

# Placemaking

with Project for Public Spaces



*Imagine a town square...*





Since 1975, we have worked in more than 2,000 communities in 26 countries around the world, helping people turn their public spaces into vital community places, with programs, uses, and people-friendly settings that build local value and serve community needs.







# Project for Public Spaces

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Founded in 1975, PPS embraces the insights of William (Holly) Whyte, a pioneer in understanding the way people use public spaces. Today, PPS has become an internationally recognized center for best-practices, information, and resources about Placemaking.

*We provide:*

- *Place-based Planning and Design;*
- *Placemaking Training and Education;*
- *Public Space Advocacy.*

## *What does PPS bring?*

- Our deep understanding of how successful places work, based on more than 30 years of experience and research.
- Our belief that the community is the expert.
- Our ability to translate community visions into actions in a range of diverse settings and contexts around the world.
- Our commitment to always determine a program of uses before developing a formal design.
- Our support for people who care about sustainable development of communities by providing them with the resources, skills, networks, and knowledge to become successful Placemakers.
- Our worldwide experience with a variety of countries, people, and innovations, which allows us to understand and serve communities and individuals everywhere.

*...bustling with people who are greeting each other,*  
buying, selling, and exchanging ideas. For everyone striving to make public spaces better, PPS is that town square. Our vision is to act as the central hub of the global Placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, expertise, and partners who share a passion for creating vital places.





# Planning and Design

*with people and places in mind*

PPS uses an approach that we call “Placemaking” in all of our work with communities to plan and design public spaces.

Placemaking is not just the act of building or fixing up a space, but a holistic approach to creating vital public destinations that promote community commitment and involvement. It capitalizes on a community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, creating good public spaces that promote health, happiness, and well-being.

What sets our method apart is that we truly put people first. We determine how the community wants to use a place before we begin any part of the design process. That way, when the project is implemented, it reflects the community’s desires and serves their specific needs.

Read on to learn how PPS can help your community bring its public spaces to life.



## NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.

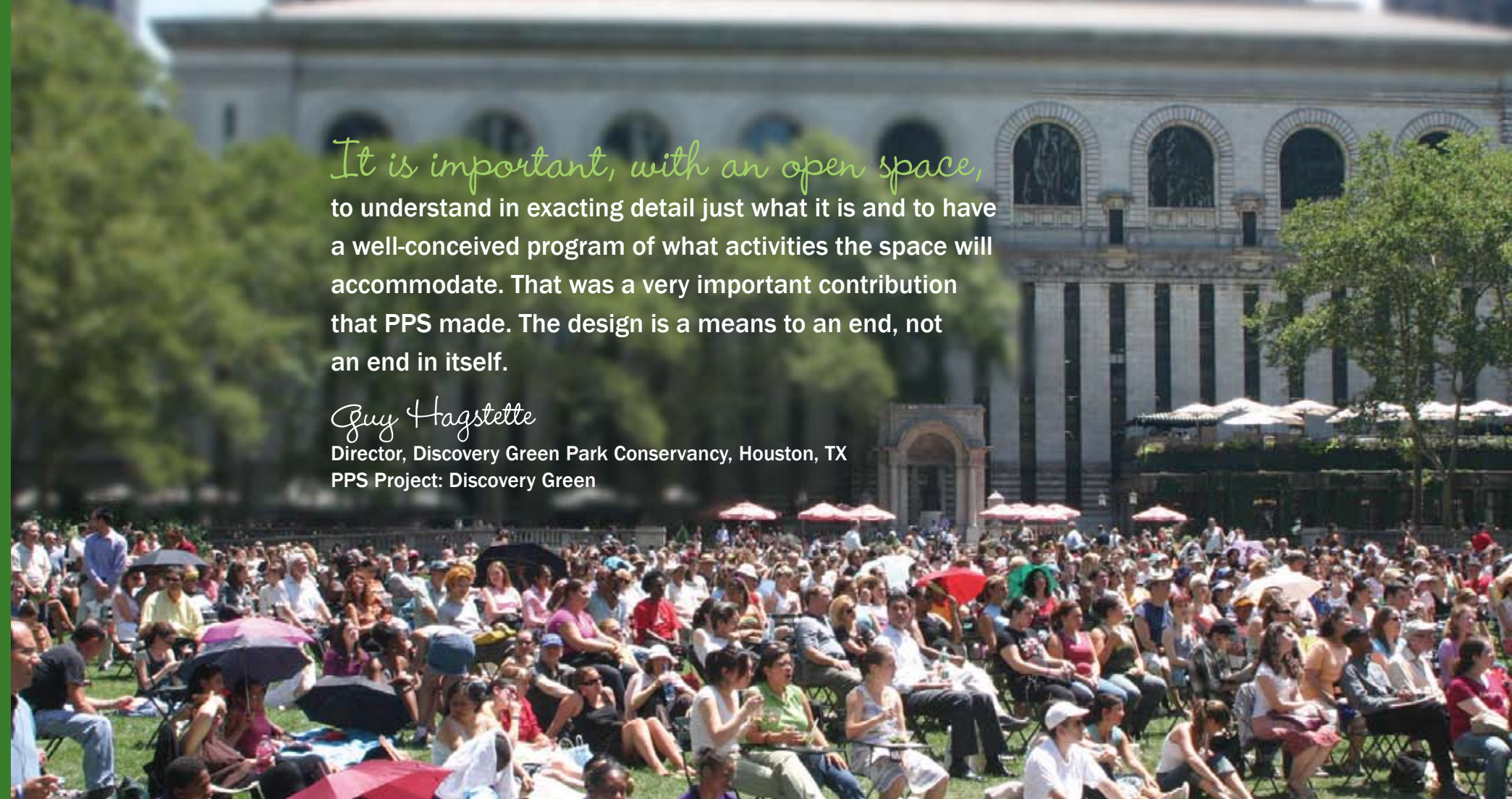
In 2004, PPS worked with NJ DOT to improve the downtown interchange between Rte. 280 and Rte. 21 by minimizing excessive traffic, limiting through-traffic to residential streets, and changing street features. Through a series of collaborative workshops and visioning meetings with community groups and stakeholders, PPS helped develop community-sensitive transit designs for the neighborhood.



*It is important, with an open space,* to understand in exacting detail just what it is and to have a well-conceived program of what activities the space will accommodate. That was a very important contribution that PPS made. The design is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

*Guy Hagstette*

Director, Discovery Green Park Conservancy, Houston, TX  
PPS Project: Discovery Green



Working alongside William H. Whyte and others, PPS helped address drug-ridden, uninviting Bryant Park in midtown Manhattan. We proposed a series of objectives to promote public use, from renovating park entrances and adding amenities like moveable seating and refreshments, to improving park management and programming. Bryant Park is now one of the most popular, comfortable, and well managed big city parks in the country, and spurred district-wide revival. Client: Rockefeller Foundation, Bryant Park Restoration Project, 1981.

*Bryant Park*  
New York City

## WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL PLACE?

By researching public spaces around the world, PPS has found that successful ones have four key qualities, all of which have equal importance. These qualities form the basis for our approach to evaluating a place.



## THE POWER OF TEN

The Power of 10 is a concept we use to think about places beyond singular uses, activities and features—layering these functions and attributes of a space creates a richness and exponential synergy that all great places have.



# Our Placemaking Process

## 1 DEFINING PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through partnership-building and public presentations, PPS lays the foundation for lasting change. We explore opportunities to make significant, scale-appropriate public destinations for regions, cities, neighborhoods, or specific interest groups. Drawing from our observations of public spaces all over the world, we show what makes public spaces succeed, build momentum for bold ideas, and set the stage for ongoing collaboration between stakeholders.

## 2 BUILDING THE VISION

Even the worst place can turn into a great one if the local community shares a compelling vision for its future. That's why PPS facilitates a community-based process that engages a full range of local stakeholders. We bring people with diverse ideas into dialogue in an inclusive process that produces high-quality, workable recommendations with big impacts. Those who know the space most intimately are the ones who shape the vision. PPS uses their recommendations to develop a program of uses, which we then translate into a concept plan and report that summarizes improvement opportunities and an overall implementation strategy.

## 3 MAKING IT HAPPEN

PPS creates an implementation plan to guide the program and concept to completion. We often start this process by recommending a range of short-term, inexpensive experiments that build credibility by proving change can happen. Successful demonstrations draw in additional partners and financial support for the long-term changes to come. To protect the integrity of the community's ideas, we work with the project team from design development to production of construction documents, ensuring that concepts generated by the community are maintained.

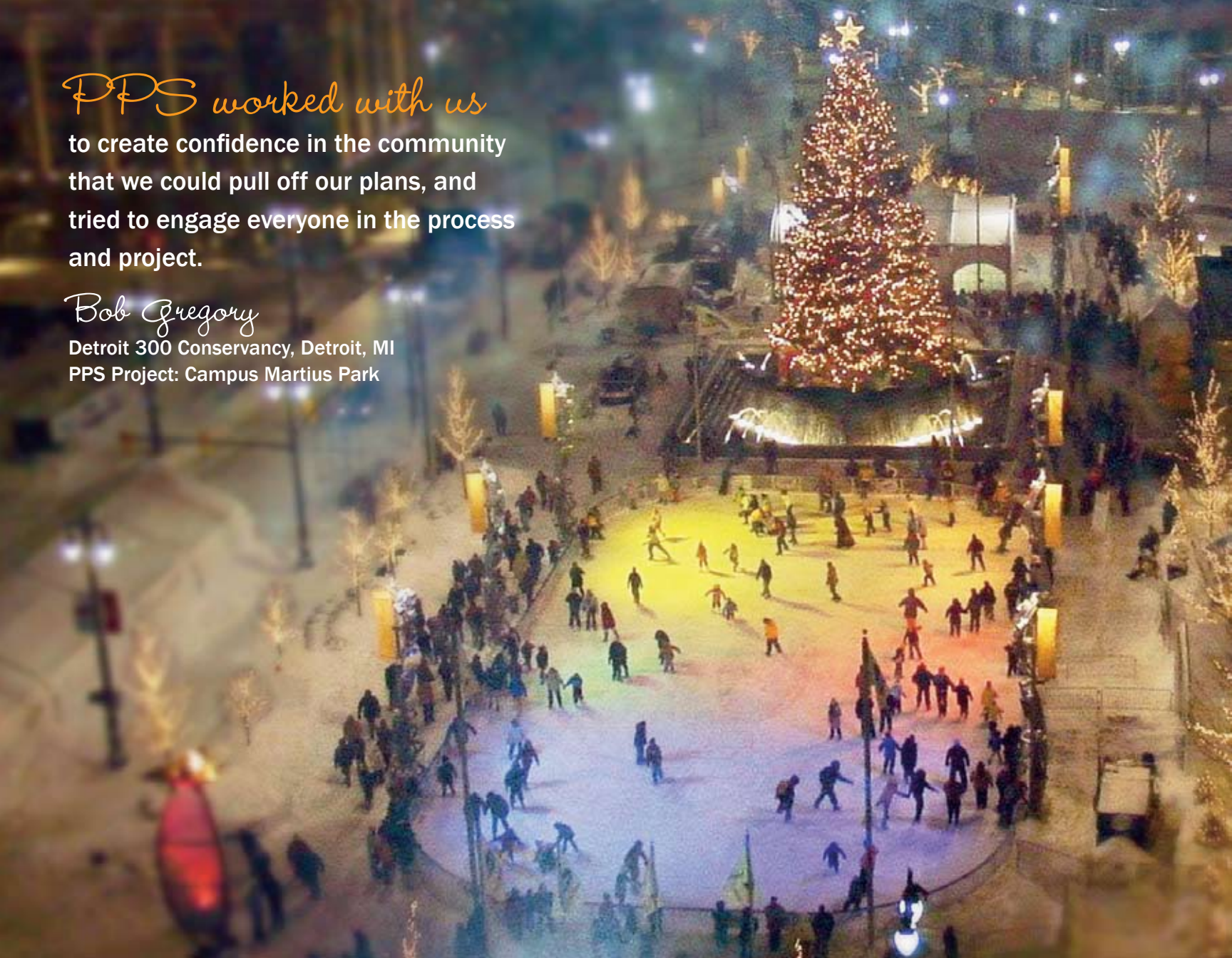
## 4 SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE

At PPS, we tell our clients, "You are never finished," because great places rely on skillful, ongoing management even more than thoughtful design. Drawing from our extensive research and experience with public/private partnerships and management organizations, we develop a strategic model for management and operations that's right for everyone.



*PPS worked with us*  
to create confidence in the community  
that we could pull off our plans, and  
tried to engage everyone in the process  
and project.

*Bob Gregory*  
Detroit 300 Conservancy, Detroit, MI  
PPS Project: Campus Martius Park



PPS helped Detroit's communities and city government achieve their vision for creating "the best public space in the world" at Campus Martius, the historic heart of the city, which was once an isolated and deteriorated traffic island. Public uses in and around the park for all ages and types of people have led to broader revitalization in downtown Detroit.

*Campus Martius*  
Detroit, Michigan

*Although it is relatively simple*  
to implement, Placemaking nevertheless has the  
potential to answer many complex challenges in  
the area of community development. It is equally  
applicable for small and large communities and  
a wide range of different spaces.

*Aleksandra Vesic*  
Executive Director, Balkan Community Initiatives Fund, Belgrade, Serbia  
PPS Project: Placemaking in Eastern Europe



# Over Thirty Years of Placemaking

Our mission driven program areas encompass all major public spaces. With the talent of our dedicated staff and the generous contributions of our partners and funders — organizations like The Wallace Fund, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Kellogg Foundation — we have improved parks, markets, streets, transit stations, libraries and countless other places.

1975	1981	1983	1993 - Present	1995	2000 - Present	2000 - Present	2005 - Present	2006
<p><b>Rockefeller Center</b> NEW YORK, NY</p> <p>PPS has transformed corporate wariness about public use of urban plazas, showing that good management can benefit businesses and the public simultaneously.</p>	<p><b>Bryant Park</b> NEW YORK, NY</p> <p>PPS' focus on the importance of urban parks and close attention to the deterioration and criminal activity that plagued important parks has led to the creation of truly vibrant, multi-use spaces that are now the pride of communities.</p>	<p><b>Chapel Street</b> NEW HAVEN, CT</p> <p>PPS has revived many main streets, urban commercial corridors, and transportation hubs through innovative training programs and Placemaking techniques.</p>	<p><b>Placemaking Training</b> CZECH REPUBLIC, CROATIA, SERBIA, &amp; MONTENEGRO</p> <p>In countries ravaged by cultural change and loss, PPS has helped reestablish community tradition through Placemaking workshops and uniting community networks.</p>	<p><b>Urban Parks Institute</b> UNITED STATES</p> <p>Through the creation of the Urban Parks Institute, PPS collected a unique library of park resources and increased awareness of the significant role parks play in community revitalization.</p>	<p><b>New York City Streets Renaissance Campaign</b> NEW YORK, NY</p> <p>PPS fosters and supports movements uniting interest groups, citizens, and governments around improving streets and the street life of cities.</p>	<p><b>How to Turn a Place Around Workshop</b> NEW YORK, NY</p> <p>Establishing a variety of Placemaking training programs, conferences, and forums in the U.S. and abroad has helped PPS teach and encourage Placemakers everywhere.</p>	<p><b>"Diversifying Public &amp; Farmers Markets Grant Program"</b> UNITED STATES</p> <p>As part of a markets renaissance in the U.S., PPS fueled markets' success and growth with support and resources, initiatives, partnerships, and grants.</p>	<p><b>The Great Places, Great Cities Initiative</b> MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO, CANADA</p> <p>Based on years of Placemaking experience with individual spaces, PPS expanded its techniques into a holistic, flexible process which cities can use to improve themselves place by place.</p>



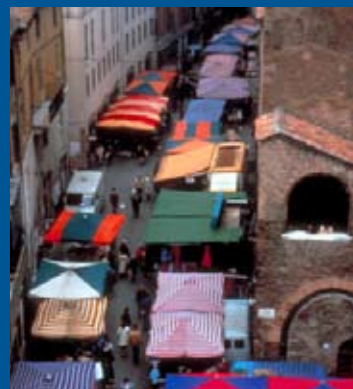


# Public Space Advocacy

We complement our project work, training, and services with public space advocacy that sets the stage for broad change. Our goal is to enhance Placemaking efforts everywhere by promoting good policy and professional practice.

Making great public spaces the norm rather than the exception depends on introducing policy-makers at all levels of country, state, and city government to new ideas and approaches. We also advocate for change within disciplines, showing how architects, planners, transportation engineers, and other professionals can adopt a Placemaking approach.

When these crucial decision-makers set their minds on creating great places, sweeping improvements follow. That's why PPS pursues systemic change in all our program areas, collaborating with foundations and campaign partners



on advocacy that leverages our resources and expertise to achieve broad impacts. Through our advocacy partnerships and outreach, we want to see Placemaking change people's lives for the better.

As part of a massive renaissance of markets in the U.S., PPS partnered with the Ford and Kellogg Foundations to support small-scale farmers markets. This partnership fueled markets' success and growth through research, partnerships, and grant programs.

## Diversifying public markets and farmers markets

with the Ford and Kellogg Foundations

### A PPS Farmers Market Grant

made it possible for Southland to launch an ambitious program to bring certified farmers markets to Los Angeles Unified School District school campuses throughout the City of Los Angeles. We have learned so much from their placemaking exercises and networking opportunities with other grantees. PPS is truly an important catalyst of change and growth among farmers' markets today.

*Howell Tumlin*

Executive Director, Southland Farmers Market Association Grantee, Los Angeles, CA  
PPS Program: Diversifying Public Markets and Farmers' Markets



### To me, every walk and bike

ride is an opportunity to imagine more vibrant and healthier public spaces. My internship at PPS helped me articulate this vision. Now my work as a transportation planner is constantly informed by the PPS Placemaking Model.

*Brooke DuBose*

Campaign Coordinator, Transportation Alternatives, NY, NY  
PPS Annual Summer Internship Program, 2006

### The impact of Placemaking

We believe that the benefits of Placemaking should be available to everyone.

Successful Placemaking promotes:

- Health and activity within a community
- Improved social interaction
- Increased cultural exchange & understanding
- Economic vitality
- Civic engagement
- Environmental sustainability

*... and just a better quality of life!*





# Working in Partnership to Advance Placemaking

## BUILDING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

PPS works with government agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration, state departments of transportation, and the General Services Administration in the U.S. We also work externally with international governments to form partnerships and advance Placemaking. We have developed publications, training curricula, and web-based resource centers now used by thousands of people to incorporate Placemaking into their daily business.

## PROMOTING CITY-WIDE CHANGE

At the local level, PPS helps public agencies and community leaders in targeted cities adopt a Placemaking approach through our Great Places, Great Cities Initiative. In each city, PPS brings different stakeholders together and employs a comprehensive approach to improving destinations and public spaces. For example, in Bellingham, Washington, PPS has fostered the recreation of a variety of public spaces and community gathering spots, working with the Mayor's office to develop public-private partnerships and widespread community participation there.

In New York City, PPS partnered with the Open Planning Project and Transportation Alternatives, creators of the NYC Streets Renaissance Campaign, to imagine more effective street use and pedestrian-friendly settings in over-trafficked areas throughout the city. This movement has united nonprofits and interest groups city-wide, and has been instrumental in challenging the city's auto-centric transportation policy at every level.

## PLACEMAKING WITH FOUNDATIONS

Our partnerships with foundations continue to foster new and exciting directions for Placemaking as well. Most recently, PPS has worked with the Ford Foundation and Kellogg Foundation to combine research, demonstration projects, and grant-making programs around the U.S., illustrating how public markets can play a bigger role in community health and development.



When PPS came back to the community with a solution incorporating their input, it really felt like the community's vision.

*Christine Berthet*

Co-Founder, Clinton-Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition, New York, NY  
PPS Project: A Community Vision for 9th Avenue



PPS partnered with the New York based nonprofit CHEKPEDS (Clinton Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition) to improve safety, accessibility, and public space on 9th Avenue in New York City. PPS recommendations and improvements, which can be seen in this photosimulation, were also publicized as part of the NYC Streets Renaissance Campaign. Client: Clinton Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition, 2006,

*A Vision for 9th Ave*  
New York City



We brought a local civil engineering company together with PPS to continue the community engagement process. PPS changed their perspective on things and helped them become better servants of the local communities with whom they're working.

*Jeff Mansour*

Former Program Officer, Ruth Mott Foundation, Flint, MI  
PPS Project: New Directions for Public Spaces

Many local governments have a lot of barriers between departments. One of the most important things PPS did was to break down and eliminate those barriers. People participated from all areas of the city: transportation, planning, parks and recreation, libraries, corporate services, even the legal and financial areas. It was a total team.

*Gil Penalosa*

Strategic Leader, Planning and Building,  
City of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada  
PPS Project: Mississauga Great Places, Great  
Cities Initiative





# Training and Resources

*to build placemaking skills*

PPS training programs provide practical skills and inspiration to people who want to improve the public environment in their city, town or neighborhood.

We train everyone from transportation engineers, architects and developers to city officials and community activists in countries all over the world. Our public training courses introduce people to the ideas and methods of Placemaking by immersing participants in the streets, parks, squares, and markets of New York City, while our custom training focuses on relevant subjects and innovative ideas that fit a specific group.

*What I found fascinating* about the forum was the relatively small and close-knit community of people there with the interest and the desire to work to improve public space. I realized just how influential a group had been brought together by PPS. We would like to see opportunities in Europe similar to our experiences at the forum in New York.

*Mike Gibbons*

Project Director, BBC Live Events | Attended Public Space Managers Forum at PPS



Keen to learn more about Placemaking, we invited PPS over to Scotland to run three How to Turn a Place Around courses. These generated significant interest; each course was a sell-out and we exposed nearly 200 people to placemaking. The secret ingredient that PPS brought to our partnership was years of practice distilled down to what works, and a passion for helping others to make great places.

*Julie Procter*

Chief Officer, Greenspace Scotland  
PPS Project: Placemaking in Scotland



## Public Training Courses

“How to Turn a Place Around” explains PPS’s unique approach to revitalization. Participants work in small teams to observe and analyze places in Greenwich Village from a user’s point of view, addressing common public space issues and acquiring new insights in the process.

“How to Create Successful Markets” teaches the crucial elements that make markets succeed as both businesses and places, through workshops and on-site tours of New York City’s open-air farmers markets, indoor public markets, flea markets and urban farms.

## Custom Training

PPS’s customized Placemaking training seminars introduce audiences to new ways of thinking about public spaces. We have tailored our curriculum for city governments, state DOTs, federal agencies in the U.S., and national nonprofits in Scotland and the Eastern European countries of Serbia, Croatia, and the Czech Republic. Whether we are training transportation engineers, librarians, planners, or public administrators, we impart knowledge that helps our clients achieve breakthroughs with the communities they serve.



The most precious gift we have to offer the global Placemaking movement is our ability to teach what we know to others. If every person we trained or touched in some way went on to teach five, ten, or a hundred others, we would truly create a revolution in placing the needs of people at the center of all planning for our built environment.

*Kathy Madden*

Senior Vice President, Project for Public Spaces, New York, NY



# Sharing Ideas

PPS' services don't stop with formal training sessions and informational resources. We constantly strive to spread our knowledge, listen to others, and foster dialogues around the creation and maintenance of great public spaces. By sharing ideas in flexible as well as fixed settings, we can meet the unique needs of our partners and speak to almost any situation.

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

PPS' staff crafts thought-provoking presentations that leave lasting impressions. We speak on a wide range of subjects related to Placemaking and the creation of more livable towns and cities, including:



- PPS' 11 Principles of Placemaking
- What Makes a Great Place
- How Successful Public Spaces Can Improve Communities
- Creating Walkable Communities
- Revitalizing Local Economies

## FORUMS AND CONFERENCES

PPS conferences and forums are settings for lively exchange between disciplines. Our events inspire people to think

differently and shake things up when they return to their hometowns, driven by fresh ideas and a new sense of what is possible.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Our desire to learn from others as well as relying on our own Placemaking strengths has led us to form many small and large-scale partnerships in a range of public and private disciplines. We actively seek partners to compliment our planning and design services, our cutting-edge research and publications, and our strategic initiatives.

## FOSTERING NETWORKS

Like a spider weaving a complex web, PPS nurtures growing Placemaking networks whenever possible. As a constructive, accessible resource to these networks, PPS aims to connect Placemakers around the world to each other through our on-line discussion forums, membership and licensing programs, and events. We have fostered emerging networks in Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Scotland, and the Seattle region of the US, and are working to see other networks grow and affect the global practice of Placemaking.



They (PPS) are Placemaking advocates as well as experts. They ask us "Why not?" at the same time they are able to show us "Here's how." While working on our new Property Managers' Guide, they helped by calling upon their deep well of experiences to demonstrate how our federal property managers could evaluate and improve their public spaces on their own.

*Frank Giblin*

General Services Administration, Good Neighbor Program  
PPS Project: "The Property Managers Guide to Improving Public Spaces"





# Staying Connected

We are dedicated to providing continuous educational services to the communities we work with. We do this through research, conferences, publications, discussion forums, newsletters, resource databases, and a commitment to sharing our knowledge with those who will benefit most from it.

## WWW.PPS.ORG

PPS' website is an invaluable resource for individuals and professionals alike. We have developed tools and worksheets based on PPS' unique methodology, compiled project experiences and case study examples, and created a unique and expansive image database. Visit today!



## PPS MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a member of PPS supports our mission to improve public spaces everywhere and offers exciting opportunities such as publication, image, and public training course discounts, as well as access to member-only forums, discussions, research, and events. Go to [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org) to join us in the Placemaking movement.



## MAKING PLACES NEWSLETTER

"Making Places" Newsletters and Bulletins put the reader at the forefront of the movement to create more livable towns and cities. They discuss and engage the latest issues in Placemaking in the U.S. and abroad. Recent features include "Great Neighborhoods," "Why Libraries Matter More than Ever," and "The Waterfront Renaissance." Both e-publications are free; to receive them, register at [www.PPS.org](http://www.PPS.org).

## How to reach us:

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New York, NY 10003

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F (212) 620-3821

[www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)



## PUBLICATIONS

PPS has written and published books on numerous topics, including these popular titles:

- The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Placemaking (2007)
- How to Turn a Place Around (2000)
- Public Parks, Private Partners (2000)
- Public Markets and Community Revitalization (1995)
- The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces (William H. Whyte, 1980)





*Choose PPS* if you want to get the job done right the first time. The result will be a project that is well thought-out and well-planned, with close attention to detail.

*Jennifer Osterman*

Executive Director, Spartanburg Nutrition Council, Spartanburg, SC  
PPS Project: Creating a farmers market for Spartanburg, SC

## Who is PPS?

Project for Public Spaces is made up of a highly experienced and cross-disciplinary staff trained in environmental design, urban geography, arts administration, architecture, environmental psychology, information management, urban planning and landscape architecture.

## Who We Serve

Many different organizations recruit PPS to develop effective community visions for public spaces, including:

- local governments
- community organizations
- civic institutions
- foundations
- developers
- market operators
- public space managers

## Who We Partner With

To make these community visions reality, PPS partners with a variety of professionals:

- architects
- urban planners
- research groups
- engineers
- landscape architects
- economic development consultants
- transportation experts
- real estate developers
- retail consultants

## Senior Staff



Fred Kent  
President



Steve Davies  
Senior Vice President



Kathy Madden  
Senior Vice President



Ethan Kent  
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*when you focus on place,  
you do everything differently*