

Placemaking



What is Placemaking?



- ▶ Placemaking is a **people-centered approach** to the planning, design and management of public spaces.
- ▶ This involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to **discover needs, desires and aspirations**. This information is then used to create a **common vision** for that place.
- ▶ This common vision will evolve into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them.

Public Space at the Crossroads

- ▶ Public space is inherently multidimensional.
- ▶ Successful and genuine public spaces are used by many different people for many different purposes at many different times of the day and the year.
- ▶ Because public spaces harbor so many uses and users—or fail to do so—they are also where a staggering cross-section of local and global issues converge.
- ▶ Public space is for negotiating the interface between our homes, our businesses, our institutions, and the broader world.
- ▶ Public space is how we get to work, how we do our errands, and how we get back home.
- ▶ Public space is for buying and selling, or for meeting, playing, and bumping into one another.

POWER OF 10+

How Cities Transform through Placemaking

- ▶ To be successful, cities need **destinations**.
- ▶ They need destinations that give an **identity and image to their communities**, and that help attract new residents, businesses, and investment. But they also need strong community destinations that attract people.
- ▶ A destination might be a downtown square, a main street, a waterfront, a park, or a museum.
- ▶ Cities of all sizes should have at least **10 destinations where people want to be**. What makes each destination successful is that it has multiple places within it.
- ▶ For example, a square needs at least 10 places: a café, a children's play area, a place to read the paper or drink a cup of coffee, a place to also sit, somewhere to meet friends, etc. Within each of the places, there should be at least 10 things to do. Cumulatively, these activities, places and destinations are what make a great city. We call this big idea the "Power of 10+."

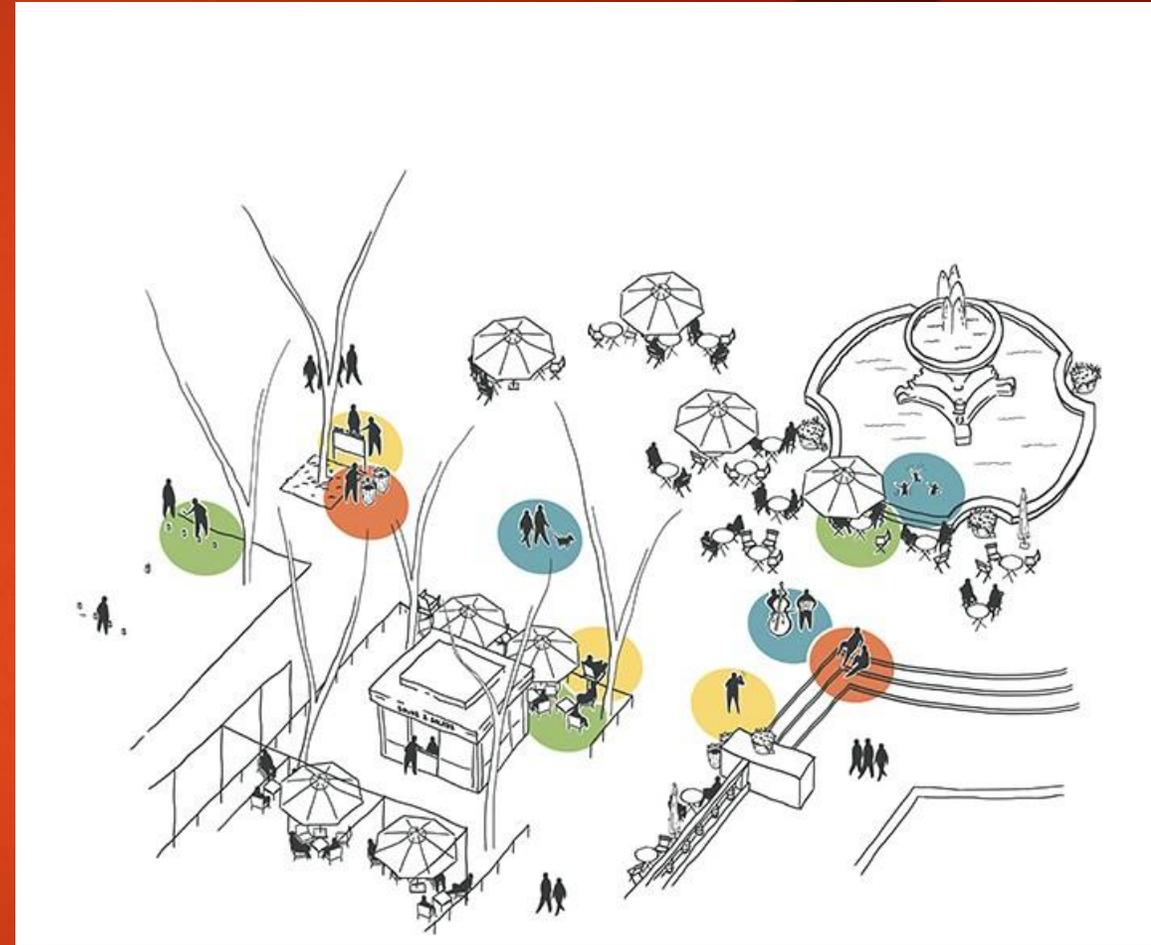
POWER OF 10+



City/Region
10+ MAJOR
DESTINATIONS



Destination
10+ PLACES IN EACH



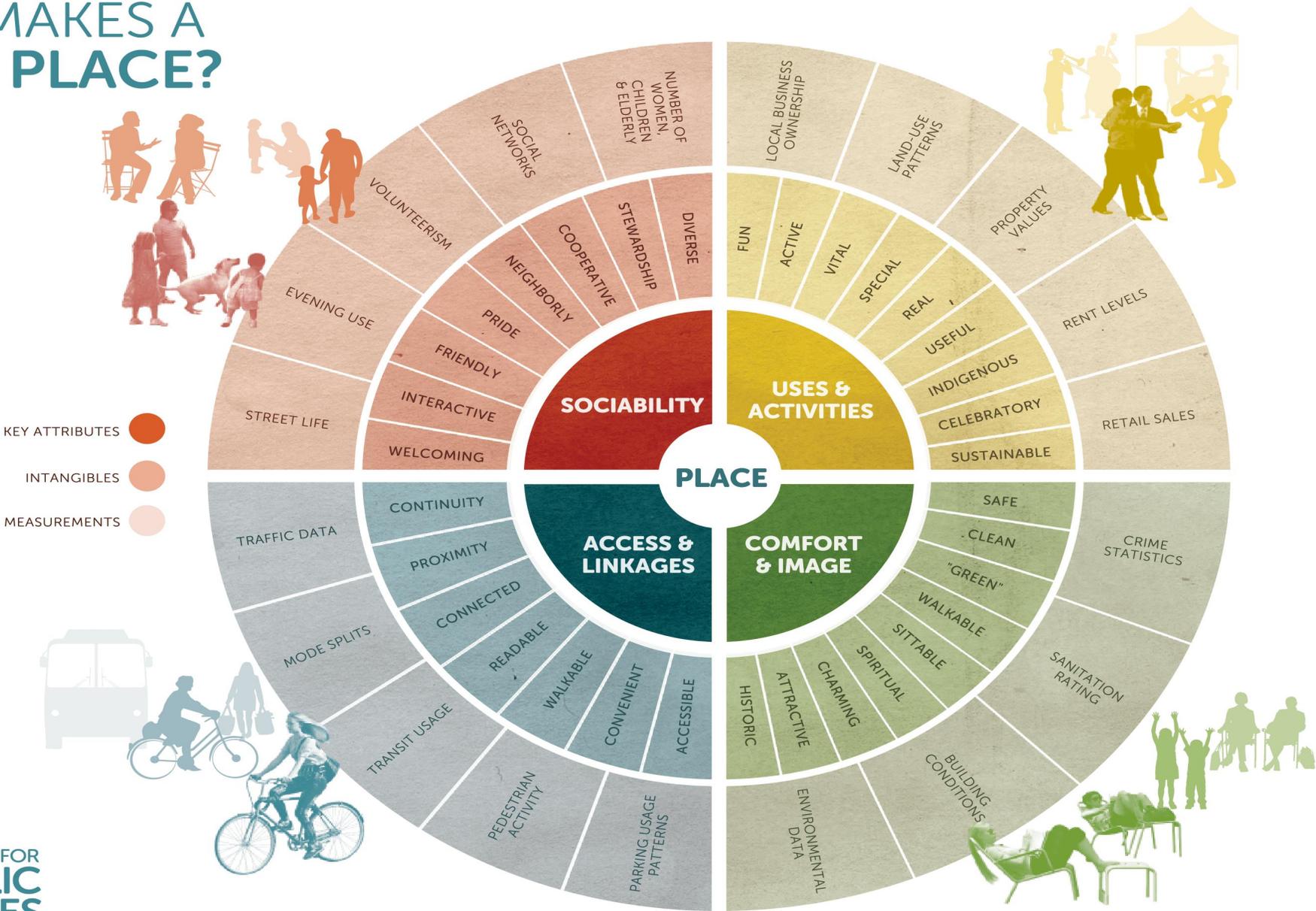
Place
10+ THINGS TO DO,
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

It's surprisingly simple.

- ▶ Most great places, whether a grand downtown plaza or humble neighborhood park, share four key attributes:
 1. They are accessible and well connected to other important places in the area.
 2. They are comfortable and project a good image.
 3. They attract people to participate in activities there.
 4. They are sociable environments in which people want to gather and visit again and again.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?



Access and Linkages

You can easily judge the accessibility of a place by noting its connections to the surroundings, including the visual links. A great public space is easy to get to, easy to enter, and easy to navigate. It is arranged so that you can see most of what is going on there, both from a distance and up close. The edges of a public space also play an important role in making it accessible. A row of shops along a street, for instance, is more interesting and generally safer to walk along than a blank wall or an empty lot. Accessible spaces can be conveniently reached by foot and, ideally, public transit, and they have high parking turnover.

- ▶ Questions to consider about Access & Linkages:
 - ▶ *Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?*
 - ▶ *Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?*
 - ▶ *Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?*
 - ▶ *Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?*
 - ▶ *Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?*
 - ▶ *Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?*
 - ▶ *Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?*
 - ▶ *Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?*

Comfort and Image

A space that is comfortable and looks inviting is likely to be successful. A sense of comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. A lack of seating is the surprising downfall of many otherwise good places. People are drawn to places that give them a choice of places to sit, so they can be either in or out of the sun at various times of day or year.

- ▶ Questions to consider about Comfort & Image:
 - ▶ *Does the place make a good first impression?*
 - ▶ *Are there as many women as men?*
 - ▶ *Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?*
 - ▶ *Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?*
 - ▶ *Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?*
 - ▶ *Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?*
 - ▶ *Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?*

Uses and Activities

A range of activities are the fundamental building blocks of a great place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come (and return) to a place. **When there is nothing interesting to do, a space will sit empty. That's the best measure that something is wrong.** A carefully chosen range of activities will help a place attract a variety of people at different times of the day. A playground will draw young kids during the day, while basketball courts draw older kids after school, and concerts bring in everyone during the evening.

- ▶ Questions to consider about Uses & Activities:
 - ▶ Are people using the space, or is it empty?
 - ▶ Is it used by people of different ages?
 - ▶ How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
 - ▶ Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
 - ▶ Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Sociability

This is the most important quality for a place to achieve—and the most difficult. When a place becomes a favorite spot for people to meet friends, greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, then you are well on your way to having a great place.

▶ Questions to consider about Sociability:

- ▶ *Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here?*
- ▶ *Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?*
- ▶ *Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?*
- ▶ *Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place? Do they point to its features with pride?*
- ▶ *Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?*
- ▶ *Do many people use the place frequently?*
- ▶ *Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?*
- ▶ *Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?*

- PLACES
- Visually pleasing
- Generally stimulating
- Sense of belonging
- Greater security
- Better environmental quality
- Feeling of freedom

Promotes Sense of Comfort

Creates Improved Accessibility

- More walkable
- Safe for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Compatible with public transit
- Reduces need for cars and parking
- More efficient use of time and money
- Greater connections between uses

Nurtures and Defines Sense of Community

Builds and Supports the Local Economy

- Small-scale entrepreneurship
- Economic development
- Higher real estate values
- Local ownership, local value
- More desirable jobs
- Greater tax revenue
- Less need for municipal services

Promotes Health

Fosters Social Interaction

- Improves sociability
- More cultural exposure, interaction
- Draws a diverse population
- More women, elderly, children
- Greater ethnic/cultural pluralism
- Encourages community creativity

The Benefit of Great Places

- Increased physical activity
- Access to fresh food
- Greater security
- Greater social inclusion
- Enhanced environmental health

- Freedom
- Greater community organization
- Sense of pride and volunteerism
- Perpetuation of integrity and values
- Less need for municipal control
- Self-managing

11 PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING GREAT COMMUNITY PLACES

- ▶ *Effective public spaces are extremely difficult to accomplish because their complexity is rarely understood. As William (Holly) Whyte said, “It’s hard to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.”*
- ▶ PPS has identified 11 key principles for transforming public spaces into vibrant community places, whether they are parks, plazas, public squares, streets, sidewalks, or the myriad other outdoor and indoor spaces that have public uses in common. These principles are:

Underlying Ideas

1. The Community is The Expert

- ▶ The important starting point in developing a concept for any public space is to identify the talents and assets within the community.
- ▶ In any community there are people who can provide historical perspective, valuable insights into how the area functions, and an understanding of critical issues.
- ▶ Tapping this information at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of community ownership in the project that can be of great benefit to both the project sponsor and the community.

Underlying Ideas

2. Create a Place, Not a Design

- ▶ To make an under-performing space into a vital “place,” physical elements must be introduced that would make people welcome and comfortable, such as seating and new landscaping, and also through “management” changes in the pedestrian circulation pattern and by developing more effective relationships between the surrounding retail and the activities going on in the public spaces.
- ▶ The goal is to create a place that has both a strong sense of community and a comfortable image, as well as a setting and activities and uses that collectively add up to something more than the sum of its often simple parts. This is easy to say, but difficult to accomplish.

Underlying Ideas

3. *Look for Partners*

- ▶ Partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space improvement project. Whether you seek partners at the start to plan for the project, or brainstorm and develop scenarios with a dozen partners who might participate in the future, these collaborations are invaluable in providing support and getting a project off the ground. They can be local institutions, museums, schools, and others.

Underlying Ideas

4. *They Always Say “It Can’t Be Done.”*

- ▶ One of Yogi Berra’s great sayings is “If they say it can’t be done, it doesn’t always work out that way,”
- ▶ Creating good public spaces is inevitably about encountering obstacles, because no one in either the public or private sectors has the job or responsibility to “create places.” For example, professionals such as traffic engineers, transit operators, urban planners and architects all have narrow definitions of their job – facilitating traffic or making trains run on time or creating long term schemes for building cities or designing buildings. Their job, evident in most cities, is not to create “places.”
- ▶ Starting with small scale community-nurturing improvements can demonstrate the importance of “places” and help to overcome obstacles.

Planning and Outreach Techniques

5. *You can see a lot just by observing*

- ▶ We can all learn a great deal from the successes and failures of others. By looking at how people use public spaces and finding out what they like and don't like about them, it is possible to assess what makes them work. Through these observations, it becomes clear what kinds of activities are missing, and what might be incorporated. And when the spaces are built, continuing to observe them will teach us even more about how they evolve and can be managed over time.

Planning and Outreach Techniques

6. Have a vision

- ▶ The vision needs to come out of each individual community; however, essential to a vision for any public space is an idea of what kinds of activities might be happening in the space, a vision that the space should be comfortable and have a good image, and that it should be an important place where people want to be. It should instill a sense of pride in the people who live and work in the surrounding area.

Translating Ideas into Action

7. Form Supports Function

- ▶ The input from the community and potential partners, the understanding of how other spaces function, the experimentation, and overcoming the obstacles and naysayers provides the concept for the space. Although design is important, these other elements tell you what “form” you need to accomplish the future vision for the space.

Translating Ideas into Action

8. Triangulate

- ▶ “Triangulation is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other” (Holly Whyte).
- ▶ In a public space, the choice and arrangement of different elements in relation to each other can put the triangulation process in motion (or not). For example, if a bench, a wastebasket and a telephone are placed with no connection to each other, each may receive a very limited use, but when they are arranged together along with other amenities such as a coffee cart, they will naturally bring people together (or triangulate!).
- ▶ On a broader level, if a children’s reading room in a new library is located so that it is next to a children’s playground in a park and a food kiosk is added, more activity will occur than if these facilities were located separately.

Translating Ideas into Action

10 Experiment: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper

- ▶ The complexity of public spaces is such that you cannot expect to do everything right initially.
- ▶ The best spaces experiment with short term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years!
- ▶ Elements such as seating, outdoor cafes, public art, striping of crosswalks and pedestrian havens, community gardens and murals are examples of improvements that can be accomplished in a short time.

Implementation

10 Money is not the issue

- ▶ This statement can apply in a number of ways. For example, once you've put in the basic infrastructure of the public spaces, the elements that are added that will make it work (e.g., vendors, cafes, flowers and seating) will not be expensive. In addition, if the community and other partners are involved in programming and other activities, this can also reduce costs.
- ▶ More important is that by following these steps, people will have so much enthusiasm for the project that the cost is viewed much more broadly and consequently as not significant when compared with the benefits.

Implementation

11. *You are never finished*

- ▶ By nature, good public spaces that respond to the needs, the opinions and the ongoing changes of the community require attention. Amenities wear out, needs change and other things happen in an urban environment.
- ▶ Being open to the need for change and having the management flexibility to enact that change is what builds great public spaces and great cities and towns.

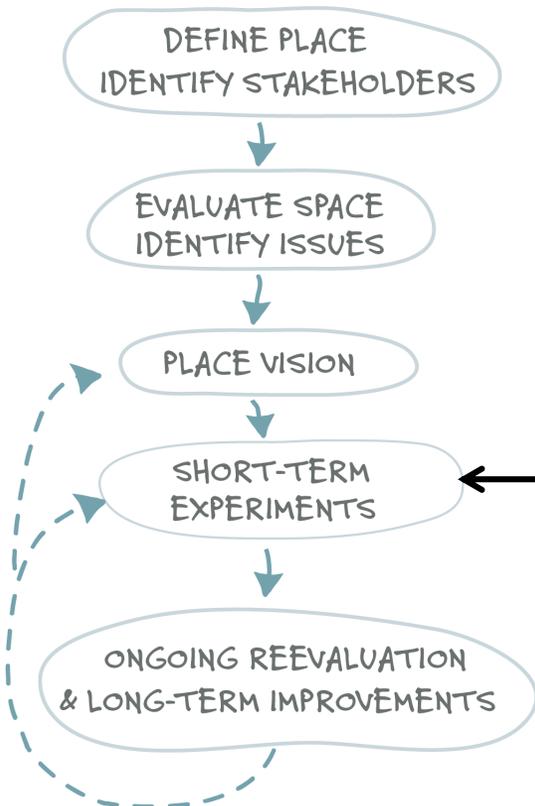
The Placemaking Process

- ▶ Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. It is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole.
- ▶ Working with the community to create a vision around the places they view as important to community life and to their daily experience is key to building a strategy for implementation.
- ▶ Starting with short term, experimental improvements can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them and inform longer term improvements over time.

The Placemaking Process

Lighter Quicker, Cheaper

LQC experiments range in scale and impact. From small neighborhood amenities and art to large downtown temporary structures and events.



Stakeholder Roles

advise/suggest
bring additional resources
implement & maintain

Expert Roles

inform
facilitate
design & implement



One Process

1. Identify key stakeholders and meet to discuss placemaking
2. Identify “Nodes” – areas where people currently congregate
3. Public is invited to attend public to attend Placemaking session at Tables arranged by “Node” (Newspaper, Radio, Social Media, Service Groups, Chamber, Main Street etc)



One Process

1. Each group visits assigned areas and notes what is present in area that is desirable, undesirable, what can be done LQC etc
2. Each group compile notes and presents findings to the larger group – larger group can make observations as well.
3. Findings are compiled in a report and group is brought together again some weeks later to review findings and recommendations for each node
4. Volunteer committee is created and node champions are sought
5. Work begins on each node
6. Steering committee meets regularly



Suggestions/Comments

1. Do not have this as a council led initiative
2. Invite Mayor and Council to attend the event as participants
3. This is not an exercise to create a punch list for council to start working on
4. Get the Services Groups involved
5. Cast a wide net. Invite EVERYONE to participate for weeks prior to the event– Rice Lake had many people from outside the city participate as this one time they can have input.
6. Next Steps – Better Block, Arts Placemaking etc.



Questions?