

## Imagining a Narrative Form for Place

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### Abstract

Applying long-term thinking to placemaking is challenging when practitioners work within short timeframes to deliver a project – usually from the length of a funding window to that of an on-the-ground build. In order for placemaking activities to uphold the future vision for a place, new frameworks can be applied to widen our lens. Narrative structure is the framework of storytelling, in which the beginning, middle and end are distinct phases where the action of each propels the story and its characters forward, creating plot. The success of a story relies on sustaining the integrity of how the action of each phase links to what happens next. Telling the story of our future neighbourhoods by mapping out their history, their present, and their possibility will help to shape more people-centric places in vital areas of our towns and cities. This article demonstrates how to use narrative structure as a lens to deliver our future neighbourhoods in a way that shifts our time scale for meaningful placemaking. It articulates each phase of a place’s lifespan: the place’s past, present and future, in order to develop a context for placemaking activities. Within each phase, practical guidance is given on what to consider, and how to apply this thinking to places and placemaking.

Keywords: Urban design, narrative structure, future neighbourhoods, placemaking, tactical urbanism

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