Participatory Photo Mapping

Participatory Photo Mapping (PPM) is a tool for exploring the experience of place and for communicating this experience to community stakeholders and local decision-makers. Using PPM helps communities uncover supports for and barriers to well-being, especially those related to the built environment.

Our goal is to use PPM in collaborative projects to improve the health and well-being of communities. It’s all about reaching the goal of “Healthy People in Healthy Places.”

The PPM method combines:

1. photographs
2. narratives
3. maps
4. presentations

PPM allows you to:

1. assess the social and environmental determinants of health, safety and well-being,
2. address perceptions of neighborhood environments,
3. identify community supports and barriers to health, safety and well-being,
4. call for action by presenting information to stakeholders and decision-makers.

The PPM process has four steps:

Step 1: Provide participants with digital cameras and GPS receivers for documenting routine use of community and recreation environments in their neighborhoods.

Step 2: Use photographs to guide narrative interview sessions during which emerging themes are attached to particular place images.

Step 3: Map images and narratives as part of a neighborhood-level geographic information system (GIS).

Step 4: Use insights gained to communicate information to community stakeholders and decision-makers in order to prompt action.

Journal Article: