

# PLACEMAKING CAPACITY BUILDING

## A TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE IN MADISON, WI

Strengthening and Expanding Community Empowerment through Placemaking  
in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods

### **Summary:**

This project aims to strengthen and empower community groups and individuals in selected neighborhoods of Madison, WI through Placemaking training and assistance in the implementation of short-term improvements to neighborhood community places.

### **Project Overview:**

For years, the Mayor's Office has been developing and deploying Neighborhood Resources Teams (NRT) in close to a dozen neighborhoods with the goal to improve and coordinate local government services, promote equity, and improve the quality of life. These teams have been hugely successful at engaging with local residents and community partners, identifying and addressing pressing issues, and helping the city successfully deliver a variety of neighborhood services, upgrades and improvements ranging from transit to public amenities such as playgrounds and fountains.

While these efforts have been very effective in offering city services and amenities, they were also intended to create a lasting engagement at the grassroots level, particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods facing economic, social, and other obstacles. The NRTs' success is the result of many years of community organizing wisdom and city service effort. The challenge of keeping the grassroots involved beyond the resolution of a particular issue or reaching a specific goal is still something the NRTs are facing daily.

We believe that Placemaking and the placemaking ethos of hands-on, intensive community involvement in public spaces can become a powerful tool for the NRTs seeking to overcome inertia. It can help to build a lasting tradition of participation beyond specific improvements or fixes. Placemaking is, above all, a process of people coming together to create the vibrant public places at the heart of their community. This approach gives community members an opportunity to participate directly in the betterment of the places that matter to them through ideas, plans, and design but also through hands-on co-creation, day-to-day programming and self-management. In this process, the community members take the leading role, while the NRT, city departments, planning and design professionals, and politicians take the role of advisors and supporters. Depending on the interest and capacity within a neighborhood, idea-generation, design, decision-making, implementation, and day-to-day operations are all community-led with the city in a supporting role. As capacity grows within communities, so does their connectedness to neighborhood places and the city in general.

## Goals

Therefore, Project for Public Spaces proposes to assist the City of Madison by leading a Placemaking capacity building training and technical assistance initiative to include target neighborhood NRTs and community members with the following goals:

- Enhance the capacity of local groups and individuals in target neighborhoods to initiate, develop and implement small-scale Placemaking projects that build community;
- Enhance the tools and capacity of NRTs to effectively engage with and support community groups and individuals in the Placemaking process;
- Help create catalytic “seed” projects in target neighborhoods, with funding provided from the city for implementation and staff support;
- Use the Placemaking approach to grow the sense of empowerment and ownership in target neighborhoods.

## Process

1. Assist the Mayor’s Office NRT team coordinator with setting up the program (structure, outreach, potential projects, etc.)
2. One Day Training – open to everyone. Training to be organized by City’s Mayor’s Office but ideally hosted by a local organization in one of the target neighborhoods. Training to include:
  - a. Introduction to and Principles of Placemaking (Benefits of Place, Power of 10, LQC)
  - b. Applied Placemaking: Model Placemaking Workshop (site evaluation)
  - c. How to do the Power of 10 evaluation
  - d. How Placemaking/LQC fits with other Madison City initiatives and with specific neighborhood goals
3. Jointly with NRT coordinator (and possibly appropriate local non-profit) develop criteria for participation. Review and select pilot projects in each of the target neighborhoods
  - a. Neighborhood partners required to submit results of Power of 10 self-evaluation
  - b. Neighborhood to submit description of proposed space and resources needed to develop that space in 2018
  - c. PPS to review applications/proposals along with Mayor’s Office/NRT Coordinator/non-profit partner
  - d. PPS to participate on selection panel / comment and support Mayor’s Office/NRT Coordinator selection
4. Conduct a One-Day Training Program for Pilot project participants and NRT members
  - a. How to Do Placemaking (this could be a webinar?)
    - i. Placemaking steps/project rollout
  - b. Review selected projects in each neighborhood
  - c. Make site visits to each site – on site

5. Each community to work with NRT to conduct their own Placemaking workshop
  - a. PPS to review proposed Placemaking concepts for each site and give recommendations as needed
  - b. PPS to help Mayor's Office develop a "Kit Of Parts" with common amenities, pricing, info from local contractors, for implementation.
6. PPS to conduct a series of webinars/phone conferences/Q& A Sessions for participating communities (Lighter Quicker Cheaper, implementation steps, share experiences, etc.) NRT Coordinator to organize and facilitate webinars and meetings.
7. NRT Coordinator (or selected community non-profit) to provide general support, connect with other people with resources in Madison – high level outreach.
8. Local projects do their implementation and evaluation
  - a. PPS to help develop Evaluation framework and review project evaluations
  - b. Advise on future expansion and modification of the program

### **About PPS:**

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Our pioneering [Placemaking](#) approach helps transform public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs through amenities, programming, attractions and partnerships. PPS's Placemaking process allows diverse constituencies to identify how a space can be reshaped to make it a welcoming, well-functioning and attractive place for people. Our approach is based on the belief that it is not enough to simply develop design ideas and elements to improve or develop a public space. Improvements, programs and attractions need to reflect community values and needs.

PPS was founded in 1975 [to apply](#) and expand on the work of [William \(Holly\) Whyte](#), the author of [The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces](#). Since then, we have [completed projects](#) in over 3000 communities in 43 countries and all 50 US states. Partnering with public and private organizations, federal, state and municipal agencies, business improvement districts, neighborhood associations and other civic groups, we improve communities by fostering successful public spaces.

Having applied Placemaking in a broad range of contexts around the country and the world, an increasing focus of our work is in training and capacity building, often helping to build local Placemaking capacity. PPS [trains](#) more than 10,000 people every year and reaches countless more through our websites and publications.

**Budget:**

We expect the total cost of labor for this engagement to be \$35,500, plus reimbursable travel-related expenses for PPS staff to travel to Madison on two site visits not to exceed \$5,000.

The budget breakdown is as follows:

\$35,500 in labor costs for 3 PPS staff – Senior Lead, Project Manager and Education Manager - for initial development of program structure; developing and preparing training curricula, materials and presentations; leading and facilitating trainings, workshops and site-visits; advising NRTs and neighborhood teams in person and on conference calls with selected participants; follow-up calls with NRTs and community partners; general admin, communication, staff meetings, and overall review.

**Participating PPS Staff:**

Elena Madison, Vice President, Senior Lead  
Anna Siprikova, Senior Associate, Project Manager  
Juliet Kahne, Education Manager

**Timeline:**

We anticipate to conduct initial site visit and training in the Fall of 2017, with project selection and planning running during the winter months, site-visits to selected sites in Spring 2018, implementation of LQC initiatives by local members in the Summer 2018.