



Outside the Box

A Guide for Placemakers



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Introduction



About This Guide

Outside the Box is Redbox's community initiative. Developed with our nonprofit partners, this innovative program empowers communities nationwide to create unique entertainment experiences that bring people together. Because when neighbors connect, communities get stronger, places become destinations and lives accrue meaning.

This guide presents the steps in developing a local Placemaking program. It is designed for libraries, so that they may engage citizens in new dynamic ways that benefit their communities through creating great places.

The role of the *Outside the Box* library partner evolves during the course of an initiative: at the outset, the main goal is to get people involved and to solicit as many ideas as possible. Then the library transitions into a collaboration with a variety of community partners to put together an exciting program that is achievable and attractive to the community.

While we have tried hard to make this guide as clear as possible, we would like to emphasize that placemaking is not a rigid process that cannot be modified. We know from our own work that we often have to adapt the process to fit into different community circumstances. As you tailor the process to your needs, we encourage you to share your experiences with one another through *Outside the Box* resources, and with other Placemakers at www.pps.org.

The goal of this training is that each participant will be able to:

- Define the basic elements that create a successful place. Understand the role that successful public places play in community revitalization.
- Recognize a successful place.
- Learn to analyze a specific site.
- Identify how placemaking can help you implement *Outside the Box* locally.
- Work with a variety community partners to put together a program for an active public space.
- Develop a plan of immediate, short-term, actions to improve the place.
- Approach place-related issues/problems differently in the future.

About Placemaking

Public spaces are integral to any community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. They are the settings where celebrations are held, where both social and economic exchanges take place, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix. They are also the “front porches” of our public institutions — libraries, post offices, courthouses, city halls — where we can interact with each other and with government.

The success of any town or city as a destination will not be determined solely by its businesses and employers, its impressive buildings, or its cultural and recreational offerings. Cities and their neighborhoods become real magnets when they offer people the intangible qualities that they have experienced in the civic life of great cities: a sense of place; social vitality, a host of activities and a quality of life that is hard to define or plan for.

Project for Public Spaces is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping communities plan for better outcomes, such as advancing the social, cultural and economic vitality of their town or city. We call this Placemaking – the art and science of making your community a great place to live. Placemaking is way to improve the “ground floor” of a community - streets, sidewalks, parks, buildings and other public spaces – so that they invite greater interaction between people and foster healthier, more social and more economically viable communities.

PPS is at the forefront of helping communities achieve “livability,” through a combination of community visioning and urban design, but also through unique and comprehensive Placemaking strategies that cross space programming with design and management and short term catalytic actions.

Placemaking differs from traditional master planning or urban design because its principal goal is to create experiences that serve and attract a wide variety of people throughout the day, week and year. We often stress short-term changes that can quickly add value to a place and demonstrate future potential. At the same time, we work with communities in an ongoing process that will enable both the public and private sectors to respond to change and grow over the long term. The Placemaking process we use encourages a unique sense of community ownership and support.

Today there is a growing understanding of how a focus on place can change how professionals function. Many communities are turning to alternatives to the traditional, discipline-driven approach to neighborhood revitalization. Downtowns are once again becoming places to walk and shop and gather. People are moving back to towns and cities and their neighborhoods to be close to culture, vibrancy, and walkability. Our placemaking program with Redbox offers libraries new ways to function as centers of this resurgence: when people come together through shared experiences like movies, music concerts or art festivals, neighbors reconnect, communities get stronger, and public places, and libraries, become great destinations.

Impacts and Benefits of Placemaking

People care about places in their communities. From its experience working in towns and cities around the globe, PPS has learned that Placemaking yields benefits far beyond making safer, cleaner and more attractive places for people:

- **Community identity** - Places nurture and define community identity through greater community engagement, a better sense of dedication and volunteerism, perpetuation of integrity and values, and a common vision.
- **Bridge-building** - Places draw a diverse population, including more women, elderly, and children, as well as a greater ethnic and cultural mix, and encourage people to get involved. Public spaces indeed are a “common ground.”
- **Youth engagement** - Youth are often an audience that is overlooked and sometimes feared. An opportunity is missed not only to build leadership and increase participation, but also to reduce apathy or cynicism among young people.
- **Healthy Communities** - Research has shown that communities with strong social interaction are healthier, more equitable, and resilient.
- **Economic Development** - Public space improvements are a cost-efficient way to become a competitive city. Research suggests that human and creative capital is now the catalyst for economic growth rather than mere results of that growth.
- **Sustainability** - Placemaking is about creating more sustainable and livable communities that encourage walking, transit, support community health, and reduce reliance on the automobile.



The Qualities of Great Libraries

Successful library leaders know that libraries today must master many different roles—some traditionally associated with libraries, some not. Their new, multi-faceted missions must be supported with great design, strong amenities, and popular programs. That’s a lot to juggle, but when everything works together, libraries become places that anchor community life and bring people together. To help leading libraries expand their potential as neighborhood institutions, PPS offers the following strategies based on our many years of experience creating great public spaces.

1. Great Libraries Offer a Broad Mix of Community Services

Because libraries tend to be centrally located within cities and towns, they are ideal places to offer numerous community services—from child care to job placement to income tax advice to university extension courses. These types of community offerings are a crucial part of the mix for libraries seeking to become multi-use destinations.

The Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, Maine, for example, works with the Mid Coast Hospital and Parkview Adventist Medical Center to offer “Health Kits” to childcare providers. This equips caregivers to initiate conversations with children about sensitive topics like living with disabilities, going to the doctor, and conflict resolution.

2. Great Libraries Foster Communication

Innovative libraries aren’t content serving as one-way conduits of information; they want to foster dialogue and exchange with their users. To that end, many libraries house community access television and radio stations, and other means of disseminating information freely. The Rotterdam public library, for instance, has a broad range of programs to share Dutch language and culture, including an in-house movie theater. In one annual program, the theater hosts festivals featuring the work of local and student filmmakers.

Translation services, literacy programs, foreign language classes, English as a second language (ESL) tutors, and computer training are yet more ways that libraries strengthen language and communication skills among patrons. Many of these services are of immense value

to recent immigrants, providing a means to help people navigate the process of citizenship, secure housing and medical providers, find child care, and become established in their communities.

3. Great Libraries Showcase Local History and Information

Libraries are widely appreciated as stewards of local history and lore, repositories of a community’s collective memory. In addition to housing genealogical centers, settlement records, archives and map collections, library innovators are captivating patrons through storytelling, traditional festivities, and exhibits celebrating culture and myth.

Libraries can also connect people to their communities by serving as civic information centers. They are ideal forums for public discourse about timely local topics such as zoning changes, new developments, and government initiatives. Furthermore, with information on community events, entertainment, and noteworthy destinations, libraries can welcome visitors and help understand and better appreciate the community.



4. Great Libraries Build Capacity for Local Businesses

More and more libraries fill important needs for employers, jobseekers, and consumers. They play a crucial “think tank” role for local start-up businesses and community development advocates, helping them acquire entrepreneurial skills and discover methods of raising capital. For people seeking work or taking on career changes, libraries connect them to employers and specialized job training. For the consumer, libraries may provide up-to-date information about the best businesses to patronize in their area.

5. Great Libraries Become Public Gathering Places

The spaces inside and outside of libraries are perfect for public proclamations, celebrations, fairs, and festivals – as well as smaller but no less important events that occur on a regular basis, like brown bag lectures or midday concerts. These activities reinforce the library’s role as a community anchor, and leading libraries are jumping at the chance to attract people by expanding their programs. To succeed as lively gathering places, a library can offer an eclectic mix that may include outdoor exhibits on science or history, temporary public art installations, games and chess tables, or outdoor play areas linked to the children’s reading room.

6. Great Libraries Boost Local Retail and Public Markets

The public goals of libraries mesh very well with the community-minded aims of public markets. As more cities and towns turn to markets to spur the local economy and encourage new business development, it is becoming common to see library lobbies, parking lots, and sidewalks used for farmers markets, book markets, art markets or all three.

Libraries may be for lending, but there’s nothing wrong with getting in on the retail action too. Some sell used books in a gift shop or open a café to serve patrons and residents. Others provide their communities with international newsstands and video rental facilities. Making use of their prime locations, libraries can rent space to arts organizations and commercial galleries, or for public events—even weddings!

7. Great Libraries Offer Easy Access

Because everyone uses them, libraries need to be accessible. It is essential to provide people with a variety of ways to get there, including convenient transit routes with nearby stops and stations, walkable streets, and adequate bicycle facilities and amenities for transit passengers. First and foremost, libraries should be connected to the sidewalk network, not set apart and surrounded by a sea of parking. Nearby streets should be designed so that cars slow down around the library, crosswalks should be well marked, and lights should be timed for pedestrians, not vehicles.

8. Great Libraries Make the Surrounding Area Come Alive

Knowing how to enhance a library with active streets and sidewalks is key to attracting more visitors and patrons. A library with an entrance opening right onto sitting stairs or a plaza where people can read outside or sit in the sun, for instance, will be infinitely more lively compared to one with blank walls around the ground floor. Going further, the reading room could flow outside onto a public square. Or a bookstore and café on the ground floor could spill onto the street. The best libraries foster exactly this type of connection between the inner library—the stacks, computers, and reading areas—and the “outer library”—the façade, sidewalk, plazas, parking areas, and the rest of the town. Creating an active, welcoming outer edge of the library is essential to the well-being of the library as a whole.

9. Great Libraries Feature Multiple Attractions and Destinations

A surefire strategy for libraries is providing a series of smaller “places” within and around them to attract people. These attractions don’t need to be elaborate to make the library a success. In fact, numerous small attractions, such as a vendor cart or playground, will effectively draw people throughout the day. Strategically locating these attractions in proximity to each other generates synergy and stimulates further public activity.

10. Great Libraries Are Designed to Support Function

Library buildings and their outdoor public spaces (streets, sidewalks and parking lots) should be designed so that the spaces can be used in different ways for different patrons throughout the course of the day, week, and the year. To allow for overlapping and changing uses, form needs to support function. Properly located and necessary infrastructural elements, in adequate numbers, need to be in place to facilitate this flexibility.

11. Great Libraries Provide a Variety of Amenities

The importance of good amenities cannot be overstated for any library that wants to become a multi-purpose destination. The right amenities greatly bolster efforts to attract more patrons and serve a variety of different people. If a library decides to offer Wi-Fi service, for instance, they will optimize public use if they also give web surfers comfortable places to sit both inside the building and outside under shady trees. Other amenities may include public art, fountains or other central features that help establish a convivial setting for social interaction, encouraging people to gather and linger.

12. Great Libraries Change with the Calendar

Libraries are at their best when their programs evolve throughout the year. Holidays, seasonal changes, and dates of local historic significance all afford great opportunities for libraries to celebrate the cultural and civic life of a community. To remain vital and interesting all year, libraries should make rotating horticultural displays, seasonal markets, holiday celebrations, and civic events central to their programming menu. Flexible use of library spaces also supports more flexible programming.

13. Great Libraries Depend on Wise Management

Managing a library for public use goes beyond security and maintenance. It involves constant evaluation of how effectively the programs, amenities, and design features serve patrons and the mission of the library itself. A good management effort keeps the library operating in peak form by responding to evolving needs of users with ongoing improvements and refinements. A wide variety of partners and stakeholders, as well as library patrons and board members, can take on and share the management duties and responsibilities.

14. Great Libraries Catalyze Community Revitalization

When you put all the ingredients of a great library together, you end up with a public institution whose influence extends far beyond its physical location. The best libraries anchor communities. Because they are highly visible centers of civic life, these libraries instill public confidence in their neighborhoods and catalyze further investment from both the public and private sectors. The power of these institutions to revitalize communities was central to recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, when libraries along the Gulf Coast were among the first institutions to receive government support and private philanthropic attention.

Placemaking is a dynamic process with infinite room for improvement, there are always new ideas to discover and new lessons to learn.

Step-by-Step Guide

STEP I: Select a Site

Selecting the site for your *Outside the Box* placemaking project is the first step to a successful project. While it may be easier to program a space right outside your door, that may not be the most strategic space.

Since the goal of this program is to enhance both the library and the community, you may want to consider some additional criteria as well.

The best sites are:

- connected, catalytic spaces;
- can get people excited;
- have many partners and stakeholders;
- have political potential;
- may be endangered or at risk from some development ;
- are constantly complained about.

Placemaking initiatives can also help raise the profile and attractiveness of existing public spaces that may be in need of a boost.

STEP 2: Identify Key Stakeholders

The next step in the process is to identify the stakeholders and constituents who can help plan an event or project and potentially become partners in its implementation or expansion. Finding local partners can double the impact of what you are trying to do.

Library Users

Your own constituent base is the most valuable source for finding partners and an audience. Betsy Rogers, the woman who turned around New York's Central Park, told us that "There is no one more precious than what I call 'the zealous nut,' the person who really, really loves the community, who lives there and understands what the place means – that is a very precious individual. And that precious individual of course is connected to other individuals, and I think that is the way we begin a dialogue and have an energy source that will propel a project."

Local Government Officials

Local government officials are often essential to the placemaking process especially if the local government is responsible for the sites studied in the project. It is always good to be forthcoming and transparent with local governments about the project, as they should feel full partners in the process. In most instances local government officials have proven to be great support and participated constructively in the placemaking process and regularly cooperated in implementation.

Community Organizations

Local and national community organizations and nonprofits focusing on community development, arts and culture, youth and elderly outreach and activities, tourism, etc. can make wonderful partners in the placemaking process. They can provide funding, expertise, programming, and help promote workshops and events through their networks.

Local Associations

Local community groups such as book clubs, retirees' clubs, parents' associations, and churches or religious groups can be great partners in holding events and increasing attendance. It is important to reach out to culturally and ethnically diverse associations.

Neighborhood Councils

In certain communities neighborhood councils can be a focal point for reaching out to residents. It can be especially valuable to include them in strategizing over your events and expected outcomes, as they may become active partners attempting to create even bigger outcomes for the neighborhood.

STEP 3:

Assess Public-Space Challenges

A strong placemaking process begins with an informal assessment of the public space or spaces within and around the selected project site. This assessment will help you to view these places with fresh eyes, and to begin to determine the challenges and issues that need to be resolved.

The assessment begins with a thorough understanding of the physical characteristics of the place. Photo and sometimes video documentation is extremely valuable for gaining insight of the place, along with available maps and plans. Walking to and through the place, and spending some time in it helps identify certain basic needs such as lack of seating, shade, underutilized corners, or need for a safe place to cross the street, etc.

Presented on the pages that follows is a “Do-it-Yourself Checklist” – a short and easy to use list for placemakers to evaluate and outline challenges for existing public spaces. The checklist describes the basic criteria for evaluating spaces and provides a series of questions to answer when thinking about a particular space.

This assessment goes beyond creating an “Outside of the Box” program and looks at the longer term physical context. It is meant to help you think of improvements that support your activities but could go much farther and create lasting positive change in the places that are important to your community.

Signs of Successful Places

Most people can recognize a good place when they see one, but what exactly is it that draws them there? In other words, which ingredients make an otherwise ordinary plaza, street or square into a people-magnet? When they enjoy a place, people often describe it as “safe,” “fun,” “charming,” or “welcoming,” or use numerous other words to express what might seem like intangible qualities. However, all of these descriptions represent certain basic criteria for success: a place must be accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is sociable – that is, it’s a place where people choose to meet up with each other, or show it to visitors. Great places may not have all four of those qualities, but usually they have at least two.

Start by choosing a site to evaluate. When you get to your site, take some time to look around. If you are doing this with a partner or a small group, choose one person to record everyone’s comments.

Access

A successful place is easy to get to, and visible as well. People can easily circulate within it to different areas. Physical elements can enhance access: for instance, a clearly marked street-crossing or retail-lined sidewalk leading to the space can add comfort and interest, and create a generally safer environment. Perceptions – for example, the ability to see a public space from a distance – can affect access as well. Short-term parking and convenient public transit are also key factors in making a place accessible. Accessible public places have a high turnover in parking, and, ideally, convenient public transit.

IMPROVING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF A PLACE

- Add banners, art, planters, lighting and/ or a sign-band at major access points to the place
- Provide bicycle parking
- Work with the local transit agency to improve transit stop and transit information
- Work with transportation agency to create a more pedestrian friendly environment (e.g. balance on-street parking with other uses, narrow streets to make them easier to cross).

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the entrance to the place visible from a distance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it easy to identify what is going on in the place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there adequate directional signage, maps and location information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can people easily get there (e.g. they don't have to dart through traffic)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do sidewalks, paths, or roads match up with the directions in which people wish to go?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can people use a variety of transportation options (bus, train, car, bicycle) to get to the place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the place function for people with special needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from getting to it?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are crosswalks well placed and well marked and crossing distances minimal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are adjacent buildings and uses relating to or interacting with the site?

COMFORT & IMAGE

Perceptions about safety and cleanliness, and overall character or charm are often foremost in people’s minds when they are deciding whether or not to use a place. Women in particular are good judges of comfort and image, because they tend to be more discriminating about the public spaces they use. Comfort also includes the availability of places to sit (the importance of having choice in this area is generally underestimated), along with shade, shelter, or other protection from the elements.

IMPROVING THE COMFORT AND IMAGE

- Add amenities - seating, wifi, waste receptacles, information board, in carefully considered locations, such as at entrances or in the shade, or in the sun in colder climates
- Create opportunities for using the space during inclement weather such as awnings or umbrellas
- Increase security by organizing events that attract people
- Upgrade maintenance including daily cleaning and landscaping maintenance - this also provides a management presence
- Add gardens, or planters with flowers and color, and encourage local gardeners to plant and maintain landscape.

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the place make a good first impression, both from afar and close up?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there as many women present as men?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a choice of places to sit (for example, either in the sun or shade)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there appropriate weather protection (umbrellas, shelters)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the space clean and free of litter?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the space and the surrounding area feel safe?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the space dominated by groups or individuals that make others feel uncomfortable?
		Does the place meet the needs of the people using it?

USES AND ACTIVITIES

The basic building blocks of a place – uses and activities – are the reasons why people come to a space in the first place, and why they return. They can also make a place special or unique. Successful public places typically offer a variety of uses and activities – food vending, a market or other retail, community programs and events, transit access, games, displays – to draw a range of people. When there is nothing to do in a place, it will be empty and unused, and that generally means that something is wrong.

IMPROVING THE USES AND ACTIVITIES

- Survey the people in using the space, or living/working in adjacent buildings
- Survey the people in using the space, or living/working in adjacent buildings to determine their talents and interest
- Create programs that support the talents of people in the area (e.g. one building had a ping-pong club but they didn't have anywhere to play, in another building there was a choir needing a place to perform)
- Develop partnerships with other local organizations to plan events (schools, churches, art museums etc)
- Add amenities that support the activities that could occur (e.g. picnic tables, play courts, game tables.)

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are people using this place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the place used by a range of ages and types of people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do people tend to use the space by themselves, or do they cluster in groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do several types of activities occur – for example, walking, eating, relaxing, reading, socializing, playing games, meeting, etc.?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is most the space well used?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a management presence or other evidence that someone is in charge of the place?

SOCIABILITY

Sociability encourages all sorts of people to become more open and friendly, creating a synergy that injects a public space with life. It's an unmistakable quality, but a difficult one to achieve. When people see friends, meet and greet acquaintances or co-workers, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger attachment to their community and to the "sense of place" that fosters these types of social activities.

IMPROVING SOCIABILITY

- Use amenities to encourage social interaction (e.g. grouping benches, using movable seating)
- Design events specifically to encourage meeting people (e.g. swap meets)
- Encourage community volunteers to assist with improvements and maintenance
- Triangulate: locate elements in such a way that encourages activity to occur around them (e.g. a bench, a trash receptacle, and a telephone placed near each other at a bus stop or a newsstand next to a seating area)

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you choose to meet your friends in this place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are people talking to each other?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they smiling?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they bring visitors to this place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do strangers make eye contact with each other?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflects the community at large?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do neighbors volunteer to help program or maintain the place?

STEP 4: Prepare for the Placemaking Workshop

Based on the simple power of observation, the Placemaking Workshop makes the most of participants' special knowledge, common sense, intuition, and input. Stakeholders can quickly sum up the qualities of a site and ignite a process about transforming an ordinary place into an extraordinary community asset. Any person can participate, including children, library patrons, and library staff. The exercise also works in a range of situations, from informal groups or small planning teams to workshops and conferences with as many as 100 people. Best of all, the workshop and its Place Evaluation exercise is fun: participants get to know each other better, while gaining insight on how to look at public spaces holistically and see their potential as "places" in communities.

While this process is largely about engaging the public leading up to the *Outside the Box* event series, we encourage you also to use the resulting information to address potential lasting improvements to your place.

Here are certain basic considerations when preparing for a workshop:

1. Select the workshop evaluation sites

In general, the site(s) is where you want to make an improvement or organize the event. A typical site might be a library plaza or lawn, which can be broken down into smaller subspaces if necessary for the workshop. Types of subspaces include: the area around a focal point (i.e. monument or fountain); main entrances / access points to the space; lobbies, etc.

2. Book a meeting space

When deciding on the meeting space, remember that proximity to the placemaking site(s) is very important. The workshop location should be within walking distance from the site.

When reserving the meeting room, one should also make sure that there are enough chairs and tables for teams to work on, that the room could be darkened sufficiently to allow for a presentation to be projected, that there is sufficient wall space to project on, and later post charts and drawings.

3. Set date, time, length and agenda

Depending on the site and the size of the audience, the workshop can last from 2.5 hours to 4 hours. A standard placemaking workshop should take about 3 hours.

If an outdoor space is the site being studied, pay attention to the sunset and try to ensure the outdoor portion is completed before dark!

The availability of stakeholders determines whether a workshop is held on a week-day or on a week-end, during the day or in the evening. When a large number of stakeholders work for the local administration and NGO's, and resident stakeholders include many retired people, or youth, workshops are best held during work hours. If the main stakeholder group is of working adults, the workshop should be held in the evening or on a weekend. Keep in mind that the workshop requires people to go and evaluate the sites, and this can not be done in the dark, thus workshops cannot be held too late at night.

Your toolkit provides a sample agenda that you can tailor to your needs and the amount of time you have.

4. Select and invite participants

Unless a workshop is tailored to a specific group of people, participants should be a mixed audience, including patrons and staff, cultural groups (potential programming partners) and possibly local government representatives.

The number of participants can vary anywhere from 20 to 100 people. With larger groups, additional help facilitating and keeping everyone on schedule is needed. Meetings with larger groups tend to run longer. Larger numbers of participants can be divided into smaller teams that evaluate several sub-sites, or evaluate the same sites as other teams and then share their findings.

For a well attended workshop, invitations should be mailed at least two-weeks in advance. Ask people to RSVP in order to plan for room settings, number of workshop sites and refreshments.

For all practical workshop details please consult the workshop checklist provided here.

5. Prepare necessary equipment

Reserve all necessary equipment ahead of time, including a PowerPoint projector and cables, screen if necessary, slide projector or overhead projector, flip chart easel and flip chart pads, markers, writing pads and pens for participants, name tags etc. And don't forget refreshments and snacks.

INVITATION FLYER

WHEN Saturday, January 22, 1:00 - 4:30 pm

WHERE NYU
Parking available at ...

Refreshments will be served.



Help make Washington Square Park a better place!
Don't miss the Placemaking Workshop

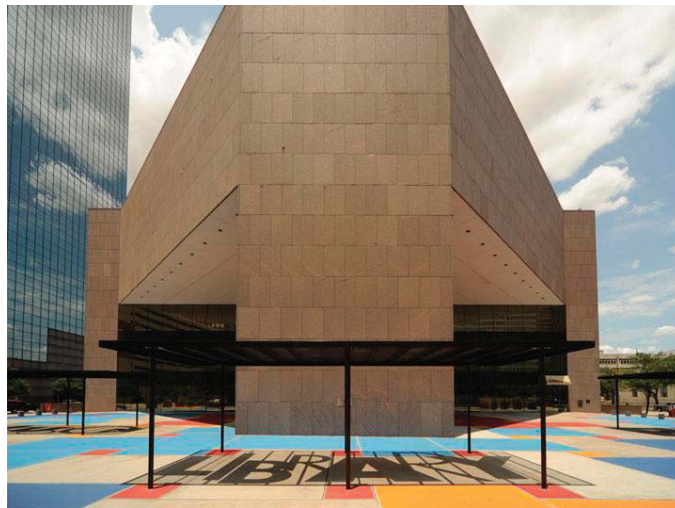
WHY Washington Square Park is one of the best-loved, historic open spaces in New York City. The challenge today is to determine how Washington Square Park can better meet the needs of its diverse users and encourage the right variety of activities and uses.

HOW Participate in the collaborative placemaking process and help create a vision for improving the park, share your opinions, ideas and skills at this public workshop.

Sponsored by the Washington Square Park Council, conducted by Project for Public Spaces.



Houston Public Library | **Linking YOU to the World**



Please join us as we develop ideas for the use of Houston Public Library’s Central Library Plaza.

Public Placemaking Workshop

Thursday, May 10 | 4 PM - 7:30 PM

[Central Library](#) | Concourse Meeting Room

500 McKinney, 77002 | [832-393-1313](tel:832-393-1313)

HPL invites you to participate in a Placemaking Workshop for the Central Library Plaza. This is a project that will help transform the Central Library Plaza into a vibrant, exciting, active public space, and make it a downtown destination for people of all ages and backgrounds. This workshop will be a fun, interactive session to brainstorm on the potential of the space. Light refreshments will be served. Parking is available in the Central Library parking garage or at the Heritage Society, located at 1100 Bagby.

Thanks to generous support from the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and Reinvestment Zone Number Three, HPL is able to engage Project for Public Spaces to help the Library develop a well-conceived and managed re-imagined public space. Such a space could provide a platform for programs and events on the plaza and could even help positively activate this area of downtown.

WORKSHOP CHECKLIST

Presentations to prepare

- Introductory Placemaking PowerPoint show
- PowerPoint segment showing the study sites (map and photos)

Handouts

- Copies of Workshop Agenda
- Copies of Place Evaluation form (ideally one for every participant)
- Small site maps that show where the evaluation sites are (sites should be numbered)

Meeting Space

- Near evaluation sites
- Room can be darkened (shades on windows?)
- Spaces available for teams to use for preparing their reports
 - Teams can meet in different corners of the main meeting space, preferably with a table for each team to sit around
- Room set-up confirmed? (e.g. round tables or movable chairs)

Audio-Visual:

- PowerPoint projector with all cables
- Laptop
- Extension cords
- Screen (the larger the better: for more than 75 people need a screen about 3-4 meters wide)
- Microphone (for more than 50 people)

For front table:

- Name tags
- Sign-in sheets

For each placemaking team to use when they come back from on-site:

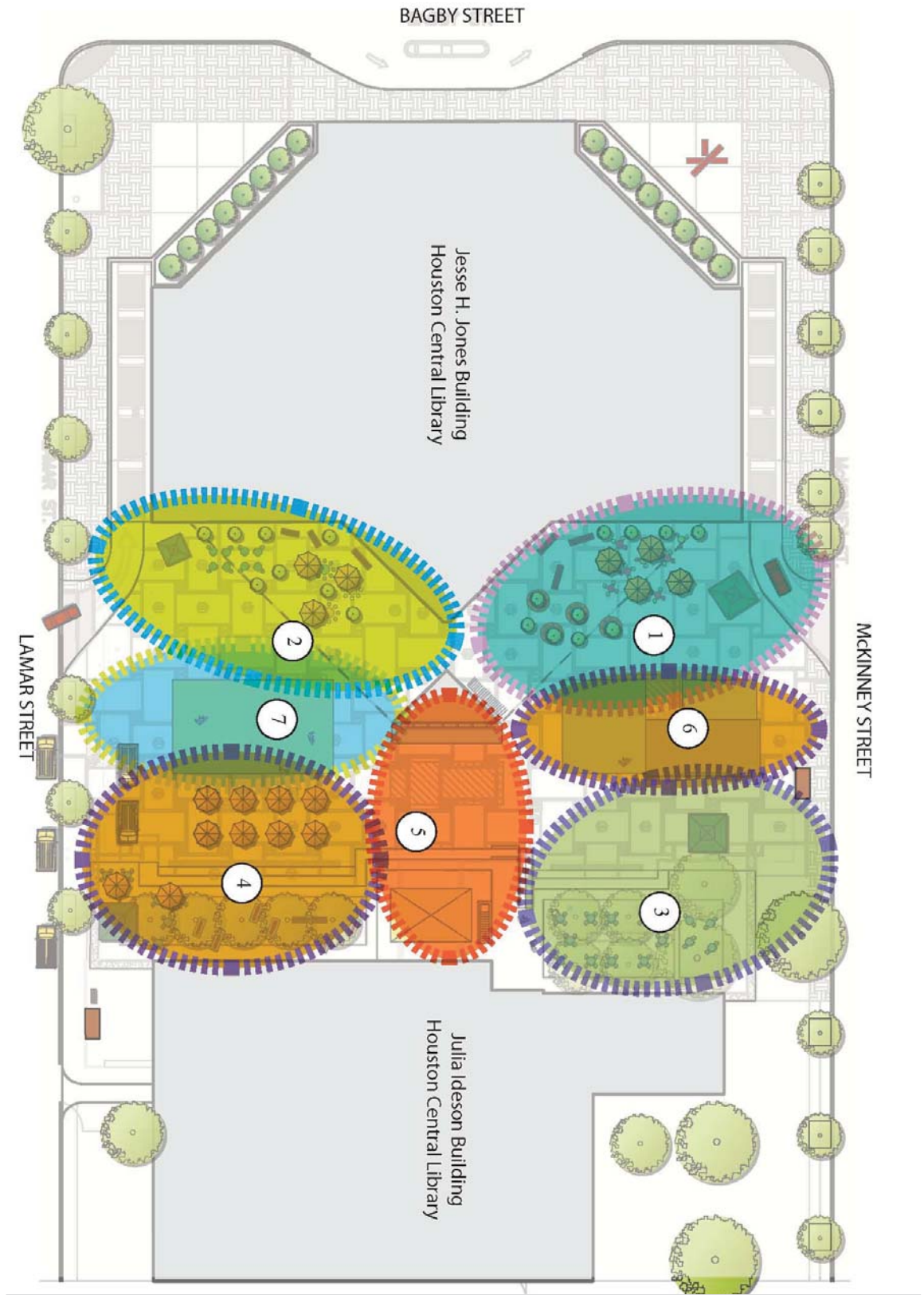
- 1 Flip chart for each team to use, with an easel if available (if no easel, each group will definitely need a table to work on)
- Markers (1 or 2 for each team/placemaking site)
- Masking tape (or tacks, to hang flipchart paper)

Other (not always necessary):

- Refreshments
- Large maps or aerial photos of the site to hang on wall or to give each team to draw on
- A translator
- Materials, reports to distribute

SAMPLE FORMS

PLACE GAME SITES





Houston Central Library Plaza
Place Evaluation Workshop
Facilitated by Project for Public Spaces
May 10, 2012

Concourse Meeting Room
Central Library

500 McKinney Street
Houston, TX

- 4:00 pm
Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop
Purpose and Anticipated Outcomes of the Workshop
By Dr. Rhea Lawson
- 4:15 – 5:00 pm
What Makes a Great Civic Gathering Space?
PPT presentation by Cynthia Nikitin, PPS VP
- 5:00 –5:45 pm
Place Game
Evaluation of the Plaza site. Each team will be assigned a specific site to evaluate and brainstorm ideas for.
- 5:45 – 6:30 pm
Team Work and Brainstorming Session
Group Discussions
- 6:30 – 7:15 pm
Report outs of findings by Teams
Group Discussion
- 7:15 – 7:30 pm
Next Steps and Adjourn

STEP 5

The Placemaking Workshop

Place Game and Reporting Results

Now the fun begins!

Introduction

Introduce yourself and your host(s) who should say a few words themselves, the community, the place.

Icebreaker/ Self-Introductions

Ask people to state their name, their affiliation (if any). This should take no more than 10 minutes and is not recommended for groups bigger than 25 people.

Objectives and agenda

It is always important to explain the objectives of the workshop. Focus on what people are going to learn and what the final result of the workshop will be. One helpful trick is to write both objectives and agenda on a flip-chart and have it posted and visible during the entire workshop.

Introductory PowerPoint Presentation

You will be provided with a 30-35 minute presentation that introduces the Placemaking concepts and Evaluation tool with examples. You may also want to add pictures of the sites you want people to evaluate.

The Placemaking Exercise

Explain the Placemaking exercise. Then:

1. Divide participants into groups – either do a count-off of the audience (1,2,3, 1,2,3, etc) or you can pre-assign them by writing a group number on every name tag beforehand.
2. Give groups a couple of minutes to organize themselves and find their teammates.
3. Take groups out to the site(s)
4. Let the groups observe their sites and work together for a few minutes onsite.
5. The groups then return to the room and sit at a table. You may have to reset the furniture during their site visit.

Group Working Session

Instruct each group to discuss each question and list all answers on the flip chart provided.

Group Presentations

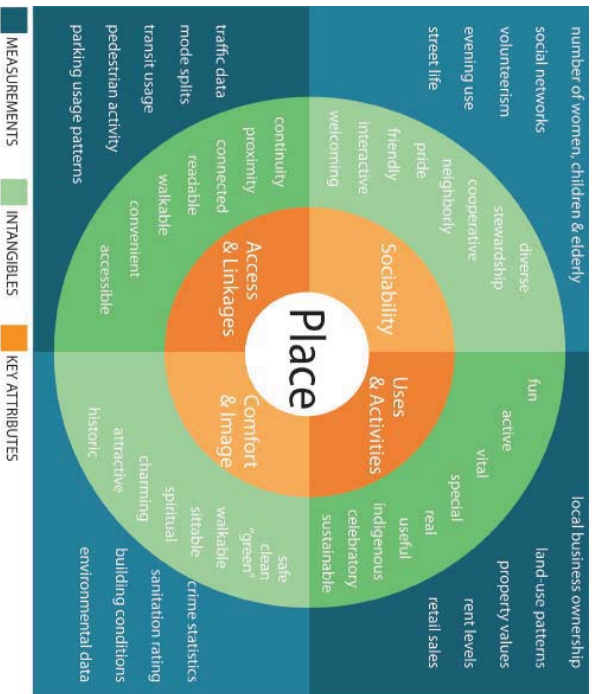
Ask groups to select one or two persons to present their answers to the other groups.

Summary Discussion/Debrief

As the coordinator of the workshop, facilitate a discussion to summarize the ideas presented by all the groups. Try to frame participants' ideas within the context of the *Outside the Box* program; ask for suggestions for how to make ideas happen, what the next steps may be, who the partners might be.

PLACE GAME

What Makes a Great Place?



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 central squares; buildings and civic architecture; transportation; and public markets. Since our founding in 1975, we have worked in over 2,500 communities in the United States and around the world, helping people to grow their public spaces into vital community places.

PPS
PROJECT FOR
PUBLIC
SPACES

419 Lafayette Street
Seventh Floor
New York, NY 10003
212.620.5660
www.pps.org



Place Game

Place Performance Evaluation
A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process

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SAMPLE FORMS

SAMPLE FORMS

SITE #: _____ Date: _____

Identify Opportunities

USES & ACTIVITIES

1. What activities or events would compel you and a group of friends/family to come and spend time here? (movies, concerts, art, festivals, etc.)
2. What existing community programs could be hosted or featured here?

SOCIABILITY

3. List any specific audiences that you want to attract? Please adjust your list of activities accordingly.

COMFORT & IMAGE

4. What would make this place more comfortable and inviting?

5. What kind of furnishings would support the activities you listed?

6. How can this place reflect local traditions, customs or culture? (e.g. folk art, local festival or product, etc.)

LONG TERM CHANGES

7. What simple but lasting improvements would you like to see here in the long term?

PARTNERSHIPS

8. What local groups, partners, talent could help implement the activities you outlined? Please be as specific as possible.

PLACE GAME

PLACE GAME

STEP 6

Translate the Ideas into Action

1. Prioritize Ideas for Improvements

Referring to the list of ideas from the workshop, categorize and then prioritize the list of short-term ideas and actions.

Short-term changes demonstrate that progress is underway and help to keep the community interested and engaged over time. They are a cost-effective way to test and modify an idea or improvement before it is made permanent.

- Look for items that could be provided or supported by your municipal or county government -- their buy-in is important.
- Develop options for how various actions or items might be obtained – funding, barter, exchange, borrowing, donations, etc.

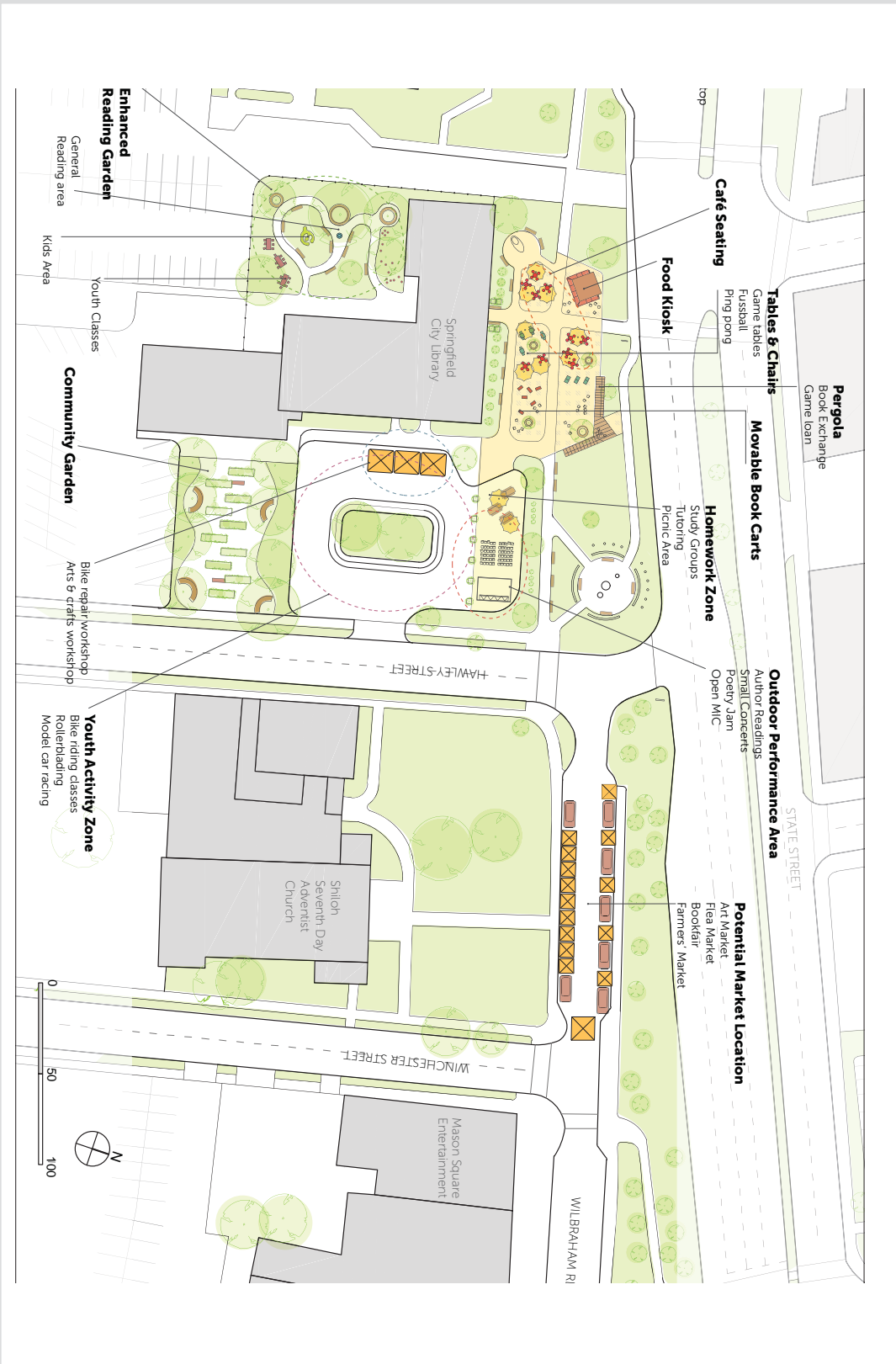
2. Create a Short-Term Action Plan

The purpose of the short-term action plan is to help organize the most feasible short-term ideas. The plan does not have to be complicated – in fact, the simpler, the better! The action plan can be revised and re-prioritized as needed - it is important to highlight do-able, low-cost actions. To develop this plan you will need to:

- List actions to tackle first.
- Establish goals for designated time-frames.
- Determine partners that will be responsible for particular improvements.
- Assign actions to specific people to carry out.
- If possible, identify additional partners to involve in the placemaking effort.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS	Contact Person from Working Group	Implementing Partner(s) or Organization(s)	Status (updates on progress with partners, funding, deadline, etc.)	Funding Estimate	Deadline for completing next action
Children's art exhibits		local school districts/boards; children's museum; museum educators		no cost - \$500 for display materials	
Lunchtime concerts		Nearby high schools and colleges; local chamber music group or jazz ensemble		no cost - \$2000	
Bloodmobile, bookmobile, mobile post office		local libraries, hospitals, civic groups or nonprofits		goods and services provided by organizer	
Cultural Presentations; displays or activities based around local public issues		theaters, schools, community/cultural orgs			
Weekly farmers market		city permitting office or EDC; local farmers and growers		no cost	
Theatre/dance band rehearsals		local performing arts groups, theaters, or schools		no cost	
Giant chessboard (and/or other games)		local chess clubs or game/puzzle societies		no cost - \$500	
Sidewalk or plaza chalking festival		nearby art schools; local artists groups/collectives; local elementary, middle, and high schools		no cost - \$300 for supplies	
Local arts, crafts or flower markets		local artists' or crafts collectives		no cost	
TV news broadcasts		Local news stations, including public access/cable		no cost	
Ideas Festival		local schools and universities		no cost	
Tenant displays (agency missions, programs, products, etc.)				no cost - \$500 for display materials	
Street furniture exhibit		local manufacturers or design firms		no cost	
"local talent show" - solicit art, music, or other performances from building employees, and/or their		building management and tenant contacts		no cost - \$500 for display materials	

ACTIVATION PLAN DIAGRAM



SAMPLE FORMS

ACTIVATION PLAN



ACTIVATION MATRIX

PROGRAM			IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY			
Area	Type	Element	Quantity	Price Range	Source	Comments
Reading Room						
	Reading materials	Periodicals, newspapers, magazines				
	Lunchtime readings	Portable mini-PA	1		HPL	Already own
	Club meetings	book club, knitting, etc.			Clubs	
	Lap Top checkout area					
	Wifi					IT to expand coverage
	Book sale	Sales by friends of library				
	Amenities	Tables	6 - 8	\$250 - \$600	Catalog	
	Amenities	Chairs	24 - 32	\$70 - \$190	Catalog	
	Amenities	Umbrellas	4 - 5	\$250 - \$600	Catalog	
	Amenities	Round planters - large	3	\$500 - \$800	Catalog	
	Amenities	Round planters - medium	5	\$200 - \$400	Catalog	
	Amenities	Planter boxes near ramp	3 - 4	\$400 - \$800	Catalog	
	Amenities	Circular benches	2 - 3		Catalog	Custom made
	Amenities	Book carts	3		Report	Custom made
	Amenities	Information cart / desk	1		Report	Custom made
	Amenities	Benches near ramp	2 - 3	\$800 - \$1800	Catalog	Custom made
	Amenities	Bicycle racks			Catalog	
	Amenities	Skateboard racks			Catalog	
TOTAL						
Kid / Youth Game Area						
	Kid & Teen reading materials	Books, magazines, comix			HPL	
	Storytime/Library programs for kids / youth				HPL	Existing program outside
	Video/computer game demos / competitions	Screen, projector, IT set-up	1	Custom		
	Performances for/by kids, i.e. puppet shows				Partners	
	Film / Game projections	Screen, projector, IT set-up	same as above			
	Fussball	Fussball table	2	\$600 - \$1000	Report	
	Table games	Board games, card games			Gaming clubs	Checkers, Sorry, Settlers of Catan, etc.
	Amenities	Tables for games	3 - 4	\$500 - \$600	Catalog	
	Amenities	Kid Tables	3 - 4	\$200 - \$300	Catalog	
	Amenities	Chairs	12 - 16	\$70 - \$190	Catalog	
	Amenities	Kid Chairs	18 - 24	\$70 - \$180	Catalog	
	Amenities	Umbrellas	3 - 4	\$250 - \$600	Catalog	
	Amenities	Round planters - large	2	\$500 - \$800	Catalog	
	Amenities	Round planters - medium	5	\$200 - \$400	Catalog	
	Amenities	Planter boxes near ramp	3 - 4	\$400 - \$800	Catalog	
	Amenities	Circular benches	1 - 2		Catalog	Custom made
	Amenities	Book carts	2		Report	Custom
	Amenities	Game cart / kiosk	1		Report	Custom made
	Amenities	Benches near ramp	2 - 3	\$800 - \$1800	Catalog	Custom made seating also appropriate here

STEP 7

Evaluate Results and Replicate

After you've implemented a successful *Outside the Box* program it may be time to think about expanding your efforts to more programs, longer term improvements or even other sites. This is a good time to capitalize on your achievements by involving stakeholders and community members in expanded programs, other places for intervention, or both.

Some of the questions you should consider as you expand your efforts are:

- What other programs and activities would benefit the community? You can consult the placemaking brainstorming notes for ideas.
- What other places in the community could be improved?
- Is there a need for a broader “placemaking” effort in the community?
- If so, what do you see as your role in such efforts?
- How can you work with other placemaking initiatives in the community?

Capturing the success of your efforts through evaluations, media and follow-up meetings will help tell the *Outside the Box* story, and your own, long after the initial event.

