



# Y-PLAN Mini

Hands-on rapid learning experience for educators, students, and civic partners



## Key Mini Steps Include:

- 1 Start Up:** Meet the Team & Define the Problem
- 2 Making Sense of the City:** Map the Community & SWOT Analysis
- 3 Into Action:** Brainstorm Solutions
- 4 Going Public:** Present Ideas for Change
- 5 Looking Forward and Back:** Reflect and Take Action



The Center for Cities + Schools created the Y-PLAN Mini to provide a rapid, hands-on learning experience for civic leaders, educators, and students alike. This collaborative activity demonstrates how the Y-PLAN methodology can enrich learning, further professional practice, and create more just and joyful cities!



The Y-PLAN Mini distills the methodology's five learning modules, which typically occur over multiple weeks, into a workshop of just several hours.



## STEP 1: Meet the Team

Each team member brings unique skills, experiences, and visions for the future! Much like puzzle pieces, everyone's contributions form a complete, well-rounded project. This process transforms a group of individuals into a larger whole: a 'community of practice.'

Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:	Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:
Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:	Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:
Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:	Name: City/School/Organization: What I bring to the table:

## Step 1: Define the Problem

**Project City & Site** \_\_\_\_\_

**Civic Client:** Who is posing the project question? \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Community Partners** \_\_\_\_\_

**Main Project Question:** What is the problem you are trying to solve?

Example: How can the City of San José make White Road safer for pedestrians?

---

---

---

---

---

**Subquestions:** What are the project's subquestions? What questions or concerns do you have?

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Step 2: Map the Project Site

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Site observation is an important type of research. Before developing a plan, we must first gather evidence and insights about a project area. As you walk around, truly experience the environment and look for clues. Pay attention to things like sounds, smells, and people's behavior! ***Use the prompts and space on the following two pages to take notes and draw observations.***

**Observe • Sketch • Take Notes • Photograph • Listen • Touch • Smell**

- **Place:** types of buildings | pedestrian crosswalks | public transportation | lighting | litter | trees and vegetation | art | smells | sounds | shade and temperature | disrepair | etc.
  
- **People:** who's there and who's not | number of people | behavior | business activity | etc.
  
- **Interview:** Speak to a local resident at your project site. What is their experience like in the place?

## Step 2: SWOT Analysis

### Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Location \_\_\_\_\_


For this exercise, think about your project question and identify the following:

- **Strengths** of the community/project site
- **Weaknesses** that the community/project site may currently experience
- **Opportunities** for the future
- **Threats** and external forces that could affect the project outcome

Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Example: many businesses</i>	<i>Example: lack of trash cans</i>
Opportunities	Threats
<i>Example: creating local jobs</i>	<i>Example: gentrification</i>

## Step 2: Telling Your Story Through Mapping

Draw a map of the area you explored, detail your team's observations from the site walk. Be sure to label places where there are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to your team's proposals!





## Step 3: Brainstorming Solutions

Now that you have mapped the community, collected data, and performed a SWOT analysis, it is time to work as a team to generate evidence-based solutions for the project question. In the city planning field, this kind of collaborative, design session is referred to as a 'charrette.'

Jot down and/or sketch several ideas for change below. Do not be afraid to pitch an idea to the group, even if it feels unrealistic! Some of the most effective, creative recommendations require out-of-the-box thinking. After brainstorming as a group, work together to narrow down your ideas to one or two main proposals. When weighing your options consider factors such as:

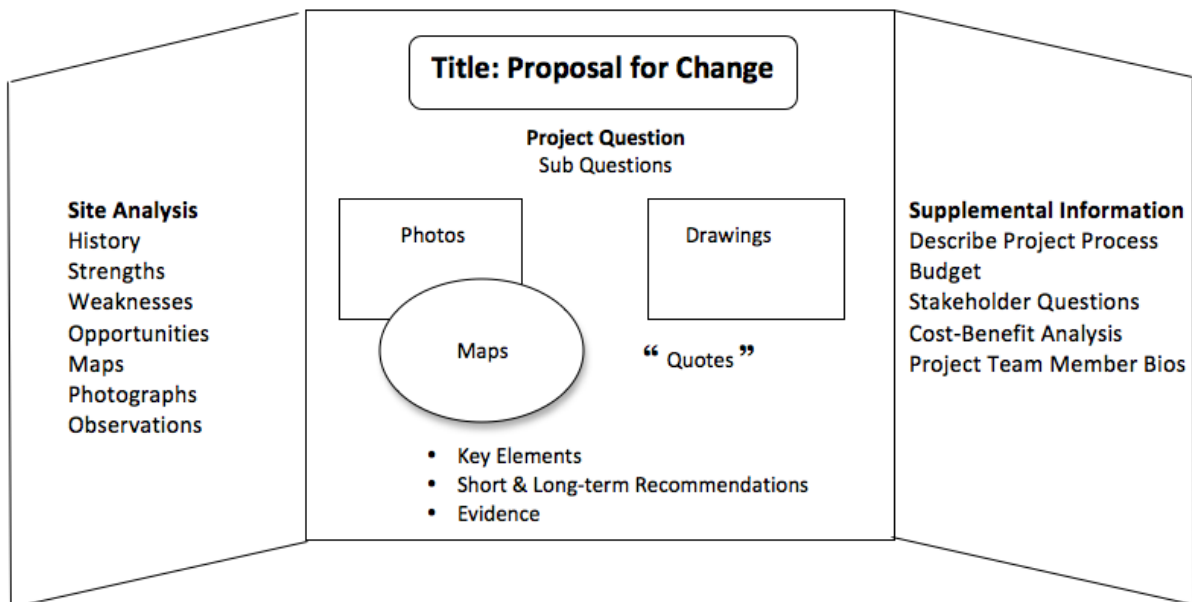
Benefits | Costs & Obstacles | Equity Implications  
Possible Community Partners | Timeline for Implementation

## Step 4: Present Ideas for Change



Having identified one or two main proposals, your team should now think about how to present this information to the public! Posters can be very effective at explaining recommendations in a clear, visually-engaging manner.

Y-PLAN Mini posters can come in many shapes and sizes, depending on the time you have to prepare and the supplies you have access to. Even filling in a blank piece of printer paper can get the job done! Work together to create a clear, well-organized poster that incorporates as many of the components below as you can.







## Step 4: Present Ideas for Change

It is now time for final presentations! Just like in longer Y-PLAN projects, presentations will take place before a panel that includes the civic client and your peers. Panelists will use this scorecard to assess your presentation and give your team feedback. They will then ask you questions about your research process and proposals.

Your presentation will be assessed by how well your team:

- Identifies the project question, describing its importance
- Explains 1-2 solutions
- Supports proposals with data
- Communicates clearly

Team Name	Strengths	Areas for Improvement

