



Advertisement

GUEST | Opinion

This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.

Developer: 'Regenerative placemaking' is key to Jacksonville's Phoenix Arts District

Tony Cho Guest columnist

Published 5:08 a.m. ET May 5, 2024 | Updated 5:08 a.m. ET May 5, 2024



[Show image info](#) ▼

Placemaking is a buzz word in the real estate and development world these days. It is a concept focused on building with the intention to revitalize and reinvigorate communities that have suffered from lack of resources or underinvestment.

But what if we took this concept a step further? What if developers first took the time to build trust within the community by engaging its members in conversation about their hopes and dreams for their neighborhood?

Advertisement

Dialogue is a core principle of regenerative placemaking, which is the development framework for the [Phoenix Arts and Innovation District](#), located on 8.3 acres in the North Springfield neighborhood within Jacksonville's Urban Core and five minutes north of downtown.

Regenerative placemaking builds on the idea of public spaces by taking an inclusive approach — co-creating with the community to design the best outcome for a development to serve the neighborhood's needs and growth. At [Future of Cities](#), we see this approach as having three pillars — community, nature and culture.

These are the three living systems that make up all neighborhoods. When we began the Phoenix Arts & Innovation District project, we started by listening to and working with the community. That way, we garnered a deeper understanding of what type of development would nourish the people and culture already living there.

We also fully embraced and supported the visionary efforts of the Emerald Trail, which runs through our district.

What we've learned is that there is a thriving artist and maker community, which had already been engaged by [Christy Frazier, the entrepreneur who pioneered the Phoenix district](#) before Future of Cities got involved. The priorities include more public green space with shade and trails, a venue for community events, affordable artist studios and supported gallery spaces.

A grocery store is needed, as well as easier access to public transit. Affordable and workforce housing is also desired and essential while mitigating gentrification. Assisting the community with legal support for title and heir issues will ensure those who want to stay in their generational homes can do so.

We held formal workshops and informal events to bring the people living near the district together to share their ideas. As we listened, we shaped our master plan to reflect what the community felt would best to support their vision of growth for North Springfield.

Mark Woods: \$147 million federal grant a game-changer for Groundwork Jacksonville, Emerald Trail

We believe that “success moves at the speed of trust.” Trust is our most valuable commodity, and we endeavor to authentically foster it within the community and the city at large. We want to be allies by building public private partnerships that elevate the great work of many partners from all sectors.

Advertisement

Regenerative placemaking aims to consciously revitalize underserved communities. Celebrating their unique cultural assets and people raises their value at the start of a development project. In return, the process nourishes self-sufficiency, empowerment, stability and — ultimately — the joy of living in an authentic, vibrant and healthy neighborhood.

Letters: [Thanking those who helped save JEA for National Public Service Recognition Week](#)

Advertisement

Since we began this journey at the Phoenix Arts & Innovation District, we have welcomed thousands of citizens to gather, explore and enjoy. We aspire to be a hub for small independent creative businesses and a home to artists and innovators from around Jacksonville and the region.

We are excited to bring this new vision of development to the city of Jacksonville and invite you to come see it in action — or better yet, be a part of it. Join us in the co-creation. Learn more at PhxJax.com.





Tony Cho was an early investor in Miami's Wynwood Art District and is now investing in Jacksonville's Phoenix Arts District which is in the early phase of being redeveloped and incorporated with the Emerald Trail project. *Bob Self/Florida Times-Union*

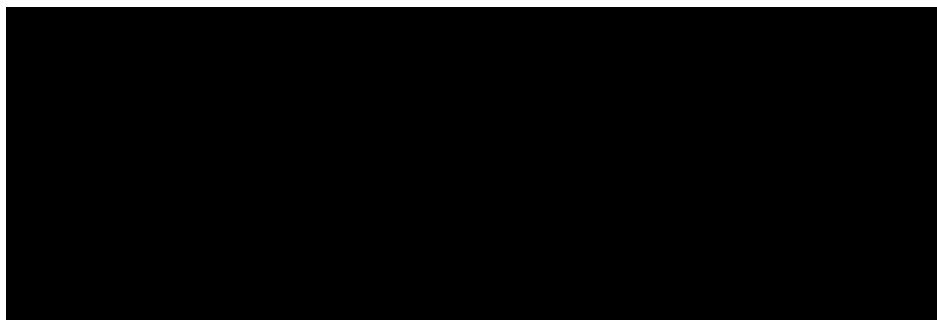
Tony Cho is the founder and CEO of Future of Cities, as well as the founding managing partner of Phoenix Arts and Innovation District, Jacksonville.

This guest column is the opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Times-Union. We welcome a diversity of opinions.



[Share this](#)

Taboola Feed



Neurologists Amazed: This Shoe Helps with Pain Like No Other

Barefoot Vitality |



Have a Car? Need Funds Fast?

Let us help with your emergency needs. Applying is quick and easy. Get funds in as little as 30 minutes.

InstaLoan |



Cardiologists: How Older Women Are Losing Weight

Quickly

American Women Over 40 Doing this Morning Coffee Ritual to Lose Weight!

HealthWellnessJournal |



Don't Miss Out on Babbel's Lifetime Language Offer!

Get 60% Off + Lifetime Access To 14 Languages

Babbel |

Deal of the Day



Pre-Order The 2-In-1 JLab Hearing Aid Earbuds For Under \$100

REVIEWED | USA TODAY Network

[View Deal](#)

Recommendations are independently chosen by our editors. Purchases you make through our links may earn us a commission.



These Barefoot Shoes are Leaving Neuropathy Experts Baffled

Barefoot Vitality |



This "Botox In a Bottle" Sold Out at Target (And This Is Why)

BeautyLoveLaugh |





Unexpected Surprises? Have a Car? Need Funds Fast?

When emergencies arise, choose InstaLoan to help you get the funds you need while keeping your wheels!

InstaLoan |



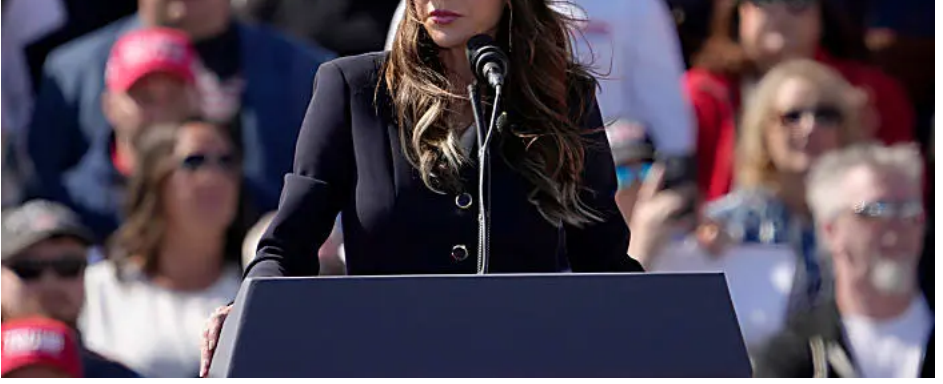
Limited Time Offer: Babbel's 60% Discount is Here!

Get Lifetime Access to 14 Languages Now

Babbel |

Recommended






Kristi Noem doubles down while Trumps stay quiet on dog shooting

Jacksonville

About

[Careers](#) | [Staff Directory](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site](#)

[Map](#) | [Legals](#) | [Public notice certification](#) | [Our Ethical Principles](#) | [Responsible Disclosure](#) | [Subscription Terms & Conditions](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) |  [Your Privacy Choices](#)

Support

[Contact Us](#) | [Support Local Business](#) | [Advertise Your Business](#) | [Advertising Terms and Conditions](#) | [Promote your Event](#) | [Buy and Sell](#) | [Licensing & Reprints](#) | [Legal Notices](#) | [Help Center](#) | [Subscriber Guide](#) | [Manage Account](#) | [Give Feedback](#)

Stay Connected

[Subscribe Today](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [eNewspaper](#) | [NIE](#)

Our Partners

[Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Pay Your Ad Bill](#) | [Reviewed.com](#) | [10Best](#) | [LocaliQ Digital Marketing Solutions](#)