COMMUNICATING to Cultivate Community

TECHNOLOGY, art, and a playful approach

for getting people INVOLVED

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Interface Studio LLC

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Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation (FNDC)
interface studio

part urban designers/part graphic designers/part data nerds/part community organizers
APA National Planning Excellence Awards

2009 for a **Grassroots Initiative**
Lower Italian Market Revitalization Project, Philadelphia

2010 for **Public Outreach**
Wicker Park Bucktown Master Plan, Chicago

- Graphic and playful nature of our work
- Interest in “urban incrementalism” or fast, affordable, Do-It-Yourself initiatives
INNOVATIONS in PUBLIC OUTREACH

- REFRESH your public process, BUILD COMMUNITY, and HAVE FUN while you’re at it
- Emphasize the importance of LISTENING (and ECHOING what you hear)
  - Linking public outreach with IMPLEMENTATION
    - Building awareness
    - Empowering the community by listening to local ideas
    - Recruiting committed volunteers
- Explore emerging best practices in public outreach that harness NEW, ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY
  - Using the RIGHT TOOLS to build community among disparate / uninvolved groups

2 CASE STUDIES:
- Neighborhood Plan for Francisville in Philadelphia
- Commercial Corridor Plan for a Business Improvement District in Chicago
FNDC  Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation

FOUNDED
2003 with the aim of creating a community resource for information and communication, thereby ensuring that all residents could have an active role in the growth and development of their neighborhood.

MISSION
To improve the quality of life in the Francisville community through Commercial and Residential Equitable Development and to implement programs designed to develop the youth, aid senior citizens, and generally invest in the people of Francisville.
A little background...
...and history
Historic neighborhood with great bones…but a fragmented physical fabric…a struggling commercial corridor…and some conflict between community groups…

In 2006:
Between 2000 and 2006, 280 new and rehabilitated units had been completed or proposed (16% growth). And to complicate matters, market pressure was on the rise.
Moving Francisville Forward:
a blueprint for the future

Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation
People For People, Inc

INTERFACE STUDIO LLC
Our Public Outreach Goals

- Build Awareness of FNDC and Plan
- Calm Fears about Gentrification
- Educate Neighbors about benefits of Mixed Income Communities
- Hear their Ideas for the Future
- Recruit Volunteers!!
FIN  Francisville Information Network

• Our take on the traditional phone tree
• Affordable & EASY automated messaging service
• Neighbors sign up to receive FREE updates and announcements
• Great for people without internet access

Now  on  and on the web too:
www.francisvillendc.org
Change is inevitable.
Embrace the possibilities.
Our Plan was a grassroots effort
The lasting value of our public outreach is immeasurable

Built a network of interested neighbors and committed volunteers
Ready to roll up their sleeves
And help maintain momentum after the planning process was completed

A few of our volunteer-driven successes:
Greening – putting Francisville back on the map… (and on the Mayor’s radar!)
FYC3
Francisville Youth Community
Caretakers Club
The Creation of Ogden Park, 2008 – present
FNDC at work, reclaiming vacant and underutilized land...
March 2008
Francisville Clean & Green Volunteer Team in Action
We opened up the whole area, and it’s no longer a scary place to walk through!

September 2010
And now, we’ve moved on to the Francisville Orchard at 815 Perkiomen Street
Before and After, April 2010
Conceptual Sketch for Entrance
From Concept to Reality, September 2010
WPB SSA is a public body funded by property owners along the commercial streets in Wicker Park and Bucktown.
6 commercial corridors: Ashland, Damen, Division, Milwaukee, North, Western

13 miles of sidewalk

734 businesses

2,750 homes
The mission of WPB SSA is to:

**sustain and promote** the **prosperity** and **unique qualities** of life in WPB’s neighborhood and commercial district

**whilst**

**preserving** its **diverse character** for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses

through the

**wise and discerning investment of resources** to **enhance our public ways**
Re-activating a Vacant Storefront
open house activities

- photo suggestion booth
- video storytelling booth
- postcards from the future
- d.i.y. budget
- interactive map
- proMOTIONal installation
- community photo exhibit
“Bucktown could become the model community for wig recycling.”

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening. The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 29th, April 5th & April 12th. 10am - 4pm, 1275 North Milwaukee

wickerparkbucktown.org

“Cat Parks. That’s how you improve Wicker Park.”

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening. The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 29th, April 5th & April 12th. 10am - 4pm, 1275 North Milwaukee

wickerparkbucktown.org

“Nothing would bring Wicker Park together more than an adult bookstore.”

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening. The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 29th, April 5th & April 12th. 10am - 4pm, 1275 North Milwaukee

wickerparkbucktown.org
WPB has a plan in the works...
You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening.
The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 28th, April 5th & April 12th. 10am-4pm. 1275 North Milwaukee
wickerparkbucktown.org

YOU ARE HERE

the plan should be as funky as we like, a dreamscape for the area.

Storefront Video Installation
9’ x 9’ Interactive Map
Postcards from the Future

in 2028... much to everyone’s surprise, the flat iron building still is a art studios and inhabited by artists of all kinds. In fact, now the little banking offices that bank of America built and are always empty now always have art shows hanging from floor to ceiling. This intersection is a real hub now! There are lots of free shuttle buses to the link to old town. To metro (now called the bucktown station), to the clifton & eelini corridors, to Humboldt park, just everywhere! I don’t need a car all weekend! I was really impressed with the american-style bike lanes, rather than having the bike lanes between traffic and parked cars, the lanes are between the sidewalk and parked cars. I was also impressed to see how green/sustainable it was... found parking at home between the hours of 6-9pm, and the valet, many cars, and guest cars somewhere that did not affect residents trying to come home from a long day at work... were impressed to learn that if a retail storefront is empty for more than a month, the owner is required to pay for posters that cover the windows that have random wicker park, bucktown neighborhood facts. Very cool! I decided that the feeling of community still lives on north avenue. North avenue was alive with many unique shops and pleasant places to stop and grab a quick bite, the moving sidewalks also helped getting us around. We walked everywhere and went to see all the new art galleries and artist studios/residences on the second and third floors and a fantastic rooftop patio with outdoor exhibits. The main floor is strictly retail, that’s artists’ work on display and for sale (yes, round). Rents are extremely low due to a subsidy from the city. The building looks fantastic and is truly the gateway to the wicker park area. We visited several world-class art galleries then went to dinner in a great one-of-a-kind restaurant that I attended a live music production. It was a great experience... love all the old buildings that have been in the neighborhood forever! It’s amazing how the diversity of people has remained in the neighborhood and the eclecticism that has always characterizedwick park... hung out at the concord court plaza beer garden, our hotel is off the plaza in a warren of alleys between milwaukee ave and Damen. We rode the late night trolley from Damen down to Division; I drank too much coffee and rode the bean street trolley from the new riverfront park where high rises step over the freeway and terrace down to a waterfront promenade. I was happy to park in the new parking garage on ashland just north of Milwaukee division in the old mouth area. The retail mall has just opened with parking above, I especially like the central indoor courtyard where young artists (on a rotating basis) are allowed to display and sell their artwork. On the upper levels, above the garage is the new theatre, music and dance auditorium with a seating capacity of 25,000! Love the place, it’s a friendly place to live, and fun at the same time. My girlfriend and I went to have coffee at one of the small parks located on Milwaukee ave. Had a cup of coffee and enjoyed a concert there. We walked along division street where we spent some time at borders and then we watched a movie at the independent film center located right behind the mb bank building... I love living here! It has everything you want within a short walk of the people are young, hip, and engaging! I’m glad I decided to retire here.
1,000s of views on flickr.com

Photo Suggestion Booth
DIY Budgeting Exercise
show us the money.

If you had $10, $20, $50, or $100, how would you spend it to improve Cramer Hill?

Expand the presence of bicycle police

Expand corridor lighting, upgrade to LED

Undertake LED yard lighting program
Video “Confessionals”
Storytelling Booth
...and for the WPB Baby Boom
If only I knew when the next bus would be here!
What is this screen?

- live Bus Tracker info
- upcoming WPB events and community info

route # and direction
destination

arrival time
bus stop location
Everyone should live art, fart art.
MAKE
REACTIVATING VACANT SPACES IN WPB
BELIEVE
VOTE NOW FOR YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST
MAKEBELIEVE.WEGOTITINWPB.COM
JULY 15TH → OCTOBER 29TH
Mautene Court

A place for all to enjoy
Revitalize the park at Division/Ashland/Milwaukee. (Polish Triangle Park).
Northern Liberties

Yorktown
the online collaborative map has been viewed 5,400+ times...
77 comments and ideas have been added to the map...
39 people have completed the online survey...

...and counting!
HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT SPRING GARDEN?

Have an idea about how to improve Spring Garden?

trees
benches
food trucks
lighting
solar trash cans
flower beds
bus shelters
rain gardens
murals
decorative pavers
public art
dog park

Please tell us how to use the numbered orange sticker to indicate the location on the map or streetscape photo and write your idea on the card with the corresponding number.
place-specific greening ideas

YOU SAID...

“put flowers, landscape with shade trees and benches”

“a smorgasbord of color the entire growing season”

“big space—community garden—attractive fencing—great sun prospect”

“endangered evergreen forest”

“this whole area should look like veterans memorial park”

“develop a WALKING TRACK from 2nd St. to Del Ave & back. put distance markers, water stop, rest spot, time & distance info”

“grow plants beneath the overpass?”

“plants to cover view of black top parking areas”

“this area needs ‘greening’”

“this entire route needs SHADE”

“this parking lot should really be a public park!”

“incorporate a nice fence and pathway... it would open up the whole corner very easily!! it would be another place to walk a dog.”

key

- tree planting
- ground planting
- community garden
- median greening
although it covers only about 21% of the distance between 2nd St and Columbus Blvd...
...of the comments and ideas addressed the UNDERPÄSS.
mural ideas

“metal shapes coated with phosphorescent paint & reflective glass beads, which hold the light of the cars driving by to work with Arup lighting.”

“signage that there is an entrance to the El located on south side of the underpass would help people looking for the station.”

“The upgrades and ‘mural’ should reflect the linear, transitory nature of the space. It is a temporary space for thousands of people each day, and not a destination.”

“make sure the ‘mural’ is also graffiti-proof or/and that it can be cleaned.”

“i suggest a permanent resurfacing in a lighter color instead of some silly trendy painted mural that will peel off in 2 years”

“motion activated lighting (by pedestrians), random/traffic-activated at other times

“whatever ‘mural’ element...is on the walls should be reflected in the median structure of the overpass, the ‘trunks’ can be part of the effect.”

“i was in Taipei & Hsin Chu Taiwan...and i recall on a certain highway, they had these colorful panels that were wavy that masked the underside of the highway, perhaps some like these could be installed and used to feed the water that drips down to the side.”

“how about some funky lighting under I-95 and El...imagine the walls shimmering with mirror shards. How about a funky welcome to Northern Liberties sign painted on the East side of the I-95 overpass.”
Yorktown CHATTER BOX
“The community is basically part of our heritage, and everyone who lives here doesn't want to leave, because there is no other neighborhood like ours.”

“Yorktown stands as a symbol for the continuing rise of the African-American family in America.”

“I DON'T REALLY KNOW, EVEN THOUGH IT IS THE FUNNEST!”

“It's a great neighborhood, and it will continue to be great if we let our grandchildren stay here and rebuild.”

“Look at all that beauty out there, isn't it nice? And to sustain it for 50 years! I want it to keep growing.”

Yorktown CHATTER BOX
so in conclusion

ever-growing range of tools (hi-tech and low-tech) at our disposal
+ growing interest in cities
+ increasing access to information

= communities we work in are FULL of people who are excited about planning and ready to talk and share ideas

Our job is to:

* use the tools we have or INNOVATE new ones (artful, playful, interactive)
* select the tools that BEST FIT each community
* view public outreach as CENTRAL to the process
* collect community ideas, organize them, weigh them, add our own, and package them
Change is inevitable.
Embrace the possibilities.

Thank You!
Once you are logged in to your Google account and viewing the Spring Garden Greenway Collaborative Map on the Google Maps page, click on “Edit” in the upper right corner of the scroll bar area to the left of the map.

To add a comment or idea to the map, click on the “Add a Placemark” tool.

This will turn your mouse cursor into a blue placemaker. Click anywhere on the map, and your placemark will be fixed to that spot. A speech bubble dialog box will appear and prompt you to give your comment or idea a title, as well as add description text. You will notice that other comments and ideas are titled in a particular way—“Comment 503,” “idea 3,” etc. These titles correspond to serial numbers on stickers used to collect public input at community meetings—feel free to give your placemaker any title you like!

When you’re done entering your title and description text, you can change the default blue icon to the yellow “comment” or orange “idea” icon by clicking on the blue marker here. To select the custom icon, click on “My Icons” and then choose either the yellow “comment” icon or the orange “idea” icon by clicking on the desired icon.

**VOILA!**

That’s it! If you have any trouble, shoot an email to leah@interface-studio.com and we’ll get you back on track.