- **EVERYONE’S PLAZA**
  - **5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**
  - **FREE FAMILY FUN**
  - **7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**
  - **KEPOST**
    - SHARE PICTURES TAG
    - divisionunited
  - **BETTER CITIES FILMS**
  - **PING PONG**
  - **MALAMATI JUICE BAR**
  - **FIRST 40 PEOPLE GET A FREE POPSICLE OR HOT APPLE CIDER**
  - **BOCCE**
  - **POPSCILE**
  - **MINI GOLF**
  - **COMMUNITY PANTRY WITH LOCAL FOODS TO SAMPLE**
  - **NEW URBANIST MOVIE SHOWING**
  - **EVERYONE’S PLAZA**

*CAPACITY LIMITED FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING, PLEASE WEAR A MASK; PPE STATION WILL BE AVAILABLE*
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead
HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Team Better Block has worked with over 150 communities across five countries to develop Better Block projects. Looking at these past projects, the team identified four different types of Better Blocks according to their scale and urban context.

CATEGORIES

**MAIN STREET**

Main streets are a vital part of a city’s public open space system. They function as movement corridors for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicles. They also support many social and business activities. The projects in this category address the appearance and character of main streets that play a large part in determining the overall quality of life, economic health, and livability of the city.

**NEIGHBORHOOD**

The projects in this category focus on adapting low-density communities into sustainable, mixed-use spaces that reduce urban sprawl and the dependence on cars. Examples show how residential subdivisions can be reinvented and revitalized through changes in transit patterns, rezoning for mixed use, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and roads.

**PARKS & PLAZAS**

These projects try to answer how existing public spaces can be examined and reformed to produce new vitality to the city. Based on placemaking principles, this category approaches public space from the user’s perspective.

**OTHER**

As urban conditions change, we are being challenged with more unique problems that do not fit into a single category. Projects in this category deal with dead shopping malls, underperforming industrial and business parks, empty big-box stores, worn-out strip malls, etc.
New technologies and manufacturing processes allow us to add elements to the street to slow drivers and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists without costly design processes and long construction periods. Through different projects, Team Better Block identified a palette of interventions—a toolbox that can be used for rapidly deploying projects and testing ideas in any city. These different strategies embrace improvisation where locally sourced materials may be available to fill the same functions as the commonly-used items.

Tools listed here have the ability to create an entirely new environment within the space by using modular and portable components that change the shape or aesthetic of the space. Depending on the ambition of the community and city officials, these tools can be permanent or temporary. Look for these colors when installations are identified on the following pages.

**TOOLS**

- PERMANENT INSTALLATION
- TEMPORARY INSTALLATION

- BIKE LANE
- CROSSWALK
- TRAFFIC CALMING
- PARKLET
- POP-UP SHOP
- SEATING
- FOOD
- ACTIVITY
- LANDSCAPING
- DIGITAL FABRICATION
- WAYFINDING
- ART

**CASE STUDIES**

The report is composed of case studies that demonstrate the principles of building a better block in practice. The primary aim of this section is to highlight the best practices from each project.

Each case study includes basic summary facts and project statistics, a description of the design process, evaluation of the project’s success and limitations, lessons learned, and the value gained, selected comments by clients, users and community groups.

The following pages explain the layout that is used to guide the reader through the projects.
The Grand Rapids region is growing faster than anywhere else in the state of Michigan. A significant portion of that growth is along the northern terminus of the The Rapid’s Silver Line BRT service in downtown Grand Rapids. As part of the Division United initiative that identified strategies to spur Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along the Silver Line corridor, Team Better Block powered by WGI conducted a series of Better Block projects along the corridor.

Our team engaged with the local community to create enhanced public spaces, calmed streets, pop-up businesses, and public art. We partnered with local volunteers to build these Better Block installations.

The goal of the overall project is to integrate land use and transportation planning with transit capital investments, thereby improving economic development, ridership, accessibility, and catalyzing private sector development. Using the outcomes and lessons learned from these Better Block pilot projects, WGI made recommendations on how to incorporate these strategies into the overall Silver Line TOD plan.
ICCF property located at the corner of Division and Logan St provided an opportunity to test community driven desires for public space. A senior housing building is in final design and a public space is conceptualized at the corner. Public space has the ability to transform Transit Oriented Developments into community gathering places.
**WHAT?**

**DIVISION UNITED THE RAPID SILVER LINE TOD**

**LOCATION**
Division Ave. at Logan St.
Grand Rapids, MI

**OCTOBER 2ND, 2020**

**CATEGORY**
Main Street Neighborhood Park & Plaza Other

**INTERVENTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bike Lane</th>
<th>Crosswalk</th>
<th>Traffic Calming</th>
<th>Parklet</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTNERS**

**CONCEPT PLAN**
Transportation + Placemaking Plan

Based on past community plans like the Heartside Quality of Life Plan and outreach done by this team a series of public space and street interventions were conceptualized. The safe crossing of Division was paramount along with places to eat, drink, sit and be active. Each space was carefully planned for the spacing needed during Covid-19 restrictions.
DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

DATE
OCTOBER 2ND, 2020

INTERVENTIONS
BIKE LANE CROSSWALK FABRICATION PARKLET
POP-UP SHOP SEATING FOOD TRUCK ACTIVITY
LANDSCAPING DIGITAL FABRICATION WAYFINDING ART

PARTNERS
### DIVISION UNITED

**THE RAPID LINE TOD**

**LOCATION**

DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

**DATE**

OCTOBER 2ND, 2020

**CATEGORY**

- MAIN STREET
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- PARK & PLAZA
- OTHER

**INTERVENTIONS**

- BIKE LANE
- CROSSWALK
- LANDSCAPING
- POP-UP SHOP
- SEATING
- DIGITAL
- FABRICATION
- TRAFFIC
- CALMING
- WAYFINDING
- ART

**PARTNERS**

DIVISION UNITED THE RAPID SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

DATE
OCTOBER 2ND, 2020

LOCATION
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., Inner City Christian Federation, Aligned Planning, Better Cities Film Festival, Malamiah Juice Bar, Any Colour Your Like Popsicles, Proactive Voter Registration, SPIN scooters, Harder & Warner Landscaping.

WHAT?
Replacing a parking space with seating for outdoor dining.

INTERVENTIONS
- Bike Lane
- Crosswalk
- Pop-up Shop
- Seating
- Food Truck
- Activity
- Landscaping
- Digital Fabrication
- Wayfinding
- Art

PARTNERS
AFTER BETTER BLOCK

WHAT?

DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

DATE
OCTOBER 2ND, 2020

CATEGORY

INTERVENTIONS

PARTNERS
DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

DATE
OCTOBER 2ND, 2020

CATEGORY
MAIN STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PARK & PLAZA
OTHER

INTERVENTIONS
BIKE LANE
CROSSWALK
TRAFFIC CALMING
PARKLET
POP-UP SHOP
SEATING
FOOD TRUCK
ACTIVITY
LANDSCAPING
DIGITAL FABRICATION
WAYFINDING
ART

PARTNERS
By installing an additional crosswalk with a landscaping median refuge, the crossing distance for all pedestrians was decreased by 25 feet, and the additional physical buffers (planters) prevented cars from traveling through the median. This creates a more comfortable crossing for pedestrians and makes them more visible to vehicular traffic using the intersection. (Formula: \((\text{Before crossing distance} - \text{After crossing distance}) / \text{Before crossing distance} \times 100\))
**WHAT?**

**SIGHT TRIANGLE BEFORE & AFTER**

Before Street Improvements

After Street Improvements

**TRAFFIC SPEEDS**

- Traffic speeds are shown with a speedometer before and after street improvements. The speed before improvements shows a speed of 43 mph in the medium range, while after improvements, the speed is consistently at 25 mph in the medium range.

**SOUND DECIBELS**

- Before improvements, the sound level is 77 decibels, which can be compared to the sound of a constant vacuum cleaner.
- After improvements, the sound level is 67 decibels, which can be compared to the sound of a conversation at home.
DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

WHAT?

> RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICCF project and all future developments in the area should utilize the fundamentals of placemaking and triangulation of those amenities.

The Rapid Silver Line TOD

- Music
- Vista
- Art

THINGS TO DO

Public space

Public spaces often lack fundamental elements to make them active. Triangulating comfort, activities, and refreshments is proven to be a recipe for activating public spaces. Better Block uses these in combination with programming sourced from local talent to create vibrant public spaces. For further definition on placemaking triangulation see the Better Block Field Guide.

Pittsfield perfectly executed the triangulation in two areas as described below.
The front porch of the future senior housing does not have to be static. It can be alive with a range of ages using placemaking as the bonding element. Not all of these elements could be completed in the final design, but the demonstration proved that places to sit, things to do and food and drink mix well at this corner. See the examples to follow.

> Rendering mash-up of ICCF senior housing and Better Block.
LOGAN CASE STUDY

AFTER BETTER BLOCK

DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

WHAT?
> COMFORT

INTERVENTIONS
MAIN STREET NEIGHBORHOOD
PARK & PLAZA
OTHER

Bike Lane
CROSSWALK
TRAFFIC CALMING
PARLET
POP-UP SHOP
SEATING
FOOD TRUCK
ACTIVITY
LANDSCAPING
DIGITAL FABRICATION
WAYFINDING
ART

DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

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THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD
# Better Block Case Study: Logan

## Better Block in Logan

**Location:** Division Ave. at Logan St.  
**Grand Rapids, MI**

### What?

**Things to Do**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rapid</td>
<td>pop-up shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Line TOD</td>
<td>Silver Line TOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### After Better Block

- **Bike Lane**
- **Pop-up Shop**
- **Landscaping**
- **Digital Fabrication**
- **Traffic Calming**
- **Wayfinding**
- **Art**
DIVISION UNITED
THE RAPID
SILVER LINE TOD

LOCATION
DIVISION AVE. AT LOGAN ST.
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

WHAT?
> FOOD & DRINK

CATEGORY
MAIN STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PARK & PLAZA OTHER

INTERVENTIONS
BIKE LANE CROSSWALK FABRIC FAIRING PARKLET
POP-UP SHOP SEATING FOOD TRUCK ACTIVITY
LANDSCAPING DIGITAL FABRICATION WAYFINDING ART
During the ICCF construction attention should be placed on providing a safe crossing. The city of Grand Rapids should partner to identify best use of excess right of way such as removing existing lanes. A lane removal reassigns underused traffic lanes to other functions. These measures can reduce the distance a pedestrian walks to cross the street while reducing exposure to pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and limit opportunities for speeding and aggressive driving.