

Community Catalyst

POWER & PARTNERSHIP LADDERS

WaterMarks Art Initiative

The Haggerty Museum of Art

Milwaukee, WI | JUNE 2019



Project Description:

WaterMarks: An Atlas of Water and the City of Milwaukee is an ongoing public art initiative conceived by artist Mary Miss that invites residents to explore the water systems that support their lives. The Haggerty Museum of Art collaborated with dynamic local partners to realize the initial phase of the project, which included artist and scientist led community walks, workshops, installations by local artists, and the inaugural WaterMarks Marker.

Reflections: *Creating the WaterMarks Power & Partnership Ladder*

Haggerty Team: CCI Project Lead Christine Fleming of the Haggerty Museum reflects of their experience working with the Resident Power and Organizational Partnership Ladders:

- *On using the Resident Power Ladder:* "It was helpful to see how residents and our partners moved up the ladder from the beginning of the project to the end. We felt encouraged with next steps to continue the work and reflect on ways we could elevate the role of residents and our partners to reach the top of the ladder."
- *Advice for other libraries or museums seeking to use these tools in their community catalyzing work:* "It takes time to build a project with the ideals of the power ladder in place, and even if you start a project without doing this intentionally, you can also make improvements and spend time elevating resident voices.."

Regarding steps toward residents and partners moving "up" the ladders, the team offered the following:

As the community catalyst grant ends, power needs to be transferred into the hands of community members to continue building on the success of program outcomes. The supporting institutions need to step into the advisor and advocate role, and 1. decide internally what role they will/ can take in supporting ongoing engagement at project sites and 2. ask community partners and neighbors at project sites how the institutions can best support the project in an ongoing way.

This allows institutions to take a step back and to allow communities themselves with the support of their neighborhood organizations to be in control of programs at the sites moving forward.

Broadly speaking, these are the steps that should be taken. The logistics of this execution are yet to be determined and require partners moving into advisor/ advocate roles to determine what role they are able to take on to best support the project as it evolves.

ABCD Team: ABCD Team Site Consultant Deb Wisniewski shared that, overall the tool provided a valuable platform for the group to confront and explore issues of

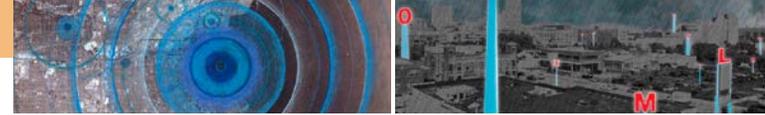
"Power" and "Representation" regarding residents. Firstly, the group came to an understanding of how a resident could participate in a program but not be in control of it. For instance while it might seem that, students participating in many WaterMarks activities "should be higher on the ladder," the group realized after some discussion that students were in reality only in charge of pieces of the project. "For example, the Haggerty/teachers decided that they students would gather water stories and the students decided whose stories they would gather, put together presentations and decided what to tell people about those stories."

The team was also able to explore the ways in which having an institution representing students/residents is not the same as those students/residents representing themselves.

The team members "were happily surprised with how many of the things that were added to or changed about the grant were things that were higher up the ladder." For example: Choosing the letter at the top of the marker or deciding art projects would be done in the park and the school. "They also seemed to realize the tension between doing things the way non-local partners felt they should do it and what happens when they were really engaging community members."

Regarding the individual sections:

- *"Where they are now:"* The team was able to see that residents may not have as much power as they believed, given how active residents have been in the program.
- *"At project launch:"* Revealed that the project had a "totally different orientation at the start of the grant" and that, overall, "the point was to meet the terms of the grant" and was lacking a strong focus on how residents would be involved and make decisions. It also "helped them realize how much has changed!" For instance, "the school was added along the way and then [the team] really starting thinking about how they would be involved."
- *"Ideal / Possibilities:"* Produced "lots of ideas about what activities could move up the ladder. Lots of discussion about how students/residents could be in control."





AT PROJECT LAUNCH



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IDEAL



"Residents" are defined as...

local residents, artists, and resident-led associations in the Greater Milwaukee Area.

in control

Participate in specific activities where their decisions are honored (the activities/choices may be determined by the museum or local institutions). For example:

Working on-site to install public art chosen by the community

Voting for which public art installation from a group of proposals should be funded/installed

Lead community activities, programs, and events

Design and implement the process to solicit, select, and fund proposals for community art installations

Contribute individual talents to local projects, e.g., photograph events

Design the evaluations

Engage neighbors and local residents

advisors

Encourage neighbors to participate

Encourage neighbors to participate

Help plan events, workshops, and activities

Present on specific topics in workshops

Help design the process to solicit, select, and fund proposals for community art installations

Encourage neighbors to participate

Help plan events, workshops, and activities

info sources

Provide input and feedback regarding workshops, events, activities when asked.

Provide information regarding Interpreting during programs/ events

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Provide information regarding Interpreting during programs/ events

recipients

Participate in walks

Receive informational emails

Attend SSCHC picnic

View UCC art installation

Participate in walks

Receive informational emails

Attend SSCHC picnic

View UCC art installation

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View UCC art installation



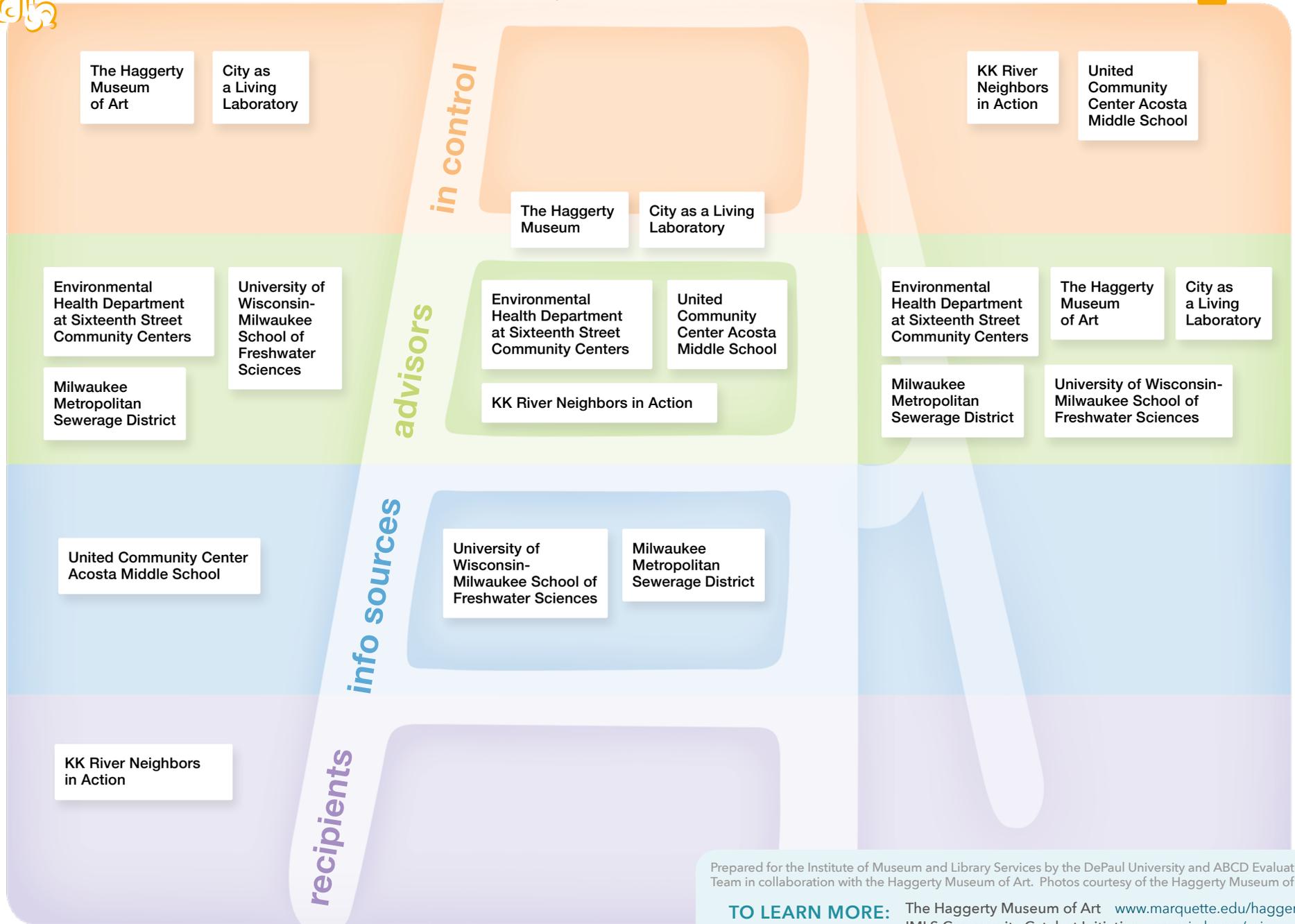
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Prepared for the Institute of Museum and Library Services by the DePaul University and ABCD Evaluation Team in collaboration with the Haggerty Museum of Art. Photos courtesy of the Haggerty Museum of Art.

TO LEARN MORE: The Haggerty Museum of Art www.marquette.edu/haggerty
IMLS Community Catalyst Initiative www.ims.gov/cci