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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION:
The Methods & Means to a Systematic Design Approach

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Abstract

During the fall 2010 semester, I was enrolled in a community revitalization studio that proposed participatory design efforts with two communities within Pittsburgh’s greater metropolitan region. Since this was the first studio I took that involved multiple meetings with community residents, I became interested in researching the variety of approaches utilized in community revitalization.

Community revitalization is important to landscape architects as revitalization usually involves seeing the larger picture and creating an experience for people to live in everyday. In order to create such an experience, landscape architects must rely on the residents of the community to share their knowledge which has been experienced and gathered over a long period of time. The landscape architect’s primary role in community revitalization is a facilitator; to collect the residents’ knowledge and encourage them to visualize and implement their ideas that will lead to an improvement in the quality of life and strength of the community.

This thesis will first define and clarify a variety of terms that are associated with community revitalization and participatory design. Since such a broad topic is being discussed, there are quite a few terms that hold contradictory meanings and carry certain implications that impact how community revitalization is perceived. Following this section a criteria is presented; with three approaches to community revitalization presented. These approaches are then investigated through several small case studies the final being a detailed description of my studio project. After the approaches have been investigated, their pros and cons are discussed as part of a conclusion as to the most effective parts that should be in every successful community revitalization project.

After the completion of this thesis, it will be presented to the landscape architecture department to use in future improvements to the curriculum. Participatory design studios provide more valuable lessons than other studios that are not involved in fostering interaction with residents.
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Introduction

The intention of this thesis is to analyze the approaches to the community revitalization process and investigate their effectiveness. By analyzing the approaches and their various components conclusions will be drawn about the most effective methods that will ensure positive, holistic and successful results in projects across the country. Perhaps this document’s most valuable contribution will be to Penn State’s landscape architecture department. It will hopefully inspire the department to continue finding new ways to integrate participatory design throughout their curriculum.
Definitions and Clarifications

Community revitalization has developed a specific set of terms which provide detail for this expansive topic. Over time, these terms often acquire conflicting definitions that hinder successful discussions about community revitalization. The following section will present several clarifications that were collected during the research of this thesis and provide a clear starting point for later discussions. These clarifications will focus on encouraging the collaborative nature of participatory design.

Starting on the broad scale, communities share an interesting dialogue with landscapes. While landscapes are “extensive tracts of land and all that is on them”; communities are “more than aggregates of people.”¹ A common misconception would be that both terms are defining a group of objects. However, it is important to remember that a community does not simply mean a large group of people; their own unique personalities must be included in the definition. Therefore, a community experiences interactions between individuals as well as existing in and connecting to their local environment. Their similarities are drawn from their emergent properties of having a specific identity and reality. In addition, Robinson (2011) brings up the concept that many communities seek to revitalize the landscape on which they live. A community draws their meaning from the landscape as a foundation and means for the development of their social and cultural identity.² In short a community cannot exist without a landscape to establish itself from or on. Certain communities choose to value the landscape they live on and therefore include its identity in their own, but other communities, often American, have trouble integrating their identity and the landscape since they see the landscape as a commodity. The highly commercialized mindset of the American public encourages people to see the landscape as something they can make money off of and gain resources from rather than as simply something that is beautiful and has a nonmonetary value.

After a community commits to revitalization, documents and plans will be created to organize thoughts and goals. There is some debate as to what to call these documents and it actually relies on whether they are created as a living document that is meant to evolve or as a statement that is considered above community based revision. A few commonly used terms are vision, plan, master plan

¹ Hamin, Elisabeth, Priscilla Geigis and Linda Silka, Preserving and Enhancing Communities (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007) 37.
and management strategy. Wendy Sarkissian mentioned an interesting discussion that she had with Patrick Janssens, mayor of Antwerp, on the difference between vision and plan. The discussion started at the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) in September of 2007 after Janssens presented his city’s commitment to citizen engagement by allocating 3% of the total budget to this purpose. While explaining his view on participation he said, “if we don’t start to build participation early enough in the process, you will lose an enormous amount of time in the execution...I think that is what leadership is about...you keep on being legitimated if you have proven, first of all, that you have a vision”.3 Sarkissian took his use of the word vision as little more than a buzzword when Janssens really should have been talking about having a plan. She felt that ‘vision’ had top down and ‘social marketing’ connotations to it as well as not having “anything about a dream that was dreamed by the community or parts of the community”.4 That the community wants to change is an important condition, because when people want change they have the motivation, perseverance and determination to see the process through many stages and the long term. The reason ‘vision’ or ‘visioning’ can be seen as troubling terms is when they are used as a government initiated process where leaders are identifying goals and objectives without consulting the community. A vision can additionally be seen as an unchanging idea, something really abstract and beautiful for people to think about but one that is never achieved. While a plan sounds attainable, the community can break a plan down into a process of steps and continue to improve and adjust the plan as they go along and learn new things about what works and what does not.

By analyzing the people that make up a community, a distinction can be made between citizens and residents. In the previous example, the mayor of Antwerp discussed citizen engagement, however, a citizen has special privileges within a community, but they are not the only people to make up the community. As mentioned in Hamin, “citizenship [is] not really important; often it is about [if] someone is a resident.”5 Residents of a community may not have acquired citizenship privileges because they have not been there long or only plan on staying in the community for a short period of time. However, this does not mean that they cannot suggest valuable and pertinent ideas that improve the final outcome. Community revitalization, and particularly participatory design, benefits from a wide range of ideas being presented; people living within the community for any amount of time can be as useful as design professionals that contribute their observations without spending much time in the community.

4 Sarkissian 43.
5 Hamin 9.
A final comparison should be drawn with the way people interact during the participatory design process. If information sharing is an important part of the process then it is important how people receive and perceive this information. This perception is the difference between listening and hearing; people that are truly open to the community participation process will listen to the opinion of others. Listening is something we do holistically, while hearing is just a superficial effort to appear interested in the topic. As poet Robert Bringhurst brings up in Creative Community Planning, “without poetry in our professions all is likely to go awry for our institutions because we are not listening properly to the world around us.”\(^6\) All parties must be actively involved in listening to each other, as well as the parties that cannot or chose not to speak up. Even in the best project there will always be community members that do not feel comfortable speaking up at meetings or even showing up to the meetings but their views still have value. Participatory design strives to involve all parties regardless of their capacity to voice their opinions, needs and wants. For example, the environment cannot communicate its needs, its voice is a silent one and it falls to the people to incorporate the environment into their discussions.

Successful community revitalization will certainly include a degree of community engagement, with participatory design showing more complete engagement; where the residents have some direct and active input into the design and implementation of the revitalization. When “community engagement is practiced bravely and creatively, [it] is very powerful because it forces us through new contexts, genuine listening and creative media to come into close contact with people we think are different from us and help us to see our points of intersection rather than our exaggerated differences.”\(^7\) By bravely practicing community engagement all parties involved will continue to remain open and respectful of all opinions voiced, which will then lead to stronger bonds within the community and a greater sense of shared power, information and open communications.\(^8\)

While this thesis presents a more detailed breakdown of approaches to community revitalization, there are essentially two simple approaches. The first is top down, usually with a government agency implementing changes for the people, and grassroots, with the community improving their own quality of life. The latter option is talking about the concept of self-help. A brief elaboration on this concept will help in understanding the more complicated ways of breaking down community revitalization approaches. The key concept of self-help is that people will improve their

\(^6\) Sarkissian 182.
\(^7\) Sarkissian 112.
\(^8\) Robinson 161.
quality of life by working together.\textsuperscript{9} It is important for communities to understand the balance between self-help and utilizing outside resources. When communities approach outside resources because they are in need of expertise or financial support they risk becoming dependent on these resources and preventing the future development of capacity building. This is due to their perceived local deficiency and the tendency of experienced professionals to be incapable of offering support after the fact. Community revitalization needs involvement after project implementation as they tend to span long periods of time and thus require continued attention, particularly community control, in order to succeed. In addition to failing to provide continued support, outside assistance also fails to incorporate community control into the plans they develop.\textsuperscript{10} Robinson (2011) discusses four steps of self-help that will assist the development of steps for the studio project discussed in this thesis. To start the project, an advisory committee will be formed to identify what the communities’ expected outcomes are, create a resources plan of where information and money will come from, and identify various members’ roles, responsibilities and rules. The next step, often called action planning, involves establishing goals and objectives as well as thoroughly analyzing the current conditions and issues. This step is crucial to the steps that follow, as informed efforts that address current issues before moving on to solutions ensure that revitalization efforts have a strong and reliable base. In order to maintain momentum, involved community members and officials should plan ahead to ensure leadership conflicts and lack of resources do not hinder the projects established goals. Lastly, monitoring and evaluations need to be conducted to understand the effectiveness of the project and ensure that the process continues to meet the project goals. This step also allows the project to be adjusted based on the observed interaction of people and understand the intricacies of the implemented project.\textsuperscript{11}

There are a variety of ways to categorize and explain a set of approaches to community revitalization but there are also methods that can be applied to any approach. Action research is one tool that can be used by residents, government officials or design professionals to improve the resulting design. Even with today’s trend towards smaller revitalization projects, the long term nature of the community revitalization process is still applicable. It is, therefore, useful “to know whether or not community development efforts have any of the effects they are purported to have, we need to know how these effects are brought about, and we need to know why they are not brought about if they are

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\textsuperscript{10} Robinson 73.  
\textsuperscript{11} Robinson 80.
unsuccessful.”12 The design professional might seem to have more experience with conducting this research, however, they will not be accessible to continue this research into the future as the community continues to grow and adapt the original revitalization plan. Therefore, the residents of the community offer the greatest opportunity for creating a research database that can be easily accessed and incorporated into a revitalization plan. In addition, since the research would be collected by residents from other residents there would be less chance for mistranslation.

The term empowerment is often used by professionals and government officials as what they are trying to achieve; they are striving to empower the community. In a way making this declaration voids this intention and results in strengthening the divide between the community and the “power or leaders.” Pamela Ponic, a feminist, participatory action researcher, says empowerment “can be used in a really unilateral direction: I am going to empower you. I have power so I can empower you... [however] I may have access to resources where I can help facilitate a situation where you can find your own power or feel empowered but I can’t empower other people”.13 A seemingly minor distinction but it is a common misconception that anyone is capable of empowering other people. If the community feels like those in power are giving them power it means something completely different from them earning and finding this power in themselves and on their own.

13 Sarkissian 114.
Types of Approaches

Community revitalization has been categorized into a variety of approaches however this thesis will be focusing on a criteria set of three approaches that was proposed by Douglas R. Hess and discussed in a PhD dissertation by Randal D. Pinkett. The first of these types is community organizing which involves persistent pressure from the community members on the government for them to implement revitalization projects. This does not mean the community forfeits all their power; they are responsible for introducing problem areas, electing members of city council and becoming active members of citizen boards.\textsuperscript{14} But it is not enough for the community to elect officials and then tell those officials that they need to complete a laundry list of improvements; the community needs to remain active and interested in what and how the officials are implementing. Community organizing is used because the municipalities know that even a community determined to make progress will ultimately fail if they build without planning or considering the big picture first. This is why municipalities bring in planners and utilize various means of expertise to ensure that revitalization efforts are not in vain.

Another way for communities to be informed is to understand the eight major trends of community economic development:\textsuperscript{15}

i. Land is not enough: there needs to be utilities infrastructure to promote growth

ii. Taxes are not that important: infrastructure, schools, airports and a trained workforce are all more important

iii. Communities should devote their educational efforts to creating a strong k-12 educational infrastructure: companies offer specialized training to people that have a solid base of knowledge

iv. At the local level community colleges can sometimes be more important than major universities: tend to be more involved with the community and less about pure research

v. “be wired or be gone”: essential for businesses as they value connectivity

vi. Zoning issues are becoming increasingly complex: land is being classified without properly evaluating the quality of the land

\textsuperscript{14} Robinson 9.
\textsuperscript{15} Robinson 184-186.
vii. Sustainable development is becoming increasingly important: least obvious of the trends and subject to failure if increased prices and timelines

viii. Finally, economic development and industrial corporations are increasingly important: these enforce the right type of development and prevent cheaply built strip malls

The problem is that communities and the context they live in and are tied to are constantly changing. The communities must therefore adapt and become smarter about the manner in which they stimulate development and that they need to be involved in selecting the correct elements to encourage the success of the desired industries.16

Community development is a second approach to revitalization where a plan is developed to establish infrastructure by having non-profit community organizations coordinate the efforts.17 The power of this type of development is that there is an established community organization and that they seek expertise. While these types of revitalization projects often focus on housing it covers a wide range of projects that fall under this category. When considering housing it is important to understand that “new housing is a major consumer of open space, transportation needs are affected by decisions about where to locate new housing, adaptive reuse can create more housing, and decisions about which industries to recruit affect the need for housing in the future.”18 The idea of adaptive reuse will help reduce suburban sprawl and reconnect and strengthen communities. By constantly building new infrastructure to supply the new housing developments the community will continue to encourage growth but not the connections between the people or their environment. So while the communities’ efforts may be well intentioned if they are poorly planned efforts there will not be as many positive results.

Lastly, community revitalization can be approached as a community building exercise. According to Randall Pinkett (2000), this approach “seeks to leverage the resources within a community by mapping these assets and then mobilizing them to facilitate productive and meaningful connections.” 19 Since this approach seeks to map the community’s assets this process is generally started by the community members, but there are opportunities for the interaction of professional expertise. All the

16 Robinson 184.
18 Robinson 167.
methods presented have strong and weak points, but a particularly strong point of this method is the utilization of the community’s unique identity and raising awareness about the places that are special to local residents.20 These assets may initially be mapped by existing community organizations which can utilize their committed members to start the process and produce results that will increase enthusiasm and new members. Essentially existing community organizations may initiate the revitalization process faster and continue to keep the momentum going better.21 An established organization has the benefit of understanding the community, since they are composed of residents, and will therefore be able to create more informed design decisions and remain heavily involved throughout the entire process. This contrasts with design professionals who are only contracted for a limited time period with the length of time being entirely reliant on the community’s financial resources. Asset mapping proves to be a useful process that has the ability to bring the community together, by celebrating shared assets, several differing community organizations can be united to facilitate mobilization and action.22 The danger with the community building approach is that efforts could become solely focused on the community and fails to acknowledge linkages within the greater network. By including landscape architects to “enhance local capacity” the community can integrate their goals into the larger picture and prevent their local efforts from being “portrayed as ignoring the larger social and economic forces that shape localities.”23

20 Hamin 137.
22 Robinson 75.
23 Robinson 76.
Occasionally community members choose to voice their concerns and facilitate government action to implement revitalization efforts as in community organizing projects. Even implementing minor improvements within a small community can be a daunting task which is why utilizing established government agencies can prove more manageable. Developing a community organization which will in turn work to implement the revitalization can decrease the likelihood of success. There are two benefits to utilizing the community organizing approach; first, any resident or group of residents can present the problem they see and allow the solution and fine details to be worked out by someone else. The other benefit of applying to the government to improve quality of life is that the suggestions of one community could be more easily applied to many other communities in the region. An example of this situation would be the creation of the Community Preservation Act in Massachusetts. While many communities within Massachusetts were interested in encouraging growth there was concern that unique community character was disappearing. In an effort to preserve character, communities began requesting land banks which eventually lead to the passing of the Community Preservation Act in December 2000. Officially the act is intended to enable “communities to establish a local, dedicated fund for open space including recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing.” By providing funding the commonwealth helps justify the need for revitalization and lessen the possibility of financial burdens from hindering project completion. In addition it sends a message to all communities that open space and history are assets to be valued in the development and maintenance of strong community character.

There is a perceived superiority from design professionals and government officials that promotes the use of elaborate vocabulary and overly complicated analysis even when presenting to the general public. Landscape architects in particular will conduct analysis on demographics, soil surveys, invasive plant species, etc. but this information is not necessarily useful to the community. Even information that is collected from residents can change its intended meaning after it has been interpreted by an outside source, as could be seen at a panel discussion in Vancouver. Professionals had been brought in to compile a document that investigated homelessness and affordable housing in the city; these findings were then presented back to the community. Afterwards, during the question

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24 Robinson 234.
session, one resident asked if the document could be translated into a format that was more understandable and useful to the community. It was not only a matter of language barriers but the fact that the formal document’s technical information did not serve the community; it was incapable of inspiring them or providing a purpose to community wide actions. Despite this document’s foundation in the community, the information had been collected from its residents; the design professionals had made it unrecognizable by interpreting the data in a way that benefited planning efforts rather than inspire grassroots efforts.25

Websites are useful tools for all parties involved with participatory design since they provide an easily accessible and constantly updated source of information exchange. In addition frequently used websites give the community a dedicated spot to voice their opinion; there is no need to wait until the appropriate meeting comes up. The problem is often maintaining a website that allows residents to feel valued while still providing organized information for the designer to utilize. The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) and many other supporters developed the Think Salmon website to collect community stories about salmon all in one location.26 To increase visitors to the website it was actually decided to hold a few events face to face with community members in an effort to strengthen awareness and people’s desire to contribute. One event was held to distribute website merchandise and collect drawings and stories in person; the result was positive, especially the huge spike in numbers of people viewing at the children’s’ drawings. By striving to talk with the people where they are at... [as] an outreach approach as opposed to preaching from the pulpit” the website has been successful at facilitating conversation within the community.27

Within the university setting the participatory design process provides an excellent learning opportunity for students on their way to becoming professionals. The students will learn to establish a connection and importance to valuing the community’s opinion. From the residents point of view it might be easier to talk to a professional in training rather than a veteran professional. Rutgers’ landscape architecture department conducted a one day charrette for the abandoned Hackensack Water Works in 2009 as part of ongoing county efforts to retrofit the buildings. “The objective for this Charrette was to integrate ideas and concerns of local citizens into the design process and to begin to

25 Sarkissian 178.
26 Sarkissian 135.
27 Sarkissian 137.
build public support for a sustainable long term reuse solution(s).”28 The Water Works was constructed on an ecologically sensitive island along the Hackensack River and was in operation from 1882-1993 and has since been allowed to decay. Within the community there was a strong divide between people arguing for historic preservation vs. environmental protection; it was the students’ job to serve as moderators and encourage a compromise to be reached. The charrette was held on site to establish a close connection with the landscape throughout the process. In an effort to produce better results, participants from various groups and ages were invited to ensure a diverse set of viewpoints. On the day of the charrette 32 residents and 6 Rutgers students spent some time reviewing site history and conducting site inventory on a tour before breaking into a design session. The four hour design session was presented as an opportunity for locals to share personal experiences and discuss important site characteristics that they enjoy or would like to add. This information was then translated into plans, sections and perspectives with the help of the landscape architect and presented to all groups at the end of the day. During the town hall meeting the question indicated people were concerned with the commission type organization setup and discussed, how money would be raised, safety and increasing involvement across the community.29

Successful examples of community building prove that a diverse group of people can come together and motivate themselves to take control. The residents of Loudon County, Virginia decided to focus their efforts on improving quality of life for the homeless in the 1990’s. An extended period of trial and error was caused by the lack of organization and informal spoken communication approach that was used. Eventually their efforts became more organized and successful when the Good Shepherd Alliance was formed. Their efforts are commendable and truly reflect the essence of community building as they “mobilized assets from every part of the community, involved the homeless in running the organization, worked with the county, and nurtured independence and self esteem through vigorous efforts to keep work and training opportunities available.”30 With humble beginnings a Baptist minister in the town started caring for the homeless in his own home and paying out of his own pocket. As the operation grew larger connections were developed between multiple volunteers and organizations; all interested in devoting time and resources to building the community and not just

29 Hoefer.
helping the homeless. During the entire process they “continued to see homeless people as members of our community, as our neighbors, and we encouraged volunteers to see themselves not as doing things for the homeless, but as working with them.”31 The whole reason there were a lot of homeless in Loudon County was because there were jobs for the unemployed but they moved in to take the jobs before knowing that the housing was unaffordable. The alliance has three main tasks: raise funds to ensure sufficient resources, developing relationships for the homeless to have places to stay and finally fairly evaluating needs. Some of their failed attempts included: using hotel rooms, misunderstanding the differing needs of the homeless since they all had unique backgrounds.

A second example of community building is the First Baptist Church of Roanoke, VA which initiated the expansion of their church to accommodate the needs of their growing community. Since the process was initiated by an established organization they could move right into the design phase. The active congregation of this small town sought out an architectural firm to turn their dreams into reality and remained active in decision making throughout the design process. From the start the firm’s intent was not to design a typical church but instead to “give voice to their stories, hopes and fears for their church, and to find a way to insert our knowledge about the process of making places into the conversation.”32 To ensure a balance between the firm’s knowledge and the community’s needs a coordinating committee was established. The committee was headed by a rotating chair which encouraged differing viewpoints would be considered equal and that the no single person in the committee would be overwhelmed with responsibility. They, too, held a workshop session and were able to answer the following question, “In what ways can our mission of saving souls be best accomplished for the members of our church and for the community in which it lives?”33

31 Calabro
33 Schneckloth 27.
This final case study presents the data from the design studio I participated in during the fall 2010 semester. The studio project is focused on two sites in the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan region and encourages the students to actively engage residents during the design process. The two halves of the studio did not have much interaction with each other due to the differences in community types and the distance between the projects.

Since the Pittsburgh studio was the first opportunity any of the twelve students had to interact consistently with residents, an initial survey was conducted to understand how the students perceived participatory design. During the discussion, each student was asked to write down their definition of participatory design and list a few pros, cons and techniques. The result of the group discussion was the compilation of everyone’s ideas into the statement that our job as landscape architects in community design is to combine the correct technology and community groups in order to enhance the project outcome. In addition, the key ideas for landscape architects to remember throughout the process are:

- Share a goal with the community
- Build trust with community
- Focus on quick & dirty ideas
- Utilize community knowledge
- Simple & relatable visual aids
- Combining traditional & digital ideas
- Accept shifting roles with residents
<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATORY DESIGN</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous 1</td>
<td>It is a design process that gets the community extremely involved in all of the aspects. It focuses on what the people want or would like to see happen and the designer helps to make that happen or at least come close to it.</td>
<td>creates user friendly sites, increases community involvement, promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>designer’s creativity not utilized, differing opinions, mistranslation of ideas</td>
<td>charrettes, community awareness meetings, surveys, website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous 2</td>
<td>Design that incorporates a dialogue from all active participants of the project including: designers, engineers, community members, and city &amp; town board members.</td>
<td>creates user friendly sites, final design is well loved, use local knowledge</td>
<td>increased costs, poor information exchanges</td>
<td>charrettes, interviews, meetings, site visits, surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous 3</td>
<td>Participatory design involves a design team as facilitators and a group of community stakeholders as the real “experts.” The process works best when those who will receive the effects of a design, feel as if they have a sense of ownership of the design process. Therefore feeling relevant and not simply assuming their social and environmental issues are addressed.</td>
<td>community ownership, creates user friendly sites, final design is well loved, learning experience for designer, promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>designer’s creativity not utilized, differing opinions, increased costs, increased time</td>
<td>blog, charrettes, interviews, open house critiques, seminars, surveys, website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous 4</td>
<td>Participatory design is collecting thoughts from others, whether community members, students or workers, that lives or function in the design area. After this data is collected the design process can be improved by incorporating it in the final design.</td>
<td>accommodates a variety of groups, creates user friendly sites, final design is well loved</td>
<td>differing opinions, increased costs, increased time</td>
<td>charrettes, competitions, examples, interviews, meetings, question &amp; answer surveys, surveys, website</td>
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<td>Cleveland, Tristan</td>
<td>When the stakeholders work actively with the designers of a project, such that the resulting design incorporates the knowledge base and personal needs of the stakeholder, with the practical construction knowledge and aesthetic training of the designers.</td>
<td>builds trust between groups, increases community involvement, final design is well loved, learning experience for designer, promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>consistent involvement difficult, increased costs, increased time, misrepresentation of future users</td>
<td>charrettes, community run construction, door to door meetings, surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donnachie, Laurie</td>
<td>Concerned with community participation in the design process. Community designers create everyday environments important to our well being and need to be concerned with the needs of the people.</td>
<td>community ownership, final design is well loved, learning experience for designer, promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>consistent involvement difficult, increased time, mistranslation of ideas</td>
<td>charrettes, meetings, surveys, website</td>
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<td>Green, Robert</td>
<td></td>
<td>increases community involvement, initiate action to solve inequities, promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>differing opinions</td>
<td>community responsibility, cost &amp; benefit evaluation, education based, community identity, listening, mapping &amp; inventory, setting goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATORY DESIGN</td>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>TECHNIQUES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karduck, Craig</td>
<td>Using the clients’ knowledge and expectations to in your final design.</td>
<td>creates user friendly sites final design is well loved increases community involvement</td>
<td>certain people will feel forgotten increased costs increased time</td>
<td>bulletin community run construction competition meetings non-profit groups passive observation surveys</td>
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<td>Kiesta, Ryan</td>
<td>Usually a low budget process where a professional works closely with the living and working members of a community in order to improve the quality of life of a community according to the population’s goals and desires.</td>
<td>accommodates a variety of groups final design is well loved promotes community cohesion</td>
<td>increased time mistranslation of ideas untrained people making decisions</td>
<td>community built models forums interviews meetings surveys</td>
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<td>Lampariello, Mike</td>
<td>Design that is rooted in the community and engages the community to define their own wants, needs, constraints, and challenges.</td>
<td>community ownership creates user friendly sites increases community involvement</td>
<td>active members create bias certain people will feel forgotten untrained people making decisions</td>
<td>case studies conversation mapping &amp; inventory meetings needs assessment surveys transparent design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lippert, Josh</td>
<td>Participatory design involves a collaborative design process where stakeholders and designers work together to share ideas about a certain project. The stakeholders bring local insight on their needs and wants, while designers engage these ideas through a design perspective, creating an engaged and collective design.</td>
<td>community ownership increases community involvement</td>
<td>differing opinions</td>
<td>door to door meetings promote local business survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roth, Alex</td>
<td>When those who the design is for play a role in the design process.</td>
<td>community ownership creates user friendly sites learning experience for designer use local knowledge</td>
<td>differing opinions mistranslation of ideas</td>
<td>case studies charrettes door to door games meetings needs assessment phone calls setting goals social community events surveys transparent design work with established groups website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. students initial thoughts on participatory design. Note: all definitions are direct quotes while pros, cons & techniques are simplified into common ideas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY LEVEL</th>
<th>TECHNIQUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>community meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>charrette of key words &amp; needs assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>setting goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>community workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>work with established groups &amp; invite them to meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>website to update community &amp; thus transparent design</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>constant evaluation by community</td>
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<td>high</td>
<td>mapping exercises</td>
</tr>
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<td>high</td>
<td>cost vs. benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>games &amp; group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>sharing case studies to gage appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>post construction evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>education of site programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>site based design</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Participation technique analysis. This chart presents a list of participatory design techniques composed by the 12 students in the Pittsburgh studio; after the students composed the list they rated the effectiveness of the techniques based on their prior knowledge base.

At first glance, this case study appears to be a community building effort since both communities shared their interest to revitalize with the Penn State Center in Pittsburgh. There is another layer though, since both communities are in the preliminary steps of revitalization, sources of stable financial assistance may not have been identified. Therefore, it is possible that as the community develops their plans further they develop a stronger partnership with local government agencies. This partnership could result in a shift to a community organizing approach if the community decides to give away their power due to budget and constructability issues. Penn State’s involvement in the projects does not necessarily change the fact that at the core both communities are seeking to improve themselves. While the students did provide enthusiasm, inspiration and visualization assistance for the residents they also provided an unreliable source of assistance. The students’ strong points is that they can show the community what they could be and visualize the “what if” situations. This ability to inspire the community to push past what they think is possible and achievable provides a lasting sense of determination. On the other hand, student involvement presents a few negative points; as students they are not fully qualified to give professional advice, their distance from the project sites prevents frequent visits and their limited time commitment within the long term process.

One half of the studio was based in West Pittsburgh, with four sites stretching along an underutilized corridor. The sites included a skate park, way finding to an overlook of the historic Point, outdoor programming for the Storehouse for Teachers and, connecting them all, the Corliss Art Corridor. All the projects loosely require artistic gestures since the revitalization efforts were being led by the
Meter Room, a group of local artists that was based along the corridor. The other half of the studio had projects in the town of Coraopolis, about 15 miles from Pittsburgh’s city center. Here the projects were focused along the Ohio Riverfront with the intent of increasing local tourism activity; the projects were the Mill Street business district, a riverfront park and a pedal-paddle network. On a large scale the pedal-paddle network is intended to serve as a means to encourage active recreation within the community as well as drawing people from Pittsburgh’s city center. There are existing kayaking programs within Pittsburgh but the linkages do not currently extend out into the suburbs. Projects to develop larger networks are useful because they link open spaces and prevent scattered and isolated open spaces. The largest piece of public open space along the riverfront, fanning out from the base of Mill Street, is already being used as an unofficial community park. As an investment for a more successful riverfront experience the community will need to buy a few privately owned plots that will create a unified piece of open space. They can potentially approach the situation from the point of view that these plots are not ideal in the long term as private housing, due to steep slopes or flooding concerns, and it would therefore serve the community better as a place to experience the natural environment. Finally we move up Mill Street to the heart of Coraopolis where extensive vacancies compete for attention with interesting architectural details. This is a great place to develop into a pedestrian orientated business district with a focus on “historic preservation, consumer marketing, small-business development and pedestrian access.”

West Pittsburgh was undergoing a recent transition in its identity during the course of the fall semester. A recent planning document had combined eight distinct neighborhoods in West Pittsburgh to simply efforts to revamp the city. Due to this transition residents still felt commitment to their small neighborhood character and were unsure of what the next step should be. The students’ presence was intended to bring the pieces together and encourage different groups to embrace the start of new relationships. The residents of Coraopolis, PA have enjoyed a strong sense of community for many years; however, a decrease in residents and businesses has lead to a desire for revitalization. The Coraopolis Community Development Corporation (CCDC) was formed by the residents and community leader, Sam Jampetro, to begin the process of uniting the community’s desire to improve their quality of life and subsequently increase visitors. Since 2006 the CCDC has participated in smaller projects and seized the opportunity to work with Penn State to inspire the development of their large scale and long

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34 Hamin 138.
35 Hamin 174.
36 Hamin 209.
term revitalization efforts. Adaptive reuse of existing structures was a priority as it is an ideal situation for all parties involved since “developers can save up to 40% on construction costs, preservationists want to see historic buildings skirt demolitions, and commercial tenants looking for large spaces in tight downtown markets have more options through reuse.” From the landscape architecture point of view it was commendable to know that Coraopolis wanted to keep their existing infrastructure but they needed help realizing the holistic value of their landscape. The students could provide intention to the CCDC’s effort and encourage them to place a higher value on landscapes since they “can serve important functions as the basis of community identity, which can be marketed to tourists.” From the first visit to Coraopolis it was apparent that the community’s identity was tied up in the natural beauty of the region and that small scale tourism would flourish as a quiet and charming town for people to escape the city to on summer evenings.

Coraopolis is interested in the economic possibilities of their community and could benefit from structuring their efforts using an economic development strategy. One such example is a four step process that asks the following questions: Where do we stand now? What does the region want to achieve? How does the community get there? How is the community doing? To revitalize a community it is important to establish what the community has now, including local and regional businesses that provide reliable services. Due to the students’ limited time in the community detailed information on local businesses was needed from the residents. In the next step the region needs to determine what they want to achieve. While this step was partially decided when the three design sites were chosen it was further investigated during the community workshop that was held on October 4th. During this meeting various members of the community gave local information and expressed what they would like the community to look like. From this information the studio developed formalized statements of the community’s goals that give people a sense of security and encourage them to take up these goals when they improve their own properties. The community has a sense of purpose and a ‘roadmap’ for revitalization efforts through the development of goals and objectives. Since students are not permitted to produce stamped construction drawings they cannot assist the community in their next step of ‘getting there’ completely. Throughout the semester the students refined the community’s ideas into vision statements that were then translated into short and long term goals for the community to

38 Robinson 51.
39 Hamin 187.
40 Hamin 187-192.
use as a jumping off point. The main objective for the students was to develop designs that would inspire the community and allow them to implement these ideas on their own. Whatever path the community decides to take to develop a plan and a set of implementable ideas; the final step is to determine how the community is doing through progress indicators. Unfortunately the students involved in the studio will not be around to see these indicators decided, implemented or enforced; this task will fall entirely to the community.

On September 1, 2010 both studio groups had the opportunity to visit their sites and talk with a small group of residents that were committed to revitalization efforts. The methods of site inventory and analysis followed by the students in this studio reflect standard landscape architecture practice including: sociodemographic data, observations from the site’s natural state, interviews, focus groups and surveys. However, observation of the site’s natural state involves two parts: the nonparticipant bystander and the participant observer. This study focused on being a nonparticipant bystander but could have become participant observers by going to established community events such as concerts, farmers markets or parades. Following the site visit the entire studio discussed how their perceptions had changed after meeting with actual community members. The West Pittsburgh group was pleasantly surprised by the neighborhood’s potential and that some residents shared clear ideas of how they saw the community being transformed. The Meter Room was an important factor in inspiring revitalization with a focus in recycled material art works that compliment the character of the neighborhood. The Coraopolis group was also excited to see the potential for connecting the community to the natural environment and instantly picked up on the residents’ enthusiasm. They wanted the students to “dream big” as they worked to make Coraopolis a destination rather than a throughway where businesses would be established for a long time.

The results of multiple site visits and extensive site inventory and analysis were presented at community workshop on October 4th. In preparation for the workshop, charrette procedures were researched, one in particular provided nine clear steps:

- Work collaboratively
- Design cross functionality with realistic decisions
- Compress work sessions
- Communicate in short feedback loops as regular stakeholders feedback to build trust
- Study details and whole

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41 Robinson 127-132.
42 Jampetro, Sam, Personal interview 28 Mar 2011.
43 Hamin 57.
This research helped the students familiarize themselves with successful techniques for working with the community. The students frequently met to discuss how the workshop would be run and it was decided earlier on that a survey would be a useful tool. A needs assessment survey was created by the students and posted on a blog for the community; in addition, the survey was given to participants on the night of the workshop. For the Coraopolis group it was decided that the workshop would start with a group introduction of the project sites before splitting up into smaller groups of eight to twelve residents and two students to serve as facilitators and documenters. The riverfront group spent most of the workshop simply listening to and recording the residents’ wealth of knowledge. It provided positive results as the entire time was spent in enthusiastic conversation, the following are some of the points made:

- area of transient housing near the riverfront could weaken sense of community
- borough owns a large portion of existing riverfront open space including the underutilized baseball field
- limited maintenance workers will impact design after implementation
- residents want a lush, green space where they can go to relax
- cafes, small shops and a theater are all great amenities along the riverfront
- Station Square in Pittsburgh probably does not fit in Coraopolis

The pedal-paddle network group tried the barefoot mapping technique that was mentioned in Creative Community Planning. The experience presented in the book used a map large enough for participants to stand on top of their homes. For Coraopolis a smaller map was placed on the floor and the participants gathered around it discuss ideal nodes and networks for active recreation. The exercise helped the group draw out the important points of the pedal-paddle network and help the students’ gain a better understanding of the community’s assets. Finally the Mill Street group really involved the community by creating a “build your own city” game. They used a plan of the storefronts along Mill Street and asked the participants to put the type of stores they wanted to see in the business district. The exercise was well received and the participants found it easy to voice their opinions.

During the design phase some students found it difficult to make additional site visits or contact community members and instead reverted to designing in the way that they knew, by themselves.

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44 Coraopolis Studio, Pennsylvania State University, Coraopolis Community Revitalization, 14 Sep. 2010
45 Sarkissian 222-230.
However, the few students that did commit to working with the community and visiting during the design process were able to create more meaningful designs and in turn gain a deeper experience. Periodically informal interviews were conducted to see how students were designing and whether they were considering suggestions made by the community. For example, Mill Street is currently a busy road but the residents agreed they would be in favor of turning a section of it pedestrian only in the interest of creating a better business district. The two students working on this project were thrilled and gladly incorporated this aspect into their designs. An additional traffic restriction proposed by the community was a solution to fast moving traffic surrounding Mill Street. Like many other communities Coraopolis was interested in improving roadways with pedestrians in mind by using bumpouts, textured crosswalks, roundabouts and raised crosswalks.46

The students’ final designs were presented in an open house format on November 17th with the Coraopolis students presenting in the CCDC office and the west Pittsburgh students presenting in a local senior center. Unlike the initial site visit and the design workshop the final presentation was open to all residents. In Coraopolis, the students presented the main points of their project to an audience of roughly 50 people and then encouraged informal conversations about the designs during the following poster session. Two of the residents that were involved with the riverfront group during the workshop expressed their enthusiasm of the resulting designs and stated that while they had not imagined what the design would look like they were pleasantly surprised that it was exactly what they wanted and that some of their ideas had been included.

Early this year four of the twelve students participated in a final interview of their thoughts of the studio, valuable lessons they learned and what they found most effective. Josh Lippert was in the west Pittsburgh studio and completed a design for the Corliss Art Corridor. He developed a good relationship with the Meter Room and received positive feedback on his design’s ability to move pedestrians safely through the site and create a clear gateway for the collection of neighborhoods; his project won an award of merit from the ASLA Pennsylvania/Delaware Chapter. During this spring semester Josh plans to apply his lessons learned to an independent study project where he plans to include more meetings with various community members and to request their feedback from interim design drawings.47

46 Hamin 163.
47 Lippert, Josh, Personal interview 24 Jan 2011.
Ryan Kieta worked on the Storehouse for Teachers site in west Pittsburgh by creating a variety of outdoor spaces for local teachers. However, Ryan felt that the Storehouse needed to focus more on following a community building approach since it would increase the number of teachers using the site as a destination. Ryan enjoyed working with the site and also received positive feedback on his efforts to daylight a stream but he would have preferred more interaction with the site’s future users.\textsuperscript{48}

In Coraopolis, David Yackuboskey was responsible for developing a pedal-paddle network. An interesting part of his site inventory was actually kayaking with three community members which provided him with the perspective of his network’s future users. Throughout the semester David enjoyed the grassroots nature of his project as well as the involved residents that provided plenty of positive feedback. He received particularly positive feedback from the barefoot mapping exercise and he hopes to incorporate similar techniques into future designs.\textsuperscript{49}

Emily Wood designed a pedestrian oriented business district that integrated indoor and outdoor spaces. Her most positive experiences were the site visits and the “make your own city” exercise conducted during the workshop. During the final presentation the community seemed distant from the designs, Emily felt that this was likely because the drawings presented were detailed and professional. This might have discouraged residents from making design suggestions; perhaps because there was a loss of communication and ownership between the workshop and the open house. If given the opportunity to redo the studio Emily said she would make more of an effort to share rough design ideas with the community and encourage them to have an active role in design revisions.\textsuperscript{50}

Finally, an email interview was conducted with Sam Jampetro, the community leader responsible for inspiring Coraopolis’ revitalization; he went in with an open mind and no expectations but was “very impressed with the level of interaction and the ownership the students took with this project.”\textsuperscript{51} The students are happy to hear that their work did advance the community’s goals and will help them reach the next step of the planning process. Sam considered this an excellent learning experience saying that, “the community can be motivated to dream through the efforts of these types of “what if” projects.”\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} Kieta, Ryan, Personal interview 24 Jan 2011. 
\textsuperscript{49} Yackuboskey, David, Personal interview 24 Jan 2011. 
\textsuperscript{50} Wood, Emily, Personal interview 24 Jan 2011. 
\textsuperscript{51} Jampetro, Sam. 
\textsuperscript{52} Jampetro, Sam.
The three approaches to community revitalization presented in this thesis are clearly defined and provide an effective way to categorize this extensive topic. However, after analyzing numerous case studies it is now clear that most revitalization projects have layers of complexity which makes it challenging to clearly categorize them. The more important thing to understand is that the process requires long term commitment from all parties where the “essential ingredient ... is ensuring that the plan will be a real guide for implementation and that citizen input will truly make a difference.”53 The revitalization plan can only be a ‘real guide’ if the community is actively involved in the document’s creation. Our design studio made this simple mistake when some of us did not fully involve the community in the design revision stage. This is a common error that municipalities often make when they present comprehensive plans and then allow the community to review and comment on the document. The problem with this strategy is that residents feel uncomfortable commenting on a plan that they were not involved in creating.54 Besides engaging the community to begin with there is the problem of engaging the community, designers, etc. throughout the process. Of course, the more time people can devote to a specific participatory design project the more successful the results will be. Day long events can be useful to catalyze reaction among the community and generate ideas while repeated interactions with the community will encourage them to act on their ideas and dedication for many years can lead to outreach with other communities in need. There are many ways to facilitate this involvement and communication but it helps to create an easily accessible place to store information and encourage conversations. The community needs to feel confident that they will always have someplace to go and voice their opinions knowing someone will listen and take action; this is why properly executed websites can prove useful throughout the process. All too often residents will attend meetings and voice their opinions only to be told they need to wait for a different meeting to bring up their concerns. For example, when people request additional bus shelters not knowing that the current meeting is only concerning bus lanes.55 Examples such as this encouraged our studio to always make the community feel welcome to contribute ideas by creating a website and making site visits to talk with the community. The final result of successful community revitalization is an increase in funds and involvement from people outside the original community circle. Economic and population growth is

53 Hamin 60.
54 Hamin 10.
55 Hamin 13.
spurred by the percentage of parks and open spaces as they bring money to the municipality, happiness to the residents and financial stability for businesses.56 These benefits make the trials of community revitalization worthwhile and encourage landscape architects to continue showing communities how they can achieve success.

In reference to lessons learned, as a participant in the Pittsburgh studio, there was a constant struggle with time, distance and cost constraints. Most students had access to transportation and the cost was not terribly expensive; even the distance was not completely unreasonable. Time was definitely the biggest factor that prevented students from visiting their sites more frequently. Deadlines from other courses often made it unreasonable to visit more frequently. While the simplest solution would be to have project sites that are within a half hour drive from studio this would certainly limit the variety of projects that could be developed. Perhaps a better solution is to encourage students to take fewer courses while they are in a participatory design studio or built into the course syllabus a requirement for students to visit the site at minimum once every two weeks. In earlier parts of the curriculum there was a seminar integrated into the design studio perhaps this technique could be integrated into the upper level participatory design studio. Instead of discussing readings each week the students would be required to keep a journal of their experiences and discuss how they were interacting with the community. The students would benefit greatly from holding weekly informal discussions with each other as way to hold themselves accountable for keeping up their site visits. Since the four months during which the studio is conducted is not long enough to develop a strong website following, face to face interaction is the preferred contact method with telephone and email contact falling somewhat behind. Landscape architects can play a pivotal role as facilitator in participatory design projects and landscape architecture students can perform their role more successfully by finding a personal reason to be invested in the community’s interest and holding themselves and their classmates accountable to more successful time management.

56 Hamin 138.
Bibliography

Definitions and Clarifications


Types of Approaches


Case Studies


Jampetro, Sam. Email interview. 28 Mar 2011.

Kieta, Ryan. Personal interview. 24 Jan 2011.

Lippert, Josh. Personal interview. 24 Jan 2011.


Yackuboskey, David. Personal interview. 24 Jan 2011.


Conclusions

Appendix A: Analysis & process board
SITE VISIT: VEGETATION

- INVASIVE JAPANESE KNOTWEED
- MAPLE
- WALNUT
- OAK
- OAK
- OAK
- OAK
- OAKBIRCH
- SYCAMORE
- BIRCH
- BIRCH
- BIRCH
- MAPLE
- OAK
- WALNUT
CORAOPOLIS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This survey includes questions about all 3 revitalization projects discussed at this workshop. It will take about 5 minutes to complete and will be used by the design students to understand the needs of the community.

1. The list below contains a variety of community groups; please select any that you personally identify with.
   - college student
   - church member
   - resident in walking distance of Mill Street
   - parent with young children
   - parent with adult children
   - senior citizen
   - work in Coraopolis
   - work outside Coraopolis
   - outdoor enthusiast
   - riverfront resident
   - business owner
   - riverfront resident
   - parent with adult children
   - work in Coraopolis
   - work outside Coraopolis
   - outdoor enthusiast
   - riverfront resident
   - business owner
   - resident in walking distance of Mill Street
   - parent with young children
   - parent with adult children
   - senior citizen
   - work in Coraopolis
   - work outside Coraopolis
   - outdoor enthusiast
   - riverfront resident
   - business owner
   - resident in walking distance of Mill Street
   - parent with young children
   - parent with adult children
   - senior citizen
   - work in Coraopolis
   - work outside Coraopolis
   - outdoor enthusiast
   - riverfront resident
   - business owner
   Other (please specify)

2. Development along the riverfront has the advantage of drawing a lot of people and a wide range of activities. What amenities would you like to see most along the riverfront? (Please select all that apply)
   - restaurants on the river
   - scenic river views
   - tennis court
   - shoreline trails
   - farmers market
   - natural area/wetland
   - volleyball court
   - fishing
   - baseball field
   - kayaking/canoeing
   - bathroom facilities
   - playground
   - basketball court
   - motorized watercraft
   - open air theater
   - water playground
   - soccer field
   - bike trails
   - gathering lawn
   - dog park
   Other (please specify)

3. I would be interested in buying a full week’s groceries at a farmers market.
   - highly disagree
   - disagree
   - not sure
   - agree
   - highly agree
   What day of the week would you like a market?

4. What type of businesses would you like to see most in the Mill Street restaurant district? (Please select all that apply)
   - boutiques
   - gym/health store
   - art gallery
   - deli, bakery, etc.
   - bookstore
   - movie theater
   - grocery store
   - craft stores

5. On average how often do you visit downtown?
   - hardly ever
   - 1-2 times a week
   - 3-4 times a week
   - everyday
   Why do you visit the downtown? (i.e. work, shopping, church, recreation, etc.)

6. Integrating university activities into the development of Coraopolis would improve the quality of life. (i.e. student produced art shows & theater events)
   - highly disagree
   - disagree
   - not sure
   - agree
   - highly agree

7. Which of the following destinations would you enjoy kayaking/canoeing to along the river shore (both sides) or Neville Island? (Please select all that apply)
   - restaurants
   - bike paths & hiking trails
   - green space & recreational parks
   - scenic views
   - historical & cultural amenities
   - Other (please specify)

8. Do you live within walking distance from the riverfront or the proposed Mill Street restaurant district?
   - yes
   - no
   What intersection do you live near in Coraopolis? (optional)

9. Assuming that frequent water tests are conducted would you swim in the Ohio River?
   - yes
   - no

10. Please look at the 4 examples of streetscapes at the bottom of the page and choose which one you would like to see most in Coraopolis.
    - A
    - B
    - C
    - D
    Additional Comments (optional)
SURVEY RESULTS

1. The list below contains a variety of community groups; please select any that you personally identify with. (Please select all that apply)

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<td>church member</td>
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<td>business owner</td>
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<td>resident in walking distance of Mill St.</td>
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<td>riverfront resident</td>
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<td>outdoor enthusiast</td>
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2. What amenities would you like to see most along the riverfront? (Please select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>cafes/snack shops</td>
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<tr>
<td>farmers market</td>
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<tr>
<td>bathroom facilities</td>
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<td>open air theater</td>
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<td>gathering/gathering</td>
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<td>natural area/wetland</td>
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<tr>
<td>playground</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>dog park</td>
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<td>soccer field</td>
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<td>bike trails</td>
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<td>motorized water craft</td>
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3. I would be interested in buying a full week’s groceries at a farmers market.

<table>
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<td>agree</td>
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<td>highly agree</td>
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What day of the week would you like a market?

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday &amp; Tuesday</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday &amp; Sunday</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any day</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What type of businesses would you like to see most in the Mill Street restaurant district? (Please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boutiques</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookstore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gym/health store</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art gallery</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movie theater</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craft stores</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deli, bakery, etc.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. On average how often do you visit downtown?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a week</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times a week</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyday</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you visit the downtown? (i.e. work, shopping, church, recreation, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work, shopping, church</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church, food, groceries</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work, lunch hour</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own the yoga studio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business owner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work, shopping, walking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping, church, kids activities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church, recreation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church, shopping</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus, church, groceries</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Integrating university activities into the development of Coraopolis would improve the quality of life. (i.e. student produced art shows & theater events)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>highly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highly agree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Which of the following destinations would you enjoy kayaking/canoeing along the river shore (both sides) or Neville Island? (Please select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>restaurant</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scenic view</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bike paths &amp; hiking trails</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical &amp; cultural amenities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green space &amp; recreational parks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Do you live in walking distance from the riverfront or the proposed Mill Street restaurant district?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Assuming that frequent water tests are conducted would you swim in the Ohio River?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Please look at the 4 examples of streetscapes at the bottom of the page and choose which one you would like to see most in Coraopolis.

    | Count | total responses |
    |-------|----------------|
    | A | 9 | 15 |
    | B | 1 | 15 |
    | C | 3 | 15 |
    | D | 2 | 15 |
MEETING RESULTS

IMPORTANT CONCERNS

1. TRAIN TRACKS
   DIVIDE CORAOPOLIS

2. INCREASE
   CONNECTIVITY WITH
   TRAIL NETWORKS

3. LOW MAINTENANCE
   COSTS A NECESSITY

4. PROVIDE OPEN USE
   RECREATIONAL
   GREEN SPACES

5. DESIGN WITH SAFTEY
   IN MIND

6. CORAOPOLIS’
   DRINKING WATER
   DRAWN ON SITE

7. WORK WITH FUTURE
   LOCAL EXPANSIONS:
   PRODUCE COMPANY
   MONTOUR RUN
   SPORTS FIELDS
PRECEDENTS

PLAYGROUND
BROOKLYN, NY

WATERFRONT
SHEBOYGAN, MI

LOCAL
BRIDGEWATER, PA

NATURAL EDGE
TANGHE RIVER, CHINA
PRECEDENTS

PITTSBURGH, PA
THEATER/VIEWS

KENNETT SQUARE, PA
LAWN

SHEBOYGAN, WI
WATERFRONT

PHOENIXVILLE, PA
SUMMER CONCERTS

09.20.2013 11:36
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

G1. TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE OF CORAOPOLIS TO SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF NATURE RATHER THAN AS A SEPARATE ENTITY.

OBJ1. Develop a design that requires low maintenance requirements that allows people to experience naturally occurring processes.
OBJ2. Focus on temporary program elements that allow for adaptable use & river flooding accommodation.
OBJ3. Frame existing views of the river to bring people to the riverfront.

G2. TO HELP THE COMMUNITY REALIZE THEIR EXISTING POTENTIAL AS A STRONG COMMUNITY.

OBJ4. Increase community ties by improving pedestrian & vehicle movement over the train tracks.
OBJ5. Bring the community closer together using adaptive reuse to provide public gathering spaces.

G3. TO ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE PRIDE IN CORAOPOLIS AND SHARE ITS UNIQUE CHARACTER WITH OTHERS.

OBJ6. Use the river to draw boaters & kayakers into Coraopolis with restaurants along the river & extensive trail networks.
OBJ7. Use art, music & education venues to inspire local talent & encourage visitors.

Concept Statement: In an effort to improve the quality of life for the community of Coraopolis this studio will work with the residents of Coraopolis to reunite the community with the natural environment.
THE IMAGE BELOW WAS DEVELOPED TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PROGRAM ELEMENTS. BY SKETCHING A SERIES OF THESE I WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE THE BEST LOCATION FOR THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS IN RELATION TO THE EXISTING SURROUNDINGS AND ALSO DEVELOP A SITE SEQUENCE THAT ENCOURAGED THE FLOW OF PEOPLE THROUGH THE SPACE. EVEN IN THIS EARLY STAGE I USED THE SURVEY RESULTS TO FUEL THE DESIGN, OPTING FOR A LARGE PLAYGROUND AREA TO ACCOMODATE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH SMALL CHILDREN IN CORAOPOLIS.
WHILE DESIGNING THE OUTDOOR THEATER MANY OPTIONS WERE CONSIDERED AND THE DESIGN WENT THROUGH A SERIES OF COMPLEXITY LEVELS. BY CREATING A VARIETY OF DRAWINGS OF THE AREA IN ADDITION TO 3D MODELS I WAS ABLE TO REFINE THE DESIGN TO ONE THAT WAS BOTH SIMPLE AND INTERESTING.
Academic Vita of Laurie Beth Donnachie

Laurie Beth Donnachie
3 Jason Lane
Thorndale, PA 19372
lbdonnachie@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Landscape Architecture with Honors
Pennsylvania State University, Spring 2011

Thesis Title: Community Revitalization: The methods & means to a systematic design approach
Thesis Supervisor: Ken Tamminga

RELATED EXPERIENCE

To complete the research of this thesis I utilized my personal experience, in a participatory
design landscape architecture studio, as a detailed case study and opportunity to test effective
methods.

AWARDS

Ann Pellow Wagner Memorial Scholarship
Dean’s List
Departmental Award for Excellence in Planting Design
Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant