

COVINGTON SDAT REPORT



COVINGTON, KY • SEPTEMBER, 2013

AIA Communities by Design

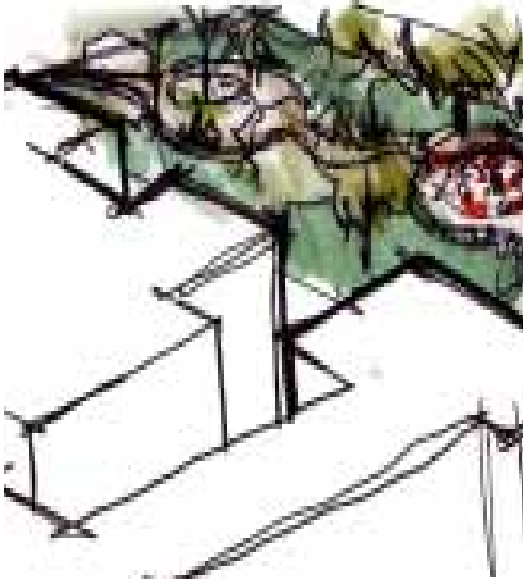
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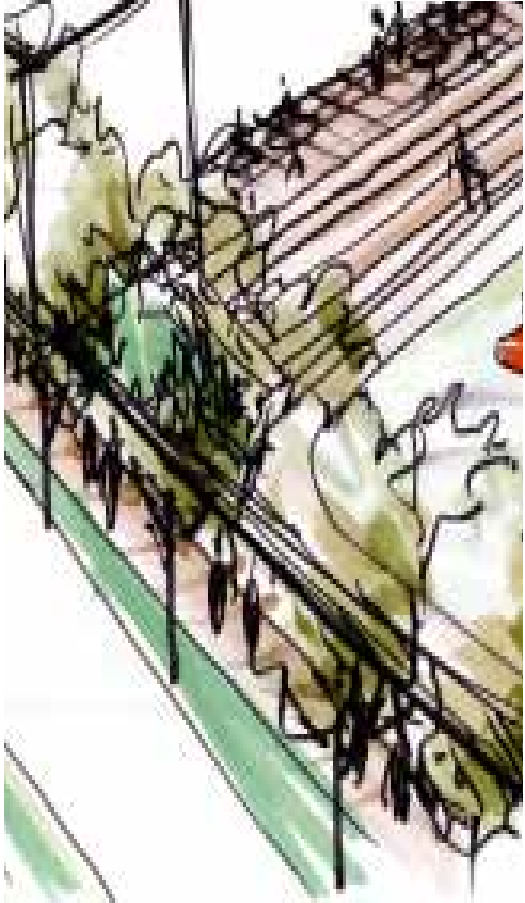


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INTRODUCTION



THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

With nearly 300 state and local chapters and over 76,000 members, the American Institute of Architects serves as the voice of the architecture profession and the principal way for the profession to give back to society. The AIA has a 46-year history of public service work. Through the Center for Communities by Design, the AIA has engaged over 1,000 professionals from more than 30 disciplines, ultimately providing millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country, and engaging thousands of participants in community-driven planning processes. Through these processes, the AIA has produced recommendations to improve the design and development of some of the most recognizable places in America. In 2010, the AIA received the *Organization of the Year* Award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), recognizing its program impact on communities and contributions to the field.



- **Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT):** Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations.
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT):** In 2005, in response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed it to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long term sustainability plans. During the first 8 years of the SDAT program, the Center for Communities by Design has worked with over 60 towns, cities and regions.



The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

- **Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance that incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes a multi-disciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that is outside of the normal politics of public discussion. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.
- **Public Participation.** The AIA has a four-decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

THE COVINGTON SDAT PROJECT

In 2012, the City of Covington successfully applied to the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a community process to build a strategy for the revitalization of Randolph Park and the surrounding Eastside Neighborhood. As the application stated:

“For the residents of Covington, KY, specifically those in the East Side Neighborhood, the public will is strong and the timing is urgent for the AIA’s SDAT Program. With the creation of the Licking River Greenway and Trails, residential investment through a HOPE VI grant for complete rehabilitation of a community public housing unit, and local health initiatives on the rise, it is more pressing now than ever to implement a strategic plan for Randolph Park to maximize its potential. The objective of the Covington SDAT Project is to create a redevelopment plan for Randolph Park that will capitalize on this greenspace’s potential by integrating the main strategic efforts impacting its borders and creating an enhanced sustainable opportunity to connect and recreate.”

To address the issues surrounding neighborhood revitalization and the future of Randolph Park, the American Institute of Architects’ (AIA) Communities by Design program assembled a national team of experts in community development, revitalization, urban and landscape design, and community building. The team included:

Paul Fontaine, AICP, Team Leader
Kofi Boone, Urban & Landscape Design
Darrel Williams, FAIA, Neighborhood Revitalization & Urban Design
Glenn Kellog, Market Analysis & Economic Development
Deborah Moore, Community Development & Neighborhood Engagement
Jessica Strauss, Community Schools & Neighborhood Engagement

The following report contains a narrative summary of the team’s findings, with additional information and resources.





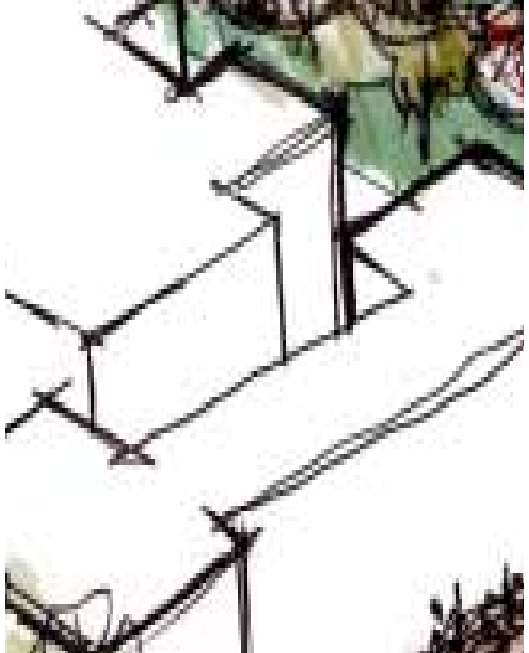
THE COVINGTON SDAT PROCESS

Team leader Paul Fontaine conducted a preliminary site visit in the summer of 2013 to meet with civic and project stakeholders. The full team was assembled in Covington in September 2013. In order for the SDAT team to put forward an informed series of recommendations concerning the future of Randolph Park and the Eastside neighborhood, a public agenda was developed to include participatory bus and walking tours, site visits, meetings with stakeholders and public workshops.

The SDAT application outlined the following goal for the project: "It is our desire to empower the AIA Team to use their expertise to mold stakeholder input into an integrated, sustainable vision for Randolph Park. There is great interest and commitment from our key stakeholders, master plan committee members, neighborhood representatives, and community leaders, to capitalize on the potential of Randolph for the greater community of Covington."

The following specific desired outcomes were also articulated:

1. Integrate the 4 strategic efforts impacting the Eastside Neighborhood: Hope VI Project, Covington Center City Action Plan, Housing Strategy and Licking River Greenway Master Plan;
2. Tangibly incorporate the rich history and strong sense of community of the Eastside Neighborhood into a redevelopment plan;
3. Develop a plan that maintains passive greenspace, while enhancing opportunities to gather;
4. Create consensus between community leaders and stakeholders on a redevelopment plan;
5. Establish a potential phased approach to implementation.



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



INTRODUCTION

This report, and the 2013 SDAT process, are necessarily limited by the team's level of exposure to the Covington community. In any assessment of a community process, the central question most often lies with "Who needs to be involved, who is not currently represented in the dialogue?" In the case of the SDAT process, the team felt that its analysis and recommendations were limited by the fact that not all community groups were represented in the dialogue, particularly the community's youth voices, its Latino residents, and the business community. There may be a variety of reasons for this reality, and it should offer lessons for future community endeavors. The following report does provide some direction to Covington to build upon the SDAT process with a community engagement process that is fully representative and inclusive of the entire community.

COVINGTON'S STRENGTHS

Covington has all the pieces to become a spectacular place that draws residents, employers and visitors alike from all parts of the country. Few communities two or even three times its size have as many positively contributing resources as does downtown Covington:

- Downtown's location at the confluence of 2 rivers that both have greenways, providing a potentially magnificent pedestrian experience and becoming a potential magnet for people.
- A downtown full of mostly occupied historic buildings directly across the Ohio River from a healthy downtown Cincinnati, with the region's job center and major attractions a walkable distance.
- Significant progress being made on municipal debt, despite scarce public resources.
- The convenience and connectivity of being less than 15 minutes from a major international airport
- A slate of new development projects that will introduce the community to an entirely new audience.

With so many good things in place, it makes one wonder why the downtown isn't doing *better*.



NEW ENERGY & INVESTMENTS

Covington is currently experiencing significant new activity, with several large initiatives and investments helping to position the city for future success. Randolph Park's strategic location adjacent to downtown presents it with a significant opportunity to benefit from all of these major changes. As the SDAT application explains:

"The Eastside is a neighborhood in transition, as four different strategic efforts are slated to positively impact the neighborhood. First is the Hope VI project, a HUD funded project that will transform the Jacob Price public housing into a mixed-income housing community. Secondly, the Covington Center City Action Plan (3CAP) offers a strategic framework with linked action plan to focus efforts on creating a strong economy, an inviting public realm and establish strong neighborhoods. This was possible through a Community Challenge Planning Grant from HUD in the amount of \$359,000. With efforts just beginning, the third strategic effort is a Housing Strategy for the surrounding neighborhood. Lastly, the Licking River Greenway and Trails Master Plan (LRGT) is a comprehensive greenway development project that looks to transform the Licking River corridor into multi-faceted trails network that will offer connectivity and celebration of the diverse and rich neighborhoods it adjoins. To date, nearly 5,500,000 has been invested in the LRGT implementation. While these plans promise great things for the neighborhood, there were no detailed design plans for Randolph Park included."





MAJOR CHALLENGES: TRUST AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP

The Covington community is facing significant civic challenges, which are hindering all of the great work and progress that is beginning to occur in town. The fundamental challenge is widespread distrust within and across the community. Distrust is systemic in Covington:

- *Distrust of Government.* There is distrust and alienation of residents with regard to local government which has built up over years and will take time to mend and heal.
- *Distrust of Civic and Neighborhood Organizations.* There is distrust of existing community organizations and a feeling that they are not representative of the neighborhood or community.
- *Distrust Between Neighborhoods.* There is distrust across varying neighborhoods in the community, engendering conflict, misperceptions, and often a scorekeeping mentality. Such thinking pits neighborhood against neighborhood in a never ending game of “they have it, we deserve it as well” - no matter what the “it” is. Scorekeeping doesn’t consider a neighborhood’s unique character, its physical setting and history, or the more practical considerations of construction costs or on-going maintenance of any improvement. If neighborhoods define success by tracking only civic dollars spent in their backyards, Covington will remain a sleepy, overlooked community.
- *Distrust between Neighbors.* Even within neighborhoods, there is distrust among residents.

The team’s scope of study was focused on the Eastside neighborhood, particularly the Randolph Park area and the connections to downtown. It is understood that trust and partnership varies across the Covington community, and may be stronger in some places than others, but as a general, fundamental point the importance of addressing existing trust issues and building community cannot be overstated. Over generations, that lack of trust has eroded the civic will to create a shared vision for downtown’s development. A vision is what pulls together and amplifies the community’s different pieces, making them better than the sum of their parts. Broad social trust is a necessary prerequisite for civic leadership. Without trust, no organization can serve as a credible convenor for community dialogue. Without trust, the critical partnership and collaboration that is necessary for success cannot occur. Beyond any of the technical or resource constraints facing Randolph Park or Covington more generally, this issue should be seen first and foremost as an area for intense focus and improvement to build civic capacity for future success and the attainment of residents’ aspirations for Covington in the 21st century.

RANDOLPH PARK: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Eastside neighborhood is described as “a dense urban community.” As a result, there is a strong need for more greenspace. As the SDAT application explains, “While a few neighborhood amenities do offer chances to gather, these are neither greenspace nor opportunities to recreate, truly limiting the quality of life of the neighborhood.”

The SDAT application described Randolph Park as follows: “Randolph Park is a 6-acre parcel located in the Eastside Neighborhood of downtown Covington, Kentucky, that is brimming with potential. As the neighborhood’s sole greenspace, Randolph has played an integral community role to the residents of the Eastside Neighborhood, providing a location to congregate, host events and showcase its rich culture.”

The application characterized Randolph Park as an important asset in the community, but one that is struggling to adapt to contemporary needs and uses:

“Randolph Park is the neighborhood’s only public greenspace venue and offers its own set of limitations as its L-shape forces park amenities to be stretched. Considering the important role the park serves to the community it has been difficult to develop an appropriate plan that capitalizes and best utilizes the park to meet community needs, while remaining sustainable. Included in the site is the Lincoln Grant School building, which has been vacant for several years and is in disrepair. This structure is seen as a key community node, however challenges exist in financial feasibility of redevelopment due to environmental remediation (asbestos and lead).”



RANDOLPH PARK IN CONTEXT

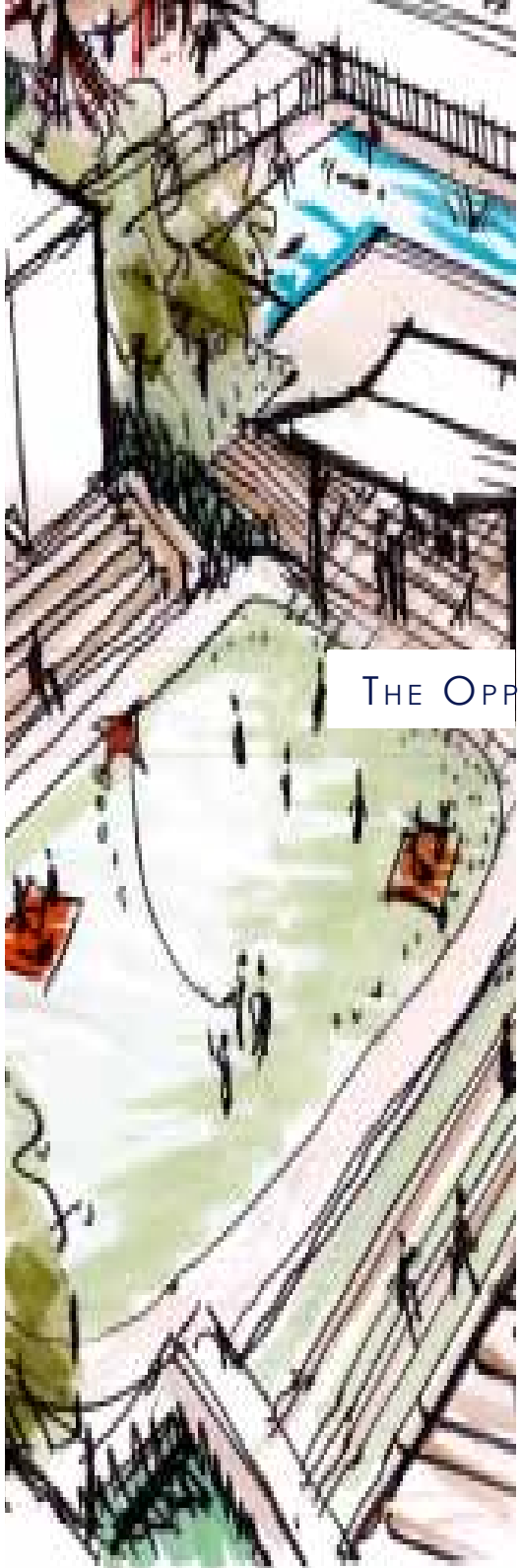
As the SDAT application explained, “There have been several attempts to create a redevelopment plan for Randolph Park. Efforts have included plans from several University of Cincinnati DAAP students who incorporated public input in 2006. Unfortunately, there has been no one plan that has been well accepted by the various stakeholders and public leaders and that is implementable.”

Randolph Park epitomizes Covington’s planning struggles. At 6 acres and already housing a historic school, an outdoor pool, a baseball field, community garden, picnic area, playground and hard court area, the park is already full. How can a space like Randolph Park adapt to changes in population, technology, recreation patterns, and civic budgets if everything needs to stay as is, even if it doesn’t work?

Instead of playing a specific role in a larger downtown development strategy, Randolph park attempts to be everything to everyone while trying to respond to changing times with plan after plan. Each new master planning effort attempts to nudge the park into the present but cannot muster the support from the surrounding neighborhoods. Meanwhile, other neighborhoods are able to create a shared vision for their parks and make significant improvements, restarting the scorekeeping cycle for another generation.

The following sections of the SDAT Team’s report show how many opportunities for change exist and can be the starting point for a new era for the Randolph Park area. An improving housing market, the region’s overall improving economic conditions, ideas to jump start the school district’s performance, and very specific and detailed ideas for the park itself are all worth exploring, but only if a shared vision is in place.





THE OPPORTUNITY

THE TRIPLE-BOTTOM LINE

The premise of this project is to help the community plan for a sustainable future. In doing this, there are three components that are commonly construed to comprise “sustainability”. This “triple bottom line” of people, planet and profit encourage mindfulness of the ecosystems that support us: both the natural resources we require for healthy living as well as the social and economic resources we require to prosper and lead fulfilling lives.

The Environmental (Planet) side is the one most commonly associated with sustainability. This includes providing transportation options and walkable communities to reduce our “carbon footprint” and the vehicle miles required in our daily lives. It includes preserving natural habitats and encouraging efficient use of developed land.

The Social (People) side reminds us of our responsibility to treat people fairly and give them means to live healthy, satisfying lives. This includes providing access to amenities, services and green spaces. It also includes a responsibility to provide a mix of housing options for all income levels and household structures, and a mix of jobs.

The Economic (Profit) side of sustainability is less commonly associated, but is crucially important because efforts that are not feasible will not be implementable or will not last.

Each lens contributes to shaping a holistic philosophy that is balanced in its approach to building Sustainable communities.



PRINCIPLES FOR A SUSTAINABLE EASTSIDE

While a sustainable city is a complex organism that addresses all of these components, a sustainable neighborhood need only play a part. It is not essential that every neighborhood host both jobs, housing, local retail and parks. In this case, we imagine a sustainable Eastside to play a part in the ecosystem of Covington by providing: a mix of housing options that are walkable to downtown jobs and services; access to amenities and green spaces, a home for anchor institutions such as churches, schools, community centers, libraries and daycare; and efficient use of land. Many of these things are already here and there is an opportunity to expand and reinforce what the neighborhood has to offer. Goals for the neighborhood should include:

- Providing park and recreation space for the community
- Strengthening anchor institutions and providing community services
- Providing quality, affordable housing options
- Making productive use of vacant lots and parking lots.

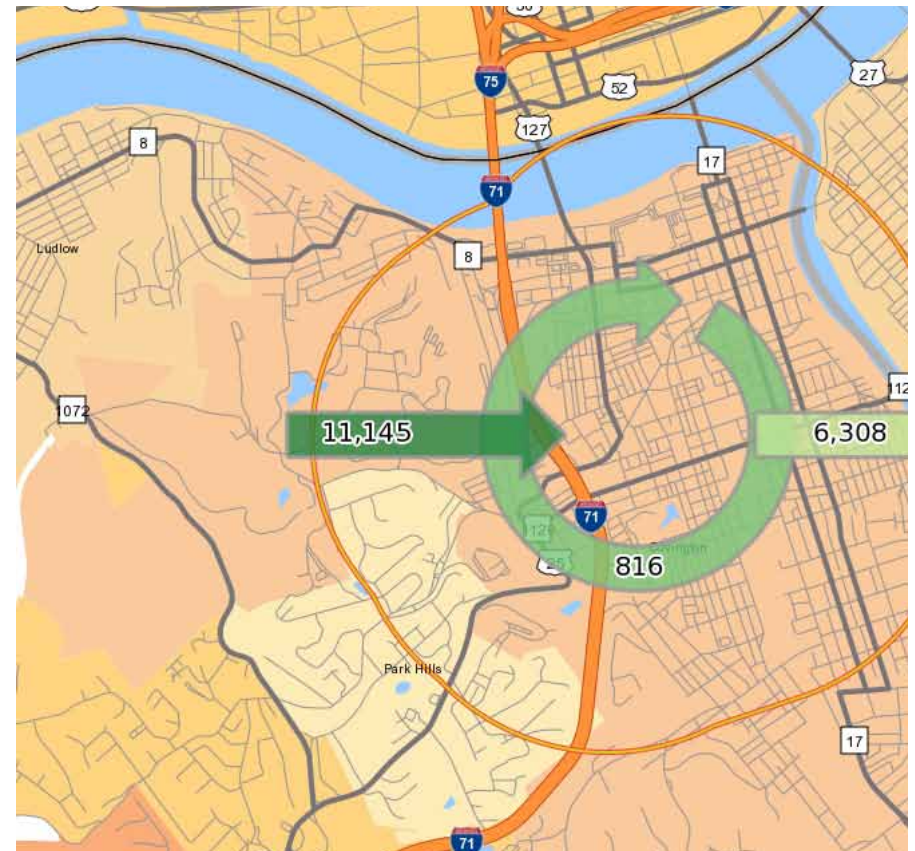
COVINGTON TRENDS

Downtown Covington is a regional employment center that many other cities would envy. With almost 12,000 jobs, there are over 11,000 employees who live outside the downtown and commute in every day.

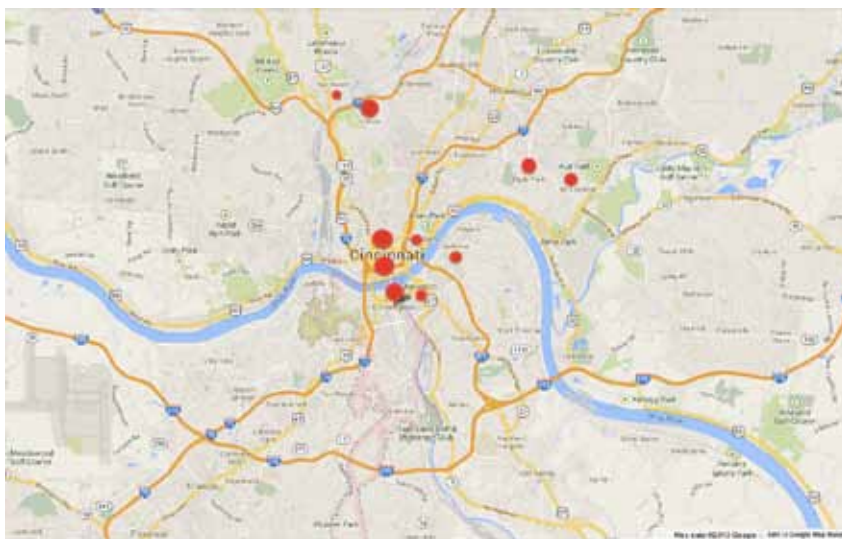
These workers have a range of incomes and require a range of housing types and prices. These workers provide a huge opportunity for downtown both as potential customers of businesses and potential residents of downtown neighborhoods.

THE VALUE OF WALKABLE PLACES

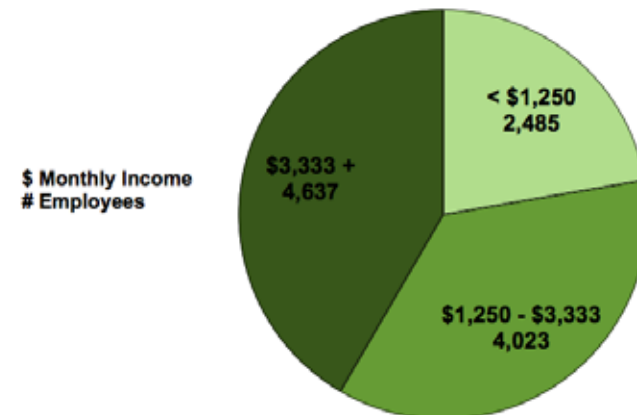
People are increasingly looking for walkable, sustainable neighborhoods where they can walk to work, services, parks and other amenities. According to a 2011 study by the National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America, 6 out of 10 prospective homebuyers choose walkable neighborhoods with less time spent driving. And these places are scarce. In the Cincinnati metro area, there are only a handful of places that provide such an opportunity. And Downtown Covington is one. Besides the opportunity to capture existing employees, as the region grows the existing walkable neighborhoods will see increasing market potential for a population that desires a return to traditional neighborhoods. Within Covington, the Eastside is directly adjacent to downtown and uniquely positioned to provide new workforce housing.



Source: BLS Labor Employment Dynamics & Urban Advisors Ltd

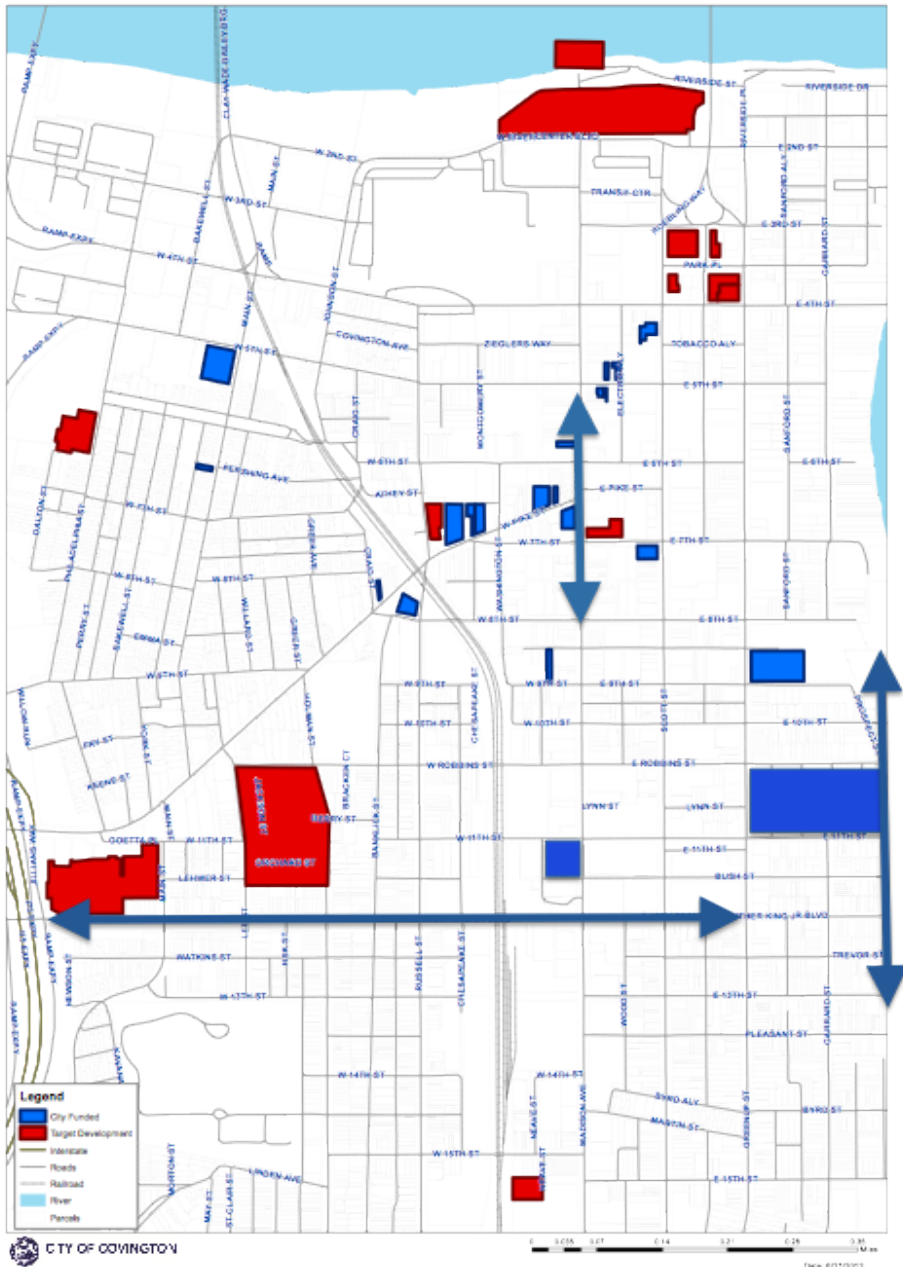


Walkable Places in the region



Source: BLS Labor Employment Dynamics & Urban Advisors Ltd

City of Covington Projects



Source: City of Covington & Urban Advisors Ltd.

LOCAL PROJECTS

Things are already happening. A list of projects in downtown highlight a few that are taking place in the East Side: improvements to Martin Luther King Boulevard, construction of the Greenway Trail, expansion of Covington Latin School, construction of the Hope VI mixed income housing, and redevelopment of the Lincoln Grant Scholar House. There is no doubt change is possible. In fact, it's already happening.

VACANT LOTS

There is a large amount of land in the neighborhood around the park that is vacant or paved for parking. Related to the goals for neighborhood sustainability, this is an inefficient use of land and an underutilized resource that could be returned to productive use. Infilling vacant lots in this neighborhood could provide a mix of housing types walkable to downtown jobs and services. While data from the city is not complete to determine the amount of buildable land or number of new supportable units, a visual inspection suggests many opportunities.*



*The City's GIS database of tax Opportunity Sites potential to quantify the amount of underutilized space in this, and other study areas. At the moment, it appears that data on non-taxable properties has not been fully entered to include the existing building square feet or stories. Since this study area has a large number of tax exempt properties, analysis was inconclusive. Once this data has been entered, the building square feet can be divided by the parcel square feet to determine the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of each parcel. Parcels with an FAR below .5 can be highlighted for infill opportunities.

A surprising amount of land in the neighborhood surrounding the park is owned by government agencies and local institutions, especially churches. This gives the community an opportunity to engage the city and work with the local organizations to shape the future of the neighborhood and direct new development to contribute to the neighborhood character.

These illustrations suggest how existing vacant lots might accommodate new uses that strengthen the community character. For example, the lot across the street from the Lincoln Grant building could be market rate housing. Or it could be a retirement living center. And the vacant lots across the street from the new Hope VI development could be used for additional housing.



Greenup Street Before & After Infill Housing



Robbins Street Before & After Infill Development

FINANCING PARK IMPROVEMENTS: AN EXAMPLE

The ROC City Skatepark in Rochester, New York is going to be built in 2015 as a result of a successful proposal by an organized group of citizens. The history of this initiative is illustrative of the kind of citizen action necessary to generate support for financing. As their website states:

“The activity toward realizing Roc City Skatepark started when a fundraiser and father of four kids who participate in progression-oriented sports (1) Decided he was frustrated with paying a small fortune to take them to private parks and (2) Realized that most cities across the country have free, public skateparks. The poor-dad mentioned above had never participated in any of these sports, so went to the experts at Krudco Skateshop, who proceeded to pull in bmx riders. The combined expertise and knowledge proved to work well together and progress toward realizing the largest public skatepark in the United States right here in Rochester has moved quickly ever since.

Funding for the Roc City Skatepark is in the City of Rochester Capital Improvement Program budget that was released to the public on May 3, 2011. The budget document states “Construction of a skate park underneath Fredrick Douglass-Susan B. Anthony Bridge.” The budgeted amount is the full \$2MM that the Board of the Friends of the Roc City Park requested.

This is a clear and strong sign of support from the City of Rochester for both the skatepark project and the desired location for the skatepark. The project is scheduled for the year 2015. With this great news and support of the City of Rochester, the three primary objectives of the Friends of the Roc City Park are now (1) Ensure that the proposed \$2MM remains in the City of Rochester’s Capital Improvement Program budget (2) Secure additional funding for the skatepark from private donors, including a leadership gift at the naming rights level and naming rights to features within the park and (3) Work to move the timeline of the planned construction up to 2013.”



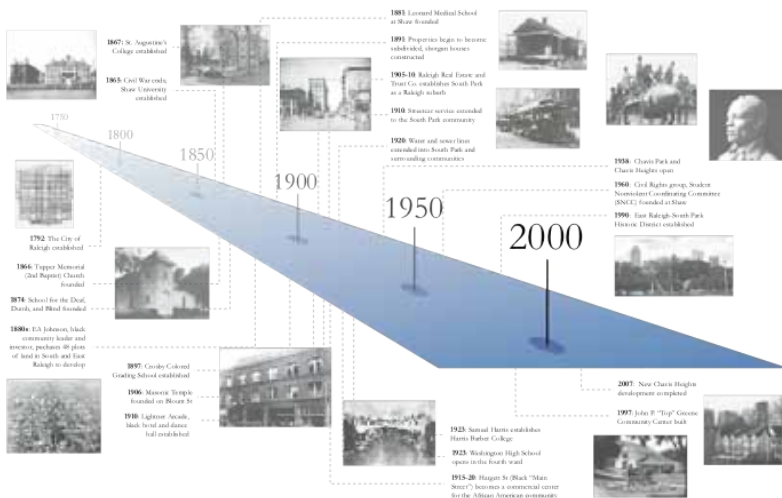
COMMUNITY-LED FINANCING OPTIONS

Park construction is typically financed as part of a City’s Capital Improvements Plan. As with the Skate Park in Rochester, a committed group of citizens with a shared vision and a well articulated plan can get their project into a future budget and funded through coordinated lobbying and conversations with city representatives. Where municipal resources are scarce, two additional sources of funding might be possible. One option is community fundraising through efforts like Kickstarter. This can generate a small amount of funds for community led projects. Being able to articulate a project and raise even a small amount of money from a large number of people would probably go a long way towards persuading the city that this project is important to the community.

A second common strategy is to fund public improvements with Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This might be an untenable solution in this neighborhood depending on the plans of institutional land owners. As noted previously, a large amount of land in the neighborhood is owned by tax exempt entities. If some of the vacant lots were improved, put into productive use, and returned to the tax roll, the change in value might help fund the planned improvements. In this case the land is not only vacant, but much of it is tax exempt so 100% of the future tax value could contribute to financing. TIF financing works best when there is a clear plan for the future of the neighborhood and it can anticipate and quantify the impacts of new development.



PARK SCENARIOS



From Community Input Summary Report, 2009



RANDOLPH PARK AS A GREAT PLACE

Randolph Park has all the ingredients present to become a great place. Great places exist across the country, in diverse locations and communities, but they all espouse the following key characteristics.

Great places have great stories. Every great place has a narrative, whether related to its history and evolution or the local culture which it animates. The Eastside neighborhood is no different. As the SDAT application explained:

“The Eastside Neighborhood, formed in the early 1900s, has a rich cultural heritage and continues to be one the most diverse neighborhoods in Northern Kentucky. Historically, the Eastside has produced many talented leaders, including doctors, politicians, teachers, social workers, and business leaders, many of whom helped advocate for civil rights in our local area.”

The cultural influences on the area over time also represent important narratives in the history of local neighborhood change and evolution:

“The area was originally settled by German and Irish immigrants; however by the late nineteenth century, the area became one of the centers of Covington’s small black population, and was home to many of the city’s black professionals.”

In fact, the namesake of Randolph Park is one of a number of historical figures of particular importance in Covington:

“Dr. James Randolph (L917-L981), a pioneering African-American physician, became the first African American to join a Northern Kentucky hospital and be admitted into the Campbell-Kenton County Medical society. Rev. Jacob Price, (L839-t9231, Baptist minister and business owner, was an advocate for education opportunities for African American children. On April 17, 1866, a group of concerned citizens met in the Covington City Hall to establish a school for African American Children. Another Eastside resident, Alice T. Shimfessel, from the 1940s until her death in 1983 fought against segregated movie theaters and restaurants and advocated school integration at the local high school.”



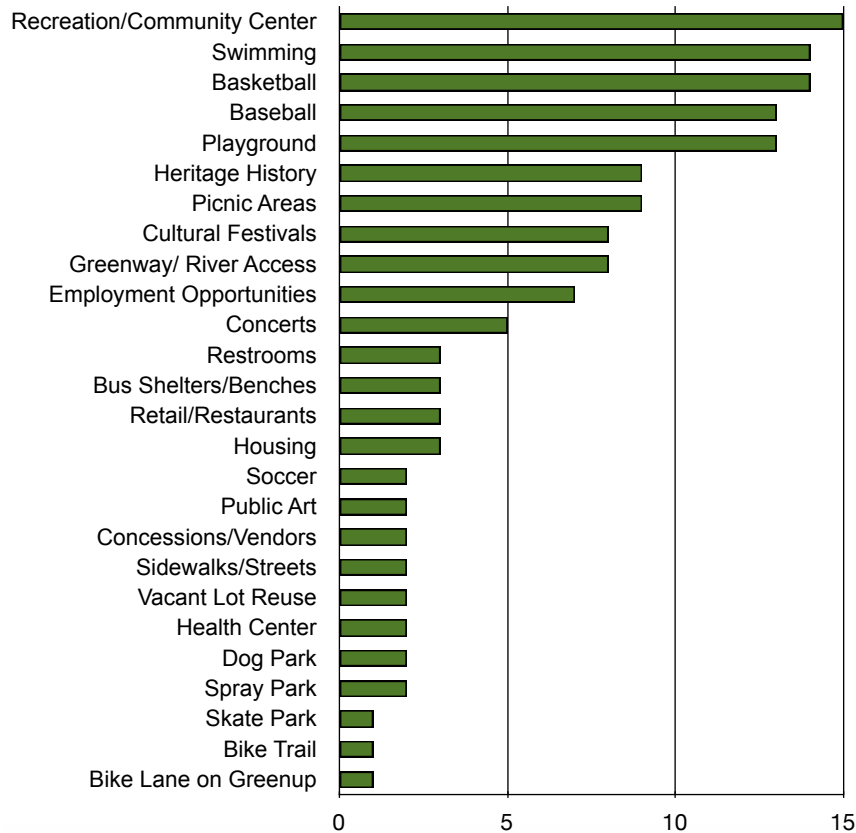
These stories have all contributed to what Randolph Park represents today, and should be expressed in the identity and history of the park. They form the foundation for the park's identity and the basis upon which it will continue to evolve.

Great spaces are connected. Great public spaces form important assets within a connected system that represents the community experience. They help connect residents to one another, and to the wider region and world around them. Again, the Randolph Park area exhibits incredible potential to become a significant asset within the broader context of the system surrounding the Eastside neighborhood. The Eastside neighborhood's boundaries are defined by the Licking River and Madison Avenue, and from 8th street to 15th street. Within this context, the neighborhood is home to more than 18 churches, as well as the Carnegie Arts Center, the Lincoln Grant School, Jacob Price Homes, Gardens of Greenup, Covington Latin School, and the world renowned Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. Its adjacency to downtown connects the park and surrounding neighborhood directly to education and job centers, and across the river to the urban core of Cincinnati. Through the development of the Licking River Greenway masterplan, Randolph Park will become part of a regional greenway system that provides enormous value to local residents and can attract visitors from around the country.

Great spaces adapt and respond to the changing needs of the community. Spaces evolve with physical and human development activity over time, as well as the changing social and political culture of the community. Randolph Park has the opportunity to serve the Eastside neighborhood and the surrounding community and region in a renewed vision of the future.

The future Randolph Park should become an authentic representation of all these elements in a resulting physical environment, inviting new participants to contribute to the contemporary identity and help build the future narrative of the park.

What's Most Important to You?



PARK SCENARIOS

Based upon the current opportunities and constraints defining the Randolph Park site and the community aspirations and priorities articulated during the team's public workshop, three potential scenarios were developed for the park. They represent different levels of resource intensity and use, and will require further deliberation by the community before a future direction for Randolph Park can be finalized. However, they present three distinct strategies that respond to community needs and desires and can be implemented incrementally, beginning with volunteer-driven efforts to create temporary installations and events, and scaling up to major capital investments as resources become available and the community agreement about the future identity of Randolph Park becomes apparent.

The community's current priorities for the park were clearly articulated during the SDAT public workshop, and are represented in the associated chart on this page. High priority was placed on keeping the current pool resource in any future configuration of the park. The challenge associated with the current pool is that it is in significant need of upgrade, and it is a net-negative revenue source. However, there are some scenarios in which the current resource may be re-thought within a wholly new and robust park amenity.



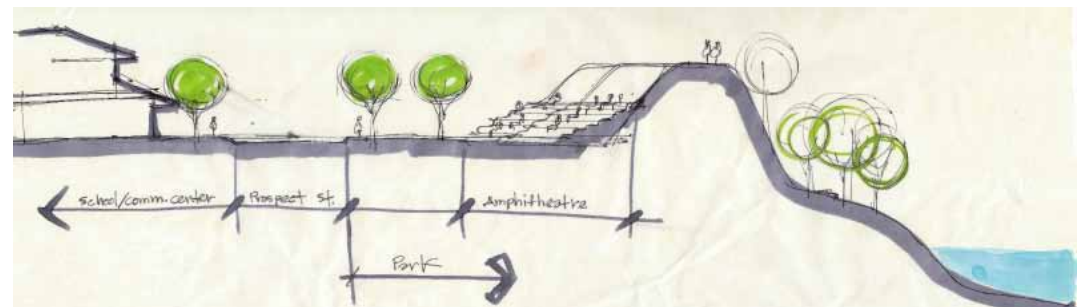


SCENARIO ONE: RANDOLPH PARK



SCENARIO ONE

The first design scenario the team developed largely maintains the current integrity of the park offerings, while adding enhanced playground and performance space. It envisions a swimming pool on the site of the current pool, expanded options for gazebos and canopies to provide shade and gathering areas, potentially with new lighting. It includes definition of distinct areas of the park with the planting of shade trees. It also envisions the possibility of creating an area for a splashpad, where kids can play during hot summer days. The design takes advantage of the landscape of Randolph Park to bring more cohesion to the various activities through integration of cascading steps and new play and gathering areas of modest scale. The hard courts are moved to the southern end of the park in order to create a central green space adjacent to the former school facility and invite users of the newly envisioned facility to experience the park.





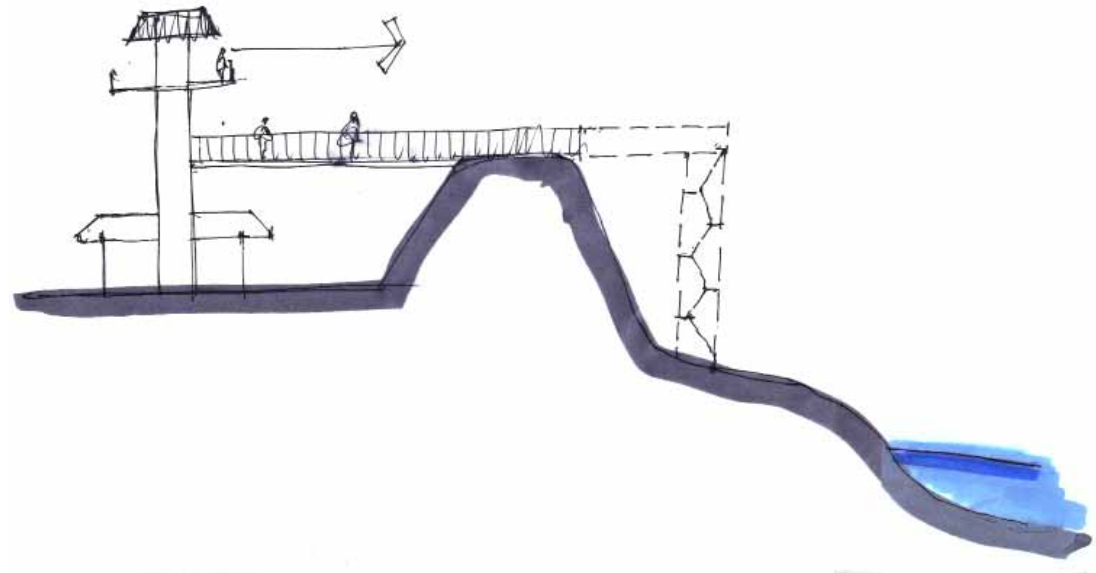
SCENARIO TWO: RANDOLPH PARK



SCENARIO TWO

Park with Viewing Tower and Community Center with Indoor Pool

Scenario Two for Randolph Park builds upon the first scenario with some important new characteristics. This park scenario envisions some bold, transformational changes to Randolph Park that will require significantly more resources to realize, but which provide the potential to make the park a regional attraction and destination that draw people into the community. The scenario envisions new playgrounds and performance areas incorporated into the site. Part of the issue with the current park is in its relationship to the river. The existing levy, an important flood barrier, blocks views of the river and inhibits a relationship between the park and adjacent waterfront. The planned greenway trails will help address the potential waterfront experience for residents and visitors, but this scenario envisions adding a viewing tower as a major feature to the park. The tower would offer spectacular views of the river, the waterfront, and the Cincinnati skyline, and would likely draw thousands of visitors annually.



It would provide an important destination for future users of the greenway, inviting them to visit the Eastside and experience more of the Covington community. The Tower would provide a pedestrian connection directly to the levy path. The second important feature of Scenario Two is the inclusion of a year-round recreational swimming amenity. By enclosing the pool for year round swimming, and potentially providing complementary programming in the newly envisioned facility on the former school site, Randolph Park could become a major recreational hub in Covington. The pool resource could even become a revenue-generating asset if programmed as part of a larger recreational or community center program with the former school. The new facility could include glass walls on the park, providing a scenic viewpoint of the greenspace and making important connections between the new structure and the park. It could be programmed with both adult and youth offerings, serving as an important resource for the entire Eastside and larger Covington community.





SCENARIO THREE

Amphitheater, Playgrounds and Community School Incorporated

The final scenario represents by far the most robust potential vision for Randolph Park, and would require a long-term implementation plan and significant resources to assemble all of the new components. Scenario Three includes an expanded vision that would require acquisition of land to the south and east of the current park in order to produce a larger park with many varied amenities. In similar fashion to the offerings presented in Scenario 2, this vision includes enough land to include a public amphitheater for performance art and community events. It includes additional property for expanded playgrounds and youth activity areas. Most significantly, it includes the potential for the establishment of a community school model to the east end of the park. According to the national Coalition for Community Schools, “A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings and weekends.

Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Partners work to achieve these results: Children are ready to enter school; students attend school consistently; students are actively involved in learning and their community; families are increasingly involved with their children’s education; schools are engaged with families and communities; students succeed academically; students are healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally; students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment, and communities are desirable places to live.”

The team completed some initial analysis that projected the need for additional facilities which could justify this use. Current school populations at nearby elementary and middle schools are nearing capacity. Therefore, the anticipated growth from existing and new housing produced by the completion of the HOPE VI project and other infill projects may support the development of another school in the district.

A community school in this location might incorporate an early childhood center, K-5 schooling, and a family and community resource center. Under this model, the Eastside could gain a powerful community resource that would allow learning opportunities for all ages, after-school programming, adult education and training, and important community services and non-profit activities under one roof. Community School models are utilized successfully in many states, and the team believes the model could provide a critically important community structure for the integration of services and collaborative work in Covington.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING COMMUNITY BY BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The pervasive mistrust apparent in the Eastside neighborhood and across Covington can only be improved by intentional, deliberative efforts to improve communications, understanding, and collaboration at all levels of the community. Without an active initiative and authentic group effort to improve community relationships, mistrust will continue to fester and keep Covington from reaching its full potential. These efforts must focus on developing and nourishing “social capital” across Covington. The Saguaro Seminar at Harvard describes social capital as “the collective value of all “social networks” [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other [“norms of reciprocity”].” In short, it is the glue that brings community together in partnership and mutual support. It holds that “a wide variety of quite specific benefits flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with social networks. Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and, at least sometimes, for bystanders as well.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The Saguaro Seminar maintains that social ties and a community’s network of relationships are key indicators for safety and child well-being and development. As their research has demonstrated, the benefits of developing social capital are broad and deep: “If you had to choose between 10% more cops on the beat or 10% more citizens knowing their neighbors’ first names, the latter is a better crime prevention strategy. If you had to choose between 10% more teachers or 10% more parents being involved in their kids’ education, the latter is a better route to educational achievement. Joining and participating in one group cuts in half your odds of dying next year.” In 2011, Peter Levine and Nathan Dietz released some new research suggesting that unemployment rose less during the recession in states with higher baseline levels of civic engagement. Their research compared levels of social capital (using measures like volunteering, attendance at public meetings, helping neighbors, voting and registering to vote) with the rise in unemployment from 2006-2010 at the state level. States experiencing the biggest growth in unemployment were the least “civic” states.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The goal of community development is to build a healthy, vibrant neighborhood where residents can live, work, and play. These ends are self-evident, but the means to achieve them, “community engagement” and “community empowerment,” for example, can seem far more intangible. However, there are concrete, proven tools for successful community engagement efforts that can lay a solid foundation for real and lasting community development efforts.

Community engagement regularly happens around negative issues which need to be addressed and can take many forms and have multiple goals, but improving the public health is frequently a primary or secondary goal. For instance, Randolph Park residents have expressed an almost uniform concern for keeping a community asset, the swimming pool, as part of any redevelopment activities in the Park.

The CDC Committee for Community Engagement developed a working definition of community engagement as a “process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being.”

Identifying the best engagement strategies for your specific community, to address your specific needs may be a process of trial and error, but with patience, persistence and an understanding of the tools of community engagement, great things can be achieved.



ENGAGING THE **WHOLE COMMUNITY**

Though it may seem obvious, understanding why community participation is valuable is critical in finding ways to better encourage participation. The real value of participation is underscored by the finding that mobilizing the entire community, rather than engaging people on an individualized basis, or not engaging them at all, leads to more effective results. That is to say, that an effort that engages the entire community—individuals, groups, and institutions-- will have more long-term success than one that engages only individuals, or does not engage at all.

Research suggests that government and institutions will be more effective if they are guided and held accountable by an organized, engaged community. Robert Putnam in his landmark 1995 book -Bowling Alone notes that social scientists have "... unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions... are... powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement." Moreover, "researchers in education, urban poverty ... and even health have discovered that successful outcomes are more likely in civically engaged communities" (Putnam, 1995, p. 66). On a project- or initiative-based level, Dr. Allan Steckler's CODAPT model for "Community Ownership through Diagnosis, Participatory Planning, Evaluation, and Training (for Institutionalization)," suggests that when community participation is strong throughout a program's development and implementation, long-term program viability, (aka Institutionalization), is more likely assured. While individual groups or communities may lack the technical expertise or desire to enact this type of formal academic model, an awareness of its precepts (that engagement at all levels increases the chances of success) may positively inform community development projects of all scopes.

Community engagement is the opportunity for residents to contribute and influence outcomes which directly affect their lives.



FROM PARTICIPATION TO EMPOWERMENT

After encouraging participation, the next step in successful community engagement is to empower participants. Empowerment means mobilizing and organizing individuals, grass-roots and community-based organizations, and institutions, and enabling them to take action, influence, and make decisions on critical issues affecting their community. It is important to note, however, that external entities – such as government – won't be able to grant the community the power to act in its own self-interest. Rather, those working to help empower the community can provide important tools and resources so that community members can act to gain mastery over their own issues.

Empowerment takes place at three levels: 1) individual, 2) organizational or group and 3) community. Understanding these three levels of empowerment can help identify where and how interventions to encourage empowerment should be directed. Empowerment at one level can influence empowerment at other levels. For example, an empowered individual may act as a group leader, or an empowered group may act as a community leader. Levels of empowerment, as with other aspects of community engagement, should be thought of more as a web of influence rather than a step-by-step process.

UNDERSTANDING THE TOOLS OF ENGAGEMENT

Communication

Fundamentally, successful community engagement is based on social networks and gradual consensus building. Consensus may start small: plan meetings at convenient places and times. Poll residents to make sure you select the best time for them to gather. Free online tools like Doodle and Google Forms can make this process very easy (www.doodle.com, <http://drive.google.com>). These tools as well as other online tools such as Facebook and Twitter can simultaneously serve to organize project participants and promote awareness of the project. However, be aware of your audience and the community you're working in: posters & flyers, phone trees, and most of all word of mouth (or all of the above) may be better options than online tools. Building, and building upon, social networks (online and off) is imperative. Think about whom you know and how you can get to know more people in more places—especially those who are strangers to your community.

Identify Community Leaders & Stakeholders

A strong resident leader is one who not only leads, but inspires leadership in others. That is, a strong leader will draw out the feedback of others, and help to direct conversation toward constructive, concrete goals. "Stakeholders" is a catch-all term meaning everyone who has an interest in the project. This may include local government, businesses, educational institutions, church or youth groups or others. When identifying stakeholders, think very broadly. Taking care to identify and engage with stakeholders is a crucial aspect of community engagement.

Capacity Building

While it is true that external actors cannot impose or bestow power on a community, external actors can provide knowledge and resources to aid and speed the process of community empowerment. Examples of capacity building activities may include engagement with local student or professional groups to draw on their experience or technical understanding of a problem. Community Development Corporations may be involved to provide assistance with securing resources or designing engagement structures. Again, though, capacity building should not be mistaken for project design or implementation. Outside groups may offer tools, but in successful projects, the community itself will direct how those tools are ultimately used.



Coalitions

Community engagement efforts will likely require the involvement of coalitions. A coalition is a partnership of diverse organizations, which come together to achieve a common cause. Coalition building may be one of the most difficult, but ultimately most beneficial tools of community engagement. Coalition building can be challenging because it requires that groups put aside divisions to devote themselves to continuous negotiation, and that there be an equitable distribution of power and credit among groups. However, the benefits associated with working in coalitions far outweigh these challenges. A coalition can maximize the influence of individuals and organizations, identify and exploit new resources, and reduce duplication of effort. Additionally, a strong coalition can increase the chances of securing resources to undertake community development projects, as a strong, broad-based coalition is extremely attractive to funders.

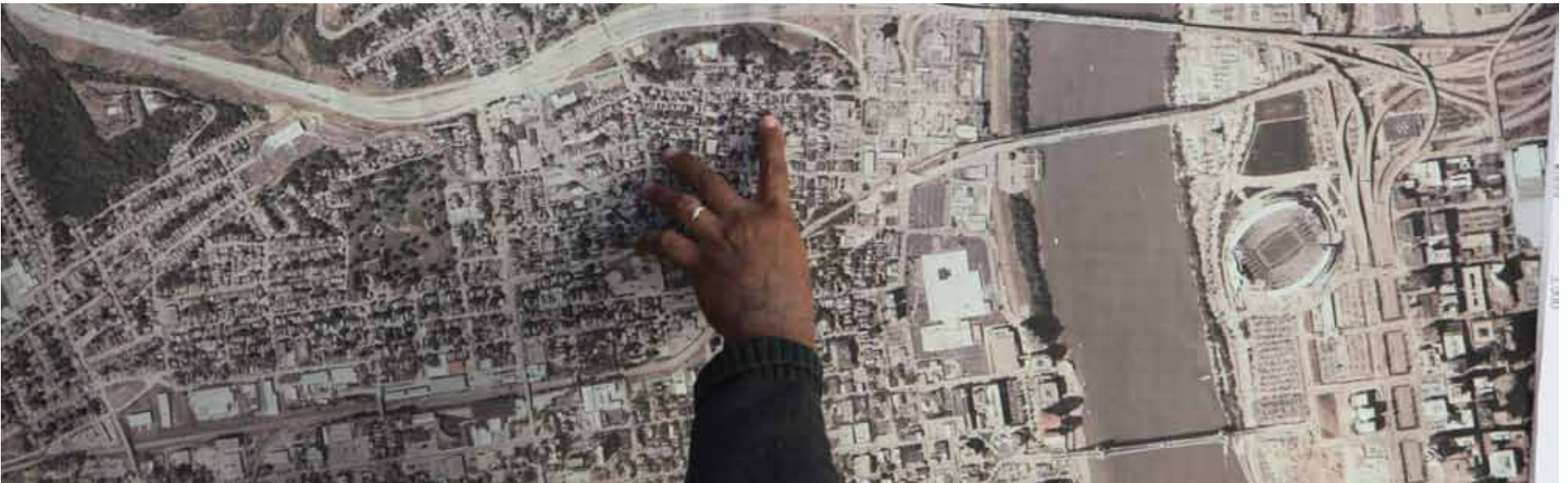


Consensus Building

At the heart of community participation and empowerment is consensus building—the process of aligning the interests of all the stakeholders. There are many tools for consensus building but the two most important are patience and clear communication. The process of building consensus can be thought of in five parts:

1. *Inclusion*: bring in as many community members as possible, leaving no voices out.
2. *Participation*: everyone is allowed and encouraged to participate.
3. *Cooperation*: everyone involved collaborates and builds upon each other's concerns and suggestions to come up with a decision that will satisfy the group.
4. *Egalitarianism*: no one's input is weighted more or less than anyone else. Each has an equal opportunity to amend, veto, or block ideas.
5. *Focus on solutions*: the group agrees to work toward a common solution despite differences.

These steps may take several sessions to fully achieve. Some groups have meetings, brainstorming or visioning sessions, or other in-person conversations. Online surveys can be another tool, but they are less transparent and so should be used with caution.





Frameworks for collaboration

Given the present mistrust within the Eastside neighborhood, there is not an existing organization that is currently in the position to serve as a credible convener or civic leader. In order to build relationships and begin building stronger social capital, a new organizational structure or umbrella that is inclusive of all voices would be advantageous for the neighborhood. A couple of potential models that could be effective include the following:

- **Community Advisory Board Model.** Community Advisory Boards (CABs), are generally applied to build a broad and representative stakeholder group from a community to work with a local institution. Therefore, an advisory board model would be an appropriate mechanism to apply to an organization serving as the umbrella for local area non-profits and social service agencies, to discuss neighborhood concerns and work together on common issues.
- **Voluntary Neighborhood Collaborative.** Forming a voluntary neighborhood collaborative would represent the least formal organizing mechanism, and could provide a loose coalition of area stakeholders a forum to discuss neighborhood issues and work together.

This organizational structure could be most effective if a neutral, third-party facilitator could be engaged to help lead the dialogue.



Building Understanding and a Framework for Partnership

An Example from Lexington, KY

In 2001, a local Community Action Council in Lexington, Kentucky hired the National Civic League to implement a study to more fully understand and measure existing social capital in the Winburn neighborhood. The neighborhood, historically African-American, had changed dramatically over the years, developing a population that was 50 percent Latino. The neighborhood residents complained of persistent petty street crime, graffiti, and the perception of safety issues. The consultant team conducted a neighborhood-wide survey of residents, and organized several specific focus groups (including one with youth) to evaluate neighborhood issues. They found that levels of social capital within the African-American community, and levels of social capital within the Latino community, were healthy. However, social trust, reciprocity, and neighborliness across demographic groups was non-existent.

Ironically, both groups shared the same concerns about the overall health of the neighborhood. Furthermore, focus groups with youth revealed that there were no opportunities for local youth to engage in productive activities. As a result, youth were involved in a large majority of the reported crime in the neighborhood. The findings of the study led to three specific recommendations:

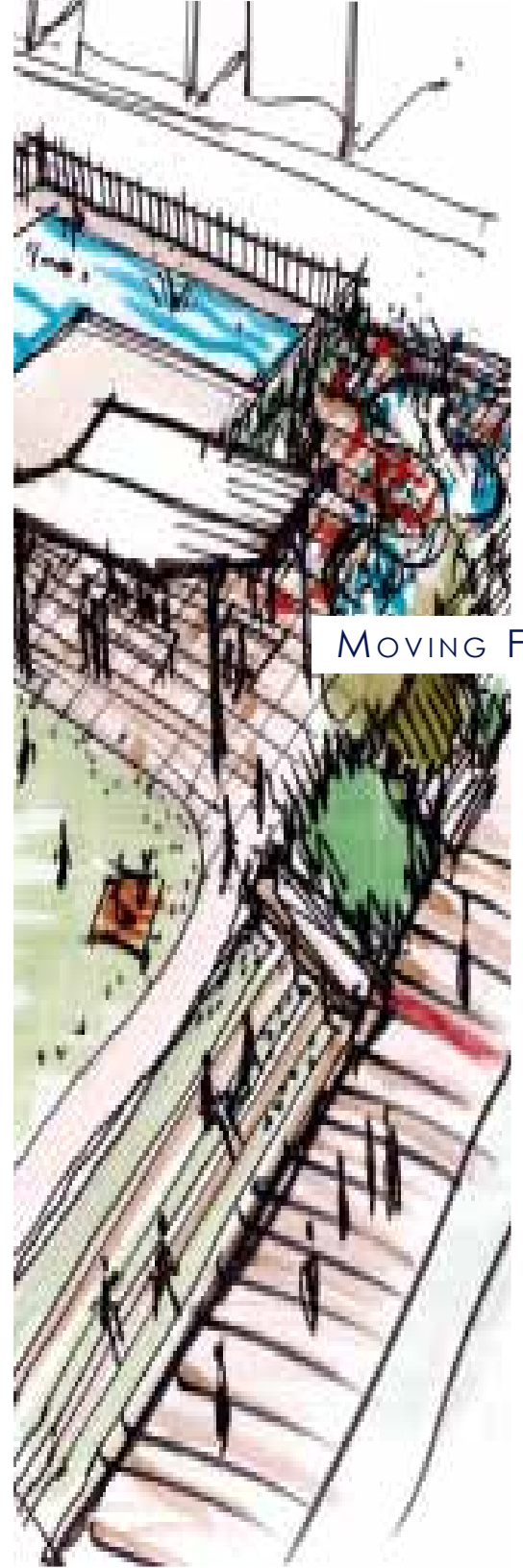
- Start an inclusive neighborhood watch group involving both African-American and Latino residents;
- Begin some joint-programming to build neighborhood pride (block parties, neighborhood clean-ups, etc);
- Have the Community Action Council locate a recreation center or YMCA in the Winburn neighborhood (a consensus desire identified in the youth focus groups).

The study formed the basis for understanding and new efforts at communication and collaborative work between groups in the neighborhood. When these actions were taken, crime declined in the neighborhood, and communication and collaboration across demographic groups led to increased social capital, feelings of trust and neighborliness, and an enhanced image of the neighborhood both internally and externally.

Visioning as a Vehicle for Social Capital Generation

Conducting a community visioning process would provide several benefits to the Eastside community. It will help identify and align common community interests, establish a platform for greater understanding about residents' aspirations and needs, and help build relationships, trust, and potential partnerships. A visioning process can help build the collective community capacity to work together on common issues. The area's future success will be dependent on the breadth of its partnerships, the involvement and investment of its residents, and the collaborative leadership abilities of its institutions. It must overcome its present fragmentation in order to achieve common goals.





MOVING FORWARD

GETTING STARTED

Make Investments in Temporary Uses To Catalyze Additional Interest

The realization of Covington’s vision for Randolph Park will require incremental implementation as resources are identified for each component of the program. However, the community should take advantage of opportunities to create temporary spaces and transitional uses that can build momentum and energy for larger investments in permanent spaces and facilities.

It is important to describe and illustrate what is possible in short-term temporary projects that can be completed quickly and garner community participation in the process. These projects should be visible, tangible messages to the community and outside funders and supporters that there is vision and community commitment to the larger aspirations for the park.



Some of these early activities can be focused on participatory public art or temporary spaces. In Wenatchee, Washington, local leaders installed a participatory project titled, “I Envision” during their SDAT process, and asked citizens to fill in the blanks. The project was bi-lingual to be inclusive of their residents’ languages, and hundreds of people participated in the project, providing a visible reference point for the community’s dreams. This project was based on artist Candy Chang’s “Before I Die,” art, which began on the side of a vacant building in New Orleans and has now been installed in countries all over the world. These kinds of projects help build enthusiasm for volunteer projects at a larger scale.

Engage the Community Directly in Volunteer-Driven Projects

One of the best ways to build momentum for the realization of the Randolph Park vision is to engage the community directly in public work associated with the implementation process. For instance, the community could be involved directly in the construction of new playgrounds in the park. There are outside organizations that Covington can engage to help with this work. *Kaboom!* is one national organization that has worked with communities all over the country to design and build playground space in a community-driven process.



Leverage Community Engagement to build Support and Resources

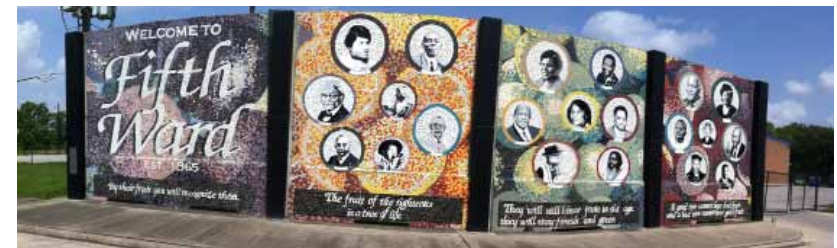
The scenarios for Randolph Park represent a major capital project that will take significant resources to realize, but the team recommends use of the site in the interim to both build interest in the long-term project as well as utilize the existing site in expanded ways. Many of the interim steps can use community engagement and volunteerism to build support and interest in the long-term vision for the park as well. Other communities have utilized similar strategies. For instance, in Tremonton, Utah, local residents wanted a splashpad for their park. The city did not have funds in its capital improvement budget when the project began, so families partnered to hold a community fundraiser, which raised 50 percent of the needed funds, and more importantly demonstrated widespread public support for the project. The city was able to identify the rest of the funding from its budget. In Houston, Texas, the Fifth Ward community is home to the historic DeLuxe Theater, which hosted famous names dating back to the 1940s. The community is currently preparing for a \$3.7 million restoration of the theater, but in the interim, a group of local artists worked together to create a complementary amphitheater space down the street at their local park. Called the “Fifth Ward Community Jam,” the amphitheater was constructed of reclaimed lumber from condemned housing in the neighborhood. It has since become the focal point for the community, serving as an important location for gatherings and events. Historic murals and other public art also provide easy opportunities to demonstrate new direction for the park.



*Splashpad in Tremonton, UT
funded 50% by community*



Fifth Ward 'Community Jam', Houston, TX



Mural in Houston, TX tells of historic local figures



Sculptural Mural in Bastrop, TX illustrates local history

BUILDING CIVIC MOMENTUM

Revitalization as a Process

Revitalization is a process. It will involve many investments, both small and large, and they must all link effectively to one another to create an environment that is attractive for more of the same, creating a virtuous cycle that builds continued momentum. It is a complete myth to think that there is a single transformational investment that will change the neighborhood. It will require a process where both small and large investments carry importance. Some communities have a tendency to be dismissive of smaller ideas such as community gardens, bike lanes, and public spaces. Some people will consider these kinds of actions too insignificant to matter, and so unrelated to neighborhood health as to be unworthy of consideration. However, the experience in other cities provides evidence that each community must follow a process by which sequential actions leverage the following ones, scaling upward and outward to eventually create the desired environment for sustained change. The immediate goal must be focused around creating an environment in Randolph Park and the Eastside neighborhood that is an attractive place for investment.

The preceding report contains innumerable examples of design interventions, and programming strategies that can be applied to many components of the Covington vision for Randolph Park. However, the team felt it would also be instructive to offer comparable case studies from other communities which can help inform the design of an implementation process. Each community has overcome challenges with scarce public resources by engaging the whole community in the process of revitalization to achieve success.



CHATTANOOGA: THE POWER OF A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Chattanooga, Tennessee's Bluff View Art District is a "creative haven that specializes in the visual, culinary and landscape arts." The district is located along the city's riverfront, and is connected to the North Shore by the Walnut Street Bridge, a pedestrian bridge and linear park across the river that has become a central experience for both locals and visitors. The Parks Foundation describes the impact of the pedestrian bridge as follows:

"In only a generation, the Bridge has become the centerpiece and a vital connector of Chattanooga's riverfront renaissance, linking the city's vibrant North Shore with the Bluff View Arts District, the Hunter Museum of American Art, the Tennessee Riverwalk and the Tennessee Aquarium. Like the city's own rebirth, The Bridge's story is also one of decline and revival. Since 1978, when it was closed to traffic for safety reasons after serving Chattanooga for 87 years, the Walnut Street Bridge sat disabled, deteriorating, dormant and yet another reminder of the city's decaying downtown. By the late 1980s, the city had taken steps to demolish the downtrodden bridge, but lacked the funding. Before officials could dismantle the bridge, however, a community campaign comprised of visionary activists, civic leaders and historic preservationists banded together to save the bridge, envisioning it as a vibrant pedestrian bridge that could help propel a downtown renaissance. After nominating the bridge as an historic landmark, work began to raise the millions necessary to restore The Bridge as a pedestrian walkway, partially funded by a U.S. Department of Transportation grant and with the support of hundreds of thousands of dollars from Chattanooga residents. When the restored Walnut Street Bridge opened in 1993 to much fanfare, the "linear park" soon quickly realized the hopes of its restorers as a dynamic symbol of the rebirth of Chattanooga, and became a "bridge" to the revitalized riverfront and downtown. In the years since the original restoration campaign, the Walnut Street Bridge has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic symbol of the spirit of Chattanooga. The Bridge has established itself as not only a highly visible landmark and center of community activity, but as the connecting element between Chattanooga's internationally acclaimed riverfront renaissance and the exciting North Shore, a landmark linking public parks and pedestrian walkways on the revitalized North Shore with the Tennessee Aquarium, the Hunter Museum of American Art, and the Tennessee Riverwalk, which extends some seven miles to the Chickamauga Dam. Besides its near constant daily use, The Bridge has become a favorite venue for events and activities of every kind and description."

SEATTLE'S 'NEIGHBOR POWER' MODEL

Seattle presents an illustrative case. The city's Department of Neighborhoods has involved tens of thousands of neighbors in the development of scores of community-driven plans and 3,000 neighborhood self-help projects. In *Neighbor Power*, Jim Diers recounts the first 14 years of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods. He describes a series of city programs, including the city's neighborhood matching fund which put up 50 percent of funds for neighborhood-driven projects that citizens had to match and implement. The account also describes the city's neighborhood service centers, and bottom-up neighborhood planning, that transformed and empowered neighborhoods all over the city. This model of community empowerment has been adapted and applied in jurisdictions all over the world now. The public monies used for these programs helped catalyze exponential private investment in revitalization and neighborhood health. The programs also fueled enormous civic pride. Diers describes the program impact as follows:

"More inspiring, though, are the many stories of how Seattle citizens have utilized the department's programs to create their own innovations. For instance, Ballard residents, after planting 1,080 street trees in a single day, went on to build a dozen new parks, including the first "gray to green" project involving the removal of asphalt from a schoolyard. Central Area neighbors were the first to combat graffiti with murals, to create a drug free zone, and to involve youth in documenting the history of their elders. In Delridge, the community successfully lobbied the city for its first library and designed and built it to include low-income housing above. As they have revitalized their neighborhoods, citizens have also been building a stronger sense of community. They have taken lessons from their new Eritrean neighbors, who, knowing the importance of supporting one another--"from the youngest to the most senior"--pooled their meager resources to build a community center in Rainier Valley."

It is this spirit of civic engagement and approach to leveraging the entire community's resources that will be the key to Covington's success as well.



The world famous Fremont Troll under a bridge in Seattle



Playground designed to showcase local nature



Volunteer Street-Painting project



Before: Neighborhood Visioning Mural After: fully developed project reflecting their vision

PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON

Building Community Pride through a Public Revitalization Process

Port Angeles, Washington (pop. 17,000) provides an example of how to inspire pride in change by creating a truly public revitalization process. Their success has been built around involving everyone in the process.

In 2009, Port Angeles hosted an SDAT to focus on downtown revitalization and waterfront development. Port Angeles had suffered declining fortunes as the result of mill closures and reduced productivity from natural resource industries. The three-day charrette process created enormous civic energy to pursue a vision for the city's future. "Just two weeks after the SDAT presented more than 30 recommendations, the Port Angeles Forward committee unanimously agreed to recommend 10 of those items for immediate action," said Nathan West, the City's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Public investment and commitment inspired private investment, and, less than a month later, the community joined together in an effort to revamp the entire downtown, starting with a physical face-lift. Community members donated paint and equipment, and residents picked up their paintbrushes to start the transformation."



Before & After for one Building in Port Angeles, Washington

During the first summer of implementation, over 43 buildings in the downtown received substantial upgrades, including new paint and other improvements. This effort led to a formal façade improvement program that extended the initiative exponentially. The city dedicated \$118,000 in community development block grants (CDBG) for the effort, which catalyzed over \$265,000 in private investment. The city also moved forward with substantial public investment in its waterfront, which had a dramatic impact in inspiring new partnerships and private investment. Three years later, the city had over \$75 million in planned and completed investments and had turned the corner by producing huge civic momentum across the community. In June 2012, Port Angeles was recognized with a state design award for its waterfront master plan, designed by LMN Architects. The city completed the project in 2013, and the award-winning park opened to the public.

As West concluded, "The City of Port Angeles SDAT experience was far more than just a planning exercise. This opportunity for our community was a catalyst for action, implementation and improvement. Three years after the SDAT team arrived, the progress and excitement continue. A primary outcome has been that the process awakened community pride and inspired a "together we can" attitude. Today the inspiration remains and the elements and recommendations of the program continue to be the driver for publicly endorsed capital projects and investments in our community. More importantly this sustainable approach has tapped into the core values and priorities of our citizens to ensure a better and more balanced future for our City."



Before & After for the waterfront in Port Angeles

SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Building Sustained Civic Momentum

“A lot can change in 20 years.” That was the conclusion reached in 2012 by the *San Angelo Standard-Times* in looking back at twenty years of accomplishments that have followed San Angelo, Texas’ R/UDAT. The paper described a “Snowball Effect” of civic work that was spurred by the process.

Lee Pfluger, who served as the chair of the local R/UDAT Steering Committee, described the conditions twenty years ago: “Back in 1991 you could have shot a cannon in downtown San Angelo on a Saturday night and not hit a soul — it was that dead — not a car in sight. The effort started with Celebration Bridge (with funds raised from the community) and the revitalization of the Paseo de Santa Angela as public space, and each success stimulated new interest in downtown. All the vacant buildings that were underutilized in 1991 have all enhanced their utilization to a higher use.”

These early successes each built more momentum for larger investments. In fact, in the last seven years, the total amount of public and private dollars that have been invested in the downtown has reportedly grown from less than \$1 million to more than \$55 million in combined public and private investment through the third quarter of 2012. In 2002, the San Angelo Area Foundation was created. The Foundation exemplifies the partnership and civic engagement that have blossomed across the community. In the past decade, it has received more than \$92 million in donations from more than 3,500 different donors, and has distributed over \$38 million in grants. One of its recent grants, to the Performing Arts Coalition, is part of a larger effort to raise \$13.5 million to convert an old Coca-Cola warehouse into the San Angelo Performing Arts Center.

NEWPORT, VERMONT

The Power of Leveraged Actions

In 2009, Newport, Vermont (pop. 5,000) brought a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to town to help build a revitalization strategy. Patricia Sears, the Executive Director of the Newport Renaissance Corporation, described the town’s dilemma a few years ago: “We were the last city in Vermont to achieve downtown designation from the state. We had some of the highest unemployment in the state. We decided we were done being last. We decided, ‘we are going to be *first*.’” Newport hosted the first R/UDAT in state history. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the process. As Mayor Paul Monette said, “it wasn’t the usual political process. Everyone was heard during the R/UDAT.”

Within two years of the project, the R/UDAT had built so much momentum that the town had over \$250 million in new and pending investment, including 2,000 new jobs in a town of just 5,000 – an incredible achievement in the midst of a severe national recession. Like Port Angeles, Newport was able to achieve success through broad partnership and involvement. It also leveraged small actions to build momentum for larger investments. For example, the R/UDAT team included a recommendation to create a community garden, something that has been suggested for Covington as a potential action. Newport created a community garden with over 32 organizational partners. They took advantage of existing capacity – a downtown parking lot that was donated – and not only created a garden, but programmed it to have a transformational impact. Despite Vermont’s reputation as the nation’s premier state for local-food production, 32% of Vermonters either cannot afford enough food or enough nutritious food. Out of the community garden, the “Grow a Neighborhood” program was created, teaching neighborhood residents about urban agriculture, providing space for family plots, and engaging local restaurants in a farm to table initiative. Six new restaurants opened in the downtown during the first two years of implementation. The downtown began its first annual food festival. What started as a modest neighborhood garden expanded into a city-wide co-operative farm run by volunteers. Thousands of pounds of vegetables are grown in these gardens. As one local newspaper reported:

“The benefits of these gardens are immediately obvious -- Bernier said she grew enough and froze enough for her family last summer that she didn't have to buy a vegetable until April. Neighbors partnering together and working outside have had intangible benefits as well. Last year, one garden produced 1,700 pounds of vegetables -- with only volunteers and no chemical fertilizers. The garden plots have been donated by the city and property owners.. The Fresh Start Community Farm grew out of the Summer Street garden, where neighbors claimed small sections and grew their own vegetables. So the neighbor-driven garden grew into a co-operative farm organized under the Newport City Recreation and Parks Department, with a local resident as overall manager and a local manager for each of the gardens.

Donations have poured in of all kinds of things, fence sections and limbs for pole beans, and even some clay pots that youngsters have painted for décor. Along with Summer Street and the convent, there are gardens on Broadview, Gardner Park near the band stand, and on land next to Numia Medical on Lake Road. There is a community garden behind Dailey Memorial Library in Derby Center and there will be a garden at the mobile home park owned by Rural Edge on Shattuck Hill Road in Derby. Youngsters have participated in the gardens, including school groups like Turning Point and grade school students. Seniors from The Meeting Place on Second Street are now involved in the Summer Street garden nearby.”

A couple of years into implementation, the city opened a regional tasting center, which highlights local produce from the region and draws locals and visitors. Newport also took advantage of widespread community participation in the R/UDAT to engage citizens in code changes, designing a participatory process to create the first form-based code in the state. New investments include boutique hotels, a tasting center featuring regional agriculture, and a waterfront resort. The city also created the state's first foreign trade zone, attracting a Korean biotechnology firm and other businesses.

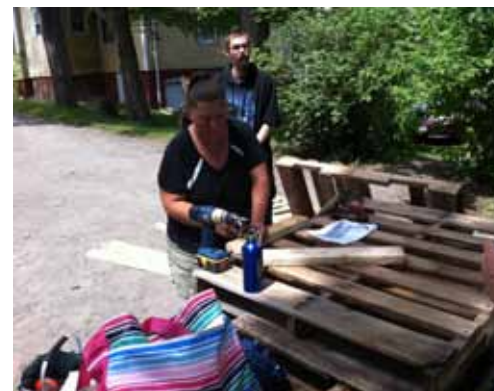
The City has undergone a fundamental shift in its thinking since the R/UDAT process. In 2009, the public dialogue was dominated by nostalgia about the city's past. As one resident exclaimed, “I've seen Newport come, and I've seen it go.” Two years later, the R/UDAT team conducted a follow up visit to assess progress in the community. As the Mayor stated, “I attribute our success to the successful R/UDAT in 2009 followed by the great public/private partnerships which have developed.” The sense of change reaches all levels of the community. A citizen described the civic “attitude adjustment” that had occurred: “When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. That's the most important change that has occurred – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible.” Today, communities across New England are visiting Newport to learn the ‘secrets’ of its success.



Construction Kick-Off Party for New Resort Development



Family Garden Plot



'Chairbombing' Volunteers engage in tactical urbanism



New Vibrancy Downtown

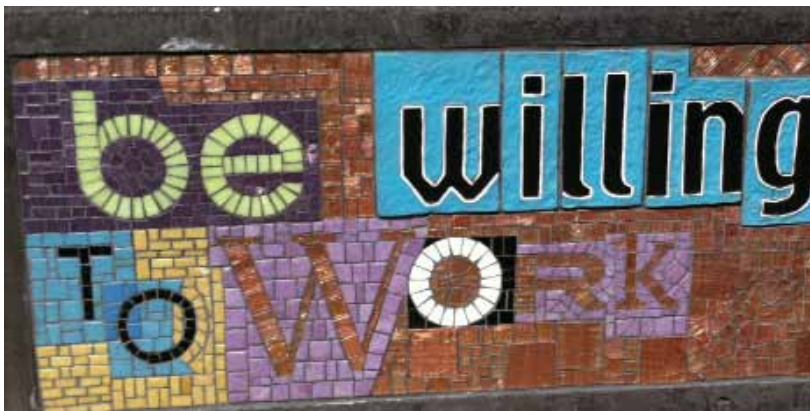
LESSONS FOR COVINGTON

Citizen-led, and volunteer powered revitalization works

Every action outlined in this report represents an opportunity to partner, and the community must leverage all of the resources at hand in pursuit of a common vision to be successful. Municipal government is but one partner in the community – it cannot be depended upon to provide all the resources, or solutions. Cross-sector partnerships involving the private sector and non-profit organizations as well as citizens will be imperative for community success. The embedded resources within every community represent a significant and powerful resource with which to begin implementation. For instance, consider the following national statistics:

- Volunteerism represents \$171 billion nationally, and that is accounting for 64 million volunteers, which means the figure could be substantially higher with increased volunteerism.
- Annual charitable giving equals just under \$300 billion, representing a huge source of non-governmental resources available in communities.
- Non-profit organizations contribute \$300 billion in community investment every year.
- Crowdfunding was estimated at \$1.5 billion in 2011 alone, and continues to grow.
- There is an estimated \$180 billion to be leveraged for public-private partnerships on infrastructure development.

The above resources total almost a trillion dollars in resources that are non-governmental. Every community contains some of these powerful resources, which can be leveraged for community development.



Consider the preceding examples:

In Chattanooga, citizens stopped the demolition of their beloved bridge, envisioned it as a pedestrian walkway, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the project, and partnered with a federal agency to realize their vision.

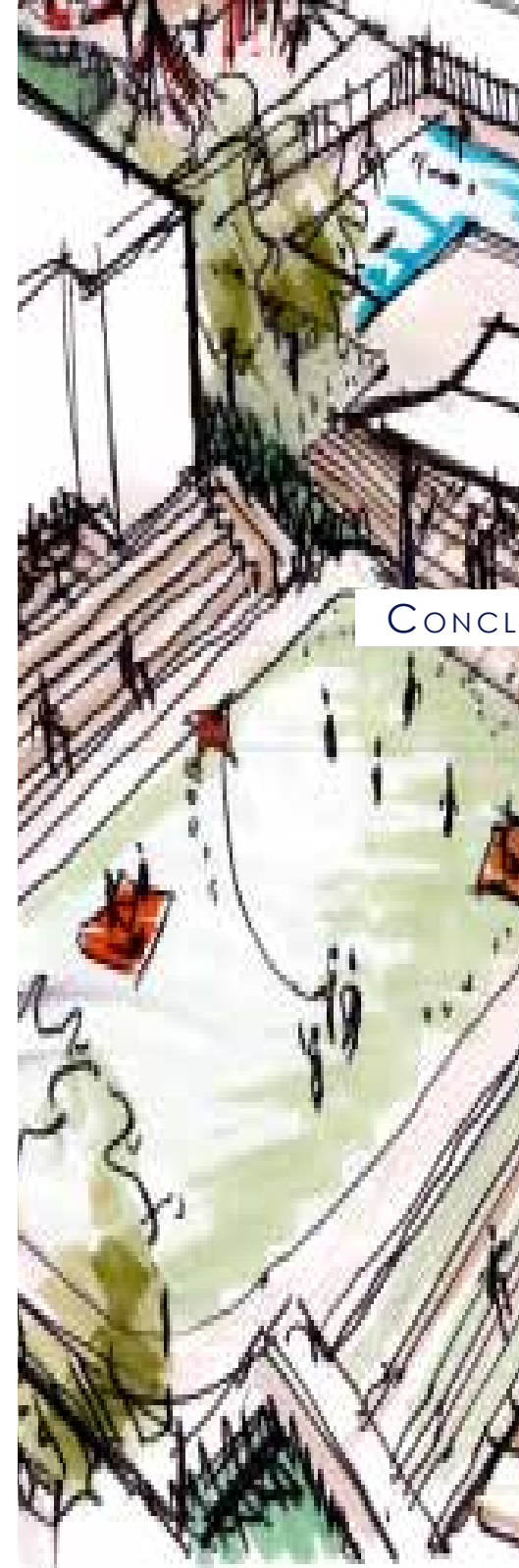
In Seattle, neighborhoods not only envisioned every project that occurred, but they raised 50 percent of the funds and served as the major workforce that implemented the projects.

In Port Angeles, citizens literally gave their downtown a facelift with a volunteer army and donated paint, upgrading 43 buildings and setting the stage for an ever-increasing level of private investment and a series of major investments and projects that has transformed the community.

In San Angelo, citizens raised the funds for the creation of Celebration Bridge, their first important implementation project, which created a “snowball effect” of bigger and bigger investments that transformed their downtown.

In Newport, citizens and non-profit partners worked together to create community gardens, re-envision their zoning regulations, and implement a host of significant projects that have transformed their community and local economy, providing thousands of jobs to a needy community.

There is a reason that these success stories all sound similar. Civic leadership is an essential component of every success story. When community residents come together around a common vision, and work together toward that vision, they create enough energy to realize all kinds of community benefits. This is the strategy that will best serve the residents of the Eastside neighborhood, and Covington at-large.



CONCLUSION

BEYOND THE EASTSIDE

The Covington SDAT Report outlines a redevelopment strategy with design scenarios for Randolph Park and its adjacent area within the Eastside Neighborhood. The recommendations contained within the report take into consideration the Park's physical, historic and cultural context and attempt to build upon Covington's ongoing downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. The authors of the report recognize that any of the recommendations will require sustained civic investment and consistent public participation. Realizing the limited resources available currently, the team suggests the following actions as a starting point:

- Issue yearly report cards on progress being made on the vision plan to maintain interest and accountability. Don't stop making things better.
- Undertake a professionally led 6 month downtown Covington (everything North of 12th Street to the Ohio River) visioning process. Start when schools are in session and involve kids of all ages. Allow enough time for school age kids to stay with it and move right into the implementation phase with a can't miss project. Type of questions / issues to tackle:
 - o What are downtown's boundaries?
 - o What relationship do we want with Cincinnati?
 - o How big is too big?
 - o Where is the heart of our downtown?
 - o How can we take advantage of DeVoe Park's proximity to downtown?
 - o What can we not afford to lose in downtown Covington?

After draft civic goals and objectives are identified by the visioning process, start testing them with specific challenges:

The Roebling Bridge is the symbolic gateway into your community. Right now, as soon as you reach the Kentucky side by automobile, you have to make very quick decisions on a curving road. Not the ideal experience for a visitor. How can this national landmark make an even bigger positive impact on the community?

Can the bridge be closed to auto traffic on game days (Reds and Bengals), special events, road races and holidays to improve awareness of the bike and greenway connections? If yes, can temporary carts / stands showcasing KY and Ohio local farms, restaurants, organizations and artisans be located on the bridge? Can the area where the bridge lands in Covington between 2nd and 3rd be reorganized to be less confusing / more welcoming? Can Roebling way stop at Second St. and force traffic to go E/W like Cincinnati's side of the bridge? Can Court Avenue house a covered farmer's market that can extend into the block between 2nd and Third?

While it may be difficult to imagine at this point in Covington's history, visioning can be a fun and even healing process. Be thankful there is so much to work with, the timing is right and that there are people who want things to succeed. The Covington community is well-positioned, through some intentional collaboration and hard work, to realize significant achievement in the future.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements

The SDAT Team would like to extend its gratitude to the citizens of the Eastside neighborhood and the City of Covington for hosting this process. It is our sincere hope the SDAT conversations will lead to greater collaboration and future success for the community. We would like to extend special thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their leadership and invaluable contributions to this process:

The team would like to thank Mayor Sherry Carran and City Manager Larry Klein for their support of the process. The team would like to thank Nathalie Gardner of the City of Covington, whose personal commitment to the process and the Eastside neighborhood represent a model of collaboration for future community work. Ms. Gardner was an invaluable resource to the team's efforts throughout this process and facilitated contact with a broad array of community stakeholders.

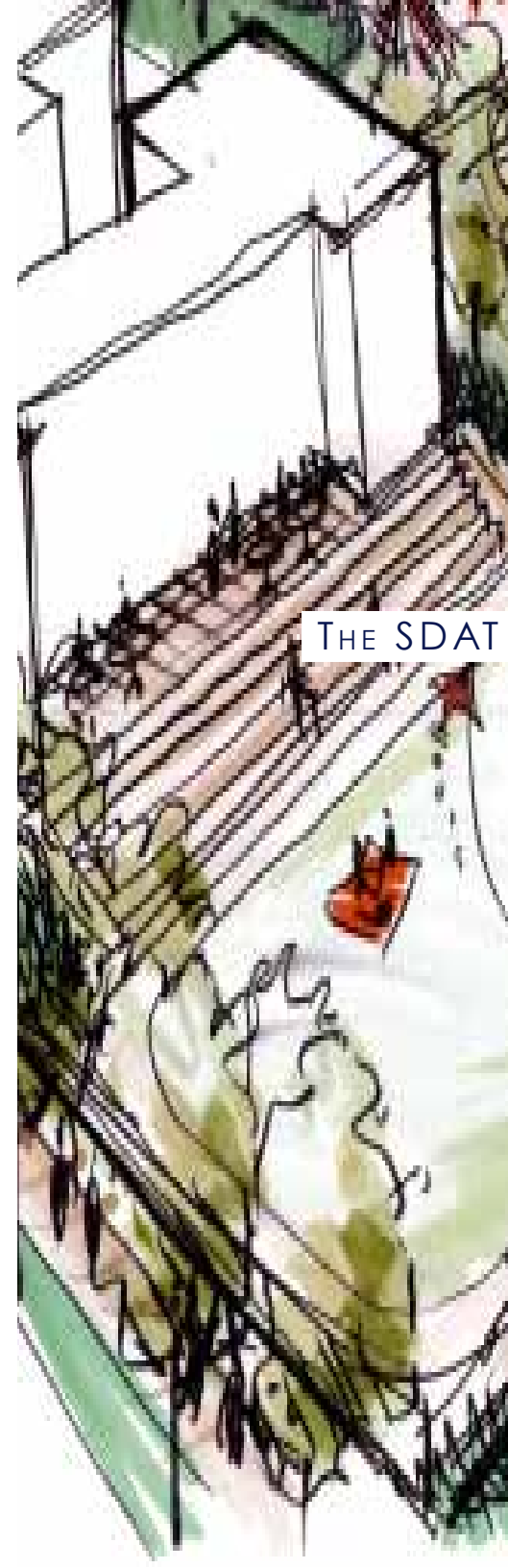
The team would like to extend its gratitude toward the AIA Northern Kentucky Chapter, and in particular Raymond Mack, Ben Eilerman, and Ben Barlage, who provided essential expertise and support to the SDAT team and process. The AIA Northern Kentucky Chapter represents a strong local resource to the Covington community and its public interest work during this process was second-to-none.

The team would like to thank Bennie Doggett and the Eastside Neighborhood Association, as well as OASIS, for their support of the process, critical information on the community, and generous hospitality toward the team.

The team would also like to thank Christian Roadman and Elise Ross, from the University of Michigan, who volunteered their support to the team and made valuable contributions to the process and final product.

The team would like to thank all the residents who shared their time and expertise during the process. Through the SDAT process, the team came away with a understanding of the Eastside's community narrative and the generosity of its people. The Covington community has our deep gratitude.





THE SDAT TEAM

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Paul Fontaine, AICP - Team Leader

Paul Fontaine is a nationally award-winning urban planner and designer who has extensive experience in working on public-private partnerships to bolster local economic revitalization and land use strategies. As an instructor at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Planning, Paul creates and co-leads client based urban planning projects that serve as the final studio for graduate level planners. Paul leads Fontaine Urban Design, an urban design firm that specializes in civic revitalization, brownfield redevelopment and grant writing assistance. He started working as an urban designer and planner 20 years ago after obtaining a MS in Urban and Regional Planning from Columbia University. Paul lives in Ann Arbor with his incredible wife and demanding cat. In his off time, he is either looking for a great story -- whether it's from a book, movie, play, opera or good friends, or playing basketball at the YMCA.

Glenn Kellogg, Market Analysis & Economic Development

Mr. Kellogg has over 14 years of experience in financial and urban planning services, working in neighborhoods of large cities and small towns. During this experience, he has learned to listen to the concerns of communities and help demystify the economic conditions that surround them. Through an understanding of the local economy, he assists communities with feasible, market-based strategies for neighborhoods to achieve their vision. After graduating from the University of Virginia, Mr. Kellogg was a Lewis Mumford Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania where he studied real estate at Wharton and received a Master of City Planning from the Graduate School of Fine Arts (Penn Design). Mr. Kellogg has served as an Advisory Services Panelist for the Urban Land Institute, a Juror for the Coalition for Smarter Growth, and was a 2005 Knight Fellow in Community Building through the University of Miami.



Darrel Williams, FAIA

Darrel is a founding partner of Neighboring Concepts. Under his leadership, the firm has successfully improved the quality of life in urban communities through innovative architectural design, thoughtful urban planning and responsible real-estate development projects. An accomplished and award-winning architect, Darrel is motivated by a desire to influence positive change within socially and physically challenged urban communities. For him, “transforming communities through architecture” is not simply a firm tagline, it is a calling.

Originally from Baton Rouge, Darrel graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Southern University in Louisiana. He received an award for the most outstanding Fifth Year Student in his class and has been the recipient of numerous additional awards and recognitions to date. He is the past President of AIA Charlotte, has served on the Board of AIA North Carolina, is a member of the National Association of Minority Architects (NOMA) and is also certified with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). In 2006, Darrel was elevated to the College of Fellows for the American Institute of Architects (AIA), one of the highest honors of the profession and an ideal acknowledgement of his significant contributions to architecture and society on a national level.

A true public servant, Darrel Williams has also made countless contributions to the Charlotte Mecklenburg community through years of unwavering dedication. He served four consecutive terms on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and continues today to passionately serve civic and community organizations on the local and state levels. Most recently, he chaired Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library Board of Trustees and currently serves on the Boards of Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte Center City Partners, The Nature Conservancy and others too numerous to list. Darrel is a noted leader in the smart growth and sustainability movement and he has chaired several national committees on key initiatives (i.e. smart growth, housing, community/economic development, etc.).

As an architect and former elected official, Darrel has been very successful in bridging the gap between the physical and social challenges facing urban communities. He is highly experienced in leading project teams on large-scale projects with multiple disciplines and he is a natural organizer and facilitator, committed to using his experience to influence the design of quality architecture to improve the quality of life in urban environments.



Kofi Boone

Kofi Boone is an Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at NC State University, College of Design. Professor Boone focuses on the changing nature of communities, and developing tools for enhanced community engagement and design. Professor Boone is a member of the Academy of Outstanding Teachers. Through scholarship, teaching, and extension service, Professor Boone works in the landscape context of environmental justice, and his research includes the use of new media as a means of increasing community input in design and planning processes. Professor Boone has published articles in journals including *Intensions* and *Journal of Tourism Analysis*. His work with mobile technology and participatory video in diverse urban communities will be featured in the forthcoming book *Community Matters* edited by Dr. Mallika Bose and Dr. Sigmund Shipp, as well as in a special issue on critical visualization in the *Journal of Landscape and Urban Planning*. Professor Boone has served as a presenter at the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), the American Society of Landscape Architecture National Meeting and Expo, and numerous Colleges and Universities. Prior to joining the faculty at NC State University, Professor Boone worked at JJR on a wide range of community design projects. He received his Master of Landscape Architecture and Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from The University of Michigan.

Deobrah Moore

Deborah Moore became Associate Director of Neighborhood Strategy and Planning at Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Inc. in October of 2010. A long time asset to the organization, Moore first began serving NHS in 1996 as Director of the West Englewood office, and became Director of the Auburn Gresham/Englewood Office in 2000. As the Associate Director of Neighborhood Strategy and Planning, Moore directs and develops neighborhood program resources and oversees the staff for the seven neighborhood offices and NHS of the Fox Valley. Additionally, she administers the implementation of both national and local community development initiatives in the neighborhoods, including NHS' involvement in the City of Chicago's Micro-Market Recovery Program and in various NeighborWorks® programs. Her role also includes orchestrating the beneficial relationships between the Neighborhood Strategy office and other programs and divisions within the organization.

Prior to joining NHS, Moore was extensively involved in community development in many of Chicago's low income neighborhoods. Working closely in Austin, South Shore, Auburn Gresham, and Englewood, Moore directed the development of housing co-ops, commercial buildings, and a successful artist incubator. Moore remains committed to the betterment of the South Side's underserved neighborhoods, and currently serves on the boards of the Greater Auburn Gresham Community Development Corporation and the Genesis Housing Community Development Corporation, and as Commissioner for the 79th Street Special Service Area #32.

Moore was awarded the Community Hero Award by the Greater Auburn Gresham Community Development Corporation's New Community's Program in 2007 for her innovative work in and continued commitment to the Auburn Gresham community. She received her Masters in Human Services Administration, with a curricular concentration in Affordable Housing Development at Speitus College.



Jessica Strauss

Jessica Strauss is Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Alliance for Community Teachers and Schools. She has been an independent consultant for 16 years, focusing on school and community partnerships. In those years, she has provided research, planning facilitation, program design, initiative design and policy development for Government agencies, Foundations, and Non-Profit organizations. She is an expert in school partnerships, systemic reorganization, family and community engagement, human services for urban children and families, and organizational development for schools and grassroots organizations.

Ms. Strauss worked for eight years as a Consultant for the National Center for Community Schools of the Children's Aid Society, where she served as a consultant to several communities as they planned and expanded community schools, and as project manager for the 2009 roll-out of capacity-building methodology and a compendium of materials, developed over 15 years by NCCS staff.

Ms. Strauss co-founded and led Baltimore Community School Connections, an intermediary TA center, from 2003 to 2007, developing and supporting Baltimore's 26-school initiative. Her prior clients have included Family Support America, where she served as Senior Advisor for Family Support in Schools for three years, and authored a number of magazine articles and a handbook on Shared Leadership: A Process for Family and Community Engagement. She spent ten years as a half-time Consultant with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, where she provided research and development for new portfolios and edited a series of monographs, *Elders As Resources for Youth*.

She was Co-Chair of the Urban Initiatives Network of the national Coalition for Community Schools from 2005 - 2010, and has been active over the years in developing the Coalition's federal policy, evaluation and strategic initiatives. Prior to her consulting career, Ms. Strauss was founding Director of a comprehensive family development center in East Baltimore and Adjunct Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at Essex Community College. She holds degrees in Social Work from Morgan State University (M.S.W., 2011), Political Philosophy from Oxford University (M.Phil., 1980), and Political Science from Wellesley College (B.A., Wellesley Scholar, 1977); she was post-certified in the doctoral program (ABD, 1984) at The Johns Hopkins University.



Erin Simmons- Director, AIA Design Assistance

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 60 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication *Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments*. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Joel Mills - Director, Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's 20-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with over 100 communities, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated community-generated strategies on a host of issues. During the past five years, this work has catalyzed over \$1 billion in new investment. His past work has been featured in over 1,000 media stories, including *ABC World News Tonight*, *Nightline*, *CNN*, *The Next American City*, *Smart City Radio*, *The National Civic Review*, *Ecostructure Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, and dozens of other sources. He has served on numerous expert working groups, boards, juries, and panels focused on civic discourse and participation, sustainability, and design. He has also spoken at dozens of national and international conferences and events, including the World Eco-City Summit, the Global Democracy Conference, the National Conference on Citizenship, and many others.

