

Focus on...
Placemaking
 Tools for Transforming Communities



What is placemaking? Quite simply, it's about making a "place" special and memorable. Why is it important? Because research shows that creating memorable places is a way to attract and retain a talented workforce as well as encourage investment. Michigan is at the forefront of this national movement through the efforts of the MIplace Partnership Initiative (miplace.org). The Initiative is made up of a diverse range of stakeholders including state agencies, regional and local units of government, key associations and nonprofits, and private sector partners who have embraced placemaking and understand that vibrant, successful regions promote economic activity and will help build a better Michigan.

For truly active and engaging places, placemaking strategies should be rooted in a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential. It should focus on creating interesting and useful places that attract people. Art, natural features, outdoor dining, and plazas all can offer opportunities for people to connect with each other and with a place.

Clearzoning, Inc. recently assisted the City of Clawson, Michigan, with a Downtown Master Plan that included several placemaking strategies. The illustration above offers a concept for the transformation of a parking lot and adjacent buildings in an underutilized block adjacent to the main downtown intersection. The resulting plaza could be a welcoming place to gather informally or for community events.

How did we do it? We envisioned these improvements:

- Renovate the buildings flanking the paved parking area
- Transform the parking area with landscaping, street furniture, and pedestrian-oriented lighting.
- Add landscape screening and low masonry wall to help fill in the "dead space" between the existing buildings (seen in the top photo).
- Create a pedestrian connection that encourages shopping throughout downtown.

At Clearzoning, Inc., our staff has attended all six modules of the official MIplace Partnership Initiative Placemaking Curriculum Training, allowing us to bring this important training to your community. Contact us for additional information.

Master Plans
 Recreation Plans
 Downtown Plans



Parking Studies
 Community Visioning
 Zoning Ordinances



Place Making
 Traffic Engineering
 Transportation Plans



Access Management
 Form-Based Codes
 Expert Witness Services

