

*URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS: RECLAIMING UNDERUSED AUTOMOBILE
INFRASTRUCTURE AS COMMUNITY PUBLIC SPACE*

by

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(Under the Direction of David Spooner)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to underscore the damages to community wrought by car-centric planning and to seek mending solutions. Large and sweeping measures are necessary to stem the outward sprawl that drains downtowns of residents, businesses and general vitality. Yet, these large measures are expensive, idealistic, and in the near future at least, unrealistic. This thesis takes an alternative stance in looking for solutions to aid our depopulated streets and urban communities. Instead of large, permanent, and costly efforts, it proposes that small, temporary, and inexpensive measures can easily and effectively plug in to the existing automobile infrastructure to create public spaces. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* (urban + interim + interventions) reclaim underused slices of the very infrastructure that fractures neighborhoods to provide impromptu public gathering spaces. These spaces draw people back out onto their streets, where they are able to reestablish contact with one another to begin healing damaged communities.

INDEX WORDS: Community, Urban Repair, Interim Strategy, Temporary, Reclaiming, Automobile Infrastructure, Public Space

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem:

Auto-centric planning in the United States over the past fifty years has damaged the pedestrian connections that are the heart of strong street life and community. With the advent of car transportation, American cities strove to accommodate this new mode of transportation to the detriment of pedestrian amenities and connections. Public interactions that make up community used to take place within these urban spaces. This thesis defines community as the intersection of positive social interactions, strong connectivity, and economic vitality. From street vendors and markets to simple interactions with one's neighbors, the life of the street was and is vital to the strength of the whole community. When cars are the focus of the city, as they are today, necessary space for public interaction is denied, overlooked, and often entirely absent.

New cities and suburbs are planned with little attention to pedestrian networks and human-scale interactions, while newer and larger arteries divide and depopulate the once vibrant city streets of older American cities. In each, ubiquitous parking effectively obstructs organic interactions between people and shops and businesses.

Damage to the community is not restricted to the form of the city, with bisected and often useless pedestrian connections; social damage is also sustained by our auto-centric cities. Valuable and impromptu social interactions between community members are vital to a vibrant community and thus strengthen bonds between diverse sectors of

the population. These chance meetings take place on the street, in the public space of the city, not in individual cars. Randy Hester confirms the suffering inflicted by car-centric city planning. He offers a scathing rebuke of current misplaced priorities and the resulting breakdown of community:

Poor city design divides us from others in our communities, undermines our sense of community and place ... In the name of progress, we destroy the best neighborhood to build highways that are still unable to relieve traffic congestion. The vehicles that ride on ever wider streets add deadly pollutants to our everyday environments, make neighborhood play unsafe for our children, and turn across-the-street neighbors into strangers. As we improve environments for cars, we neglect walking and grow less healthy (Hester, 2006, pp. 1-2).

The problem that this thesis addresses reflects my personal history with urban communities. I have grown to care deeply about these damaging city-forms, having grown up in car-centric, sprawling San Diego. My most recent home of Portland, Oregon is no less transportation-guided, being a city of former streetcar spoke neighborhoods. Yet, Portland prioritizes the pedestrian experience in a way that encourages and enables healthy community within a human-scale city. The contrast between these two and my travels throughout the rest of the country have highlighted this issue as one of chief importance to the future of healthy urban communities.

Purpose:

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the damages to community wrought by car-centric planning and to seek mending solutions. Large and sweeping measures are probably necessary, but they are also expensive, idealistic, and in the near future at least, unrealistic. This thesis seeks an alternative solution to aid city streets and urbanized communities. Instead of large, permanent, and costly efforts, it postures that

small, temporary, and inexpensive measures can easily and effectively plug in to the existing automobile infrastructure to create public spaces. The term *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* is used throughout this thesis to refer to these small, inexpensive, interim maneuvers, combining the terms interim and intervention. This new term is created because none of the existing terms accurately describe this concept. These *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* spaces can draw people back out onto streets to reestablish contact with other and heal socially damaged communities.

Examples of the measures that fall within the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* examined in this thesis are food trucks gatherings in parking lots, skate and bike parks in freeway underpasses, street games painted along sidewalks, planter benches that occupy parallel parking spaces, and intersection beautification paintings. In each instance, the maneuver can be accomplished quickly, cheaply, and with little impact on the existing automobile infrastructure. These uses are largely reversible, and yet this thesis will illustrate their enormously positive impact.

Argument and Questions:

The first argument this thesis makes is that streets have value in shaping healthy community. The activities that take place on the street are vital to the community well being, as the street is the most pervasive public space that a city can offer. This thesis will draw from traditional urbanists and writers who note the connection between street life and community viability (J. Jacobs, 1961) (Gehl, 1987). Community needs physical spaces to exist, and the most important of those public spaces is the street. This thesis argues that pedestrian accessibility illustrates the value of the street, not only as a

space designed for interaction, but also as an important and often overlooked mode of transportation.

The question that this thesis addresses is: What role can interim maneuvers play in occupying underused automotive infrastructure to reinvigorate community, where that community has been fragmented by cities built for cars?

Goals:

There are three community repair goals, within the context of this thesis' interim strategy. Social interaction is the primary, and arguably most important goal for repairing urban settings. The enlivened streets that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* aim to produce can provide a setting for impromptu and spontaneous interactions between diverse community members. These collective interactions eventually compose social capital and form the strong base from which cooperative projects arise. Collective movement and communal energy generate many of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* outlined in this thesis.

Connectivity is the second community repair goal that this thesis addresses. Since *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* primarily occupy urban streets, pedestrian networks become key to lively urban communities. These networks have broken down and degraded due to car-centric planning and fair access is often denied. Many of the temporary uses that this thesis proposes aid in rebuilding pedestrian networks, and thus aid rebuilding community. Some *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* provide pedestrian amenities for rest, commerce, and entertainment, while others directly provide pedestrian access where it is currently lacking.

While this thesis will focus on the social and connective benefits of this interim strategy, economic benefits are integral as well. Enlivened and populated streets mean not only more vibrant communities, but also more vibrant local economies (Kappel, 2009). More people on the streets for positive reasons make the streets safer, drawing even more people (J. Jacobs, 1961). Increased foot traffic brings money spent at local businesses and further aids in community stability. Some *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* also provide low-risk and viable small business opportunities to enliven the streets on which they operate.

Scope:

City planners, elected officials, architects, and landscape architects struggle to find balance between the public desire for car travel, generally supported by urban policy, and the walkability essential to vibrant city streets. The problem that this thesis proffers is a large one with a vast array of possible solutions. This thesis focuses on an interim strategy even while larger tactics are necessary in tandem with this one to wholly solve the problem.

While this thesis does not address transportation planning, it does acknowledge that alternative transportation options are necessary for the future vitality of American streets. The thesis narrows and excludes the breadth of research and theory on urban transportation enhancements. While automobile infrastructure is the setting for this thesis' *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, it suggests that these uses can occupy spaces designed for cars now, without re-engineering street patterns, existing traffic needs and regional grid systems. These changes can coexist without robust public transportation

and bicycle networks. In cities with burgeoning alternative transportation, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could be used alongside non-car transportation to further foster street-life. The application of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to mend damaged street-life is not dependent on alternative transportation, though when it comes, it will certainly advance the initial healing.

This thesis is not a planning thesis, but ideally it will encourage planning and other civic decision makers to consider *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* as an option for enlivening their cities, downtowns, and neighborhoods. These projects are often met with resistance from local jurisdictions, because they don't yet fit into traditional planning processes and municipal management of streetscapes. The hope is that this thesis will illustrate the relative ease with which community repair can come from temporary and inexpensive grassroots measures. Illustrating the value of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, as this thesis aims to, will ease concerns of municipal decision makers that worry that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are too unconventional, accompanied by too many unknowns and that temporary solutions are viable options for urban regeneration.

Process:

Chapter 2 establishes a number of concepts in laying a base for further discussion. A brief history of the shift toward car-centric planning shows the relationship that automobile infrastructure has to the current urban fragmentation. This history begins with a look at the U.S. and gradually focus on Atlanta, and then on the Pittsburgh neighborhood within Atlanta. The Pittsburgh neighborhood is chosen for the author's

familiarity with it from previous research and for the extremity of its situation. The value of streets and their vital role in community are substantiated through literature review.

Chapter 3 explains interim nature of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* and places it on a continuum of repair. Randy Hester's ideal *Enabling Form*, which he speaks of in absolute terms, are the finalized form the city must take to support community (Hester, 2006). Jessica Hyde's concept of the *Fallow Fields* lies at the other, early stage of repair, end of the spectrum (Hyde, 2010). By placing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and their proposed automobile infrastructure locations within the context of these two viable concepts for urban repair, this thesis aims to validate its claim that simple and inexpensive solutions can make a difference.

Chapter 4 reveals the lack of existing scholastic writing on the value and role of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in mending damaged cities and their communities. For this reason, this thesis introduces a brief literature review of the well-researched concepts of community gardens and public art and the community repair they can engender. (Campbell & Wiesen, 2009) This method helps clarify the benefits of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*.

Community gardens and public art two strategies that have intrinsic similarities to the one this thesis advocates. All three strategies occupy existing underused and undervalued spaces of the city. Community gardens also often occupy spaces previously used for cars, such as parking lots. They each engage communities in collective efforts that result in increased sense-of-ownership and neighborhood pride. Additionally, they all encourage interpersonal interaction and development of social capital among community members. While the two concepts, community gardens and

public art, are helpful as comparative tools, this thesis acknowledges that the resemblance is not precise and serves only to help illustrate the potential value of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*.

Case study evaluations included in Chapter 4 illustrate the types of existing maneuvers that define *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. Six case studies that occupy automobile infrastructure illustrate the potential these *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* have to build strong communities. Case studies were chosen based on the three community-defining goals: social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality. The case studies share commonalities found between community gardens and public art. Food carts in parking lots, skate and bike parks in freeway underpasses, intersection repair paintings, and street games painted on sidewalks predominate strategies presented here.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions about the viability of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, while introducing the application of the strategy to the Pittsburgh neighborhood in Atlanta. The application illustrates how these temporary and inexpensive measures can transform depopulated city streets into vibrant public spaces, all while occupying underused slices of existing automobile infrastructure. The application *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are distinctively fit to Pittsburgh. In order for any *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* to succeed in impacting a place, it needs to be generated by local residents and stakeholders for their own community, reflecting their unique character and needs. Chapter 5 concludes with final recommendations for implementing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: A Brief History of the Car in America and the Subsequent Urban Fragmentation

This chapter provides a brief overview of the ascension of the automobile in the United States. Historians, social scientists, planners, and others have ruminated on the effect of the car since its inception. The aim of this chapter is to orient the reader, with as direct an account as possible, to the historical and social events of the past one hundred years that shape the current condition of automobile infrastructure. The historical discussion is followed by an exploration of the damages that automobile infrastructure wrought on American cities, using Atlanta, Georgia as a specific example to illuminate the problem.

1885-1895: Early automotive stirring in the U.S.

Karl Benz built the first gasoline-powered three-wheel vehicle in Germany in 1885 (2011, p. 59). Eight years later, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, at the Chicago Worlds' Fair, held a competition for the best mechanical road vehicle, sparking early interest in American manufactureres (McShane, 1994). Historians point to 1895 as a year marking a number of firsts for America and the car. In 1895 the first car-related patents - over five hundred of them - are applied for; the first car race is run; trade magazine *Horseless Age* is launched; and "automobile" becomes an American English noun (Seiler, 2008). This first race was sponsored by Chicago *Times-Herald* publisher

Herman Kohlsaatt and was meant to bring the trend of French “horseless carriage” races to the U.S. (McShane, 1994).

1895-1913: The American romance with the car begins

Around 1900, the first reliable internal combustion engines edged out steam technology, and became the focus of engineers, Henry Ford among them (Ladd, 2008). Ford spent the early years of the 19th century developing the first widely available American-made automobile. His efforts culminated in 1908 when he unveiled the Model T and drew Detroit into the world’s automobile market (Clymer, 1955). By 1916 model T’s made up 55% of the world’s cars. Daimler, Duryeas and Oldsmobile were also among early American car manufacturers (Schneider, 1971).

Early fascination with the car was articulated in quotations such as the following from *Scribner’s Magazine* in 1913: “Greater liberty, greater fruitfulness of time and effort, brighter glimpses of the wide and beautiful world, more health and happiness – these are the lasting benefits of the motor car” (Schneider, 1971, p. 29). At this moment in history, everything automotive seemed liberating and positive.

1914-1920: World War I and its effect on cars and roads in Europe and America

European fascination with engineering and manufacturing after World War I had a tremendous impact on American automobile development. After the war, France and Germany, already leaders in automobile development, threw themselves into further research and manufacturing, especially in roadway improvements. Their motivation was for improved military logistics, needing viable roads and vehicles to facilitate military

mobilization (McShane, 1994). This European preoccupation with better roads coincided with increasing demands for road growth in America. By 1917 *Scientific American* reported on high road use, arguing the need for more roads. “The logic is plain. Cars increase the working capacity of men. Good roads increase the working capacity of cars” (Schneider, 1971, p. 35).

In general the period between 1895 and 1920 the automobile surged in popularity as the car became entrenched in American culture, economy, politics, and landscape (Seiler, 2008). The landscape alterations that this produced come in the form of an elaborate new highway system (Schneider 77). By the 1910's the Auto Trail organization began construction on highways to support the growing need for longer distance road systems. These early roads, predecessors to interstate highways, are called U.S. Numbered Highways or U.S. Routes. Most notable among the early highways was the Lincoln Highway, built in 1913, stretching from San Francisco to New York City (McCarthy, 1974; Schneider, 1971).

1920-1945: Car growth continues, ignited by the threats of World War II

Car manufacturing grew exponentially between 1899 and 1937: auto output increased by 180,000 percent (Schneider 38). Registered automobiles in the United States increased from 8,000 to 23.1 million between the years 1900 and 1929 (Seiler, 2008). With the growth of the numbers of cars problems with congestion and parking continued as well, even while space dedicated to pavement and parking grew virtually unhindered. City officials acquiesced to the increasing demands of the car, and typically

accommodate its needs, touting their new guiding policy, “the city practical rather than the city beautiful” (Ingersoll, 1990, p. 149).

In the aftermath of World War II and the Cold War, social scientists and historians agree that threats to individual freedom spurred expansion of the automobile and its supporting infrastructure (Ingersoll, 1990; Ladd, 2008; Seiler, 2008).

Consumerism and the freedom that car ownership provided were a response to the threats that totalitarianism projected. With the help of efforts like Eisenhower’s People’s Capitalism campaign, Americans grew to view the car, and the ability to choose and purchase one, as a symbol of the freedom that their newly revitalized capitalist country provided. Americans now saw personal mobility as a right and consumerism as edtantamount to citizenship (Seiler, 2008).

1950-1970: Eisenhower’s modern highway system and the suburbs that follow

The 1950’s saw a second major surge in automobile ownership as Americans come to view cars as integral to their modern lives. To support this growing habit, and pressured by car manufacturer lobbyists, president Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act in 1956, authorizing the Interstate Highway System (Seiler, 2008).

Eisenhower’s “Road Gang,” a group of politicians, businessmen, and lobbyists, succeeded in securing nearly 90% federal funding for the highway system. They used such arguments as road safety, national economy, and defense to convince the Nation of the necessity of the highway (Seiler, 2008).

In 1961 Eisenhower left office and there arose a preliminary awareness of the cultural effects of the car on American society (Seiler 3). By 1967 Francis Turner, the

Federal Highway Administrator, wrote about the inevitability of the highway, with the advent of the automobile, that they “developed like Siamese twin, each utterly dependent of the other” (Schneider, 1971, p. 45). Also in 1967, *Fortune* magazine discussed the robustness of the automobile market, speaking to the saturation of the automobile that didn’t seem to slow its market: “The auto population curve has begun to bump against the human population curve and level off. There is, of course, no demographic law that says the vehicle curve cannot push right through the human curve” (Schneider, 1971, p. 44). The Eisenhower highway legacy continued in the form of the 1968 National Highway Needs Report, officially renewing the call for the continued future of a federal highway program (Schneider, 1971).

With growing urban congestion and now plenty of roads into, and more importantly, out of town, suburbs begin to spring up. Early suburbs are limited to the areas surrounding streetcar spurs and are more often filled with middle and working class citizens, than the middle to upper classes that flock to them once cars are widely available (McShane, 1994). These few early suburbs dramatically increased in size and number when car-driving commuters could access their out-of-town homes faster and tolerate driving farther (Ladd, 2008). The dizzying extent that suburban sprawl reached in the twentieth century, surrounding nearly every major American city, is inextricably tied to the dependence on the car in the modern American experience and transportation planning. Former urbanites flocked to suburbs and suburbs grew to meet the demand. People extracted themselves and the spirit of their communities from the urban core, debilitating lively communities across the country.

History of the problem in Atlanta: How the automobile stifled the life of the streets

The following section looks at the history and evolution of physical form and community in Atlanta, Georgia. This example will illustrate the assertion that the automobile and its infrastructure are complicit in killing the life of the street. Atlanta is used here as a model for the patterns of fragmentation that happen in cities across the country. Atlanta is chosen for its proximity and ease of access for the author, as well as her personal experiences trying to navigate it. Howard Kunstler's writing on Atlanta's degradation in his book *The City in Mind*, offers valuable insight and factors prominently in this discussion of the city (2001).

The principle factors of street life and thus strong urban community - social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality - are dealt with here as each are disabled by the fragmenting effect of the automobile. Via nearby Atlanta, this section illustrates the argument that urban community deteriorates when these three factors are weakened or destroyed. A subsequent section on the Atlanta neighborhood of Pittsburgh grounds the discussion of community breakdown in Atlanta with a concrete example.

In his book, [Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space](#), Jan Gehl distills city and site planning as efforts to either assemble or disperse people. Assembly is not necessarily always the desired effect, at least not everywhere, but in order to retain vitality, the city must support assembly more than it causes dispersal (Gehl, 1987). Atlanta has become essentially a medium for dispersal. Over the course of its evolution, Atlanta has become what Kunstler calls an Edge City. This means that the city center is drained of people, who have scattered to outlying suburbs (1993). The factors causing

this scatter and its impact on community in Atlanta are the venues through which this thesis explores the problem of automobile infrastructure and how it affects communities all over the U.S.

Atlanta's dramatic statistics

Atlanta was chosen as a model for the urban devastation that happens when cars are the focus of planning for the dramatic scale of its concurrent de-densification and suburbanization. Included here are some of the most striking statistics that illustrate the extreme situation Atlanta now finds itself in. The Atlanta metro area is comprised of ten distinct counties. Each week, in the 1990's, nearly 500 acres of tree cover are razed for suburban development, losing 190,000 acres of tree cover between 1988 and 1998. Each day commuters drive 100 million miles on Atlanta roads and highways (Kunstler, 2001). The average commuter drives 35 miles to get from home to work and back. Georgia has the lowest gas tax in the U.S. and that money can only go toward new roads and bridges (R. D. Bullard, Johnson, Glenn S., Torres, Angel O. , 2002). Finally, and most potent: Atlanta has the lowest population density of all U.S. metro areas; in 1999 it was roughly four times less dense than the city of Los Angeles (Kunstler, 2001).

Terminus as an early transit hub

As early as 1833 white settlers arrived in the Cherokee village of Standing Peachtree (Garrison, 1987). Only five years later, in 1838, the burgeoning community became part of the Western and Atlantic rail lines, having the only good bridge for railroads to cross the Chattahoochee River (Ambrose, 2003). Atlanta continued to grow

through the 1830's under the name Terminus as the far end of the Western and Atlantic rail lines. During this time the economy of Atlanta was the railroad, as a freight hub for the cotton-producing region. The town initially existed to support rail workers (Preston, 1979).

In 1850 the first successful run of the Western and Atlantic lines out of Terminus were established and the town secured its place as a major inland transportation hub (Ambrose, 2003). Seven years later the Memphis and Charleston rail lines were completed on the Atlantic line the town was set to become the military transportation nexus of the budding Confederacy (Kunstler, 2001). The first life of this new rail line was a short one. In 1864 Sherman's troops destroyed Atlanta and its railroad infrastructure in the most complete destruction of the general's campaign (Garrison, 1987).

Southern farming setbacks

In 1868 Atlanta became the state capital, quickly reviving its rail capacity and capitalizing on its central location within the railroad-driven U.S. economy. It became the key depot for the largely agricultural region (Hartshorn, 1976). Atlanta became the commercial center of the Southeast. Nonetheless, Atlanta grew relatively slowly between the 1870's and the 1930's, and most of its population were black displaced sharecroppers and poor white farmers (Kunstler, 1993). Both of these populations were new to Atlanta and brought new challenges to the nascent city.

Boll weevil infestations of 1914 and 1921 devastated an economy based almost entirely on cotton. In 1918 mechanized tillers replaced draft animals and effected widespread erosion, damaging rural resources, including the 200-year-old culture. The

result of these farming setbacks was an influx of poor former-farmers to Atlanta, who were especially unsuited to weather the coming depression of the 1930's in an urban environment (Kunstler, 2001). A short-lived electric streetcar system that was nearly defunct by the 1950's, left the city primed to accept cars as its new primary mode of transportation (Preston, 1979).

Air conditioning, suburban growth, and MARTA

By the 1930's the next big trend to shape Atlanta's future was the widespread availability of air conditioning. Once the debilitating heat and humidity was tempered, Atlanta's population in the urban core grew until around 1960. After 1960 residential growth occurred primarily in the suburbs. Once people had cars and air-conditioned homes, they depended less on the outdoor civic spaces of the city. This widespread sentiment made the shift to the suburbs virtually seamless and marked the beginning of the move toward suburban sprawl in Atlanta. Kunstler claims "Air conditioning and cars are the primary determinants of life in Atlanta. The city's utter dependence upon them is assumed if no longer conscious. Both are, in turn, utterly dependent on reliable sources of cheap petroleum" (2001, p. 59). The explosion of air-conditioned high-rise and skyscraper development in downtown Atlanta also removed people from the street. Large public housing projects also grew during this period, with the intent to rid the city of slums (Ambrose, 2012).

The 1960's civil rights laws shifted the makeup of Atlanta. In 1962 new areas of the city were opened to African American development, particularly in southwest Atlanta (Ambrose, 2012). The 1970 census illustrated that Atlanta had a majority African

American population for the first time. These dramatic changes brought with them high rates of crime within the city center. This crime became a large factor for white Atlantans to move out of the city towards the newly constructed suburbs (Allen, 1996).

The well-intentioned but poorly executed MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) failed to reconnect the city and ease race relations. The project was perceived as existing primarily for African American Atlantans, as it passed in 1971 because of their vote. Instead of drawing whites back to the city center, as it intended to do, it further separated remaining white downtown residents and firmly planted them in the suburbs (R. D. Bullard, Johnson, Glenn S., Torres, Angel O. , 2002). Suburban withdrawal of the white middle and upper classes widened the poverty gap along racial lines as poor African Americans continued to reside in the city's core.

By the 1980's not only did more residents migrate to the edge of the city; the businesses where they worked began relocating. These corporate offices and manufacturing centers followed their workers to the edge of town to alleviate commutes (Hartshorn, 1976). This migration further drained people from the streets of downtown, since they could now live and work on the edge of the city. Malls, commercial strips, and big box stores grew to support the ever-growing suburbs, later including the Mecca of regional consumerism: the Mall of Georgia (Kunstler, 2001). Evidence of this retail culture abounds in strip malls and big box retail store in Gwinnett and Cobb counties.

Developers and bankers spurred on the Sunbelt culture of consumerism. Sub-prime practice like DiTech's notorious 125 percent dream loans encouraged people to spend more than they could afford on bigger and better homes and cars (Kunstler, 2001). Not only did this inextricably bind Atlanta, and the entire U.S., to cheap

petroleum, it also foretold the economic crash that had to eventually come with a culture of reckless indebtedness.

Atlanta continues as transport center, now by air

The third major determinant of Atlanta's future was the construction of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport (ATL), begun in 1926 as a U.S. Post Office federal airmail center. In the 1960's the airport expands with passenger airline Delta's arrival (Garrison, 1987). In the 1970's when airlines were de-regulating, ATL adapted and expanded once again, now to include international terminals. Access to airline travel paired with the growth of convention business composed a large piece of Atlanta's economy throughout the 1980's (Kunstler, 2001).

This new convention-driven economy, based on Atlanta's central location and easy air travel, included a huge new conference center, 'The World Congress Center.' The World Congress Center was created to help Atlanta make connections to the growing global market of commerce. In the past, ports on seaboards served to connect U.S. manufacturing and farmers to the world. This new inland portal to the world, dependent on air-travel, was a radical idea and, for a time, supported tremendous growth and opportunity for a workforce that desperately needed catalyzing. The city also constructed three new sport stadiums to further stimulate its economy. These complexes devastated downtown, obliterating whole neighborhoods and street patterns. Car transport was the only mode planned to service the stadiums, making huge parking lots necessary. Freeway on and off ramps, built to support car-driving stadium visitors, further disrupted connectivity within these neighborhoods. The ball parks are lifeless

except for games and vehicular congestion overloads the adjacent roads and freeways on game days (Ambrose, 2003).

Olympics exacerbate downtown damage

The 1996 Olympics brought more poorly planned development that further disrupted the downtown grid and what was left of its old character. This didn't seem to be a problem to Mayor Andrew Young who told preservationists, even before the Olympics disruptions, that "Atlanta has no character—we're building it now" (Kunstler, 2001, p. 63). The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) built their stadium adjacent to a low-income African American neighborhood, called Summerhill, and refused to include residents in the planning process. The ACOG later offered a 'revitalization' project for Summerhill that effectively gentrified the area, forcing out the original inhabitants. The impact spread to nearly 100 small businesses that were forced to relocate for the stadium, permanently damaging the downtown economy (Keating, 2001). Centennial Olympic Park was the other major project, also displacing two entire public-housing neighborhoods, Techwood and Clarke Howell (Kunstler, 2001). The complex is now an underused 21-acre commemorative plaza adjoining the World Congress Center (Love, 1998).

Forced to reform again by Federal regulations

In 1998, two years after the Atlanta summer Olympics, the Environmental Protection Agency declared that Atlanta was not in compliance with the 1990 Clean Air Act and placed the city at risk to lose one billion dollars in federal highway money

(Chapman, 2002). Between the 1970s and the 1990s when most of the sprawl developed, Atlanta and its mayors continually yielded to developers wishes, instead of imposing growth limits. The city is now faced with a blighted downtown, a widening poverty gap, an unsustainable addiction to petroleum, and an air pollution problem that needs immediate attention.

Since the 1990's some creative infill and neighborhood revitalization projects arose. In 2000 The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) launched a project called the Livable Centers Initiative that aims to restore air quality by retrofitting declining neighborhoods into denser, mixed-use districts (Dobbins, 2005). ARC is the regional planning agency for Atlanta's 10 counties, focusing attention on key regional resources and issues. Bell South, Atlanta's second-largest employer as of 2002, relocated its offices closer to MARTA stops (Johnson, 2002). In 2007 the historically African American Sweet Auburn neighborhood underwent a major revitalization and renewal. Its market parking lot now hosts a successful weekly food truck gathering (Kirk, 2007). On the extreme end of the spectrum, William Buzbee, environmental law professor at Emory University, proposed federal anti-sprawl legislation to stem the flow of economic and residential development on the edge of the city (2002). Currently Atlanta faces new challenges as it moves toward recovery; car-centered planning of the past fifty years cannot be undone quickly or easily. These projects and others like them are the first steps to mend a city that has been torn apart by a culture of cars and the sprawl it induces.

How Atlanta's problem reflects community breakdown

As stated in the introduction, this thesis proposes that community grows from of strong social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality. These three elements are inextricably intertwined when considering urban communities, but here are teased apart to identify real ways in which each notion is broken down by car-centric development. The following section examines these three factors as they relate to Atlanta and it's evolution. Many of the trends that this thesis identifies as shaping the city's form are unique to Atlanta and it's geographic location, but similar trends with similar results are seen all over the U.S.. Atlanta's dramatic sprawl makes it an easy target for this discussion, but the points that this thesis makes about Atlanta could be made about any number of sprawling mega-cities around the county.

Social interactions break down in Atlanta

Positive social interactions are necessary for vibrant communities. Diverse social interactions, which this thesis identifies as of particular importance to strong community, suffer with the divisive sprawl of the type that Atlanta engenders. When people use their cars to function, they forego the spontaneous and unexpected interactions that one can have on the street. Atlanta's suburbs not only divide people from one another, they also divide residents by social class and race. Middle class whites typically move to the suburbs and lower class African Americans stay in the city core (R. D. Bullard & Johnson, 1999). Whether this segregation is self-induced or policy driven, people in Atlanta seem to choose to live with similar racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups.

This thesis further proposes that a strong community is a diverse one - racially, socio-economically, and culturally.

Connectivity breaks down in Atlanta

Atlanta originated as a transportation hub and continues today to be well connected to the rest of the U.S. by rail, road, and air traffic, and to the world via air transport as well. It is ironic, then, that connectivity *within* the city of Atlanta is one of its main drawbacks to being a vibrant, livable city. The highway network put in place to disperse goods also allows for human dispersal to the edge of the city. The most visually dramatic instance of the tangle of freeways infringing on urban connectivity is the Tom Moreland Interchange, colloquially called Spaghetti Junction (Figure 2.1). This fourteen-bridged jumble of freeways and on-ramps creates uninhabitable interstitial spaces and cuts through neighborhoods, as many freeways do throughout the city. Even Grant Park, one of the oldest Victorian neighborhoods in Atlanta, is not immune to a bisecting Interstate 20. The one effort made to reconnect people to the faltering city core, MARTA, also fails.

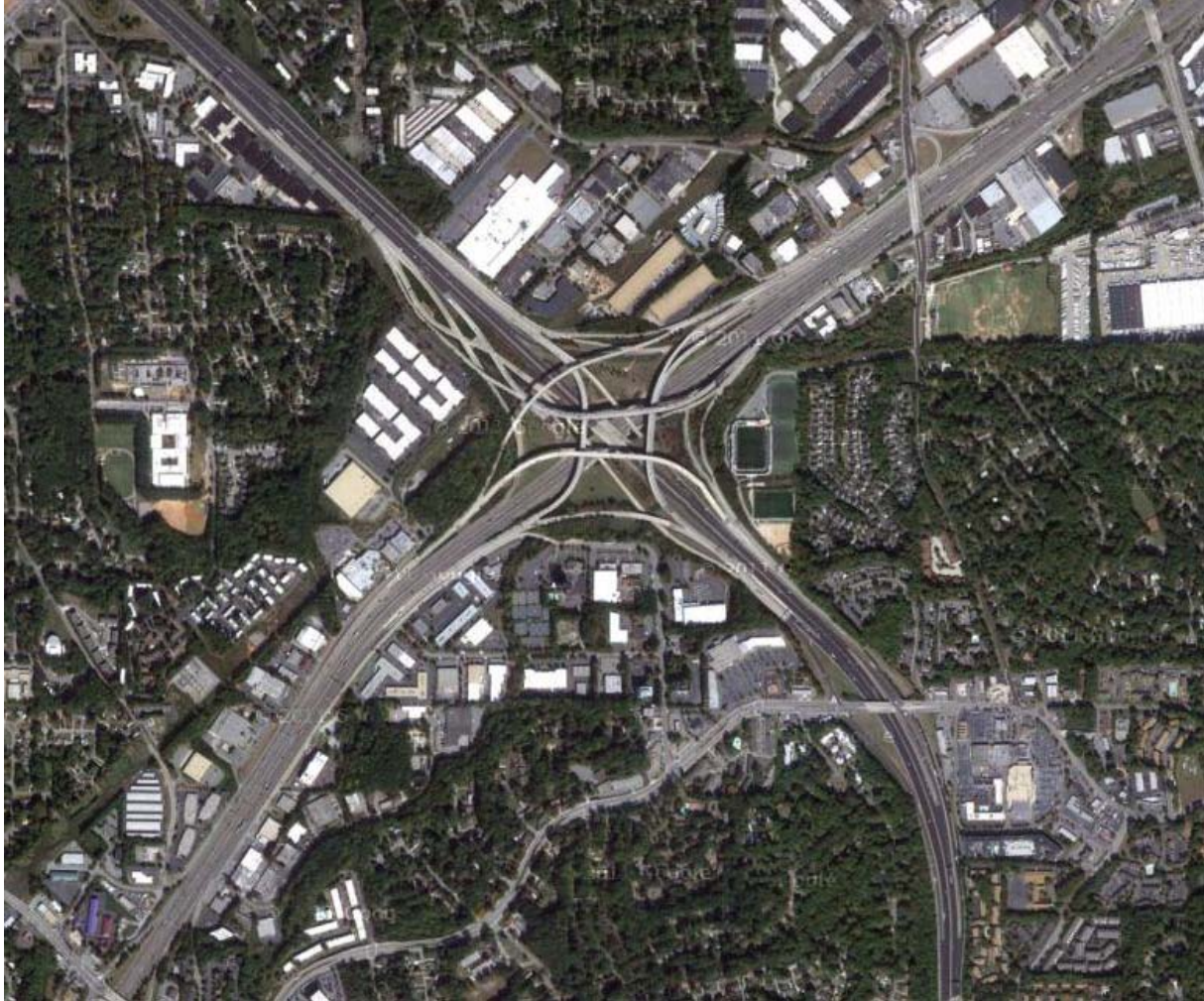


Figure 2. 1 Tom Moreland Interchange, called Spaghetti Junction, lies just north of downtown Atlanta. (Landers, 2012□)

This thesis identifies accessible and effective transportation as necessary to a well-connected viable community. Options for connectivity in Atlanta are few and are dominated by the personal car. It is not within the purview of this thesis to determine which came first: the market demands for vehicular design or the automobile's needs for accessible roads. What concerns us here are the results of the dependency on the car in major metropolitan areas. Pedestrian networks suffer from car-centric planning and, in many neighborhoods, are entirely absent. Downtown Atlanta is crisscrossed with freeways and their ramps in so many places that it has become a wasteland of

disconnected parcels and widespread congestion. Poorly planned civic projects in Atlanta such as stadiums, convention centers, and Olympic relics, further disrupt the street and block pattern that composes the city's connective fabric. These complexes disconnect, and sometimes bisect, neighborhoods with their massive surface parking and freeway on-and-off ramps. Residents, workers, and visitors are forced to make a conscious effort to interact and that interaction usually involves an automobile.

Economic vitality breaks down in downtown Atlanta

Just as car infrastructure developed alongside the growing popularity of the car, residents and their supporting commerce and corporations depart for the edge of the city together (Figure 2.2). As Atlanta's suburbs boom, so do big box stores, strip malls and corporate campuses - all within a convenient car ride. This migration drains the city core of customers, devastating businesses small and large. They either have to follow the trend out to the edge or fold. Some businesses cannot survive a shift out to the suburbs, especially if they depend on street traffic. This includes coffee shops, restaurants, and small markets. Another key to strong community that this thesis identifies is a robust and stable local economy with a variety of business types and sizes.

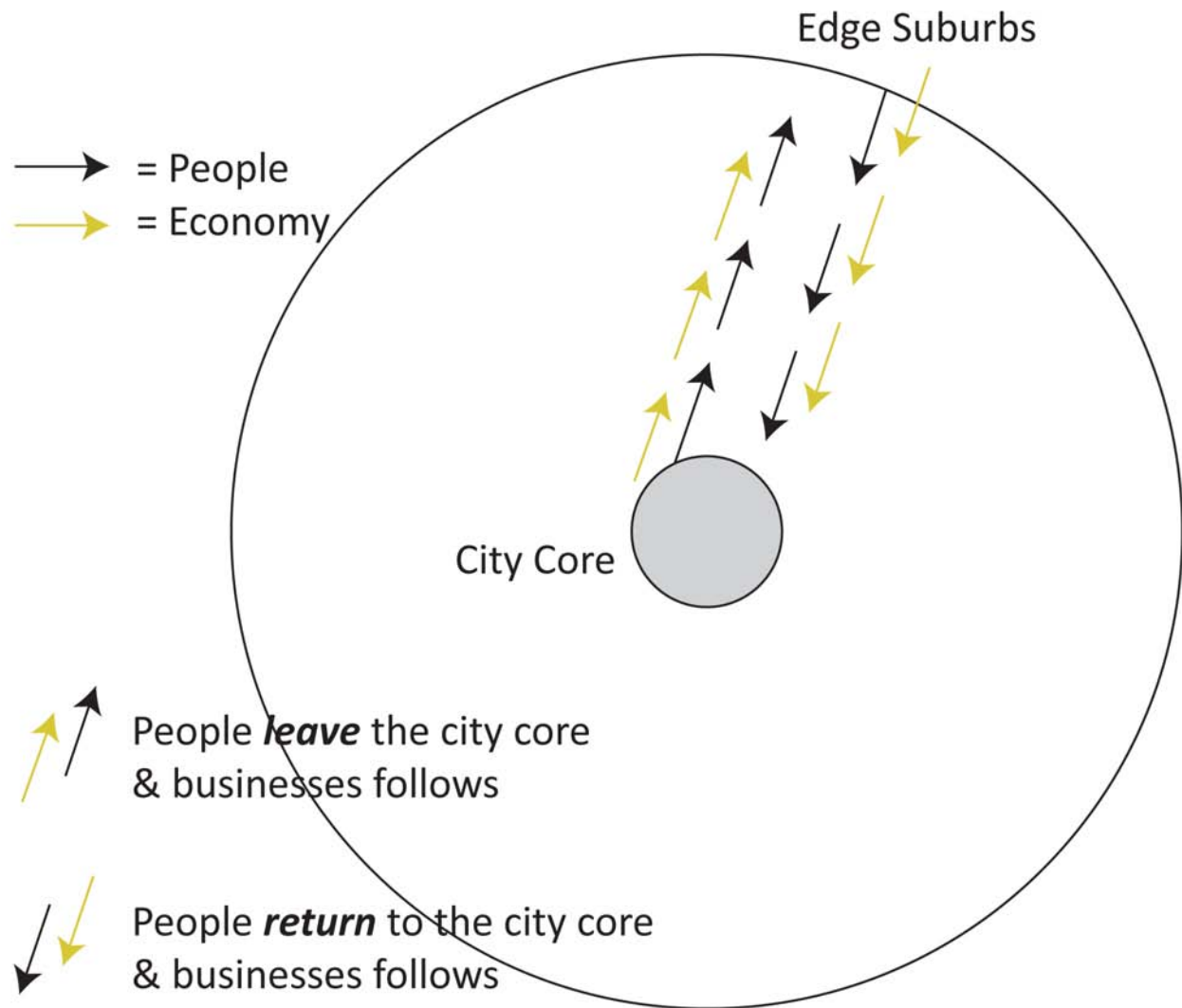


Figure 2. 2 Diagram of the flow of people and economy from the city core out to the suburbs (Landers, 2012o)

Beyond the economic damages of a depopulated urban core are the damages wrought by overspending. Atlanta's reckless credit economy spurs suburban growth, similar to the trend seen throughout the Sunbelt. This consumer-oriented economy, with its unsustainable loan practices, destroys countless neighborhoods in Atlanta. The resulting widespread foreclosures leave blighted communities in their wake.

Zoom in on Pittsburgh

The Pittsburgh neighborhood in Southwest Atlanta serves as a good case study for the city's community breakdown (Figure 2.3). Here, disintegrating social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality add up to a severely broken down community. This dissolution is largely caused by the ubiquitous automotive infrastructure that cut through and cuts off the neighborhood. Pittsburgh is chosen as a focus because of the author's familiarity with it from previous research, but also because it encompasses the issues that this thesis discusses in a dramatic and compelling way. Pittsburgh is chosen from numerous sites within Atlanta for the extremity of its current situation. This is not to discount the many other damaged sites in Atlanta, but to make this thesis' assertions about community breakdown real and concrete with a specific example.



Figure 2. 3 Atlanta with the Pittsburgh neighborhood highlighted in yellow (Landers, 2012a)

Pittsburg lies just southwest of downtown Atlanta, bordered by I-85/I-75 to the east and I-20 to the north. This wedge of land is marginalized and cut-off from the rest of downtown Atlanta not only by these freeways and their overpowering infrastructure, but also by an industrial rail yard that pollutes the neighborhood and forms a divisive northeastern boundary (Figure 2.4). The neighborhood is bound on the southern edge by a paved 31-acre post-industrial wasteland called the University Avenue Site. This parcel was used most recently as a shipping and transport center, another element of the automobile infrastructure of the city that inflicts damages on the human community.



Figure 2. 4 Map of Pittsburgh, in yellow, within surrounding Atlanta context (Landers, 2012y)

Low-income African American residents compose what is left of the homogeneous community, but with a 43% vacancy rate, there doesn't appear to be a viable, "living" neighborhood ("The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Fact Sheet," 2010). Connectivity is especially weak, with an anemic bus route and sparse sidewalks. Commerce in the neighborhood has dwindled and it lacks a commercial core and most essential services. Its economic vitality was drained with the flight of residents to other, out-of-town suburbs, similar to the trend described in Chapter 1. These factors, among others to be enumerated in Chapter 5, make Pittsburgh an apt example for the devastating community breakdown that happens when commerce shifts away from the city core, downtown neighborhoods become homogenized in their poverty, and connections to the rest of the city dry up; all incited by a city who plans for cars and not human neighborhood within the urban fabric.

Chapter Summary

This chapter charted the rise of the car in the U.S. along with the growth of the infrastructure that supported it. The history of the car in America and a brief overview of Atlanta's urban evolution, show that America's cities depended upon cars as the twentieth century progressed. Automobiles were part of twentieth century America's character development. Atlanta, a city struggling with utter destruction after the Civil War and the devastation of Reconstruction clamored to become a leading light in progressivism, commercialization, and modernity at the expense of community character and sense of place. This chapter used Atlanta as a model for what can happen when car use is at the center of urban and transportation planning. The

breakdown is demonstrated here by looking at Atlanta in terms of damaged social interactions, connectivity, and economy. The Atlanta discussion narrows to discuss the Pittsburgh neighborhood as a concrete example of the problem that this thesis addresses: the breakdown of community that results from an automobile-dominated city.

Chapter 3: Continuum of community repair, placing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* between Jessica Hyde's *Fallow Fields* and Randy Hester's *Enabling Form*

This chapter will define community and discusses the concept of urban community repair. This thesis places *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* between two other models for community repair. Jessica Hyde's *Fallow Fields* becomes the predecessor and Randy Hester's *Enabling Form* becomes the successor. Both concepts aim to repair urban form and community, but at different stages in the lifespan of the urban landscape. Fitting this thesis' *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within the context of these other concepts lends a framework for looking at the entire continuum of repair. This thesis suggests that community repair is dynamic, nuanced and, above all, takes place over time, making the framework for repair a *continuum* (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 (Landers, 2012m)

Community Definition

This thesis' definition of community encompasses the interaction between people in a neighborhood, the physical connections throughout the neighborhood, and the economic life of those neighborhood residents. The term neighborhood is used here to mean any physical space within a city or town, irrespective of scale. This thesis agrees with social theorist Suzanne Keller in her extension of the definition of community to include physical environments (2003). The social networks that compose community are not separate from the physical spaces where they take place. This unity is central to the efficacy that this thesis proposes *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can have in repairing community.

There are countless definitions for the term *community*. This thesis will focus on three key features of strong community, not to the exclusion of other possible features, but to narrow the focus to a manageable scope that relates to the themes this thesis addresses: social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality (Figure 3.2). The notion of community, in all its manifestations, theories, and definitions is a vast field unto itself (Aku, 2000). The definition of community that this thesis uses derives from this large literary and social science tradition, but solely as it relates to the community building that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can enact. Each of the three community features within this definition is composed of nuanced elements that are examined in the following sections.

One particularly useful starting point for this thesis' distillation of community enabling features is a list of six beneficial elements articulated in a report created by the

London-based Department for Communities and Local Government ("What works in community cohesion," 2007). The components of community cohesion include:

1. Equality of opportunity, access, treatment and services.
2. Engagement and participation.
3. Respect for diversity and social trust.
4. Meaningful interaction across groups.
5. Solidarity and collective community action.
6. Economic well-being and empowerment ("What works in community cohesion," 2007)

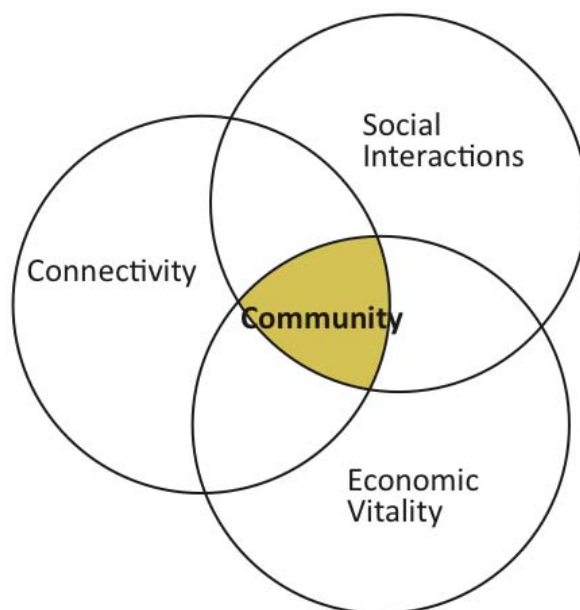


Figure 3.2 (Landers, 2012I)

Social interaction supports community

Social interaction among community members is arguably the most important factor in strong community. One way to discuss the significance of interpersonal interactions within a community is the theory of social capital. Basically, social capital theory proffers that social networks have value. Social capital is loosely categorized as either bridging or bonding. Robert Putnam distills the social capital categories: bonding

social capital is *exclusive* while bridging social capital is *inclusive* (Putnam, 2000).

“Bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves” (2000). Both modes are integral in strong communities.

To further specify the nature of social interactions that contribute collectively to community strength, diversity must be included. This thesis argues that a strong, interactive community must also be a diverse one - racially, socio-economically, and culturally (Hester, 2006). This thesis agrees with Putnam’s assertion that informal social connections are key in an age when formal, organized socializing is in decline (Putnam, 2000). If informal social connections are all that remains, then they must be encouraged and supported. Ray Oldenburg writes extensively on the value of informal social gathering: “When good citizens of a community find places to spend pleasurable hours with one another for no specific or obvious purpose, there is purpose to such association. Further, the most important of the purposes or functions served by informal public gathering places cannot be supplied by any other agencies in the society” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. xi). Impromptu social interactions are also vital to strong community. Chance meetings on the street introduce community members to one another in a spontaneous and organic way that cannot happen when people are drained from the streets into their own cars (Hester, 2006).

Connectivity supports community

Connectivity is vital to community. Accessible and effective transportation is an integral factor in strong community (“What works in community cohesion,” 2007).

Connectivity is both the physical, infrastructural networks of travel and the services that are offered to aid that transportation. Options for connectivity must be affordable and fair and thus they must stretch beyond the car. Pedestrian networks are key, but other options like bicycle and public transportation systems are also important.

Walkability is a term used here for pedestrian networks that connect amenities within a city. Unsurprisingly, one urban study tell us that people walk more in areas that are more interconnected, have shorter blocks and more intersections (Doyle, Kelly-Schwartz, Schlossberg, & Stockard, 2006). This seemingly obvious point is an important one; city form affects behavior. Another study, led by Marichela Sepe shows that walkability is a condition for livability; that is, vital for a beneficial quality of life (2009). She goes on to discuss the importance of walkability in place identity, making it all the more critical to create a strong community (Sepe, 2009). Pedestrian networks are the spaces within which diverse and impromptu social interactions take place, making these two factors of community interdependent and thus both necessary for community vitality.

The concepts of connectivity, as both accessible transportation and walkability, place high value on the street. For the interactive spaces that they provide, as well as their connective purpose, streets are often touted as the most important public space of the city (Gehl, 1987; A. B. Jacobs, 1993; J. Jacobs, 1961; William Hollingsworth Whyte, 2000). They are also the most plentiful. It is necessary to treat streets and sidewalks as usable public space in the city, since often they are the only public space available. When streets are empty of businesses and people and obstructed by mega-blocks and freeway access ramps, they cease to serve as public space that supports community.

Strong community needs viable streets for accessible transportation and for public space (J. Jacobs, 1961).

Economic vitality supports community

Another key to a strong community that this thesis identifies is a robust and stable local economy with a variety of business types and sizes. This feature is deemphasized within the three factors that compose community, in order to give primacy to social interaction and connectivity. Nevertheless, it is included here because it plays an important role in community *resilience*. Locally-owned and operated businesses are the key to a strong community's economy (Putnam, 2000). Scale is also important, there must be a variety of scales of businesses as well as a mix and range of types. A diverse and local economy is more adaptable and resilient, further contributing to the overall strength of the community.

Beyond being the livelihood for community members, urban businesses also provide an additional venue for social interactions and gathering. These "third spaces" provide an important service in community building. The third space lies between the very public street and the very private home (Oldenburg, 1989). A third space could be a hardware store where neighbors exchange advice or a coffee shop where people meet to discuss a common interest. These businesses provide a useful space within the landscape of the city for people to gather and interact with one another.

Jessica Hyde's *Fallow Fields*

The following is a brief discussion of Jessica Hyde's thesis entitled *Fallow Fields: Designing a Restorative, Transitional State for Vacant Land in Detroit, Michigan* (Hyde, 2010). Hyde earned her masters in landscape architecture from the University of Georgia in 2010. Her concept of *Fallow Fields* for revitalizing Detroit's vacant spaces forms a powerful precedent for what can come first along the continuum of community repair. Her main premise is to prepare vacant land in a conspicuous manner to make it "more usable by land use visionaries" (Hyde, 2010, p. 41). She uses compelling examples of work that these visionaries already do with vacant land and existing structures in Detroit. The question that guides the inquiry of her thesis is as follows:

How could landscape architecture reveal the inherent potential of vacant urban land, with the hope that doing so might help initiate reinvestment in and repopulation of Detroit? How could it do so in a way that resonates with the unique spirit of the city? (Hyde, 2010, p. 41)

The answer is to fallow Detroit's fields (vacant land). Hyde relates this fallow state to that of an agricultural field: a state that is deliberate, interim, and sustainable with little resources (Hyde, 2010). She speaks of this fallow state as a long-term phase, preparing the land physically, and also preparing the public perception of the land, for future use. The physical remediation artfully intertwines with aesthetic remediation, intending to raise the public perception of vacant land. Phytoremediation of industrial brownfields and demolition-by-design techniques both deal with physical challenges of these vacant sites while offering cues to care that help mend the physiological perception of disorder. Hyde sees the lifespan of the fallow field as a mix between an improvisational adaptive management plan and a directed trajectory toward

redevelopment, in order to leave plenty of room for happenstance and unforeseen change (Hyde, 2010).

This intervention is more ecologically based than *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* but the essential theory is similar: to spark interest in a space and invite positive public attention. The impact that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can have on de-populated urban streets relates to the psychological repair that *Fallow Fields* can incur on land that people view as disorderly and dangerous. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* take place not on vacant land, but on land vacant of people, left over by the car. This thesis proposes that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can serve as another phase of urban healing, focused on healing human connections. They fit within the continuum of repair, as a subsequent phase of urban healing after *Fallow Fields* have mended the land, but before redevelopment.

Both concepts seek to revitalize underused land: *Fallow Fields* uses vacant land in a blighted city and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* use the undervalued land of automotive infrastructure. Before these strategies are enacted, both vacant land and the automotive infrastructure are devoid of people and generally hold a very low place in the community's consciousness. Both *Fallow Fields* and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* aim to raise that public perception; one by mending the land in an aesthetically pleasing manner, the other by providing places for much-needed gathering and interacting.

Randolph T. Hester's *Enabling Form*

Randolph Hester's *Ecological Democracy* is a seminal work on community, ecology, democracy, and city form. This thesis relies on some of Hester's most

important notions to help orient *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within the continuum of community repair. His concept of centeredness, within his enabling form theory, is the most applicable to what *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* strive to do. While many of Hester's theories relate to this research, centeredness is the most concise and useful in illustrating the role that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can play in bringing community back to city centers. *Enabling Form*, is Hester's definition of the ideal community supporting city form:

Enabling form, first and foremost, creates places where community members work together democratically to solve complex problems and are informed by ecological thinking, locality, and shifting externalities. *Enabling Form* makes places that enhance the sense of community and the working effectiveness that come from shared local experiences and values. It heightens an awareness of interdependence and a respectful caring for others in our community and for the local environment itself. *Enabling form* makes places where we can get to know neighbors and build an increasingly capable and empathetic civil society (Hester, 2006, pp. 18-19).

Hester identifies five design principles that shape *Enabling Form*: centeredness, connectedness, fairness, sensible status seeking, and sacredness (Hester, 2006). The following section focuses on Hester's discussion of centeredness to draw a connection between *enabling form* and what *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can do to build and repair community.

Centeredness means that people need a central place to gather in order to interact, build social capital, and in turn, build community. "Centers are essential for economic complexity, local identity, and rootedness. Centers build social-spatial capital, enhance deliberative democracy, and incubate ideas regarding locality" (Hester, 2006, p. 21). With increasing mobility and the demands of vehicles, economy shifts away from mixed-use centers and they suffer. As is seen in places like Atlanta, the center becomes

a hollowed out core. Hester contends that such a lack of centeredness is at the core of community breakdown, with a coinciding lack of local identity, place knowledge, and the capacity to work with other community members (Hester, 2006).

Hester goes on to outline ten rules for good centers in a design approach to solve the problem of de-centeredness. Interestingly, many of his rules coincide with this thesis' definition of what composes strong community, underlying the connectedness of community to city form. Hester's first rule for a good center is an intense concentration of different uses. The second is that the center be accessible for everyone in the area. The third rule states that centers should encourage frequent, daily use, as well as use throughout the evening, and the fourth states that centers should provide places for both formal and informal community interaction. The fifth rule states that good centers help develop local knowledge. The sixth says that good centers develop shared interests, the seventh that they provide a sense of orientation for coming and going. The eighth rule states that they reflect ecological content in built form. The ninth rule of a good center is to present a consistency of local built form, and finally, the tenth rule is to invite commitment (Hester, 2006, pp. 23-28).

This list of requirements for a good center illustrates the primary difference between *enabling form* and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. *Enabling Form* is an ideal city form that does everything right in reconnecting community members. It is for this reason that *enabling form* lies on the end of the community repair continuum, and why *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* come at a much earlier, still-damaged phase.

URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS strive to bring back the center that Hester describes as necessary. They provide spaces for gathering within the urban core. While

Hester approaches centeredness with design solutions, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* approach it in a grassroots manner that enables interim projects to take root and grow, as they gather people back to the urban core and revitalize the community. One can think about each *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* as a mini-center that can, collectively, generate centeredness. Hester's definition of a center fits entirely with what this thesis proposes *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can do: "[Centers] are focal points and nodes of activity and interest that serve as points of orientation and invite investments of time and energy" (2006, p. 23).

Another concept that should be mentioned in this illustration of *URBAN INTERIMVENTION'S* value is triangulation. Hester, along with Jan Gehl and William Whyte, the fathers of modern urban behavior mapping, underscores triangulation (1987; 2006; 1980). People see something of interest, which could be one of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*; their curiosity impels them to stop, and passersby see people gathering and are intrigued to stop as well. An interested gathering quickly forms and the first step is taken in community creation with this impromptu and diverse social interaction. The manner by which *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* achieve community healing begins with this simple and time-tested phenomenon of urban behavior.

To clarify, one obvious difference between *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and both *Fallow Fields* and *Enabling Form* is that the two latter solutions focus on design in their approach to community repair, whereas, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are not design, in any conventional sense, but rather encompass a strategy that allows, encourages, enables, and facilitates grassroots projects to start or, in some cases, continue. In this way *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are distinct. However, it is still useful

to relate *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to *Fallow Fields* and *Enabling Form* theories for their relative alignment along the continuum of community repair.

Another defining feature of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* is their relative permanence. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are defined by a necessary degree of impermanence or malleability. Many of them evolve into long-lasting project but they all begin as temporary and immediate solutions for community public space. To be defined as an *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, a project must have the capacity to change with time, as the community surrounding it transforms.

Chapter Summary

This chapter begins with a definition of community, narrowed by a focus on the role of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in community repair. In order to orient the concept of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within the context of other theories that deal with community repair, this chapter illustrates two other thinker's works: Jessica Hyde's *Fallow Fields* and Randy Hester's *Enabling Form*. This thesis wedges its concept of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* between these two approaches, to form a phased continuum of community repair. Both Hyde and Hester's work aid in grounding *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in practical terms and help illustrate the ways in which they can achieve the common goal of community repair.

Chapter 4: *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* case study exploration

Chapter 4 further defines *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in the language of real projects by real people in real cities. Case studies play an essential role here in characterizing the types of projects that compose *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. The goal of this thesis is to illustrate the importance of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in community repair, and to suggest that they be encouraged and supported, rather than discouraged and challenged. This goal makes thorough case study research crucial. The lens through which *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* case studies are viewed comes from a preliminary discussion of two other urban land use strategies whose positive effect on community is well documented. Literature on how community gardens and public art benefit communities is explored and comparisons are drawn between these two strategies and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. Since there is relatively little research on *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, community gardens and public art research are useful in showing existing precedents and the community benefits they can enable. While there are many commonalities between *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and public art and community garden, there are important distinctions that set *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* apart. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* specifically occupy spaces within the automotive infrastructure of the city and are transitory. The case studies section presents projects with varying levels of impermanence, but the fact that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are dynamic and transitory is central to their definition.

Public art and community gardens mend community

When speaking of public art, this thesis will focus primarily on temporary works that fall within the 'new genre' of public art. Joanne Sharp writes about public art after the sensational rejection of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, erected in 1981 and removed in 1989, as belonging to a new genre (2007). *Tilted Arc* was generally hated by those working in its Manhattan vicinity, and it was eventually dismantled and removed (Figure 4.1). It is accepted now that Serra's parachuted-in artwork failed because it lacked connection with its audience (Sharp, 2007). The new, post-*Tilted Arc*, genre that this thesis refers to when speaking of public art is one of participation between artists and community members. A vivid example of this type of cooperative public art is a Los Angeles intersection painting, inspired by those done in Portland by community group City Repair (Figure 4.2). A City Repair intersection painting from Portland appears in the case study portion of this chapter. Their work is the product of collaboration between artists and community members, who execute the design in a collective, interactive event (Poirier, 2012). Sharp remarks about the impact of participatory public art on community, "...contributing to local distinctiveness, increasing the use of urban space, creating ownership, reducing vandalism, and improving various economic measures of the area" (Sharp, 2007, p. 275). The emphasis is now on process, rather than product, making this new genre of public art an apt precedent for the inclusive and participatory nature of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*.



Figure 4.1 *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra, New York City, removed in 1985 (Aschkenas, 1985)



Figure 4.2 Los Angeles intersection repair painting, inspired by City Repair’s work in Portland, Oregon (“Intersection Repair Event,”)

Community gardens are also useful in comparison with *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, especially for their position on the spectrum from interim to permanent. Since this thesis focuses on interim land uses their quick implementation and their flexibility with capacity to reverse or evolve is applicable. Interim uses are at the center of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* discussion, but not to the exclusion of projects that begin as interim and evolve into permanence, much as community gardens often evolve. Community gardens occupy a dynamic space within the urban fabric, typically beginning as small temporary projects and evolving into large, well-planned,

permanent community assets. They are useful here for the community mending they engender, but also for the various ways they are treated as interim projects as well as permanent and city-supported neighborhood amenities. By their nature they are flexible and ever evolving, yet often sanctioned. This dynamism makes them unique and valuable in comparison with *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are interim and dynamic, while community gardens are more permanent, yet still dynamic; both can shift as a neighborhood changes. Community gardens and temporary public art lie on the continuum of community repair along with *Fallow Fields*, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, and *Enabling Form* (Figure 4.3). For their longstanding and supported position within the urban fabric, even if they are sometimes temporary projects, community gardens and public art lie closer on the spectrum to Hester's ideal *Enabling Form*.

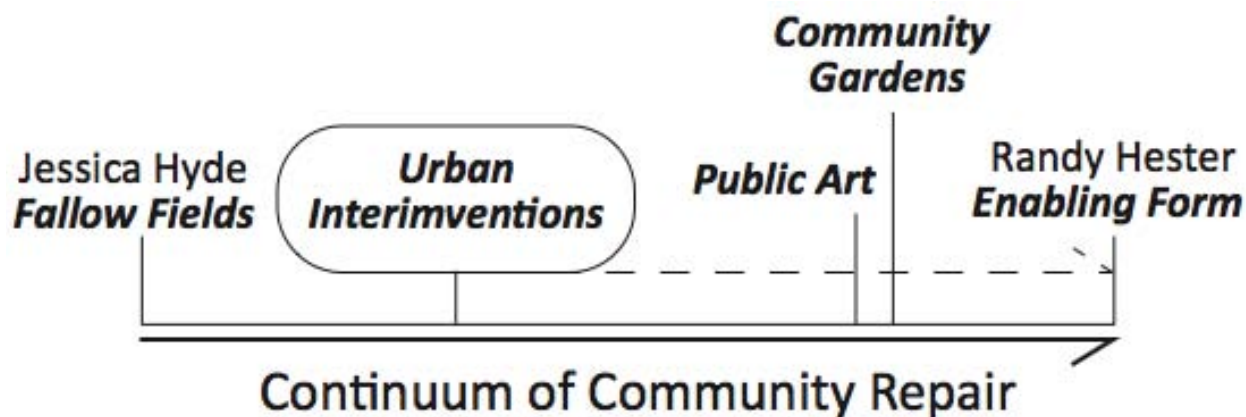


Figure 4.3 Continuum of community repair with public art and community gardens (Landers, 2012n)

The issues that shape community gardens and public art are similar to those that shape *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. These factors, here distilled to an essential four, are commonalities between these three types of projects and will help illustrate the

ways they all achieve community repair. The parallel examples of these two established project types, community gardens and public art, reflect the value of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in rejuvenating community. The four common factors follow:

collective creation - projects grow from collective efforts, often with volunteer participation; undervalued spaces - project sites are typically un-used or undervalued spaces within the urban fabric of the city, often-vacant lots or de-populated streetscapes; flexible and evolving - the projects are not always interim or temporary, but nevertheless dynamic and ever changing; triangulators - the projects serve to gather people and become public amenities as they enhance the street and city by providing a place to stop and engage with others. These commonalities appear in Figure 4.4.

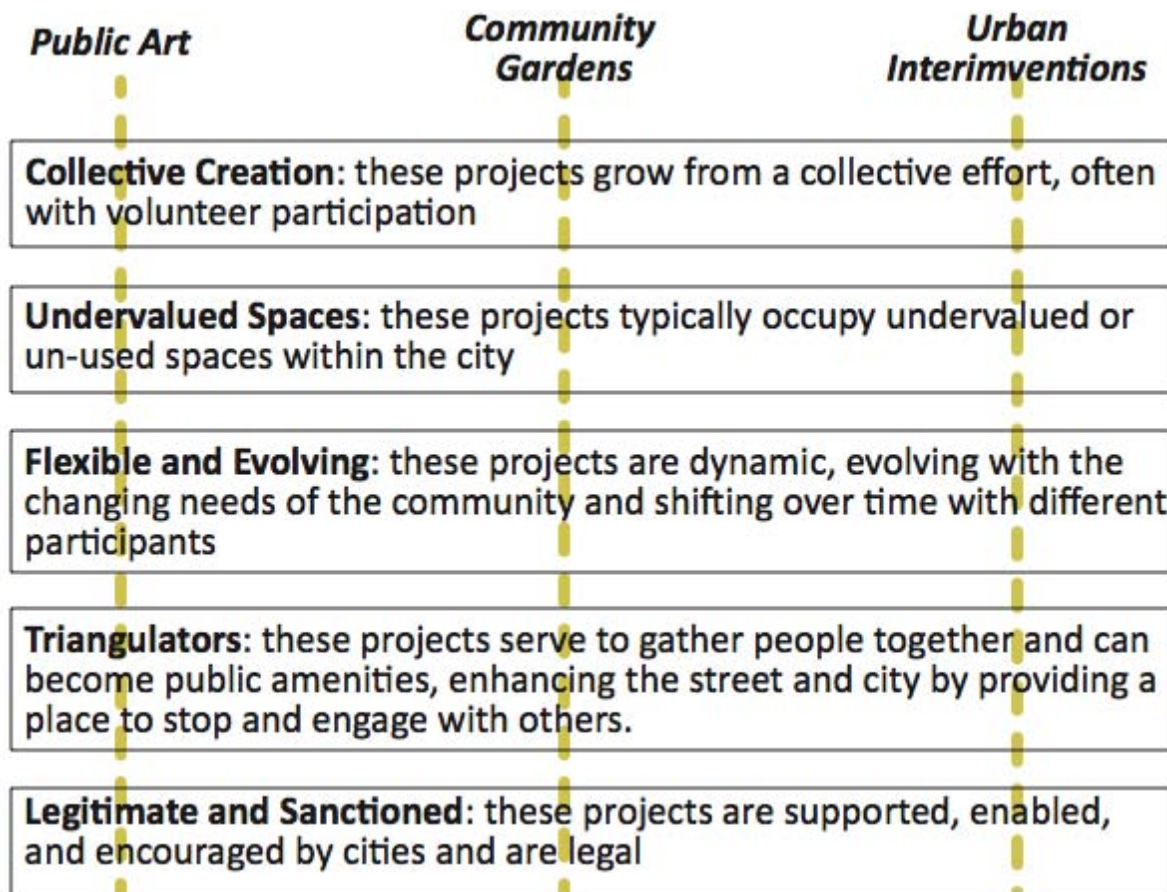


Figure 4.4 Commonalities chart (Landers, 2012k)

Figure 4.4 highlights the assertion that this thesis makes: why not sanction and support *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*? If community building is the goal, and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* share these essential commonalities with known community-building projects, why not legitimize and encourage *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* too? Public art has long been supported and commissioned by civic authorities and community gardens have enjoyed at least a decade of strong civic support in cities across the country (Hou & Lawson, 2009). If these two types of projects can grow community and, often more importantly, engender confidence in civic authorities as productive and positive additions to the urban fabric, then why can't *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* strive to reach a similarly sanctioned status among civic programs?

Figure 4.5 and the sections that follow, illustrate that the four essential characteristics common to temporary public art, community gardens, and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, coalesce to align with this thesis' three community-defining attributes: social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality. This correlation indicates that temporary public art, community gardens, and more importantly, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, contain the necessary components to engender the community repair at the heart of this research. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* aim to mend community breakdown that occurs when cities are planned to accommodate cars rather than people; hence they fit primarily within the infrastructure built to support those vehicles. Community gardens and temporary public art are not restricted to automotive infrastructure spaces, but they too often reclaim such urban spaces.

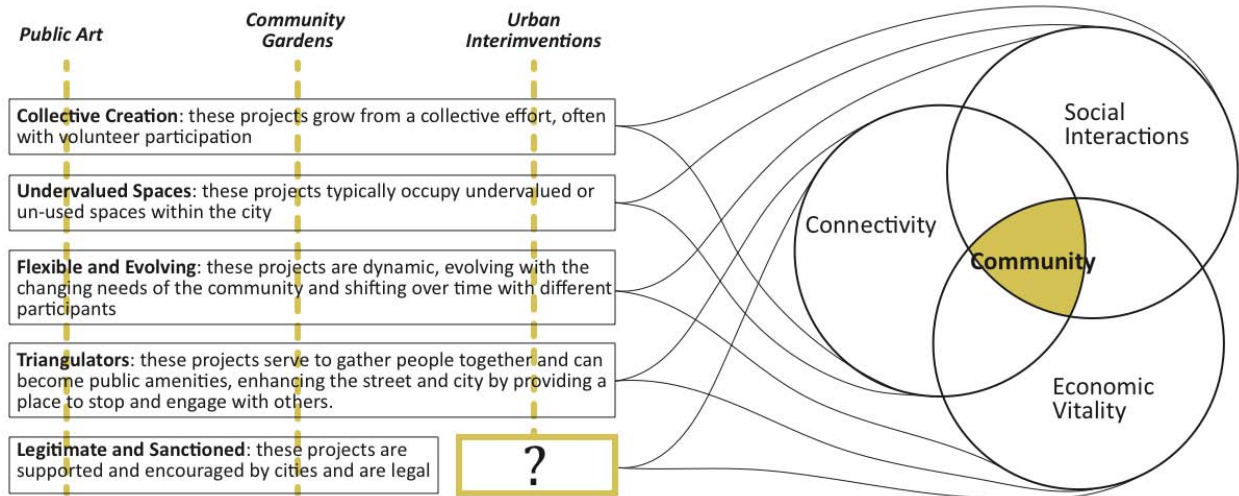


Figure 4.5 Commonalities merge into community Venn diagram (Landers, 2012–)

Collective Creation

The collective efforts that generate these projects are one of their most valuable aspects. Whether people come together because they have a strong community and want to achieve a collective goal, or they create strong bonds because they end up working together, that collective action grows social capital and thus community. This feature, common to community gardens, public art, and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, matches very closely with the community-defining characteristic that this thesis emphasizes as imperative: social interaction. These projects necessitate diverse social interactions to draw people together to collaborate, communicate, and eventually trust one another. Jeffery Hou speaks to this characteristic as seen in community gardens:

Gardens bring people together who might not otherwise interact. As neighbors collectively work to establish a garden out of nothing, they develop social networks and learn organizational skills. The capacity to support community dialogue is essential, as garden participation evolves and communities change. In some cases, this organization has saved gardens from demolition. In other cases, success in community gardening has led to other local campaigns, such as street cleanups or efforts in community economic development (Hou & Lawson, 2009, p. 25).

The outgrowth of further collective efforts stemming from one of these projects, (community gardens) is exactly the kind of community benefit that these social interactions engender. Hou mentions “community economic development,” another common result these projects can produce (Hou & Lawson, 2009, p. 25). This connects back to another definitive characteristic of strong community: economic vitality. When community members know and trust one another, the initial groundwork is laid that can grow into economic development. The community is now stronger socially, which makes it a more attractive place to do business.

Undervalued Spaces

These projects occupy space within the urban fabric that is not otherwise used for public gathering, often occupying a site that isn’t used at all. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* occupy the multitude of spaces that are left over in cities built to support the car. Examples of these spaces include excessive parking lots, parking spaces, space underneath freeway overpasses, and oddly shaped parcels left when roads and freeways slice up the urban fabric. All of these projects, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* as well as temporary public art and community gardens, make thrifty use of spaces that are sitting vacant and detracting from the streetscape. When projects like these arise in reclamation of a city’s undervalued spaces, they bring people back out onto the streets. Figure 4.6 shows people flooding to a former parking lot to eat at one of many of Portland’s food cart pods, or gatherings. Occupying properties that are otherwise vacant with a positive, community-reviving project creates value in a

neighborhood. Over time, the energy generated from this creative infill encourages future economic development.



Figure 4.6 Food Cart Pod on in a former parking lot on SW Ankeny Street in Portland, Oregon ("Cartopia: Portland Food Carts Are Tiny Mobile Businesses That Revitalize Vacat Lots in the City,")

The community-defining characteristic of connectivity is also supported by the use of undervalued urban spaces. Inserting these community-building projects within the existing fabric of the neighborhood, in central and accessible sites, diminishes the need for community members to travel long distances to reach gathering places.

Working *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* into the existing urban fabric decreases the need for car travel to them, and enables pedestrian travel as a viable and realistic mode of transport. When people walk to and from these projects, and between them, there arises a presence on the street of engaged community members, greatly contributing to the overall strength of the community.

Flexible and Evolving

These interim projects are nimble and dynamic and thus can evolve with changing community needs and can reflect efforts to enhance economic development. As gardens grow or *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* evolve over time, they come to reflect the values of the community where they reside. They become the physical manifestation of a positive community climate, which, in turn, provides a desirable backdrop for economic growth. Their dynamic nature is one of their greatest assets; they are suited to initiate connections between community members, provide a venue to strengthen those connections, and evolve as the community's needs change with time. Their flexibility also relates to the social interaction component of strong community. When a project is ever evolving, it is necessary to keep strong communication alive to pass information from one group to another and to negotiate shifting participation and stewardship of projects over time. Those bonds between community members, the social capital they have garnered in generating the projects, will sustain them beyond their initial creation.

Triangulators

William Whyte defines triangulation as “that process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not” (William Hollingsworth Whyte, 1980). This thesis suggests that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can function to enliven streets and bring strangers into contact with one another, just as Whyte's external stimuli do. Similar to the way people interact with public art, people can stop to see what's going on with one of these

projects, becoming a beacon for more passersby to stop and join. When people are on the street engaging in *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, or simply observing them, the street becomes more populated and thus safer. This improved climate of the enlivened street provides the pedestrian traffic necessary to support small street-lining businesses. Triangulation at *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* not only generates economic vitality necessary for strong community, it also provides an apt venue for the diverse social interactions that communities need to revive and grow.

Legitimate and Sanctioned

The variety and quantity of guerrilla public space projects is impressive, even without a system in place to support and enable them. People have been and will keep creating these projects on their own with a mix of both eventual acceptance and rejection leading to destruction. There is something beautiful about how these projects spring up when there is a need for public space and where people are willing to enact them. That said, working to legitimize and support these projects is important if cities are to see more than a smattering of these exciting projects. If neighborhoods want to see real change in their public space, these efforts need to be encouraged and legitimization needs to be streamlined. As Figure 4.4 suggests, legitimization of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* is logical. Community gardens and public art are proven to strengthen community and are legal and supported by municipalities more and more. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* share essential commonalities with community gardens and public art, and they too enact community vitality. So, following this logic, why not

legitimize *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and encourage their growth within the existing urban fabric?

Case Study Introduction

The following case studies help illustrate the types of projects that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* encompass. One major point needs noting as they are introduced: most of these case study projects take place in gentrified, middle-to-high income neighborhoods in cities that are especially progressive and accepting of atypical, creative land-use projects. These case studies are the inspiration for this thesis and play a crucial role in shaping the discussion of what makes *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* valuable. This thesis draws from provocative work others have done, teases out the community strengthening value of those projects, and suggests that similar projects be applied to troubled neighborhoods. The already-vibrant communities that provide the backdrop for the following case studies benefit immensely from them. How much greater, then, could the impact of such community strengthening projects be on a neighborhood whose community is damaged and weakened? This thesis suggests that, given the value this research proposes *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* have, applying them to blighted neighborhoods will bring back stirrings of public common ground. Economically depressed neighborhoods, fraught with vacancies and high crime rates, can host such projects to engender all three community goals that this thesis identifies: social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality. The application of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Chapter 5 will elucidate this point in terms of the Pittsburgh neighborhood in Atlanta, with very real problems.

Case Study Lens

In order to enact a systematic comparison of the following case studies, a lens through which the case studies are observed needs defining (Figure 4.7). The specifications of each project are outlined, beginning with the project's location and accompanied by a site map. The type of site each project occupies is included, along with descriptive photographs. A summary description of each project appears, as well as an account of the project's evolution over time. The projects are then evaluated as to how they contribute to the three factors of strong community: social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality. The extent to which each case study supports those factors provides a gauge for assessing their capacity as community-generating tools. Lastly, the permanency and legitimacy of each case study is discussed. This helps illustrate the levels of permanency that are possible, as well as how permanency plays into the process of legitimization for each case study. The governing body for each project is explained, to further illustrate the mechanism by which these projects function.

Many case studies are introduced, ranging widely in form. This research suggests that the strength these projects have is in their nimble, temporary nature, and also in their numbers. Presenting a wide array of the types of projects that make up *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* conveys the immense variety that is possible, while still achieving community repair through improved social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality. The assortment of projects selected for case study research also intends to display the potential for future creative *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* projects, growing from the inspiration these real and innovative ideas offer.



Figure 4. 7 Lens for case study examination (Landers, 2012j)

Case Study 1: *Walk the Line*

Location: Sydney, Australia: George Street

Foundation Year: 2011

Site Type: Streets, sidewalks, and intersections

Map:



Figure 4. 8 Downtown Sydney with *Walk the Line* route highlighted (Landers, 2012□, 2012□; Muhlebach, 2012b)

Description: This project is a winning competition entry for a design competition entitled STREET WORKS, sponsored by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) and the City of Sydney (Figure 4.10). The goal of the competition aligns neatly with the use that this thesis proposes with *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*: “Cities around the world are moving toward installing little interventions that reclaim under-utilised spaces and build creative and engaging places that invite public participation in urban life (“Street Works,”).” *Walk the Line* is a colorful painted line that

weaves through downtown Sydney, connecting the other five competition winners. The line morphs into fun and engaging games, like hopscotch, at various points along its route (Figure 4.9).

How this case study enacts social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality:

This case study encourages social interaction as it brings people on the streets into contact with one another as they explore the games and follow the route through town.

The painted line, and the games scattered along it, act as triangulators, focusing gatherings of people along the streetscape where they would not otherwise assemble.

Walk the Line also draws attention to the urban streetscape as a fun, public amenity in a creative and engaging manner. The project contributes to connectivity within Sydney by highlighting a pedestrian corridor with amenities and physical demarcation. By making a walking tour of urban intervention projects fun and engaging, the line makes walking in the city more appealing (Ong, 2012). The line encourages social interaction and has become an entertaining event.

Overseer Organization: The Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) sponsored the competition and *Walk the Line* was designed by Australian design firm Hassell. Members of the firm who participated in *Walk the Line*'s design include: Timothy Muhlebach, Stephen Tan, Pe Yang Teng, and Gerhana Waty.

Permanency Gauge: Each winning competition entry, including *Walk the Line*, was implemented in downtown Sydney for three months, October through December 2011. The material used to paint the line is a biodegradable paint that was easily removed after the three-month installation.

Road to Legitimacy: The competition was legal and sanctioned by the City of Sydney, as the overarching goal of the competition was to reflect the City's 'Sustainable Sydney 2030' initiative.

Photographs:



Figure 4.9 Hopscotch game along *Walk the Line* route (North, 2012)

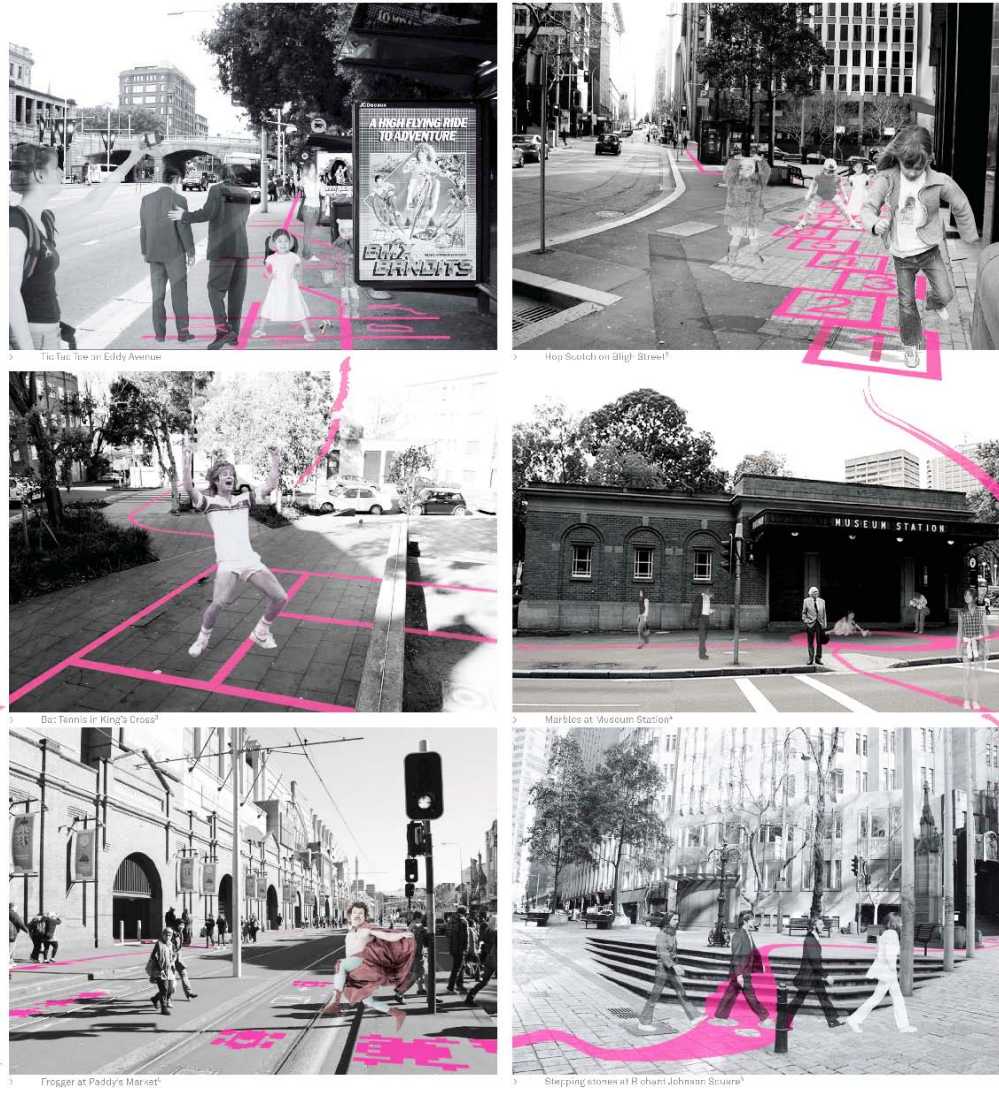


Figure 4.10 Hassel's *Walk the Line* proposal for STREET WORKS competition (Muhlebach, 2012a)

Case Study 2: *Share-It Square*

Location: Portland, Oregon: Sellwood neighborhood (SE 9th & Sherret St.)

Foundation Year: 1996

Site Type: Intersection

Map:



Figure 4. 11 Portland's Sellwood neighborhood with *Share-It Square* highlighted (Landers, 2012}, 2012~)

Description: The *Share-It Square* intersection painting was the first of many Portland intersection repair projects. It has since grown to include a produce sharing stand, a 24-hour tea station, a cob bench, a community bulletin board and chalkboard, and a kids' playhouse - all surrounding the intersection. The purpose of intersection repairs like this one is to bring neighbors together by creating a central gathering space created by community members and imbued with that community's unique identity. The neighborhood closes the intersection to cars, with a sanctioned permit, a few times a

year for neighborhood gatherings (Figure 4.14). These events reinforce the notion that the intersection is a gathering place that can be shared by both pedestrians and cars. Part of the motivation for the colorful and highly visible paintings is to encourage traffic to slow down and be aware of pedestrians (Poirier, 2012). With intersection repair, intersections transform into central gathering places in neighborhoods that were planned in a grid pattern to accommodate car traffic. These neighborhoods, like Sellwood, typically lack a plaza or central commons, which intersection repair projects aim to supply. When polled by the project's coordinator, City Repair, 85% of neighbors perceived that crime fell, traffic slowed, and communication between neighbors improved after the painting was installed (Lerch).

How this case study enacts social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality:

Social interaction is a necessary and prevalent component to the *Share-It Square* intersection repair effort. Both in its initial construction and its maintenance and on-going additions, interaction among community members is strong and essential. The intersection itself, as well as the amenities at its edge, serve to draw people living in the Sellwood neighborhood together to socialize and support one another (Lerch). The *Share-It Square* intersection painting strengthens connectivity within the neighborhood as traffic is calmed and pedestrian crossings are highlighted (Figure 4.12).

Overseer Organization: Portland based non-profit City Repair coordinated this, and other, intersection repair projects. They have a process in place for nominating a 'Placemaking Site,' gathering materials and support, and planning the design implementation with community volunteer participation. The mission is to "educate and

inspire communities and individuals to creatively transform the places where they live (Poirier, 2012).”

Permanency Gauge: Intersection paintings, like this one, last for a few years before the image begins to fade. Typically, if the community is still intact and energized, they plan another workday to repaint the intersection together as another collective effort. The relative impermanence of this type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* is valuable, since it draws the original creators, as well as new community members, together after a few years have passed. This can rejuvenate the painting, but also rejuvenate the community that cares enough to refresh their intersection once again. This also allows for a dynamic design that can change and evolve with each re-painting. *Share-It Square* was painted for the first time in 1996, see Figure 4.13, and has been repainted with various design changes every few years (Lerch). The most recent design appears in Figure 4.12.

Road to Legitimacy: City Repair has streamlined the permitting process to implement intersection repair painting. See Appendix A for the City of Portland intersection modification ordinance ("Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections ", 2001). The *Share-It Square* intersection repairs, and others like it, are legal and sanctioned by the City of Portland. When the Sellwood neighborhood closes the intersection for community gatherings a few times a year, they obtain a legal permit from the City of Portland, similar to those given for block parties (Poirier, 2012).

Photographs:



Figure 4. 12 Current *Share-It Square* with intersection painting, crosswalks, bench, and tea station (Eckersten, 2007)



Figure 4. 13 Original 1996 *Share-It Square* intersection painting (Lerch)



Figure 4. 14 Community gathering in *Share-It Square* (Eckersten, 2007)

Case Study 3: I-5 Colonnade Mountain Bike Park

Location: Seattle, Washington: Eastlake neighborhood

Foundation Year: 2005

Site Type: Underneath freeway overpass

Map:



Figure 4. 15 Seattle maps with I-5 Colonnade Park highlighted (Landers, 2012q)

Description: The park occupies a 7.5 acre area underneath the I-5 freeway ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995). It is the only urban mountain bike skills park of its kind. In a rainy city like Seattle, this dry, urban bike park has become extremely popular (Figure 4.16). The park features a variety of trails and features for bikers of all skill levels ("Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance," 2008). Special attention was paid to pedestrian connections throughout the park to allow circulation between neighborhoods on either side (Figure 4.17). The park also incorporates public artwork by Seattle native, John Roloff ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995).

How this case study enacts social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality:

When I-5 was constructed in the 1960's it became a stark dividing line between the Eastlake and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. Now, since the area under the freeway has been reclaimed, cleaned up, and is regularly full of people, it is an inviting community amenity. In addition to bike trails the park provides amenities, such as a picnic area and dog park, to further cater to the public space needs of the surrounding neighborhoods (Figure 4.18). People from the two neighborhoods can visit and shop in opposite neighborhoods via paths that the park provides. This improves both connectivity and economic vitality of the area, and makes car travel less necessary. The park, built and maintained by community volunteers, draws people from all over the city together to work toward a common goal ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995). These social interactions build the social capital that keeps the park alive in a sustained and well-managed manner.

Overseer Organization: Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and Seattle Parks and Recreation partnered to develop and manage the park. It was funded through a variety of sources including a city-wide parks levy, grants, sponsorship deals, and donations ("Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance," 2008). Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance coordinated the 14,000 hours of volunteer labor that constructed the park. Volunteers continue to maintain the park and work on new expansions (McQuaide, 2008).

Permanency Gauge: The park is permanent, but it is also always evolving with new trails and access routes implemented in an ongoing basis. It has expanded from 2 to 7.5 acres over the seven years since its initial construction.

Road to Legitimacy: Seattle Parks and Recreation has been involved, along with Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, since the parks inception. The park is legal and sanctioned by the City of Seattle. Seattle Parks and Recreation uses the I-5 Colonnade Park as a model for community generated parks and highlights it as an example of an especially successful partnership that they encourage for future park projects ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995).

Photographs:



Figure 4. 16 Mountain Biker at I-5 Colonnade Park ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995)



Figure 4. 17 Pedestrian connection through park ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995)



Figure 4. 18 Dog park and picnic area within bike park ("Seattle Parks and Recreation," 1995)

Case Study 4: Mississippi Marketplace

Location: Portland, Oregon: Mississippi neighborhood (SW Stark St. & SW 5th Ave.)

Foundation Year: 2009c

Site Type: Vacant lot

Map:



Figure 4.19 Mississippi neighborhood in North Portland with Mississippi Marketplace highlighted (Landers, 2012u, 2012x)

Description: Between eight and ten carts occupy this food cart pod, or group, at any time (Figure 4.21). The carts offer a range of food and drink items and the carts share a common seating area with picnic tables and benches (Figure 4.22).

How this case study enacts social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality:

The Mississippi Marketplace food cart pod has turned a vacant lot within the Mississippi neighborhood into a vibrant gathering place. The lot lies at the intersection through which most visitors pass on their way to visit Mississippi. This highly visible location

makes the renovation of the space all the more powerful, since now visitors see an active, lively space, rather than a derelict lot (Figure 4.20). The lot now provides a vital “third space” within the community. Visitors are paying customers, but they also engage in social interactions with one another and with the food cart vendors. Most vendors and customers live locally, so it offers a chance to engage with neighbors in an impromptu, informal setting. The shared picnic tables further enable the social character of this space, encouraging strangers to sit and eat together (Figure 4.23). The neighborhood already has strong pedestrian and bike connections, which the food cart pod contributes to with ample bike parking (“Mississippi Marketplace,”). The location of food cart pod ties into the existing connectivity of the neighborhood as it is within an easy distance of both the bus and light rail systems. The location, as well as the existing infrastructure, offers plenty of options beyond car travel. The economic vitality of the neighborhood is enhanced by the presence of this food cart pod. It attracts more people to the streets and thus draws more business to the area (Kappel, 2009). The availability of a rentable location also provides food cart owners with a popular and safe place to run their carts, making their businesses more stable.

Overseer Organization: Mississippi Marketplace is privately owned and managed. The owner renovated the vacant lot with permeable pavement, gas and water access for carts and landscaping. He maintains the space and manages the carts on site.

Permanency Gauge: This pod, or group, or food carts is semi-temporary, meaning that the lot was built to provide rental space for food carts, but it was built in a minimal way that could easily be reversed. Carts and seating arrangements also change on a regular basis, adding another degree of dynamism to the food cart pod’s character.

Road to Legitimacy: The food cart pod is legal. The owner of the lot rents space to food carts, which are individually permitted and insured according to Oregon State law.

Photographs:



Figure 4. 20 Left: vacant lot (before), Right: Mississippi Marketplace food cart pod (after) (Landers, 2012v, 2012w)



Figure 4. 21 Two of the ten Mississippi Marketplace food carts ("Mississippi Marketplace, Potland, Oregon," 2010)



Figure 4. 22 Mississippi Marketplace food cart pod (Anne, 2010)



Figure 4. 23 Communal covered seating at Mississippi Marketplace (Anne, 2010)

Case Study 5: *Parkmobiles*

Location: San Francisco, California: Yerba Buena neighborhood

Foundation Year: 2011

Site Type: parallel parking spaces

Map:



Figure 4.24 San Francisco's Yerba Buena neighborhood highlighted (Landers, 2012~ , 2012™)

Description: Yerba Buena Community Benefit District worked on a 10-year street life plan, for which landscape architecture firm Conger Moss Guillard (CMG) designed a set of six mobile parks. The Yerba Buena neighborhood consists of twelve blocks, bordered by Market and Harrison Streets on the northwest and southeast and 2nd and 5th Streets on the northeast and southwest. The *parkmobiles* each feature a unique set of hardy native plants, including shrubs and trees. They are inserted into parking space in the Yerba Buena neighborhood, each for about a month (Figure 4.27). The *parkmobiles* are

constructed of steel containers with a street-facing planter and a sidewalk-facing integrated bench ("Parkmobiles," 2012).

How this case study enacts social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality:

The *parkmobiles* were developed in response to the Yerba Buena community's desire for more green space within their urban neighborhood. The *parkmobiles* provide an area of green, as well as a space to gather and interact with strangers in an impromptu and informal manner (Figure 4.25 and Figure 4.26). These mini-parks also serve to stimulate the businesses around them for they draw crowds when they are first installed and continue to draw curious onlookers while in place ("Yerba Buena Street Life Plan," 2011). Connectivity in the San Francisco neighborhood where these *parkmobiles* reside is influenced by the fact that they are sanctioned by the City to occupy parking spaces (King, 2011). The City is less worried about depriving the public of one parking space, than it is eager to support a creative public amenity like a *parkmobile*. This demonstrates that the City of San Francisco, at least in this neighborhood, is de-emphasizing car travel in order to prioritize community connections and well-being.

Overseer Organization: Yerba Buena Community Benefit District owns and manages the *parkmobiles*, which were designed by San Francisco landscape architecture firm CMG.

Permanency Gauge: The *parkmobiles* are temporary, staying in one parking space for a few weeks up to a few months.

Road to Legitimacy: Developed in tandem with designers, community members and civic authorities, the *parkmobiles* are legal and sanctioned by the Yerba Buena

Community Benefit District and the City of San Francisco ("Yerba Buena Street Life Plan," 2011).

Photographs:



Figure 4. 25 People enjoying the *parkmobile* bench on a rare sunny San Francisco day ("Parkmobiles," 2012)



Figure 4. 26 This *parkmobile* is installed adjacent to a food cart event, providing additional seating ("Parkmobiles," 2012)



Figure 4. 27 *Parkmobile* installation in parallel parking space ("Parkmobiles," 2012)

Case Study 6: Burnside Skatepark

Location: Portland, Oregon: Kerns neighborhood, Central Eastside Industrial District

Foundation Year: 1990

Site Type: Under bridge

Map:



Figure 4. 28 Kerns neighborhood along Willamette River with Burnside Skatepark highlighted (Landers, 2012g, 2012h)

Description: Burnside Skatepark occupies a slice of land left vacant but owned by the City of Portland. The park lies under the Burnside Bridge, on the east side of the Willamette River, buffered from the River by I-5, which hugs the river directly.

How this case study enacts social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality:

The park was conceived and constructed solely by skaters in Portland who wanted to see a local free skatepark. Those skaters had pleaded with the City to build such a park, but the City did not respond. The park began with a few skaters and minimal concrete

work in the space under the Burnside Bridge ("Burnside Skatepark," 2012). It has grown up over the past twenty-two years into a well-built and internationally famous skatepark (Figure 4.29). Social interactions between committed members of the Portland skating community generated this project and contribute to the park's ongoing strength. The park's creators took what was once a haven for drug dealers and prostitutes, and cleaned it up. They turned the space into a free, public amenity that draws people from all over the City together to engage in the sport they love (Figure 4.30). Nearby business owners helped lobby the City to sanction the park, as they saw the park as an obvious improvement over the previously derelict and dangerous space under the bridge. These business owners note that economic activity has improved since the park was built, making the neighborhood safer and more inviting (Crane, 2011). Further economic activity, and an outgrowth of the success of the park, is skatepark design company Dreamland Skateparks. This business was founded by Mark Scott, one of the original builders of the Burnside Skatepark and is now renown in the field for expert design and construction of skateparks around the country ("Dreamland Skateparks," 2012).

Note: This case study's creation shows an unexpected benefit from the interaction between automobile infrastructure and *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* construction. In 1990, just as skaters were beginning to construct their own small ramps under the Burnside Bridge, construction on nearby highway 84 began. The skaters established a relationship with cement trucks working on the highway, who would drop off unused cement under the bridge during the course of the highway construction project. This free

material allowed the park to grow to its current extensive state ("Burnside Skatepark," 2012).

Overseer Organization: In recent years the park has achieved 501-3C status as a non-profit organization, led by its original founders. The park is still managed and maintained solely by volunteer skaters ("Burnside Skatepark," 2012).

Permanency Gauge: In the minds of its founders, users, visitors, and fans around the world, Burnside Skatepark is permanent. However, the City of Portland still owns the land under the park, making the park officially "temporary." The park is constantly being reworked, rebuilt and upgraded and as one of the original builders of the park put it in 2004:

"In the parks 14 years there have been numerous changes and improvements. But the park is still not done. The beauty of Burnside is that it is never really complete. By begin a non-sanctioned park, we are at liberty to destroy and rebuild as we see fit, without approval from any city organizations. It is how Burnside was started and it is how it continues to thrive ("Burnside Skatepark," 2012)."

Road to Legitimacy: While the City of Portland sanctions the park, now that it is officially a non-profit entity, it does not offer financial assistance or legal ownership. The City of Portland still owns the land that the park is built on, leaving the park in a somewhat tenuous position. The immense popular support the park enjoys, as well as national and international fame, makes its position, in popular opinion at least, more stable.

Photographs:



Figure 4. 29 (Burriss, 2006)



Figure 4. 30 Crowds gather at Burnside Skatepark to watch and participate ("Burnside Skatepark," 2012)

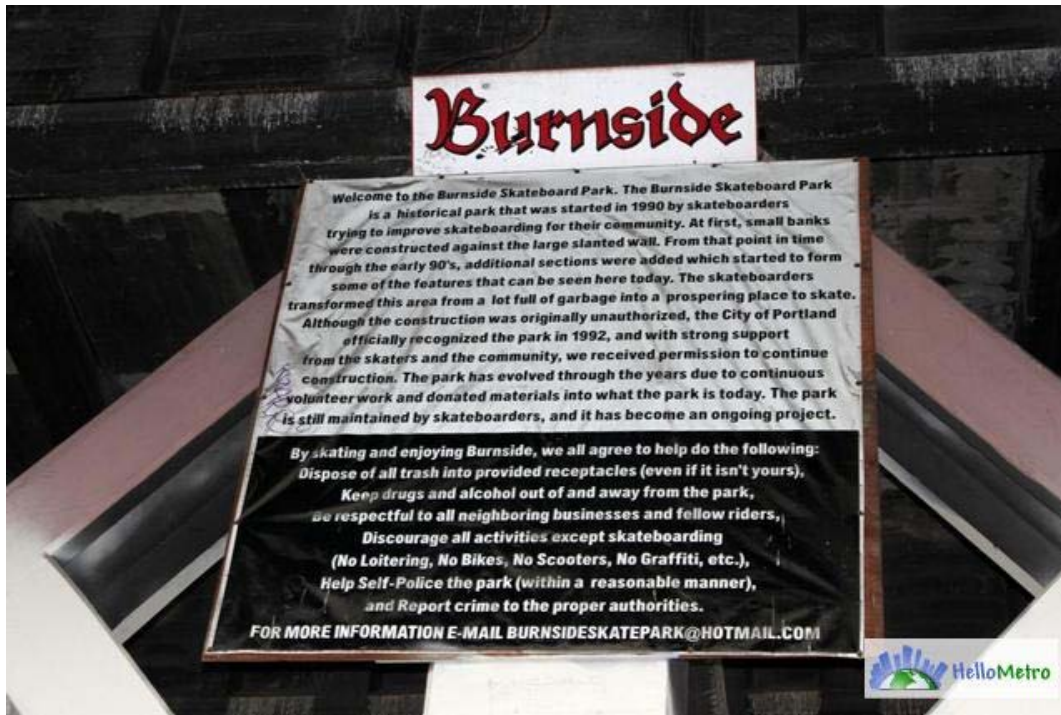


Figure 4. 31 Historic information and park etiquette are posted at Burnside Skatepark (Crane, 2011)

Case Study Summary:

The following is a brief summary of the case studies, looking at them collectively through each case study lens item. Summarizing them in this manner allows valuable patterns to emerge.

Location: Five of the case studies are located the large west-coast cities of Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco, while one lies outside the United States in Australia. The concentration of case studies in west-coast metropolises has two explanations. One being that these three western cities are liberal and have a history of accepting new and creative land-use trends. The other explanation is that the author grew up and has lived on the west coast most of her life and is more familiar with projects in those cities. Furthermore, Portland features prominently in the case studies

because the author lived there recently and was able to experience the case studies from that city first hand.

Foundation Year: Case studies range in age. Two are over twenty years old and are constantly evolving, while the rest are between one and seven years old.

Site Type: Case study sites range widely in type, including: city streets, parallel parking spaces, vacant parking lots, intersections, and spaces under bridges and freeways. While these site types are all very different in character, they are all spaces left within the automobile infrastructure of the city, returning the case studies back to one of *URBAN INTERIMVENTION'S* essential defining attributes.

Overseer Organization: Half of the six case study projects are orchestrated by non-profit organizations that rely heavily on volunteer support. This pattern speaks to the community engagement that is necessary for the creation and maintenance of some of these projects.

Permanency Gauge: Each project can be described as interim or temporary, yet some have achieved more of a permanent character. The idea of urban permanence is somewhat oxymoronic: cities are constantly shifting and evolving. The reason these projects are known to the author and have been written about is because of their long-standing success. One reason they have become entrenched to the point of near permanency can be traced to their age. This thesis suggests that newer versions of similar projects may seem more temporary, but have the potential, as is seen in the case studies, to grow towards permanency. While some will evolve into permanent civic features, their eventual permanency is less important than their nimble and interim beginnings, which all of these case studies share.

Road to Legitimacy: All but one case study has reached fully legal status within the cities where they reside. This is an encouraging pattern, illustrating the potential for *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to gain legitimacy. This research suggests that there are factors that contribute to an interim project eventually gaining legitimacy. Some that stand out are: strong and diverse popular support, positive presence and accessible within a neighborhood, strong community engagement and participation, and revitalizing economic opportunity. These factors that emerge from the evaluation of case study legitimacies match closely with the three factors that this thesis proposes contribute to strong community: social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality.

Large-Scale *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* projects:

There are a number of large-scale projects that bear mentioning alongside this case study research. Their scale is too large to accurately be defined as *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, yet these projects often possess a similar spirit of community betterment and encourage improvement through temporary programs. They are included here to illustrate that projects of this nature happen at a variety of scales and can be effective, albeit with very different management at each. See Appendix B for a full chart of further case study examples. Scale is a factor in defining projects as *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* principally for purposes of research. Narrowing the scope of the definition to projects that are limited to the scale of a neighborhood makes them more feasible to research. Scale is not intrinsically important in defining *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, but for the purpose of this thesis, projects are chosen partly for

the availability of information. Their relationship with the surrounding neighborhood and community is an important factor, making neighborhood scale projects appropriate.

International Park(ing) Day, founded in 2005 by San Francisco art and design studio ReBar, is another larger-scale inspirational case that influenced this thesis.

ReBar began by taking over just one parallel parking space with a small, temporary park (Figure 4.32) ("Park(ing) Day," 2012). The goal of the annual international project is to temporarily transform parking spaces into temporary public spaces and it provided a vital precedent for the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* concept this thesis proposes. The author participated in a Park(ing) Day event, along with UGA's College of Environment and Design, in 2010 that exposed her to the great potential parking spaces can have as urban public space. Park(ing) Day is very temporary, lasting only a few hours each year, but the concept of automobile infrastructure, here parallel parking, providing space for public use had an immense impact.



Figure 4. 32 Original 2005 Park(ing) Day installation by San Francisco art and design studio ReBar ("Park(ing) Day," 2012)

Large-scale temporary street closures are booming in metropolises across the globe. Many cite *Ciclovía*, in Bogota, Columbia, as inspiration. *Ciclovía* translates from Spanish to “bike path” and has come to signify events that close streets on a temporary basis to cars, providing safe spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists and social activities and events (Khawarзад, 2011). New York’s Summer Streets program, which closes miles of roads in Manhattan every Saturday in August grew out of the *Ciclovía* trend. These projects, and many more like them, can activate communities by giving access to the largest public space in the city; the street (Khawarзад, 2011). The programs are typically funded and organized by city governments and thus are legal. Currently, forty-six cities in the United States host *Ciclovía* events each year. *Ciclovía* proponent and author of *Tactical Urbanism*, Mike Lyndon, comments on the effect *Ciclovía* can have on influencing further change:

Ciclovía facilitates social interaction and activity between people of all ages, incomes, occupations, religions, and races in public space. *Ciclovía* enables people to experience their city’s public realm in a different way, which helps build broader political support for undertaking more permanent pedestrian, bicycle, and/or other livability improvements (Khawarзад, 2011).

Alley reclamations are another large-scale opportunity for salvaged public space within the existing fabric of the city. Environmental designer, Jennifer Wolch, writes about the potential of such spaces for gathering, play, green infrastructure, and pedestrian connectivity, contributing to sustainable urbanism from social and ecological standpoints (Wolch et al., 2010). In an extensive analysis of the 930 linear miles of alley space within the City of Los Angeles, Wolch and colleagues conclude that redesigning alleys can lead to ecological, economic and social benefits. They hope to create a Green Alleys Program that piggybacks onto LA’s existing Green Streets Initiative,

galvanizing public support for their creative public space re-use project (Wolch et al., 2010). Another alleyway reclamation project that began over twenty years ago is the Tenderloin National Forest in San Francisco. This project is an elaborate alley conversion that turned a dangerous alley into brilliantly green park, completely generated by neighborhood community members (Wright, 2011). This attention on alleys as yet another untapped resource for public space within the city aligns well with the spirit and goals of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*.

Following are a number of other projects that exhibit similar grassroots techniques at temporary urban land repurposing. The booming trend of parking lot farmers markets are an effective economic and space-reuse model, but they also serve as a community engagement tool, drawing neighbors together and in contact with their food providers. Chinatown night markets, in cities across the country, occupy streetscapes temporarily every evening. These night markets offer economic opportunity to small business owners and draw visitors to shop, socialize, and interact with one another. The long-held tradition of the block party is seeing resurgence in cities across the country. Simplified permitting makes these gatherings accessible and offers a welcome opportunity to meet one's neighbors while temporarily reclaiming the street as a social public space ("Neighborhood Block Party," 2012). Repurposing derelict malls is the new frontier, with projects like Dutchess County Mall in Fishkill, New York. With the help of Brooklyn based planning and architecture firm, Interboro Partners, new businesses are setting up shop temporarily in the vast sea of parking surrounding this dead mall, breathing new life into the space. Interboro Partners plan to reclaim and

redesign parts of the mall, in an effort to re-use this existing building, rather than tear it down and build something new (Kimmelman, 2012).

While mobile libraries, or bookmobiles, have waned dramatically in the United States in recent years, they are still a vital amenity in England. They can transform a parking lot into a library for an hour or a day, providing educational access to both urban and rural neighborhoods that are underserved by brick and mortar libraries. This simple model for nimble mobile service can reach beyond books to services like banking, produce distribution, and even health services. Underused parking in underserved neighborhoods could combine to make such mobile services an apt solution in cities across the United States. Mobile services that bring necessities to underserved neighborhoods also cut down on needless car travel.

Chapter Summary:

Chapter 4 introduces case studies to the discussion of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. To begin, community gardens and public art are examined for the commonalities they share with *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, aiding in the definition of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and also in the argument for their legitimacy. Four commonalities are called out which collectively contribute to the components of community this thesis identifies: social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality. Next, an array of six case studies are examined using a systematic lens that displays similar information from each case study. The case studies are essential in defining *URBAN INTERIMVENTION'S* character and potential. Their evolution, permanency, and legitimacy are all investigated to expose their value in defining the value of *URBAN*

INTERIMVENTIONS. The case study discussion wraps up with a brief case study summary, looking at patterns that emerge when each lens item is evaluated for all six case studies at once. This collective information, garnered from the case studies, will help inform the application of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to the Pittsburgh neighborhood in Atlanta that follows in Chapter 5. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of various other projects that share the spirit of the case studies and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*. These projects are too large to be helpful in defining *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, but they do help show the breadth of projects in progress that enact community engagement through temporary programs in underused urban space, just as *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* do.

Chapter 5: Application of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to Pittsburgh, Atlanta

“Pittsburgh will be a unique, historical, and diverse community that promotes homeownership, economic and community development, public safety, education, recreation, and community pride...a “city within a city”.
-Community generated vision for the future of Pittsburgh (Urban College Inc., 2001)

History of Pittsburgh neighborhood

Located just southwest of Atlanta’s central business district, Pittsburgh is one of the city’s oldest in-town neighborhoods. The neighborhood has a rich history that dovetails with Atlanta’s railroad origins. African American railroad laborers originally inhabited Pittsburgh, beginning in 1883. They flocked to the city after the Civil War, just as Atlanta was rebuilding with rail at the center of its economy (Kidd, 2006). Pittsburgh thrives as an African American business center, with McDaniel Avenue as its “Main Street” of commerce. By the 1920’s Pittsburgh is a popular neighborhood for prospering African Americans, with a new, community funded school. The neighborhood gets its name because of the concentration of industrial factories that lend it polluted air, similar to that of Pittsburgh, PA.

With the 1960’s Civil Rights Movement and desegregation, many white residents of nearby in-town neighborhoods left for the suburbs, out of town. As a result, many Pittsburgh residents and businesses move to these newly vacated neighborhoods and drained the economic and community vitality from the once-vibrant Pittsburgh (Kidd, 2006). To further inhibit the neighborhood’s prospects, lending institutions practiced ‘redlining’ of African American communities, including Pittsburgh, making it difficult for

residents to sell their homes. Many unsold homes are left vacant as residents move away, leaving a physical mark of the neighborhood's decline (Kidd, 2006). Rampant vacancies usher in crime, compounding the desire of residents to desert. Pittsburgh lost nearly half of its residences between 1970-1990, falling from 7,276 to 3,624 ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009).

Automobile infrastructure contributes greatly to the deterioration of Pittsburgh, as I-75/85 expands in the 1960's. With the construction of the University Avenue exit, the Southeast corner of the neighborhood is cut off from connections with the adjoining city (Kidd, 2006). Connectivity in Pittsburgh suffers, as the neighborhood is now virtually ringed by rail and freeway networks, isolated and marginalized by infrastructure that prioritizes the car. This isolation makes it difficult to live and travel within Pittsburgh. There are very few entry points from nearby neighborhoods, and these are concentrated on busy, fast-moving arteries. Basic pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks, are often broken or non-existent within Pittsburgh's grid. The few large employers in Pittsburgh are concentrated near the University Avenue freeway ramp, draining what little economy that remains to the edges and away from the core of the neighborhood. Pittsburgh lies only a few miles from the urban core of Atlanta, yet it is so cut off by the very freeways that supposedly connect the city, that it sees none of the economic or social benefits from that proximity. This neighborhood is a textbook example of the social and economic drain that happens to downtown neighborhoods when people follow the freeways on their flight to the suburbs. This is the same devastating trend that is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Early stirrings of revitalization come in the 1990's with the inclusion of Pittsburgh in the Atlanta Empowerment Zone, which provides federal revitalization assistance. In 2000 the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association (PCIA), a longstanding community group, develops the Pittsburgh Community Redevelopment Plan (Urban College Inc., 2001). At this time, Atlanta's mayor also designates Pittsburgh as a Weed and Seed Community; a program of the U.S. Department of Justice that provides local level funding to combat crime. PCIA works closely with Weed and Seed officers, local schools, and faith-based organizations to begin to heal the neighborhood's fractured community.

The next big boost to the neighborhood came in 2003 when the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) designated the University Avenue Site as "Atlanta Civic Site ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009)". The University Avenue Site is a 31-acre rectangular parcel that forms the southern border of Pittsburgh. The site is paved and has hosted various industrial activities, leaving remnant toxicity throughout. The Civic Site designation provides a ten-year commitment for revitalization efforts. PCIA and the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership work together to administer AECF grants in the Pittsburgh neighborhood (Kidd, 2006).

The Atlanta BeltLine is the most recent development effort to impact Pittsburgh. The planned Atlanta BeltLine, a 22 mile greenway and public transportation loop, offers neighborhoods on its path, like Pittsburgh, enormous redevelopment potential (Kidd, 2006). The BeltLine project brings with it the NPU-V Tax Allocation District (TAD), which includes the University Avenue Site and parts of the Pittsburgh neighborhood. The TAD funds can be used to jumpstart revitalization along the path of the BeltLine. To that end,

Pittsburgh neighborhood community organizations have been, and continue to, build partnerships to present a unified vision for future redevelopment. The Georgia Conservancy's *Blueprints for Pittsburgh* report aims to present a strong and cohesive vision, in order to improve the chances that NPU-V district will receive TAD redevelopment funds (Kidd, 2006).

Current profile of Pittsburgh

Demographics: Pittsburgh is predominantly an African American neighborhood with 25% of its population over the age of 50. The neighborhood lost around 15% of its population during the 1990's, coinciding with population booms in other peripheral Atlanta counties (Urban College Inc., 2001). This shift echoes the trend seen throughout Atlanta, as discussed in chapter 2, where in-town neighborhoods lose residents to outlying suburbs. According to 2000 Census data, 45% of Pittsburgh residents did not graduate from high school and 41% of households live below the poverty line. The median household income in Pittsburgh is \$16,012, roughly half of Atlanta's median household income ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009). Despite the low income and population loss, there are still many community organizations active in Pittsburgh, see Figure 5.2 for a complete list.

Land Use: The Pittsburgh neighborhood encompasses 337 acres, 31% of which is single-family residential, making it the dominant housing type. Only 5% of the total land is composed of duplex homes and another 5% is multi-family homes. Most of the neighborhood is zoned R-5 for single-family residences, but many lots do not meet the minimum lot size as mandated by zoning code (Urban College Inc., 2001).

Building Conditions and Occupancy: Of the total 1,146 residential structures in Pittsburgh, 34% require demolition or major rehabilitation, 53% require moderate rehabilitation, and 13% are in marketable shape ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009). In terms of the occupancy rate for residentially zoned parcels, 57% are occupied while 28% are vacant structures and 15% are vacant lots. These combined vacancies add up to a staggering 43% (Figure 5.1). Of occupied residences, 64% are renter-occupied and 36% are owner-occupied ("The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Fact Sheet," 2010).



Figure 5. 1 Vacant, boarded-up houses in Pittsburgh (Landers, 2012•)

Transportation: Pittsburgh retains most of its original grid pattern, but it lacks clear pedestrian connections to major neighborhood destinations and it lacks street amenities such as street lighting, landscaping, crosswalks, and bus shelters (Urban College Inc., 2001). Most redevelopment studies, along with resident input surveys, identify McDaniel Street as the most promising area for future redevelopment. McDaniel runs North/South through the middle of the neighborhood and was the historic commercial core and host to a streetcar line until the 1950's. The McDaniel corridor holds great potential to thrive once again as a transportation and commercial corridor, especially as it meets the University Avenue Site at its southern end. McDaniel Street

features prominently in the locations chosen for *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* applications, in order to stimulate this effort at redevelopment. The neighborhood is serviced by two bus routes that run North/South, but there are very few East/ West connections (Pardue, 2011). The red and gold MARTA rail lines runs nearby, just Northwest of the neighborhood, with the West End stop just a few blocks North of the neighborhood ("MARTA: Interactive System Map ", 2012).

Economy: The four largest employers in Pittsburgh, Carey Limousines, Overhead Door Company, the Salvation Army, and Southeastern Stages, only employ five Pittsburgh residents, out of three hundred employees (Kidd, 2006). Unemployment is historically high in Pittsburgh, around 19% in 2000 ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009).

Stadium Impacts: Atlanta's Community Development Plan identifies Pittsburgh as a 'stadium neighborhood' in need of development attention ("Atlanta Strategic Action Plan," 2009). Pittsburgh is directly South of Turner Field, mentioned in chapter 2, and suffers for its proximity. The stadium's freeway ramps disrupt connectivity to nearby neighborhoods, and game-day traffic further exacerbates access problems.

Pittsburgh Perceptions: community group, Preservation of Pittsburgh (POP), reports survey results in their 2011 *Community Engagement Final Report* about the perceptions that Pittsburgh residents hold of their neighborhood. 30% of respondents agree that they feel safe in the community. 49% indicate that they do not have easy access to fresh foods and vegetables. 13% of respondents agree that neighborhood housing is safe and high quality. 51% of respondents say that parks and recreation are near their homes. 54% say that transit is accessible. 22% of respondents agree that

there are fewer vacancies and more workforce development opportunities today (in 2011 when the report was published) versus three years ago. Two of the most common assets that respondents identify are the closeness of the neighborhood to downtown and the friendliness of neighbors. Common challenges that respondents identify are vacant housing and crime (Conrad, 2011, p. 10).

Organizations and Institutions:

- + *Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)*
- + *Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies Inc. (SNDSI)*
- + *Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association, Inc. (PCIA)*
- + *Preservation of Pittsburgh (POP)*
- + *Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. (ANDP)*
- + *Center for Working Families*
- + *Pittsburgh Ministerial Alliance*
- + *Salvation Army Community Center*
- + *Jars of Clay Outreach*
- + *Georgia Tradeup*
- + *Mayor's Weed to Seed Community Program*
- + *US Dept of Housing and Urban Development*
- + *NPU-V Tax Allocation District for BeltLine*
- + *Pittsburgh Master Planning Newsletter*
- + *Safe Walk to School Campaign*
- + *Georgia Justice Project*
- + *The Enterprise Foundation*
- + *Hand on Atlanta*
- + *Georgia Forestry Commission*
- + *Habitat for Humanity*
- + *The Atlanta Community Tool Bank*
- + *The Pittsburgh Civic League*
- + *Trees Atlanta*
- + *Atlanta Area Technical College*

Figure 5. 2 Organizations and institutions active in Pittsburgh's community (Kidd, 2006; Urban College Inc., 2001)

Existing programs and reports

The 2006 *Blueprints for Successful Communities* report, created by the Georgia Conservancy, engages the community in a participatory planning process (Kidd, 2006). Through this effort, the community identifies its assets and challenges in concrete terms, which are useful in evaluating future solutions and efforts for change within the

neighborhood (Figure 5.4 & Figure 5.5). These two lists are extremely helpful in understanding what the community views as its assets and challenges. Community participants also generated a map of the neighborhood where they identify specific areas where those strengths and weaknesses are located (Figure 5.3). The *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* application incorporates these perceptions in its project suggestions, ensuring that the suggested projects accurately reflect the community's needs.

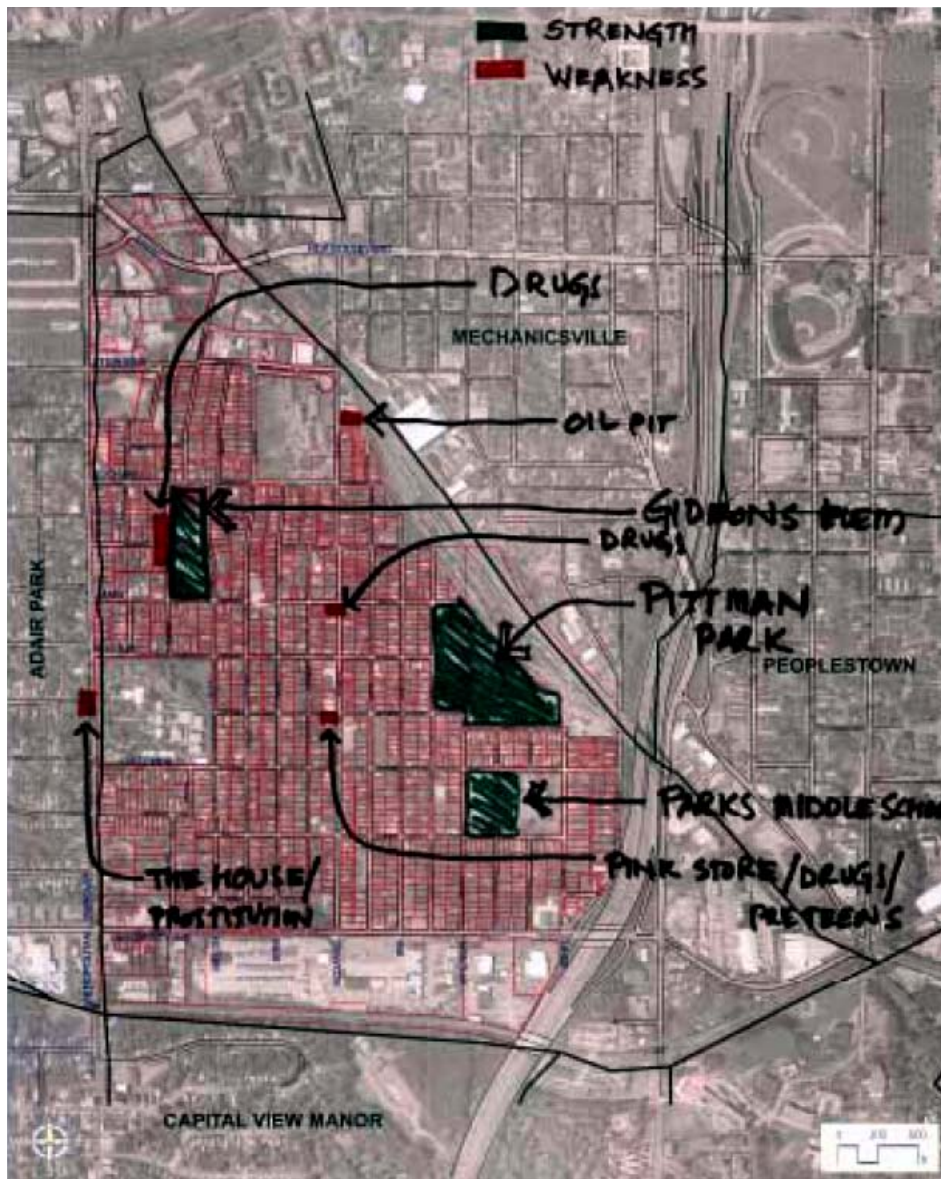


Figure 5. 3 Community generated map of Pittsburgh neighborhood strengths and weaknesses (Kidd, 2006)

Assets:

- + PCIA leadership
- + Residents addressing change
- + Houses of worship
- + New community center at Salvation Army
- + Access to resources
- + Salvation Army School of Officer Training
- + Elementary school with a commitment to the next generation
- + Annie E. Casey Foundation
- + Tool Bank / Enterprise Foundation / Hands on Atlanta
- + Community center
- + History/senior and returning residents

- + *We have expertise: use it but don't misuse us. Hire neighborhood residents*
- + *Youth*
- + *Police participation*
- + *Positive involvement of police department and fire department*
- + *Weed and Seed Community program funding and assistance*
- + *Part of NPU-V*
- + *City Council and State Representative involvement*
- + *Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership*
- + *Civic League*
- + *Access to financial institutions (Atlanta City Employees Credit Union)*
- + *Bakery*
- + *Small businesses*
- + *Close to University Centers*
- + *Atlanta Area Tech*
- + *Overhead Door Company*
- + *Southeast Stages business*
- + *Location along interstate and proximity to downtown*
- + *McDaniel Street as possible town center*
- + *New apartments to be built with return of residents as well as new*
- + *New affordable housing*
- + *Crogman School – historical value*
- + *Sense of place – “know where they are”*
- + *Existing historic stock and grid street pattern*
- + *Pittman Park and other parks*
- + *Proximity to airport but not in the flight path*

Figure 5. 4 Assets of Pittsburgh neighborhood, as identified by community members (Kidd, 2006, p. 8)

Challenges:

- + *Drugs*
- + *Prostitution*
- + *Pre-teens hanging out on street corners*
- + *No professional services*
- + *No quality grocery store*
- + *Safety*
- + *Single mothers who work need more day care options*
- + *Concentration of poverty, homeless population*
- + *Drop-out rate*
- + *Truancy*
- + *Aging population with fixed incomes*
- + *Switching voting precinct locations*
- + *Promises not kept*
- + *Unemployment or employment that is not sustainable for those living with families*
- + *Lack of local jobs, and job training*
- + *No investment in youth jobs or leadership*
- + *Not utilizing community skills*
- + *Proximity to downtown traffic*
- + *Redevelopment is unmanaged – not following the redevelopment plan*

- + *Lack of comprehensive land use strategy*
- + *Housing code is not enforced*
- + *Mortgage fraud*
- + *More renters than homeowners*
- + *Small lot sizes*
- + *High amount of boarded-up houses and absentee owners*
- + *Redlining*
- + *Not walkable neighborhood*
- + *No street lighting*
- + *No clear vision for the community*
- + *Non-resident crime, trash, illegal dumping*
- + *Lack of green space*
- + *Speeding on Metropolitan and other streets*
- + *Not enough bus transit*
- + *Seniors need better transit*
- + *Better connectivity (pedestrian, bus)*
- + *Closed streets*

Figure 5. 5 Challenges to Pittsburgh neighborhood as identified by community members, highlighted challenges are those that are directly addresses in the following site applications (Kidd, 2006)

The subsequent report of 2009, entitled *Recovering Pittsburgh as Proud Community of Working Families*, by Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies Inc. (SNDSI) and AECF, delves into qualitative data on Pittsburgh's current state of decline. This report focuses on vacancies resulting from the recent housing market collapse ("Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community for Working Families," 2009). The 2011 *Pittsburgh Neighborhood Master Plan Request for Proposals* is the most recent effort to generate a recovery program (Watts, 2011). These are only three reports among many that local and national redevelopment organizations have produced over the past twelve years. Some are studies commissioned by urban planning and landscape architecture firms and some are locally generated programs; all aim to revitalize the neighborhood and mend the issue of vacancies.

Figure 5.6 displays a chronological list of some of the more ambitious reports developed since 2001, including their dates and the organizations that developed them.

- + 2001 *Pittsburgh Community Redevelopment Plan: Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association (PCIA)*
- + 2006 *Georgia Conservancy's Blueprints for Successful Communities*
- + 2006 *Atlanta Beltline Redevelopment Plan: The Atlanta Development Authority*
- + 2008 *Atlanta Strategic Action Plan: City of Atlanta*
- + 2008 *Univ. Ave Competition, 2011 AECF family aid brochure, 2011 Civic Site Final Report: Recovering Pittsburgh as a Proud Community of Working Families: Annie E. Casey Foundation and Atlanta Civic Site (AECF & ACS)*
- + 2011 *Pittsburgh Neighborhood Master Plan RFP: Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc. (SNDSI)*
- + 2011 *Pittsburgh Neighborhood Master Plan RFP Addenda No. 1: Silverman Construction Program Management*
- + 2011 *Pre-planning Community Engagement Report: Preservation of Pittsburgh (SNDSI & PCIA), funded by US Department of Housing and Urban Development*
- + 2011 *The Atlanta Beltline Typologies Draft: The Atlanta BeltLine Inc. and Perkins and Will*

Figure 5. 6 ("Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan," 2005; "Atlanta Strategic Action Plan," 2009; Conrad, 2011; Kidd, 2006; "University Avenue Competition," 2008; Urban College Inc., 2001; Watts, 2011)

While each of these reports has value, especially in the community-identified needs they reveal, none have been implemented to successfully transform Pittsburgh. Most are not implemented at all; since they call for such sweeping, albeit necessary, change. The resources needed to implement these vast redevelopment programs have yet to be gathered on the scale necessary for big change. This is the most compelling reason to try *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Pittsburgh.

Why use *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Pittsburgh?

Since *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are cheap, quick, and reversible, they have immense potential to transform Pittsburgh's public streets into vibrant and populated community assets. This could be the first step in healing the public space needs of the community. Pittsburgh may have physical scars, vacant houses scattered throughout, interspersed with debris-filled vacant lots, but there is a strong underlying community

that remains. To an outsider, as the author admittedly is, the neighborhood appears largely derelict, but upon closer look there are countless community organizations, faith-based organizations, and schools that are actively engaged, and have been since the decline began, in mending their beloved neighborhood (Figure 5.1).

URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS can play a role in shifting the public perception of the neighborhood from one defined by crime and vacancy to one defined by community cohesion, in order to more accurately reflect the underlying community present in Pittsburgh today. Part of the reason this thesis selects Pittsburgh as the application site for the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* concept, is for its underlying community presence. Authenticity in *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* is essential; *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* will not work if they are not generated by and for their own communities. In a neighborhood like Pittsburgh, where there are very real challenges, but also a long-standing and coherent community, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can arise from the community members themselves. Social networks are already in place to achieve collective *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* projects. The only piece missing is the city-sanctioned encouragement and support for such projects.

Where to apply *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Pittsburgh?

Encouraging and enabling *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Pittsburgh can help the neighborhood with its primary challenge: vacant homes and lots. Bringing people back to the streets with *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, while also providing services and community amenities, can begin the process of reversing the existing perception that Pittsburgh is not a place where one would like to live or move. As this thesis proposes, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can help revitalize the neighborhood's economy as well, which also benefits from positive and active street life. If this perception can be transformed, even a little, over time people will start to see Pittsburgh as the vibrant community that it once was. Single family housing stock in Pittsburgh is plentiful and of relatively high quality. Once some of the negative stigmas are mitigated, it will become a more desirable place to live and the vacancy problem will begin to lessen.

Another way *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can alleviate the problems posed by vacant lots is to actively occupy them. Pittsburgh is littered with vacant parking lots, empty of cars and people, which contribute to the overall sense of dereliction that pervades the neighborhood. This is a clear instance of the overbuilt automobile infrastructure that detracts from the vibrancy of a neighborhood, leaving it gap-toothed and largely empty. Vacancies are also the most commonly sited challenge of the neighborhood, among stakeholder groups. Within the automobile infrastructure that this thesis intends *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to occupy, abandoned or underused parking lots are abundant in Pittsburgh. Many are adjacent to vacant businesses and sit empty, collecting garbage and weeds, and detracting from the vitality of the street as a social and commercial space. Automobile and rail infrastructure has marginalized this

neighborhood, like so many across the country, so it seems only right that the very spaces that were planned to accommodate cars are reclaimed to revitalize the physical spaces of the community.

Pittsburgh's challenges are many and complex, and they won't be solved quickly. Allowing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* to occupy underused parcels within the automotive infrastructure acknowledges both the idea that change is necessary, but also that small, incremental change is the best way to begin. Along the continuum of community repair this thesis employs, *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are an early-phase strategy to begin to transform street life in challenged urban neighborhoods.

Application sites within Pittsburgh

Sites are chosen for two primary reasons: to serve as gateways to the neighborhood and to coincide with areas that the community designates as weaknesses. Vacant parking lots abound in Pittsburgh, so sites are chosen strategically to have the most impact on people as they enter the Pittsburgh neighborhood, both visitors and residents. Gateway oriented projects are high-priority *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* because they connote neighborhood pride and sense of identity. They also make it clear to visitors and residents alike that you have arrived in Pittsburgh. Gateway areas and weakness areas are chosen as application sites because they have the potential to have the highest impact on the transformation of the neighborhood as a whole. Of the automobile infrastructure spaces that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* occupy, Pittsburgh's primary assets are vacant parking lots. There is little convenient on-street parking, so parallel parking space projects are not viable.

While freeways abut the Pittsburgh neighborhood on two sides, unfortunately they do not provide usable space underneath.

Each application site is illustrated using a common framework. Neighborhood context aerial photography is included for each site, as well as aerial site photography and boundary delineations. On-street perspective photographs are included to show the existing character of each site, as well as existing conditions and street-level context. A discussion of why the site is chosen is included, followed by a discussion of how the site is currently being used. The specific *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* chosen for each site is explained, including a discussion of the existing organizations in Pittsburgh and Atlanta that may help in facilitating the projects. Where relevant, precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are included to further illustrate the character of the project and its viability. Each *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* is discussed in terms of how effectively it addresses this thesis' community-defining goals of social interaction, connectivity, and economic vitality. Images of the proposed *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are drafted, to lend a sense of the change in on-street character they can bring to each site.

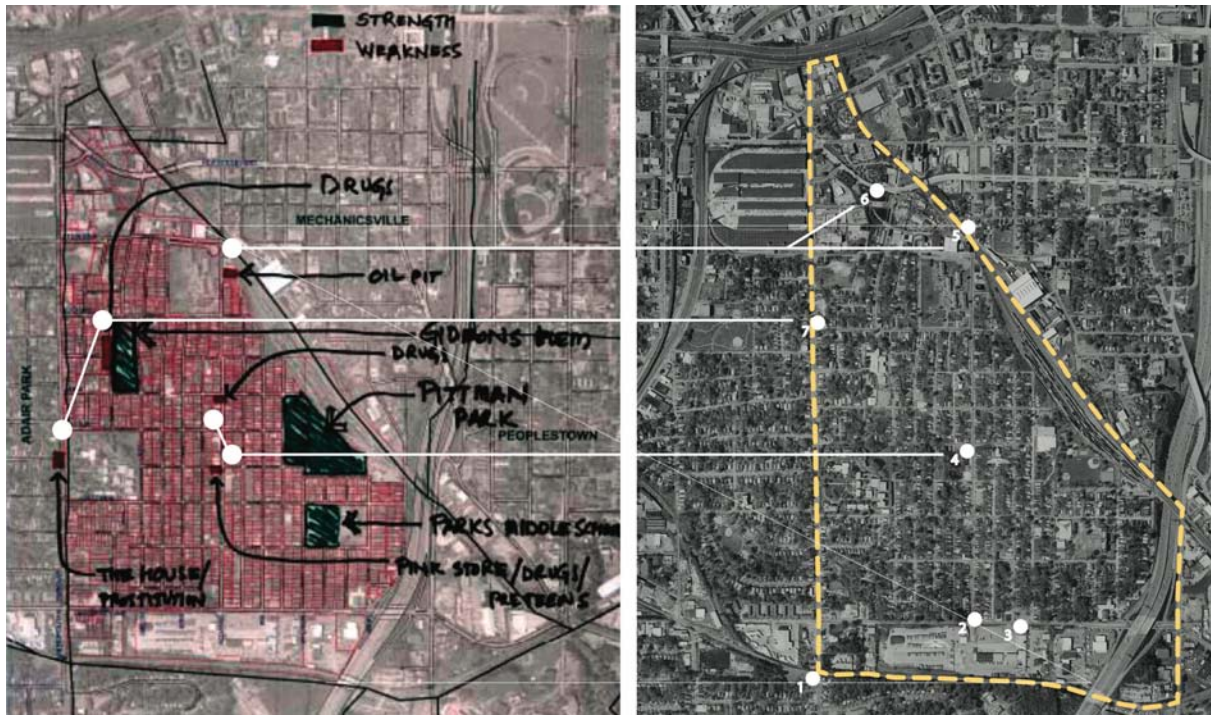


Figure 5. 7 Left is a community-generated map of Pittsburgh’s strengths and weaknesses, and Right is a map of the corresponding application sites. (Landers, 2012c)



Figure 5. 8 Pittsburgh neighborhood with surrounding context and numbered *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* sites (Landers, 2012y)

Site 1: *BeltLine Banner* @ Metropolitan Ave. & Atlanta Beltline



Figure 5. 9 Site 1: *BeltLine Banner* within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012y)

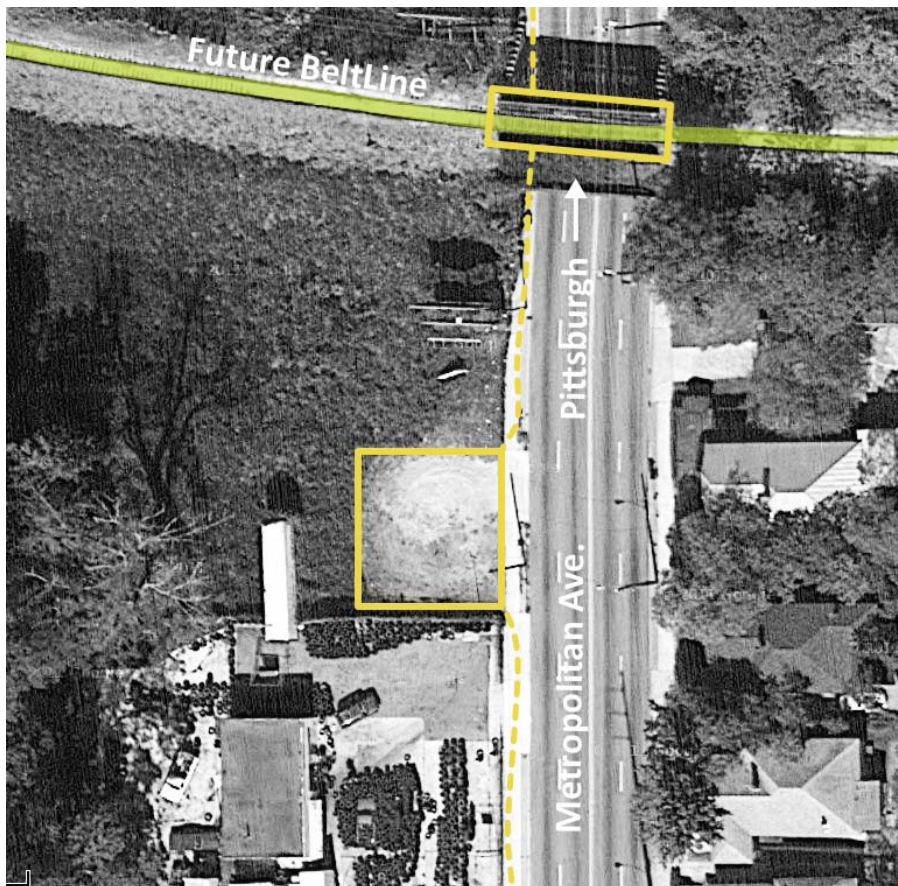


Figure 5. 10 Vacant lot and adjacent BeltLine bridge, leading into Pittsburgh (Landers, 2012b)

Existing conditions

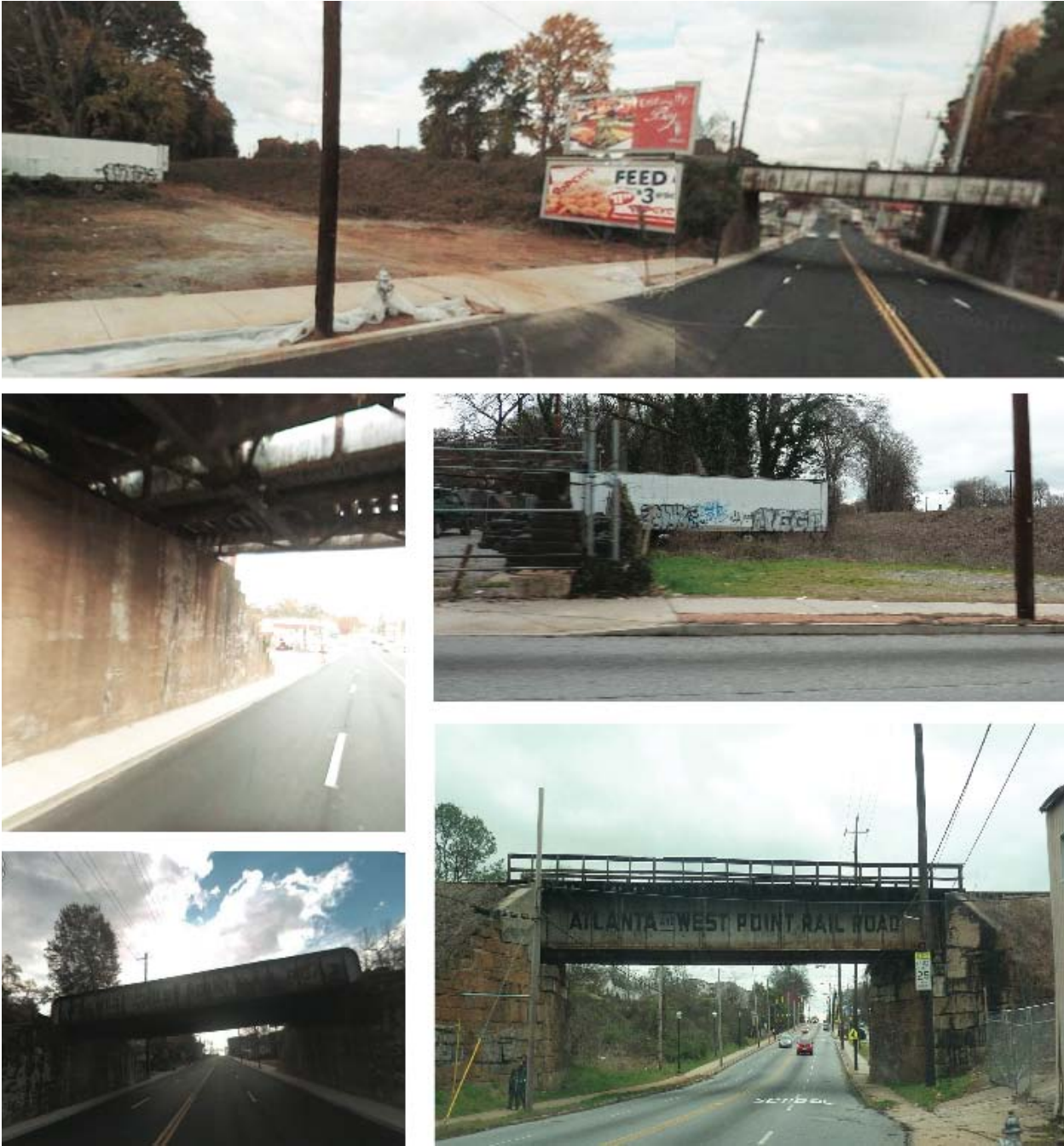


Figure 5. 11 Top: existing site looking North, Middle Left: wall under bridge, Middle Right: existing site from street, Bottom Left: bridge looking South, Bottom Right: bridge looking North into Pittsburgh (Landers, 2012)

Why this site?

This site is chosen for its impact as a potential gateway to Pittsburgh. Its location also calls attention to the future BeltLine that will impact redevelopment in Pittsburgh in innumerable ways. Embracing and reclaiming the rail infrastructure that pervades Pittsburgh is one way to echo the unique identity of the Pittsburgh neighborhood. Rail infrastructure shaped Pittsburgh into what it is today, and in some cases damaged it. This site occupies that infrastructure, albeit in a low-impact manner, and uses it to revive neighborhood pride. The BeltLine bridge becomes a ready-made gateway, which can be highlighted to enhance the sense of arrival into the neighborhood (Figure 5.11). Currently the lot just South of the BeltLine bridge is vacant and is used as an informal turn-around. There is a large billboard catching the eye of the fast moving traffic that passes under the bridge on its way to and from Pittsburgh. This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* uses that same principle to catch the driver's eye and direct it towards Pittsburgh's positive revitalization. The site lies on Metropolitan Avenue, a busy corridor that forms the Eastern edge of the neighborhood.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

The type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* that could work here is one that will act as a gateway to Pittsburgh. Simple maneuvers like painting a "Welcome to Pittsburgh" banner on the BeltLine bridge and graphically referencing the coming BeltLine above can be powerful visual cues to the vitality of the neighborhood. Calling attention to the Beltline as an asset to the neighborhood is important as the neighborhood gathers strength ahead of BeltLine redevelopment efforts in order to present a unified vision for

Pittsburgh's future. Pittsburgh and the University Avenue Site will become a major stop along the BeltLine, as residents use it as a recreation and transportation amenity, and as the neighborhood profits from its presence, bringing visitors and economic opportunity.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

Atlanta has a lively mural culture seen all over town. This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, as others will do, ties in to that existing phenomenon of urban beautification to address this gateway. Atlanta's own *Living Walls Conference* held annually does great work in coordinating mural painting projects and is a logical potential partner in this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. *Living Walls* garnered community support to construct a mural wall a few blocks West of Pittsburgh that serves as an attractive precedent for this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* (Figure 5.12) ("Living Walls 2011," 2011). The national *All City* program aims to encourage murals as well, combining mobile phone applications that help visitors and locals navigate the urban gallery of street art. They also petition local businesses to donate walls and coordinate local artists to paint them. They organize community events around the mural paintings, gathering interested visitors and residents alike to engage in this beautification effort ("All City," 2012). The social nature of this precedent makes it a useful model for the community-building event that this gateway banner painting could become.



Figure 5. 12 Atlanta's Living Walls program mural on Murphy Avenue, two blocks West of Pittsburgh ("Living Walls 2011," 2011)

Art on the BeltLine is a program that features local Atlanta artists' work along the path of the future BeltLine. This program commissions work by local artists in each neighborhood that the BeltLine passes through, making this site a good choice for a future project ("Art on the Atlanta BeltLine," 2012). Other *Art on the BeltLine* projects have inhabited mural wall spaces under bridges, just as this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* does underneath the BeltLine bridge (Figure 5.13).



Figure 5. 13 Mural wall under rail bridge in Atlanta for *Art on the Atlanta BeltLine 2010*, by local graffiti artist Hense ("Art on the Atlanta BeltLine," 2012)

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

Connectivity is key to this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, since this gateway highlights Metropolitan Avenue as a portal to Pittsburgh from the South. Pittsburgh lacks

peripheral access points, especially from the South, making this one even more important as an entry point receiving lots of traffic. Transforming both the bridge and its blank wall underneath into colorful and inviting amenities makes the Metropolitan corridor more inviting to pedestrian traffic as well. As a critical gateway to the neighborhood, it is important to treat this site as more than a car thoroughfare, but also as a comfortable pedestrian corridor. Lighting beneath the bridge will help makes this corridor feel safer for nighttime use. There is also a bus stop at this site, further promoting alternatives to car travel.

The method by which this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* is enacted will strengthen the Pittsburgh community through the social interactions that are necessary to plan and carry out the project. Community meetings and collaboration with these existing organizations and networks will strengthen the bonds of participants. The collective effort at neighborhood pride will be something that community members are reminded of every time they pass beneath the BeltLine bridge by car or foot. It will hopefully also offer hope for future change in its reference to the coming BeltLine, and its proximity to the Pittsburgh neighborhood.

Improving neighborhood pride and sense of place, as well as a positive sense-of-arrival for visitors, can lead to future economic vitality as some of the negative stigmas of vacancies and crime are mitigated. This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will hopefully lead to a strong pedestrian presence, making the streets safer. Strong, positive visual cues to the care that the community is putting into their neighborhood will encourage economic vitality by way of strengthening Pittsburgh's active street life.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?



Figure 5. 14 BeltLine overpass heading North, into Pittsburgh (Landers, 2012f)



Figure 5. 15 BeltLine overpass heading South, out of Pittsburgh (Landers, 2012d)



Figure 5. 16 Mural wall and lighting under BeltLine overpass (Landers, 2012e)

Site 2: Market Corner @ McDaniel Ave. & University Ave.



Figure 5. 17 Site 2: Market Corner within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012z)

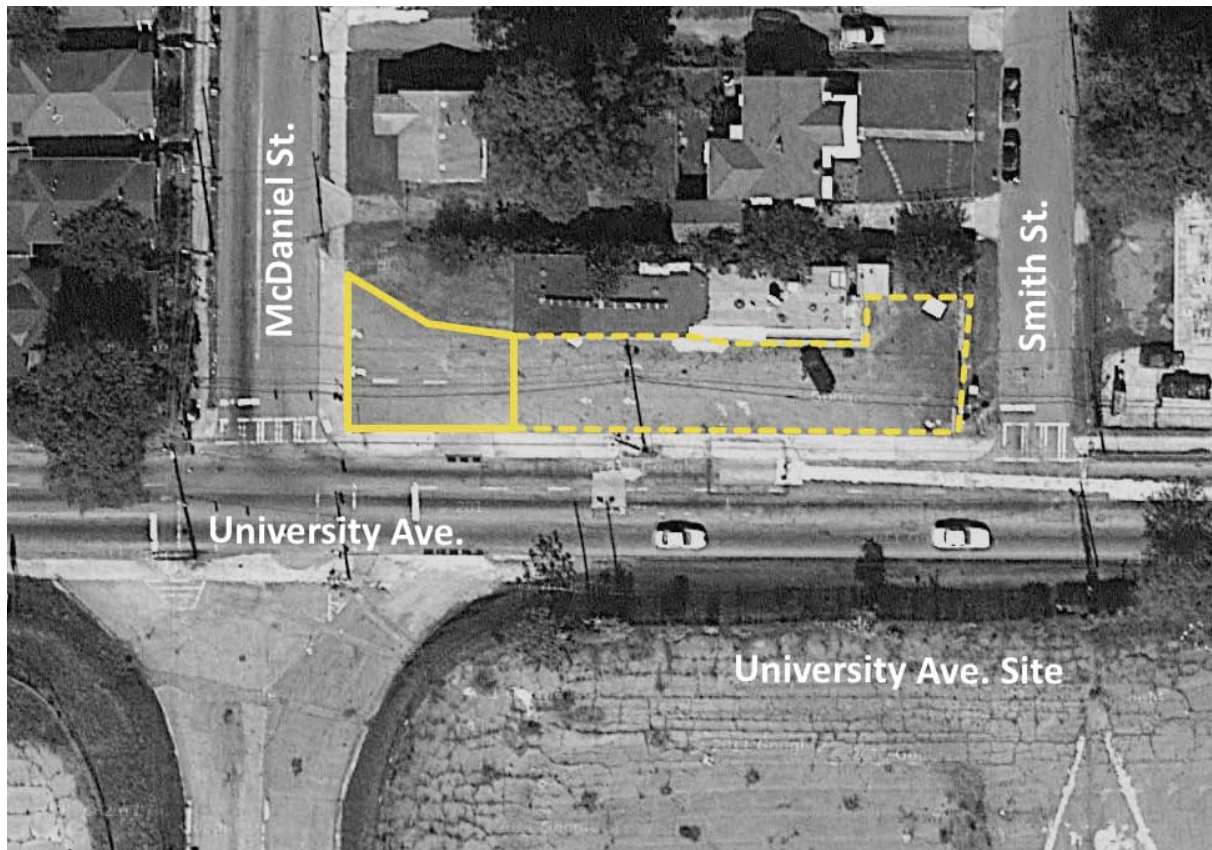


Figure 5. 18 Corner parking lot adjacent to convenience store (Landers, 2012□)

Existing conditions

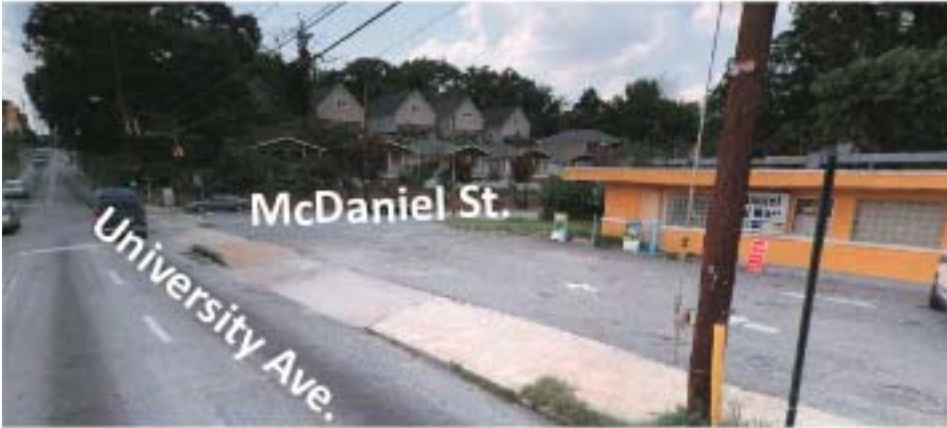


Figure 5. 19 (Landers, 2012)

Why this site?

This site is chosen for its axial location along McDaniel St., where it meets with the University Avenue Site. This location will become key when the BeltLine is constructed along the South edge of the University Ave. Site. When the University Ave. Site is eventually redeveloped, this corner becomes the access point for the neighborhood to get to the BeltLine and for the University Ave. Site to interact with the neighborhood. McDaniel is poised for economic rejuvenation as it is still the busiest and most central corridor through Pittsburgh, making this corner a key location for an *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*.

The corner lot is a large one with a lot of paved parking space. There is currently a small convenience store on the lot that has ample parking space, most of which is left empty most of the day. This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* would occupy the square of parking that makes up the corner, using only a portion of the store's parking lot.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

Since there is already a small convenience store on this corner, this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will tie into that use with a market space. The market could take a lot of forms, all temporary, with stalls, tents, and trucks. This could be a farmers market, produce stand, local flea market, church fundraising sale, or even food cart pod. The idea is that since the space is already associated with market in the community's mind, it could easily grow into a market space that could be used by any organization that wants a temporary sales space. The community identifies the lack of a grocery store and access to fresh produce as one of its primary challenges. This *URBAN*

INTERIMVENTION could directly address this issue by providing a space where such items can be sold. Since the existing convenience store sells items different from those being suggested, competition should not be an issue. The presence of this ever-changing market would bring more people to the space, thus buoying the existing store's customer base.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

Farmers markets and food cart pods have popped up all over Atlanta in the last few years, to great success. Most of these markets occupy parking lots, transforming an underused piece of automobile infrastructure into a lively and social commercial venue. *Pick Your Own* is an organization that holds a database of all Atlanta farmers markets and would be a great resource in setting up a temporary, possibly weekly, market on this site ("Pick Your Own," 2012). The *Georgia Flea Market* database would also be a useful local resource in both getting vendors to set up a market event on the site, and to get the word out to flea market enthusiasts ("Georgia Flea Markets," 2012). Events like these would appeal to local Pittsburgh residents, but also to visitors, further drawing people into Pittsburgh to enliven its streets.

Mobile food vending in Atlanta has seen a boom in success over the past five years, organized by the local advocacy group, *Atlanta Street Food Coalition* (ASFC). ASFC would be a productive partner in setting up a weekly food cart pod, or grouping, on this site. They currently manage food cart pods in parking lots throughout Atlanta (Figure 5.20) ("Atlanta Street Food Coalition ", 2012).



Figure 5. 20 Atlanta street food events in 2011 and 2012 ("Atlanta Street Food Coalition ", 2012)

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

The corner market *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promotes social interactions between vendors and local customers, building the social capital that is integral to strong community. The temporary market also brings community members together in a social and fun environment that enlivens the streetscape and also enlivens the local economy. The first step toward reviving the economic vitality of the neighborhood,

especially along McDaniel Street, can come in the form of a temporary market. Visitors and residents alike will come to expect the revolving series of open-air markets on this corner, drawing in more people to spend money and engage in these fun and social market events.

The community-strengthening goal of connectivity is addressed here in the service that these markets provide to Pittsburgh residents, close to home. As there is no grocery store within walkable distance of Pittsburgh, residents are forced to drive or take the bus to get their groceries. This market space provides access to food and goods that residents would otherwise have to spend a car trip on or go without. Connectivity is also addressed in the location of this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. There is a bus stop on the same corner as the proposed market, making access easy.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?



Figure 5. 21 Market stalls, tables, and tents (Landers, 2012t)

Site 3: [Just Off the] Street Games @ University Ave. & Ira Street



Figure 5. 22 Site 3: [Just Off the] Street Games within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012f)



Figure 5. 23 Vacant parking lot adjacent to University Ave. Site abandoned warehouse (Landers, 2012g)

Existing conditions



Figure 5. 24 (Landers, 2012,)

Why this site?

This site is chosen for an informal game center because it lies on University Avenue, the primary East and West access route through Pittsburgh. A lively streetscape amenity, such as a game center, on this busy thoroughfare can cue visitors to the strong and positive community they are entering. This site also lies on the property of the University Ave. Site, in the parking lot of an abandoned warehouse. Bringing life and activity to the University Ave. Site is an important first step in improving

the community's view of the site. Currently the site lies vacant and cuts off the neighborhood to the South. There is no activity on the site, other than the odd driving school lesson, and it effectively kills street life on the Southern border of the neighborhood. Beginning to shift the community's opinion of the University Ave. Site is important as it will be the primary focus of BeltLine redevelopment efforts. The parking lot is large and is already bordered by a fence that can help keep balls off the road. It also has the backdrop of the abandoned warehouse to help define the space with a vertical wall.

The adjacent freeways to the East of this site and the University Ave. Site itself, a former shipping center, are both pieces of the automobile infrastructure that impinge on the pedestrian and social experience of the neighborhood. Reclaiming this space as an active asset to the neighborhood can reinvigorate the community and reactivate the streets.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will feature game courts, painted on the parking lot pavement. Basketball, foursquare, and hopscotch areas will be laid out on the site, providing games appropriate to various aged children and adults. One of the basketball courts will be surrounded by low, informal bleachers to provide a sense of spectacle. This court could be used for important games in an adult recreation-league tournament or children and teen basketball camps. The site will become a gathering place for families, children, and young adults to come play and interact together. Nearby Pittman Park has two basketball courts, a good start, but more would certainly be used.

Providing a positive and healthy gathering place for teenagers may also help combat the loitering and truancy that the community has identified as one of its many challenges.

The warehouse wall could become the backdrop for the central basketball court, with signage inviting people to visit the free center, and lighting to allow for nighttime use. The lack of street lighting in the Pittsburgh neighborhood is another challenge that the community identifies. This could be the first step toward a well-lit pedestrian experience, making nighttime street life safer and more active.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

The Sydney STREET WORKS competition winner, *Walk the Line*, discussed in detail in Chapter 4, provides a creative precedent for this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. *Walk the Line* occupies a long stretch of street and sidewalk in Sydney, adding painted games along its path (Figure 5.25)(North, 2012). This [*Just Off the*] *Street Games* *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will provide a similar pedestrian amenity, although here concentrated to one location. Both provide a fun and social addition to the streetscape, transforming it from pure transportation to a venue for engaging with the city, with strangers, and with fellow community members.



Figure 5. 25 *Walk the Line* temporary installation in Sydney, Australia (North, 2012)

There are many established basketball camps within Atlanta already, *Rising Stars* being one of them, who might be able to partner with the Pittsburgh community to plan summer or after school basketball camps for children and teens living in Pittsburgh ("Rising Stars Hoops Basketball Camps," 2012). Gideons Elementary School and Park Middle School, both within walking distance of the [*Just Off the*] *Street Games* center, might also be able to endorse the program and help spread the word that the courts are free to use and open to everyone.

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

By providing a social and healthy space, social interactions are central to the success of this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. The games center is a non-threatening way to gather community members of all ages together for informal fun and exercise. Bleachers at sporting events have always been an active social venue, similar to what can happen here. The informal nature of the courts allows for access to all community members. A managed schedule for free use would help facilitate use and ensure that everyone who wants to use it has a chance.

As with all *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*, this one brings people back out onto the streets, making them safer and more lively. This, in turn, can help active the economy of the neighborhood, shifting the perception of Pittsburgh to a strong and vibrant place where the community feels safe to navigate its streets. Connectivity is also enhanced by this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, as it improves the pedestrian experience with street lighting and by interrupting the long, unpopulated University Avenue with a well-lit, social, and lively space. In offering another exercise and gathering place within Pittsburgh, residents no longer need to travel outside the neighborhood to access such amenities, cutting down on needless and time consuming car and bus travel.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?



Figure 5. 26 Basketball courts with spectator seating (Landers, 2012r)

Site 4: Neighborhood Nexus @ McDaniel Ave. & Arthur Street



Figure 5. 27 Site 4 within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012#)



Figure 5. 28 Intersection and adjacent vacant lot and convenience store lot (Landers, 2012,,)

Existing conditions



Figure 5. 29 Arthur St. and McDaniel St. intersection, Top: looking West, Bottom: looking South (Landers, 2012...)



Figure 5. 30 Vacant lot adjacent to Arther St. and McDaniel St. intersection, next to convenience store parking lot (Landers, 2012+)

Why this site?

This site was chosen for an intersection repair style *URBAN INTERIMVENTION: Neighborhood Nexus*, for its central location within Pittsburgh, but also for its location one block away from a spot the community identifies as a corner of illegal drug activity. As with all the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* projects, when possible they are located to

try to combat challenge areas that the community calls attention to in the *Pittsburgh Blueprints* community input report (Kidd, 2006). Another reason for choosing this site for an intersection repair *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, similar to that seen in the Portland case study in Chapter 4, is for the vacant space surrounding it. There is a weedy vacant parking lot to the Southwest, and a lot overgrown with trees and weeds to the Southeast. These spaces provide additional space for the intersection repair project to grow and expand over time, as well space to stage the construction of the project. The Southwestern lot also has two large shade trees that make it an inviting space in the spring summertime.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

This *Neighborhood Nexus URBAN INTERIMVENTION* closely follows the City Repair model from Portland, seen in the Sellwood neighborhood *Share-It Square* case study in Chapter 4. The community will collaborate with local artists to generate a design for the intersection painting that reflects the unique character of the Pittsburgh community. Materials will be gathered by donation from local residents and local businesses. Next, a painting day will be organized to implement the design, complete with a daylong street closure to cars.

Like most turn-of-the-century American neighborhoods, Pittsburgh is planned according to a grid system. While its grid is more effective than most because of its small scale, it still lacks a central core or commons. This intersection repair project aims to reclaim a piece of this car-centric grid for a community gathering place. Just as happens in Portland, this intersection will be closed to cars twice yearly, and occupied

by a community-wide block party. Even when the intersection is open to cars, the two adjacent lots can serve as impromptu public gathering spaces for people who have come to view the intersection as the center of Pittsburgh. Just as happened in Portland, the intersection repair effort can grow into further pedestrian amenities, such as benches and shade structures (Lerch). Every few years, when the paint begins to fade, the community will once again come together to redesign and repaint the intersection, to update and refresh it. This continual renewal will help bring community members and artist together in an ongoing basis, to work on a project that provides a necessary, and currently lacking, neighborhood core.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

Portland's *City Repair* intersection repair projects provide a useful model for this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. There are also many local arts organizations in Atlanta that may be able to act as partners to help accomplish this project (Figure 5.31). The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta stands out as one who mission is to enhance communities through art, as this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* aims to do ("Improving Communities: Arts, Culture & Humanities," 2012). They provide grants for community generated public art projects and may be a useful resource as this project progresses.



Figure 5. 31 *Share-It Square* in Portland, Oregon(Eckersten, 2007)

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* encourages social interaction between community members in its creation, maintenance and ongoing use. In order for this project to become a reality, community members much interact and collaborate to come to consensus and plan implementation. The intersection provides a necessary core gathering space within Pittsburgh where residents and visitors alike can gather for community building events, such as twice-yearly intersection closure block parties.

Connectivity is addressed in this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* with the traffic calming that intersection paintings can create. The community identifies speeding as a challenge and the pedestrian oriented, highly visible, and colorful intersection painting

provides a safer place to cross the street and gently encourages traffic to slow down. Pedestrian travel is made easier and safer with this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* and its central location allows residents to visit it by foot, further eliminating unnecessary car travel. There is also a bus stop adjacent to the intersection, so residents waiting for the bus will have a safer and more inviting place to wait and socialize.

Nearby businesses such as the convenience store, whose parking lot abuts the southwestern vacant lot, can benefit from the activity and positive community that the intersection painting produce. People gathering at this site will draw more business to the McDaniel corridor, which the community has identified as a site with great commercial potential.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?

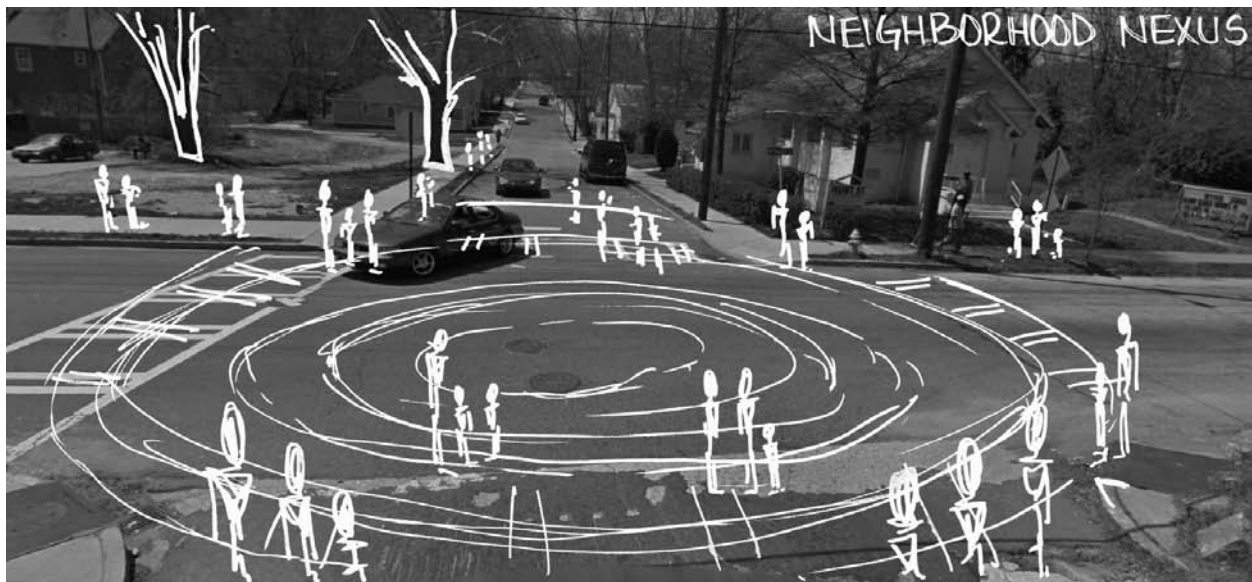


Figure 5. 32 Intersection painting with pedestrian crossings (Landers, 2012{)

Site 5: [More Than a] Bus Stop @ McDaniel Street & Rail line



Figure 5. 33 Site 5 within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012š)

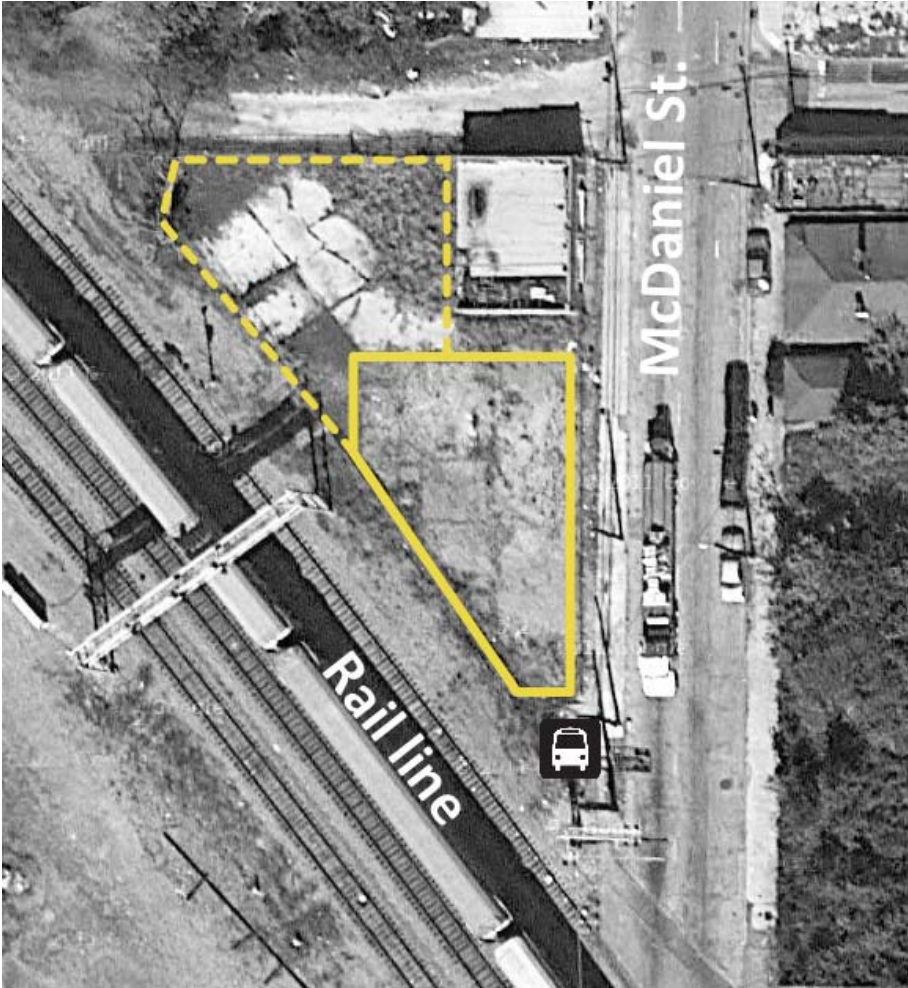


Figure 5. 34 Vacant parking lot adjacent to vacant building (Landers, 2012^)

Existing conditions



Figure 5. 35 Top: looking South, Bottom: looking North (Landers, 2012%)

Why this site?

This site was chosen for its potential to act a gateway to Pittsburgh. It lies along McDaniel St. and forms the primary northern access point to the neighborhood. Placing another strong gateway *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* here can correspond to the *Market Corner* gateway *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* at the South end of Pittsburgh, lending a strong sense of unity by “bookend-ing” neighborhood with gateways. The site is a triangular parking lot, shaped by the rail line and McDaniel, adjacent to an abandoned building and a bus stop. Since McDaniel is the proposed business corridor, placing a highly visual amenity here will help draw visitors and residents into the neighborhood and towards the future commercial core.

This site’s location along the rail yard makes it a good opportunity to raise awareness of the illegal toxic dumping that has happened all along the rail line (Pardue, 2011). This could take the form of an information station, pointing out the damage that has been done and what steps can be taken to remediate the problem, including fund raising efforts. In order for the land surrounding the rail yard to be reclaimed for a more positive use in the future, large remediation efforts need to be undertaken. This rail-yard dumping site is just one of many that needs clean up attention.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* project will be a bus stop waiting area. It will include amenities such as a shade structure, incorporating the abandoned building on the site. Benches and picnic tables will also be provided, making waiting for the bus more comfortable. There will also be a community message board where bus riders can

learn more about community organizations and neighborhood events. Signage about the illegal dumping situation incorporated into the community message board can take advantage of this captive audience to help spread information about the neighborhood current situation with regard to its many toxic areas. Since a lot of Pittsburgh's residents travel by bus, this and other bus stops around Pittsburgh see a lot of traffic. Providing a space that is friendly and social can help make bus travel more appealing and safer. Including lighting at this bus stop for those waiting on evening buses, or arriving back home late, will help make bus travel safer as well.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

In addition to intersection repair projects, Portland based *City Repair* also helps communities construct bus stop amenities such as shade and seating structures (Figure 5.36)(Eckersten, 2007). The bench in Figure 5.30 offers a successful precedent for a community generated effort that makes waiting for the bus more comfortable, just as this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* aims to.



Figure 5. 36 Seating at *Share-It Square* in Portland, Oregon (Eckersten, 2007)

Athens, Georgia, has its own precedent for fun and celebratory bus stop designs as well. In 2010 the Athens Arts Council, Athens-Clarke County, and the state of Georgia transit system collaborated on a series of music-oriented bus stops (Figure 5.37). They provide shade and engage those waiting for the bus in the local musical culture ("Bus stop decorations hail Athens, GA music scene,"). This partnership between governing entities provides a useful model for how such projects can become reality.



Figure 5. 37 *Beat a Drum* bust stop shelter installation in Athens, Georgia ("Bus stop decorations hail Athens, GA music scene,")

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

While waiting for the bus in this comfortable and social space, people can interact with one another, both with neighbors and strangers. The space is well lit and, hopefully, full of people, making these interactions non-threatening and safe. Residents and visitors to Pittsburgh can learn more about the neighborhoods challenges here as well, with information on illegal toxic dumping and how to combat it. They can also learn more about the neighborhood's assets while they wait for the bus, while perusing a community message board with information on community organizations and events. Connectivity is incorporated into the function of this bus stop *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* as it enhances the bus-riding experience, making it a more comfortable and desirable mode of transport. The addition this as another gateway *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*, to the North along McDaniel Street, contributes to the overall economic vitality of the neighborhood. This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will help transform public perceptions of the neighborhood to reflect the growing strength of the community. As the sense of community visibly increases in the Pittsburgh neighborhood, more community-oriented economic rejuvenation will soon follow.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?



Figure 5. 38 Bust stop with shade, lighting, and seating amenities (Landers, 2012i)

Site 6: Wall Becomes a Gate @ Ralph D. Abernathy Road



Figure 5. 39 Site 6 within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012²)

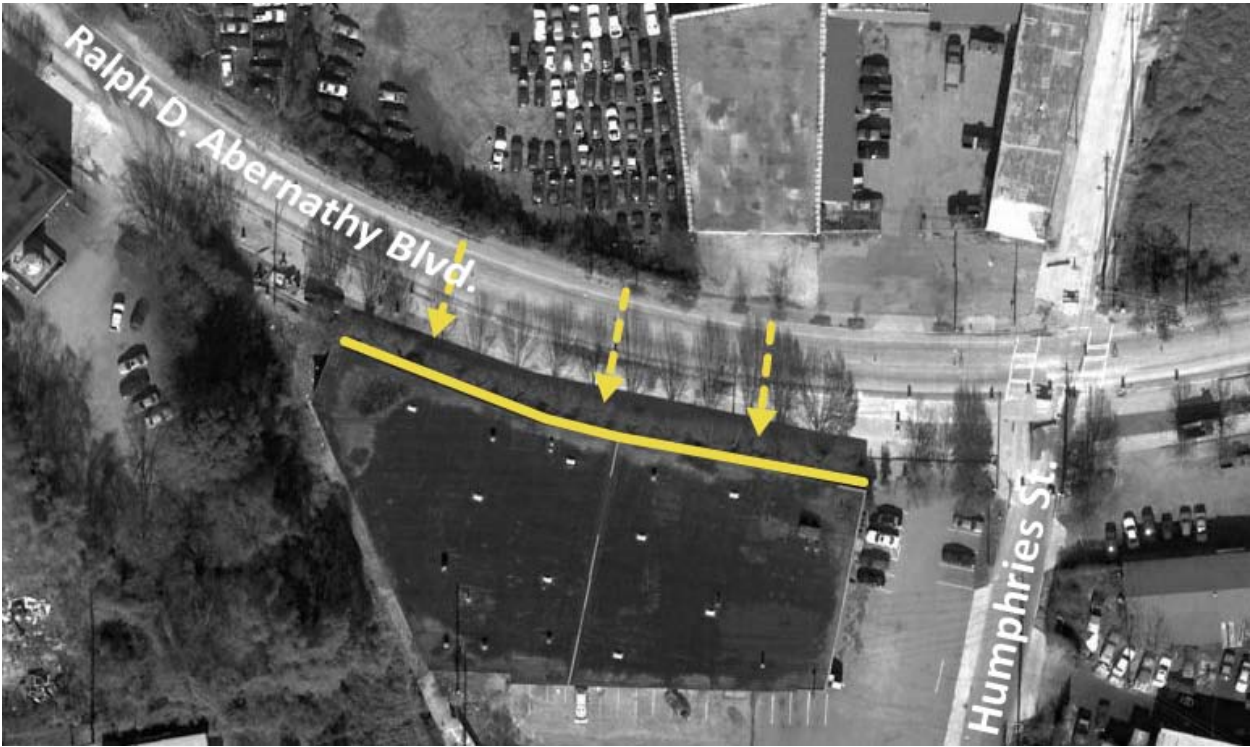


Figure 5. 40 Blank wall on Holtzquip Inc. warehouse wall (Landers, 2012³)

Existing conditions



Figure 5. 41 Top: looking West, Bottom: looking East (Landers, 2012CE)

Why this site?

This site is chosen for its large expanse of blank wall, punctuated by a row of Bradford Pear trees. The location of the wall, part of an industrial warehouse, is in Northern Pittsburgh, along Ralph D. Abernathy Boulevard, granting it a lot of car traffic. As drivers pass by this wall as they zip along this busy road, they will see a large and colorful mural, welcoming them to Pittsburgh. This wall can act as a gateway, rather than a barrier, contributing another highly visual cue to the community that lives within the surrounding neighborhood. This busy arterial road, part of the automobile infrastructure that fractures neighborhood like Pittsburgh, transforms into a venue for advertising the strength of the neighborhood. Since drivers travel it so frequently, the wall gains power in those numbers of drivers who can now come to view the wall as a gateway to the neighborhood. Taking advantage of this blank expanse of wall is one effort among many to catch the attention of drivers by, in a positive manner.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

This gateway *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will be a painted mural applied to the Northern exterior of Holtzquip Inc. warehouse. Holtzquip Inc., a medical equipment factory, has repainted the wall white after various graffiti incidents, so they may be willing to donate this wall for a planned mural, whose design they can then sanction and participate in creating. Like the intersection repair paintings, this mural will be a collaborative effort between local artists and community members. The design will reflect the unique character of the Pittsburgh community.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

As mentioned in Site 1, Pittsburgh has a lively mural cultural, as does all of Atlanta. The *Living Walls* program, discussed in Site 1's *BeltLine Banner*, may also be helpful in implementing this mural. Another local precedent for a successfully eye-catching mural is the one covering the wall surrounding the swimming pool at Pittman Park (Figure 5.42). This vibrant mural calls attention to the community with a positive and engaging design, just as this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* could.



Figure 5. 42 Pittman Park mural (Landers, 2012|)

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

This *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* is different from the others in this application chapter in that it does not provide space for community members to gather and interact. It does, however, have power in calling attention to the character of Pittsburgh and lending the neighborhood a strong sense of arrival. This mural engages the goal of connectivity through harnessing the attention of the traffic on Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd.

to convey the strength and vibrancy of the neighborhood that those drivers are entering. Community members have identified downtown traffic as a challenge, and this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* transforms that challenge into an opportunity to begin to transform Pittsburgh's image.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?



Figure 5. 43 Gateway mural on blank warehouse wall (Landers, 2012—)

Site 7: Lot of Books @ Metropolitan Ave. & Rockwell Street



Figure 5. 44 Site 7 within Pittsburgh neighborhood context (Landers, 2012)



Figure 5. 45 Vacant parking lot adjacent to abandoned building (Landers, 2012)

Existing conditions



Figure 5. 46 Corner vacant parking lot of Metropolitan Ave. and Rockwell St. (Landers, 2012)



Figure 5. 47 Corner of Metropolitan Ave. and Rockwell St. (Landers, 2012p)

Why this site?

This vacant lot is chosen for its highly visible location along Metropolitan Avenue. It is also chosen for its proximity to two areas that the community identifies as drug and prostitution zones. The lot is only a few blocks West of Gideons Elementary School, making its location a strategic alternative to those challenge areas. Truancy, a high dropout rate, and lack of adequate childcare are also challenges that Pittsburgh residents specify, which this projects aims to mitigate.

What type of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* could work here? Why?

The *Lot of Books URBAN INTERIMVENTION* will host a bookmobile, or mobile library, on a regular basis. A temporary and movable reading room, consisting of picnic tables and benches, will accompany the bookmobile. The abandoned building adjacent to the lot can provide shade and help define the space with a vertical wall. Ideally, the bookmobile would arrive on school-day afternoons and be available for elementary school students as they get out of class. As this program generates interest, it could grow into a daily or weekly homework help session, supported by the bookmobile. Over

half of the residents in Pittsburgh are over 50 years old, and the community has identified their fixed-income aging population as one of their challenges. Aging community members could participate by helping the young students with their homework as a part-time, local job. There are two libraries near Pittsburgh, the Mechanicsville Library and the West End Library, both about a mile away to the Northeast and Northwest ("Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System," 2012). Yet, when traveling by foot, freeways, train tracks, and busy arterial roads make it a difficult trip. A bookmobile working out of one of these nearby libraries would be an asset to Pittsburgh, allowing easy and local access to books and an after school homework help program.

Precedent *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*

Unfortunately bookmobiles have declined in the U.S. over the past ten years, but they are still frequently used in England to great success. They are used in both rural and urban settings where residents do not have easy access to a library, much like Pittsburgh. They are valuable for their ability to access underserved communities in a temporary and mobile manner. Pairing a bookmobile with a vacant parking lot allows the neighborhood residents to know and expect the bookmobile in one designated location, so that it can be easily found. The parking lot also offers a safe support space where families and children can gather and spend time as they visit the bookmobile.

Georgia's Department of Transportation participates in a national program called *Safe Routes to School*, which helps neighborhood advocate for safer routes for children to walk to their schools ("Safe Routes to School," 2012). This organization may be a

useful partner in helping Pittsburgh identify the safest routes for children to use as they walk to school, and also to encourage students to take advantage of the *Lot of Books* on their way home.

How does this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* promote social interactions, economic vitality and connectivity?

Gathering children, aging residents, and families around an educational and social pursuit will help strengthen the Pittsburgh community. Connectivity is strengthened as children are able to access books locally and do not have to ride the bus or get their parents to take them by car to other library outside of the neighborhood.

How will this *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* look on this site?

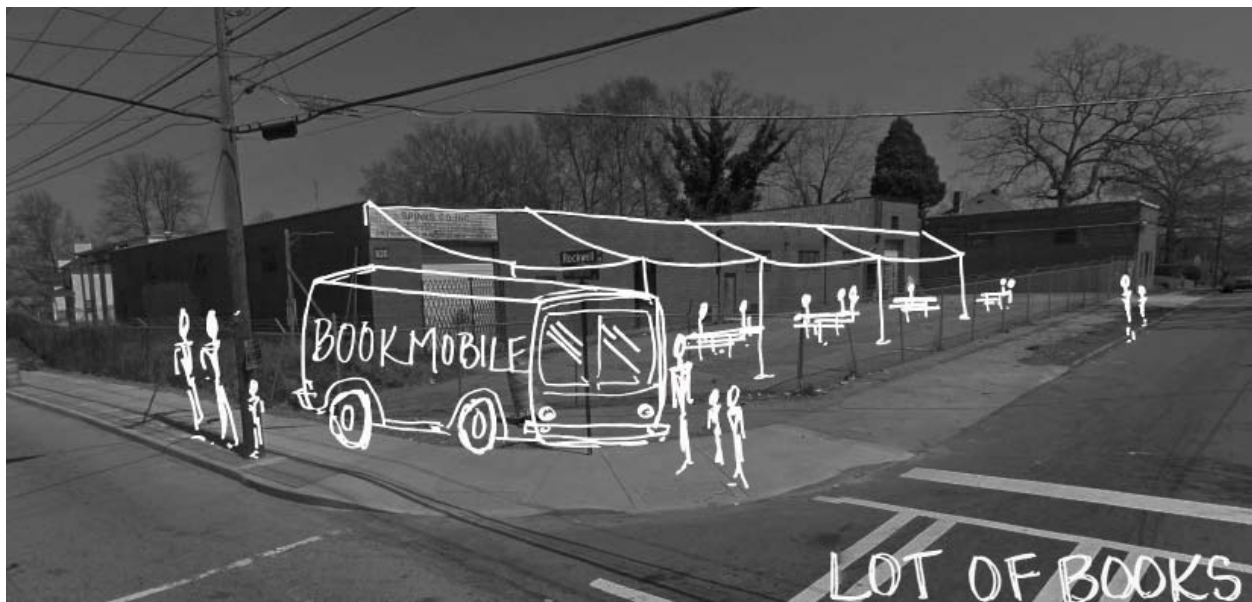


Figure 5. 48 Bookmobile and shaded reading room area (Landers, 2012s)

Concluding summary

All five chapters of this thesis aim to illustrate the value of *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within an urban context. They each approach *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* from a different point, all with the intent to flesh out and define this concept as coherently and thoroughly as possible. The history of the problem helps set up why *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are necessary in mending the breakdown of community that results from cities that are planned to prioritize the car. Fitting *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within two other academic theories, Randy Hester's *Enabling Form* and Jessica Hyde's *Fallow Fields*, lends legitimate conceptualization to *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and defines their place among other efforts at community repair. The continuum of community repair that this research develops fits *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* into the long and phased continuum of city form and community recovery, from desolate all the way to vibrant.

This research revolves around its case studies. They are the venue through which *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are defined in real and successful projects around the country and world. Without case studies and the applications that follow, the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* would be an abstract theory. It is anything but abstract in the real, unique, and innovative ways communities unite to accomplish public space reclamations within slices of leftover and underused automobile infrastructure. The most valuable kernel of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* concept is that it ties into the pre-existing phenomenon that the case studies illustrate: people will take over underused space within their city if their public space needs are not being met. And, this research

proposes, what better ubiquitous urban space to reclaim than the infrastructure that has become the very mechanism of urban fragmentation that generated the problem.

Building upon these case study findings, the application of seven unique *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* projects in Atlanta's Pittsburgh neighborhood further illustrates their value. The process of developing the applications demonstrates how nimble and adaptable *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are. The programming and form of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* arose seamlessly from Pittsburgh's site conditions, surrounding context, community needs, and existing support organizations. The evolution of the application clarifies how useful *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can be in neighborhoods of all flavors. Appropriate and useful projects can arise from a community based on its specific character, available sites, and what that community lacks and desires. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are adaptable and flexible, allowing for their immediate implementation without large amounts of funding, which is especially hard to find in the current economic recession. Their dynamism allows for growth and change over time, yet still they provide immense positive impacts on community. As is stated and restated throughout this thesis, the community-defining goals that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can help achieve are social interactions, connectivity, and economic vitality.

Recommendations for *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* legitimacy

The principal message this thesis offers brings the discussion back to the argument made in Chapter 3, as well as throughout the rest of the thesis: Why not legitimize *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*? A. Civic authorities condone and support community gardens and public art. B. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* share essential,

defining characteristics with community gardens and public art, such as their collective creation, their occupation of undervalued urban space, their flexible and evolving nature, and their role as triangulators. C. If A. and B. are true, than is there any reason to exclude *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* from civic support? This research finds that if community betterment is part of the mission of any civic authority then no, there is no reason not to legitimize, enable, sanction, encourage, and wholeheartedly support *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS*.

Each case study reviewed in this thesis achieves a degree of legitimacy, over time, yet the process is far from simple. The author's own endeavor at attempting an *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* in Athens, Georgia, highlights how difficult municipalities can make it to enact one of these projects. *Athens Food Cart Fest: Mobilize Your Appetite* is a six-hour food cart festival, which takes place on March 31, 2012. The purpose of the event is to gauge the community's interest in food carts and to illustrate that they can be an asset to Athens' downtown streetscape: basically it is a one-time trial *URBAN INTERIMVENTION*. The process necessary to close down one block of downtown Athens and bring in 15 food trucks for a one-day fun, social, and community-building event has met obstacle after obstacle. Permitting has been extremely difficult, with four separate permit application attempts before final approval. This event will go forward as planned, but it has taken countless volunteers hours over the course of over a year to enact. *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* should not be this difficult. This thesis suggests that the value they have on the social, connective, and economic lives of community members is more than ample to justify civic support.

The City of San Francisco is acting on a similar conviction with new legislation to fast-track permitting for interim projects in stalled and vacant development sites. The proposed ordinance is called a Green Development Agreement (GDA), and it provides financial incentives for developers to allow temporary greening and community use of stalled property for an agreed-upon period of time. See Appendix C for executive summary of draft GDA legislation (Alumbaugh, 2010). Developers retain property rights and are able to resume construction in the future if their fortunes change. The ordinance protects developers from overly successful interim projects, where community members may try to prevent future development. At the same time it supports neighborhood-improving interim uses with legal standing.

The City of San Francisco commissioned GDA criteria from San Francisco based arts collective ReBar, along with aid from the Department of Public Health, the Department of the Environment, and the Planning Department. For details, find a draft of this legislation in Appendix C. This collaborative effort at defining the criteria for interim projects makes the process transparent and allows valuable input from various government agencies. The criteria benefits break down into three categories: 1. Provides public benefits, 2. Means of implementation, operation and deconstruction, and 3. Contribution to larger framework of public benefits. The first criteria category describing the public benefits that each interim project must enact closely aligns with this thesis' *URBAN INTERIMVENTION* goals, making this legislation extremely useful as a precedent for legitimization. These benefits touch on such topics as public fulfillment of unmet public space needs, providing space for social interactions, cultural

enrichment, and education, and providing temporary productive landscapes, among many others.

San Francisco's GDA's will occupy stalled development sites that are currently, and historically, used as parking lots until they can be developed. This legislation serves to support community benefiting interim projects *instead* of parking lots, just as this thesis suggests *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* can. Both this thesis' *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* applications in Pittsburgh, Atlanta, and San Francisco's GDA's take advantage of vacant space within the urban framework that would otherwise be used for parking. Both of these projects exchange parking space for interactive, social, and community supportive public spaces. The similarities between GDA's and *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* makes GDA legislation an apt tool for legitimizing Atlanta's own foray into interim projects.

Atlanta's Midtown Alliance, an advocacy group for the revitalization of Midtown Atlanta, has recently expressed interest in interim projects for stalled development sites. These four factors: this thesis' application research in Atlanta, Atlanta's Midtown Alliance interest, successful case study precedent projects, and San Francisco's GDA legislation, combine to demonstrate that *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are entirely possible in Atlanta.

Future research

The process of finding sites within Pittsburgh to apply *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* was useful in revealing some of the subtleties of the neighborhood. The primary finding from the application process revolves around the

unique nature of each neighborhood where *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* might be applied. Each site within Pittsburgh has its own unique situation, revealing that the process of developing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* is intrinsically tied to the character and existing social structure of any given neighborhood. It makes sense that the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* are uniquely shaped by their physical location, as well as their proximity to assets and challenges within a neighborhood, and in this way retain the authenticity toward which this thesis strives.

There is inherent inauthenticity in the fact that the author is developing *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* for Pittsburgh and yet is not a member of the Pittsburgh community. The degree to which this application is inauthentic is acknowledged and this thesis suggests these *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within Pittsburgh only to convey the potential that they have when developed by and for the community itself. These applications are estimations at potential sites, projects, and partnerships based primarily on community generated comments and input.

The inauthentic nature of the applications could be surmounted with conversations and interviews with members of the Pittsburgh community. While community generated assets, challenges, and a corresponding map of each was available, direct conversation regarding potential *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* would be helpful. Discussing this specific type of interim project would be useful in gauging the community's interest in and momentum for such projects. This person-to-person research would also deepen the understanding of the community's current needs. The neighborhood is constantly evolving, making current knowledge of needs and desires

useful. This research was not included in this thesis primarily because of the time constraint.

As the San Francisco GDA ordinance addresses, future research could include planning for a finite timeframe, maintenance, and evolution of the *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* in Pittsburgh. Eventual dismantling should also be planned, to make the conclusion of the projects as smooth as possible for all parties. An important aspect of the GDA is the protection it offers to property owners. It is important to assure owners of the parking lots chosen for *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* within Pittsburgh that they retain their property rights. In order for these projects to succeed anywhere, Pittsburgh included, all parties need to benefit and the length and nature of the projects needs to be defined and transparent to everyone involved.

Various competitions in the last year have focused on interim strategies for urban revitalization, including the Venice Biennale, Five Design Challenge, and the aforementioned *STREET WORKS* competition in Sydney, Australia. Pursuing the resulting project of these competitions, as well as new projects that fall under San Francisco's GDA would be appropriate future research to further inform *URBAN INTERIMVENTIONS* and their viability.

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APPENDIX A

City Ordinance No. 175937

Passed by Portland, Oregon City Council 09/19/01

Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections

(following)

City Ordinance No. 175937
passed by Portland, Oregon City Council 09/19/01

Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections

- (1) The permittee shall hold the City of Portland, its officers, agents, and employees free and harmless from any claims for damages to persons or property, including legal fees and costs of defending any actions or suits, including any appeals, which may result from permitted activity.
- (2) The intent of a proposed project and the likely outcome of such project shall be consistent with the goals of the Portland City Council.
- (3) The two streets must be classified as Local Service Streets and carry less than a combined 2,500 vehicles on an average day.
- (4) The applicant for a permit must provide to the City Traffic Engineer a petition of support for the proposed intersection modifications. The support petition must have signatures from each of the adjacent residents and at least 80 percent of the residents on the project street frontage(s) within two standard city blocks of the proposed project. The City Traffic Engineer shall have the authority to modify the petition boundaries when considered appropriate. The City Traffic Engineer shall certify the accuracy of the petition.
- (5) The applicant for a permit must provide the City Traffic Engineer with a written description of the proposed changes, including diagrams depicting how the intersection will look when completed. The applicant must demonstrate how the project will improve, or at least maintain, traffic safety and the safety of individuals at or in the vicinity of the intersection.
- (6) The City Traffic Engineer may approve a revocable permit authorizing construction and maintenance of the project as described and shown in the submitted diagrams, subject to any changes that may be required by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (7) The permit shall be for use of the public right-of-way only, and does not exempt the permittee from obtaining any license or permit required by the City Code or Ordinances for any act to be performed under this permit. Nor shall the permit waive the provisions of any City Code, Ordinance, or the City Charter, except as stated herein.
- (8) The permit shall not exempt any party from complying with all applicable traffic laws, including laws regarding pedestrians.
- (9) The permittee is not authorized to do any excavation, except as specifically identified in the project plans. The permittee shall be responsible for protecting all public and private facilities placed in the public right-of-way, including underground utilities.
- (10) The permittee shall notify all households and businesses within four standard city blocks of the proposed project at least 30 days before the project installation date.
- (11) The permittee shall obtain a Block Party Permit to close all legs of an intersection, for up to one block distance, in order to install the intersection modifications. Permittee shall use Type III barricades and STREET CLOSED signs as provided in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. No street shall be blocked for more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period unless specifically allowed by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (12) Repair, maintenance, or installation of existing or future utility facilities in the right-of-way may require the permittee to reconstruct, move, or remove the project, or portions of the project, with all costs borne by the permittee.
- (13) The permittee shall work with all affected neighbors to resolve any concerns that may arise regarding the project. The inability to resolve such concerns may be grounds for revocation of this permit by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (14) The permittee shall maintain, at no cost to the City, all aspects of the project during the term of the permit. If any nuisance condition is allowed to exist in the area of the project, the City may summarily abate such nuisance. The existence of a nuisance in the area of the project may be grounds for revocation of the permit.

- (15) All permits shall be revocable by the City Traffic Engineer. The City Traffic Engineer may revoke a permit for any cause. The City Traffic Engineer shall immediately revoke a permitted project no longer meeting the intent of City Council goals.
- (16) The permittee shall, at no cost to the City, remove all aspects and/or features of a project when either the permit expires or is revoked.

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Appendix B: Further Case Study Examples

NAME	LOCATION	FOUNDATION DATE	LOCATION DETAILS	SITE TYPE	OVERSEER ORGANIZATION	LEGITIMACY	PERMANENCY GAUGE
Tenderloin National Forest	San Francisco, CA	1989	Between Hyde and Leavenworth, Tenderloin district	Alley (25'x136'), now park	SF State Urban Laboratory	Began guerrilla, now legal	Permanent
Mississippi Marketplace	Portland, OR	2009	N. Mississippi Ave & Skidmore Street	Private parking lot, previous vacant lot	Private owner	Legal	Permanent but with changing food carts
Share-It Square	Portland, OR	1996	Sellwood Neighborhood	Intersection	City Repair	Legal, city ordinance for painting	Permanent yet evolving with re-paints
Brooklyn Skate Park	Portland, OR	2010	Brooklyn Neighborhood	Under pedestrian overpass which spans over a railyard	Non-profit	Began guerrilla, now temporarily sanctioned	Permanent yet evolving over time
Washington Street Skate Park	San Diego, CA	1999	Washington and PCH	Under freeway overpass	Non-profit	Began guerrilla, now sanctioned	Permanent
Burnside Skate Park	Portland, OR	1990	Under Burnside Bridge on the east side of the Wilamette River	Under bridge	Non-profit	Began as guerrilla, now sanctioned by city	City says it's technically "temporary"
Sunday Streets	San Francisco	2009	All over city, different neighborhoods	Street	City of San Francisco	Legal, inspired by Ciclovía in Bogota, Columbia	Temporary, one Sunday per site
Ciclovía	Bogota, Columbia	1976-present	Main streets in Columbian cities on Sundays and holidays	Street	City of Bogota	Legal	Temporary
Chicano Park Murals	San Diego, CA	1971	Downtown San Diego, beneath I-5	Under freeway overpass	City of San Diego	Legal	Permanent
Big Yangge Dance	Beijing, China	ongoing	Mingguang Qiao	Concrete pad underneath freeway overpass	N/A	Allowed	Temporary: Mornings from 9am-9am
Hayes Valley Farm	San Francisco, CA	2010	Fell St. and Laguna St.	Damaged freeway on-ramp parcel	Non-profit	Two year interim-use agreement with City of SF	Temporary: two years
Park Mobiles	San Francisco, CA	2011	Yerba Buena neighborhood	Parallel parking spaces	CNG (SF firm) and Yerba Buena Community Benefit District	Legal, deal with city to enable these projects	Temporary
Surfing Madonna Mosaic	Encinitas, CA	2011	Encinitas Boulevard	Wall under railroad overpass	N/A	Guerrilla, removed, now replaced and legal	Intermittent permanency
Parklets / Walklets	San Francisco, CA	2010-present	All over city	Parallel parking spaces	Rebar (SF firm)	Legal	Temporary: generally in place for a few months
Madison Block Parties	Madison, WI	ongoing	All over city, various neighborhoods	Street	City of Madison	Legal	Temporary: one day
Broadway	New York, NY	2009	Section of Broadway in Mid-town Manhattan	Street	New York City Mayor's office	Legal, inspired by Ciclovía in Bogota, Columbia	Experimental at first, now permanent
Saturday Market	Portland, OR	1974	Under Burnside bridge on west side of Wilamette River	Under bridge, adjacent to Willamette River	Non-profit	legal	Temporary: every weekend
I-5 Collonade Mountain Bike Park	Seattle, WA	2002	7.5 acre bike park under I-5 freeway, among colonnade supports	Freeway underpass	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Legal, partnered with Seattle Parks and Recreation	Permanent, but evolving and expanding
Play or Rewind	Siena, Italy	2001	Three different piazzas	Piazza	Cliostraat (Torino firm)	Legal	Temporary: one day
Walk the Line	Sydney, Australia	2011	Main thoroughfare in Sydney, connecting competition winner's STREET WORKS projects	Streets and sidewalks	Hassel (Sydney firm) and City of Sydney	Legal	Temporary: 3 months

APPENDIX C

San Francisco Planning Department

Executive Summary

Draft Green Development Agreement Legislation

Hearing Date: February 25, 2010

(following)



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary Draft Green Development Agreement Legislation

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2010

Project Name: Green Development Agreement Legislation
Case Number:
Initiated by: Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Staff Contact: David Alumbaugh
david.alumbaugh@sfgov.org, 415-558-6601

Recommendation: **Informational Only, No Action Requested**

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DRAFT GREEN DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT LEGISLATION

The Mayor's Office is preparing two interrelated "Green Development Agreement" (GDA) ordinances and requests early policy guidance and feedback from the Planning Commission in advance of introducing the draft ordinances to the Board of Supervisors in March of this year. After introduction at the Board, both ordinances would be referred to the Commission for formal review and recommendation before being heard at the Board of Supervisors Land Use Committee.

A memorandum prepared by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development outlining the draft legislation is attached.

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

This item is before the Commission as an informational item. No action is requested.

PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has received no letters in support or opposition to the proposal from the public.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational presentation only. No action is requested.
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Attachment:

Memorandum to the Commission from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.



Memorandum

To: San Francisco Planning Commission
From: Michael Yarne, OEWD
Re: Informational Presentation on Draft Green Development Agreement Legislation
Date: February 17, 2010

The Mayor's Office is preparing two interrelated "Green Development Agreement" (GDA) ordinances (described below) and requests early policy guidance and feedback from the Planning Commission in advance of introducing the draft ordinances in March of this year. After introduction, both ordinances will be referred to the Commission for formal review and recommendation before being heard at the Board of Supervisors Land Use Committee.

1. **An ordinance creating a GDA "fast track" approval process for interim uses on vacant lots with previously entitled projects.** This ordinance would provide stalled development projects with protection from future uncertainty in exchange for provision of certain interim public benefits, including greening and/or art-related uses. To this end, the ordinance would create an expedited process to convert existing entitlements into GDAs in exchange for redeveloping vacant or blighted development sites with interim uses that satisfy a set of public benefit criteria set forth in the ordinance. The GDA would provide certainty for both the landowner and the neighborhood. The landowner would receive a legally protected right to proceed with a previously approved entitlement when the economy improves while the neighborhood would receive much-needed beautification and activation of vacant or blighted development sites.
2. **An ordinance approving a "Pilot Project" GDA for the 399 Fremont development site.** This ordinance would grant approval of the City's first GDA, which would incorporate an interim use agreement and schematic design plan at the vacant site of the 399 Fremont project. The interim use agreement would establish the specific use program, construction and opening dates, and public access, liability and maintenance obligations. The Pilot Project GDA would be accompanied by a schematic design plan for the development site that would establish general design dimensions and materials.

Why Green Development Agreements?

The primary policy goal of the GDA program is to provide financial incentive for the temporary greening, beautification and/or conversion of vacant or blighted development sites by offering developers the opportunity to lock-in existing entitlements for a 5-8 year period. The legally binding nature of development agreements (DAs) protects participating developers from losing control over development sites in the event that an interim use is "too successful" and a motivated group decides to oppose the permanent use originally approved for the site. A streamlined GDA process will also provide the surrounding community with a legally binding agreement to implement a program of interim uses and maintenance that would be difficult for the City to finance or enforce without a DA in place. Finally, from an economic development perspective, OEWD believes that GDAs are an important demonstration of a policy that can improve neighborhood livability while also improving San Francisco's attractiveness as a place to invest real estate capital.

What is a Development Agreement?

A DA is a contract between a city and a developer – resulting in a legally binding promise for mutual benefits. The primary intent of the DA is to provide greater security and flexibility to both parties to an agreement than exists within the confines of conventional California land use law. The state law authorizing DAs was enacted in 1979 and there are now more than 500 DAs throughout the state, ranging from 10,000-unit subdivisions to single buildings.

DA law permits virtually open-ended bargaining between developers and local government. As a result, there is no need to follow traditional nexus laws (the state Mitigation Fee Act) or existing land use ordinances. The primary

requirement is that a City must demonstrate that the DA would result in greater public benefits than what could be achieved through application of existing ordinances and regulations.

Accordingly, local governments can be more creative when negotiating with developers than under conventional zoning procedures (e.g., the imposition of “lifetime leases” under the Trinity Plaza DA). In exchange, DAs provide developers with certainty and simplicity: no increases in fees, subsequent changes in zoning, limitations on use, etc.

DAs are most often used for long-term, large-scale, high-risk projects with substantial up-front capital/infrastructure investment and multi-phase build-outs like Mission Bay. However, they are increasingly used for creative urban infill projects with complex financing and public benefit packages.

Draft criteria for interim uses qualifying for a GDA

We are proposing that GDAs only be approved for (1) project sites with previously approved entitlements and (2) for interim uses that meet a specific set of public benefit criteria. The following list of draft criteria were developed by the non-profit art collective ReBar in consultation with OEWD and a variety of City agencies, including the Department of Public Health, the Department of the Environment and the Planning Department. The criteria are listed here in order of relative importance.

I. Provides public benefits

Public benefit is defined as a primary use or effect of the design that contributes to any of the citywide objectives or neighborhood-specific objectives listed below. A proposal may also qualify by meeting several public benefit objectives to different degrees or in conjunction, or by using one type of benefit to leverage others. The proposed project must represent a significant improvement over existing vacant/unimproved site conditions in terms of the benefits listed. The following benefits might be considered “safe harbor” choices:

1. Citywide benefits

A. Temporary Productive Landscapes

- i. Urban agriculture, plant propagation and production, animal husbandry. (Yield should be produced sustainably and distributed and consumed within the San Francisco bay area region.)
- ii. Stormwater infiltration, detention, and cleaning; rainwater harvesting
- iii. Carbon sequestration
- iv. Biofuel, solar or wind power production
- v. Non-human Habitat--habitat creation for birds or insects which can reach the site by air. *Habitat for animals that depend on ground connections between habitat sites would not usually qualify since by their nature interim sites are fractured and do not form long-term, continuous patches. Habitat for rare or endangered plants would not usually qualify since establishing them in a site is at odds with long-term use and adaptability. Greater consideration is to be given to habitat for endemic species that can benefit most from additional, noncontiguous, temporary habitat.*

B. Social Yield

- i. Fulfills unmet need through temporary public use or enjoyment of the site *For example: passive recreation, active recreation, entertainment; examples might include a temporary dog park, running or walking trails, community garden, art event.*
- ii. Provides a site for unique or under-represented types of social interactions that contribute to the quality of urban life *e.g: festivals, fairs, dances, etc.*
- iii. Use is available to the entire public or a broad subset of it. *For example: an interim use primarily for children would qualify; an interim use primarily for employees of a company would not. This does not necessarily preclude membership dues, entrance fees or the sale of products on site, if those are used primarily to offset operation cost or that public benefit greatly outweighs individual barriers to entry. However the barriers to entry must be comparable to other public and semi-public facilities, e.g. a public swimming pool or entrance*

fee to a flea market. The interim use may not exclude any group based on income, cultural affiliation, age, race, etc.

C. Cultural Yield

- i. Provides opportunity for cultural enrichment through temporary public art, installations, and cultural events (*e.g. the Hayes Green temporary art program*).
- ii. Education, demonstration or interpretation of any of the above (in conjunction with also providing those benefits on site). *The value of the interim use as a demonstration or pilot project for a particular public benefit may outweigh other contravening factors, such as location. For example, an interim use for urban agriculture in a dense downtown location may not be the most spatially efficient use of the land, but could have tremendous value in terms of visibility and education ("cultural yield").*
- iii. Incubates a social activity that contributes to the vitality, diversity and richness of the city and which currently does not have sufficient access to other sites.

D. Community Economic Opportunity for Nonprofit

- i. Provides a site for a niche nonprofit economic activity that can contribute significantly to the character of the city, but for which very limited sites are available. *For example: a boat building pier, a Christmas tree lot, a cluster of food carts. This type of use can incubate emerging trends, stack functions over time, and fulfill unmet needs in the market. For a proposal to qualify, various programs must activate the site at least 50% of the time that the surrounding area is trafficked by people and be shown to contribute positively to a vibrant public realm.*

2. Site-specific benefits

Site-specific benefits do not qualify if the entitled development exacerbates or leaves in place the condition the temporary benefit improves. Some particular site conditions that could be addressed are:

- A. Contaminated soil remediation and toxicity removal
- B. Noise buffering, wind calming, etc.
- C. Abatement of litter, graffiti, beautification
- D. Air quality improvement (removal of particulate matter, airborne pollutants)
- E. Heat island effect
- F. Water quality and management improvements (as above in City-wide benefits)
- G. Neighborhood uses (that contribute at a neighborhood scale, as above in City-wide benefits)

II. Means of implementation, operation and deconstruction

Interim use proposals could be evaluated on the basis of how quickly they can be implemented, the materials and energy used to create them, and plans for deconstruction, relocation, and/or re-use of materials, constructions, plants, etc. afterwards. At a minimum, proposals should include a plan for the re-use, re-purposing or recycling of all materials after decommission.

III. Contribution to larger framework of public benefits

Proposals could be evaluated based on the need for a particular public benefit on a citywide, neighborhood or site scale and how the proposed use contributes to a larger framework of public benefits. *For example, habitat creation may be seen as a citywide need but one that could be fulfilled on a variety of changing sites over time. Interim uses should not duplicate or out-compete long-term uses, nor unnecessarily duplicate other interim efforts.*

Tentative Timeline/Next Steps:

- March – Introduction at Board of Supervisors (BOS).
- Early April – Public hearing and recommendations at Planning Commission.

- Late April – Review at BOS Land Use & Economic Development Committee.
- Late April – Vote at full BOS.
- Late May – Commence construction on 399 Fremont GDA pilot project