Placemaking

Placemaking is turning a neighborhood, downtown, or community from a place you can’t wait to get through to one you never want to leave. It requires residents to view public spaces where people gather (e.g., streetscape, park, civic building, retail center) through a new lens. Placemaking capitalizes on local assets, inspirations, and potential (as defined by those who live, work, and play in a particular place) to create and manage good public spaces. The result is a common vision and strategy, beginning with small-scale, doable improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them.

Placemaking is about improving the quality of life of residents. People choose to live in, shop in, and invest in places that offer attractive amenities, social and business networks, and opportunities for a vibrant, thriving lifestyle. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation recently made placemaking a centerpiece of their community revitalization strategy and has recognized that vibrant places are key to attracting and retaining knowledge-based workers, entrepreneurs, and growing industries within the “new economy”.

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) has partnered with the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to bring placemaking to our region. In evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, PPS has found successful places have four key qualities in common:

- they are accessible and have linkages to other places;
- people use them and are engaged in activities there;
- they are comfortable and have a good image;
- they are sociable places where people meet and interact.

WCWRPC can apply the PPS placemaking process and concepts to guide your community through the PPS Place Game, an interactive place performance evaluation, and employ the PPS Power of Ten tool to help you identify placemaking opportunities and build a critical mass of quality amenities and places to create a more vibrant community. Call us today to learn how we can help you enhance the places in your community.