

Place Evaluation Workshop

Conducting a Place Evaluation

Part 1: On-Site Exercise

1. The group should appoint a facilitator to guide the process and keep time. The facilitator could be someone very familiar with the building or site you are evaluating.
2. Each small group should appoint a good note-taker or recorder (NOT the facilitator) to write down comments during the evaluation.
3. Become familiar with the entire place first, by walking around and through it in its entirety. Pay special attention to the spaces surrounding the building and the uses and activities that could occur there.
4. After surveying the entire place, go with your small group to your assigned site (or sites). Spend 15-30 minutes with your group at your site.
5. Using the Place Evaluation Game, (page 61), rate your assigned site by yourself or with a partner (do not do this as a group). Don't agonize over this part of the evaluation. It's better to record your first impressions. Do NOT tally your ratings yet (this will occur later).
6. Then, with your group, answer the questions on the Place Evaluation Game (page 62). The recorder should read the questions aloud and write down all the comments. A separate piece of paper may be required.
7. Remember to consider any streets, intersections, and/or pedestrian connections to your site, if applicable.
8. Don't spend too much time on any one area or question. If you or others get delayed, have the facilitator prompt the group to move on.
9. Most importantly, Have FUN!

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Part 2: Reporting Back Your Findings & Recommendations

1. When you return to the meeting room, check the agenda to see how much time your group has to compile its findings. Then, add up and average your ratings by yourself.
2. Next, come to consensus as a group about the ratings for the site you evaluated. Feel free to debate/discuss differing views. Then, combine ratings from all group members into four overall scores (Access & Linkages; Comfort & Image; Uses & Activities; and Sociability).
3. The group should select one person to record the average ratings and the recommendations. The goal is to summarize each comment, but also capture the main ideas and details accurately. (Good penmanship helps!)
4. Go over each group member's likes and dislikes for the site; summarize those that come up repeatedly.
5. Discuss the range of short and long-term recommendations for your site and develop a list of key recommendations. Summarize any main, overarching points.
6. Consider having someone in your group draw or sketch ideas, plans, or diagrams, if desired.
7. Discuss the range of partners who can, should, or must help in implementing your group's recommendations. Brainstorm any additional "unlikely" partners.
8. Your group now has a mini-presentation: site ratings, likes & dislikes, short- and long-term recommendations, and potential partners, plus any summary or visionary comments.
9. The group could select another (or the same) person to use the flip chart notes to report the site ratings, likes and recommendations to the other groups.
10. Submit your evaluation forms to your facilitator at the end of the session so s/he has a record of your comments.