

*Modern Roundabouts  
Downtown & Suburban Revitalization*

# ENHANCING A COMMUNITY'S SENSE OF PLACE

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Photo courtesy Art in Public Places, Bend, OR

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand placemaking terms: placemaking, landscape, sense of place
- Discuss why roundabouts are well-suited to placemaking
- Recognize how roundabouts can enhance a community's sense of place



# PLACEMAKING TERMS

- Placemaking
  - A planning and design process that is informed by the physical, cultural, and social identities of a place



# PLACEMAKING TERMS

“[Placemaking] creates good public spaces that promote health, happiness and well-being. Place-based planning and investment can restore confidence and create pride in community and neighborhoods.”

“Principles of Context Sensitive Solutions,”  
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA),  
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/css/benefits/placemaking.cfm>, accessed August 2017



Photo courtesy of Dokken Engineering

# PLACEMAKING TERMS

- Landscape
  - Visible features of an area of land, including but not limited to landforms, vegetation, and hardscaping
- Sense of Place
  - An attribute of the landscape which conveys a strong identity that can be perceived by residents and visitors



# PLACEMAKING TERMS

“A sense of place is closely related to how people perceive their environment. It involves the actual safety and comfort of the area, the general appeal, and the feelings of connection between the people and the place.”

“Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington,” Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT),

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/design/CSD/UnderstandingFlexibility.pdf>,  
accessed August 2017



# PLACEMAKING TERMS

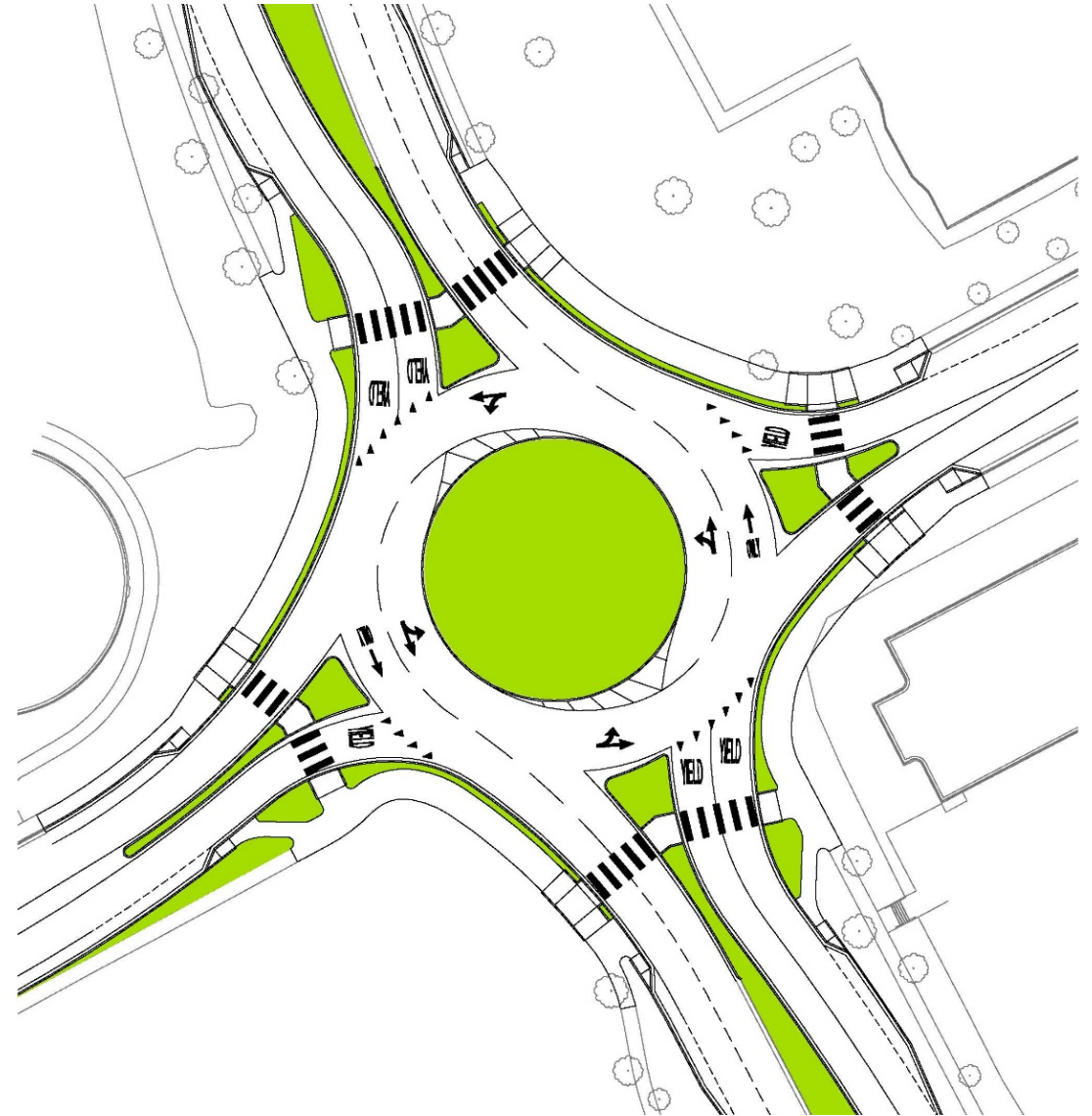
- How is a sense of place developed?
- Placemaking process
  - Stakeholder collaboration
  - Multi-disciplinary design team
  - Community context
  - Budget



Photo courtesy of Lummi Nation Public Works & Planning

# ROUNDBABOUTS ARE WELL-SUITED TO PLACEMAKING

- Roundabout geometry separates vehicle paths, creating open spaces
  - Center island
  - Splitter islands
  - Between curb and sidewalk
  - Between sidewalk and right-of-way



# ROUNDBABOUTS ARE WELL-SUITED TO PLACEMAKING

- Open spaces are not “leftovers”
  - Alert drivers to a change in conditions
  - Encourage speed reduction
  - Strategically limit sight distance
  - Focus driver attention on next decision point



*Photo courtesy of Russell+Lambert*

# ROUNDBABOUTS ARE WELL-SUITED TO PLACEMAKING

- Open spaces can receive basic treatments
  - Grass
  - Mulch
  - Gravel



# ROUNDBABOUTS ARE WELL-SUITED TO PLACEMAKING

- Open spaces can receive enhanced treatments
  - Additional plantings
  - Public art
  - Decorative signage
  - Site furniture



# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Snohomish, WA*

- City wanted a parklike gateway entrance at the north end of the town
  - Create welcoming feel
  - Provide seating areas
  - Show community pride
  - Remain within budget



# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Snohomish, WA*

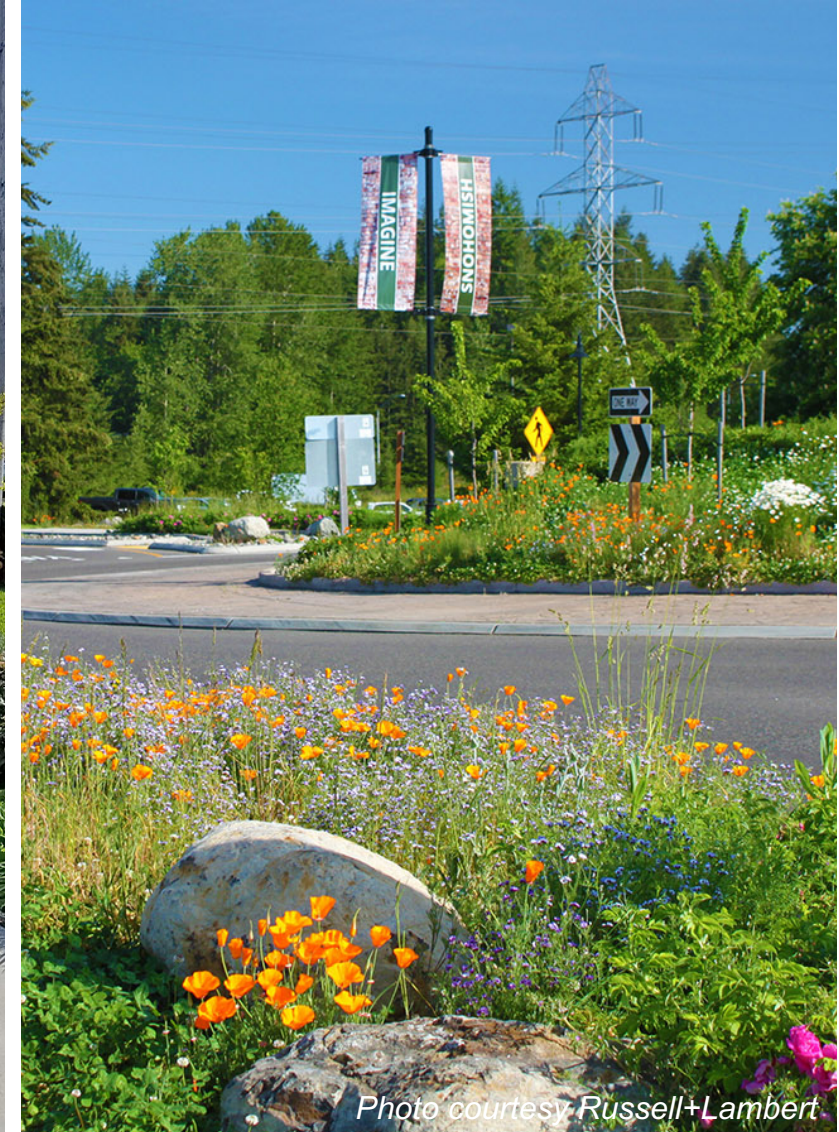
- Landscape elements
  - Large buffers between sidewalks and road
  - Cost effective boulders and cobbles
  - Welcome sign wall
  - Banner post
  - Sign support posts
  - Up-lit welcome sign and trees



# ROUNDAABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Snohomish, WA*

- Landscape elements
  - Benches
  - Decorative sidewalk paving
  - Pedestrian scale lighting
  - Native and drought tolerant plants
  - Pockets of plantings near benches



# ROUNDAABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Snohomish, WA*

- Results

- Goals were met
- Parklike gateway into town
- Owner and community are happy with intersection's functionality and sense of place



*Photo courtesy Russell+Lambert*

# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Union Gap, WA*

- Three roundabouts constructed along corridor
  - Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project coordinated with City of Union Gap
  - Goal was to improve operations from I-82 into Union Gap's commercial district



*Photo courtesy WSDOT*

# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Union Gap, WA*

- Landscape elements
  - Connection to natural and built environment
  - Brown shale rock used elsewhere on corridor
  - Xeriscape landscaping
  - Thematic consistency along corridor



# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Union Gap, WA*

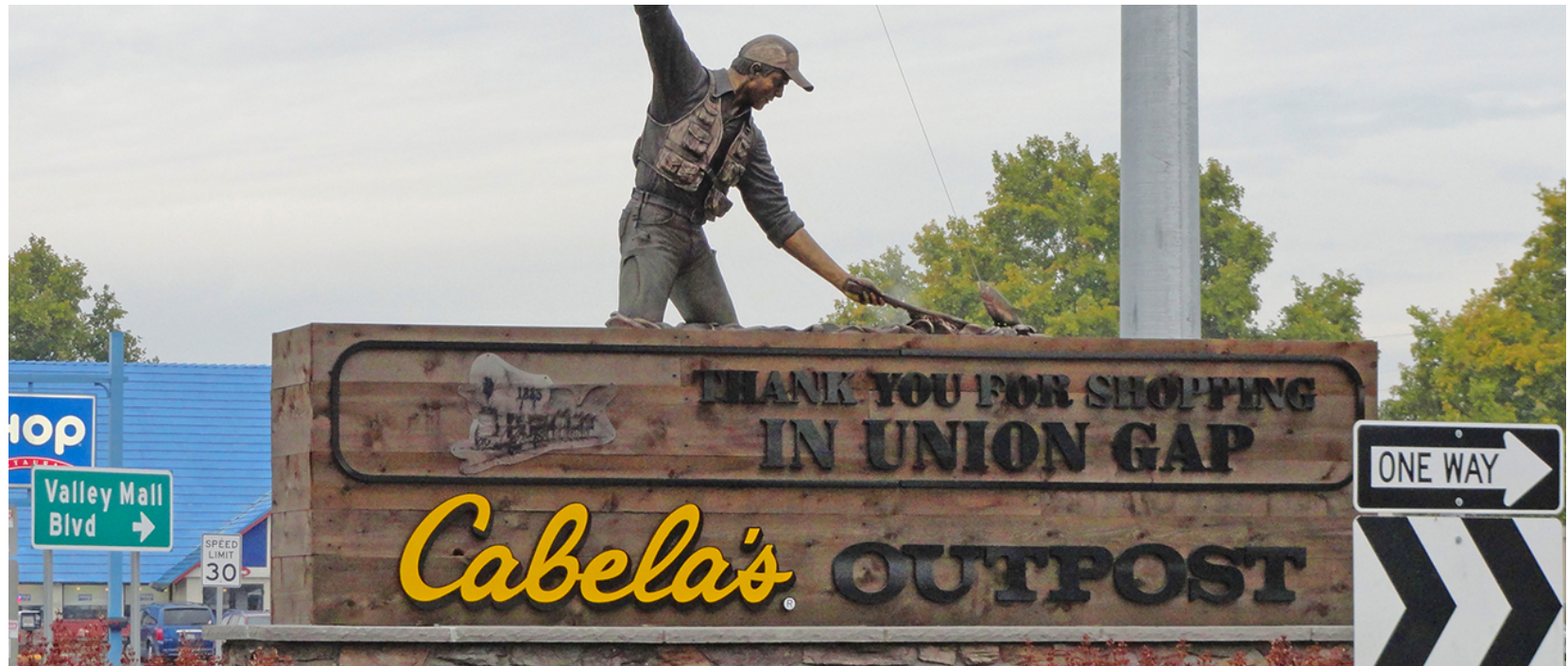
- Landscape elements
  - Welcome signs made of granite and columnar basalt
  - Bridge walls echo columnar basalt theme
  - Bridge wall incorporates “Rising Sun” theme used throughout city



# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Union Gap, WA*

- WSDOT constructed roundabout then turned it over to City
  - WSDOT installed landscaping and platform
  - City installed signs with their “Old West” theme and Cabela’s Outpost sign with fisherman statue



# ROUNDAABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Union Gap, WA*

- Results

- Community is pleased with the improved operations and aesthetics
- Thematic consistency along corridor



# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Bend, OR*

- Bend has many roundabouts with public art
  - City has a unique relationship with Art in Public Places
  - City constructs roundabouts, Art in Public Places donates public art for roundabouts

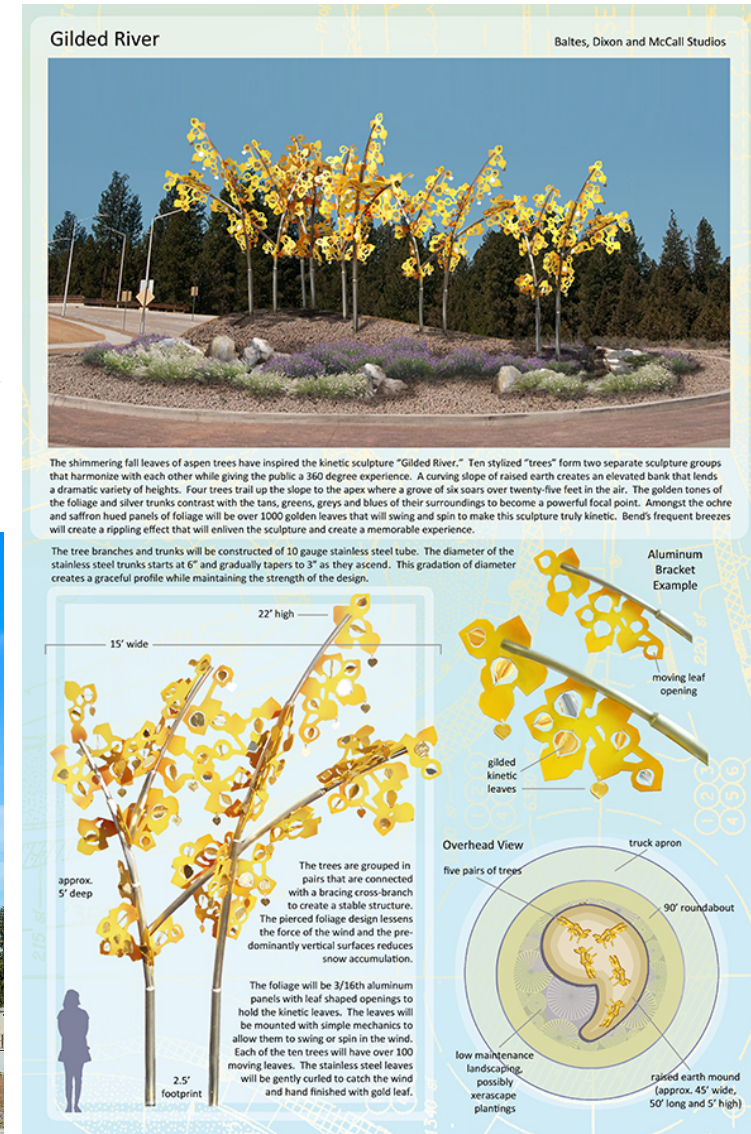


# ROUNDAABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Bend, OR*

- Placemaking process
  - Location for art is selected
  - Art in Public Places issues call for artists
  - Artists prepare poster and mockup
  - Community invited to comment on artwork
  - Art in Public Places reviews community input and makes selection
  - Art is installed

*Photo and Poster  
Courtesy Art in  
Public Places  
Bend, OR*



# ROUNABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Bend, OR*

- Bend's roundabout art supports tourism
  - Visit Bend published Roundabout Art Route brochure
  - Tour features 23 roundabouts with public art donated by Art in Public Places
  - Answer trivia questions and return quiz to Visit Bend for a prize



*Brochure courtesy of  
Visit Bend*

# ROUNDBABOUTS WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

*Bend, OR*

- Results

- Public art installations develop sense of place at each location
- Art throughout City enhances overall sense of place



*Photo courtesy Art in Public Places, Bend, OR*

# CONCLUSION

- Roundabouts provide great opportunities to enhance a community's sense of place
  - Multi-disciplinary design teams collaborating with stakeholders
  - Public participation encourages civic pride
  - Roundabouts become local landmarks



# PLACEMAKING RESOURCES

- Context Sensitive Design Resources, WSDOT  
[www.wsdot.wa.gov/Design/Policy/CSDesignResources](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Design/Policy/CSDesignResources)
- Principles of Context Sensitive Solutions, FHWA  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/css/what\\_is\\_css/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/css/what_is_css/)
- Project for Public Spaces  
[www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

