



## Case Study: Re-imagining Carlsbad Village as a Place to Connect

The City of Carlsbad hired Urban Place to revitalize the Village (Downtown Carlsbad). Unlike most of Urban Places' projects, the Village did not have a need for cleaning or safety programs, it was already a pleasant space, however it was not a place. You did not experience the village, there was no community places to connect to your neighbors. So, after listening to what the community, stakeholders and residents wanted, Urban Place set about to make places to enjoy, to sit and relax, to eat and drink and talk to your neighbors, places to connect and have experiences.

Urban Place educated the City on the potentials of more outdoor gathering places and with a little maneuvering and an amendment to the master plan, the Curb Cafe Pilot Project was born. The pilot project allows restaurants to obtain permits from the city to build outdoor patios in parking spaces in front of their businesses. It not only provides outdoor dining when none is available, because of sidewalk width, but also began to change the perception of the area from an area where nothing is going on, to an area where people are enjoying themselves and having great experiences, all because others can now see people connecting and enjoying themselves.

The Village Pop-Up Plaza was a week long demonstration project in conjunction with the Village & Barrio Master Plan Charrette that involved converting a public parking lot into a temporary public plaza. Improvements to the small city-owned parking lot included a specialty asphalt paint treatment that preserves parking space delineation for the transition back to parking lot, while adding color and vibrancy to the plaza; tables, seating, and umbrellas; decorative lighting; and a WiFi hotspot. Various activities were programmed throughout the week, including a yoga class, a craft fair in conjunction with the State Street Farmers' Market, a "Flicks at the Fountain" movie encore, and two evening musical acts. When programming was not planned, the Village Plaza was a passive public place in which to relax at the tables and chairs, read a book from the mobile library, work on a laptop, or meet with friends.

Urban Place also worked with assets that the Village already had, like its farmers' market, but re-imagined them into active community events. Although the farmers' market had been in existence since 1997, it was tucked away in a small parking lot off the main street where no one could see it. The farmers' were barely making ends meet, and most of them over the years had left for better markets. The community thought the market was sad and most never attended, opting to drive miles to the thriving markets in adjacent cities. Knowing how great markets can bring community together and energize neighborhoods, Urban Place decided to move the market from the small walled off parking lot, and drop it right into the heart of the village, in the middle of the main street. Not wanting to alienate the retail businesses along State Street, Urban Place made the decision to face the booths outward toward the stores in hopes that people would not only buy their vegetables at the market, but also shop in all the stores lining the street. The thought was that even if the community focused on the market on that one day a week, they would be placed in front of the stores and notice shops they didn't know were there, possibly returning on other days to shop as well. In its new location the market thrived in the first year, becoming one of the top markets in the county according to a local publication, doubling its revenue for both the nonprofit owner of the market and the farmers themselves, and boosting sales in businesses along the street..