

Resilience

# Tactical Urbanism in Rural Utah

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People are embracing change in their shared spaces. More and more we see community

members contributing to the urban landscape through physical investment in public spaces.

These "citizen interventions" are all based on the idea that one person, or a group of people,

can influence positive transformation in their surroundings. Tactical urbanism projects are

typically community-led efforts that are low-cost, temporary or short-term in nature, and aim to

demonstrate the possibilities of larger investments in public spaces.<sup>1</sup> The rise of tactical

urbanism represents a change in planning culture –traditionally long-term, major capital

investment—transforming our cities in real time.

Streets are common locations for tactical urbanism projects –from block parties to crosswalk art.

Streets play a vital role in cities throughout the world, contributing to a city’s image, cultural

memory, formation of community, and function. They are more than just paths for the movement

of people and goods: streets are the city. Streets are the places where everyone can participate

in public life. The rise of tactical urbanism and community-led initiatives reminds us that streets

can be places for people – celebrating local culture, neighborhood identity, and “life between

buildings.” Using easily available materials like house paint, traffic cones, fabric, even chalk,

citizens can transform streets temporarily and demonstrate the possibilities of investment in

public places.



On May 1-2, 2019, city planners, designers, and other attendees of the Utah Chapter of the

American Planning Association’s Spring Conference, designed and executed a crosswalk –

tactical urbanism project across Main Street in Price, Utah. The primary

were twofold: to present the completed project as a gift to the host community while building

local interest and participation in planning and urban design; and to build tactical urbanism

capacity amongst conference attendees in order to implement similar processes and projects in

their home communities. A “tactical urbanism toolkit” or how-to manual is being developed for

conference attendees and the City of Price. The toolkit will include the step-by-step instructions,

sample permits, materials list, and other information on how to plan, design, and execute similar

projects.

The resulting project was a painted crosswalk and “parklet.” The design is a series of rings and

circles that appear to extend beyond the limits of the crosswalk. It is an interpretation of the

molecular structure of carbon—as the power behind the local economy—which is surrounded by

a bike gear, representing the growing recreation-based economy. The colors were inspired by

the bright sky, vivid signage, and other elements found along Main Street. The oversized rings

are intentional and meant to inspire the local community to continue the design through the

entire intersection, where Main Street and civic spaces meet.



The design and implementation was a collaborative effort of a group of conference attendees.

including professional planners, architects, landscape architects, and others. Volunteers hailed

from around Utah from Roy to Park City to Wellington. Price City Councilmember Boyd Marsing

helped paint.

Materials for the project were provided by the APA Utah Chapter and the City of Price as part of

their conference sponsorship. All paint was donated by Benjamin Moore.

The project was organized by members of the Utah Urban Design Committee, a collaboration of

architects, planners, landscape architects, and other design professionals from Utah. UDU's

goal is to elevate design consciousness and culture in Utah by advocating for the qualities and

design details that make memorable places and livable neighborhoods for people.

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1. For more on tactical urbanism, see the book by the same name by Mike Lydon. 2 A parklet repurposes part of the street next to the sidewalk into a public space for people. They often include seating, plants, and other vertical elements to activate and define the space. 3 Fully painted intersections are a growing trend nationally and can be found in neighborhoods from Florida to Oregon. Google "Intersection Repair" or "Paint the Pavement" for examples.