
Reimagining
the Civic Commons

Measure What Matters

Tools to evaluate the social impacts of your city's
public places

Measure What Matters

Can parks, libraries, community centers, and trails connect people of all backgrounds, cultivate trust and counter the trends of social and economic fragmentation in cities?

We believe they can.

To prove it we must measure what matters. This toolkit will help you get started.

Measure What Matters

Reimagining the Civic Commons is working to understand the social value of our shared civic assets in order to make the larger case for further investment and attention.

To do that, we've designed a new system of measurement for public places and nearby neighborhoods. With this system, we are discovering how people are interacting with each other in place, and how the place can support a more engaged, equitable, sustainable, and economically vibrant community.

Whether you're managing a civic asset, planning new assets, heading up a friends' group, or advocating for better public places, these open-source tools will provide insight that you can use to reimagine your city's public places with social, environmental, and economic impact in mind.

With this meaningful data and analysis in hand, you can:

- Tell the story of your civic commons to communities, elected officials, and funders
- Understand what's working and what isn't so you can make smarter choices
- Make a strong case for additional investment based upon impact

We invite you to explore the tools and put them to use in service to your city. If you have questions on how to use the tools, we're here to help. Contact Bridget Marquis at bmarquis@u3advisors.com.

Behind the Data

Learn more about our measurement methodology and how we're putting it to work.

[Measuring the Civic Commons: A Framework](#)

[Blog post: Measuring what matters in the commons](#)

[Baseline reports for Akron, Chicago, Detroit, and Memphis](#)

The Tools

Each tool includes instructions to help you get started and a way to collect and analyze data. You can customize the tools to meet your specific needs or use them as presented.

Observation Map

This tool allows you to collect data about who's visiting your site throughout the day, simply by observing. The data you collect will help you understand how many people are visiting your site and when, what types of activities they're engaging in, whether they're interacting with others around them, and more. It also collects demographic data such as age and ethnicity. The observation map provides insight on the Reimagining the Civic Commons signals of public life, mixing on site, and safety.

Download the toolkit

Download individual files:

[Observation Map Worksheet](#)

[Instructions](#)

[Analysis Form](#)

[Example Analysis](#)

Site Intercept Survey

This brief survey provides a snapshot of who is visiting the site, where they're coming from, and how the site impacts visitors. It helps you understand what people think about the site and what role it plays in the surrounding neighborhood and the entire city. It also allows you to collect demographic data of a representative sample of visitors. The intercept survey provides insight on a number of Reimagining the Civic Commons signals related to the goals of civic engagement and socioeconomic mixing.

Download the toolkit

Download individual files:

[Site Intercept Survey](#)

[Instructions](#)

[Analysis Form](#)

[Example Analysis](#)

This toolkit was created by the Civic Commons Learning Network in partnership with Interface Studio, LLC.

Reimagining the Civic Commons is a three-year, national initiative with projects in five U.S. cities that revitalize and connect civic assets. A collaboration of national foundations and a network of local partners, the initiative is working toward four main goals: civic engagement, socioeconomic mixing, environmental sustainability, and value creation.

Learn more at www.civiccommons.us.