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Ten Benefits of Creating Good Public Spaces

1. *Support local economies:*

The River Market in Little Rock, Arkansas, a \$4.4 million project that opened in 1996, has been a catalyst for over \$500 million in new and proposed construction, including the Clinton Presidential Library. The market has doubled in size in three years, and is given credit for the downtown's renaissance. PPS has been closely involved in the project.



2. *Attract business investments:*






In downtown Oak Park, Illinois, PPS recommended replacing a failed pedestrian mall with the original street. Even before the changes were fully implemented, there was a 100% increase in enquiries from potential tenants, and the vacancy rate eventually decreased from 30% to 5%.



3. *Attract tourism:*

After extensive user studies PPS recommended design improvements to the Channel Gardens at the Rockefeller Center. The changes, including increased seating, have allowed the gardens and world famous skating rink to become one of the most popular spaces in New York City and encouraged The Today Show, and other attractions, to locate there.



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4. ***Provide cultural opportunities:***

San Rafael, California, a city with a large Italian population, worked with PPS to create a vision for a neglected city park. The residents raised money to install bocce courts, which



are managed by a local nonprofit. The park has since become a major source of civic pride: families come nightly from all over San Rafael, while media attention has attracted bocce enthusiasts from across the U.S. and Europe.

5. ***Encourage volunteerism:***

In Corpus Christi, Texas, 1500 adults and children helped to make ceramic tiles decorating the benches, light poles, columns and central archway of Staples Street Station, a bus transfer center. PPS



won a Federal Design Achievement Award for the project.

6. ***Reduce crime:***

In the early 1980s, seven-acre Bryant Park in New York City was over-run by drug dealers - office employees and tourists didn't dare venture in. With the changes recommended by PPS, the park now



attracts 10,000 people on a sunny day, and presents a popular film festival on summer evenings.

7. ***Improve pedestrian safety:***

PPS's experimental diagonal parking initiative in San Bernardino, California resulted in 50% more pedestrians along the street while increasing parking spaces by 25%.



8. ***Increase use of public transportation:***

The successful renovation of Netherwood train station in Plainfield, New Jersey, under guidance from PPS has resulted in a 40% increase in ridership.



9. ***Improve public health:***

Research shows that in neighborhoods where people walk less, people are more likely to be overweight. In the last year, PPS have trained 600 New Jersey transportation professionals in



Context Sensitive Design - a design process that responds to local needs and helps create more walkable neighborhoods.

10. ***Improve the environment:***

Increased awareness of the importance of open spaces



increases responsible use of these resources, and reclaims waterfronts, rivers and meadows. PPS's Urban Parks Institute is a national resource center for efforts to restore urban parks.

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