SAMPLE PROPOSAL

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Public Programs well before a grant deadline.

Project Title: 
Place Matters Web Site: Creating Online Dialogues about Historical and Cultural Landscapes

Institution: 
City Lore, Inc.

Project Director: 
Marci Reaven

Grant Program: 
Special Projects

Grant Type: 
Planning Grant

Award Amount: 
$50,000
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1. NATURE OF THE REQUEST
City Lore seeks support from the Division of Public Programs to collaborate with distinguished humanities scholars and web experts in the planning of new interactive and virtual community features for a website connected to its Place Matters project.

Place Matters is a joint initiative of City Lore, a cultural organization dedicated to fostering New York City’s living cultural heritage, and the Municipal Art Society (MAS), one of New York’s premiere advocates for a livable city. Launched in 1998, Place Matters aims to create, for the first time, a genuinely public history of New York City that can be inscribed in its streets, buildings, and public places. The initiative also aims to galvanize national discussion about conservation of urban historical and cultural landscapes, using Place Matters’ work in New York as a model. To do so, Place Matters is drawing together two broad streams of humanistic thinking, concerned with historical experience and with the nature of place and place attachment. At the convergence of these streams, Place Matters is creating a vital public discussion including educators, citizen-activists, policy makers, architects and planners, as well as humanities scholars. And we are creating a truly participatory and public process which democratizes the predominantly professional exercise of valuing historic sites.

Place Matters conducts innovative community partnerships; public, educational, and interpretive programs; and historical, architectural, and ethnographic research, including a citywide cultural resource survey. We are now in the process of producing a pilot website for the project.

To extend the impact and reach of our online programming, and to develop its potential for virtual community building, we seek support from the Division of Public Programs to plan the second-generation of a Place Matters website. The site will be an important tool in achieving project goals. We seek $50,000 in planning funds, out of a total project budget of $96,000. Planning funds will support ongoing consultation with humanities and technical experts as we plan an enhanced web site and produce online prototypes of key interactive elements.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT
A. Intellectual Background
Born out of acute concern for a heritage at risk of destruction and forgetfulness, Place Matters is based on an idea that is both new and as old as historic preservation itself: that people become attached to places for a broad range of reasons, and that those attachments may sometimes merit public concern and intervention. Over a century ago, the founders of the historic preservation movement fought to preserve Mount Vernon and the Civil War battlefields. They understood the power and value of attachments based on common history, and our work would strike a familiar chord with them. Yet today’s understandings of history differs from theirs, and Place Matters brings these new ways of thinking to bear on the central question of historic preservation: how should we conserve our historical narratives, memories and traditions as embodied in the built environment?

In doing so, Place Matters draws consciously on trends in historical thought that originate with the “Annales” school historians who began to substitute details of everyday life for grand narratives of politics and war as the subject matter of history. This approach has helped to create an urban history
of richly nuanced narratives of neighborhood rise and decline, ethnic and economic succession, and cultural identity and interchange. Concurrent, and even more sweeping, changes in the nature of our society and cities have in turn prompted an increased awareness of the multiplicity of cultures, beliefs, and traditions that flourish in our cities. Buildings, streets, and public spaces can furnish a powerful tool for public history —just how powerful has been shown in Los Angeles by Dolores Hayden and The Power of Place. Yet in most of the country, protection and interpretation of historic fabric have remained surprisingly unaffected by these currents.

While historians have been rewriting our relationship to the past, other disciplines have been revising our relationship to place. Novelists and journalists have created regional literatures rich in evocation of place, from Faulkner in the south and Stegner in the west through Paul Auster and Joseph Mitchell in New York. Environmental psychologists (Setha Low), anthropologists (Keith Basso), cultural geographers (Yi-Fu Tuan, John Stilgoc, Paul Groth), public artists (REPOHistory, John Ahearn), folklorists (Henry Glassie, Mary Hufford), cultural landscape theorists (J.B. Jackson, Matthew Potteiger), philosophers (Edward Casey), sociologists (Herbert Gans, Jack Kugelmass), urbanists (Jane Jacobs), and even economists (Thomas Michael Power) have described place-making and place attachment from the perspective of their disciplines. Eloquent studies have been written about the Shawangunks, the Adirondacks, New England towns, southwestern reservations, New York neighborhoods, and many other places. These have brought to the study of place a sensibility parallel to that of the historians: affectionate attention to daily life, appreciation of distinctive customs and traditions, and awareness of symbolic attachments rooted in community history. Yet their focus on the special character of places gives their work a flavor distinct from that of the historians.


These are theoretical statements, however, written by and for professionals. Place Matters is where theory meets the real world, where intention is translated into practice, where humanist scholars and conservation professionals meet the public in a conversation that brings theoretical, practical and public perspectives to bear on the question of what makes places special, what these places contribute to our civic life, and how our society can protect them.

Our website will be a major tool in fostering and focusing this debate. Through it, Place Matters will focus our humanities consultants’ participation on a deceptively simple question: what makes places special —special enough to warrant public interest and concern? We propose to
City Lore Proposal- Place Matters
Narrative Essay

down into subsidiary lines of inquiry. One centers on how different communities define place. Though conservation professionals refer to “place” as if it were self-explanatory, it is anything but that. Place can mean a discrete location, a loosely defined geographical area, or a network of social connections rooted in such an area, depending on the speaker’s cultural background. Our consultants’ expertise on a broad range of ethnic and geographic communities will help ensure that our work reflects a nuanced understanding of the different ways in which places are constituted.

Another inquiry focuses on how meaning is negotiated within contested terrain. Our cities harbor diverse communities, and conflict sometimes arises over buildings, public spaces, and even neighborhoods. The contest may be over who occupies the place or whose history is represented there. Places of contention may themselves be sites of historical conflict related to political or cultural movements (Stonewall Bar, Triangle Shirtwaist factory). Or they may be neighborhoods of changing racial or ethnic composition. The example of a Jewish neighborhood that is now African American comes easily to mind. Yet in New York we can also ask whether the Corona neighborhood’s African American heritage has something to say to Corona’s new Korean residents. Or whether the Korean experience has meaning for African Americans. A public discussion of how to identify and interpret New York’s sites of racial, class, or gender conflict could lead to shared new understandings of our history as a city, and Place Matters will lead such a discussion.

B. Programming Foundations

During its first year and a half, Place Matters has built the foundations for the proposed website by launching the Census of Places that Matter, presenting a wide range of events, and building an interested public.

The Census of Places that Matter is a citywide inventory of sites that merit public concern because of their history, cultural traditions, or popular memories. We solicit nominations to the Census through community workshops and study projects, mailings, exhibits, and collaborations with other organizations. The nearly 200 nominations received to date reflect a broad spectrum of the city’s history and culture. These and other nominations will soon be made available to the public through the pilot website, together with a sampling of the historical, ethnographic, and architectural documentation that we carry out. At a later point in the project, the nominations will be reviewed by a broadly representative advisory committee and will then be published in final form.

The Census, like Place Matters itself, is both novel and traditional. Many conservation programs rely on inventories; some even begin with them. The Municipal Art Society itself spearheaded the architectural inventory that demonstrated the need for New York’s Landmarks Law. On one level, Place Matters is updating that list. On another, the Census represents an important innovation. Not only is it a cultural resource survey on a larger scale than has ever been assembled in New York City, but also - unlike most such surveys - it is being built from the bottom up. We are asking people what they care about and why, and they are directing us to places that conservation professionals using more traditional techniques might overlook. Cultural conservationists have often called for this kind of process: folklorist Mary Hufford describes (in Conserving Culture) how federal heritage policies have sought for “resource identification to be guided as much as possible by those whose cultures are affected.” But this advice is rarely practiced. Place Matters is doing so.
The Census of Places that Matter is central to our project. It plays several roles: to establish the scope of conservation needs facing New York City; to stimulate public discussion around the need for new conservation policies; and to organize a publicly accessible archive, compiled in compliance with professional standards in folklore and architecture, on places of historical and cultural value in New York. The process of compiling the Census has its own special value: it gives us a way of organizing a wide range of public programs, focusing discussions, and energizing communities on behalf of their heritage. For example, during our first year and a half, Place Matters has:

- worked with the East Harlem Historical Organization to create and publish a cultural and historical neighborhood map, which led to a series of public discussions (attended by hundreds of residents) organized around historic themes of great interest to the communities within East Harlem, including radical politics, public art and turf sharing;
- organized a conference session and an issue of Designer/Builder to present the thoughts of community activists, public historians, and folklorists on efforts to preserve the Staten Island home and spiritual retreat of social reformer Dorothy Day;
- coordinated a public workshop on sites of labor history led by members of the New York State Labor History Association and REPOhistory, an artists’ collective;
- led an in-depth studio project at Pratt Institute focusing on the history and traditions of Red Hook, heart of Brooklyn’s historic industrial waterfront;
- launched a collaboration with community organizations to uncover and commemorate the heritage of Latin music as embedded in the streets, shops and buildings of the South Bronx;
- contributed articles and opinion pieces to organizational newsletters and given talks to Community Planning Boards and local civic associations;
- created and circulated photographic exhibits on neighborhood shopfronts and other significant neighborhood sites.

In addition to these activities, we are discussing collaborations with Libraries for the Future, Museum of Chinese in the Americas, Historic Districts Council, and community-based history organizations such as the Hamilton Heights/West Harlem Community Preservation Organization.

These activities have created a core of knowledge and engaged a diverse public in our work: both of these are essential steps towards launching a website that will help people to see beneath the bricks and mortar of the urban landscape to the trove of cultural meaning embedded there.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Place Matters seeks funding for a year-long consulting and planning process to help us create the intellectual and technical framework for a website that can significantly expand our public, support an enriched public discussion, and serve as a model outside New York. This website will be based upon a pilot to be launched in spring 2000. The second-generation site proposed here will give “visitors” a range of opportunities to learn about the latest thinking on places and cultural conservation, participate in discussions of theory and practice, apply new knowledge to stewardship of their own communities, and access a broader reservoir of knowledge on the web.

The world wide web is, paradoxically, well-suited to our mission. Because it is “boundary—less,” even placeless, it can bring people together across geography, disciplines, professions, class, or race. Anthropologist (and Place Matters consultant) Keith Basso remarks that “sense of place is a universal experiential genre”; cultural identity, as consultant Rina Benmayor explores in her work on Latino...
cultural citizenship, is often located in claims for social space, not universal and even territorial. If “place” offers terrain for exploring the prickly intersections of cultural identity and national belonging, the universality of digital space provides a relatively neutral forum for such dialogue to occur.

The web is an efficient means of communication, particularly for a program like Place Matters. Unlike museums, we do not aim to attract people to “our” place; rather, our goal is to stimulate new ways of thinking about New Yorkers’ places, and about the historical and cultural landscape more broadly. Our presence on the web, aided by cross-links to other sites, will help us present a rare view of one of the world’s principal cities, featuring communities and ideas not typically promoted in tourism boosterism, supported by a rich audio/visual environment. We will also model new ways to look at the built environment, while subjecting those ways to critical analysis. We aim for a kind of virtual civic engagement that can lead Americans to real participation in civic life in New York and in communities across the country.

On a more local level, the web offers a way to satiate a hunger for community history. We receive an average of five phone calls a week from local organizations seeking help in recognizing places of significance for their constituencies. Our workshops on New York communities attract hundreds of participants and last for hours while participants vigorously discuss the history and traditions of their communities in forums led by both professional and community scholars. Translating these kinds of programs to the web can leverage our efforts by making them available to more people, and by helping advocates to seek and disseminate information across community lines. Through web presentations Place Matters can also set community histories within a broader humanities context, making links (both intellectual and digital) to a larger city or national history.

A. Consulting and Planning Process
The planning process will begin by focusing scholarly and technical consultants on evaluating the Place Matters pilot website and will then move quickly towards creation of a second-generation site. Consultant discussions will establish conceptual and technical frameworks for our public interface; later some consultants will also help develop and host prototyped elements.

To ensure that concepts and intentions developed in scholars meetings are successfully translated into public interpretation, we have retained as web developer a professional historian whose public history/new media firm, Clio, Inc., Visualizing History, is experienced in producing websites and nurturing virtual communities. In addition, Marc Weiss of Web Lab, founder of the noted PBS series POV and POV Interactive, is joining us as a consultant. Both consultants are highly regarded in the new media field for the intellectual, interpretive, and aesthetic quality of their work.

The planning period will begin by requesting all consultants to visit and evaluate the Place Matters pilot site. To facilitate their assessment, Place Matters will, provide each consultant with goal statements and descriptions of our work. Place Matters will also conduct its own evaluations, working with partners who can broaden our reach. One group of evaluators will be the city-wide network of historic preservation professionals and community activists served by the “Preserve and Protect” website. Another will be constituents of The Point Community Development Corporation, a community-based economic and cultural development organization in the South Bronx, with whom
we are conducting a major documentation project.

In June, 2000, all of our consultants will gather for a two-day colloquium to discuss evaluations of the pilot site and envision the next generation of improvements, including intellectual tenets, site content, technical presentation, and distribution. Out-of-state consultants will participate in follow-up conversations by phone and email and will share drafts of work-in-progress. Local consultants will take part in subsequent meetings. With the help of Marc Weiss of Web Lab, we will invite guest web experts to ensuing meetings with our content consultants, seeking an interchange that will expand and sharpen our ideas for online presentation.

During the planning period, the project team (comprising staff and consultants) will create a site map for development of the full site over the next three years, and develop two online prototypes of interactive and interpretive elements for a second-generation site. We will also craft technical and distribution plans for reaching our intended audiences. Finally, assessment of the second-generation site will inform subsequent implementation efforts.

B. Pilot Website (in progress)
Place Matters has already initiated a planning and development process with the public history/new media firm Clio, Inc., Visualizing History, to create a pilot site for launch in April, 2000. We have committed $15,000 in addition to staff costs from our existing project budget to produce, distribute, and evaluate this pilot site. City Lore will host and maintain the site. Content will be drawn from City Lore’s extensive multimedia archive, the growing Place Matters archive, and the rich public and private sources throughout New York City.

The pilot site will function as an online contact point for the project. Its navigation interface may replicate the one City Lore recently developed with Cho for an interactive museum kiosk where subway graphics featuring local and express lines help visitors choose routes through a program about extraordinary New Yorkers. (Photocopies of sample pages from this work-in-progress are attached as an appendix). The pilot site’s components will include:

- an online version of the Census of Places that Matter, including: a virtual exhibit featuring examples of places that have been nominated with accompanying images and text blurbs; an interactive nomination form for the Census of Places that Matter, using a “forms interface” linked to a searchable, dynamic database; interactive search function allowing Census inquiries, by address, neighborhood, cultural group or historic theme;
- a bulletin board with a limited series of discussion threads to pilot online dialogue; and an email listserv for alerts and special announcements available for visitors who subscribe on the site;
- a news column allowing Place Matters to share information about programs and current issues;
- an “About Place Matters” component briefly describing our projects and calling, in some cases, for informants and materials about places being documented,
- a “Resources” component that will direct visitors to related websites, project partners, and written, audio and visual resources for further study;
- a “Guest Book” to encourage visitors to join the Place Matters mail list and communicate directly with us.
C. Second-Generation Website (proposed)

• Interpretive Approach
The second-generation website planned with NEH Public Programs funds will be a model of humanities thinking and public programming in digital space; a vehicle for deepening understanding of the ways in which places shape our consciousness.

It will be a place where visitors can find a virtual, yet authentic and nuanced, experience of New York, as expressed through its cultural and historical landscape. These virtual experiences will support discussion and learning about New York’s history and living cultural heritage, and the ways in which it is embedded in and supported by the built environment.

It will also be a place where a national (and indeed international) public can use New York as the focus for discussions around the growing body of critically important ideas on place. New York is truly a world city: just as our consultants and our local audience are alert to the ways in which New York’s culture has been shaped by people, ideas, and money from outside, so our website will recognize the importance of a public outside New York.

Our goal in moving from the pilot to proposed “second generation” website is to prototype two new interactive features, to expand threaded bulletin board discussions, and enhance the site’s potential for virtual community building. We aim for a site that is neither flat nor merely informational, although its informational resources will be rich.

The new elements to be prototyped during the planning phase are envisioned as follows:

• Community Exhibit and Tours & Online Dialogue
To fully understand a place you have to see, walk, and touch it, learn its spatial qualities as well as its historical and cultural associations, and ultimately hold both levels of experience in mind at once. The web can’t duplicate the immediacy of experience offered by a visit. But it can offer a remarkable tool for comprehending layered concepts of space and association. And it can provide this to people twelve thousand miles away as well as those in the community itself. Place Matters will harness this tool through an ongoing series of community profiles, or virtual tours, of New York City neighborhoods or communities of interest (such as women’s history) that immerse visitors in an authentic experience, discovering or re-discovering new meanings in the physical city. Such web tours will encourage visitors to cross boundaries of language, class and ethnicity. They will revolve around user-navigated maps with pin-pointed clickable destinations that link visitors to related images, video and sound clips, timelines, biographies, and narratives that will reveal the complex interweaving of place with memory, history, community use and tradition.

Our first community profile will be of East Harlem, a primarily Latino community on Manhattan’s east side previously known as Spanish Harlem. Data, materials and interpretation will derive from our work on the Rediscovering East Harlem map (see attached) that we produced with the East Harlem Historical Organization. The tour will explore the cultural and historical landscape of East Harlem and involve users in a key humanities inquiry: what makes a place worthy of public notice and concern? An interactive “journal” feature will allow visitors to submit new information and memories about the neighborhood which Place Matters will monitor and selectively add to the site. Drawing
from comments made in the journal and on the bulletin board, as well as from our own data, Place Matters will initiate topics for online discussion of related humanities themes.

An example of an online discussion would draw from the work of our consultant Keith Basso, rancher and Professor of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico. His recent work, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, maps connections between physical and mental terrain among the Western Apache. It shows how place names evoke traditional stories that in turn provide reminders and insights about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. When a WPA-era pool in East Harlem was nominated to our Census of Places that Matter we conducted oral histories that uncovered intriguing parallels. Though East Harlemites don’t practice Apache place-naming traditions, they do tell stories about the Jefferson Pool that revolve around turf-sharing in a highly diverse neighborhood and have helped local groups develop a common wisdom and rules of behavior. Special places generate stories, and our online discussions will help to draw them out and discover how they contribute richness to the urban environment.

Another kind of online discussion would concern gentrification in East Harlem. Once known for fierce ethnic clashes among Italians, Jews and Puerto Ricans, East Harlem settled into several decades of homogeneity and “ethnic peace.” Today, new residents are moving in and neighbors are once again competing for resources and authority. Though there are many opportunities to discuss gentrification, our website will provide a much-needed forum to explore the anxiety over loss of community memory, tradition, and symbols that can accompany it.

Comparative discussion about culturally-derived definitions of place, or issues of contested terrain, are examples of humanities-based discussions that the website will host. Consultants will help us plan how to present and maintain the discussions and will take part in them as guest hosts or featured speakers. Site visitors will be encouraged to engage in dialogue, via threaded discussions on the bulletin board, and to browse the archived previous dialogue. This system allows for discussion “threads” to be organized around particular topics and remains accessible indefinitely. Previous experience tells us this system is preferable to real time chats for stimulating the discussion we envision and preserving highlights for future visitors. Place Matters will monitor and participate in these discussions, facilitating them as necessary, and selectively reprint the dialogue on the main site.

Our online community tours will target a broad range of users, appealing to those interested in New York history, family or community history, or notions of place attachment The linked virtual community component is more likely to attract users interested in East Harlem, Latino communities, or issues of contested terrain. Such users would include residents of East Harlem and neighboring communities who are active in the many community development organizations and city agency offices; officials responsible for the area, and students, educators, scholars, and professionals studying East Harlem or New York City, or related issues of immigration, gentrification, economic development, place studies, urban history, etc. Since our web neighborhood tours will always connect to communities where Place Matters conducted on-the-ground work, connections between live and web programs can easily be made.
Case Studies In Why Places Matter & Online Dialogue

In the second of our proposed prototypes, online case studies or “works in progress” will feature collaborations between Place Matters and particular communities (including communities of interest) to develop the historical-cultural context for significant places in the built environment. Online case studies, accompanied by significant online dialogue, will involve site users in a process of historical and ethnographic discovery and build sensitivity to the cultural landscape.

Our first case study may feature Place Matters’ Latin Music project in the South Bronx, conducted in partnership with The Point Community Development Corporation. The story is an interplay of people, culture, politics, history and geography that, in the post war years, transformed the dance halls, apartments and record stores of the South Bronx into a crucible for a distinct Latin sound that contributed to the development of salsa—one of the most commercially significant styles of our era. It also stimulated a fascinating period of cross-cultural interaction involving Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Jews, Italians, and African Americans. The role of the South Bronx in Latin music history is a piece of New York’s historical narrative that has not yet been told. Our case study, then, will track our progress as we work with our scholar consultants and community advisors to develop the right questions to ask, find and interpret evidence, and assemble and present a story.

For materials we will draw from rich text and audio/visual resources we have already identified, including recordings, photographs, clippings, autobiographies, and oral histories. (We are fortunate to have access to a large oral history archive compiled by the local archivist who uncovered the neighborhood’s music heritage.) The presentation will also showcase the work of students in The Point’s after school program who, aided by teachers from a branch of the International Center for Photography, are recording some of the oral histories and photographing important sites.

Constructing a historical narrative (in this case, the development of Latin music) helps us “read” and interpret the landscape for its role in storing memories, remembering historic events, and sustaining traditions linked to this story. But it also raises questions. Are all parts of the story/landscape of equal interest or value to everyone? Based on what criteria, and for what purposes, should society distinguish among the places revealed by our history? Some aspects of our story will be useful to local revitalization efforts, to local families, and educators, while places like Hunts Point Palace, a dance hall prominent in the mambo and salsa eras, may rise to a broader level of public significance. If so, what kind of attention is called for? Which places deserve to be landmarked, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or commemorated in another way? And who participates in the decision-making?

How to present this kind of unfolding story on the web, and how to foster public dialogue, will be a major topic of discussion for the planning period. Our distinguished consultants, aided by other New York City scholars already involved with the South Bronx project, Juan Flores (Center for Puerto Rican Studies) and Joshua Brown (American Social History Project, and himself a new media developer), will work with our web experts to conceptualize this exciting case study component.

Sometimes connected to live public programs, and sometimes existing only in digital space, we envision online dialogue that is guest-hosted by scholars and community members, featuring exciting presenters, and monitored by Place Matters. To keep online conversations interesting and active, we
will invite individuals to participate as a “seed group” whose experiences, comments and responses will create an environment that nurtures virtual community-building around Place Matters topics.

By presenting provocative case studies and stimulating dialogue with site users of varying interests and expertise, we aim to involve website visitors in uncovering and interpreting a new piece of New York City history. We also aim to galvanize discussion around our place-related humanities themes, building understanding of how special places are constituted and what they contribute to our urban society. Place Matters benefits from this process and so do participants: community residents, policymaking officials, students, educators, and scholars.

D. Evaluation of the Second-Generation Website

Front-end evaluation of the site, based on goals established during the planning process, will be conducted during production of the site’s two new, interactive prototypes. We will ask consultants, community partners, preservation colleagues and web experts to use the site and provide feedback. Evaluators for the East Harlem profile, for example, will include teachers and students in the community study unit of Central Park East school; members of the East Harlem Historical Organization and local residents who took part in Places Matters East Harlem workshops, with online access provided by the Julio de Burgos Latino Cultural Center (lab pending); architectural historian and author of the *Guide to New York Clay Landmarks* Andrew Dolkart; City Council member from East Harlem Phillip Reed; and collaborators from Web Lab who were not part of the planning process.

Outside of invited evaluators, all site users will be encouraged to comment on their experience. Navigation and page links to the guest book and to the bulletin board will facilitate user feedback.

4. AUDIENCE

A. Place Matters Audience

Place Matters is still a new initiative. We began audience development by building upon the constituencies of the two sponsoring organizations, which together reach about 20,000 residents of the New York metropolitan area through mailings, publications, exhibits, and public programs. The Municipal Art Society’s (MAS) core audience comprises civic activists and influential professionals (architects, preservationists, urban planners, designers) actively involved in promoting a more livable city. The Society’s public also includes history enthusiasts and avid explorers of the city’s neighborhoods. The Society, finally, reaches all government officials in urban planning and design, historic preservation, public transportation, parks, and cultural policy at both city and state levels. City Lore’s audience includes folklorists, anthropologists, historians, and ethnomusicologists as well as people concerned about the viability of grassroots cultural traditions, specifically those featured in City Lore’s many programs and publications. Both organizations also serve the general public as information clearinghouses and advocates.

The overwhelming success of the History Happened Here conference that jump-started the Place Matters initiative in late 1996 solidified our core audience. More than 300 people attended the conference, reflecting a strong desire for public discussion of place-related issues by a diverse audience. Preservationists, architects and planners, educators and students, activists and academics, elected officials and concerned citizens found common ground around the conference issues and remain loyal to the Place Matters mission.
In the eighteen months since the creation of Place Matters, we have added 4,000 new constituents to the 20,000 described above, many of them individuals and grassroots community organizations, often in communities of color, whom we have reached through our public programs. These new audience members include community development corporations, community gardening associations, local preservation and history organizations, community of interest associations, etc. We also have used professional organizations to build an increased regional and national presence, taking part in panels at the annual conferences of the New York State Preservation League, Historic Districts Council, American Society of Landscape Architects, Fife Folklore Conference and American Folklore Society.

B. Website Audiences
The web plays an important role in reaching new audiences and in building dialogue around issues of place. While we welcome the broadest definition of audience possible, we realize that we have to build an audience for the website just as we have to build local participation for public programs. We expect to start out small but to grow, as our programs and those of other like-minded organizations interest increasing numbers of people in notions of place.

The primary audience for the website will be people already interested in Place Matters or its issues: citizen activists, students and educators, professional practitioners, and scholars of place and history. But whereas our public programs attract local audiences, our web programs will aim at a national public that is otherwise difficult if not impossible to reach. Our web audience will grow as people across the country begin to discover and explore the Place Matters site. Further, this website will give these audiences models of conservation activity in an urban environment: the community explorations and case studies, bulletin boards with active dialogues, success stories and requests for advice will provide this primary audience with both passive and active options for information, contacts and conversation.

The website’s secondary audience, served mainly through our exhibits and community profiles, will be all those interested in New York’s history and culture: New Yorkers, tourists, armchair travelers, history buffs, students, and teachers.

C. Audience Outreach
Planning for a well-used site involves creating content-rich and stimulating features. But that’s not enough. It also involves planning for the ‘tweak spots,’ developing strategies to make the online dialogues worthwhile, considering issues of web accessibility, and getting out the word. Our consultants will be vital informants in this process.

What’s a weak spot? We discovered in soliciting Census nominations that many people are hindered by lack of familiarity with thinking about what places matter to them and why. This realization has prompted a continuing series of changes in the design of our public programs and suggests that will also need to experiment to find effective ways of asking questions within a virtual environment.

We expect to seed online dialogues by selecting certain participants who are committed to starting and continuing the discussion. Guest hosts will be chosen for the richness of their work and their commitment to public discourse. Place Matters staff and consultants will monitor bulletin board and on-line discussions, and when necessary will post questions or exercises to guide the conversation.
For example, if a discussion of civil rights history veers too far from issues of place, a monitor could ask participants to name sites they think of in connection with these issues; this could lead to a revealing analysis of the features or associations that make them significant.

We also plan to link our web programs to ongoing public programs. Initiating online discussions in face-to-face settings ensures that they are launched with energy and direction, gives at least some participants a sense of each other (mitigating that “talking into cyberspace feeling”) while opening up the discussion to new members, provides time for reflection, and builds new audiences for the website. We have reason to believe this will work: during one public workshop in East Harlem, a lively debate over the creation of two art institutions was still going when the event had to close, but participants were reluctant to leave. Through the web, participants can extend the commentary as long as needed, and all of it goes into the public record created by the Place Matters archive.

When we attempt to extend live “grassroots” discussion into the digital realm, we confront issues of web accessibility. To prepare for this, we have begun discussion with organizations such as Libraries of the Future who can provide web access for participants. We will also explore collaborations with neighborhood organizations such as settlement houses, museum education programs, and community centers that have Internet labs and public classes.

D. Publicity
To publicize the website to our primary and secondary audiences we will take the following steps, using the planning period to flesh out details of this distribution plan:

- Widely list our site with search engines by registering with “www.submitit.com,” using key words and meta-tags embedded in the HTML.
- Conduct national outreach to related organizations for the purposes of cross-linking our websites. We would cross-list, for example, with the site called Preserve and Protect which serves as an umbrella site for numerous New York-based preservation organizations. It typically gets 1000 hits a month plus over 60 email messages from people around the country inquiring about one of its preservation alerts. The hit count rises dramatically when news of one of its organizations is in print. We will also work with regional and national organizations, to coordinate our website discussions around issues of particular concern to their constituents; their own marketing would include announcements of these discussions. Possible partners with whom we already have informal working relationships or contacts include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Glynwood Center, Center of the West (University of Colorado), Department of American Studies/University of Wyoming (which teaches classes on folklore and on New York City), American Planning Association, and American Institute of Architects.
- Conduct print media outreach, including prominent notices of the website in all published articles and printed information sent out by MAS, City Lore and Place Matters; a special postcard announcement about the website to our mailing lists and lists of related organizations; and notices in newsletters of related organizations. On all notices of our public programs and as much as possible on those of other organizations the web feature most relevant to the public program will be highlighted. MAS has a staff dedicated to media placement and public relations, and City Lore has relationships with professional publicists. These will be used to promote the website to major publications, for features such as the New York Time’s weekly “New York On-Line” column.
- Join and monitor related online newsgroups and listserves so that announcements of the website
can be written in language appropriate to these particular communities, and will be more likely to garner improved reception.

5. ORGANIZATION HISTORY

A. Place Matters

Place Matters was launched in 1997 as a pathbreaking urban venture in linking historic preservation and folklore. It embodies important long-range goals of both sponsoring organizations, the Municipal Art Society and City Lore.

In the early 1990s, the Municipal Art Society was engaged in campaigns to preserve New York’s 18th Century African Burial Ground, the Audubon Ballroom (site of Malcolm X’s assassination), and the house where Dvorak wrote the New World Symphony: these campaigns led to broader concern for and new emphasis on places that had special power to recall central themes in New York history. At the same time City Lore, concerned with the disappearance of places that support important elements of New York’s living cultural heritage fishing piers, kosher wineries, casitas (social gathering places in Puerto Rican communities) launched a program called Endangered Spaces to build public appreciation of these places. The two streams flowed together in 1996 when the MAS released its policy report, History Happened Here, at a major city-wide conference organized by the MAS and City Lore. Encouraged by the success of the conference and participant calls for further action, the two organizations launched Place Matters, a three-to-five year venture to identify New York’s most important historically and culturally significant sites, build public appreciation of their value, and take steps towards their protection and interpretation.

Place Matters’ has raised close to $600,000 in funds to support its programs. It is run by full-time coordinator Laura Hansen, who works from an office at the Municipal Art Society. The project is co-directed by Hansen; Ned Kaufman, Associate Director of Issues for MAS; and Steve Zeitlin and Marci Reaven, Executive Director and Managing Director of City Lore respectively. City Lore is responsible for controlling the budget, disbursements, and accounting. The project draws upon a larger pool of staff expertise in both organizations, as well as upon our many colleagues among professionals, active citizens, and humanities scholars in New York and other cities.

H. City Lore

City Lore is dedicated to the documentation, preservation and presentation of New York City’s living cultural heritage, founded by Executive Director Steve Zeitlin in 1986. City Lore is a major producer of original programs and publications for student and general audiences. Our annual budget is $1,000,000. We have nine full-time staff members, professionally trained in the disciplines of folklore, anthropology, history, and ethnomusicology, who work from our office in downtown Manhattan. City Lore has 500 members, a core of dedicated volunteers, and a 15-member Board of Directors. We have been recipients of a major four year NEA Challenge Grant, awarded jointly to CITY LORE and Bank Street College of Education for our educational programs, and a $262,000 stabilization grant from the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund.

Recent project grants from NEH include City Lore’s Local Learning, a national pilot program to help educators transform community-based humanities resources into tools for classroom learning; New York, for sponsorship of Ric Burns’ forthcoming PBS series on the history of New York City, and
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Toward A More Perfect Union, City Lore’s five-city discussion program and accompanying guide produced as part of the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. Funds received from the New York Council for the Humanities supported Welcome to Your Second Home, our exhibition on ethnic social clubs at the Museum of the City of New York, and City Lore-sponsored projects such as The Weavings of War, an exhibition on needlework customs that depict a culture’s own experiences of modern warfare, and Ric Burns’ film Coney Island.

In support of Local Learning and other City Lore projects, we have embarked on a significant effort to increase our web presence and our in-house technological capacity. The public history/new media firm Clio, Inc. has been retained to revamp our existing City Lore website, which was produced in the early days of the Internet, and our more recent project sites. The City Lore site will engage visitors in exploring the living cultural heritage of New York and other cities, and act as a portal to our major project sites. A critical component of Clio’s scope of work is training City Lore staff member Elena Martinez to maintain and update the sites on a regular basis. We have purchased graphics and web-publishing software for our office computers. When professional design and programming skills are required, we will continue to work with a new media firm such as Clio.

City Lore’s public festivals include the People’s Poetry Gathering, a major three-day festival mounted in partnership with Poet’s House that is devoted to presenting literary and folk poets with a focus on poetry’s oral roots, over 5000 people from around the country attended the 1999 festival. Our annual event, the People’s Hall of Fame, attracts over 500 people to an award ceremony honoring unsung heroes making extraordinary contributions to the living cultural heritage of the city.

City Lore has an active educational division, responsible for running cultural arts programs in New York City schools and nationally through projects such as Local Learning. This year we have received funding from the Empire State Partnership and the Annenberg initiative to support our work in the schools. In addition to ongoing classroom programs, we produced an award-winning educational website (www.carts.org) and, over the past three years, have created a revenue-producing mail order Culture Catalog to make accessible great works in history, folklore and culture to K-12 teachers. Our work with the Culture Catalog is written-up as a “best practice” on the web site of the National Endowment on the Arts as part of its feature “Lessons Learned.”

City Lore also operates a photo, video and audio archive that conforms to professional archival standards. The importance of our archive was recognized when we were chosen in 1998 to take part in a state-wide archives conservation initiative funded by the New York State Documentary Heritage Initiative, administered by the New York Folklore Society. To make our growing collection of more use to the public teachers, museum educators and curators, research scholars, film makers - we have undertaken a computer data base project to digitally catalog our archive. We raised funds to custom design a data base on Access software, and are about to complete the first phase of cataloging.

C. The Municipal Art Society

The Municipal Art Society of New York incorporated in 1893, plays a unique role among New York’s arts institutions as both a recognized cultural center and civic advocate for historic preservation, urban design, planning, and public art. In the preservation field, the Society helped pass New York’s Landmarks Law and led the campaigns to preserve Grand Central Terminal and St. Bartholomew’s
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Church, both of which culminated in Supreme Court decisions of national import. The Society also mounts public educational programs, using its galleries and meeting spaces in the Urban Center, in midtown Manhattan to mount exhibitions and a busy program of panel discussions and lectures. The Society also operates Urban Center Books, New York’s leading architectural bookstore, which presents its own series of author’s talks and symposia on architectural design issues, and runs a popular series of walking tours emphasizing New York’s architectural heritage and diverse neighborhoods.

The Municipal Art Society has an annual operating budget of $1,792,000 and a full-time staff of twenty-five. The Society also has an extended and active voluntary structure, centered on its fifty-three person board.

6. PROJECT STAFF
A. Place Matters Personnel
Marci Reaven (Project Director & Place Matters Co-Director) is the Managing Director of City Lore. Among her responsibilities is direction of City Lore’s web and new media programs. She has served as project director for several NEH-funded efforts, including a 5-city discussion series for the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity, and exhibitions and public programs for the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and Federal Hall National Memorial in New York City. In over twenty years of practice in public history, she has produced projects for public television, museums, and educational institutions, including WGBH/Frontline, the Underground Railroad National Freedom Center in Cincinnati, and the Wheeling, WV National Heritage Area. Her essay on the history of Tompkins Square appears in From Urban Village to East Village (Basil Blackwell, 1994), and her Guidebook for Building Stronger Communities through Public Dialogue is in national distribution through Study Circles Resource Center. Ms. Reaven received a MA. in American History from New York University, and teaches American history Bard College’s Clemente Humanities Course.

Ned Kaufman (Place Matters Co-Director) is Associate Director of Issues at the Municipal Art Society. In 1992 he formed and chaired the Society’s task force on historical and cultural landmarks, whose efforts led to the 1996 groundbreaking conference and policy report “History Happened Here.” Dr. Kaufman’s advocacy work on behalf of preservation has also included campaigns to save the Audubon Ballroom and Ellis Island, to memorialize the African Burial Ground, and to devise a preservation and development plan for Governors Island. Dr. Kaufman received a Ph.D. in architectural history from Yale University, has taught architectural history at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, curated the inaugural exhibition of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and has published award-winning books and articles on architecture and preservation. He is currently Visiting Associate Professor at Pratt Institute.

Laura Hansen (Place Matters Coordinator & Co-Director) received her M.A. in historic preservation at Columbia University. She has worked as a professional consultant for a variety of preservation, planning and civic organizations, including the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the American Institute of Architects, the Westchester Arts Council, architectural and environmental planning firms, and neighborhood organizations. As a consultant to the Sea Islands Preservation Project, Penn Center, St Helena Island, South Carolina which integrated preservation, planning and economic development to protect the Gullah culture. Ms. Hansen conducted oral histories and archival research to prepare a National Register nomination for the vernacular hall of a burial aid society. Ms.
Hansen serves on the Board of Directors of Historic Districts Council and is a member of the Municipal Art Society’s Preservation Committee. She coordinated the Society’s and City Lore’s 1996 conference “History Happened Here.”

Steve Zeitlin received his Ph.D. in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. in Literature from Bucknell University. He is the director and co-founder of City Lore (founded in 1986). He is the creator of the major poetry festival, “The People’s Poetry Gathering.” He also co-produces the storytelling series “American Talkers” for NPR’s Weekend Edition Sunday, and has been a regular commentator for the nationally syndicated public radio shows “Crossroads” and “Artbeat.” Mr. Zeitlin served for eight years as a folklorist at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and taught at George Washington and American University. He is author of a number of books on America’s folk culture, several of which are Because God Loves Stories: An Anthology of Jewish Storytelling (Simon and Schuster, 1998); City Play (Rutgers University Press, 1990); and The Grand Generation: Memory Master and Legacy (University of Washington Press, 1987). He has also co-produced a number of award-winning film documentaries.

B. Consultants

Keith Basso is professor of anthropology at the University of New Mexico and a renowned scholar of the Western Apache. His studies of the Apache over the past 30 years range from linguistics, symbolism and communication to more recent work focusing on place and landscape. He wrote Wisdom Sits in Places, was the co-editor, with anthropologist Steven Feld, of Senses of Place, an anthology of works of anthropology dealing with the subject of place, which was the culminating document from a 1993 School of American Research advanced seminar, “Place, Expression, and Experience.” Professor Basso received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University. He has been a professor for more than 30 years, is the recipient of numerous fellowships and research grants, and the author, co-author and editor of dozens of books, articles and book reviews.

Rina Benmayor is professor of literature, oral history, and cultural studies at California State University, Monterey Bay. She chairs the Institute for Human Communication and is founder of the Oral History and Community Memory Institute and Archive. Formerly, she directed the Cultural Studies Task Force at the Centro de Estudios Puertoriquenos, Hunter College, City University of New York. She has published numerous articles on Puerto Rican women in the garment industry, Hispanic and Latina literatures, Cuban popular music, and oral history and community empowerment. She is co-editor of Migration and Identity, a special issue of the International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories (Oxford University Press, vol.3,1994) and Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights (Beacon Press, 1997). Professor Benmayor received her Ph.D. from the University of California. Berkeley.

Daniel Bluestone teaches architectural history and directs the historic preservation program at the University of Virginia. He is the author of the prize-winning book, Constructing Chicago (Yale University Press, 1991) and numerous articles on American architecture, urbanism, and historic preservation. Professor Bluestone has worked on major neighborhood history and preservation projects, including the White House’s National Design Charette Team for Pennsylvania Avenue. He has led University of Virginia’s preservation program in its interdisciplinary effort to foster site-specific narratives as a means of cultivating connections between people and places, and encouraging
more sustainable approaches to development. Professor Bluestone received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

**Paul Groth** is professor of architecture and geography at the University of California, Berkeley. His primary research interest — and the subject of several scholarly publications — is in cultural landscape studies, particularly the ways in which social groups have used ordinary spaces to articulate social relations and derive cultural meaning. As principal editor of *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (Yale University Press, 1997), he has assembled a range of professional perspectives on these issues. Professor Groth received his Ph.D. in the history of human geography from the University of California, and held a Smithsonian Institution Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the National Museum of American History. He has taught at UC Berkeley, New Jersey Institute of Technology and North Dakota State University.

**James Oliver Horton** is the Benjamin Banneker professor of American studies and History at George Washington University and Director of the Afro-American Communities Project of the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution. He received his Ph.D. in history from Brandeis University in 1973. In 1993 Professor Horton was appointed by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt to serve on the National Park System Advisory Board; in 1994-95 he served as Senior Advisor on Historical Interpretation and Public Education for the Director of the National Park Service. He has served as an advisor to museums around the country and video productions for ABC, PBS, the Discovery Channel and the History Channel. Professor Horton is currently serving as a historical expert for First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and the White House Millennium Council. He has published numerous articles and five books on African American history.

**Judith M. LaBelle** is President of the Glynwood Center (formerly The Countryside Institute) in Cold Spring, New York since 1994. She is an attorney with many years experience in the practice of environmental law, in both the private and public sectors, including service as corporate counsel to the National Audubon Society (1992-1994). She received her J.D. from New York University School of Law, and has authored numerous publications on the application of environmental law with regard to historic resources. Under her leadership, the Glynwood Center’s 225-acre site was converted to a residential training and conference facility to provide retreat opportunities for community leaders and to promote best practices in the fields of community planning, environmental conservation, historic preservation and economic development. Through recent comparative analyses of French park systems and initiatives in the Netherlands, Ms. LaBelle is bringing international perspectives to the Center’s services.

**John Kuo Wei Tchen** is a historian and a co-founder of the Museum of Chinese in the Americas. He received the Charles S. Frankel prize from NEH in 1991. He is director and founder of the Asian/Pacific American Studies Program at New York University where he is Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Sciences & Gallatin School of Individualized Study. Professor Tchen is the author of several books and numerous scholarly articles on the Asian-American experience, and has curated and produced exhibits, videos and radio shows. His recently published work, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), is volume one of a projected three-volume study on the formation, history, and legacy of New York’s Chinatown. Professor Tchen received his Ph.D. in American History from New York
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University, and an M.S. in modern Chinese history (ABD) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Mary Hufford has been a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress since 1982. She directed field projects in New Jersey and West Virginia, and in 1991, a national conference on cultural conservation at the Library of Congress. She has taught at George Mason University and the University of Pennsylvania, and is the author of numerous books and articles in scholarly and popular publications. Two titles include Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage (ed.) (University of Illinois Press, 1994) and One Space, Many Places: Folk4fe and Land-Use Planning in New Jersey ‘s Pinelands National Reserve (American Folklife Center, Library of Congress). Her Ph.D. in folklore is from the University of Pennsylvania.

Richard Rabinowitz is a historian with 30 years of experience in interpreting historical places and themes for public sites and in scholarly publications. As co-founder and president of American History Workshop, he has led creative teams in more than 360 public interpretive projects, many of which were funded through NEH Public Programs. Mr. Rabinowitz also directs the New York Institute on Public History Interpretation, co-sponsored with the New York Council for the Humanities. Early in his career he led the development of the museum education program at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Mr. Rabinowitz has a Ph.D in the History of American Civilization from Harvard, and has taught at Harvard, Skidmore, and Scripps colleges. He is the author of The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life: The Transformation of Personal Religious Experience in Nineteenth-Century New England (Northeastern University Press, 1989).

Marc Weiss is the founder and executive producer of Web Lab (www.WebLab.org), an online laboratory that develops, supports, and champions innovative uses of the web to enhance public understanding of—and participation in—the issues of our time. In addition to its own projects, Web Lab, in association with PBS Online, underwrites and provides visibility for innovative websites. In 1986, Mr. Weiss created the highly-praised public TV series for independents called P.O.V., serving as its executive producer until 1995, when he created and went to work full-time on P.O.V. Interactive, public TV’s first interactive website, with online dialogues, resources and information on issues raised by P.O.V. programs. The Silicon Alley Reporter, a leading new media publication, named Weiss “a visionary and gift to the alley.”

Anthony Wood is Executive Director of the Ittleson Foundation, and has been involved in New York City preservation and planning efforts since the late 1970s, as a foundation executive, civic leader, teacher and professional advocate. He received his M.A. in urban planning at the University of Illinois, and has served as assistant professor of historic preservation at Columbia University since 1991. From 1986 to 1993 Mr. Wood served as program officer with the J.M. Kaplan Foundation, and from 1984 to 1986 as Director of Public Affairs for the Municipal Art Society. Mr. Wood’s many civic activities includes service to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Executive Committee of the Preservation League of New York Sate, Partners for Sacred Places, and the High School for Environmental Studies. He is the founder and chair of the New York Preservation Archive Project, an effort to document the history of the historic preservation movement, through oral histories, archival research and a collections program.
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7. PLAN OF WORK

Prior to NEH Funding
1. Continue to identify potential models in the private & public sectors
2. Develop and launch Place Matters pilot web site
3. Evaluate Place Matters pilot web site

May 2000: Project Start Up
1. Finalize agreements with web developer & consultants. Set up email lists.
2. Finalize meeting logistics for June consultant colloquium
3. Prepare briefing packets for colloquium participants, including report on pilot site evaluations. Confer with consultants on colloquium agenda & humanities themes
4. Project consultants evaluate pilot web site and prepare brief presentations on their work and ideas for the PM web site

June 2000: Humanities Colloquium
1. Hold colloquium in NYC over June 2nd-3rd. Consultants and Place Matters refine humanities themes to inform interactive web site programs; define success criteria and evaluation methodology regarding usage, impact, learning, and user commitment, set levels of participation to obtain meaningful results
2. Produce summary report of meeting for distribution to all participants

July - October 2000: Architecture and Conceptual Development
1. Hold brainstorming meetings in NYC with local web experts and content consultants
2. Develop site map; assess and revise plans for navigation structure and interface
3. Produce preliminary plans for interactive prototypes; revise pilot site elements as necessary
4. Review and discuss plans with consultants, in person and via distance communications
5. Document Resources (text, audio, photo & video, related web sites, databases, research, exhibit texts, other media); collect audio and visual assets; draft text for web pages
6. Identify audience needs and interests, and contact online communities representing these groups; develop questions for online and front-end user evaluations

November 2000 - April 2001: Production & Audience Development
1. Revise plans as indicated based on reviews by consultants. Confirm plans with online dialogue hosts
2. Clio coordinates design of screens and programming; makes all server arrangements
3. Clio conducts art direction, revising navigation interface & pilot elements as necessary, creating pages for new prototypes
4. Asset collection, research, text writing for prototypes
5. PM & Clio maintain contact through phone, meetings, and via Clio’s private website
6. Clio arranges for online review of work-in-progress by consultants; makes revisions as indicated; monitor related discussion groups & listserves.
7. Conduct evaluations of prototypes with outside evaluators; revise as necessary
8. PM and consultants approve completed site
9. Clio oversees final programming
10. PM and consultants refine plans for guest-hosted dialogues
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V. February - April 2001: Publicity/Distribution
1. PM & Clio conduct outreach to arrange cross-links; continue to monitor related discussion groups and listserves in preparation for launch
2. PM creates postcard advertisement for web site; submits notices of web site to newsletters; arranges for mailings to mailing lists of related organizations

VI. May 2001: Site Launch
1. PM completes pre-launch distribution
2. Place Matters site is launched

FUNDRAISING PLAN
City Lore and the Municipal Art Society have achieved gratifying success with fundraising for the Place Matters initiative. Of the $600,000 raised to date for Place Matters, the majority of funds have come from private foundations: the Booth Ferris Foundation, Kress Foundation, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, New York Community Trust, New York Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Other funders include the New York State Council on the Arts, the Prudential Corporation, and the offices of two New York City officials: Manhattan Borough President Virginia Field and Brooklyn City Councilman Ken Fisher. A grant application is pending at the New York State Council on the Arts for the coming year.

The cash cost share noted in the attached NEH budget form is allocated from Place Matters’ overall project budget. We feel confident that, we will continue to be able to raise funds for the Place Matters website. The diversity of Place Matters programming, and the interdisciplinary nature of our work, opens the project to a larger pool of potential funders. In addition, City Lore is increasingly attracting funder support for website development. Our educational website, which features interpretive, resource-based and e-commerce components, will be upgraded with recent support from NEH and Bell Atlantic. Our People’s Poetry Gathering site just received $75,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation to create what will amount to a virtual poetry gathering, an innovative site to enable poetry-lovers and new audiences for poetry from around the world to participate in a Gathering online. In addition to the possibility of planning and implementation funding from NEH’s Division of Public Programs, we are a prime candidate for support from the New York State Council on the Art’s new technology initiative and are pursuing that potential. City Lore’s fundraising is complemented by the efforts of the Municipal Art Society’s full-time Director of Development.
PLACE MATTERS
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Interactive Multimedia Project

Advantage of Proposed Technology
Having a presence on the internet is an expected part of almost any kind of modern activity. Many web sites, however, amount to little more than digital promotions for their sponsors. Place Matters’ web site aims to go well beyond this basic function to integrate digital technology into the heart of our project work.

Working in digital space helps us reach a national, and international, audience. Broad distribution is important to an initiative dedicated to fostering a way of thinking about and caring for the historical and cultural landscapes of our cities and towns. Public awareness is itself a tool for preservation, influencing decision-making by community members, property owners and local officials.

The flexibility of the medium and the ability to update and change site features allows us to provide meaningful content for site visitors who have different interests, and to feature exciting examples of thinking and practice emanating from many different sources. Place Matters is a small entity connected through its sponsoring organizations, its projects, and its affiliations to much wider circles of activity. The web format allows us to present and link to these wider circles with relative ease, bringing together the most exciting work in a field of endeavor that heretofore has developed in separate spheres. Fostering the cross-fertilization of ideas and drawing attention to best practices will help the project compile a “knowledge bank” of humanities ideas, resources, and related policy strategies in participation with its many “publics.” Web technology is well-suited to this endeavor by permitting us to present works-in-progress, mount problem-solving dialogues, and refine work as we learn.

The technology can also be effectively used to portray New York’s historical and cultural landscape, and the intangible resources it supports. The Place Matters website will excel in use of the web’s multimedia capabilities. With Web Lab as our model, we will create “cutting edge” presentations while taking care to keep programs accessible to people using older computer technologies.

Intended User Experience
To envision the website’s intended appeal to users, we have created four hypothetical user experiences. Please note that these are samples: many other iterations are probable.

Hypothetical User #1
A former New Yorker who grew up in an Italian family that hails from East Harlem finds our site by searching under the key words “Italian New York.” She’s interested in knowing more about the Italian American experience, and to expand on resources existing near her southern California home. Linking to the Place Matters website she encounters brief text and visual descriptions of several sites that have been nominated to the Census of Places that Matter. Scrolling through several, she discovers the Church of Our Lady of Mount Cannel in Italian Harlem, which at the time of her family’s residence was the largest “Little Italy” in the country. Images of the annual festa, including the barefoot pilgrims and the icon’s procession through the neighborhood, remind her of
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stories she heard from her grandparents and mother about taking part in the festa. She feels like she’s connected to the right place on the web, but she’s run out of time and logs off.

Another day she returns to the bookmarked site and decides to contribute some of her family stories to the site journal. She also links to site Resources and notes two entries: Robert Orsi’s *The Madonna of IJY*” Street, which she would like to read, and a link to the Calandra Italian American Institute, a place she can inquire about other programs and resources. Before she logs off, she enters her name and contact information on the mailing list.

Hypothetical User #2
At the (real) Central Park East school, located in East Harlem, community studies play a key role in the school’s integrated curriculum. Classrooms also have internet access. The principal and social studies leader learned about Place Matters at a public forum on neighborhood history in 1998. Now for the hypothetical: the school decides to use the virtual tour of East Harlem as a springboard for classroom studies and further documentation. The school contacts Place Matters to arrange for some special activities, such as “virtual residencies” where, say, a scholar, poet, or novelist agrees to be interviewed online by the students using a threaded-discussion format on the bulletin board. Place Matters welcomes the collaboration and follows through. Place Matters also agrees to showcase the students’ resulting work, either by providing a link to the school’s website, or by curating their materials and uploading a special feature connected to the East Harlem tour on our website. (We envision creating a template to aid in the incorporation of selected features when appropriate.)

Hypothetical User #3
A community leader who belongs to the local historical society in a West Virginia town reads about the Place Matters website in *Dispatch*, the newsletter of the American Association for State and Local History. She reads about an online dialogue taking place the following month with Daniel Bluestone, Place Matters consultant and Director of Historic Preservation at the University of Virginia, and Richard Rabinowitz, Place Matters consultant and President of American History Workshop. Our community leader is eager to discuss how she and her colleagues can approach commemoration and interpretation of some local places. While interesting looking, none of the places are prime examples of architectural styles. They do, however, hold significant meaning in local history and show how her town took part in national events as well. How should she approach her argument? Using a case study which explores interpretive planning, renovation and reuse for historic buildings, these consultants will guide a discussion on specific ways in which these types of “interventions” can intensify the understanding of historic significance, ways in which communities can be actively involved in the process, and ways to achieve public recognition of historic sites (including National Register designation, public education activities and local celebrations of place). The consultants will provide advice particular to specific projects, as well as intellectual probing into the larger issues such projects raise. Our community leader logs on to the site, enters the dialogue through a home-page link, and finds the opportunity to direct questions to the featured guests and learn from other participants very rewarding. She returns a half-dozen times, and also explores other parts of the site. She bookmarks it. She now has a resource and a community she can turn to.
Hypothetical User #4

Waiting one day for a meeting with his professor, a graduate student in American Studies at George Washington University sees a postcard announcing the Place Matters website taped to his professor’s door. The student is interested in American popular culture and finds the site description intriguing. So he copies down the URL — www.placematters.org — and logs on later that evening. Using the site’s own search function, he discovers brief text/visual entries on places in New York that have been nominated to the Census of Places that Matter. He examines an entry on the Empire Roller Disco in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and follows deeper links from the entry to excerpts from three related oral histories. He scrolls quickly through an entry on the Cyclone Roller Coaster in Coney Island. When he gets to the Hunts Point Palace in the Bronx he stops. He’s interested in salsa music so he links to the Case Studies in Places that Matter. He finds a richly curated web feature on the development of a distinct Latin Music sound in the Bronx in the post war years. He’s intrigued by the focus on places in the neighborhood that hosted this activity. He’s studied music history but never thought much about the role of the physical environment. He also pays attention to the way the site presents its research protocols. This will be a great guide for doing his own research, so he bookmarks the site. He browses the archived bulletin board discussion, finding a dialogue related to the Latin Music project co-hosted by Professors John Kuo Wei Tchen and Rina Benmayor. They are responding to questions raised by site users about assigning meaning to such places. Our student prints out the text, and highlights sections to use in class the next day. He also notes the title of Rina Benmayor’s work *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights* and the URL, www.lacn.org, for Los Angeles Culture Net, a site initiated by the Getty Information Institute that promotes understanding and participation in communities through culture.

Proposed Technology

Access to this site will be through a widely available web browser. Most of the text will be rendered in HTML 3.0, which is the most widely adapted version of HTML, ensuring our materials will reach a broad public. Careful planning will provide alternate page formats for the visually impaired.

The site will include dynamic interactive elements which will be handled through a widely accessible cross-platform, and free-of-charge plug-ins such as macromedia shockwave and flash. There will be slide shows and multimedia exhibits. Multimedia assets, such audio and video, will be handled by streaming technology to accommodate the widest variety of Internet connection speeds.

The archival portion of the site will be catalogued using a relational database, following the National Digital Library’s guidelines for inter operable archival materials. Full text of documents will be catalogued according to the most current SGML and SGNL mark up standards. Wherever possible the actual page images of primary documents will be stored by tonal GIF files, which will be linked to the full text of manuscript materials. Full resolution digital copies of all materials will be stored in anticipation of new digital display technologies and future manipulation of archives. These versions might also be made available on CD or Internet download by interested people as cost allows.
City Lore Proposal — Place Matters
Special Requirements

Samples of Previous Work

1. CULTURAL ARTS RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS (www.carts.org)

City Lore and the National Task Force for Folk Arts in Education produced this site to foster our educational mission. The award-winning site received .... hits per. Maintenance of the site fell behind when its developer/web master ended her “independent contractor” affiliation with City Lore to take another position. The site is about to be revamped with funding raised from the National Endowment for the Arts and Bell Atlantic, but to address on-going site maintenance issues, City Lore has contracted with Clio, Inc., Visualizing History to upgrade our sites and train a full-time City Lore staff member to maintain them.

2. THE LIVING CITY (www.livingcity.org)

Clio Inc. is a technical consultant and subcontractor for this multi-million dollar digitization project for Columbia University Department of Public Health and Medicine. In the first stage of the project, Clio Inc. is providing technical assistant in the scanning and SGML encoding of 55 volumes of the New York City Department of Health Annual Reports. In addition to the annual reports, the project will also include a number of ancillary documents and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of public health images from the scientific and popular presses.

3. BEDFORD HISTORY Website (www.bedford.com/history)

Clio Inc. was the consultant on the architecture, curricular offering, and technical components of the upcoming Bedford History Site. Clio also produced the interactive teaching activities for the American History portion of the site.

4. THE LEGACY: MURDER & MEDIA, POLITICS & PRISONS (www.pbs.org/pov/legacy)

Clio Inc. is the producer for this companion website to the Michael Moore film The Legacy: Murder and Media, Politics and Prisons about the “Three-Strikes and You’re Out” law in California. Airing on PBS’s award-winning documentary series P.O.V. (Point of View) on June 1, 1999, the website is intended to expand political literacy and citizen participation by defining criminal justice terms, giving users an exercise where they can test their knowledge of the criminal justice system, and hosting a virtual community where users can engage in dialogue.

5. TITANS OF TRADITION (an interactive computer kiosk)

Please see attached sample pages from an interactive computer kiosk produced by City Lore and Clio, Inc., Visualizing History for installation at the Museum of the City of New York as part of a City Lore exhibition that profiles winners in its annual People’s Hall of Fame. The multimedia kiosk features ten New Yorkers who are contributing creatively to the grassroots culture of the city and will open on November 18th, 1999 in tandem with the 6th Annual People’s Hall of Fame.