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MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Placemaking Advisory Group

From: CMAP Staff

Date: October 05, 2017

Re: ON TO 2050: Draft Placemaking Recommendations

The placemaking memo will highlight successful case studies and identify recommendations for ON TO 2050 to promote placemaking in the region. Open space, programming, historic preservation, public art, streetlife, and architecture all contribute to a sense of place. Understanding how these spaces are designed, implemented, and maintained are critical for promoting placemaking. ON TO 2050 will help support placemaking activities at the local level by highlighting best practices and encourage placemaking to be addressed within CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program. Building on the work of the advisory group and Land Use Committee over the past 6 months, this preliminary memo summarizes potential recommendations for the placemaking memo.

Placemaking framework

ON TO 2050 is addressing land use and development in a number of ways, including through strategy papers and snapshots on reinvestment and infill, TOD, housing choice, and lands in transition. These primarily take a regional-scale approach to land use, which is an appropriate way to address this topic in ON TO 2050. However, a regional-scale approach misses local-scale details that affect sense of place and quality of life. Placemaking seeks to supplement this regional-scale approach with case studies and action items that contribute to a local sense of place. The placemaking memo aims to support placemaking as a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, programming, and management of community spaces that seeks to capitalize on local assets in an effort to improve quality of life. This includes spaces both public and private and devotes attention to elements that contribute to a sense of place including architecture, historic preservation, public art, street life, and others.

Preliminary Recommendations to Promote Placemaking Initiatives

This memo will build off current local best practices in the region and identify ways to create livable communities with more accessible, attractive, and vibrant spaces. The following draft recommendations, many of them low-budget and involving strategic partnerships, offer

concrete ways to better engage and involve community members in creative place-making opportunities.

Foster inclusive public outreach processes

In many cases, the most effective way to engage residents is through community events. Block parties, street fairs and festivals, and community gardens can all help bring different groups together and help residents feel more integrated. Placemaking could help elevate community engagement, particularly in areas that are typically underrepresented. The placemaking memo will highlight strategies to help communities facilitate placemaking through broader-based stakeholder engagement, collaborative processes, and other forms of community building. The memo will identify model practices and existing resources that communities could use to increase community engagement with local residents. An outreach program may be helpful to increase communications and collaboration among communities' various groups and initiate discussions about how best to honor the identity and diversity of a community.

Involve private sector partners in the creation of public spaces

When undertaken thoughtfully, public and private infrastructure improvements can create a sense of place. While actors from the nonprofit and public sectors often spearhead efforts to create useful public spaces, the private sector is increasingly playing a significant role in placemaking and such investment can improve public spaces and spur economic development in surrounding areas. Private sector partners should be engaged to evaluate opportunities for involvement in generating a sense of place. This requires the involvement of community groups, units of government, and the private and nonprofit sectors to work together to increase the ability of communities to attract reinvestment through placemaking initiatives.

Encourage development of places that are inclusive and accessible to all community members

Community design and planning play a critical part in creating spaces filled with people and events that are welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to all community members. Ensuring that access to these spaces is equitable across geography, race, age, and income is equally essential. Addressing high and moderate need areas in a coordinated effort will help prioritize resources and identify opportunities for placemaking. The placemaking memo will identify strategies to help communities create vibrant spaces with a sense of inclusion and shared ownership as its core function.

Establish long-term management of permanent spaces and community events

The long-term success of a public space is dependent on a continued structure of support and management along with sustained funding sources. Implementation plans that look no further than initial construction efforts fail to address the sustainability of a permanent space. Successful placemaking initiatives should establish detailed management and programming responsibilities for the life of a placemaking development while identifying funding sources for implementation and continued management and programming. An initial step should be to determine the life span of the space. Determining whether to create a long-term permanent space is not always possible or desirable for every project. Part of this major step is to identify

all major parties and determine level of commitment. Management responsibilities should include all invested partners and actors, including those utilizing the space to provide community programming.

Design spaces for year-round uses

Designing flexible spaces open numerous possibilities for providing year-round activities. Utilizing shared spaces for multiple uses can broaden support and strengthen investment in them. When spaces have a variety of involved stakeholders, they are more likely to succeed and attract additional developments that further contribute to a sense of place. For example, adding community programming events to public gardens or plazas can build a broader base of support than a singular use can. Craft fairs and movie screenings are examples of open space community programming initiatives that can supplement shared spaces. Understanding that some places may lack a strong management presence or a variety of activities, which could make it difficult to attract people year-round, the placemaking memo will explore seasonal strategies, like holiday markets, parades and recreational activities to keep spaces activated during all times of year.

Encourage reinvestment through placemaking

When people do not feel engaged, a space will remain empty. Reinvigorating vacant storefronts through pop-up art and events could help encourage reinvestment in existing structures and attract new developments. Communities across the region are partnering with creative entrepreneurs to address vacant storefronts through “vacant windows projects.” Exploring innovative ideas, even if only temporarily, will help others to see the possibilities for existing vacant structures, leading efforts to prioritize existing and historic buildings as well as spark interests for new developments.

Improve street safety through placemaking activities

Streets and sidewalks provide the space for civic and community engagement as well as transportation and commerce. Providing an inviting and engaging atmosphere for all travel users can help businesses as well as support an active civic community. The placemaking memo will provide a number of strategies to enhance the look and feel of streets to improving feelings of safety and comfort when traveling. Tactical urbanism is a growing and popular concept that helps explore a space full potential before investing in new infrastructure improvements and amenities. Tactical urbanism could help facilitate the permanent development of visual improvements along major corridors, including streetscape enhancements, gateway identity, and wayfinding and signage to facilitate and promote the coexistence of all travel modes.