



Placemaking in the Warren Street Transit Corridor  
Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper  
A Short Term Action Plan for Placemaking in the  
Warren Street Transit Corridor in Roxbury, Massachusetts  
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Prepared for our local partner Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation.



This report was prepared as part of the work Project for Public Spaces is doing for Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance's Great Neighborhoods Program.





# Introduction

## Great Neighborhoods Program

In 2011, the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) announced Great Neighborhoods, an exciting and innovative partnership launching in five Massachusetts communities. Through the generous support of the Barr Foundation and Ford Foundation, MSGA is partnering with local stakeholders and Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to create Great Neighborhoods that will transform the lives of more than 100,000 residents through economic development, transportation and environmental initiatives, housing development, design and planning.

Under the Great Neighborhoods initiative, MSGA, PPS and the local partners will work together to overcome legislative, regulatory, and financial obstacles in order to enable smart community development in the communities of Lawrence, Winchester, Somerville, Boston's Fairmount-Indigo Line Corridor and the Warren Street Transit Corridor in Roxbury. These five sites represent a range of significant projects for advancing smart growth in the region. Through Great Neighborhoods, they will be part of a regional vision supported by local action.

In Roxbury, Great Neighborhoods and PPS are working with Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation (Nuestra) and other local groups to identify transit and complete streets improvements for the Warren Street Transit Corridor between Dudley Square and Grove Hall. The work will focus on reducing commuting times in one of the densest and most congested bus corridors in the City.

## Placemaking in Action

At PPS, we understand that Great Neighborhoods are also great places to live, work, learn and play, and Placemaking – a community-driven process – is the approach in which great places that are loved and owned by the community are created.

In collaboration with MSGA, PPS is working with local Great Neighborhoods partners, including Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation to identify immediate “lighter, quicker, cheaper” (LQC) or low cost, short term – actions to revitalize targeted public spaces in Roxbury to make them more attractive to people, jobs, and investment. The goal is to leverage the strategic planning work that has already been completed within the Great Neighborhood program by focusing on implementation to achieve early wins that will generate excitement for sustaining long-term changes, like increasing housing and job density, improving transportation options, and reducing vehicle miles traveled.

During April of 2012, PPS facilitated a Placemaking workshop, hosted by Nuestra and Gallery Basquiat to initiate a community visioning and Placemaking process that featured presentations by PPS president Fred Kent and PPS's Place Performance Evaluation exercise. The workshop was attended by upwards of 25 members from the community and local stakeholders who were asked to envision how lighter, quicker, cheaper interventions could be implemented in the short term in the five sites along Warren Street.

Based on the workshop findings of the community's LQC ideas for the five sites, PPS has prepared this report, which summarizes the findings and briefly describes the vision and themes for each place along the Warren Street Transit Corridor, recommends a series of lighter, quicker, cheaper improvements and outlines an action plan for implementation that will transform Roxbury's Warren Street Transit Corridor into a multi-use destination that is strengthened by a series of vibrant public spaces.

# Places along Warren Street Transit Corridor

Many of the ideas expressed by local stakeholders and placemaking workshop participants for the specific site they evaluated could be relevant for more than one space. Markets, food trucks, outdoor seating, movies and cultural activities were recommended for all five sites.

The next steps are to identify which of these activities belong where – at least in the immediate term – and what amenities, infrastructure and design changes will be required to make them successful. Moving forward, the community needs to identify how these programs could migrate around the square and activate a variety of locations. At that point, the optimal sites for each element will be determined and the permanent features and design changes required could be identified and implemented. The idea is to start with a “moveable feast” of features and options and then identify the place where each will be best suited and have the most positive impact on the neighborhood.

PPS is recommending a series of concepts and experiments that could be implemented along the Warren Street Transit Corridor beginning in the summer of 2012 and extending into fall of 2012. By breaking the corridor down into a series of places, each of these places will be enhanced and supported with a series of improvements, both physical and programmatic, that would make them mini-destinations in their own right.

The report that follows includes a draft vision statement for the short term (lighter, quicker, cheaper) improvement plan for the Warren Street Transit Corridor, a description of each of the “places” along the corridor and photographs that can be used to discuss the improvements in each area.

The following are the places that have the greatest potential to be enhanced right away:



1. Veteran's Park
2. Old Police Station
3. Library Plaza
4. Courthouse Plaza
5. Bus Station

# Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Recommendations

Five distinct places could be created along the Warren Street Transit Corridor, each of which would accommodate particular types of activities and each supported with the appropriate amenities. The goal is to make each of the places a mini-destination in its own right.

Informed by the ideas put forth by the community and guided by the vision for the corridor that have emerged from the workshop, PPS is recommending that the following improvements and interventions be considered in the short term to:

- (1) create a common vision for each place that is not only unique to each site but that would also strengthen the district as a destination to create a whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
- (2) address the issues specific to each site;
- (3) best leverage existing opportunities and capture the creativity of the people and cultural assets of Roxbury;
- (4) pool together the local capacity of the community
- (5) build long lasting partnerships to ensure that there is community buy in and a sense of ownership and pride.



# 1. Veteran's Park



## Issues and Opportunities

Dudley Square Plaza, recently rededicated as Veteran's Memorial Park, is an attractive well maintained, landscaped and treed oasis. Although located at the convergence of three streets that carry fast moving traffic, it nevertheless feels like a true "Commons," frequented by a diverse array of people from the community. However, it is a place that people pass through rather than go to. There is no place nearby to purchase food, the benches are backless and made of metal (so they are hot in summer and cold in winter), there are no tables, and the trees, because they are not located over the benches, provide little shade. These existing conditions do not make for a comfortable place to eat lunch or even to sit quietly and read a book. In addition, the pathways do not lead one through the park in a logical way and the sidewalks do little to connect the park to the other destinations. Despite these issues, the openness, greenery and the park's location in the middle of Dudley poses a great opportunity for Veteran's Park to become a great place to be where there are many more things to do.

## Recommended Activities and Support Elements

### *Vision*

The vision for the site is to create a town square that captures the creativity, energy and pride of the Roxbury community. There exists a real opportunity to take advantage of the open space, open layout and the central location of Veteran's Park by layering on festive and fun activities that would draw crowds.

### *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

The park is currently an empty canvass – it is clean and has a lot of open, programmable space. We recommend activating Veteran's Park with community-oriented events that would engage and attract people to it. In particular, market-type uses and activities as

well as food-related events and programming would be effective in transforming the park into a great town square.

### *Action Plan: Next Steps (next 6 months)*

1. **Schedule a Series of Events and Activities:** Local nonprofits, community groups and civic institutions should schedule a program of events in the park throughout the summer and fall seasons. The Boston Public Library down the street, for example, could have a mobile library unit, kiosk or cart in the park to create an outdoor reading room in a quiet, shaded section of the park. Other LQC recommendations for uses and activities are:

- Concert series in park
- Outdoor movie nights
- Farmers market with baked goods and produce
- Food carts, food trucks or push carts could turn it into a happening lunch spot
- Sculpture installation or pop-up art
- Games and tournaments such as bocce tournaments and chess tables
- Outdoor performances and buskers











**2. Improve Access and Linkages:** The park will only be successful as a town square if it is more connected to the surrounding neighborhood. The roads form a physical barrier to the park and currently people cross at Kenilworth where there is no cross walk. We recommend connecting the park to the neighborhood through the introduction of crosswalks at Kenilworth and Shawmut, changing the traffic timing to provide more walk time for pedestrians, and narrowing the lanes around the park so cars drive more slowly through the area. Because locational and directional signage is lacking in the entire area, Veteran's Square would be an ideal location for an information kiosk or "Where am I" map of the neighborhood.

**3. Add Support Amenities and Improve Comfort & Image:** A few public space amenities such as movable chairs, tables, and umbrellas for shade would encourage and enable people to have lunch out in the park while enjoying live music. Adding benches with backs is another easy fix that would do a lot to improve the com-



fort and usability of the park. Benches made of wood are recommended so that they don't get cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Other suggestions by stakeholders included placing an attractive feature or sculpture in the middle of the park to create a focal point that would anchor the park as a town square and a central meeting place. Other lighter, quicker, cheaper improvements that could help improve the comfort and image of the park and secure it as the town square include:

- Change the name to Dudley Square which would help identify the neighborhood as well as the public space.
- The Veteran's Memorial sign would be more of a landmark and have a greater presence if it were to be lowered from its height of nine feet and brought down to pedestrian scale. Veterans, particularly those who hailed from Roxbury, could be honored through the installation of plaques on the backs of benches or brick pavers bearing their names and the names of their donors.
- Install decorative or artist-designed banners along the Malcolm X Boulevard edge
- Add landscaping along the Shawmut Street edge
- Create a space for kids to play or a climbing structure. Close Washington Street for one day a week so kids can play there

## Local Partners and Roles

- Abutting neighbors/Neighborhood Association can form a volunteer group or “Friends of the Park” group.
- Art galleries can enliven the public square with outdoor exhibits.
- Boston Department of Parks and Recreation (Sherri Geldersma) and Police Department can play a role in maintaining the park.
- Dudley Square Main Street and local merchants can bring some of their uses to the park and sell their wares at the market.
- Fairfield Center, Canton Corporation, and Hurley Electric can provide sponsorship opportunities that will help implement and fund these short-term improvements.
- Food Project is another nonprofit that is engages young people in sustainable agriculture. Food harvested at the farms can be sold at the farmers market. Food Project can also hold some of their community programs and training classes in the park as well.
- Gallery Basquiat can program and manage the public art displays and outdoor exhibits.
- Haley House is a nonprofit organization with a bakery that acts as a workplace for men and women who face barriers to employment. Haley House can have a kiosk or truck in Veteran’s Park. They can also hold outdoor cooking lessons and other food-related events.
- Local CDCs in the area could be responsible for managing, coordinating and overseeing the events program.
- Local schools can put on monthly outdoor performances in Veteran’s Park and have outdoor bake sales or other special tabling events.
- Mass Art – Sparc Wagon can bring art programming to the park in their SPARC art mobile and hold outdoor public art classes.
- Whittier Community Health Center can have health education programming in the park or a table or booth at the farmers market to advocate for active living and healthy food choices. They also regularly hold community events free and open to the public such as Back to School Bar-B-Qs, Men’s Health Summit, Clean Teeth for Toys and other events promoting good health in our neighborhood – events that could be held in Veteran’s Park.



## 2. Old Police Station



## Issues and Opportunities

The old Police Station sits abandoned and lifeless at the key intersection of Malcolm X Boulevard, Washington Street and Dudley Street – a place that residents consider to be the heart of Roxbury. Currently, the old police station is abutted by an underutilized parking lot and an inactive plaza. However, the site does boast quite a few redeeming qualities such as its prime, accessible location within the center of Roxbury's commercial district; proximity to Dudley Square, which is surrounded by a good mix of uses, including transit service, stores and services, landmark buildings, and civic and cultural institutions in the area.

The site's high accessibility and visibility are attributes that represent a great opportunity to connect the old police station and plaza to the retail activity that is happening across the street and the vitality and foot traffic north of Malcolm X Blvd.

## Recommended Activities and Support Elements

### *Vision*

The vision for the old police station plaza and the major intersection is to create a "Gateway to the Village". The old police station plaza and underutilized lot could serve as a central meeting place that would welcome visitors and residents to Dudley Square and to Roxbury.

### *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

Recommended changes are to design the intersection to look and function as a true gateway to Dudley Square. However, longer term measures such as narrowing the roads, rerouting the buses, introducing a road diet to lower the volume of traffic or turning the intersection into a modern roundabout will bring about the ultimate goal of reclaiming the streets as people places and creating the village feel.

## Action Plan: Next Steps (next 6 months)

1. **Activate with Food:** In the short-term, the parking lot could be activated with food trucks and vendors, which would provide not only a great opportunity to incubate local businesses and support local entrepreneurs but also would generate interests and activity in the area to attract people. Specifically, Somali food carts could be brought here, which would support the east African restaurants and shops in the lot behind the Silver Slipper (they also could be located at Veteran's park instead or on alternating days). The lot should be furnished with movable seating, tables, planters and umbrellas to provide a place for people to sit and eat. The long-term vision is for the old police station to become a public market with vendors that spill out onto the plaza and parking lot.





2. **Highlight Cultural Diversity:** Participants suggested painting murals on the blank walls of the old police station that depict and reflect the cultural diversity of Roxbury's population. Cultural and heritage-related programming such as an outdoor gallery of art-work by local artists would draw people to the site and food options provided by local restaurants and food trucks or carts with seating would create a great reason for people to stay in the area even longer. Other cultural events such as live music performance would go a long way to breathe life into the parking lot and plaza in front of the old police building.





3. **Schedule Events and Activities:** Events and activities related to sociability, play & fun and entertainment would be most appropriate for the old police station plaza such as dance competitions and movie nights once a week projecting onto the wall in the parking lot. The parking lot and plaza could become a social gathering place for the community to come together for convivial events such as dancing and food trucks and movie nights.

Games were a recurrent theme that emerged from the workshop and participants suggested the following activities:

- Skateboarding space
- Hop scotch games
- Double Dutch
- Chess tables
- Dominoes

4. **Add Signage or Informational Kiosk:** A visitor kiosks that is operated by someone knowledgeable about the points of interests in Roxbury, such as Discover Roxbury, should be set up in a visible spot on the plaza or lot and equipped with maps, informational pamphlets about the events happening over the summer, and what there is to do and see in the area. The informational kiosk would act as the focal point of the plaza and a good starting point to discover the rest of Dudley Square. Alternatively or additionally, wayfinding signage and maps of the neighborhood showing the locations of the Social Security office, Hibernian hall, the bus station, library, post office, etc would



help build Dudley Square as a destination. Banners or flags on streetlights that say "Welcome to Roxbury" could identify the area as a gateway and center of Roxbury.



## Local Partners

- % for Arts
- AAMARP
- ACE—air quality, youth (REAP)
- Artist for Humanities
- Brown Fund
- City partnering
- Discovery Roxbury—tours
- Gallery Basquiat, local artists—Public market and performance
- Historic Boston
- Library
- Local Foundations
- Local push carts/ city permitting, temp zoning
- Local schools
- Main streets
- Mass Art CACP/space
- Mass Art students
- Merchants association
- Museum of Fine Arts
- NCAAA
- Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation
- Social Venture Capitalist (investors) TBF\*
- Youth Build Boston



### 3. Library Plaza & 4. Courthouse





## Issues and Opportunities

People liked that the neighborhood has a library and furthermore that it is surrounded by a great deal of programmable space. They were disappointed however in the fact that the entrance is hard to find and that the street-facing façade has no windows or doors which makes the library look like a fortress. A major issue is not only the lack of interaction between the plaza and the surrounding retail but also, between the activities happening on the inside of the library and the outside public space, which is currently not programmed by anyone. Moreover, the plaza in front of the courthouse also does not relate to the library plaza. The plazas in front of both the library and courthouse have a high potential to become its own active, multi-use destination within Roxbury. Therefore, an effort should be made to tie-in the two spaces so that entire area flows together in both a physical and programmatic sense.

Issues with access and linkages are also apparent since there are no crosswalks leading to the library. Library patrons have to cross a street with fast moving traffic. In addition, the plaza has very little seating and the seating that it does offer are uncomfortable concrete benches.

## Recommended Activities and Support Elements

### *Vision*

The vision for library plaza is to create an “outdoor living room” with things for the community to do. The library plaza could emphasize its outdoor living room atmosphere by having an outdoor reading room.

### *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

The key LQC recommendation is to “turn the library inside out” and develop a summer program of events that occur in both the plaza and in the adjoining space outside of the courthouse.

## Action Plan: Next Steps (next 6 months)

- 1. Identify an Events Manager:** From our experience, librarians are natural Placemakers who understand how to manage programming in public spaces. We highly recommend reaching out to the librarian at this branch who is already engaged with organizing the library’s various programming to manage a program of events out in the plaza.
- 2. Schedule a Summer Program of Events and Activities:** Work with Events Coordinators from the Library and other local stakeholders to turn the library inside out and leverage the existing programming that is already happening inside the library by bringing these activities to the plaza and opening up the library to the public sphere. Similar to the outdoor reading room in Bryant Park in New York City, the plaza can bring out carts of books and comfortable seating outside that would feature storytelling for kids. The following is the schedule of exiting and recurring programs that could be “turned inside out”:



- Each Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. films are shown for preschoolers
- Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. is story time for children. Craft projects are often included.
- Anime films for teens are shown Thursdays at 4 p.m.
- On alternate Saturday afternoons, chess lessons are offered for all ages
- Special programming that is being offered that could also be brought out into the plaza include:
  - The Black Doll Show
  - Live concerts
  - Author visits
  - Poetry sessions
- Each year there are also programs sponsored by the Fellowes Athenaeum Fund Grants and include local history, adult literacy, music and children and teen programs

**3. Add Support Amenities:** A few public space amenities such as plantings and benches, movable seating, tables, and shading structure in the plaza will make it comfortable for people to linger and to accommodate the various activities and programs. Movable tables that can be arranged to hold outdoor classes such as those offered by the Dudley Literacy Center. Oversized outdoor cushions and pillows could be brought outside for kids to sit during reading hour. An outdoor screening area where films are projected on the library's blank wall as well as a flexible stage area should also be considered. A gallery of artwork and sculptures by local artists or outdoor exhibits of historic photographs for example, can be placed in strategic spots to create "Art Walk" that could lead people to and from the courthouse plaza to the library plaza. Additional plantings, colorful murals, public art work, banners and better benches in the plaza would add to its overall image and comfort.









## Local Partners

- Art Schools
- Artists—"art district"
- Arts Community
- Boys and Girls Club (next door)
- College of Arts
- Common Thread
- Courthouse
- Discover Roxbury
- Elementary schools (could adopt a planter and do something beautiful) and become involved in making it prettier
- Friends of the Library/Employees
- Haley House
- Library and Dudley Literary Center
- Library patrons can adopt features
- Roland Hayes music school
- School committee (department relocation to Ferdinand, could sponsor arts contests for various grades and local schools)
- Urban league

## 5. Bus Station





## Issues and Opportunities

The accessibility of transit and modal choices, including cycling (a bike station is located there) and gypsy cabs were rated highly by participants. The multicultural vendors, the diverse mix of stores around the station, and the iconic structure of the shed including the architectural details incorporated into the cupola and roof of the bus station are things that people like about the station. All of these elements represent features that could potentially be leveraged to enhance the way the facility looks and functions.

A prominent issue facing the bus station site is that it is currently a transient one where people are either passing through or there just there to get on a bus. Another issue is that it feels more dangerous than it actually is because of the presence of numerous gates and fences, which made one participant exclaim, "Too many unnecessary gates. This is not a jail!". The lack of public art, color, flowers and greenery don't help the site's overall comfort and image either.

Even though the bus station's main function is to serve as a bus terminal that doesn't mean the place has to serve only that one purpose. Given the bus station's central location, adjacent mix of stores and beautiful architectural structure, there is a great opportunity to transform the site into a hub of activity and civic life instead of just being a bus transit hub.

## Recommended Activities and Support Elements

### *Vision*

The vision for the bus station site is to create a market-type destination that celebrates the local businesses and merchants in Dudley Square. Existing vendors as well as others from around the neighborhood could set up stalls and booths in the outdoor market area under the shed. There is also an option to open the market up to local residents who could bring their garage-sale items to sell at the market.

## Action Plan: Next Steps (next 6 months)

**1. Identify an Events and Market Manager and Team:** A committed events management team to oversee the market is crucial to its success. The local manager should have prior experience managing an outdoor market.

**2. Beautify and Restore the Site:**

Cleaning the semi-opaque plastic panels and making sure the public bathrooms work would go a long way to making the place more welcoming and comfortable.

Other recommendations include adding more lights on Dudley Street and in the station itself, adding benches and flexible seating, installing more art by black artists in the waiting areas and planting more flowers.



3. **Create a Market Area in one of the Underused Lanes:** A market area could be set up in the vacant lane where the trailer is parked. Opening up the locked waiting room to sell flowers or other products such as fresh fruit, which would help to activate the space and bring more market-type uses and retail to the area.

4. **Improve the site's Access and Linkages:** To make the bus station more accessible and a place to go to versus a just a bus terminal, we recommend:

- Removing the fences that separate the facility from the stores on Warren Street
- Calming the traffic and slowing down the buses as they enter and exit the facility
- Continuing the bike path to the station
- Adding welcoming signage identifying the site as the Dudley Square Station



## Local Partners

- Discover Roxbury
- Ekua Holmes - SPARC
- Guerilla gardeners
- Mary Churchice
- MBTA
- Paul Goodnight
- Project Hip-Hop
- Roxbury Chamber of Commerce
- Roxbury Open Studio







# Summary of Recommendations for Warren Street Transit Corridor in Roxbury

## Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Action Items Moving Forward:

- (1) Slow down traffic to capture the village feel of Dudley Square and turn the streets into places for people.
- (2) Experiment with market vendors in public spaces to quickly activate underutilized, high opportunity places.
- (3) Activate all five sites with a unique set of events and activities to emphasize that they are destinations in and of themselves.
- (4) Celebrate Roxbury's cultural history by planning events and activities with creative, local partners like the Library.
- (5) Brighten up the concrete, blank walls for the buildings with art and murals.



# Appendix

## About PPS & Placemaking

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit, educational, advocacy and technical assistance organization with an international reputation for its success in the creation of more livable communities. Place-based initiatives are the best way to promote vitality and prosperity in cities everywhere. Our experience helping people in more than 2500 towns around the world improve their community's shows that mobilizing people to make great places strengthens neighborhoods, cities and entire metropolitan areas.

Placemaking is about making your community a great place to live and reversing the trends of recent decades that have reduced our social and physical health and led us to unsustainable ways of living. The most authentic, most enduring destinations in a city – the places that keep locals and tourists coming back, that anchor quality, local jobs, that give a city an identity – are born out of a series of incremental, locally-based improvements that build a destination that's more than the sum of its parts.

Placemaking is central to many of the powerful trends shaping the world today. Project for Public Spaces has been working in communities across the US for thirty-five years to develop a proven model for sustainable development of human environments that elevates economic and community benefit, social capital and environmental health.

In economic terms, Placemaking is a cost-efficient way to become a competitive city. Abundant research suggests that human and creative capital of our communities is now the catalyst of economic growth rather than mere results of that growth.

In social terms, Placemaking builds a lasting sense of community that helps integrate diverse populations. Research has shown that

residents of compact, walkable neighborhoods with places to socialize produce healthier lifestyles, promote the lively exchange of ideas and further social equity.

In terms of environmental sustainability, Placemaking is about creating more sustainable and livable communities that encourage walking, transit, support community health, and reduce reliance on the automobile.

## Placemaking Concepts

PPS's Placemaking approach creates places where people want to be. Every project we plan is rich with vibrant destinations: parks, squares and streets should feel comfortable and offer a wealth of amenities; waterfronts should provide access to an abundance of water-related and other activities; and cultural attractions should contribute to a place's unique identity. Equally important is how these destinations connect and interplay, supporting and complementing each other rather than struggling in isolation.

Some common sense ideas underlie our work and represent the fundamental changes we feel can have a more lasting impact throughout Lawrence than any discipline-driven approach.

### *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper describes a hyper-local development framework that is tried and tested; one that is lower risk and lower cost that capitalizes on the creative energy of the local community and that efficiently generates new uses and revenue for places in transition. In an LQC approach, we ask the question: "What can we do to begin transforming a place within the next six months?"

### *Power of Ten*

The Power of 10 can be a framework to elevate Placemaking to a neighborhood, city or regional level. Our experience of physical environment is most defined and enhanced by great places and the things we do in them, yet we seldom focus on creating great places and defining them around uses. A great place typically has at least 10 things to do in it; a great neighborhood or district has at least 10 great places; and a great city or region has at least 10 of these great districts, plus other major destinations. By having people think about their special places and greatest opportunity places, a community can quickly determine its strengths and prioritize a path forward. This simple, common sense idea can be transformative for evaluating and strategically improving an entire city or region.

### *The Community is the Expert*

"Placemaking" has its greatest impact when applied through the people who know a place best—the local community. Despite their intimate knowledge of a community's assets and needs, the local stakeholders are rarely empowered to formulate their own transformative agenda for their communities. Too often professionals are engaged to impose solutions rather than facilitating a community vision. Moving beyond narrowly defined disciplines, Placemaking cultivates a collaborative campaign grounded in the community's aspirations.

### *Comfort and Affection*

One knows immediately whether a space is warm and welcoming or not. When a place provides a sense of comfort, patrons naturally relax, become part of their surroundings and feel free to be affectionate and at ease with others. It is this goal of creating happiness that has been all but forgotten in shaping the public realm for communities of all levels of the economic scale.

### *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 1980). 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, more activity will occur than if these facilities were located separately.

### *Zealous Nuts*

Almost every great place is the product of the passionate work of a zealous nut, or a group of them. Zealous nuts can take many forms—community residents, shop owners, school officials, librarians, police officers – the Placemaking process invites these vital stakeholders to take a leadership role in injecting the soul into a place.

### *It has to be a Campaign*

Based upon Harvard Business School professor John Kotter's book, *People Who Make Dramatic Change*, we have realized that a successful transformation of place requires a holistic campaign. It starts by developing a vision and opening lines of communication. Impediments must be acknowledged and strategies to overcome these challenges must be determined. Through this initial process, a strong team can emerge to attack complacency and produce short term wins, then move on to bigger challenges, all while keeping the vision grounded in and driven by the community.



## Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper

LQC projects quickly translate a community's vision into reality and keep momentum moving. Ideas can be efficiently implemented, assessed, then tweaked and customized based upon a community's response. Although a lighter, quicker, cheaper approach is not for every situation, it can be a creative, locally-powered alternative to capital-heavy, top-down planning. Lighter, quicker, cheaper projects:

- Provide an efficient, creative, hyper-local way to leverage a city's assets.
- Transform underused spaces into exciting laboratories that citizens can start using right away and see evidence that change can happen.
- Represent an "action planning process" that builds a shared understanding of a place that goes far beyond the short term changes that are made.
- Leverage local partnerships that have greater involvement by a community and results in more authentic places.
- Encourage an iterative approach and an opportunity to experiment, assess, and evolve a community's vision before launching into major construction and a long term process.
- Employ a place-by-place strategy that, over time, can transform an entire city. With community buy-in, the LQC approach can be implemented across multiple scales to transform underperforming spaces throughout an entire city.
- Create Jobs and incubate local entrepreneurs.



## Placemaking Process in Warren Street: Place Performance Evaluation

On April 24, 2012, Project for Public Spaces visited Roxbury to facilitate our Place Performance Evaluation exercise (e.g. Place Game) with local community members, city officials and key stakeholders to evaluate the existing conditions of five sites along the corridor.

The Place Game evaluates a site based on the following criteria: Uses & Activities, Access & Linkages, Sociability, and Comfort & Image, then asks participants to create a short and long-term vision for their sites, and a list of partners to help in the implementation.

The exercise included a slide presentation of Placemaking principles, benchmark sites and examples of LQC interventions as well as the five sites in Dudley Square that people think have good qualities and bad qualities. After the slide show, small groups visited each of the sites to observe the activities and informally interview people in the area. During the visit, observation checklists, designed by PPS, were filled out. After the observations, the groups returned to the meeting room for a discussion of what each group found. Spokespeople from each group described their findings using slides of the observation areas for reference. Specific suggestions for improvements were developed along with a plan of action appropriate to the location.

It is from this Placemaking process that a vision emerged of what the five sites can collectively become in Roxbury; focusing on both small-scale improvements that can begin to take place almost immediately as well as longer-term improvements to be implemented over time.

### 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  
400 Lafayette Street  
Second Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
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## Place Game

Place Performance Evaluation  
A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process

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SITE #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Rate the Place:

COMFORT & IMAGE	POOR	GOOD
Overall attractiveness	1 2 3 4	
Feeling of safety	1 2 3 4	
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance	1 2 3 4	
Comfort of places to sit	1 2 3 4	
Comments/Notes:		

ACCESS & LINKAGES	POOR	GOOD
Visibility from a distance	1 2 3 4	
Ease in walking to the place	1 2 3 4	
Transit access	1 2 3 4	
Clarity of information/signage	1 2 3 4	
Comments/Notes:		

USES & ACTIVITIES	POOR	GOOD
Mix of stores/services	1 2 3 4	
Frequency of community events/activities	1 2 3 4	
Overall busyness of area	1 2 3 4	
Economic vitality	1 2 3 4	
Comments/Notes:		

SOCIABILITY	POOR	GOOD
Number of people in groups	1 2 3 4	
Evidence of volunteerism	1 2 3 4	
Sense of pride and ownership	1 2 3 4	
Presence of children and seniors	1 2 3 4	
Comments/Notes:		

### Identify Opportunities

- What do you like best about this place?
- List 5 things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot (please list activities and the amenities that would be needed):
- What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
- Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
- What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

PLACE GAME

Placemaking in the Warren Street Transit Corridor 28



## *List of Attendees at the Placemaking Workshop*

*April 24, 2012*

(Held in B2 Precinct Station Community Room, Dudley Square)

- Mariama White-Hammond, Project Hip-Hop
- Destiny Palmer, graphic designer for Discover Roxbury
- V. Paul Deare, resident & Nuestra board president
- Dorothea Jones, resident & Roxbury Master Plan Oversight Committee member
- Paul Francois, Nuestra
- Mark Matel, Nuestra
- Ina Anderson, Smart Growth Alliance
- Pamela Bender, Smart Growth Alliance
- Nicole Flynt-Thomas, Nuestra Comunidad, Common Thread and resident
- Fred Fairfield, Canton Corp. & Dudley Sq Main Streets board member
- Michelle Murray, resident
- Myia X, Gallery Basquiat
- Aziza Goodnight-Robinson, Gallery Basquiat and resident
- Dumas Lafontant, Gallery Basquiat and resident
- John Dalzell, BRA
- Joshua Wilmouth, Discover Roxbury AmeriCorps member
- Sarah Howard-McHugh, Earthos Institute
- Sandra Larson, BayState Banner
- Jeong-jun ju, BRA
- Kai Grant, resident
- Mary Churchill, resident
- Pat Hoey, Boston Transportation Department
- Eric Halvorsen, Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC)

- Pam Bender, Mass Association of CDCs
- Larry Gosier, resident, contractor and Nuestra board member
- John Sisson, Mass Smart Growth Alliance
- David Price, Nuestra Comunidad

