

# PLACEMAKING FOR STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS

## A TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE IN MADISON, WI

Strengthening and Expanding Community Empowerment through Placemaking  
in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods

REVISED PROPOSAL  
September 25, 2017

### Summary:

This proposal aims to strengthen and empower municipal staff, community organizations, groups and individuals working or living in selected neighborhoods of Madison, WI through Placemaking training and capacity building. This training will focus on developing the knowledge and skills of participants locally so they can plan and implement neighborhood-focused short-term Placemaking initiatives that support and grow vibrant 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.

***Placemaking*** is a bottom-up approach to community-building, that focuses on public spaces, their role in community life and the building of social capital. By looking at the "ground floor" of a community - its streets, sidewalks, parks, buildings and other shared assets – it helps people take ownership over their community places. ***Placemaking is, above all, a process of people coming together to create the vibrant public places at the heart of their community.*** It encourages strong community organizing, helps grow a leadership of committed neighbors, promotes greater interaction between people and fosters more connected, socially and economically viable communities.

We believe that Placemaking and the placemaking ethos of hands-on, intensive community involvement in public space co-creation 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. This approach gives community members an opportunity to participate directly in the betterment of the places that

matter to them most through ideas, plans, and design but also through hands-on co-creation, day-to-day programming and self-management. In the Placemaking 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, fabrication 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 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;
- Guide and train participants in initiating engaging “demonstration” projects/events in target neighborhoods, with funding provided from the city for implementation and staff support;
- Teach participants how to use the Placemaking approach to grow the sense of empowerment and ownership in target neighborhoods.

## **Training Process**

1. INITIAL SETUP AND COORDINATION – Collaborate with the Mayor’s Office NRT team coordinator to set-up the program, create a structure, outreach, identify potential partners, etc.
2. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 1 – Introduction to Placemaking and selected Placemaking Concepts. This initial training would include:
  - a. A one-day training for relevant city staff on the following topics:
    - Placemaking for Livable Communities: Introduction | *Making It Happen - Lecture*
    - The Power of Ten: Creating Destinations | *Short Presentation*
    - Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Strategies: Creating Lasting Change with Small Scale Improvements | *Case Studies and Discussion*
    - Streets as Places | *Case Studies and Discussion*  
Followed by Group Discussion
  - b. Two introductory sessions with identical content for neighborhood participants and community stakeholders, grouping participating neighborhoods by area. We propose to conduct these on a weekend – one in the morning, another in the afternoon to assure that neighbors will be able to attend. These session would include:
    - Placemaking for Livable Communities: Introduction | *Short Presentation*

- Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Strategies: Creating Lasting Change with Small Scale Improvements and Streets as Places | *Case Studies*
3. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 2 – Developing knowledge, gaining tools, and hands-on experience in one demonstration site. City staff and community stakeholders are invited to participate.
- a. Day One topics to include:
    - Multi-Use Destinations: Building on Parks, Civic Institutions and other Neighborhood Assets | *Case Studies and Panelist Discussion*
    - The Power of Ten: Linking Destinations | *Presentation and Panelist Discussion*  
Walking Tour of Demonstration Area
    - Discuss potential destinations and assets, help participants identify and select destinations in their own neighborhood
    - Power of 10 mapping in demonstration area / mapping other neighborhoods
  - b. Day Two focuses on tools and techniques and hands-on activity in a demonstration location with:
    - A training Place Performance Evaluation workshop conducted in demonstration site;
    - A working session outlining Steps in the Placemaking Process;
    - Developing ideas for the training site and for other participating neighborhoods;
    - Discussion of other tools and potential opportunities to connect and build community.
4. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 3 – Implementing a small-scale community activation event or improvement in each participating neighborhood. Each participating community to work with NRT to propose their own event/improvement.
- a. PPS to conduct webinar/phone conference with participating communities to discuss questions, review ideas, give advice and guidance for implementing an improvement or event.
  - b. If needed PPS to help Mayor’s Office develop a “Kit Of Parts” with common amenities, pricing, info from local contractors, permitting requirements, and other steps for implementation.
  - c. NRT Coordinator to provide general support, connect with funding, people, and resources in Madison.

### **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 \$40,000, 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: Labor costs include the time and efforts of 3 PPS staff –

1. INITIAL SETUP AND COORDINATION – \$8,500
2. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 1 - \$12,500
3. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 2 - \$10,000
4. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING LEVEL 3 – \$ 9,000

In addition, we propose an implementation budget for participating communities to be administered by the NRT Coordinator of \$15,000. If more funds are available, expanding that line to \$35,000 ~ \$40,000 would allow larger individual grants to participating communities for their community space activations.

**Participating PPS Staff:**

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

**Timeline:**

We anticipate to conduct the first two training modules the Fall of 2017, with community space activation planning during the winter months, and implementation of events and initiatives by local members in Winter or Spring 2018.