Placemaking at Harvard Square

Placemaking Workshop at Harvard Square, Cambridge MA
September 17, 2013
Desired by Merchants & Residents:

- City Sponsored Festival in Harvard Square
- More Foot Patrols at busy times
- Revitalization of T Station (interior and exterior)
- Increased trash pick-up at T Station
- Inform homeless people of T Station toilet
- Ease up on giving parking tickets at meters
- More nighttime activities, i.e. more clubs with later hours
- Children’s activities and/or attractions
- Additional Beautification Projects
- Reduced competition between outdoor entertainers and outdoor speakers from existing businesses
- More Tourists in Square
- Branding & Marketing campaign
- Assistance with Wayfinding i.e. uniformed volunteers to help tourists find stores
- Help with homeless people i.e. coupons to purchase food
- Assistance from non-profits that serve the homeless

Accomplishments To Date

• Repaired the granite, replaced missing bricks and installed a new tree in the Memorial Tree planter at the OOTN Plaza

• Applied for and obtained permission for the Otto Patio on Mass. Ave (in front of C’est Bon) tentative date of installation – 9/22/13

• Trimmed trees on Mass. Ave. from Church to Brattle to allow for improved site line

• CDD installed 50+ bike racks throughout the Square

• Removed problematic bench from the front of the B of A

• In partnership with the ACT (Advocates for a Common Toilet) project, successfully worked with the MBTA to clean, and paint the public toilet in the MBTA station

• Working with the MBTA to paint the outside of the station (the rails were painted last week)

• Planted colorful mums in the Memorial Tree Planter on the OOTN Plaza

• Set out tables and chairs on the OOTN Plaza
Schedule

- Introductions
- Presentation of Benchmarks and Place Game
- Onsite evaluation
- Preparation of presentation
- Report back
- Discussion
Opportunities

- **MAKE THINGS HAPPEN NOW**
- Short term = 1-3 months. Long term = 6 – 12 months.
- **CREATE ENERGETIC ANCHORS OF ACTIVITY** in key locations and a peak times.
- **CROWD-SOURCE IDEAS** (Digital Placemaking).
- **MAKE IT A “MOVABLE FEAST”** through meet-ups and mobile management teams.
- **GET LIFE ON THE STREETS** to make public spaces safe and attractive, and encourage walking.
- **BRING THE INSIDE OUT** with transparent, visually exciting ground floors and corners that pop-out.
Thinking Small in a Big Way
Big Idea = Big Outcome

- People and Products as Primary Focus
- Power of Ten 10X10X10 = 1000 “Small Spaces”

- Comfort and Amenities... Welcoming/Friendly
- Triangulate
- Streets as Places... Shared Space
- Localize thru Markets, Local Business, Talent
- Architecture of Place
- Public Multi-use Destinations
  Safe, Comfortable
Placemaking Tools/Process

- Power of Ten - 10X10X10
- Place Performance Evaluation Game
- Placemaking Vision/Plan
- Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
- Placemaking Concept/Design
- Campaign and Social Media
Characteristics of Great Public Spaces

• Good places breed healthy activity.
• People attract people attract people.
• When you focus on place, you do everything differently.
• It takes many disciplines and skills to create a place.
• It takes a community to create a place.
• Amenities that make a place comfortable are critical.
• You can’t know what you are going to end up with.
• Each place has its own identity.
• You can’t have anything less than excellence.
• You have to have zealous nuts.
• It has to be a…
Campaign/Movement

- Develop a vision
- Become great communicators
- Organize a strong team
- Search for impediments
- Attack complacency
- Produce short term wins
- Take on bigger challenges
- Connect change to the culture of the community

People Who Make Dramatic Change By John Kotter
Why don’t we have better Centers, Streets, and Public Spaces today?

- Fear
- Project Driven
- Design-Driven vs. Place-Driven
- Governmental Structure
We have to turn everything upside down to get it right side up to

Get from (in)adequate to extraordinary
The Benefits of Place

- Nurtures a Sense of Community
- Builds Local Economies
- Improves Safety and Security
- Enhances Accessibility for All
- Fosters Meaningful Interaction
- Draws a Diverse Population

PLACE
Project for Public Spaces
38 years of Placemaking

- 50 U.S. States, 7 Canadian Provinces
- 42 Countries
- 200 major cities
- 3000 Communities
- 1.1 Million visitors to PPS.org (2012)
- 34,000 people get our electronic newsletter
- 24,000 Twitter Followers
- 24,500 Facebook Friends
Relevant Squares - PPS

- San Antonio – Main Square
- San Antonio - The Alamo
- Houston - numerous
- Fort Worth – Sundance Square
- Pittsburgh – Market Square
- Harvard - Science Plaza
- NYC – Rockefeller Center
- NYC – Bryant Park
- NYC – Washington Square
- NYC – Times Square
- Detroit – Campus Martius
- Portland – Pioneer Courthouse Square
- Perth - Cultural Centre, The Link
- Amsterdam – numerous
- New Haven Green
- Cape Town – V & A Waterfront
Place/Community Driven Approach

define place
identify stakeholders

evaluate space

place vision

expert roles
resource
facilitate
implement vision

stakeholder roles
advise/suggest
bring additional resources

short-term experiments

long-term experiments

on-going reevaluation & improvement

empowers communities
attracts partners, money & creative solutions

professionals become resources
design supports uses
solutions are flexible
engagement & commitment grow
“When you focus on a place, you do everything differently.”
What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a dynamic human function: it is an act of liberation, of staking claim, and of beautification; it is true human empowerment.
William H. (Holly) Whyte

- The Organization Man, 1956
- The Exploding Metropolis, 1958
- The Last Landscape, 1968
- Plan for the City of New York, 1969
- The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, 1980
- City: Rediscovering the Center, 1988
“It’s hard to create a space that will not attract people, what is remarkable, is how often this has been accomplished.”
“Benches are artifacts, the purpose of which is to punctuate architectural photographs. They are not so good for sitting.”
“One of the best things about water is the look and feel of it...It’s not right to put water before people and then keep them away from it.”
“If you want to seed a place with activity, put out food.”
The Return of the Civic Square
Qualities of Great Squares

- Traffic, Transit & Pedestrian
- Edge Uses
- Attractions & Destinations
- Identity & Image
- Flexibility in Design
- Amenities
- Place Management: Central to the Solution
- Seasonal Strategy
- Diverse Funding Sources
- Reach Out Like an Octopus
Traffic, Transit & Pedestrian

• Connected to adjacent areas
• Range of transportation options
Edge Uses

• Gateways & entrances
• Focal points
• People & Products
Attractions & Destinations

• Choices of things to do
• Triangulation opportunities
• Clustered activity around destinations
• 10+ places
Seasonal Strategies

- Highlight Seasons
- Rotate Displays
- Programs & Markets
- Celebrate Cultural & Civic Occasions
Identity & Image

- Showcase local assets
- Highlight historic destinations
- Local retail and services
Flexible Design

- Temporary & changing uses
- Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
- Experiments
Amenities

- Attracts cross-section of users
- Comfortable places to sit
- Food and markets
Place Management

• Management through:
  – Security/Maintenance
  – Programming Events
  – Managing Destinations
  – Providing Amenities
Diverse Funding Base

- Security -- City Funding: 23%
- Facility - Parks Department: 6%
- Event Rentals: 18%
- Event Sponsorships: 12%
- Tenant Leases: 24%
- In Kind Donations: 17%
Reaching out like an Octopus

- Creating a district
- 10+ Destinations with 10+ places with 10+ things to do
Placemaking Tools/Process

- Power of Ten - 10X10X10
- Place Performance Evaluation Game
- Placemaking Vision/Plan
- Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper
- Placemaking Concept/Design

- Campaign and Social Media
The Power Of 10

City / Region

District / Destination

Place

10+ major destinations/districts

10+ places

10+ things to do

Layering of uses to create synergy (triangulation)
Power of 10

1. Read the paper
2. Window shopping for books
3. Learn about upcoming events
4. Go inside!
5. Walk
6. Sit and relax
7. Read someone else’s book
8. Take a break from a bike ride
9. Pet a dog
10. Have a conversation
A new future for the New Haven Green

2012
New York City Transformed:
Rockefeller Center  Times Square
Bryant Park  Port Authority Bus Terminal
Bryant Park

Bryant Park
Intimidation or Recreation?

by Project for Public Spaces, Inc.
Building Base Activation

Paris Cafe
Place Performance Game

What Makes a Great Place?

Place Game

Place Performance Evaluation
A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process

PPS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. We provide technical assistance, education, and research through programs in parks, plazas and center squares, buildings and publicTRANSPORTATION, and public markets. Since our founding in 1975, we have worked in over 200 communities in the United States and around the world, helping people to grow their public spaces into vital community places.

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Underperforming areas
Triangle Plaza – Brooklyn, NY
Paris Plaza and Shared Space
5 FAMILLES DE MARQUAGES

Elles sont expérimentées et évaluées dans une vingtaine d’espaces partagés (zones 30 et zones de rencontre).

1 Les portées
Elles consistent à inverser le principe du passage piéton : c’est le véhicule qui traverse sur des lignes blanches.

2 Les rectangles
Ils sont issus du passage piéton usuel. Ils sont effacés d’un tiers ou il n’en reste que les extrémités.

3 Les clous
Passage piéton traditionnel, ils sont proposés soit avec de vrais clous soit réalisés par des ronds de peinture blanche.

4 Les pixels
Ils sont proches de l’art de la rue.

5 En lettres
L’inscription Zone 30 s’insère dans les bandes blanches du passage piéton usuel.
What Makes A Great Place?

- comfort & image
- uses & activities
- sociability
- access & linkages

key attributes
How to Look at a Place?

Key Attributes

Intangibles
- Welcoming
- Cooperative
- Neighborly
- Fun
- Active
- Vital
- Special
- Real

Access & Linkages
- Transit usage
- Pedestrian activity
- Parking usage patterns
- Connected
- Walkable
- Convenient
- Accessible

Uses & Activities
- Business ownership
- Property values
- Land-use patterns
- Retail sales
- Safety
- Charm
- Clean
- Attractive
- Historic

Comfort & Image
- Crime stats
- Sanitation rating
- Building conditions
- Environmental data

Measurements

sociability

transit usage
- pedestrian activity
- parking usage patterns

uses & activities
- business ownership
- property values
- land-use patterns
- retail sales

Fire
- Active
- Vital
- Special
- Real

sociability

Key Attributes

Intangibles

Measurements
Access & Linkages

• Convenient
• Walkable
• Informative
• Orienting
• Connected
• Enticing
Uses & Activities

- Fun/Vital
- Active
- Indigenous
- Sustainable
- Affordable
- Challenging
Comfort & Image

- Inviting
- Attractive
- Usable
- Historic
- “Green”
- Friendly
Sociability

- Welcoming
- Cooperative
- Interactive
- Neighborly
- Proud
- Diverse
- International
- Cared for
"Place Game" Evaluation Process

1. Break into teams

1. Go to designated sites where you fill out the Place Game form individually

2. Return at the appointed time to discuss your findings with your team and summarize findings

3. Create a mini-presentation to report back
What Makes a Great Place?

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# Rate the Place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMFORT &amp; IMAGE</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall attractiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of safety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort of places to sit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS &amp; LINKAGES</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visibility from a distance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease in walking to the place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit access</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of information/signage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USES &amp; ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mix of stores/services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of community events/activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall busy-ness of area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic vitality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Notes:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SOCIABILITY</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people in groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of volunteerism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of pride and ownership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of children and seniors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Notes:

# Identify Opportunities

1. What do you like best about this place?

2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

3. What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

4. Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
Place Game Sites
Site 1a: Holyoke Plaza
Site 1a: Holyoke Plaza
Site 1b: Holyoke Plaza
Site 2: The Pit
Site 2: The Pit
Site 3a: T Station
Site 3a: T Station
Site 3b: T Station
Site 3b: T Station
Site 4a: Out of Town News Kiosk
Site 4b: Out of Town News Kiosk
Site 4b: Out of Town News Kiosk
Site 5: The Point
Site 6: Harvard
Site 7a: Brattle St
Site 7b: Brattle St
Site 8a: JFK & Brattle St Intersection
Site 8b: J KF & Brattle St Intersection
Place Game Agenda

6:30 – 7:15 pm  Place Game Onsite
7:15 – 8:00 pm  Team Work & Brainstorming Session
8:00 – 8:30 pm  Report Out
8:30 pm         Adjourn