

## The Placemaking Checklist

When considering how to create a great place in your community, ponder the following four aspects of the place in consideration:

- Access and Linkages
- Comfort and Image
- Uses and Activities
- Sociability

and use the questions below to guide you through key questions and considerations.

The following graphics and text are adapted from articles and resources from the Project for Public Spaces.



## **ACCESS & LINKAGES**

You can judge the accessibility of a place by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well. For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible spaces have a high parking turnover and, ideally, are convenient to public transit.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ON ACCESS & LINKAGES:**

- Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls? Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- Does the space function for people with special needs?
- Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?
- Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, bicycle, etc. to reach the place?
- Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations such as libraries, post offices, park entrances, etc.?

## **COMFORT & IMAGE**

Whether a space is comfortable and presents itself well - has a good image - is key to its success. Comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit - the importance of giving people the choice to sit where they want is generally underestimated.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ON COMFORT & IMAGE:**

- Does the place make a good first impression?
- Are there more women than 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 are clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance? What do they do? When?



- Does the area feel safe? Is there a security presence? 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 & ACTIVITIES**

Activities are the basic building blocks of a place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come to a place - and return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong.

### **PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND IN EVALUATING THE USES AND ACTIVITIES OF A PLACE:**

- The more activities that are going and that people have an opportunity to participate in, the better.
- There is a good balance between men and women.
- People of different ages are using the space (retired people and people with young children can use a space during the day when others are working).
- The space is used throughout the day.
- A space that is used by both singles and people in groups is better than one that is just used by people alone because it means that there are places for people to sit with friends, there is more socializing, and it is more fun.
- The ultimate determinant of a place's success is how well it is managed.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ON USES & ACTIVITIES:**

- Are people using the space or is it empty?
- Is it used by people of different ages?
- Are people in groups?
- How many different types of activities are occurring - people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
- Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
- Are there choices of things to do?
- Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone is in charge of the space? .



## **SOCIABILITY**

This is a difficult quality for a place to achieve, but once attained it becomes an unmistakable feature. When people see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger sense of place or attachment to their community - and to the place that fosters these types of social activities.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ON SOCIABILITY:**

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