPlace America
- Enterprise Community Partners Climate and Cultural Resilience Grants
- Enterprise Community Partners Collaborative Actions
- National Endowment of the Arts
- Kresge Foundation
- Knight Foundation
- Local Arts Funders

For more information visit [www.pps.org/blog/innovative-funding-programs-for-placemaking](http://www.pps.org/blog/innovative-funding-programs-for-placemaking)

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILDINGS



### Brand the Neighborhood

While Salem, Mass. is a major tourist destination, "the Point" is seen as a "bad neighborhood." North Shore CDC has been commissioning murals to celebrate the area's culture and associate it with a vibrant artistic identity.



### Address Vacancy

An art installation at a vacant building that would soon be redeveloped into affordable housing highlighted the Japanese-American history of this Seattle neighborhood and its commitment to social justice.



### Physicalize Planning Visions

Bike and pedestrian activists had been working with the city to implement changes, but the Tour De Farce 'fake bike race' with chalked in bike lanes helped the neighborhood visualize what a more bike-friendly Yakima, Wash. could be like.



### Make the Neighborhood Safer

A two-mile walk between Santo Domingo, N.M.'s residential community and its historic economic center became an 'arts trail' featuring artists' work that celebrates the community and makes the walk safer and more pleasant.

Photo credits from top left: PUSH Buffalo, Jason Travis, Thunder Valley CDC, Jessica Bremner, Tim Bevins, Jeremy Alliger, CJ Karch, Joann Ware, Robert Garlow, Joseph Kunkel.

# Creative Placemaking Glossary

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## Creative Placemaking

Creative placemaking is the intentional integration of the arts, culture, creativity, and design in comprehensive community development. Creative placemaking strategies that emphasize cultural expression and broad participation can enhance the social fabric and physical character of communities.

## Asset Mapping

Asset mapping provides information about the strengths and resources of a community and can help uncover solutions. Once community strengths and resources are inventoried and depicted in a map, you can more easily think about how to build on these assets to address community needs.

## Creative Engagement

The use of creative tools for community engagement include visual art techniques, storytelling, social-networking technology, exhibits, music, performance, festivals, and community gatherings.

## Creative Economy

The activities, assets, workers and industries that add value to the economy through arts, culture and creative activities.

## Culture Bearers

A person who possesses and transmits aspects of a specific culture. This may be through teaching, storytelling, performance, visual arts and more. Culture bearers can be artists and performers, but also elders or individuals with no formal position.

## Cultural Districts

Cultural districts are well-recognized, labelled areas of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities and programs serve as the main anchor of attraction. They help strengthen local economies, create an enhanced sense of place, and deepen local cultural capacity.

## Cultural Organizing

Drawing on cultural practices and expressions as a core component of community organizing practice and tactics.

## Tactical Urbanism

Temporary or inexpensive efforts to improve the built environment which often go around the regulatory process, but sometimes end up influencing formal urban programs and plans. Park(ING) Day, a day in which activist groups transformed individual parking spaces into mini parks directly influenced the parklet movement incorporated by many city governments today.

## Resilience

Resilience is the capacity for households, communities, and regions to adapt to changing conditions and to maintain and regain functionality and vitality in the face of stress or disturbance. It is the capacity of a system, be it an individual or a community, to deal with change positively and to use shocks and disturbances to spur renewal and innovative thinking. The goal is to be both strong and flexible—not only to be able to bounce back but to bounce forward. Resilience strategies seek to assess and evaluate the physical and social vulnerabilities and risks in a community, identify ways to reduce or eliminate the risk, and implement programs and projects to adapt and strengthen a community's physical and social characteristics.

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Definitions adapted from: Asset Mapping: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research [HEALTHPOLICY.UCLA.EDU/PROGRAMS/HEALTH-DATA/TRAININGS/DOCUMENTS/TW\\_CBA20.PDF](https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/documents/tw_cba20.pdf) Creative Engagement: American Planning Association [WWW.PLANNING.ORG/RESEARCH/ARTS/BRIEFINGPAPERS/ENGAGEMENT.HTM](http://www.planning.org/research/arts/briefingpapers/engagement.htm) Culture Bearer: Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology ed. by Alan Barnard, Jonathan Spencer, Taylor & Francis, 1996. Cultural Districts: Americans for the Arts [WWW.AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/BY-PROGRAM/REPORTS-AND-DATA/TOOLKITS/NATIONAL-CULTURAL-DISTRICTS-EXCHANGE-TOOLKIT](http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/toolkits/national-cultural-districts-exchange-toolkit)

# How can cultural organizing make a neighborhood more resilient?



**ACTIVATE VACANT LOTS**

PUSH Buffalo activates vacant lots through housing development and sustainable uses which create jobs.



**BUILD MOMENTUM & ENGAGEMENT**

PUSH Buffalo uses arts and culture to engage community members in actions and influence political outcomes.



**DEVELOP LOCAL CULTURE & TALENTS**

PUSH Buffalo's activities are grounded in the culture of the community and give local creators platforms for expression.



**ADDRESS GENTRIFICATION**

PUSH Buffalo uses local arts to create a narrative that is hard for speculative real estate to hijack.



**BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIES**

PUSH Buffalo's social enterprises create jobs and their commercial development incubates local retail.

THE SOLUTIONS PROJECT

## Building Cultures and Economies

PUSH Buffalo is a 13 year-old community development organization on the west side of Buffalo that combines housing development with community organizing and social enterprise to build local economic opportunities, greener communities and resident ownership of resources such as electricity and vacant properties. PUSH Buffalo builds assets like housing, community solar installations, green houses and rain gardens. The organization also generates jobs and organizes campaigns to shape state energy and redevelopment policies.

## Cultural Organizing

Cultural activities are integral to PUSH Buffalo's way of doing business. Artists and performers work on staff and add creativity to their organizing work. PUSH is just as likely to hold dance parties and festivals with action opportunities, as it is to host big planning meetings. These tactics leverage the assets of the community to develop neighborhood identity in the face of gentrification and strengthen the organization's political messages.

# ACTIVATE VACANT LOTS

## POLICY & ORGANIZING

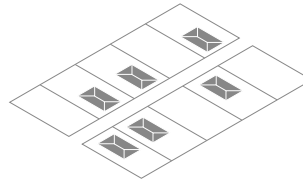
## ASSET

## IMPACT

### Vacant Lots

The **Green Development Zone (GDZ)** has approximately 50 vacant lots to be targeted for other uses.

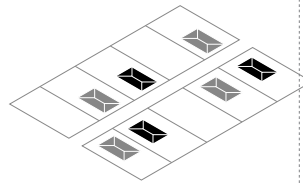
 **RESOURCE** GDZ OVERVIEW & VIDEO  
[greendevlopmentzone.org/introduction](http://greendevlopmentzone.org/introduction)



Neighborhood is visually enhanced, generates community wealth and feels safer.

### Housing

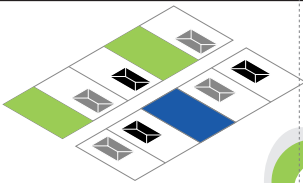
The **Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Corporation** rehabilitates housing and renovates and builds green homes. **PUSH Green** social enterprise weatherizes homes and businesses.



Residents enjoy housing with affordable utility bills.

### Green Infrastructure

**PUSH Blue** builds rain gardens to divert sewage-laden stormwater flowing into river.



Water quality is improved and community has access to locally grown food.



**Climate Resilience Factor:** Improved stormwater management/treatment and locally grown food.

### Job Creation

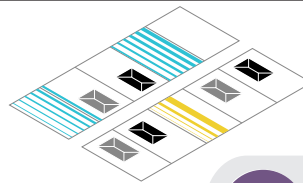
Over 200 people have been trained through **PUSH Green** and **PUSH Blue** and 75 have had job placements.



Projects result in job creation for local residents improves the local economy.

### Placemaking

Vacant lots are activated through **murals, productive gardens** and events.



Neighborhood has beautiful gathering spaces. Events and festivals build social cohesion.



**Cultural Resilience Factor:** Neighborhood murals reflect important people and values for the community.

LONNIEBARLOW



Successful 2005 campaign releases vacant houses in Buffalo to city control and creates \$3 mil funding pot.



**National Fuel Accountability** campaign redirects \$19 mil. to low-income weatherization. PUSH helps pass **Green Jobs-Green New York** state law to create living wage jobs from weatherization.

PUSH successfully lobbies for renovation of **Massachusetts Ave Park**.

### Green Development Zone

The Green Development Zone is a 25 square block area in which PUSH concentrates the majority of its efforts to improve vacant lots to build a stronger community fabric and develop the local economy.

### From Vacancy to Jobs

Vacant lots are the target of PUSH Buffalo's PUSH Green and PUSH Blue program which installs stormwater infrastructure and energy efficient systems. A central mission of these programs is to produce jobs and train people in valuable skills. To support this aspect of the program, PUSH held a job fair, knocked on doors and even encouraged local businesses to pass out job flyers. Agreements with the City of Buffalo and the other contractors that the organization works with ensure that local workers are hired and paid a sustainable wage. New hires receive on-the-job training as well as OSHA certification and will have the opportunity for leadership development.

## BUILD MOMENTUM AND ENGAGEMENT

### Using Arts to Engage

Every public engagement meeting held by PUSH Buffalo begins with a moment of artistic or cultural expression, such as a poetry reading or short performance. This engages people so they can start meetings with open-minded, productive and creative mindsets.

THE SOLUTIONS PROJECT



Climate and Culture Resiliency Factors: PUSH Buffalo is house-based action groups that will combine political action with community building and meditation and mindfulness practices.

### Bringing out Leaders

PUSH Buffalo uses its events to demonstrate community support to political leaders, and gives political leaders platforms at their events to hold them accountable to the promises they make in front of large crowds. Events are not just well-attended, but grab attention. One of these events was attended by over 450 people.

“If you’re blunt about it, community meetings are boring. No one wants to listen to people talk all day even if they are politicized people. They are not going to keep coming back if it’s lifeless. It was important for us to bring some life to our work.”

AARON BARTLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUSH BUFFALO

### Climate Change Dance Parties

PUSH Buffalo hosts dance parties themed on climate change which include an educational workshop in the middle of the party. Parties are always considered part of larger campaigns and are always followed up by action opportunities—rapper Biz Markie performed at one.



LONNIE BARLOW

### Door to Door from Day One

PUSH Buffalo began in 2005 with a door-to-door campaign that revealed residents’ concerns about vacant housing in the neighborhood. This resulted in a campaign to make change at the state level.

### Using Arts to Generate Pressure

Many vacant lots in Buffalo were state-owned, and rather than invest in community-based redevelopment the state had planned to sell them to a financial firm. In protest, PUSH spray painted stencils of Governor Pataki’s face that said “This House Controlled by Gov. Pataki” on vacant houses to bring attention to this issue and that resulted in a transfer of ownership to the city and a funding stream for community-based housing redevelopment.

# DEVELOP LOCAL CULTURE AND TALENTS





## Hip Hop Culture

“The organization is really rooted in hip-hop culture,” says Aaron Bartley, Executive Director. This means that PUSH invests in hiring hip hop artists for a range of their programs, from creating hip hop murals to performing at festivals to leading youth classes. They even commissioned a hip hop theme song for the National Fuel Accountability Coalition’s Weatherization Campaign.

## Resident Story Performances

PUSH is partnering with local organization on Unheard Voices, a performance piece that shares the stories of local residents. PUSH also operates a community center which runs classes that help youth tell neighborhood stories by teaching them film production and portraiture skills.



  **Climate and Culture Resiliency Factor:** PUSH is helping organize a play that profiles a resident’s life as he confronts social and climate challenges.

## Pitfall: Setting Expectations

While it’s important to unlock people’s talents, Aaron cautions against setting up unsupportable expectations given an arts industry in which there are “a few celebrity multimillionaires while many artists struggle to make a living. Be honest about the way the economy works to limit the distribution of artistic monies.”

## Hire Community Talent

A number of PUSH staff have artistic backgrounds. PUSH’s deputy director has run the local black theater company for the past 15-20 years, and their communications director has a recording studio. He performs at events and brings youth and community members in for jam sessions—both formal and informal.

### Developing Community Talent

“Community organizers are trained to develop people’s talents,” says Aaron, and “we kept running into folks who had creative talents,” he says. He suggests doing an internal audit of underutilized community and staff talents.

### Investing in Arts and Culture

Hip Hop is a big part of the culture of the West Side neighborhood. There are “a lot of people involved with PUSH that grew up in hip-hop culture or organized their lives around the building blocks of hip-hop culture.” Honoring that means investing in it. “Holding ourselves accountable to that culture means making sure that there’s money for it and budget when we can find it,” says Aaron.



## ADDRESS GENTRIFICATION



### Resist Gentrification with Local Art

Real estate speculators often rely on narrative tactics such as renaming neighborhoods and they sometimes use the arts as a tool to rebrand a place. PUSH uses the arts to create a strong counter-narrative for the neighborhood and the residents who live there.

“ We try to shift the culture away from a narrative that the real estate industry tells about the neighborhood. If we get enough control of the property, our hope is that those narratives aren't really credible because the neighborhood is not for sale. ”

AARON BARTLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUSH BUFFALO

### Control the Land

As the cost of land has risen in Buffalo, PUSH has begun a landbanking campaign. They aim to have 50% of properties in the hands of the city, nonprofits or long-term residents.



### Push for Policies

PUSH is campaigning for an inclusionary zoning bill that would make housing for low-income residents part of the City's long-term commitment.

### Narrative Matters

Rather than not engage in art, lest it be coopted, PUSH promotes art that comes out of the community, aims it at an audience primarily of locals, and uses local networks and institutions for its distribution.

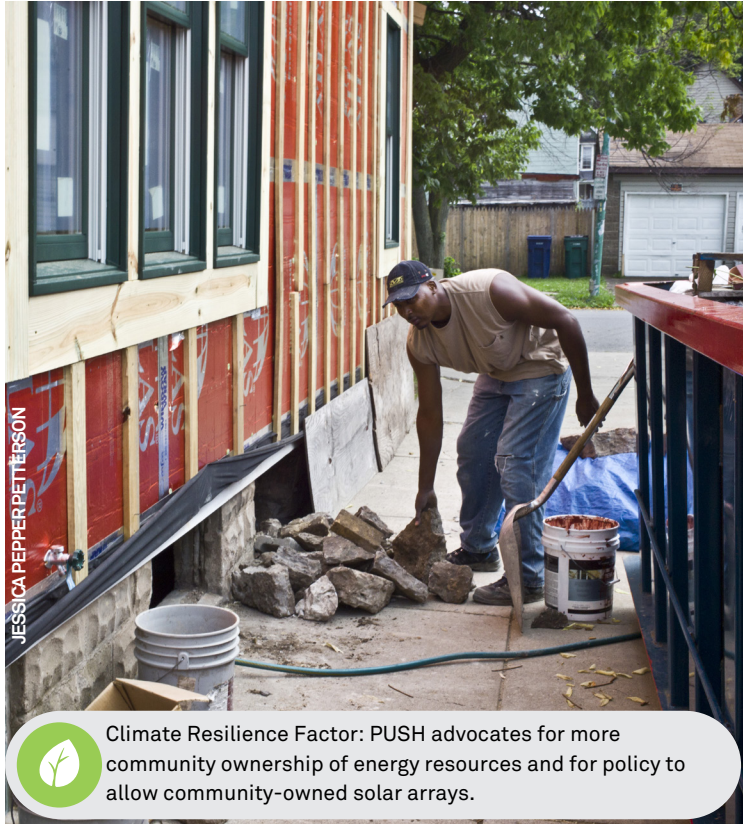
### Thresholds Matter


PUSH has three components to its anti-gentrification efforts. The first is to control the land. Aaron cites research suggesting that when a certain percentage of land is not available for sale, real estate speculators find it hard to create a snowball effect that raises land prices. The second is to push for policies such as inclusionary zoning, and the third is to use arts to generate a strong neighborhood narrative about who lives there now. However, local real estate prices are increasing and West Side lots are much more expensive than they were when PUSH began its work.

## BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIES


### **PUSH Green and PUSH Blue**

PUSH Green is an energy efficiency program that provides free energy assessments and aggregates demand for solar installation and weatherization. PUSH Blue installs distributed stormwater retention measures such as rain gardens, downspout attachments and rain barrels. PUSH Buffalo trains and hires locals to provide these services to support the local economy.



 Climate Resilience Factor: PUSH advocates for more community ownership of energy resources and for policy to allow community-owned solar arrays.



 Climate Resilience Factor: PUSH organized a campaign that resulted in a weatherization and green jobs program that became PUSH Green's funding source.

### **Labor and Community Benefits Agreements**

PUSH trains workers on-the-job to do their housing renovations. They have helped expand a network of contractors who commit to hiring new workers from their neighborhood, offering good pay, good benefits, and a real prospect for a future in the business. PUSH has used community benefits agreements as a way to regulate these standards.



### **Small Business Opportunities**

PUSH owns a small number of commercial properties dedicated to uses that expand the local economy, such as entrepreneur Nicola Ballard's RudeBoyz Artworks, a custom art, clothing and jewellery store. This requires PUSH to set a clear rationale for which tenants they would like to attract to fit with their local values.

**Grassroots Economy Building**  
Recognizing that “for decades, corporations took more out of the West Side than they put in,” PUSH began with door-knocking and a grassroots vision for building the community.

**Changing Policies to Benefit Low Income People**  
PUSH Buffalo organized a coalition targeting National Fuel Gas Company, a utility company that serves the region. The company was adding a surcharge to all gas bills to pay for fuel conservation incentives, yet the majority of the money was directed at advertising and programs that were largely used by middle class residents. The successful National Fuel Accountability campaign shared stories of low income residents struggling under the weight of high gas bills and pushed for conservation incentive money to be spent on weatherization programs that would benefit low income people and create green jobs.

## CRAFT A COMMUNITY VISION

with Jennifer Kaminsky, Housing Director



JENIFER KAMINSKY

PUSH Buffalo is redeveloping School 77, a shuttered public school that sat vacant for years. Here's the community engagement and planning process the real estate department and the community organizing team ran collaboratively.



### 1. Run a Planning Congress

PUSH runs an annual planning congress in which community members come together to make neighborhood plans. Often residents are broken up into smaller groups for intimate discussion or to work on a specific topic. School 77 emerged in a number of small groups in the planning congress of 2015.



### 2. Go Door to Door

"This project started as a community organizing project, not a real estate one" says Jennifer. The community organizing team went door to door with small cards that said, "Do you support PUSH doing something with this building and what do you want to see here?"



### 3. Get a Moratorium on Building Sale

PUSH's activists were able to get the City to put a moratorium on the sale of the building until a community plan could be developed for its reuse that either PUSH or another developer had to conform to.



### 4. Secure Funding for Community Planning

PUSH secured an ArtPlace America grant for its community planning and hired the Hester Street Collaborative to conduct planning sessions. "It is hard to find that capacity, but for our work, we feel like it's critically important, so we do find those funds and make those resources available," says Jennifer of the planning process.

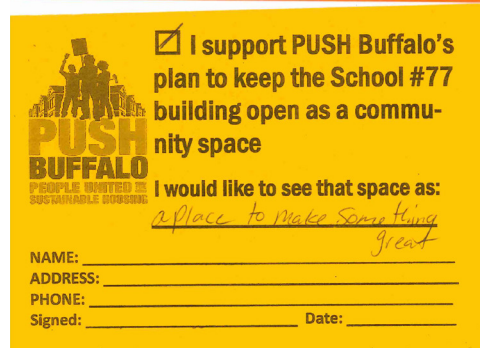
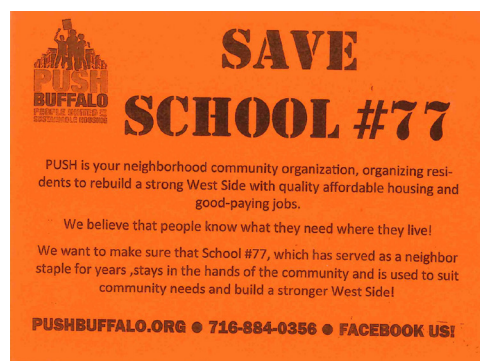


### 5. Set Expectations

While it was important the school's reuse be driven by community vision, not every community desire was feasible. The real estate team had to communicate that the building would include housing because financing was available for it, but also that the plan could only accommodate uses that had a community sponsor. "PUSH does a lot of amazing things, but we don't do everything, so if there was a use out there that people wanted to see, if no one stepped up to provide it, it couldn't go forward" says Jennifer.

"The Planning Congress is a great launching pad for ideas, but didn't lead to a concrete development project so we have to think through the framing of these events such that they're asking a realistic and meaningful question that is actionable."

JENIFER KAMINSKY  
HOUSING DIRECTOR, PUSH BUFFALO



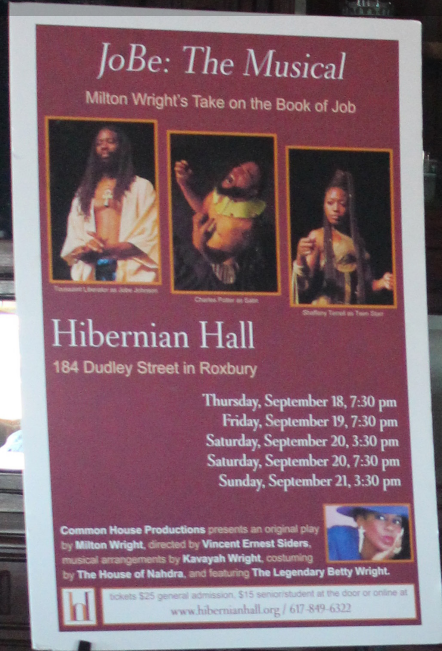
#### "Moral Site Control"

PUSH established what Jen calls 'moral site control' of School 77 by getting 500 residents to sign cards. This meant that the building—one of the few large floorplate buildings in the neighborhood—was already associated with PUSH and its efforts before the City could proceed with a sale.

#### Sustainable Neighborhoods

A successful PUSH policy effort in combination with New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) resulted in funding programs, including the Sustainable Neighborhoods Development Program, and a preference within in the Qualified Application Plan for projects that come out of a community plan. Planning work, however, is not a reimbursable cost or eligible basis on a development budget, so developers either must use development fees or other funding to pay for the work. The program's criteria were modelled after that of the Green Development Zone.

# How can arts and culture revitalize a neighborhood?



**SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY**

The Hall supports the promotion of the arts while ensuring local culture is celebrated by a diverse audience.

**STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBORHOOD PERCEPTION**

Hibernian Hall is an anchor of Dudley Square's revitalization and of the future Roxbury Cultural District.

**BUILD TRUST & VISIBILITY**

Madison Park Development Corporation has leveraged Hibernian Hall to build trust within the community and city.

**IMPROVE RESIDENT HEALTH**

Hibernian Hall and community organizing activities have positioned Madison Park Development Corporation as a key organization to improve neighborhood health.

ANGEL BABBITT HARRIS

## Building Up a Neighborhood

Madison Park Development Corporation's (MPDC) investment in the arts has been instrumental to its effort to revitalize the Roxbury neighborhood. Although MPDC's primary mission is to create and maintain affordable housing for the community's low-income residents, in 2000 it acquired Hibernian Hall, a former dance hall important to the neighborhood. Through theater, music, dance and educational programming, MPDC has gained neighborhood trust and improved the local economy, while also reflecting and contributing to neighborhood identity.

## Synergy Within the Organization

MPDC addresses community development on many levels. Their real estate operations have been successful in providing the funding for many of the events held at Hibernian Hall. In return, Hibernian Hall, a neighborhood gathering point, has generated a sense of good-will towards MPDC resulting in positive relationships with Roxbury residents and city authorities. These positive relationships are leveraged when it is time to develop future projects.

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

HIBERNIAN HALL

1913

Hibernian Hall is constructed for Irish communities. Hibernian Hall houses an Irish dance hall. It is one of five in Dudley Square that is open 5-6 nights a week.

1940s-1950s

First wave of African Americans from Deep South and West Indies to Boston, many are directed to Roxbury by real estate agents. Performances and events at Hibernian Hall reflect this transition.

1960s-1970s

Redlining practices drive African Americans to Roxbury neighborhood. Increase in foreclosures in late 60s, early 70s. Dance hall closes and Hibernian Hall becomes the location of the Opportunity Industrial Center (OIC.) The OIC closes and Hibernian Hall is vacant. Latin American immigrants move to neighborhood in late 1980s.

2000

MPDC acquires Hibernian Hall

2015

MPDC applies to City of Boston for Roxbury Cultural District

MADISON PARK

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

1966

Lower Roxbury Community Corporation (LRCC) is formed (becomes MPDC later.)

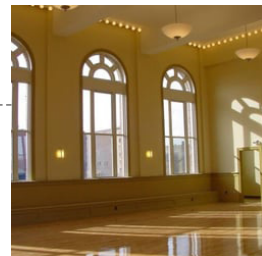
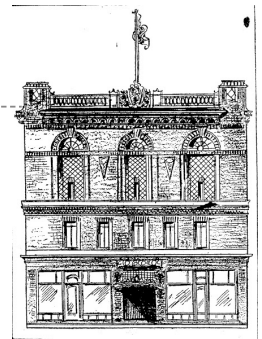
Roxbury Crossing Theater operates in basement of LRCC— theater is led by Ed Bullins, nationally known exponent of the black arts movement.

1997

MPDC helps form ACT Roxbury (Arts Culture and Trade) organization. Programs such as film festival, open studios, and literary annual publication are established. Discover Roxbury organization is established.

2005

After struggling to find tenants, MPDC moves its offices and makes organizational commitment to arts programming and operations of Hibernian Hall.



TRAVIS LEE

Long Term Relationships

MPDC has had a long-standing relationship with the community of Roxbury. Established at a time when many Roxbury neighborhoods were under threat of demolition, MPDC under the name of Lower Roxbury Community Corporation stepped in and helped stop many of the urban renewal threats from the City of Boston.

Partnering with the Arts

Hibernian Hall and MPDC both have a history of serving immigrants and people of color through performing arts. This made acquiring Hibernian Hall a good fit for MPDC. One of the oldest CDCs in the country, MPDC has provided over 1000 affordable housing units to the low-income residents of Roxbury and also has a long-time history of positioning the arts as a key asset for the neighborhood's economic development.

## SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY



ANDREW BUSTIN

### Arts as Social Change

Many of the Hall's signature productions address issues of race and social justice. The Community Action team also uses the space for efforts that leverage arts and culture including "Critical Breakdown", an open mic night in which people of all ages express themselves on issues including poverty and oppression.

### Reflect the Community

MPDC's Artistic Director strives to attract a diverse audience that includes a 50/50 mix of residents and non-residents, ensuring programming that reflects the community and opens up access to different influences and collaborations.



ANGEL BABBITT HARRIS

### Guarding against Gentrification

Many of the housing units in Roxbury are under some form of rent-control or affordable housing deed-restriction. MPDC owns approximately 1,200 rental homes for low-income and moderate income residents.



MPDC REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT



Climate & Cultural Resilience Factors: The creation of new affordable housing not only helps fight displacement in the face of increasing rents, but offers opportunities to develop units that incorporate energy efficient appliances and HVAC systems which lower the cost of utilities.

### Fighting Gentrification

MPDC's commitment to providing affordable housing is their primary vehicle to resist gentrification. However, they are also committed to using arts and culture performances and events to reflect the Roxbury culture.

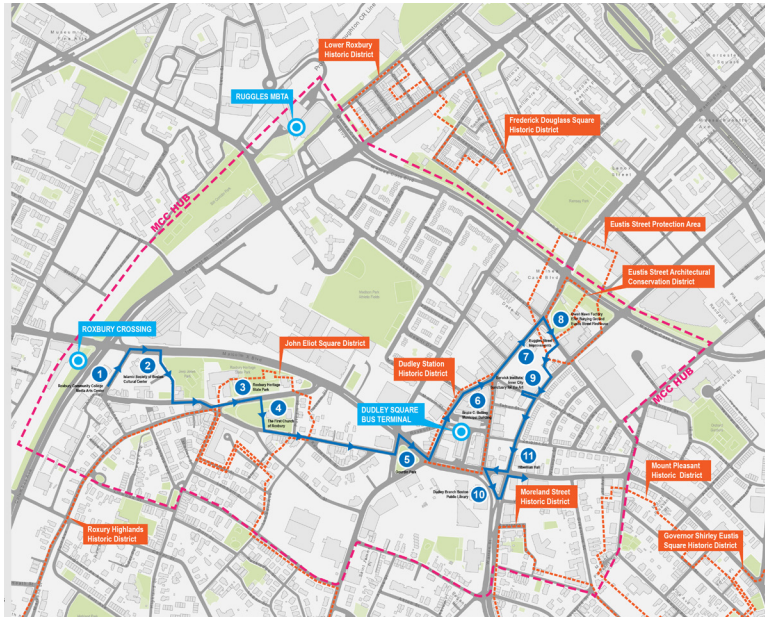
### Balancing the Arts

The programming at Hibernian Hall is diverse and meaningful. While many of the performances are from local artists and performers, the staff at MPDC try to infuse the theatre with offerings that promote diversity from other cultures and backgrounds. With audiences coming from all over the region as well as next door, the threat of gentrification is real. MPDC deliberately balances performances and arts-related events to strengthen the narratives and stories of existing Roxbury cultures and residents.

# SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

## Arts Destination

MPDC is working with several other organizations to obtain an official designation for a Roxbury Cultural District. The district, when approved by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, will help identify Roxbury as a cultural destination within the City of Boston. The cultural district recognition will also bring added visibility to social and cultural issues that partner organizations are tackling.



## Pitfall: Stereotypes

Hibernian Hall faces difficulties because of Roxbury’s reputation as a dangerous neighborhood—a reputation that like many low-income neighborhoods persists even when crime statistics in the neighborhood are not consistent with that fear. A local college refused to send its students to a neighborhood performance without a chartered bus, which impacted the performance’s profits and detracted from the Hall’s purpose of activating the neighborhood.

“The main thing that we contend with is a perception that our neighborhood is an unsafe place to go. Those fears stem from what the neighborhood was like 25 years ago, but it’s very hard to overcome that kind of reputation.”

DILLON BUSTIN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, MPDC



## Multicultural Space

Hibernian Hall is a multicultural arts institution. Jeanne Pinado, Executive Director says, “it’s a great place to see theater because it’s one of the few places where you could find a multicultural audience or an audience that is predominantly people of color. They just experience theaters differently. They react. People really enjoy that aspect of the experience as much as they enjoy the show.”

## Revealing a Neighborhood

Professional leadership is key. Dillon Bustin, the Hall’s Artistic Director, has strong artistic networks throughout the city and also keeps the center’s art events firmly planted in the cultures of the local neighborhood.

## Strength in Numbers

The Roxbury Cultural District initiative is supported through a partnership of organizations and businesses with a stake in the Roxbury neighborhood. These organizations have defined a common vision and shared goals for the district. If their application is approved by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the District can then help promote Roxbury as a cultural destination for the state of Massachusetts.

# STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PERCEPTION

## Keeping the Lights On

Hibernian Hall is a hub of local nightlife in Roxbury. As Jeanne says, “it always was designed to be a place where the lights would be on in Roxbury at night.”



## Pitfall: Building Critical Mass

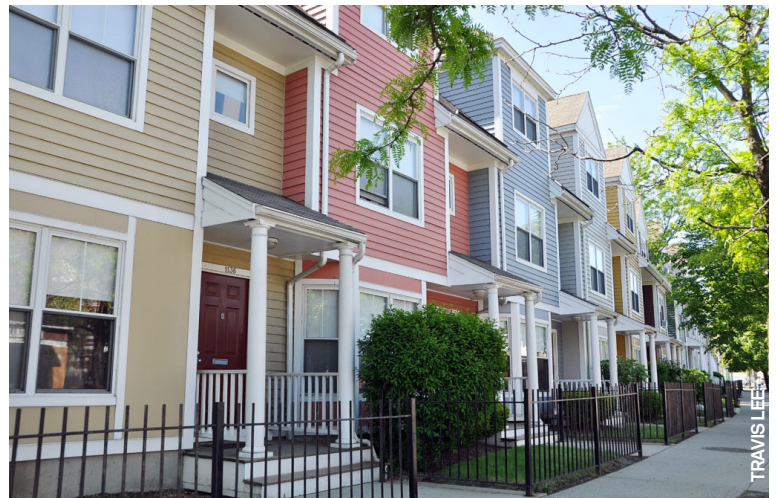
In the early days of MPDC’s operation of Hibernian Hall, the area did not have the synergies that make a thriving arts district. “There wasn’t a lot of retail in Dudley. There were no restaurants, for example, with sit down table service,” says Artistic Director Dillon Bustin, who notes that other struggling theaters at the time were offering combination deals with surrounding restaurants to draw in patrons. “We long ago gave up on the idea that the ballroom by itself could turn around the local economy. It has to be a piece of a larger effort.”

## Support Housing with Commercial Areas

In 2000 MPDC took a big step by acquiring Hibernian Hall, their second commercial property. While the strength of the organization’s portfolio is in housing, the successes of their commercial district makes for a safer and more vibrant neighborhood with more jobs and entertainment.

## Spur local business

MPDC hopes to spur economic development in the area. Hibernian Hall’s presence has helped catalyze a new restaurant’s opening. MPDC also leverages the hall to support local businesses using Haley House, a mission-based organization for catering and a neighborhood supplier for furniture rentals.



## Multipronged Development

MPDC has recently targeted some commercial properties for redevelopment in hopes that it will provide support and benefits to their existing housing projects in the area. By investing in key commercial nodes they hope to bring jobs to the area and increase foot traffic and improve neighborhood safety.

## Make a Destination

While Hibernian Hall has been under operation by MPDC for ten years, it’s only in the last six months that commercial development has picked up in the area. “My dream,” says Jeanne, “is for people to land in Logan Airport and pick up a brochure on Roxbury. They’d come see a show at Hibernian Hall. They’d eat in an ethnic restaurant and it would be a destination, just like the ethnic communities are in Paris or Spain. We’re not there yet in Boston but I hope we’ll be.”



BUILD TRUST AND VISIBILITY



Community Choice

MPDC originally planned to transform Hibernian Hall into artist live/work housing. However during the community engagement process, it became clear that the community wanted to preserve the ballroom as an event space, which necessitated fundraising.

**Pitfall: Catalyzing the Market**

MPDC bought Hibernian Hall in 2000 and hoped to rent it out to creative economy tenants but there was no market. They soon realized they would have to operate and program the building themselves. A community process revealed a desire for a gallery and a working ballroom but ultimately MPDC could only afford one of these subsidized programs.

“ I would definitely say it’s become the go-to place for politicians when they want to host an event in the community. ”

JEANNE PINADO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MPDC



Building Relationships

During construction of Tropical Foods, a MPDC-constructed supermarket, the project came under fire by local protesters. MPDC staff knew many of the protesters from events at Hibernian Hall and were able to engage and educate them on the value of the redevelopment.

Be a Neighborhood Icon

Hibernian Hall and the ballroom’s beauty are a great source of neighborhood pride. The acquisition and rehabilitation of the hall was noted also by former Mayor Thomas M. Menino as a great example of a public-private partnership in Dudley Square’s revitalization effort.



Community Pride

After a decade of vacancy, MPDC took over ownership of Hibernian Hall and turned it into a place for the community. “It generates a huge sense of pride for Roxbury residents when they come into the space to experience arts events or cultural activities” says Executive Director Jeanne Pinado.

Relationship Building

Hibernian Hall’s central place in the Roxbury neighborhood has brought goodwill and stronger political relationships to MPDC. It strengthened MPDC’s role as a community leader that can be trusted to address other important community needs such as affordable housing, community wellness, youth development and public safety.

## IMPROVE RESIDENT HEALTH

### Position for Partnerships

The success of the highly visible Hibernian Hall and MPDC's community organizing arm have given MPDC credibility that attracts key partnerships and funding, to improve resident health.



Climate Resilience Factor: MPDC helps organize the Dudley Square Farmers Market.



Climate Resilience Factor: The MPDC Community Action has walking clubs that use the hall's ballroom for walk circuits and organizes support for neighborhood pedestrian improvements.

### Integrate Health and Wellness into Housing

Another MPDC partner is the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Dana Farber works with MPDC property managers to organize residents to pursue healthy eating and exercise.



### Healthy & Culturally Relevant Food

MPDC partnered with Tropical Foods, a local business that had outgrown its space, to redevelop a 27,000 square foot store. The supermarket features culturally relevant produce and products and has hosted healthy cooking workshops attended by hundreds of people.

### Integrate Programming, the Arts and Youth

The community action team uses Hibernian Hall for some of its programming, including a health-focused movie series, and even as a location for a walking club. They host open-mic nights focused on social justice issues and fashion shows.

### A Funding Partner

The Boston Public Health Commission has funnelled state and national grants addressing the social determinants of health to MPDC because the organization is so well poised for community engagement and is thinking holistically about the community. These multi-year grants fund 2-3 community action team positions.

# HOW TO FUND THE ARTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

with Jeanne Pinado, Executive Director



JEANNE PINADO

A big proportion of MPDC's arts funding comes from the real estate arm of the organization. When Jeanne Pinado joined MPDC in 1998 the organization was not in a financial place to support the arts. Here's her advice based on the steps they took to change that.



## 1. Get a New Management Company

Hire a quality management company that is good at what they do, so you can be good at what you do. "A lot of CDCs self-manage, but generally that is not a good way to go unless you have 5,000 units," says Jeanne.



## 2. Upgrade Inefficient Systems

Invest in cost-saving measures such as the energy efficiency upgrades to heating and cooling systems on Madison Park properties. Jeanne and her team secured a loan to replace an old oil burning furnace that was costing them money.



## 3. Team up with the Right Financial Partner

MPDC partnered with Trinity Financial, a for-profit affordable housing and developer on a project and earned several million dollars in developer fees.



## 4. Get Your Books in Order

When Jeanne came on board, the organization's accounting methods were behind the times. "We had checkbooks, not even QuickBooks here," she says, and the organization hadn't pursued its last equity installment. Jeanne hired someone to read all the binders and explain the assets that the organization had, and upgraded the system and hired an accountant.



## 5. Lure Great People In

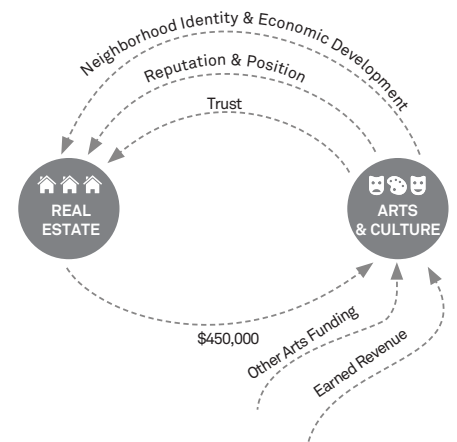
"When I had the money to do it, I hired good people," says Jeanne. "I'd tell them, I know we can't afford you, but can you be a consultant? Just come work with my staff for a couple days a week. Eventually I'd rope them in." She credits this process for recruiting her top-notch real estate director and CFO.



## 5. Position Yourself for Holistic Investments

Because of MPDC's central position in the community, they have become a go-to partner for state and city efforts to address the behavioral component of health challenges. These grants helped expand the community action department. "There was a time when I was always struggling to hire a second organizer," Jeanne says, "it seemed like we were always going to have only one. Now, I have a department of eight people."

### ORGANIZATIONAL SYNERGIES



### MPDC ARTS FUNDING SOURCES

\$200K	<b>GRANTS</b> Barr Foundation Klarman Family Foundation The Boston Foundation New England Foundation for the Arts
\$450K	<b>REAL ESTATE REVENUE</b> Revenue from Properties & Fees
\$200K	<b>DONATIONS</b> Community Investment Tax Credit Annual Event Donations Anonymous Gifts

### Start in Affordable Housing

A primary mission of MPDC when established in the 1960s was to provide affordable housing to low-income residents of Roxbury. However allied efforts have always been part of the organization's approach.

### Sustaining the Arts & Culture

As a result of MPDC's strong housing portfolio they are able to support efforts based in arts and culture including programming at Hibernian Hall and other local efforts such as the Roxbury Cultural District. A strong real estate base with the addition of some outside funding gives them the financial footing to do so. Jeanne tries to fund MPDC operations primarily from housing portfolio profits which have a steady cash flow rather than from more unstable development fees.