



Reimagining Poyntz Avenue Corridor

Public Space Activation &
Co-design Project

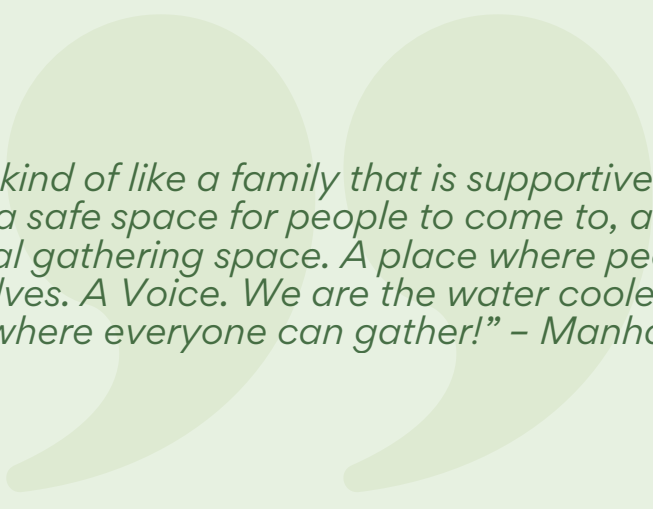
Authored by:

Spring 2025 ARCH 750: Not in My Downtown: Activating
Public Space Through Community Engagement and
Community-Led Placemaking graduate students

Prepared by:

Prof. Gabrielle Coleman, APDesign, Kansas State University





“Downtown is kind of like a family that is supportive of each other. We are a safe space for people to come to, as we are more of a social gathering space. A place where people can come and be themselves. A Voice. We are the water cooler of Manhattan and a place where everyone can gather!” – Manhattan resident

Acknowledgements

Contributors

Reimagining Poyntz Avenue Corridor: S25 ARCH750 Research and Design Report was authored by **Alexis** Broadbent, **Mario** Castro-Cortes, **Chance** Delaney, **Ethan** Fields, **Lucas** Franssen, **Emily** Harrison, **Michaela** Hein, **Brandon** Kirmer, **Tanner** Koch, **Andrew** Luttrell, **Miguel** Perez, and **Rachel** Reichert.

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Contact

Please direct any questions about this report, project, course, etc. to:

Prof. Gabby Coleman
1089 Seaton Hall
920 N Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Manhattan, KS 66506
(785) 532-5953
gkc@k-state.edu

Notes

This report summarizes a **hypothetical** design research project where graduate architecture students engage in community engagement based on design and planning projects in Manhattan, KS. The data summarized in this report reflects conversations with real people, and all participants were made aware that this research was produced as a class project and is independent of any past, present, and future work completed by the City of Manhattan and all related stakeholders.

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Engagement Workshop – February 2025

Table of Contents

5	Executive Summary	39	Engagement Workshop
6	Research Methods	48	Stakeholder Interview
9	Class Perspectives	71	Co-design
17	Case Studies	74	Design Proposals
31	Site Background		

Executive Summary

Introduction

ARCH 750: Not in My Downtown: Activating Public Space Through Community Engagement and Community-Led Placemaking

is a course at Kansas State University that worked in collaboration with the City of Manhattan's Community Development Department to investigate the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. This course is built on previous work from ARCH 715: Praxis of Community Engagement, where students held workshops to hear directly from people in the community about their hopes, concerns, and ideas for Poyntz Avenue.

The project exists because our class believes that **designing great public spaces starts with listening to the community's wants and needs**. By initially starting this process through community engagement workshops, we were able to understand how to implement the practice of community engagement into design and the value it holds. The ARCH750 course is vital as it allows students to create designs based on what the community wants and places importance on listening and understanding first. The primary course goal was to **create a design proposal for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor based on community feedback** and using those findings to create design decisions.

Course Format

Throughout the semester, we explored what it means to create lively, welcoming, and useful public space. This was achieved through readings and in-class discussions, where we explored the pros and cons of activating public space and drew lessons from others who have undertaken similar interventions. Additionally, a community engagement workshop was created with a curated stakeholder list to gain insight.

A list of catalyst sites, proposed by the city, was presented to the class, and each team was tasked with picking a site and designing for that particular area. The course's overall structure began with an engagement workshop, an organized event where stakeholders were invited to participate in various activities. Next, we organized the feedback from the stakeholders at the workshop. Using our findings, design goals were created, which are the baseline for all decisions to be made. With the design goals in mind, the class created a kit of parts that are community findings and design goals combined to create a visual representation. This kit of parts diagrams influenced all site design choices. After the framework was set, each team began creating a vision of what they imagined their perspective sites to be, based on the feedback from the community, design goals, and kit of parts. Through iterations of design schemes, the final design proposals were created.

This toolkit serves as a comprehensive project report including the class's research and conceptual proposals. The primary goal of this document is to provide our community and collaborators with our insights and recommendations for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor Plan. This toolkit will also help set a precedent for future urban design initiatives.

– The students of Spring 2025's ARCH750

Key Terms

The following key terms will be used throughout our report:

1. **Placemaking:** an approach for collectively reimagining and reinventing space to maximize shared community values
2. **Community engagement:** the action of capturing local knowledge from residents, community members, and stakeholders
3. **Co-Design:** a design approach that actively involves stakeholders in the design process
4. **Stakeholder:** someone who has an interest and or is impacted by the Poyntz Avenue Corridor Plan and future development

Research Methods

Introduction

The methodology of our research and design project is described in the following paragraphs. This project was the primary focus of the class and was central to the learning outcomes of the course. The project was structured into three phases: “**Set the Stage**,” “**Remeasure and Redefine**,” and “**Codesign**.” These phases had overlapping timelines and engaged students with different kinds of learning.

Phase I: Set the Stage

Set the Stage connected students to previous work done in placemaking, the site, and the goals and constraints of the City of Manhattan Placemaking is one of the primary terms students studied throughout the semester. **Placemaking** is the act of redefining a space such that it takes on a designed and distinct character. “Place-makers” are thus people who engage in the activity of placemaking, whether formally or informally. The first and longest-lasting part of setting the stage was engaging with **case studies**. Students each performed an analysis of a case study of an urban study/intervention by an architecture or urban planning firm. Selected firms included globally recognized design leaders such as Gensler and Gehl. The purpose of these case studies and presentations was for students to learn methods of investigation, research, and placemaking that have been used by experienced place-makers. The second piece of setting the stage was for students who carried over from Fall 2024's ARCH715 to Spring 2025's ARCH750 to present their research to newer students. These presentations allowed these students to analyze their performance, describe the activities they performed, and introduce the existing knowledge and research base that underpin the work of this seminar.

The final step of setting the stage was **site analysis**. Within the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, nine catalyst sites were chosen as potential areas for future development and placemaking. By becoming familiar with one catalyst site each, students gathered qualitative and quantitative data about Poyntz. Site analysis was completed through diagrams and quality studies that create visual and actionable data about strengths and opportunities along the corridor.

Phase II: Remeasure and Redefine

Remeasure and Redefine continued to establish a knowledge base in preparation for the third phase of the project. Phase II also leaned more explicitly into community engagement as a source of data. The first activity of phase II was an **engagement workshop** focused on gaining visual and physical data about the Poyntz Ave. Corridor. Students gathered into pairs, and each pair proposed multiple possible activities. For the workshop, we eventually refined the total activities to six, distributed across the six pairs. Students’ activities varied in the nature of the questions asked, with some focusing on transportation, others on favorite places, and still others on desired amenities and the like. Afterward, students were tasked with analyzing, refining, and synthesizing the visual and physical data output by the activities into intelligible, actionable observations about the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. In the second activity of phase II, each student held a 45-60 minute **stakeholder interview** with a resident connected to the project, focusing on questions about Poyntz Ave. These stakeholders were chosen for their potential interest in future developments of Poyntz, and largely fell into three categories: residents, business owners, and employees. Students also engaged interviewees with an **interactive mapping activity**, again aimed at producing visual datasets to accompany the students’ notes and paraphrases of the interviews.

Phase III: Co-Design

Co-Design is the culmination of the work produced in phases I and II. The two parts of phase III focus, in different ways, on making the work completed in the semester intelligible and valuable to external audiences. The first activity, the **conceptual design proposal**, synthesizes information from the site analysis, stakeholder interviews, and engagement activities, with inspiration from the case studies of the first half of the semester. This final proposal involves both planning-level and architectural-scale urban interventions and will continue to be refined until the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, the proposals were presented to our stakeholder interviewees, other known stakeholders, and city employees for more feedback. While this feedback will not be implemented into our design proposals, it is worth noting that each proposal will have an accompanying page of additional feedback and prospective changes based on the final design. All design proposals have been collated and featured at the end of this **toolkit report**.

Method Recap

> Phase 1: Set the Stage

Analysis I: Case Studies

Learning from placemakers from the past
Time: 8 weeks

Analysis II: Fall 2024 Work

Retooling past work and community engagement
Time: 1 week

Analysis III: Site Analysis

Gathering visual and actionable data
Time: 2 weeks

> Phase 2: Remeasure & Redefine

Analysis I: Engagement Workshop

Getting community input through activities
Time: 2 hours

Analysis II: Stakeholder Interview

Discussing individual vision
Time: 1 hour

> Phase 3: Co-design

Analysis I: Conceptual Design Proposal

Proposing a new design for each catalyst site
Time: 4 weeks

Analysis II: Toolkit Report

Collating this report of all data collected in class
Time: 4 weeks

Phase 1: **Set the Stage**



Class Perspectives

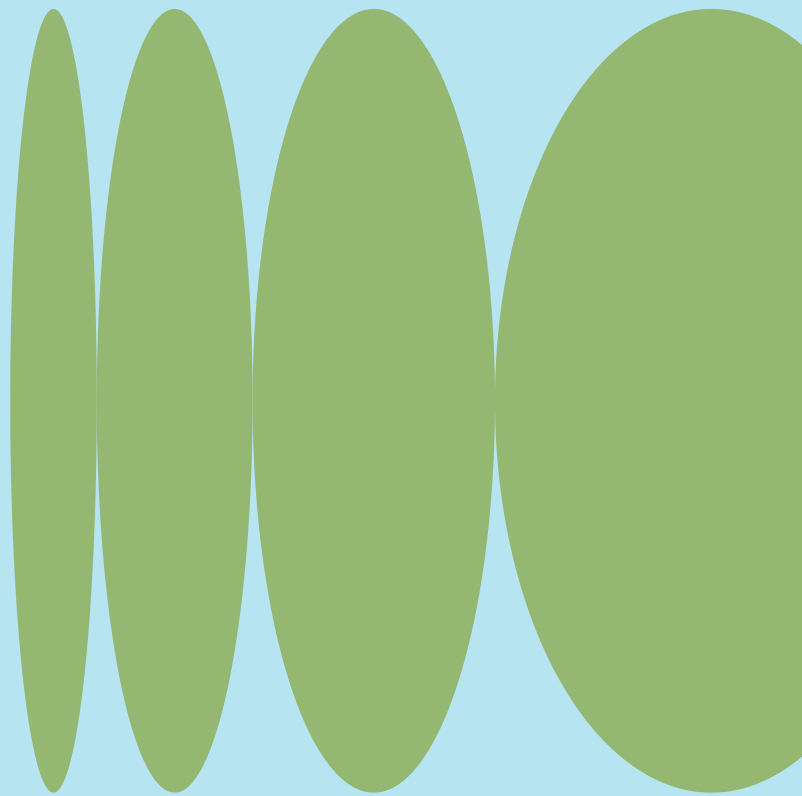
Lessons from core literature

Case Studies

Referenced projects

Site Background

History of Downtown & site



Class Perspectives

Good Public Spaces

What is a good public space?

Public spaces are understood as areas that are open and accessible to all, such as parks, plazas, and sidewalks. A **good public spaces** go beyond just an open space to create interaction, inclusivity, and safety while creating a welcoming environment for diverse groups. Good public space can accommodate various uses and encourage social engagement.

Key Lessons

Throughout the class's discussions, several scholars and practitioners provide insights into the role of public spaces in fostering community engagement, highlighting challenges and proposing strategies for effective design. There is a clear role of **public space in society** that Orum and Neal highlight in their writing. They agree that public spaces serve as arenas for social interaction, engagement, and cultural expression. They also acknowledge that spaces can often lack organic social vibrancy due to car dependency. Ferdman argues that public spaces should not be neutral but actively shape human interaction by promoting engagement. Public spaces can become contested with different groups having different interests.

In our class discussion board, Mario explains that a soccer field was taken over for volleyball, which ultimately displaces its original visitors. There is a difficulty in balancing diverse needs within shared spaces. **Community engagement** is essential in designing good public spaces. Later, Andrew noted that creating a public space doesn't promise that people will actually use it. Instead, community engagement should be held to ensure that the public space reflects the actual needs rather than a pre-programmed space.

Ferdman's perfectionistic approach suggests that public spaces should **actively promote certain values** rather than being passive. While this encourages intentional design, Alexis and Lucas's discussion board questioned its feasibility because it may impose a singular vision that doesn't account for a diverse and changing perspective. On the other hand, multi-use spaces provide flexibility but risk lacking a clear use or purpose. Chance pointed out that large, generic spaces can often feel less personal or engaging. A major challenge when designing public space is **accommodating multiple demographics** without conflict. Tanner says that elderly individuals may seek quieter spaces, while children may prefer active playgrounds. Finding a balance between the needs requires thoughtful zoning and programming. Ethan and Miguel both agree that good public space creates a **sense of belonging** by activating a once passive space. This means moving beyond neutral designs and including elements that encourage participation and interaction. *Are urban spaces typically designed to encourage integration?* Rachel questions why suburban users of the public spaces use them less frequently, whether they are designed or not. The idea of moral minimalism, discussed by Orum, suggests that suburban public spaces often lack a strong communal identity, making them less engaging than their urban counterparts.

Our Takeaways

Placemaking is about **designing meaningful, engaging, and inclusive spaces**. This ties directly into our research by enforcing the importance of four things: community engagement by understanding the local needs and the cultural contexts before designing the place; balancing flexibility and identity by avoiding spaces that are too generic; encouraging social interaction by using design elements like seating, pathways, and programming to promote engagement; and recognizing the role of policy and governance in public spaces. By exploring how to design public spaces that create community connections, we can be **inclusive** and **adaptable** to the needs of different people.

Connections to Place

What is a place?

Place can be defined in many different ways. Places are more than just physical spaces. While spaces can be defined by the physical elements and their geographical location, places become much more than physical entities through **interaction, experience, and meaning**. When a space becomes associated with personal, social, or cultural value, it is transformed into a place. Places have **emotional connections** and ties to them. They can have an attachment connection through memories, or a place can have identity, as it is somewhere a person can feel connected, rooted, or understood. Overall, the transformation of a space into a place can be vital to the design process as it gives a way to understand the importance of human perception, memory, and emotions.

Our Takeaways

During this course's discussions, several designers and scholars such as Vitello, Gehl, and Patrick Devine-Wright have provided thoughtful insights on topics such as place versus space, place attachment, and place identity. Throughout urban planning and in writing like *The Human Dimension* by Gehl, the human experience and dimension within a city have been overlooked. Factors such as specific buildings, car traffic, and unsustainable practices have become the focus, causing neglect in our cities that results in limited space, noise pollution, unhealthy living habits, and overall bad conditions. Most commonly, the lack of design for the human dimension can be seen in traffic infrastructure. Cars have invaded the streets, causing a decline in walkable communities. Cities have become flooded and congested. Sidewalks have stopped becoming places for people to gather and interact.

Overall, the places have started to lose their meaning and thus have just become a space. A space that is unsafe, polluted, static, and unhealthy. Inherently, our cities want to become lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy. *But what does this mean for our cities, and how do we achieve this?* Overall, it means we need to find a way to create these places that utilize these qualities. We can achieve this by **bringing the human dimension back** into the space. Walkability is a good way of achieving this. Walkable cities are lively with movement happening more frequently than in a congested vehicular one. This bustling activity will, in turn, create a safer community as more visibility and movement create a sense of security. It creates the feeling of eyes being on these streets and these sidewalks. It shows that people feel comfortable interacting with both others and the space itself.

The Impact on Designers

In Devine-Wright's writing on Rethinking NIMBYism, it discusses how understanding that place can have **attachments** and **identities** to community members is important in understanding our cities. When engaging with the community, this must be remembered. Change can be scary, especially when places mean so much to their users. Therefore, the first step when engaging in the community is to be aware. To be aware of possible connections and meanings that the place may hold, and to understand how change will affect the community. However, creating an **engagement process** that allows community members to share their concerns and feelings about the change will help foster beneficial feedback. Whether small or large, places always impact their people, negatively and positively, and it is important to engage, listen, and react in a way that is reflective of this **community knowledge**.

Possibilities of Placemaking

What is placemaking?

Placemaking is the act of **creating culturally significant locations** for members of the community. This can be achieved by refurbishing public spaces that lack engaging features or by transforming neglected areas into public parks where community members feel **comfortable** and **safe**. Placemaking does not just mean adding features that look nice and putting on a fresh coat of paint. For a process to be considered placemaking, it must involve community engagement to truly understand what is needed in their public place. Another crucial aspect of placemaking is recognizing that these places should be welcoming to everyone. These spaces aren't to be reserved by one demographic or put them to shame. They must be inviting to all.

Key Lessons

Often, when new parks and public spaces are being built, securing funding for these projects can be quite challenging. This is often when cities turn to big funders to help put these projects into motion. However, placemaking is not a result of creating something for someone who is willing to pay for it. Just because you have the connections and financial backing for a developmental project doesn't mean you are going to be creating a place for the community. Designers have to be very careful to understand the **motives** for whom this public place is being designed for. This place could be the primary benefit to the person in power, and they will forget the small everyday visitors. Placemaking is **inclusive to everyone** and incorporates ideas from everyone.

Many different groups of people may have a **special connection** to the place, and it is important to design for each of them. Often, without discussions of identity, we find ourselves excluding groups that we don't want included, such as skateboarders or the homeless population. By looking at all uses through the same lens, you can design a place that is beneficial to everyone. It is also crucial to engage with the community and speak with those who live there. They will share the most essential connection to a specific place and reveal hidden secrets previously unknown. Everyone has their reasons for connecting to a place; some places hold special **memories** for an individual, and others have such a strong connection to a place that it becomes part of their **identity**. When we explore placemaking, we have to also explore all of these feelings, and one of the best ways of doing this is through conversations. Allowing people to **share their stories** allows us to understand feelings from a different point of view. When it comes time to decide which design moves forward, it's essential to have a **well-rounded team** that speaks for everyone. Historically, these decisions were made without consulting everyone involved, and many minority groups were overlooked. A significant aspect of placemaking is learning how to engage everyone effectively without having too many cooks in the kitchen. When designing for the project on Poyntz, we need to understand many different elements of how our project will come to be. Through the class, we have worked to understand what community members are involved in our project and how we can cater to their needs. Through interviews and community engagement events, we have had the opportunity to **understand different stories** from around the community and collected them into usable data for our design. Using this data, we will address key issues and **highlight the benefits that this area already has**.

Power & Identity

Introduction

Placemaking is not merely a tool for design; it is inherently **political**. It determines who has the right to shape, use, and define space. This section will examine the intersection of placemaking power and identity. A key question to consider is: *who gets to participate in public life, and who is excluded?* As we discussed in class, the notion of “public” is often misinterpreted, particularly in urban environments where privatization, hostile architecture, and cultural commodification run rampant. This section will explore how power and identity influence the lived experiences of public space and how critical placemaking can pave the way towards justice.

Power & Control in Public Space Design

Public spaces are **rarely public** in practice. In *Fortress L.A.*, urban theorist Mike Davis discusses how cities like Los Angeles have become fragmented and fortified, driven by exclusion and surveillance. Wealthier neighborhoods are shielded behind gates and secured by private guards, while the urban poor are forced to navigate areas intentionally designed to limit their presence. Cities impose a **spatial hierarchy** that favors some and displaces others through design elements like hostile architecture, zoning laws, and increased policing. This phenomenon is further exemplified in Don Mitchell’s examination of People’s Park in Berkeley, California, in *The End of Public Space*. When unhoused individuals and activists transformed the park into a hub for community and resistance, their presence was labeled disruptive. The university reacted by adding volleyball courts and surveillance systems, framing it as an initiative to “clean up” the area.

Yet, this action concealed a more profound objective: to redefine the park’s intended visitors as middle-class students and local residents. These instances illustrate that power is exercised not only through legislation and law enforcement, but also through design choices. A bench with dividers serves as more than mere furniture; it symbolizes a broader ideology regarding who is entitled to public spaces. This realization prompts a reconsideration of what it truly means to design for the public and whose **comfort** and **security** take precedence.

Identity and Access: Who Feels Welcome?

Public space is **not experienced equally**. Erin Toolis reminds us that access to public space is influenced by identity factors such as race, class, gender, and housing status. Her concept of critical placemaking aims to challenge dominant narratives and **reclaim spaces** for marginalized communities through storytelling, direct action, and participatory design. In *Whose Culture? Whose City?*, the author critiques how places like Bryant Park and Hudson River Park have become privatized, sanitized, and surveilled. These so-called “public” spaces are increasingly designed for consumers and tourists, with design choices and usage rules that exclude the poor, the unhoused, and those who do not conform to an idealized “paying public.” This tension was echoed in class observations, where students reflected on how design choices intended to increase “safety” often marginalize vulnerable populations. Curfews, fencing, and surveillance disproportionately affect unhoused individuals, youth, and communities of color. The very tools used to secure space for some can render it hostile to others.

Design, Power & Belonging

The readings and discussions from this unit offer several recurring insights that deepen our understanding of placemaking:

- **Design as a Tool of Exclusion:** Urban design can marginalize individuals through subtle mechanisms such as benches that discourage sleeping, parks with no shade or seating, or areas lacking ADA access.
- **The Public vs. the Controlled:** True public space supports free movement, expression, and presence. In contrast, many “open” spaces are tightly managed and surveilled.
- **Identity Shapes Experience:** People's sense of belonging in public spaces varies widely. For many, race, class, and housing status influence how welcome or policed they feel.
- **Placemaking as Resistance:** Acts like creating community gardens, murals, or pop-up events are not just creative; they are political strategies that reclaim space and voice.

These themes raise important questions about the persistence of exclusionary design and the ethical responsibilities of designers. *How can future placemaking efforts center the voices of those often left out? What does it mean to create space for everyone, not just those with economic power or political influence?*

Key Lessons

This topic directly informs our broader research on placemaking, engagement, and co-design by highlighting how identity and power dynamics shape **spatial experiences** and **access**. Poyntz Avenue Corridor, a space that serves as Manhattan’s symbolic “main street,” prompts us to ask:

- *What kind of place is being created here?*
- *Who has the power to shape it?*
- *Who feels welcome, and who does not?*

This corridor is used by a range of people, including Kansas State University students, local residents, and those with limited or no housing. Within the student body alone, identities vary widely: international students, first-generation college students, rural Kansans, and people of color each bring distinct experiences of space and safety. A one-size-fits-all approach to placemaking cannot meet such diverse needs.

Designing for inclusivity involves deeply **engaging with diverse perspectives**, not just through surveys or stakeholder meetings but via continuous, participatory dialogue. This process requires recognizing and confronting historical injustices. Although Manhattan may not have undergone formal redlining, exclusionary systems (economic, social, and institutional) continue to influence access to space.

The corridor is more than infrastructure. It tells a story about what the city values, whose histories are honored, and what futures are imagined. Reclaiming space also means **reclaiming voices** through murals, storytelling, oral histories, and intentional spatial design, and diverse experiences can be made visible and celebrated.

Conclusion

Placemaking must be an **inclusive, radical act**. Spaces should not only be beautiful but also just. The readings from Davis, Zukin, Mitchell, and Toolis demonstrate that, without intention, public spaces become exclusionary. Designers, planners, and policymakers must **prioritize the historically excluded voices** and resist the commodification of urban life. Only then can placemaking fulfill its potential as a force for equity and belonging.

Placeunmaking

Introduction

Placemaking, a concept that has been explored in depth in this course and throughout our conceptual design processes, is the transformation of space to reflect the community actively using it. While placemaking in most contexts of this course was defined as a positive act, it does have its negative connotations. Specifically concerning the act of **placeunmaking**, which is the intentional or unintentional elimination of identity and meaning in space. To fully understand the effects of placemaking and how place-unmaking occurs, it is critical to understand how power and identity relate.

Power & Place

To understand power's relation to placemaking, it's important to define what power is and its effects. In this context, power is the ability to make decisions, and Robyn Burns and Lisbeth A. Berbary explore in their writing "Placemaking as Unmaking" how power can lead to place-unmaking. Burns and Berbary explain that for placemaking to take place, there must first be an **act of unmaking**. This act of unmaking has historically been employed as a form of control by those in power. Examples include colonialism, gentrification, and revitalization. In each of these instances of unmaking, those in power attempt to sanitize identity, the characteristics unique to the individual or the community. While Burns and Berbary's argument centers on the historical relation of power to place unmaking, our conversations addressed the role of **identity** and **power** in resisting placemaking and promoting place-unmaking. We discussed the resistance to top-down urban design, a practice where the few make community decisions for the many. Additionally, we discussed how placemaking can be resisted by **embracing cultural traditions** and reasserting the original use of space.

The connection of power and identity to placemaking revealed to us the need for thoughtful and intentional conceptual proposals.

The Importance of Community Engagement

The examination of top-down urban design in this course highlights the importance and necessity of thoughtful and robust **community engagement**. Engagement challenges top-down urban design by identifying blind spots in a design that might otherwise go unnoticed. When **power** is shifted back to the community through engagement, it creates equitable spaces, promotes stewardship among community members, and strengthens the sense of belonging. Our class quickly learned that true co-design relied on a connection to Manhattan and the community's identity. Throughout each iteration, feedback reflecting the community's identity guided the projects, and when community members were empowered to make decisions about Poyntz, the identity of Manhattan was upheld throughout the design process.

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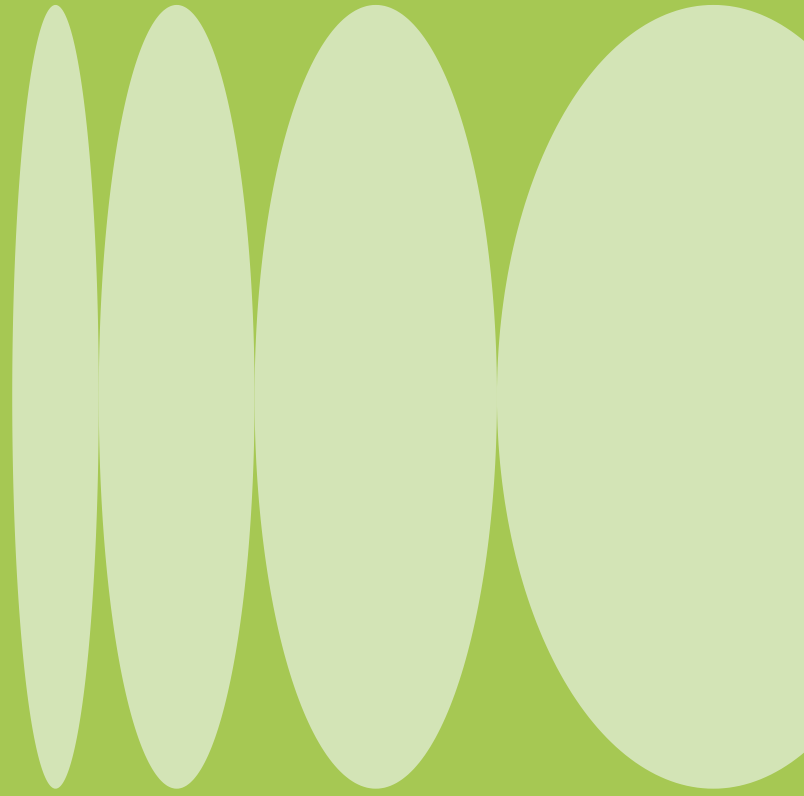
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Engagement Case Studies

Memphis Riverfront

Firm

Studio Gang

Location

Memphis, TN

The **Memphis Waterfront Concept** was a strategy created by Studio Gang to identify ways to revitalize the Memphis Waterfront. The city's goals regarding the waterfront are to restore, foster, and connect the community. The concept focused on developing five specific zones: Fourth Bluff, Mud Island, Tom Lee Park, MLK Park, and Green Belt Park. One of the major focuses of developing the riverfront is creating connections between the Memphis urban environment and the Mississippi River. This connection between the urban and natural environments would help provide economic value and improve residents' quality of life. This conceptual vision was achieved through **focused city engagement** with stakeholders, who were asked to share their vision for the Memphis waterfront and identify new programs that could be placed along the riverfront. Additionally, an **online survey** was sent out to residents, and the information gathered focused on understanding who currently interacts with the waterfront and what stakeholders would like to see developed along it. The outcome of the waterfront concept today is the reintegration of green space, investment in new programmatic spaces to support tourism, and a connection to the waterfront through a six-mile walking and biking path.

Our class's main takeaway from this case study was the **use of amenity fattening**. For each zone presented, multiple programmatic additions were made to enable community utilization. In addition to examining these programmatic additions, our class found that the addition of temporary economic pop-up markets is a good strategy to implement along Poyntz Avenue.



Tom Lee Park

This image depicts the children's zone, sports court pavilion, and walking path adjacent to the Memphis riverfront in Tom Lee Park. (Tom Lee Park, 2025)



Greenbelt Park

This conceptual image of Greenbelt Park shows its potential, which includes an observation point, walking path, and space for waterfront activities such as kayaking. (Memphis Riverfront Concept, Studio Gang, 2017)



City Engagement

Stakeholders discuss the potential for new programs along the riverfront by placing flags where they think new programs should be incorporated. (Memphis Riverfront Concept, Studio Gang, 2017)

Design for Distancing

Firm **Neighborhood Design Center**

Location **Baltimore, MD**

The **Design for Distancing** initiative, led by the Neighborhood Design Center, addressed the urgent need to support small businesses by reimagining public space. The project emerged in response to declining foot traffic, limited indoor capacity, and the need for safer, more adaptable outdoor environments. Recognizing this challenge as an opportunity, the initiative sought to transform underutilized urban areas into functional, community-driven spaces. An underutilized urban space can present itself in many ways, such as vacancy, poor land usage, and low economic quality. In this case, however, it refers to the lack of pedestrian traffic to local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. A core component of the project was facilitating **public engagement** and cooperation in the development of community-friendly spaces while maintaining safety guidelines at the time. Methods such as **workshops, surveys, and temporary design installations** allowed community members to actively participate in shaping solutions. Insights from local businesses and residents were systematically collected and analyzed, and this input directly influenced the final designs, ensuring that spaces met real needs while remaining practical and adaptable. The project's success highlights key takeaways for future urban design efforts. Effective public space interventions require **iterative feedback, inclusive engagement, and flexible design solutions**. By prioritizing collaboration between designers, businesses, and the community, cities can create vibrant spaces that support economic growth and social well-being. This project offers a replicable framework for **integrating community input** into public space, making cities more open and responsive to local needs.



Public Pickup

An exterior pickup area for local coffee during lockdown. (The Neighborhood Design Center)



View of Outside Dining

Seating set outside for restaurants to continue service. (The Neighborhood Design Center)



Working Together

Volunteers and community members come together to create interventions in unused spaces. (The Neighborhood Design Center)

Neighborhood Activation

Firm

Studio Gang

Location

Chicago, IL

Studio Gang's **Neighborhood Activation to Increase Public Safety Through Community-Empowered Design and Planning** explored how urban design can enhance public safety by fostering social interaction. Social interaction is a fundamental aspect of human life that involves the exchange of information, emotions, and actions, all of which contribute to the overall social fabric of communities. The project addressed the problem with the traditional public safety approach of increased policing, which often fails to tackle the root causes of crime. These root causes, as identified through community reflections, include systemic racism, historic disinvestment, open-air drug markets, lack of access to economic opportunity, and a lack of a sense of ownership. It is important to note that these root causes may vary for each unique community and neighborhood. Studio Gang explored how community-driven planning and design interventions can create safer and more connected neighborhoods. Community-driven planning is a collaborative approach where residents and stakeholders actively participate in shaping their community's future through a series of engagement activities. The project engaged the public in several different ways, including **design workshops**, **surveys**, and **collaborative events**, ensuring that residents played an active role. These events allowed the community to voice their concerns, identify spaces with potential, and propose design solutions that met their needs and desires. The inclusive process led to proposals for improved lighting, more accessible public spaces, programs for youth outside of school hours, and the creation of social hubs that encourage positive interactions.

In addition to these initial design interventions, short, medium, and long-term plans were established to maintain momentum and push forward with future improvements. By heavily involving the community, a sense of ownership was fostered among those who live in and utilize these spaces daily.

Key takeaways from the project include the need for early and continual community involvement, the use of multiple engagement methods and activities, and prioritizing design interventions and placemaking that will foster social interaction. With the implementation of community-driven strategies, the design process becomes inclusive and effective, leading to safer and more vibrant public spaces shaped by the needs of the people who use them.



Youth Engagement

Youth Design Leadership program engagement and education session, where participants sketch and collage ideas for a healthier and safer neighborhood as part of a curriculum. (Studio Gang)



New Community Plaza Proposal

Visualization of a new community plaza that was once a vacant lot. Phase 1 design includes a roller rink/multi-purpose court, nature play zone, picnic area, and temporary seating that could be implemented quickly. Phase 2 amenities include permanent lighting, furniture, canopies, and more. Phase 3 design, further down the line, includes the start of a development proposal for a wellness center, sports facility, grocery store, and/or housing. (Studio Gang)

Soundview Economic Hub

Firm

Ennead Lab

Location

Bronx, NY

The **Soundview Economic Hub** is an initiative aimed at reclaiming 30,000 square feet of underutilized space under the Bruckner Expressway to serve as a community-driven economic and cultural space. Led by Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice (YMPJ) in collaboration with Ennead Labs and other designers, the project addresses limited public gathering spaces, poor pedestrian connectivity, and economic barriers for local businesses. To involve the community, **visioning activities** and **surveys** were conducted in 2023 to gather opinions on public needs. Feedback revealed the community's desire for cultural programming, better lighting, and more accessible public spaces. Additionally, local artists were engaged through a Call for Artists in 2024, with a focus on fair compensation, workspace considerations, and overall support. Vendor trials included over 100 Bronx businesses, increasing foot traffic to the hub.

The key takeaways from this project include how the designers and organizers **surveyed local artists** to understand how the project could better serve them and what they needed to participate. Another key takeaway is that small steps can pave the way for more significant actions in the future. The project aimed to generate attention, leading to greater participation and establishing the hub as an essential space in the community that hosts events every Sunday. These methods can guide future projects in designing inclusive, multifunctional urban spaces that reflect community needs while promoting local economic growth.



Hub Proposal

Image 1: Future development of the completed Soundview Hub (Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice 2024)



Art Exhibit

First art exhibit, showcasing local artwork, commissioned for the opening (Ennead Lab 2024)



Pop-Up Installation

Local businesses set up tables and sell to local residents (Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice 2024)

East Harlem Neighborhood Plan

Firm **Hester Street and WXY**

Location **East Harlem, NY**

Hester Street Collaborative and WXY's **East Harlem Neighborhood Plan** focused on addressing a variety of concerns identified by local residents. These concerns included affordable housing, energy independence and resilience (access to renewable resources), policing, seniors aging in place, support for local artists, youth empowerment, air quality, protection of cultural heritage, quality employment opportunities, protection of small businesses, sufficient public open space, healthy food, NYCHA repairs and security, and affordable goods and services. With all these concerns in mind, the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan sought to collect and organize community concerns while developing tools to continue building the community in a way that preserves the culture, economy, and neighborhood character of East Harlem. To achieve this, the plan utilized seven **community visioning workshops** to understand how residents felt about the previously identified issues and to create goals and objectives to address them. For each topic discussed, a different community engagement strategy or series of strategies was used. For the first community visioning workshop, which focused on arts and culture, open space, and recreation, small groups held discussions to analyze different subtopics along with their strengths and challenges. A similar approach was taken for the second workshop, which discussed schools and education, and the third, which focused on NYCHA and housing preservation.

For the fourth workshop, which addressed small businesses and the economy, discussions on strengths and challenges were complemented by a mapping activity to understand participants' shopping behaviors and where they feel safe and unsafe. Workshop five, on affordable housing and zoning, incorporated a mapping activity, discussions, and two surveys to gather participants' thoughts on current and future developments. For the sixth and final true visioning workshop, small groups engaged in a mapping activity that related to all topics, including safety, health, and seniors. Participants then broke into groups to discuss specific topics. The seventh and final visioning workshop allowed the community to review all the objectives discussed in previous workshops and ask any questions they might have.

Key takeaways from the development of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan include the impact of community vision workshops, the importance of utilizing feedback, and how that feedback can continue to develop and shape ideas. By allowing for a seventh engagement activity that analyzed the previous sessions, another layer of feedback was gathered, vital for the design process. The entire city plan for East Harlem was based on input from citizens, making it essential to collect as much information as possible. One of the main goals of the plan was to serve as a guide for future city plans, both in Harlem and elsewhere, making it a valuable resource for a variety of users.



Voting Activity

The jar voting exercise was one of the community engagement activities from the seventh and final forum. (Hester Street)

East Midtown Vision Plan

Firm

Gehl

Location

East Midtown, NYC

This project tackles the challenge of transforming **East Midtown** from a congested, vehicle-dominated commercial hub into a more pedestrian-friendly community. Although Grand Central Terminal generates significant foot traffic, the surrounding area lacks public spaces, greenery, and seating, leading to crowded and uninviting streets. The proposal presents a grand gateway to New York City through flexible interventions (temporary, adaptable design solutions) that aim to improve pedestrian circulation and incorporate more natural elements, like trees and plantings, into the neighborhood.

Using a combination of **stakeholder interviews** (including business owners, residents, and city officials), **public life surveys** (which track how people use and move through space), **workshops, community meetings, online platforms, and temporary urban prototypes**, Gehl gathered extensive community feedback. This feedback revealed a desire for more accessible, vibrant, and comfortable spaces. As a result, several pilot interventions were implemented, including expanded plazas, car-free streets, and improved bike infrastructure.

A key takeaway from this case study is the **use of prototyping as a method for public engagement**. Prototyping allows for real-time testing and refinement of design ideas before committing to permanent changes. This is particularly valuable for projects with limited budgets, as it enables meaningful results while allowing for adjustments based on community response.

Additionally, **utilizing multiple engagement formats** such as digital tools, in-person events, and on-site installations ensures broader participation across demographics and lifestyles. These strategies highlight the importance of designing with communities, not just for them. The lessons from this project can inform future community engagement efforts, encouraging the use of creative and inclusive methods to gather diverse input and shape public spaces that reflect a wide range of voices and needs.



Engagement Workshop

Community members at an engagement workshop sharing their visions for the future of East Midtown (Gehl, 2013)



Conceptual Proposal

Conceptual rendering of "The Balcony" along Vanderbilt Avenue. The design proposes a new elevated viewing platform, dedicated pedestrian space, and increased greenery to enhance the public realm (Gehl, 2013)

The Hyatt Park

Firm **Neighborhood Design Center**

Location **Hyattsville, MA**

The **Hyatt Park** project, located in Hyattsville, Maryland, transformed an unused lot into an engaging park. This project was led by the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC), an organization primarily made up of volunteers, with a focus on helping low- to mid-income communities that lack the resources to achieve their community visions. The NDC collaborated with both community members and city employees to identify their vision for the park. Community members, including local residents, identified a vision using three key words: interactive, colorful, and innovative. Hyattsville city employees and the city council identified several goals to initiate the project, including flexible use, play for all ages, a stage for performances and larger events, and an improved border. Using these goals and vision words, designers from the NDC created a few designs to present at a Hyattsville City Council meeting. Community members were encouraged to provide their feedback on the designs either at the meeting or through an online platform. After receiving community input, the chosen design was revised and submitted to the city for approval. The NDC remained involved throughout the construction process and continued to observe the park in use. A few successes identified after the completion of the project included a stage to host events, outdoor musical instruments, and an improved pedestrian experience through the addition of a barrier between the park and the road. This project demonstrates how architecture and planning firms can **improve community engagement processes by using co-design**, as the NDC did. Revising project designs multiple times after receiving community feedback ensures that the project is truly designed for the community.



Identifying Problems

Problem areas identified for improvement included a lack of landscaping, no street/pedestrian interface, lack of play infrastructure, and the ability to expand (Neighborhood Design Center, 2025)



Engagement Activity

A young girl participates in a workshop activity, where participants leave a doodle for the NDC (Neighborhood Design Center, 2025)



Final Outcomes

Final free play design, where people of all ages can run and play on log-inspired equipment (Neighborhood Design Center, 2025)

Under the Elevated

Firm **Design Trust for Public Space**

Location **New York, NY**

In 2012, the Design Trust for Public Space initiated research on spaces under elevated infrastructure, including roads and rail lines built above ground level, typically on structures such as bridges or columns, through the **Under the Elevated** project. Through their research, they discovered that spaces under railway lines, bridges, and highways were often underutilized but could be transformed into vibrant public spaces with the right tools. Additionally, such infrastructure had historically divided neighborhoods and disrupted communities, so improving these spaces presented an opportunity to help rebuild these communities. The initiative started by forming a **board** made up of architects, planners, city officials, transportation experts, and key stakeholders to develop ideas for transforming these spaces. The Design Trust then organized **pop-up events** to collect community input on how to repurpose these areas. By setting up tables under the bridges and roads, they were able to directly engage with community members who used the spaces. After gathering input, they implemented **small design improvements**, such as better seating, lighting, and landscaping, as well as educational exhibits to inform users about the history or culture of the area. These interventions encouraged people to stop and enjoy these previously neglected spaces.

After conducting the pop-up events, the Design Trust compiled the data collected into a book, which can now serve as a resource for similar projects. Through this process, they learned that community members would use these spaces if there were activities or safe areas for sitting and resting.

The spaces also offered practical benefits, such as shade, which acted as a refuge from the heat of the day. Furthermore, the real estate beneath elevated infrastructure is often undesirable for businesses, which makes it an ideal place for public spaces, free from the risk of commercialization.

A major lesson from this project is the idea that **public space can be created anywhere**. Although these spaces under bridges were often neglected and had negative connotations, with a little attention and care, they were transformed into areas that could celebrate the culture of the local community. The key takeaway is that, no matter the initial state of a space, intentional design and care can revitalize it into a place that serves the community.



Bronx Rising!

The beginning of the Bronx Rising! event at the Boogie Down Booth. Through a series of educational boards, these seating structures explain the rich history of music in the Bronx, offering a place to rest while waiting (Design Trust for Public Space)



Community Feedback at South Boulevard

Tabling at South Boulevard, gathering community feedback. In this activity, community members were asked to share some of their favorite memories in their neighborhood and reflect on the attributes that made those places special to them (Design Trust for Public Space)

Reimagining Poyntz Ave Corridor - Praxis of Community Engagement

Firm

Fall 2024 ARCH 715

Location

Manhattan, KS

Intro

ARCH 715: Praxis of Community Engagement

was a course offered to students in the Fall of 2024. The class, consisting of 14 students, focused on understanding community engagement and its role in the design process. ARCH 715 was conducted in partnership with the City of Manhattan to undertake the community engagement efforts for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor Plan. Lessons and materials were learned in the classroom setting under the guidance of Professor Gabby Coleman, with the City of Manhattan represented by John Verssue. The course involved three workshops, each building upon the previous to refine the activities created for the project.

The **first workshop** was a community engagement event hosted by the City of Manhattan at City Hall. The **second workshop** was conducted by the students at the Kansas State University Student Union, and the **third workshop** took place along Poyntz Avenue at two locations: Parkside Station and Flight Crew. Each workshop enhanced the process, allowing the students to improve and adapt their activities. By the end of the semester, the class compiled all the collected data and created a list of takeaways and principles for the Spring 2025 semester to use when creating design proposals.

Workshop 1

Workshop 1 introduced the class to community engagement, including how it is performed and how to handle human interaction to gain meaningful insights. The importance of active listening, understanding people's emotions, and addressing biases were emphasized. Hosted at City Hall during lunchtime, local planning staff (John Verssue and Ben Chmiel) organized the event, created activities, and set up the room. The activities provided a range of approaches, including artistic expressions, writing, and information collection, catering to various people and ensuring inclusivity. These activities were essential for gathering diverse data and setting key lessons.

The data collected from this workshop helped to establish principles used in the following activities. Students learned to make their activities approachable, appropriate for the specific audience, and effective in providing data typologies to support conclusions.



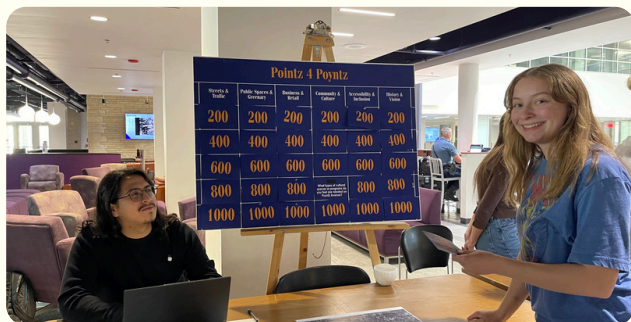
Workshop 1 layout at City Hall (ARCH715 seminar)



ARCH715 students participating in The City of Manhattan's preliminary engagement workshop (ARCH715 seminar)

Workshop 2

Workshop 2 took place in the student union on campus, adjacent to Radina's and the coffee lounge. The setup followed an L-shaped configuration, guiding guests through the workshops in a logical sequence. A variety of interactive activities were offered, such as mapping, voting, and opportunities to leave comments, all aimed at gathering community input. Though this workshop did not directly target the primary stakeholder group (residents, business owners, employees, and users of Poyntz Avenue Corridor), it still garnered valuable feedback. Some participants felt the project didn't apply directly to them, requiring the teams to think on their feet and adapt the layout to increase engagement. The main goal of Workshop 2 was to facilitate face-to-face interactions and identify areas for improvement ahead of Workshop 3. The feedback revealed key themes including crosswalks, safety, landscaping and greenery, lighting, store variety, social interactions, and bike lanes—elements the community expressed interest in for the ongoing transformation of Poyntz Avenue.



Workshop 2 at the KSU Student Union (ARCH715 seminar)



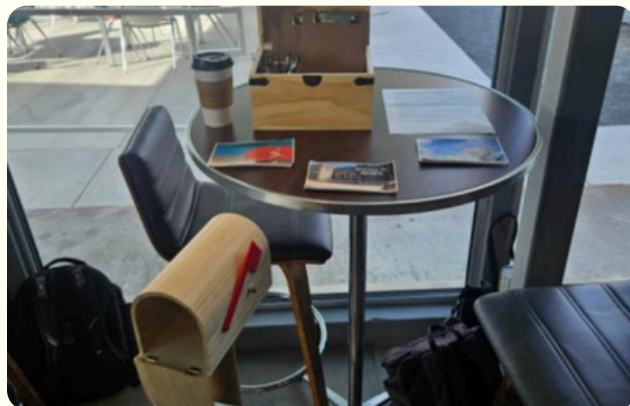
Feature Ranking and Mapping Activity at Workshop 2 at KSU Student Union (ARCH715 seminar)

Workshop 3

Workshop 3 was the culmination of the semester's work, with students facilitating an engagement workshop along Poyntz Avenue. The workshop took place at two businesses, Parkside Station and Flight Crew. The activities varied in style, incorporating games, discussions, writing, and hands-on interactions to create accessible activities for all. The teams used skills learned in previous workshops to adapt and be flexible, such as moving activities to gain more participation and working with weather conditions. A key challenge was the lack of people, as the workshop occurred during the lunch hour. From the data collected, it was found that the community valued green spaces, wanted to improve pedestrian safety, viewed Poyntz as a multi-transportation corridor, saw Poyntz as a cultural/social hub, and wanted Poyntz to develop a unique urban identity.



Workshop 3 at Parkside Station (ARCH715 seminar)



Postcard to Poyntz Activity Setup at Workshop 2 at Parkside Station (ARCH715 seminar)

Conclusions

By the end of the semester, the class established principles that designers could use as tools to align their work with community needs. Key themes identified from the data included safety, usability, bike lanes, access to greenery, and creating Poyntz as a cultural and social hub. The class drew **five conclusions**:

1. People value the park and green space but would benefit from more landscaping, shaded areas, and dynamic outdoor spaces to enhance their experience.
2. There is a need for improved pedestrian safety, more crosswalks, and walkable spaces to reduce vehicle dominance and create a safer, more accessible environment for all users.
3. Poyntz is viewed as a multi-transportation corridor, with a need for better public transit options, dedicated bike lanes, and enhanced safety for cyclists.
4. The community values Poyntz as a cultural and social hub and would like to see more public amenities, small businesses, and diverse shops, especially near the park and to the west.
5. There is interest in Poyntz developing a unique urban identity, but many feel that the existing downtown atmosphere should extend further along the corridor.

Design Principles

From these conclusions, the class developed **four principles**:

- **Linking Poyntz Corridor with Downtown:** Strengthen the physical link between Poyntz Corridor and downtown through cohesive streetscape design, connecting bike lanes, extending sidewalks, using consistent materials (like limestone), and developing mixed-use buildings with apartments and shops.
- **Reimagining Mobility:** Enhance pedestrian safety by prioritizing bike lanes, crosswalk signals, street lighting, and narrowing Poyntz Avenue to make it safer and more navigable for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Increasing Green Space and Local Businesses:** Foster the growth of local businesses and community interaction by creating public gathering spaces, parklets, and small plazas, ensuring Poyntz Avenue becomes a destination rather than a pass-through.
- **Creating a Destination for People and Events:** Establish Poyntz Avenue as a vibrant gateway, incorporating design elements such as planter boxes with limestone, plants, green spaces in the road center, parklets, and seating areas to activate the street and establish a unique identity for the corridor.

Moving Forward

The class learned that adaptability is crucial during engagement workshops, it's important not to assume that community members fully understand the project, and using accessible language is essential for successful communication. These lessons will inform future projects and ensure that community engagement is both inclusive and effective.

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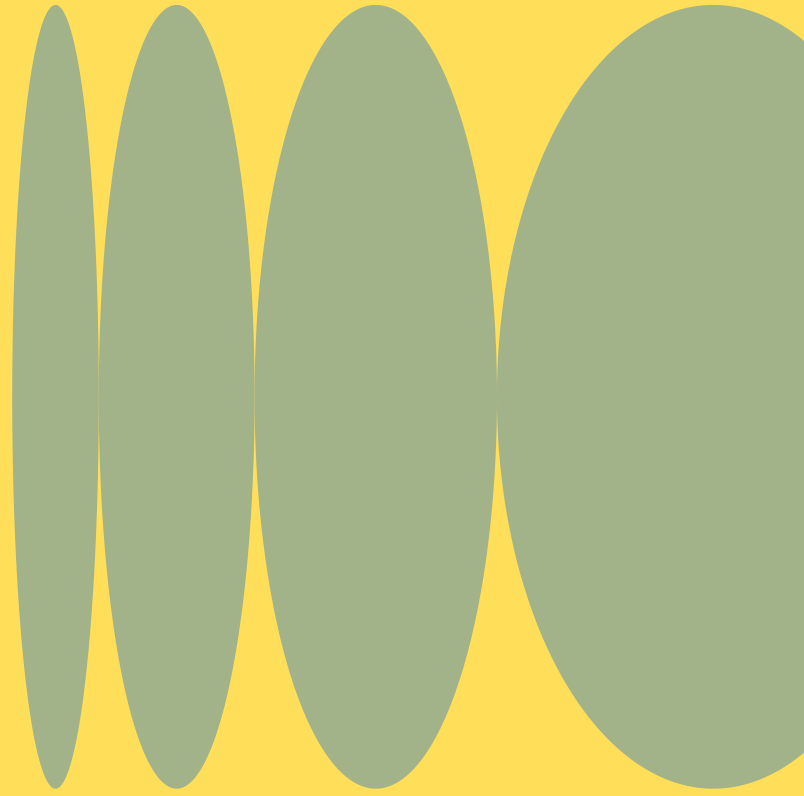
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Site Background

Downtown Manhattan

Rooted in History, Evolving Through Time

Understanding a place requires more than just observing its buildings. It demands a much deeper look into the community and context that shape it. In July 1855, Manhattan, Kansas, was first platted. At its center was an east-west thoroughfare named Poyntz Avenue, which honored Colonel Poyntz. This thoroughfare quickly became the backbone of what would grow into the city's commercial and civic core.

Over time, this original townsite evolved into what is recognized as the Downtown Manhattan Historic District. Since the 1850's Poyntz Avenue has served as the foundation for the district's identity, serving as a hub of activity, economic prosperity, and civic life. Most of the buildings that define the district today were constructed between the 1880s and the 1920s, a period when Manhattan saw significant growth. Among the oldest is the Powers Residence, built sometime between 1879 and 1910. The Wareham Block, developed between 1884 and 1928, hosts the Wareham Theater, which still serves an active role in Downtown life today. This theater was constructed in 1909 on the site of a former opera house from 1884, which highlights the long-standing role as a cultural destination.

In recognition of its architectural and historical significance, the Downtown Manhattan Historic District was designated as a Certified Local Historic District in 1982 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Within it, three buildings hold individual recognition on the National Register, while another is listed on the Kansas Register of Historic Places. Despite changes in the types of businesses and services found here, the district continues to embody a diverse mix of uses, much like it did in the past.

Architecturally, the district houses a wide range of styles that reflect its layered history. Italianate, Vernacular Victorian, Richardsonian, Romanesque, Queen Anne, Classic Revival, and Moderne structures all exist within the district, offering a visual record of the city's evolution over time. Together, the context, community, and architecture of Downtown Manhattan tell a story.

Framing the Downtown Context

While the Historic Core remains central to Manhattan's identity, the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan takes a more expansive view, which reimagines a broader swath of the city that extends beyond Poyntz Avenue's historic footprint. In addition to the Historic Core, the plan encompasses the area at the southwest corner of Bluemont Avenue and Tuttle Creek Boulevard and works its way south from there. The businesses along Leavenworth and Humboldt Streets are included along with the entirety of Manhattan Town Center. The plan goes further south to pick up the area around the Flint Hills Discovery Center and the Manhattan Conference Center before ending at the riverfront of the Kansas River. The districts in the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan that are the most intriguing for the class in the Poyntz Avenue Corridor are West Poyntz, which ends at 8th Street, and the Historic Core, since those are areas that have real estate along Poyntz Avenue.

Carrying the Character Forward

Since the Beyond Tomorrow Downtown Plan already has a vision for the West Poyntz area, it's important to analyze and reflect on how continuity can be created from an already established plan while moving further down Poyntz Avenue.

The West Poyntz area is envisioned to function and feel more like a main street and extension of the 300 and 400 blocks of Poyntz Avenue. The primary strategy to achieve this is through infill development along the corridor and adaptive reuse of key buildings when deemed needed and necessary. The important part is to maintain and preserve the historic fabric along the corridor that is currently present. The plan talks about opportunities for mixed-use infill on the 500 block of Poyntz Avenue, especially where there is underutilized land and parking lots. There would be a continued pattern of pedestrian-oriented development built up to the sidewalk with an active ground floor. The plan also mentions the introduction of Houston Street Townhomes. Even though the townhomes would face Houston Street and address the goal of increasing housing near downtown, it's important to analyze those housing strategies so that the strategies could be incorporated on Poyntz Avenue if deemed to be adequate along the corridor.

The goal of this collaboration between the two organizations is to co-design small interventions on prototype sites along Poyntz Avenue using input gathered from the community in a variety of engagement sessions. The designs and interventions created from this collaboration have the potential to be included in future city plans during the development of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor.

Partnering for Poyntz

Strengthening connections between campus and community is essential to shaping places that reflect shared values. Nowhere is that more evident than in Manhattan, Kansas. Kansas State University has always had a strong “town and gown” relationship with the City of Manhattan. In 2024, Kansas State University was ranked number two by the Princeton Review regarding “town and gown relations.” “Town and gown” refers to the relationship between a university and the surrounding community or city. With this being the case, it just makes sense that there would be a relationship between the City of Manhattan Community Development Department and the College of Architecture, Planning & Design.

Poyntz Avenue Corridor

Framing the Poyntz Avenue Corridor

The Poyntz Avenue Corridor under examination in this report is a section of Poyntz Avenue in Manhattan, Kansas. This block extends from Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard to North Juliette Avenue. The studied site also incorporates the land that faces Poyntz Avenue, which extends a half block north and a half block south of the street. The street is six lanes wide. There are two lanes for traveling both East and West, a center turning lane, and a parking lane on the Southern edge. Traveling east on Poyntz Avenue will lead visitors to proper Downtown Manhattan, which features a variety of shops, restaurants, and activities. The Poyntz Avenue Corridor does not offer mixed-use buildings, much like proper downtown does. Though these two areas do not currently identify with one another, they both share great historical significance.

Poyntz was established in April of 1855 when a steamboat was bound for North Central Kansas. The man who financed the steamboat, Colonel Poyntz, was the influence in naming the street Poyntz Avenue. In 1857, the first school building was constructed at Ninth Street and Poyntz. The current USD central office was built in 1913 at a cost of \$90,000. This building is located at Poyntz and Tenth Street. The stone school buildings still stand firm and have had many different school uses, including being a high school, freshman center, and offices. Along the 900 block of Poyntz, a Women's Club House was built in 1909. This building was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Currently, a family law office operates in this building. In 1939, City Park and Douglass swimming pools were built through Work Progression Administration projects.

The current City Hall and fire station on Poyntz and Eleventh Street was built in 1955. These buildings later went through renovation in the late 90s. Many different buildings have been placed within the Poyntz Avenue Corridor over the years.

Shaping the Future through Site Analysis

The Poyntz Avenue Corridor is greatly diverse in building types and looks. A dive into the site will guide and generate a new proposal to promote the values of the community. The most common building type on the Poyntz Avenue Corridor is a stand-alone building housing a local business. Many houses have been transformed to support small or local businesses. While these local businesses may attract some visitors, other places on Poyntz Avenue Corridor are the main attraction. The primary attractions on the Poyntz Avenue Corridor are City Park, City Hall, Manhattan Arts Center, Parkside Station, and the USD 383 Central Offices. City Park attracts many locals daily, where people participate in exercise, sports, or events. City Park has many sporting facilities, including ball fields, swimming pools, various courts, and a small amphitheater. City Hall sits on the South side of Poyntz Avenue and Eleventh Street, opposite City Park. City Hall attracts visitors for city meetings, hosts city employees, and includes a fire station. City Hall and City Park are only connected through Poyntz by a crosswalk at a traffic signal. Across from City Hall and on the North side of the street, a small restaurant named Parkside Station sits where an old gas station once stood. This building was refurbished and includes a large outdoor patio. On the South block of Poyntz and Tenth Street, USD 383 Central Offices are located. While the offices only occupy a small portion of the building, the rest of the space remains unutilized. Another main attraction is the Manhattan Arts Center, which is located on the North block of Poyntz and N Sixteenth Street. This performance space holds entertainment events which attracts many visitors at one time.

This site includes a main theater and gallery building, along with a smaller art center building. What is not a building on the site is concrete for parking. Upon research of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, it can be noted that connection and outdoor spaces are important and used by the community. Many current spaces are not being used to their full potential. Spaces are lacking meaning and amenities to attract visitors to the Poyntz Avenue Corridor.

Process for Success

The Poyntz Avenue Corridor can relate to placemaking. Placemaking creates a meaningful place for a specific local community. The process of placemaking should include community engagement to ensure a project aligns with a local community and its goals. In the past, community engagement has not been an important step of many planning projects throughout the world. Community engagement will ensure the project becomes successful, meaningful, and utilized. Through codesign in this course, designs desired by the community will come to life. Codesign is a collaborative process where a local community is involved in the design of a project. Community engagement events are usually included in this process. A design may go through various iterations before the community believes the final is designed for them. Community engagement and codesign are the tools needed to successfully transform the Poyntz Avenue Corridor.

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Phase 2: **Remeasure & Redefine**



Community Input

Approach & findings

Engagement Workshop

Overview & recap

Stakeholder Interview

Overview & recap

Community Input

Introduction

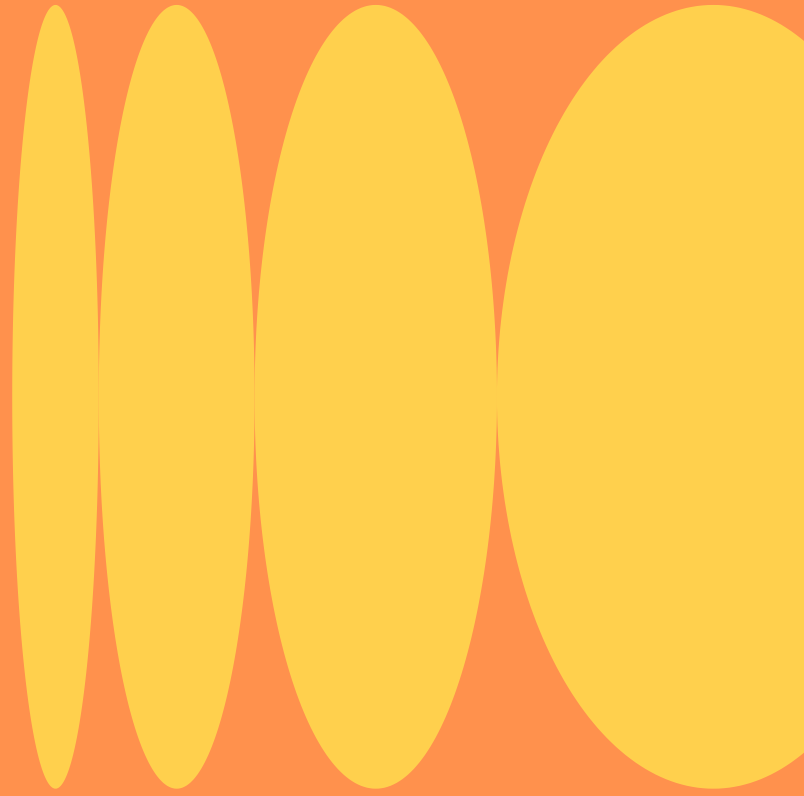
Through an engagement workshop and student-stakeholder interviews, the class obtained critical insight into stakeholders' desires about Poyntz Avenue. The **engagement workshop** was hosted in Seaton Hall on the KSU Campus, and different stakeholder groups, including residents, employees, and local design staff, were invited to participate. The workshop functioned where all the stakeholders had a chance to give their opinion about each booth, allowing the students to gain insights into everyone's point of view on one topic. Different booths featured different options such as drawing, voting, visualizing, and more. The **stakeholder interviews** served as a connection to a resident, providing one person's perspective on various subjects and topics. Away from the public or prying eyes, community members were given their chance to give honest reflections.

Findings

Through these two engagement activities, it became clear that stakeholders are deeply passionate about their surroundings and have a lot to contribute. The engagement series generated a wide range of opinions on various topics, while the interviews provided a platform for individuals to fully express their ideas. Both sets of data will be crucial as we move forward with the design process.

The key takeaway from all of the feedback can be summed up in one word: **inclusion**. The desire for activities and spaces that cater to all people—across demographics, class, race, age, and modes of transportation—emerged as a central theme. The concept of a "complete street" and city emphasizes the importance of ensuring that spaces are accessible, inclusive, and safe for everyone. Incorporating affordable housing and a variety of retail options encourages diverse interactions along the street. Implementing a road diet and complete street design will ensure that all modes of transportation are included and safe. Expanding the city park concept and increasing greenery will promote healthy and vibrant living, benefiting all individuals.

These engagement workshops clearly highlighted that the most effective design solution lies in the inclusion of diverse, approachable spaces with a wide range of uses. This approach will create a more inclusive and engaging environment for the community.



Engagement Workshop

Engagement Workshop Overview

Introduction

On February 25th, in Seaton Hall's Ekdahl room on the KSU Campus, our ARCH750 class held an engagement workshop. Our class was split into 6 pairs, each focusing on a different topic related to the future of Poyntz Avenue. Our activities were as follows:

- **Element Mapping** by Michaella and Alexis
- **One or Two** by Chance and Ethan
- **Design Your Downtown** by Rachel and Emily
- **A Day in the Life along the Corridor** by Mario and Miguel
- **Draw It!** by Lucas and Andrew
- **All Paths Lead to Poyntz** by Tanner and Brandon

Element Mapping

Michaella and **Alexis** examined specific elements that elicited positive or negative feelings from stakeholders. They had participants place happy or sad emotes onto an image with different elements ranging from bike lanes, greenery, bus stops, lighting, seating, and more. From their activity, they concluded that people seemed to enjoy a separation of spaces and uses the most. This includes an idea of separation from bike lanes, sidewalks, and traffic lanes through the use of elements such as greenery and seating.

One or Two

Chance and **Ethan** looked at the characteristics of public elements that stakeholders valued. This included elements such as seating, activity and leisure, arts, and materials. Participants choose between two options regarding the style of elements they prefer.

Through this activity, they begin to understand exactly what kinds of amenities the public wishes for. It became clear that there was a split preference between leisurely activities and recreational activities, yet a strong desire for art and brick facades.

Design Your Downtown

Rachel and **Emily** used their activity to understand the current and desired businesses along Poyntz. Through their activity, they asked stakeholders to design their ideal streetscape. Many of their participants expressed a desire to see more shopping and dining options, as well as a continuation of Proper Downtown's amenities, while also maintaining a separate identity for the corridor. Many stakeholders noted City Park's staying power, despite receiving little support from outside developments, such as an ice cream shop or a restaurant. Through their activity, they found that infill developments such as mixed-use retail, dining, and greenery will help to boost the area's walkability, use, and prominence, making it a destination and not a pass-through.

A Day in the Life

Miguel and **Mario** utilized their workshop activity to understand the stakeholders' lives in a day-to-day sense through a collage. Their activity attracted a large number of participants who expressed a desire for more physical activity opportunities, particularly in the morning or evening, in line with business hours. During the day, they recorded a variety of activities such as going to the farmers market, the pool, dining, or going to see a movie. Other participants were really interested in street art.

Draw It!

Lucas and **Andrew** looked at different ways stakeholders envisioned the street. They had the participants sketch out their ideas or wishes for what Poyntz Avenue could look like. They found that many stakeholders agree with the road diet. A difference in opinion emerged during the discussion on what to do. Some stakeholders suggested angled parking, while others suggested greenery and bioswales, and others mentioned extensions of public amenities.

All Paths Lead to Poyntz

Tanner and **Brandon** were focused on modes of transportation to and around Poyntz. They sought to understand the current and desired needs of stakeholders regarding transportation modes. They found that currently, almost everyone drives to wherever they need to go along Poyntz. When it comes to what people desire, the stakeholders wish to have better walking and biking opportunities. They walked away with the realization that people will always drive where they want, but the design of urban areas should not be tailored to that mode of transportation.

Conclusion

Overall, 13 stakeholders participated in most of the activities, occasionally skipping one or two depending on their personal schedules. The wide range of questions and activity types helped ensure a diverse set of answers and made sure all participants felt comfortable and engaged throughout the process. Through this collective effort, important insights were gathered, including the desire to express the art and culture of Manhattan, the need to infill Poyntz Avenue Corridor with a variety of uses based on user needs, time of day, cost, weather, and more. Additionally, it was emphasized that as the project progresses, the impact of the built environment, greenery, and city parks must be carefully considered.

Element Mapping

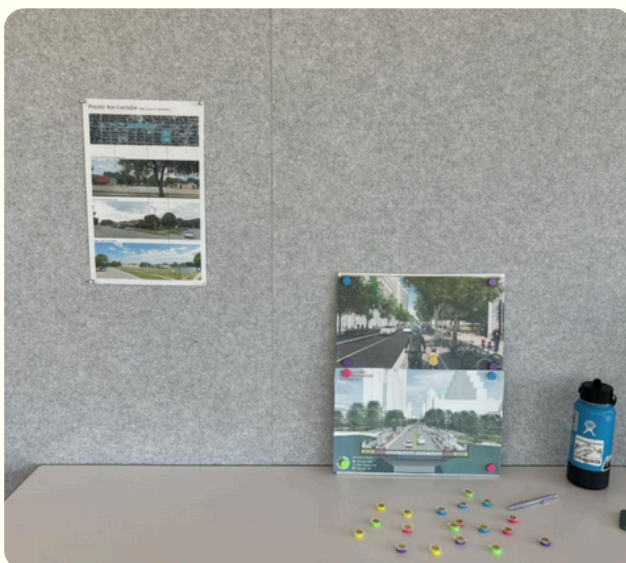
Engagement Workshop

This activity aimed at gathering information about the specific elements that residents would like to see on Poyntz Avenue. The focus was on items such as bike lanes, sidewalks, separation between vehicle, bike, and pedestrian circulation, vegetation, and furniture. The activity began with a background introduction of the project's goals, followed by visuals of catalyst sites to help participants envision potential changes to the space. Next, the pair explained the precedent images, detailing the specific elements they were assessing, in order to facilitate conversations about small-scale design features, such as seating, trees, and bike lane separations. This setup encouraged meaningful discussion, allowing stakeholders to share stories and express their preferences.

Through discussions with 13 participants, it was found that the top image resonated the most with the group, as it felt more natural and human-focused. Many people appreciated the separation between the bike lane and vehicular lane, citing safety benefits. Another popular element was the presence of vegetation and the shade provided by trees, in contrast to the built steel shade seen in the bottom image. Participants mentioned that the trees along South City Park already provide great shade and suggested this could be extended further down Poyntz Avenue. There were also multiple discussions about the potential for a green median with bike lanes in the center of the street.

Additionally, the idea of creating a line of trees as a connection to downtown was brought up during the conversation, which aligned with prior discussions in ARCH 715 about establishing a strong connection to the proper downtown area. One participant noted their dislike of the harsh barrier at Juliette Street, which separates the west and east sections of Poyntz Avenue, and suggested that this should be addressed.

Overall, the insights gained from this activity were invaluable, providing a deeper understanding of the community's wants and needs. The diversity of participants, including engineers, planners, and firefighters, added important perspectives to the conversation.



All Paths Lead to Poyntz

Engagement Workshop

This activity involved maps showing routes through the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, along with several jars where participants could vote using Skittles. The goal was to determine the modes of transportation people in Manhattan use around the Poyntz Corridor. Initially, participants were asked to place a Skittle in the jar that represented how they currently travel, whether by walking, biking, driving, or riding a bus. After voting for each of the routes, they were asked how they would prefer to travel in an ideal world. The same options were provided, with the addition of a streetcar/light rail as a choice. At the end of the activity, the Skittles in each jar were counted to identify the most popular transportation method and to understand how people were traveling on each route.

As guests visited the booth, certain trends in the data became apparent. For example, driving was by far the most popular transportation method in Manhattan. However, on some of the shorter routes, walking or biking were chosen more frequently as current modes of travel. When examining the data for preferred future transportation, there was more variety in the votes. Although driving remained the most popular choice, more people expressed a desire to walk, bike, or even travel by light rail. This data suggested that the current road diet could be improved to better accommodate the needs of people in Manhattan.

The activity also facilitated direct conversations with community members while they were voting, offering insights into why they voted the way they did. Around 12 people interacted with this exhibit. Some participants shared that, regardless of potential changes, they would still prefer to drive, as they feel it is the most convenient option for them at all times. Others shared stories about families who enjoy walking around the park and then dining downtown, but feel that sidewalk conditions could be improved to make the environment safer for pedestrians. This activity provided not only valuable data to inform design decisions but also personal stories from community members who regularly use the space.



One or Two

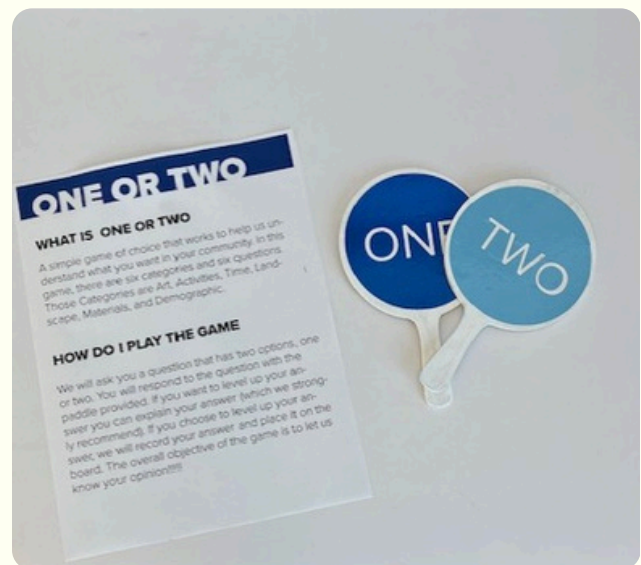
Engagement Workshop

This activity was designed to gather specific data regarding environmental characteristics and measurable qualities of public space. Participants played a game where they were presented with two images corresponding to a question, and they chose the image they identified with by revealing their answer with a paddle provided. The game included six categories and six questions: Activity, Art, Time, Landscape, Material, and Demographics.

Initial findings from the participants revealed three key takeaways. First, there is a general desire for more space for public activity in Manhattan. Second, most categories lacked a clear consensus on the preferred option. Third, residents expressed a desire for more public sculptures, beyond Johnny Kaw. During the workshop, a few changes were made on the fly. The first change was allowing more than two people to play the game at once, which resulted in some participants not having a paddle to answer with. The second change was allowing participants to start and end in different categories, fostering more interaction and conversation among participants.

Reflecting on the data collected from 13 participants, each category received a wide range of responses, but a clear winner emerged in each. For example, in the "Activity" category, leisure activities received seven votes, while recreational activities received five votes. Many participants provided reasoning for their choices, such as one participant's suggestion for more sculptures to serve as landmarks for both residents and visitors.

After reviewing the workshop and the collected data, several improvements could be made to the activity. These include creating more paddles, providing more space for sticky notes, and using specific colored sticky notes for each category.



Draw It!

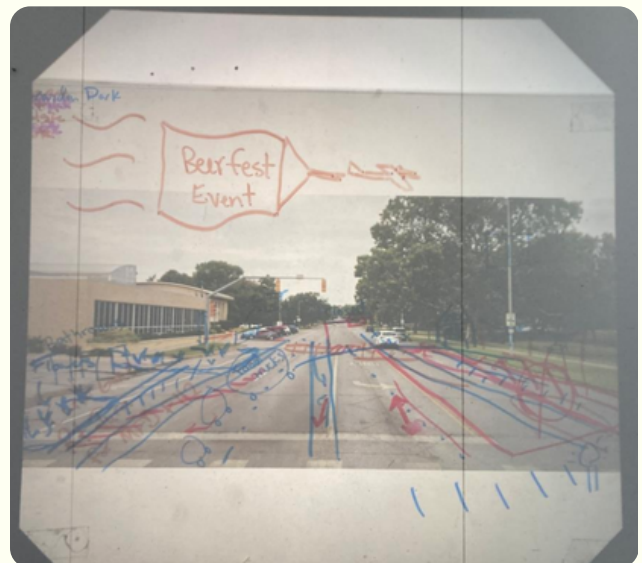
Engagement Workshop

This activity was designed as a hands-on engagement exercise with stakeholders, focusing on creating the images and ideas they wanted to see. Participants produced images that would serve as a starting point for data collection. A total of 9 participants contributed 10 images, providing valuable data for the project.

The design of this activity allowed for engagement with the community primarily through conversation and collective drawing. The main action involved having community members draw with Sharpies over two different perspectives of Poyntz Avenue. To add an element of fun and wonder, base images were printed on transparencies and placed on an overhead projector. Participants then added their drawings on individual layers of acetate. Example images were also provided to inspire and guide guests who may not have known what kinds of elements to consider. While participants were encouraged to draw their own ideas, Andrew was also available to translate verbalized desires and critiques into visuals for Poyntz Avenue.

The resulting activity was visually engaging and served as an excellent opportunity to practice interpersonal communication and networking skills. The twofold nature of the activity contributed to its success. Conversations with guests helped them think through elements they might want to include in their designs, while also encouraging them to draw freely. This not only allowed them to express the literal elements they desired but also captured the overall quality of the space. The drawings themselves steered further conversations, as each new element drawn allowed for deeper exploration into the participants' desires and motivations.

Upon reviewing the activity, it is clear that while the visual data may lack specificity and accuracy, it can be interpreted into a useful set of drawings when paired with conversational analysis. These drawings now serve as a research basis for actionable design changes to Poyntz Avenue. The data reveals common themes, including a desire for increased greenery, color, and native plantings. The road diet was also well-received, and the inclusion of bike lanes—whether protected or not—was critical in many of the drawings. Overall, the activity was a resounding success, with many participants leaving excited and thoughtful about the potential they had explored and visually created.



A Day in the life on the Corridor

Engagement Workshop

This activity explored the everyday activities and interactions that could take place along the corridor at different times of the day. The goal was to understand human behavior and patterns of use, ensuring that future redesigns would be informed by the desires of the people. During the activity, the pair examined common trends in downtown redevelopment, focusing on activities that typically enhance communities, such as markets, street performances, outdoor seating, pedestrian-friendly spaces, and recreational areas.

Participants were asked to imagine their ideal day along the corridor, encouraged to think freely and creatively about the activities they would like to engage in if the space were redesigned to better meet their needs. As they envisioned their ideal day, they placed their activities on a board, corresponding to the time of day they would prefer to engage in each activity. This interactive element created a tangible representation of their vision, making it easier to discuss and analyze. After placing their activities on the board, each participant was asked to walk through their ideal day, explaining their choices and how they would navigate the corridor. Ten different activity boards were discussed during the workshop.

Many participants expressed frustrations with existing limitations, including poor pedestrian infrastructure, insufficient seating, and a shortage of social gathering spaces. Others shared moments of joy they had already experienced within the corridor, such as walking or dining at restaurants along Poyntz.

Throughout the exercise, notes were taken on these conversations, and each completed board was documented with photographs. Ultimately, the activity reinforced the idea that successful urban design is not solely about structures and spaces, but about the people who inhabit them. By prioritizing human experiences and everyday interactions, the team aims to create a corridor that is not only functional but also deeply connected to the needs and desires of the community.



Design Your Own Downtown

Engagement Workshop

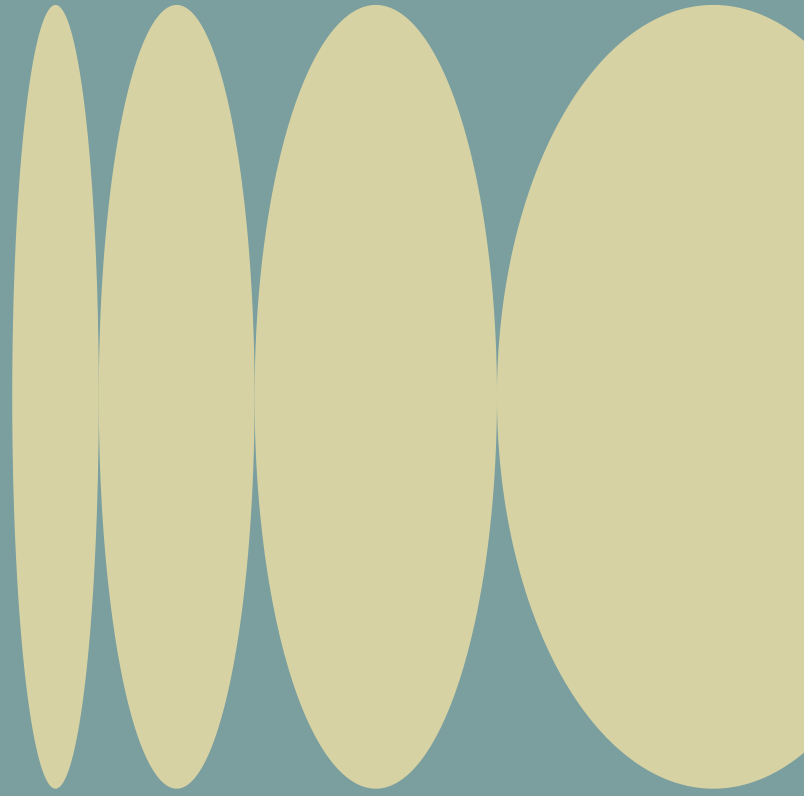
For this activity, the goal was to allow participants to envision Poyntz Avenue Corridor as their ideal downtown. By inviting them to design their ideal downtown, the goal was to gain community insights on current land use and economic activity versus potential future uses along the corridor.

During the activity, participants were first shown a map highlighting the Poyntz corridor and oriented to its layout. It was explained that the right side (east) of the map represented Juliette Avenue progressing towards the mall, while the left side (west) represented MLK Drive, leading towards Manhattan High School and the Zoo. The map also indicated existing commercial buildings in blue boxes and existing residential buildings in grey. After the orientation, participants were asked to imagine their ideal downtown, which could include spaces they feel are missing, spaces they would like to see, and spaces they feel are currently successful. Typical elements crucial to downtown communities were provided, along with blank cards for participants to contribute additional ideas. They were encouraged to think creatively and freely when designing their downtown. Once participants had the directions and materials, they began placing elements on the map that they felt would benefit certain areas. This interactive element allowed them to visually represent their ideal downtown. After placing the elements on the map, participants were asked to explain their decision-making process regarding the placement of these elements.

Thirteen participants created 11 different maps, with a few participants pairing up for the activity. Throughout the activity, several recurring ideas emerged. Participants frequently noted the need to increase green spaces to promote a more walkable downtown, the desire for more mixed-use developments to create areas of activity that would draw people towards Poyntz, and the suggestion for downtown commercial buildings to extend further west.

Overall, this activity provided valuable knowledge about community insights on current land use and economic activity versus potential future uses along the corridor. Many participants shared their preferences for the existing land use, provided insights on potential additions, and discussed the elements they would like to see in the downtown area.





Stakeholder Interview

Stakeholder Interview Overview

Introduction

The second part of this class's engagement series focused on **one-on-one student-stakeholder interviews**. Students were tasked with identifying a relevant stakeholder to interview, and many chose local residents, business owners, or public employees. To guide their interviews, approximately ten verbal questions were prepared, along with two physical questions that corresponded to a correlating map. Students were then responsible for scheduling a time and conducting the interview with their chosen stakeholder.

Anna

Alexis interviewed **Anna**, a city employee and former student. From their interview, Alexis gathered key insights about traffic conditions. Anna expressed concerns that a road diet could be problematic, especially during rush hour with large events like football games. However, she also emphasized the need for protected bike lanes, better sidewalks, and more bus stops. These elements were identified as important, though it would be difficult to accommodate all of them. Throughout the interview, Anna also commented on the importance of greenery and expanding and maintaining City Park.

Lance

Lucas interviewed **Lance**, another public employee, who had a different opinion on the road diet. Lance supported the idea of reducing the road to three lanes, as this would allow for better bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and even parking opportunities.

He also highlighted the need for approachable retail, specifically the lack of a grocery store or pharmacy, and criticized the downtown shops for being expensive and niche. Lance was quoted as saying, "There are more funeral homes along Poyntz Avenue than anywhere else in Manhattan," emphasizing his point. He argued that with proper infill development, the area could become a destination, not just a thoroughfare.

Yvonne

Brandon interviewed **Yvonne** from St. Paul's Church, who strongly supported the idea of expanding City Park and increasing green space. Yvonne emphasized the importance of greenspace for community health and wellness. She also reiterated Lance's point about the need for more approachable retail and a grocery store, adding that shared amenities along Poyntz Avenue were missing. These insights echo recurring themes in the interviews.

Kevin

Chance interviewed **Kevin**, a Downtown business owner and KSU employee, and they had a discussion about local businesses and walkability. Kevin mentioned that having more businesses would benefit all businesses in the area by attracting more people. He emphasized that transforming the road to encourage walking, rather than just driving, would make the area more vibrant and active.

Jared

Ethan interviewed **Jared**, a local resident who noted that many activities and design solutions seem to cater mainly to college students or young families, leaving older residents feeling alienated. He suggested expanding the farmers market and creating more community-oriented activities such as fairs, festivals, and outdoor music. Ethan emphasized the importance of creating activities that can engage people from all walks of life.

Brady

Rachel interviewed a local KSU student, **Brady**, who provided a different perspective. Brady reinforced the idea of poor infrastructure for non-vehicular modes of transportation, noting the poor sidewalk conditions and the lack of bike lanes. He also mentioned that the area's free-standing businesses created a different feel compared to Downtown, where businesses are more integrated.

Yessi

Mario interviewed **Yessi**, a local high school teacher. Yessi, a frequent visitor of Poyntz Avenue, pointed out the heavy traffic during rush hour but mentioned that the road was often empty otherwise. Yessi also emphasized the lack of safety measures, especially given the proximity to a school and a large park. She expressed a desire for a more walkable street with better safety features.

Rodrigo

Miguel interviewed **Rodrigo**, a local student and employee on Poyntz. Rodrigo echoed concerns about the unsafe conditions of the roadway, particularly the lack of lighting and the hazardous combination of walking and biking on the same surface. He also pointed out the lack of seating areas, unless people were customers at a restaurant.

Elisa

Tanner interviewed **Elisa**, another teacher in the Manhattan school district. Elisa highlighted the lack of businesses and activities, particularly for children and teens. She suggested that casual, reasonably priced restaurants would be a great benefit for both the school district and City Park. These amenities would also appeal to young families, helping to make Poyntz Avenue more of a destination rather than just a pass-through.

Jake & Danna

Emily interviewed **Jake & Danna**, local business owners, who raised concerns about circulation and accessibility for businesses. They pointed out the lack of public transportation and bike lanes, both of which could negatively impact local business economics. They also noted the lack of variety in business types and hours, with many businesses operating only during the day. Jake & Danna shared that a more diverse range of uses and business types would help attract more people and boost the local economy.

Tara

Michaela interviewed **Tara**, a librarian and board member. Tara also emphasized the need for improved transportation, particularly for biking and walking. She suggested that the area should be more casual-friendly, encouraging people to visit regularly, rather than just being a destination for specific purposes. A more casual atmosphere would keep the area lively and active.

Brian

Andrew spoke with **Brian**, a local pastor, who shared his appreciation for City Park and other green spaces, noting their positive impact on the community. Brian also mentioned his enthusiasm for electric scooters, which he saw as a great casual transportation option. These scooters allow people to explore areas they might not otherwise visit, making the space feel more vibrant and active.

Conclusion

Through these interviews, several recurring themes emerged, including the need for better transportation infrastructure, more green spaces, and more diverse, accessible amenities that would make Poyntz Avenue a more vibrant, people-centered destination.

Anna was chosen as an important stakeholder for the interview due to her strong connection to City Park and the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. As someone who walks around City Park and Poyntz Avenue daily and is employed by the Parks and Recreation Department, Anna offers both personal and professional perspectives that were valuable to the class's discussion. Additionally, as a resident who has lived in Manhattan for five years, Anna's insight into the area as a frequent visitor made her a key candidate for feedback on the corridor.

During the interview, Anna expressed several concerns about the road diet. By the end of the conversation, she remained worried about the potential negative effects it could have on the area. As an avid walker and dog-walker, Anna shared that she would like to see improvements to the sidewalks along Poyntz Avenue, particularly in terms of consistent material and width, so they are more comfortable for her and others to walk on with pets. She also emphasized the need for more seating options along the corridor, so people can rest while walking. Additionally, Anna suggested the addition of flashing crosswalks, especially near South City Park, to improve safety for pedestrians.

Anna was presented with a map and asked to draw her path of travel along Poyntz Avenue to understand how she uses the area and gain her insights into the corridor. Through this, Anna identified the areas she frequents most often as a pedestrian and pinpointed locations along Poyntz Avenue that she felt needed the most improvement, particularly in terms of sidewalks. She also discussed the potential for adding trash cans and plantings along the sidewalk. The map provided clear insight into which locations were most critical to Anna and what improvements were most important to her.

Overall, Anna envisions Poyntz Avenue as an extension of the proper downtown area, with an activated street featuring elements like street furniture, lighting, and updated sidewalks. She sees Poyntz as a place where she can comfortably walk with her dog, with opportunities for resting along the way. Additionally, Anna sees the potential to create an art walk to connect with the Manhattan Arts Center, which could help liven up the spaces along the corridor.



Lance is a resident in close proximity to Poyntz Avenue and works as an employee on Poyntz Avenue. After graduating from Kansas State University with a professional degree, Lance secured a position at City Hall in Manhattan. Having lived in the city for several years, Lance offers a unique perspective, both as a resident and a city employee, allowing for insights shaped by his evolving views on the city.

Lance began by discussing his daily commute, noting that he enjoys walking to work when the weather permits. However, he pointed out that traveling from Morrow Street to Poyntz Avenue can be challenging, as the back roads and side streets are often less maintained than the major roadways. Upon arriving at Poyntz Avenue, Lance mentioned the difficulty of crossing the street due to its wide nature, highlighting a potential safety concern for pedestrians. Lance expressed a deep appreciation for City Park, calling it "Manhattan's (KS) best pedestrian asset." He emphasized that the nature of City Park should be expanded throughout the city, reinforcing the value of greenery and green spaces. He believes that incorporating more green spaces along Poyntz Avenue and in other parts of Manhattan would create a more welcoming environment for the city. Having experience in the city council and design sectors, Lance is familiar with concepts like "road diet" and "complete street." He was enthusiastic about these ideas and noted that Poyntz Avenue, in particular, feels too large for its current usage. Lance also emphasized that the amenities along the street, such as seating, parking, and greenery, could be expanded to improve the overall experience. In terms of the built environment, Lance described Poyntz Avenue as a destination. He pointed out that the area is home to more funeral homes than anywhere else in Manhattan, which illustrates his point that there are no casual, frequented, or approachable businesses along the street. Lance highlighted the need for more approachable retail, dining options for all hours (from breakfast to dinner), casual drinking spots, and grocery stores along Poyntz Avenue to make it more vibrant and accessible.

Lance participated in two mapping activities during the interview. The first activity was designed to highlight the differences between Poyntz Avenue and Downtown Manhattan. Lance identified Juliette Avenue as the dividing line, noting that the differences between the two areas are stark. He pointed out the contrasting heights and density of the buildings, the varying uses, and the different types of consumers in each area. He also mentioned that the changes to the roadway serve as a clear indicator of this divide.



Lance (cont.)

In the second activity, Lance mapped the areas he frequents most often. His top choice was City Park, due to its greenery, variety of activities, and open space. His second choice was Downtown Manhattan, because of the variety of shopping and dining options available. Lance's third choice was the shopping area near Hy-Vee and Best Buy, which he identified as offering retail options that Poyntz Avenue currently lacks.

Overall, Lance's insights underscore the need for a more pedestrian-friendly, green, and dynamic Poyntz Avenue, with a mix of retail, dining, and community-oriented spaces that would make the area a more inviting destination.



Yvonne, a Deacon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church located at 601 Poyntz Avenue, was interviewed to provide the perspective of a religious organization on the future of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. Although the church is technically just outside the defined study area, Yvonne's close connection to the corridor—especially her daily interactions with Poyntz Avenue—made her insights valuable to the research. In addition to her work at St. Paul's, Yvonne is a resident of Manhattan and runs her own private therapy practice on the northwest side of the city.

During the interview, Yvonne described Poyntz Avenue as the main street of downtown Manhattan, noting that it is fairly walkable but plagued by poor pavement conditions, creating tripping hazards. She emphasized that, compared to other major roads like Fort Riley Boulevard and Bluemont/Anderson Avenue, Poyntz Avenue is uniquely accessible. Yvonne sees potential in the corridor due to its mix of churches, small businesses, free parking, and especially City Park. However, she highlighted the lack of variety in public amenities, including restrooms and showers, particularly for the homeless population, given the proximity of the homeless shelter. While Yvonne feels safe on Poyntz Avenue during the day, she mentioned that nighttime and early morning conditions are less inviting due to a lack of adequate lighting. She pointed out a significant drop-off in lighting as one leaves the historic Downtown Manhattan area. Yvonne expressed hope that Poyntz Avenue will become a more vibrant, community-focused space in the future—one that is shared and accessible to everyone.

Near the end of the interview, Yvonne participated in an interactive mapping activity. She was asked to use green and red push pins to mark assets and areas in need of improvement on a map of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. Yvonne identified places like the Manhattan Arts Center, Manhattan Library, City Park, City Park Pool, and the Boys and Girls Club as assets due to the community-centered programs they offer families and children. On the other hand, she deemed the car repair shop at the corner of MLK Jr. Drive and Poyntz Avenue inadequate, as it was not an inviting starting point for the corridor. Yvonne also highlighted the importance of parking, marking areas like Parkside Station and the USD 383 offices with a red push pin to signify the need for improved parking. She placed a red push pin at the site of the former Wonder Workshop and the Boys and Girls Club, noting that the Wonder Workshop provided excellent after-school programs for children. Interestingly, Yvonne placed both a green and red push pin on the Boys and Girls Club. While she praised its services, she suggested that relocating it to Poyntz Avenue would help centralize similar programs and services in one area.

Yvonne's overall vision for Poyntz Avenue is one of inclusivity, accessibility, and community. She imagines a vibrant corridor that supports a diverse range of small businesses and housing options, while also serving as a shared space where everyone, regardless of background or need, feels welcome. With improvements like better lighting and amenities that cater to both everyday citizens and vulnerable populations, Yvonne believes Poyntz Avenue has the potential to become a central backbone of Manhattan's identity.

Yvonne (cont.)



This map shows the locations where Yvonne placed green and red push pins, signifying areas she believed could either use improvement or are considered assets to the community.

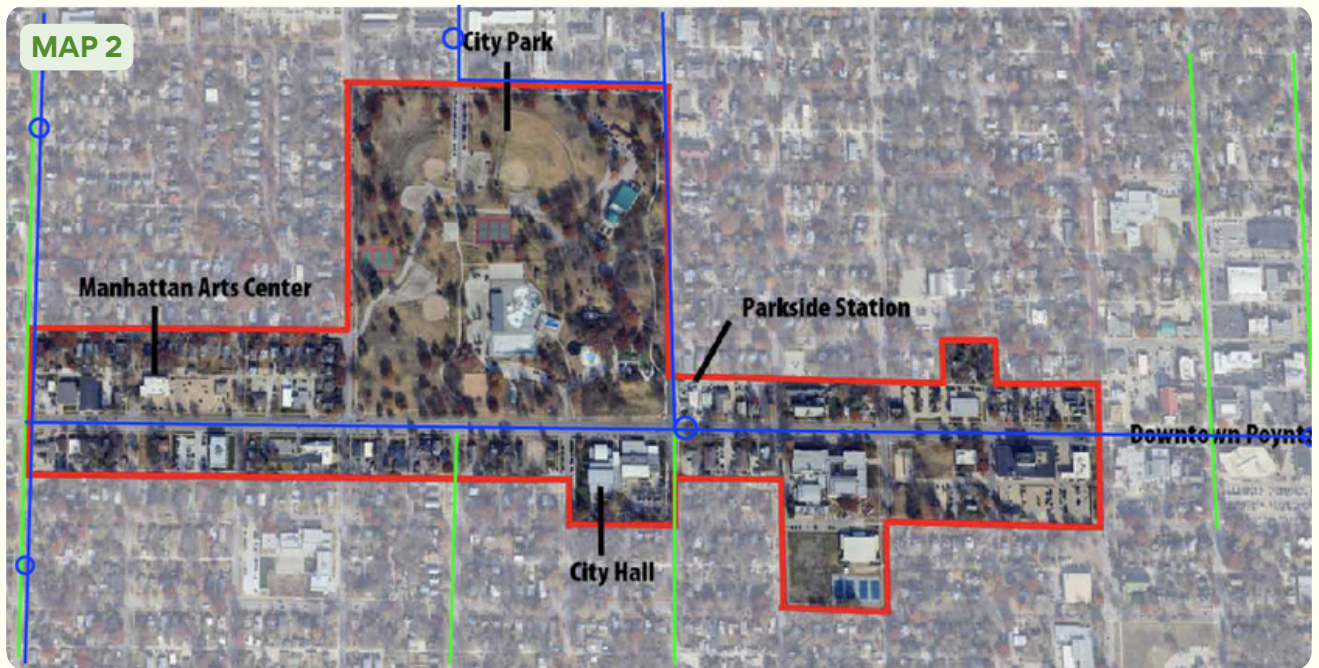
Kevin owns a local business in Downtown Poyntz, works at Kansas State University, and lives near the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. Kevin's unique geographic location and connections to both the downtown community and the student body provide him with a broad range of perspectives on the redevelopment project. During the interview, the discussion centered around his overwhelmingly positive views of the project and his thoughts on the implementation of ideas.

Key points discussed included green space, walkability, and community. Kevin noted that while the current amenities and public spaces along Poyntz Avenue are functional, there is significant potential for improvement. He suggested that by introducing more local flora and improving maintenance of the walking paths, Poyntz could transform from a mere thoroughfare into a welcoming space for a wider range of pedestrian traffic. Kevin also emphasized the importance of fostering community growth through the project, proposing that extending commercial and mixed-use zones along Poyntz Avenue could help create multi-tiered communities in the area.

The interview also involved a mapping activity to further illustrate Kevin's thoughts on the redevelopment. In the first map (Map 1), Kevin mapped out his ideas for future zoning, including the development of commercial, residential, and mixed-use zones. The second map (Map 2) focused on enhancing public transit in downtown, specifically through bus routes. Kevin pointed out that there are currently only a few bus stops along the Poyntz Corridor and suggested that increasing the number of stops and adjusting transit routes could help extend Poyntz Avenue's reach to community members living further from downtown.



Kevin (cont.)



Jared is a resident and homeowner in Manhattan with a longstanding connection to the community. Jared spent much of his childhood in town with family, and after high school, he moved to the area full-time. Two main reasons made Jared a valuable interviewee: first, his perspective as a community member who lives in Manhattan but works outside the city limits, and second, his status as a member of the Manhattan community under the age of 25 who is not affiliated with Kansas State University. During the interview, Jared provided a passionate perspective on the potential of Poyntz Avenue. The discussion began with Jared outlining the types of spaces and activities he would like to see in the area. He emphasized a need for more live music in public spaces, noting that much of the live music in Manhattan currently takes place in Aggieville behind a paywall. Jared sees the revitalization of Poyntz Avenue as an opportunity to create more public spaces for free or inexpensive events, such as outdoor live music. Other topics of discussion included the addition of identifiable landmarks, the creation of outdoor pop-up markets, and the development of more adult-friendly spaces for full-time residents. A significant part of the conversation focused on the concept of a road diet and its potential to improve Poyntz Avenue. After Jared was explained the concept, he agreed that it would be beneficial, as it could enhance pedestrian safety and help activate businesses along the corridor. From this conversation, three key takeaways emerged: the need for pedestrian-friendly roads that facilitate community interaction, the importance of financial accessibility for events to ensure broader participation, and the desire for more spaces outside of Aggieville that feature live music and community engagement.

The mapping activity aimed to understand how Jared currently interacts with Poyntz Avenue and his ideas for improvement. Jared was asked to identify the places he visits most often and his usual path of travel. It was revealed that Jared predominantly travels on Poyntz Avenue by car and frequently interacts with spaces in City Park. When asked how he would alter Poyntz Avenue, he hesitated to propose any significant changes. However, one suggestion he felt strongly about was incorporating commerce along the edge of City Park, adjacent to Poyntz Avenue. He proposed that a space for food trucks or pop-up markets would foster community interaction and attract many local residents.



Brady is a K-State student and frequent visitor to the Poyntz area. Brady was selected for the interview because he visits the site multiple times per week and is highly familiar with both the traffic conditions—whether vehicle or pedestrian—and the surrounding environment.

The interview began with an introduction to the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, outlining what is included in the site. The conversation first focused on transportation and Brady's preferred method of travel to the area. He stated that he prefers traveling by car, citing concerns about walkability. Brady believes that the site is not welcoming for pedestrians or bicyclists, with inconsistent pedestrian paths and unclear bicycle infrastructure. From there, the discussion shifted to the aesthetic elements of the corridor. Brady expressed more negative observations than positive ones, noting that City Park is one of the only appealing features. He finds the individualistic style of the business buildings unattractive and feels that City Park is the corridor's most significant asset. Brady also suggested that green space should be extended further along Poyntz Avenue. However, he mentioned that the boundaries of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor were unclear to him and viewed the site more as a transitional street rather than a destination, with downtown Poyntz acting as the site's destination.

The mapping activity began with an explanation of the map and an orientation to the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, from South MLK Jr. Drive to North Juliette Avenue. Significant sites along the corridor were pointed out to spark discussion. Brady identified and circled areas he enjoyed and areas he thought could be redesigned for better use. He suggested combining businesses into mixed-use buildings to increase community support, noting these on the map. Brady labeled City Park and downtown as the strongest elements of Poyntz Avenue, marking them with smiley faces, as he believes these areas contribute positively to the space.

Brady's vision for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor includes improving pathways and transportation infrastructure. He believes that adding proper bike lanes and accessible sidewalks would encourage more foot and bike traffic. Additionally, Brady feels that the individual business buildings along the corridor are disorganized in both function and aesthetics. He suggested combining businesses into mixed-use buildings to create a more organized layout, which would also promote walkability between businesses. Brady emphasized that by focusing on community-oriented aspects, the Poyntz Avenue Corridor could gain the support of the local community in return.



Yessi, a teacher at Manhattan High School, was interviewed due to her frequent commute through Poyntz Avenue and her connection to the community. Having worked at the high school for two years and lived in Manhattan for four, Yessi offered valuable insights into how the corridor could better serve students. Her perspective helped identify potential programs and uses that could be integrated into the Manhattan Arts Center (MAC) to increase student engagement.

Yessi primarily uses the western portion of Poyntz Avenue, especially the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Poyntz Avenue. She occasionally travels the corridor after work to get home and noted significant traffic congestion near the high school, especially at the intersection of Sunset and Poyntz. During peak school hours, a 5-minute commute can often extend to 20-25 minutes. Yessi pointed out the lack of student-friendly amenities within walking distance, suggesting that a coffee shop or bookstore near the school would be a valuable addition. While students do frequent places like City Park, the mall, Starbucks, and downtown eateries, many face challenges related to limited transportation options, distance, and the absence of accessible, designated study areas. As part of the interview, Yessi participated in a mapping activity to provide a community perspective on existing assets and potential improvements along the Poyntz Avenue corridor. She marked locations she valued, areas that should remain unchanged, and spaces where improvements like public seating or study areas would be beneficial. Yessi emphasized that City Park is a valuable community asset that should be preserved, although she noted that it could benefit from improved lighting. She also expressed concern about how future renovations might impact surrounding neighborhoods, stressing the importance of minimizing disruptions for residents. For new amenities, Yessi identified City Park and the downtown area as ideal spots for study areas and public seating, given their popularity with students and their potential to attract more consistent foot traffic if properly managed.

Yessi's vision for Poyntz Avenue is a more walkable, student-friendly environment with reduced traffic congestion and increased opportunities for students to engage with the corridor throughout the day. She suggested adding more accessible spaces for students to study, eat, and relax within walking distance of the school, such as quiet seating areas, a bookstore, or cafes. This would help ensure students are not reliant on cars to meet their basic needs. Her feedback supports the idea of the corridor functioning both as a transit route and a destination that fosters connection and comfort.



Rodrigo is a student at Kansas State University who also works along Poyntz Avenue. Rodrigo was selected for the interview due to his regular use of the corridor, walking or biking through it nearly every day. His insights as both a pedestrian and a cyclist provide valuable information on the street's functionality and the challenges it presents.

Rodrigo primarily uses Poyntz Avenue to commute to and from work, although he typically cuts through City Park rather than walking the entire length of the corridor. Although the travel time is roughly the same, he finds City Park more scenic during the day and safer at night, due to lower car traffic and more bike lanes in Aggieville. He mentioned that his job does not significantly contribute to the development of Poyntz Avenue, especially since he works at the end of the corridor that is already built up. When asked about public spaces he enjoys, he cited Manhattan Hill and Top of the World for their calm atmosphere and scenic views, acknowledging that this peaceful feeling is difficult to replicate downtown. However, he proposed the idea of creating an amphitheater or event space downtown, provided that traffic noise could be mitigated. Rodrigo also pointed out that the section of Poyntz Avenue under study feels rather lifeless, except for City Park. He emphasized the need for more events, pop-up markets, or community gatherings to make the area feel like a place worth spending time in. Lighting was another significant concern—Rodrigo mentioned that both Poyntz and City Park lack sufficient lighting, making them feel unsafe at night.

Overall, Rodrigo believes the corridor would benefit from stronger connections between the areas people actively use—City Park, Aggieville, and the university campus. These spaces are considered the core of Manhattan, but currently, there is no cohesive connection linking them.

During the mapping activity, which identified opportunities for intervention, Rodrigo circled the parking lot near the Manhattan Arts Center (MAC). He noted that the lot often appears empty and questioned whether the building is still actively used. He suggested repurposing the space to better serve the community. Rodrigo also proposed converting more parking spaces into small parklets or seating areas. He believes these changes would not only improve the street's functionality but also make it feel more vibrant, social, and safe by encouraging more people to spend time in the area.

Rodrigo's vision for the Poyntz Avenue Corridor centers on safety, vibrancy, and connectivity. With improved lighting and dedicated bike lanes, he envisions a street that feels secure for both pedestrians and cyclists at all times of the day. He also emphasized the importance of better linking City Park, Aggieville, and the Kansas State University campus to create a more unified and engaging urban experience.

Rodrigo (cont.)



The map highlights the Poyntz Avenue corridor and areas for redevelopment, particularly near the Manhattan Arts Center (MAC). The proposed redevelopment should mirror the patterns of development seen in the downtown core (indicated by the arrow).

Elisa teaches 9th and 10th grade math at Manhattan High School and was chosen for the interview because of her approachability as a newer, younger teacher. She is known for being open to conversations with students, making her a great resource for understanding their perspectives on the area. Speaking with Elisa helped provide a broad impression of what students are feeling about the community.

During the interview, Elisa shared insights from both students and teachers, which proved to be very helpful. She mentioned that students often spend time at recreation centers like the Douglas Center, particularly to play basketball, or they walk around the mall. There's a clear desire for more nearby dining options, especially fast food, as current lunch options require students to travel across town. Elisa noted that students feel City Park is too far away, which often leads them to stay in the school parking lot instead. Elisa herself enjoys Aggieville, with its variety of restaurants, businesses, and Parkside Station for yoga and small community events like concerts.

Regarding Poyntz Avenue, Elisa emphasized the importance of keeping two lanes open during rush hour, particularly in the morning when traffic heading to the school becomes very crowded. She also suggested improving sidewalk space for students and the community, especially for the cross country team, who often runs to the park during training. While there aren't many places that are walkable from the school, she pointed out that the Arts Center is used by the Boys and Girls Club, and improving the sidewalks along the route to make it safer for students would be beneficial. Elisa also recommended adding a drive-thru coffee shop near the school, providing a convenient pick-me-up for teachers and students before school. Elisa noted that while Poyntz Avenue is well-maintained and festive during the holidays, with vibrant outdoor seating and recreation areas, students frequently complain about the lack of places to hang out. Many wish for a 24/7 space like an arcade and often mention the shortage of parking around the school.

Elisa identified two key additions she felt would improve the area: a coffee shop for students and teachers to stop at before or during lunch, and an activity center where students could gather after school to play arcade games, video games, or board games. These additions could help bring more life to the Poyntz Avenue corridor, which currently lacks businesses that contribute to a vibrant atmosphere. Another key point Elisa raised was the lack of walkability and connection in downtown Poyntz. The area closer to MHS is primarily designed for driving, which isn't helpful for students who can't drive yet, leaving them stranded. Elisa believes that implementing these changes could create an environment where students would enjoy spending more time.

Elisa (cont.)



This was the map used during the mapping activity with Elisa. She marked the area where she wished the activity center to be located with "AC" and indicated the desired location for the coffee shop with the word "coffee."

Jake, a Manhattan resident and co-owner of Manhattan Brewing Company located on the 400 block of Poyntz Avenue, was interviewed alongside his partner, Danna, to provide more community perspective on the Poyntz Corridor. Although Manhattan Brewing is outside the defined Poyntz Corridor, its location in Downtown Manhattan makes its input highly relevant. Both Jake and Danna are deeply proud of their business and the overall community.

Jake and Danna have owned Manhattan Brewing Company for about five years and define the business's role in the community as "a safe place for people to come, a place for social gatherings, and a space for people to be themselves and share their voice." The interviewees spoke at length about how the downtown community functions like a family that supports one another. For Jake and Danna, Downtown Manhattan extends from the newly constructed Museum of Art and Light on Pierre Street North to Humboldt Street, and from 3rd Street West to 7th Street.

During the interview, Jake discussed both the weaknesses and strengths of Poyntz Avenue and Downtown Manhattan. The weakest aspects of Poyntz Avenue, according to Jake, include walkability, community connections, the mall, and the lack of nightlife. He noted that the downtown area currently lacks sufficient opportunities for community engagement and event hosting. Jake envisions Poyntz becoming more of an entertainment district by creating a space that is welcoming to parades, craft fairs, public concerts, and other events. By doing so, he believes that the downtown area could become more activated, making it a walkable and engaging community throughout the day. On the other hand, the strengths of Poyntz Avenue, as noted by the interviewees, are the current restaurants, businesses, and their connections with one another. They highlighted the mix of business types and green spaces as key assets to the area. Jake explained that the downtown business owners and workers are very supportive of each other, often frequenting each other's businesses, creating a very family-like atmosphere. Their favorite elements of Poyntz include Arrow, Tallgrass Taphouse/Bourbon & Baker, City Park, and the seasonal events hosted by the city.

As the conversation turned to improving Poyntz Avenue as a whole, Jake and Danna pointed out that the corridor is currently missing essential elements such as a fast food or grab-and-go shop, an ice cream shop, public transit, outdoor seating, more green space, and enhanced walkability. They feel that adding or enhancing these elements will help unify the downtown and make it more cohesive. Specifically, they noted that Western Poyntz and downtown Manhattan currently feel like two separate areas, and they believe blurring that line could create a more connected space.

The main topic of the interview focused on the lack of public transit in both Poyntz and Manhattan as a whole. Jake and Danna noted that driving is currently the dominant mode of transportation, with little infrastructure supporting pedestrians and cyclists. They explained that although they live less than a mile from a grocery store, it is not very accessible by any transportation method other than a car. This issue extends to Poyntz Avenue, where there is only one bus route running at sparse times throughout the day. In addition, the sidewalks are uneven and vary in width, and there is no designated bike lane, making Poyntz Avenue difficult for non-vehicle users to navigate.

Overall, the interview with Jake and Danna provided valuable community insight into the Poyntz Corridor project. Their feedback on the current state of downtown, the corridor, the disconnect between the two, and the transportation issues in Manhattan will be essential for developing design strategies and proposed solutions moving forward.

Jake & Danna (cont.)



Tara is a long-time resident of Manhattan, Kansas, who has lived in the city for 18 years. She currently serves on the board of the public library and has worked there for 14 years, both in public-facing roles and as a board member. She maintains a strong connection to Kansas State University and was chosen for the interview due to her dual role as a library board member and community member. Her unique perspective offers valuable insights into how the public library operates, how it's accessed, and how urban design improvements—such as the proposed road diet for Poyntz Avenue—could impact the library and community engagement.

The conversation focused on how people typically access the library, the current challenges they face, and how street redesign could impact community engagement. The stakeholder noted that library patrons arrive by a mix of walking, biking, and driving, with parking often being full. While children from the nearby Catholic school often walk to the library, bike access remains limited and less safe, especially due to the current conditions on Poyntz Avenue. She emphasized that, although the library has prioritized accessibility, bike and pedestrian infrastructure still lags behind. She expressed cautious optimism about the proposed road diet, acknowledging that there might be initial public resistance to the change. However, she pointed out the long-term benefits, especially for people like her young daughter, who is just learning to bike. Features such as improved sidewalks, protected bike lanes, shaded seating, green spaces, and water fountains would create a more inviting and functional streetscape. She also voiced concerns about hostile architecture and advocated for inclusive design that considers families, children, and people of all sizes and abilities. While improved access may not drastically change visitor numbers, she believes it would enhance the quality of the experience and increase community engagement, particularly through outdoor programming and safer connections to nearby destinations like City Park and the Discovery Center.

Rather than relying on abstract prompts, I described features such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and public spaces, asking how they might influence library use or her daily routines. This method helped draw out personal insights rooted in real-life experiences, such as her daughter's biking challenges and her appreciation for the Discovery Center's outdoor space. The activity allowed the stakeholder to reflect not only on policy or programming but also on how physical design can create emotional, inclusive, and usable spaces. Her feedback highlighted the importance of designing for safety, comfort, and flexibility—especially in transitional zones between civic buildings and public streets.

Tara (cont.)



Brian, a pastor of a church on Poyntz Avenue and a resident of Manhattan for over 15 years, was selected for the interview due to his daily commute along Poyntz and his habit of riding a bicycle whenever possible in the city. The interview began with introductions to the area of study and general terms like "road diet." Brian expressed strong support for the road diet and its associated improvements. He shared clear concerns about the conditions and positioning of sidewalks along Poyntz Avenue, noting that many sidewalks are unsuitable for walking or biking due to their surfaces, angles, or proximity to oncoming traffic.

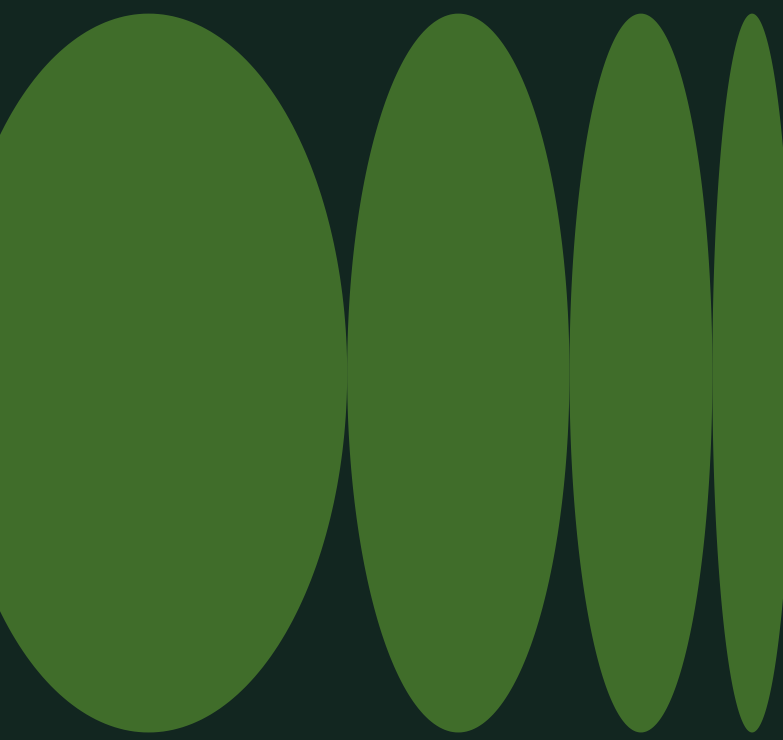
Brian views City Park as the "Central Park" of Manhattan, Kansas—the only public green space in the city—and emphasized that it should be protected. He even proposed rerouting all roads within the park to make it a pedestrian-only zone. Brian's favorite spot within the Poyntz Avenue Corridor is the pickleball courts at 9th and Houston, and he expressed a desire for more pickleball courts in City Park to accommodate more players at once. It became clear during the interview that Brian perceives the Poyntz Avenue Corridor primarily as a through-space, lacking distinct character. To him, traveling along Poyntz Avenue is merely a means to reach downtown Manhattan. He suggested that a visual zoning ordinance or the return of the median could be steps toward giving the corridor more character. Brian also expressed a desire for electric scooters to return to Manhattan, believing they would bring more college students to Poyntz who may not otherwise spend time there.

During the mapping activity, Brian focused on the placement of an architectural gateway and the methods by which he interacts with Poyntz Avenue. He proposed placing a primary gateway at 14th Street and smaller gateways at 7th Street.

Overall, Brian's vision for Poyntz Avenue is to see it become a more vibrant area with increased accessibility and paths that enhance mobility. He believes there is great potential to extend the visual and architectural character of downtown Manhattan further down Poyntz, and he would like to see the corridor attract more family-oriented businesses, possibly even incorporating the farmer's market.



Phase 3: **Co-design**



Intro to Co-design

Method & findings

Design Proposals

Six conceptual designs

Co-design

What is Co-design?

Co-design means “to design (something) by working with one or more others...” (Merriam-Webster). However, this definition is too general, so let's look to the Interaction Design Foundation for a more focused definition. “**Co-design** is a **collaborative approach** where designers work together with non-designers to create solutions. Designers act as facilitators and guide the participants through the design process” (IxDF). Co-design relies heavily on community engagement. Engaging with stakeholders, local businesses, local authorities, or simply the community is an important step toward a collaborative design. Through co-design, we can help give the community the tools they need to shape their spaces for their own benefit.

The traditional design process is usually a top-down approach, placing the wants of the developers over the needs of the community. This process typically involves identifying an area with development potential, approaching city officials with the necessary plans and funds, and then beginning development with minimal interaction from the local community. The co-design process, however, takes a much more **bottom-up, personal approach**. This process focuses on gathering the wants, needs, and ideas from the stakeholders who will be affected by the development. There are many ways to involve the community in this process, such as town hall meetings, design events, social media, or even direct communication. Community voices are listened to first and foremost, and then the design phase begins. The community is involved in every step, ensuring the project continues to align with their values. Once a well-rounded design is achieved, it is brought before the city, and construction will begin.

Using Co-design in this Research Project

Working in a limited scope with city designers, the design class researched and employed co-design techniques to gather further information as well as community insight toward the project. Community stakeholders were invited to participate in an activity event where multiple stations were arranged to engage in thoughtful discussion and hands-on activities. Shortly after the event, design students reached out to prospective stakeholders who could provide beneficial, third-party insights toward the project. These uses of co-design strategies will help further inform design decisions based on local community feedback.

Interviews were conducted with individual stakeholders from different backgrounds to ensure a wide range of data. These interviews not only provided personal insight into what each individual wanted to see from the development but also offered a deeper understanding of the life around them. From their personal anecdotes, inferences can be drawn and assumptions made about other community members in similar situations. When it comes to placemaking, everyone will have different ideas, so these interviews can help group similar ideas into main design principles.

Goals

The main goal of the co-design process is to **create spaces with the community for the community**. This is supported by smaller goals, which are used to achieve specific objectives throughout different phases of the development project. From the collected interviews and data, **several clear goals** emerged that the community wants to achieve. For example, reactivating public spaces for recreation, developing new green spaces, prioritizing pedestrian and community safety, and creating a space or series of spaces that can give the area a unique identity.



Goals | An example of Goals developed by students reflecting on the data and feedback from interviews and community activities

On a grand scale, these goals may seem like obvious choices, but each individual community member will have their own interpretation of what they mean. Therefore, holding meetings and activities with the community in larger groups will help create a focused lens through which professional designers can work. It should go without saying, but there is an important layer of trust in this process. The designers are trusting the community to provide their honest feedback, while the community is trusting the designers to truly listen to their voices.

Kit of Parts

For the design process, it was found that using a **kit of parts**—a preassembled strategy for solving an issue or implementing a design—can be beneficial in maintaining a uniform system across the Poyntz Avenue Corridor. Creating a kit of parts will help the community understand professional design methods and assist professional designers in adhering to certain standards throughout the development site. The kit of parts is developed using the previously established goals, where one of the goals is taken and broken down into its components.

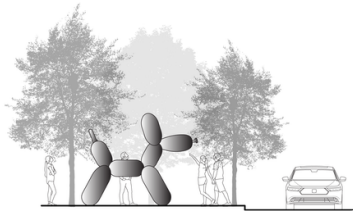
This process essentially determines what is important about the goal and how it can be achieved. Then, diagrammatically, these goals are explored to create visual representations of possible solutions. (see pg. 73 for our kit glossary). Using a kit of parts, such as these examples, provides simple outlines for complex problems. They can also be used during Codesign activities with the community. Providing simple sketches to the members of the public allows them to participate in design workshops regardless of their art skills. This creates a sense of comfort, helping members to open up about their design ideas, even if they are not able to put them into words.

Conclusion

As a whole, the idea of placemaking through co-design is a mutually beneficial process. Placemaking helps to **honor a community's identity**, similar to an individual's personality, but on a grander scale. It creates spaces with a deeper purpose, beyond the normal bounds of the mundane. Placemaking provides opportunities for people to meet, **share stories and ideas**, and **help local culture flourish**. Co-design offers the chance to see multiple perspectives and find a common solution from them.

The co-design process informs design decisions through engagement with the community, by learning their wants and needs, and by having the skills to properly adapt them in a way that benefits both the project and the collective community. The unique aspect of co-design is that the solution comes from the community and is implemented by the design professionals, rather than simply assuming what the community wants and needs. This approach creates an environment that fosters new ideas and understanding on a communal level, rather than an individual one.

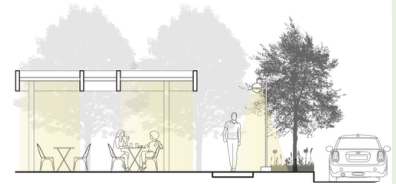
Kit of Parts Glossary



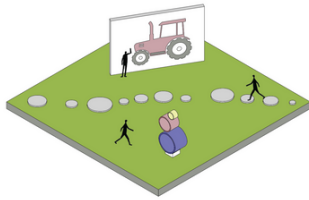
Create identifiable landmarks



Integrated soft scape and pathways



Lighted spaces for all day access



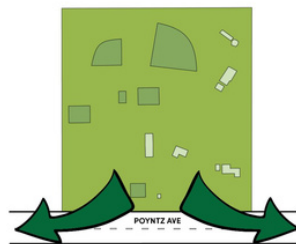
Space for self expression



Outdoor seating



Utilizing green space



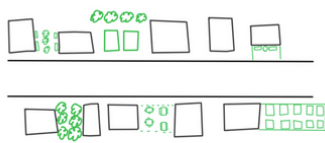
Expand City Park down Poyntz



Greenery as a barrier



Greenery as shade



Create pockets of program



Create community green spaces



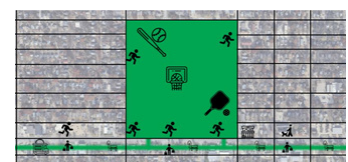
Separate leisure and recreation



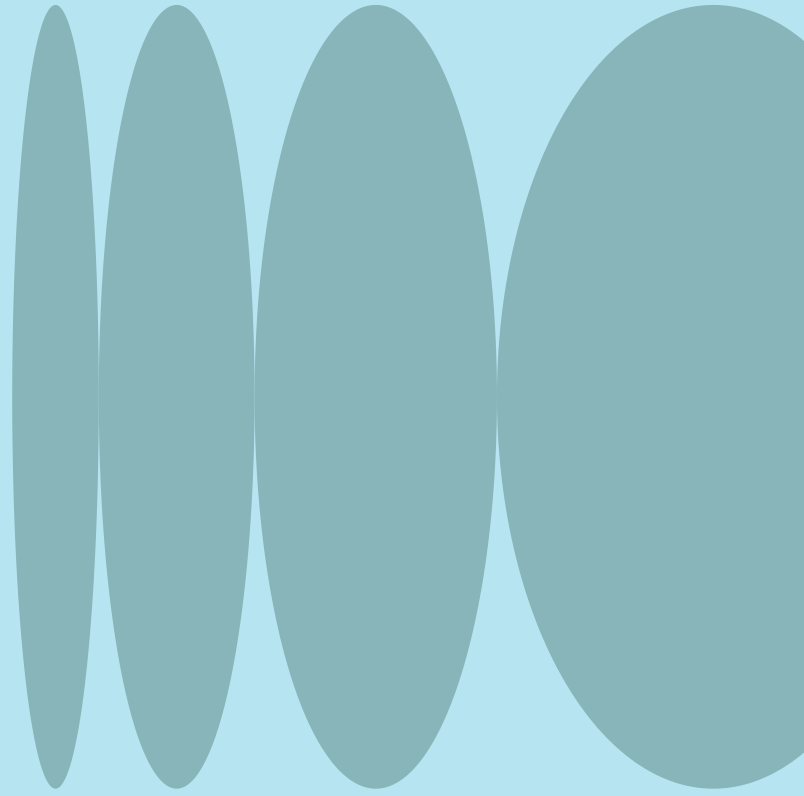
Create more mixed use opportunities



Honor Manhattan's heritage



Create green spaces for gathering



Design Proposals

Design Proposal Overview



Site 1: Intersection of Poyntz Avenue and MLK Jr. Drive

This proposal focuses on implementing a road diet to transform Poyntz Avenue into a complete street that serves drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians through a **multi-modal arts corridor**. The team recommends reducing the street from five to two travel lanes, with a center turning lane. This allows for the addition of protected bike lanes, expanded green buffer zones, and enhanced pedestrian space without the need for major reconstruction. Parking stalls double as buffers between vehicle walkways, seating, native landscaping, and public art, enhancing the identity and usability of the street. The proposal directly responds to public feedback about safety concerns, lack of greenery, and oversized street width.



Site 2: Manhattan Arts Center Lot 1

This proposal reimagines the Manhattan Arts Center (MAC) parking lot as a vibrant community space by introducing three main outdoor elements: a **performance space**, a **recreational zone**, and a **food truck hub**. By repurposing underused asphalt into green space, the design aims to extend the MAC's art programming outdoors, draw more foot traffic, and create a more usable outdoor gathering spot. The project incorporates curved pedestrian paths, a rain garden for stormwater management, and multi-use seating areas. The design responds to community feedback requesting more seating and outdoor programming.

Design Proposal Overview (cont.)



Site 3: Manhattan Arts Center Lot 2

This proposal focuses on transforming the east half of the MAC parking lot into a **flexible community-centered greenspace** through a phased redevelopment approach. In response to community feedback calling for an iconic, accessible public space, the design introduces outdoor performance and gathering areas, vegetation, and lighting features to create an inviting atmosphere. The final design envisions the MAC as both an arts venue and a beloved public destination, blending creativity, comfort, and community.



Site 5: South City Park

The South City Park site leverages its proximity to City Park and Parkside Station to enhance connectivity along Poyntz Avenue through an **amenity-rich, playful community corridor**. Community feedback emphasized the value of the city park and the desire for improved pedestrian and bike access, additional green space, and areas for relaxation and activity. The proposal includes widened sidewalks for multimodal use, terraced seating areas, flexible green spaces, and a food truck hub. These interventions aim to support users, including park visitors, residents, and nearby business patrons.

Design Proposal Overview (cont.)



Site 7: Intersection of Poyntz Ave and 11th Street

The intersection of Poyntz Avenue and 11th Street is a key location adjacent to City Park, City Hall, the fire station, and Parkside Station. The proposal responds to community input calling for improved walkability, green spaces, and a stronger connection between City Park and Downtown. The two-phase design introduces a **visual arts gateway, bulb-outs for safer crossings, and expanded sidewalks**. Over time, parking areas are adapted as flexible green spaces that support business and park users, enhancing pedestrian flow along the corridor.



Site 9: USD Central Office, South Side

Located south of the USD central office building, this underutilized site was identified as a strong candidate for reactivation based on repeated community feedback. Primary concerns included a lack of mixed-use development, outdoor gathering spaces, and exterior seating. The proposal seeks to address these needs by adapting the space into a community hub that integrates new development while respecting the surrounding residential area. The concept introduces a **mixed-use hub for community play** with ground-floor commercial space, upper-level condo-style units not targeted toward students, and improved recreational amenities, including updated courts and a central green space.



Design Proposals at a Glance

Across our sites, common challenges and opportunities emerged. The corridor offers **several underutilized spaces** that can be transformed into vibrant hubs for activity. There is strong community support for increased green space, mixed-use development, and improved recreational programming. Many sites offer opportunities to enhance transportation options and create a stronger connection between Poyntz Avenue, adjacent neighborhoods, parks, and the downtown area. These overlapping opportunities highlight the potential to create a **more integrated, pedestrian-friendly, and community-centered environment**. A primary challenge was balancing new development and improved public amenities with preserving the surrounding community's character and needs. Many sites face constraints related to traffic flow, parking, and accommodating emergency access, which have influenced design decisions. Another shared challenge addresses pedestrian safety, connectivity, and comfort, as residents desire more walkable and safe public spaces.



Site 1

Intersection of Poyntz Ave and MLK Jr. Drive

Andrew & Lucas

Artistic Intervention

Intersection of Poyntz Ave and MLK Jr. Drive

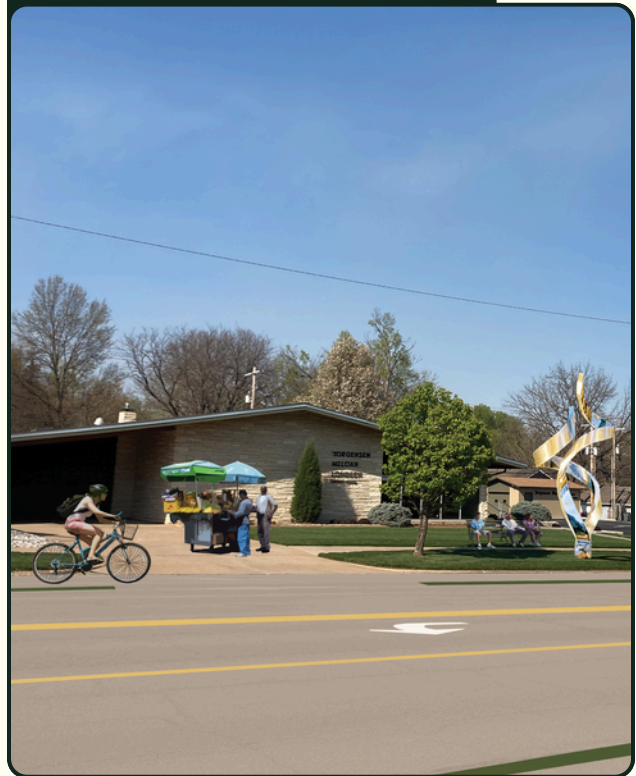
Introduction

The intention of this intervention begins with the implementation of a "road diet," aiming to repurpose the existing 4–5 lanes, transforming them into a "complete street" through a **multi-modal arts corridor**. This approach ensures the street has accessibility and enjoyable spaces for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians of all abilities. The first step would be reducing the road from 4 lanes to 2 continuous lanes, adding a center turning lane. This change allows for more room to grow and develop pedestrian amenities. The current width of the road provides a fantastic opportunity to "complete" the street with significantly lower time and financial costs compared to completely reconstructing it.

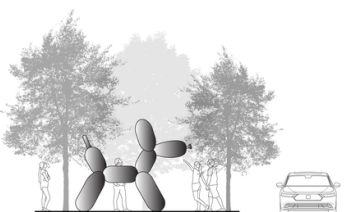
Before



After



Selected Kit of Parts



Create identifiable landmarks



Greenery as a barrier



Greenery as shade

Design Narrative

Poyntz Avenue currently lacks public amenities such as greenery, safe crosswalks, bike lanes, and parking stalls. The proposed redesign addresses these gaps while enhancing the character of the street. Parking stalls will be integrated next to the travel lanes, acting as a buffer between the vehicles and the bike lanes. These parking spaces will also provide turning lanes at intersections, allowing traffic to flow smoothly during peak hours. The bike lanes, separated by a physical barrier from the travel lanes, will provide cyclists with dedicated space, improving safety for all road users. These lanes will also connect to the larger network of bikeable areas throughout Manhattan. The rest of the street, extending towards the sidewalk, will be dedicated to public amenities. A green buffer zone will protect pedestrians from traffic, featuring trees that provide shade for both pedestrians and cyclists. Native grasses and flowers will add visual beauty and support local pollinators, while also offering environmental benefits. The sidewalks will be renovated to include more seating options, providing places to rest, relax, and enjoy the space.

A unique aspect of this greenway will be the incorporation of artworks from the Manhattan Arts Center (MAC). These public art pieces will serve as a gateway, helping to distinguish Poyntz Avenue from the rest of Manhattan. The street will feature artistic sculptures and elements reflecting Manhattan's culture, creating a distinct character for the area. Additionally, collaboration with the Sunset Zoo and Manhattan High School (MHS) may bring more community-driven art and elements to Poyntz Avenue, especially west of MLK.

The design addresses several key critiques raised during public engagement sessions, including concerns about the safety of Poyntz Avenue for children and families, the lack of greenery, and the overall oversized nature of the road. This redesign directly responds to these critiques by resizing the street, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, and reclaiming space for public amenities. By giving the street back to pedestrians and all modes of transportation, the redesign ensures that Poyntz Avenue becomes a more accessible, enjoyable, and functional space for the community. Overall, the transformation of the roadway and surrounding elements will not only make the street more suitable for traffic but also enhance the public amenities, creating a “complete” street that fosters community engagement and enhances the urban experience.

Programming Research

Projects: Oak Street, Roosevelt Road & Howard Street



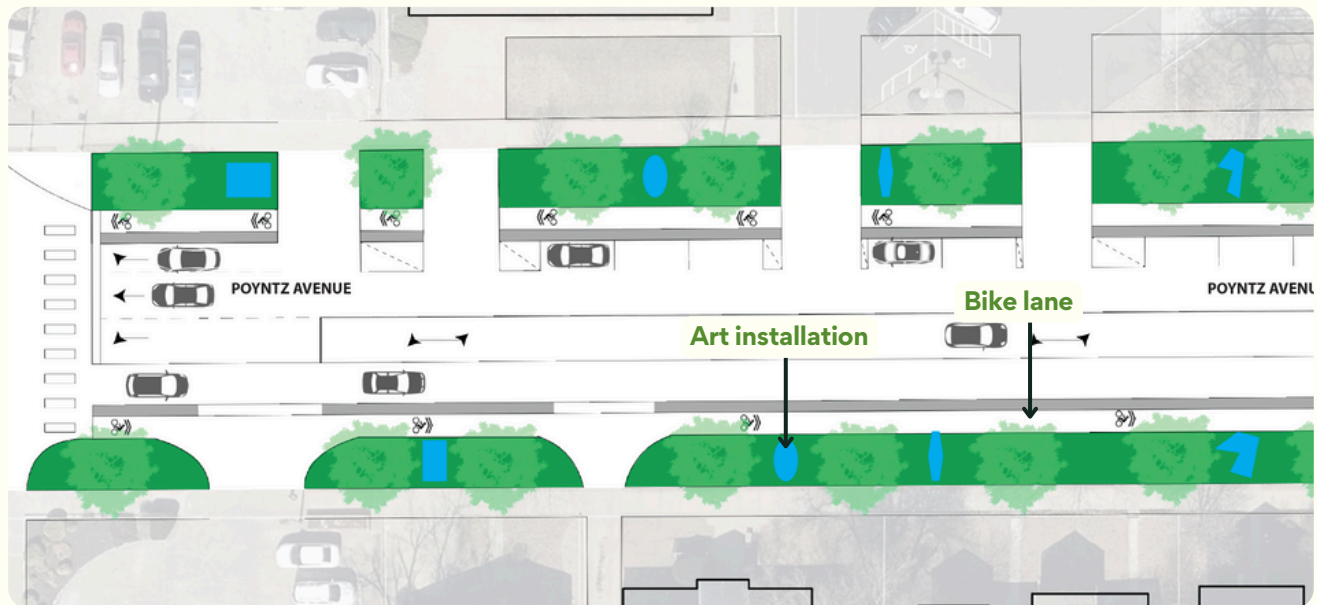
The redesign of **Oak Street** in Kansas City saw the need for more robust and safe biking facilities. This division between cars and bikes through barriers of space allows for better safety measures for all.

Roosevelt Road in Chicago features a close location to a strong arts district. A redesign of the roadway was imagined to embrace and welcome the expression and integration of art and display.



The introduction of a central turning lane on **Howard Street** allows both lanes of traffic access to turning abilities, while allowing the rest of traffic to flow continuously down the street.

Site Plan



This image shows the proposed site plan, offering a visual representation of the planned road changes. It illustrates the continuation of the turning lane, the introduction of bike lanes, and the expansion of various green spaces along the street. The site plan helps us understand how the road will look in the future, with these new features designed to improve the overall pedestrian and cyclist experience.

Art Installations & Multi-use Sidewalks

Multi-modal Intersection



Adaptability Vignettes

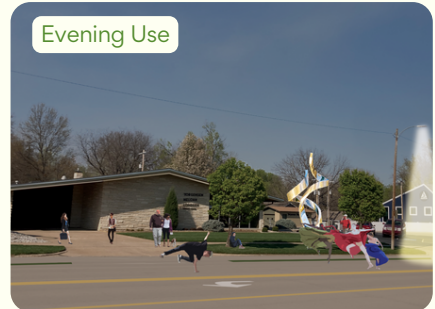
Morning Use



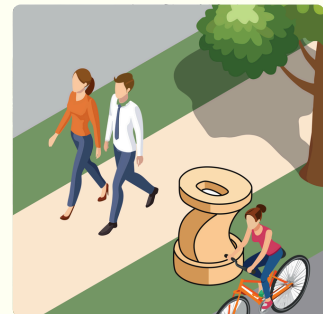
Afternoon Use



Evening Use



Key Moments



These images showcase significant moments in the design proposal, including the shaded walkways of the expanded greenway, public art installations, and the divided bike lanes protected by planters and parking elements. They visualize how the space will evolve and respond to the needs and critiques identified in the public engagement workshops.



Site 2 Manhattan Arts Center West, Lot 1

Miguel & Mario

Manhattan Arts Center

Manhattan Arts Center West, Lot 1

Introduction

The Manhattan Arts Center (MAC) serves as a vital cultural hub in Manhattan, providing a space for artistic expression, performance, and community gathering. This project proposes a community-focused redesign of the MAC, located on Poyntz Avenue between 15th and 16th streets. The intervention focuses on reimagining half of the parking lot closest to the MAC by introducing three key outdoor program elements: a **performance space**, a **recreational area**, and a **food truck hub**. The goal is to revitalize the MAC's exterior by drawing more community engagement, increasing foot traffic, and extending arts programming beyond the building.

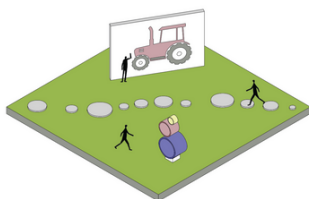
Before



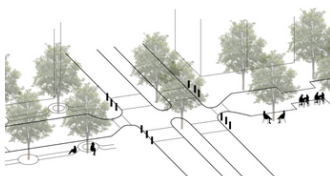
After



Selected Kit of Parts



Space for self expression



Outdoor seating



Utilizing green space

Design Narrative

The MAC Lot 2 site has many underutilized parking spaces, creating an opportunity to convert portions of the lot into green zones that support new public programming. Since the MAC already functions as a cultural center, extending art-related activities into the outdoor space could attract more visitors and activate the area outside the building. Modifying the sidewalks along the site can enhance the streetscape, making it more engaging and visually appealing to pedestrians. Community feedback highlighted the need for more seating along the corridor, especially for joggers and passersby, and a desire for outdoor programming that invites people to stop and interact with the space. One of the main challenges of the site is balancing the need for additional outdoor programming with the existing demand for parking. While the current lot is often underutilized, increasing the number of events and public activities at the center may lead to higher demand for parking in the future. The remaining parking lot, in combination with parking added through the road diet, is expected to meet the future demand. A concern includes the relocation of accessible parking spaces, which may need to be positioned farther from the main entrance due to the proposed layout. Ensuring these spaces remain convenient and compliant with ADA standards is essential to maintaining accessibility for all visitors.

The primary design concept is to transform the existing parking lot into a more inviting and functional green space that serves multiple uses. The design is centered around three main areas:

- 1. Performance Space:** This area would allow the MAC to host outdoor events. During interviews, community members expressed interest in an outdoor performance or screen space, where events like "movies in the park" could be held.
- 2. Recreational Area:** This space would feature ground mounds and open space, providing seating areas for relaxation. It aims to be an engaging space for visitors to enjoy the outdoors while also accommodating playful topographies that invite interaction.
- 3. Food Truck Hub:** This area would provide parking for food trucks, offering services to attendees of events at the MAC. Seating would be placed alongside the food truck hub to encourage people to linger, eat, and engage with the space.

To maximize the site, a curved pedestrian path would be incorporated to add more vegetation between pedestrians and cars, creating a welcoming, engaging route through the space. The curved paths would also provide opportunities for rain gardens to collect water, addressing the common flooding issues in Manhattan. These rain gardens will act as bioswales, managing rainwater runoff and enhancing the site's sustainability.

The design incorporates important placemaking principles that enhance the community's interaction with the MAC's exterior spaces. The principle of inducing experiences is applied through the recreational multi-use area with ground mounds, which serve as playful topographies, inviting visitors to rest, play, or observe nearby performances. The strategy of introducing an ecosystem is reflected in the creation of rain gardens along the curved pedestrian path, enhancing biodiversity and softening the transition between pedestrian and vehicular zones. Additionally, the rain gardens will help manage stormwater, addressing the flooding issues that are common in the area. Together, these elements create a more engaging public space, offering long-term value and usability for the community. The design transforms the MAC's exterior into a vibrant, flexible space that fosters interaction, culture, and connection within the city.

Programming Research & Site Analysis

Projects: Core City Park & Charis Park

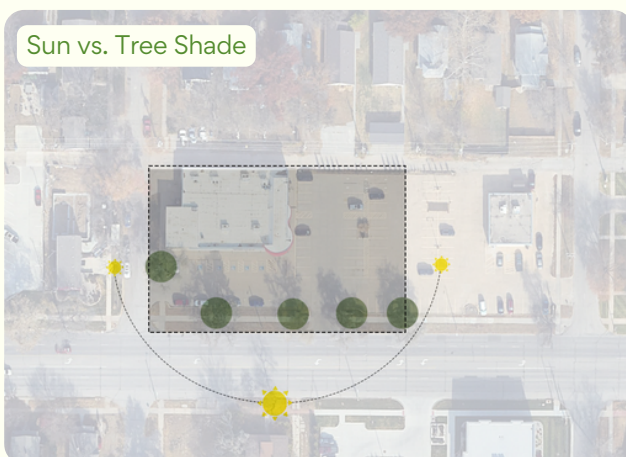


Designed by D.I.R.T studio, **Core City Park** is a vacant parking lot transformed by celebrating its openness and planting trees with plenty of seating. The concept of taking a parking lot and adding green elements was inspiration for our projects replacement of the parking.

Once a vacant one acre lot, **Charis Park** is now a garden, food truck hub, and a space with outdoor seating, open air pavilion, and multi-use field. This precedent provided the inspiration for using food trucks to revitalize the space and provide visitors with new programming.



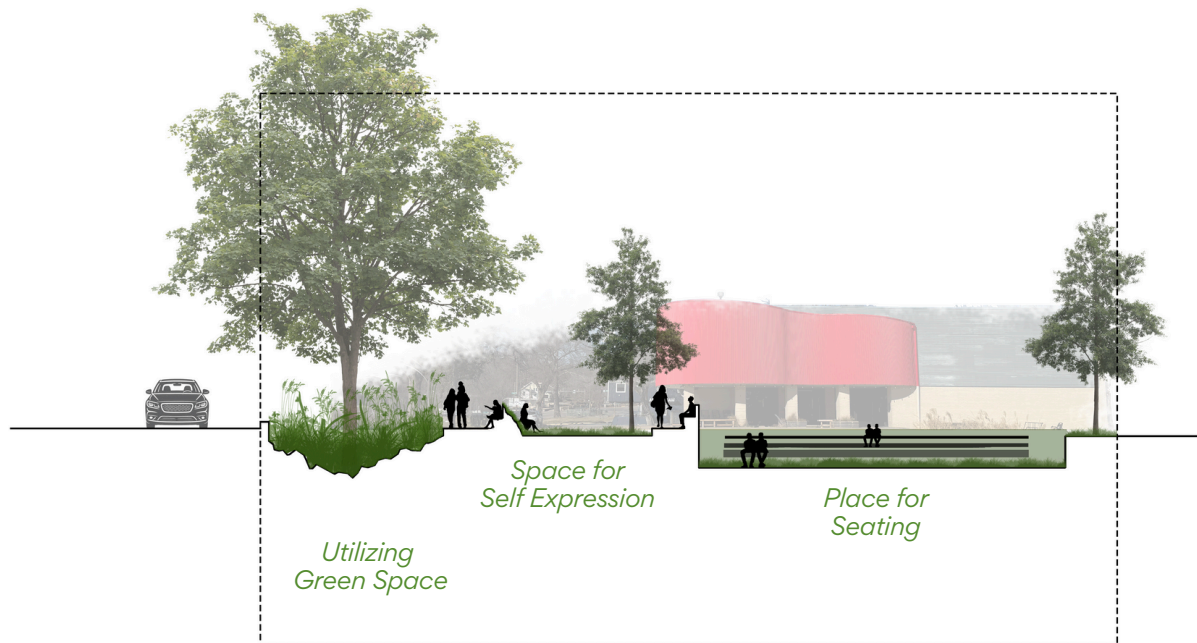
Site Diagrams



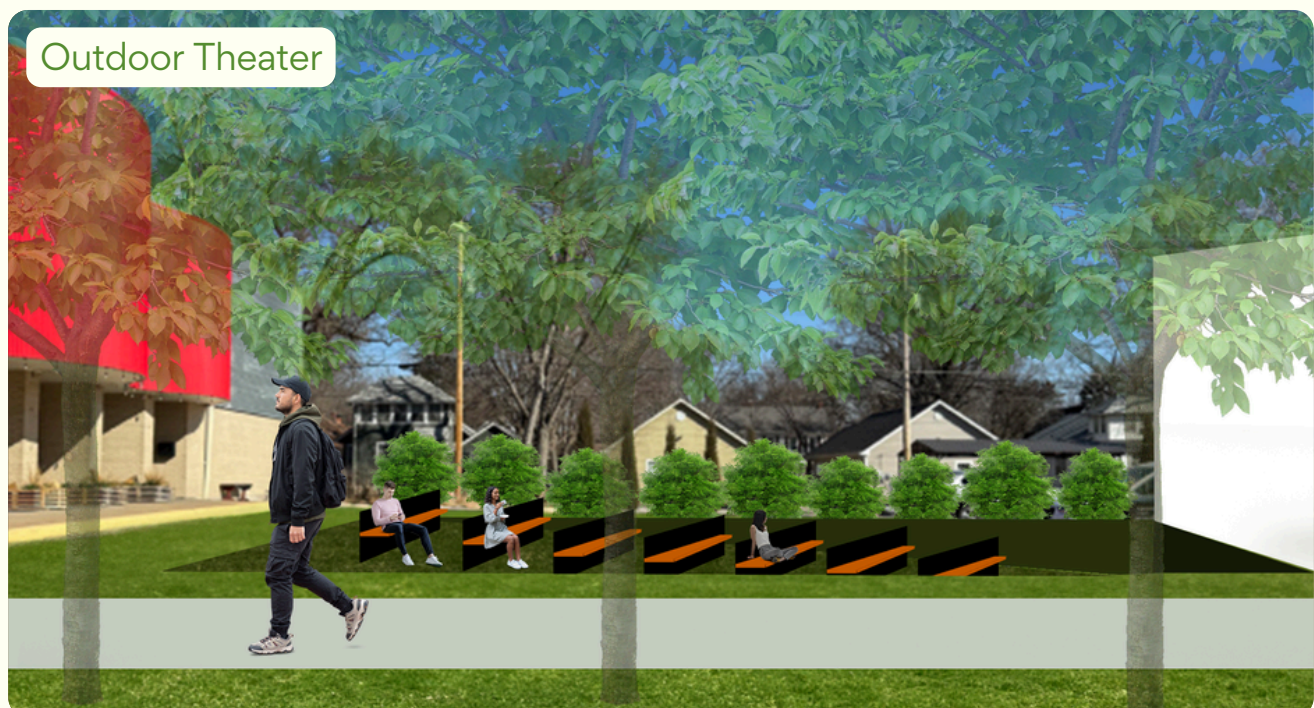
Site Plan



Multi-use Outdoor Lawn for Theater



Site Section





Site 3 Manhattan Arts Center East, Lot 2

Ethan & Chance

Lot Reclaimed

Manhattan Arts Center East, Lot 2

Introduction

The Manhattan Arts Center, and subsequently the art studio, is a staple of the life of art in Manhattan. The specific site is located on the east half of the parking lot, adjacent to 15th Street. A redevelopment for this location would be crucial to increasing pedestrian traffic and community engagement. The current state of the art studio and its surroundings is seemingly dull and underutilized, so the introduction of community greenspace could help to reimagine it as a place of performance, showcase, and relaxation. This space holds opportunities for gathering and economic benefits as a **flexible community-centered greenspace**.

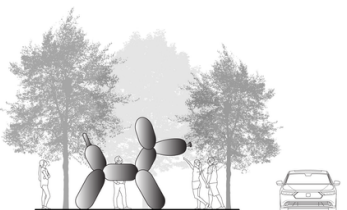
Before



After



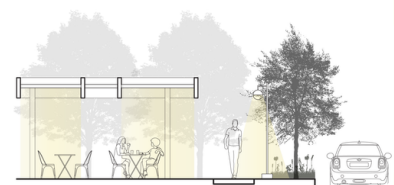
Selected Kit of Parts



Create identifiable landmarks



Integrated soft scape and pathways



Lighted spaces for all day access

Design Narrative

Community members expressed their wants, mainly for more public green space, evening activity spaces, and a space that could be seen as an icon. In an effort to find a middle ground that combines both the opportunities and challenges, we focused on feedback from the community members, particularly those who participated in an engagement workshop. These members expressed their desires for more public green space, evening activity spaces, and a space that could be seen as an icon for the community.

The development would primarily focus on introducing green space in place of the current concrete lot, while maintaining necessary access to the building. This transformation will occur through a series of phases, each one designed to gradually introduce new elements of the design, allowing community members to adjust and provide feedback based on their experiences.

The first phase involves painting zones on the concrete to indicate future development areas, introducing potted vegetation, and adding free-standing shading devices. Utilizing the A+T reference guide, which provides multiple techniques for creating spaces that are more welcoming and engaging, this phase incorporates strategies like Collaborating with the Users, and begins to demonstrate Eco-awareness and Characterized Space. In the second phase, planted green space will be introduced, primarily around the east side of the art studio, to create a more intimate space near the developing mural wall and encourage conversation. Simultaneously, the north section of the parking lot will be removed and replaced with a gravel-like aggregate, providing a more sustainable exterior space during wetter seasons. At this stage, Managing Maintenance will be crucial, as the aggregate will need occasional smoothing and refilling, and the grasses and plants will require proper watering and care to prevent overgrowth. During the third phase, a lawn will be planted on the south end of the parking lot, dramatically increasing the available green space. A wider variety of movable and static public seating will be added throughout the site, allowing visitors to sit, rest, and enjoy the surroundings. This seating will include a series of movable, glowing, stone-like objects that can serve as tables or chairs. The light they emit will enhance safety during evening hours, providing illumination when streetlights might not reach the redeveloped space.

In the fourth phase, a more comprehensive pavilion design will be introduced. This pavilion will unify the newly developed zones, tying them together with a minimal yet strong design suitable for year-round use. These additions will create interstitial zones at the edges of the site. Activating the Interstitial Space will both attract people to the site and provide a green buffer zone between pedestrian paths and the roadway, making it a perfect fit for a road diet, allowing more amenities to extend outward.

Overall, the redevelopment of this space aims to redefine its meaning for the local community and for the city of Manhattan. By extending the studio space to offer outdoor classes or providing a new area for the community to gather and express themselves through art or music, the site strives to create a place of meaning and belonging. Through the design strategies, spaces will be subtly nested together, all under one roof, fostering the mixing of people and encouraging exploration through various forms of media and communication.

Programming Research

Projects: Leshan Pocket Park, Blanton Museum of Art & Someș River Regeneration



Leshan Pocket Park, designed by VIASCAPE design, is a 5,600-square-meter public space in Shanghai's Leshan community. Previously enclosed and deteriorated, the park was revitalized to serve diverse age groups by incorporating multifunctional areas for relaxation, play, and community events. A central feature is the 80-meter-long "shared happiness" gallery, which integrates reading spaces and shelters, linking major areas within the park.

The **Blanton Museum of Art** is in Austin, Texas and was renovated by Snøhetta. The green space was designed for the public and patrons of the museum. The centerpiece of the project is the creation of a new functional landmark and sculpture. This sculpture serves as a shading device and threshold for the museum. Overall, the implementation of public art and green space has created a new public area that is inviting and has mass appeal.



The **Someș River Regeneration** project in Romanian was chosen for the implementation of green space the integration into the urban fabric of the existing city and the creation of landmarks through architectural elements. Practica uses a kit of parts of architectural moves to use through the riverfront. This kit of parts is like the one we are using to develop in class. The architect designs a centerpiece in the form of a bridge connecting both sides of the river.

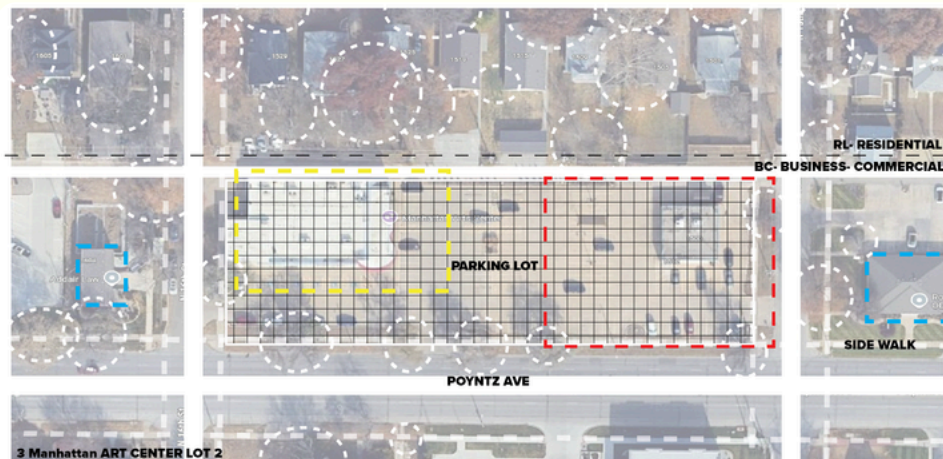
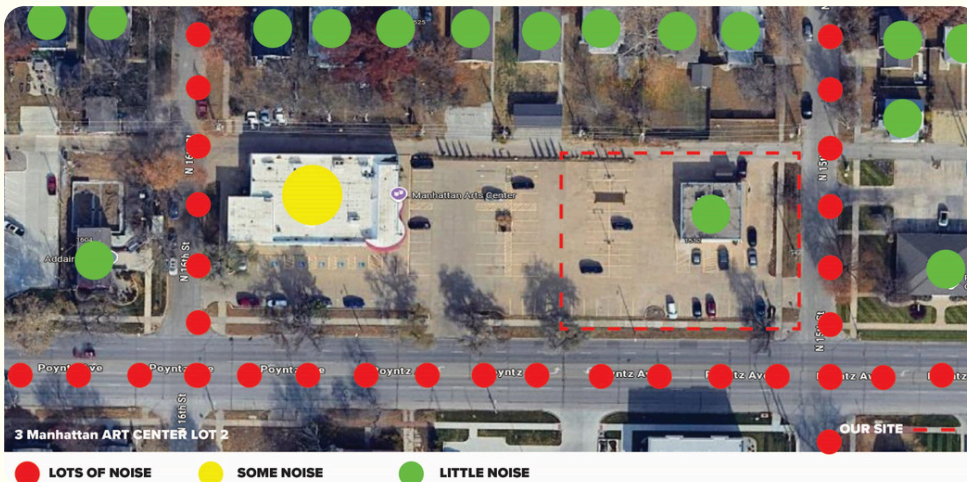
Site Analysis

Site Photos



Constraints

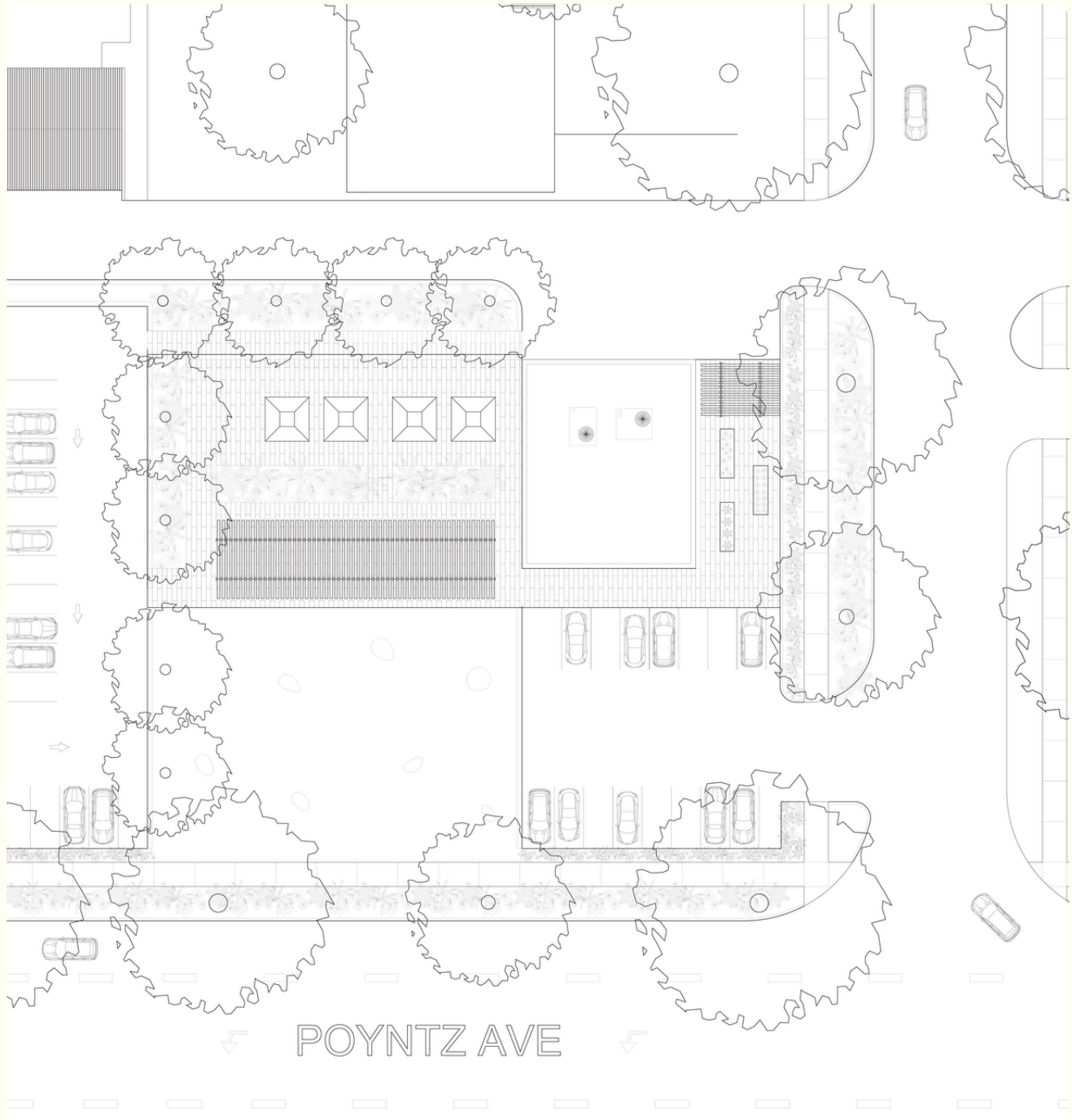
While connected to the Poyntz Avenue, the site sits towards the western end, almost on the periphery of the overall site. This position along the corridor creates a distance between the established Downtown Poyntz and our site, which could deter people from traveling farther outside of the main downtown hub. Similarly, the site location is backed against residential zones which could create possible confrontations for evening or night activities.



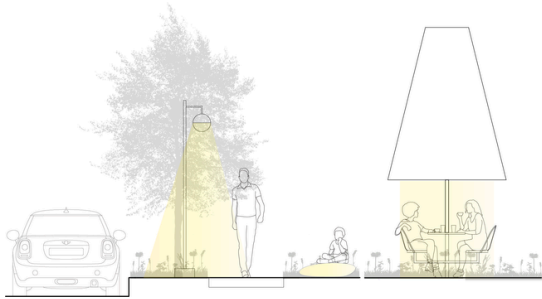
Site Elements

White Circles = Trees
Red Dashes = Site
Yellow Dashes = MAC
Blue Dashes = Business
Grid = Parking lot
Black Dashes = Zoning
Solid White Line = Roads
White Dashes = Sidewalk

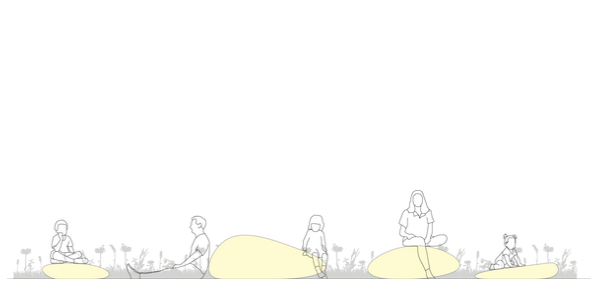
Site Plan



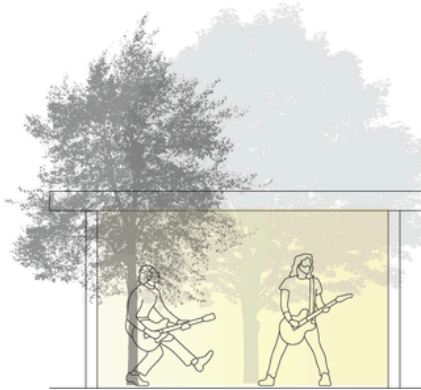
Pavilion and Flexible, Outdoor Seating



Multipurpose Social Zones



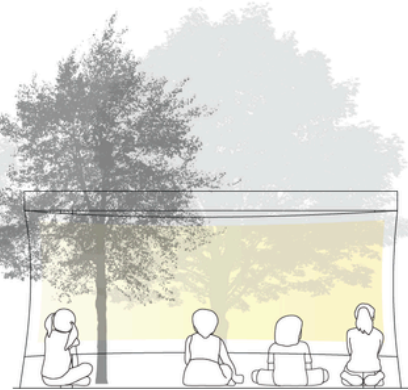
Playful Seating with Lighting



Stage



Dining



Moving Screen

Pavilion Uses

Pavilion with Outdoor Seating





Site 5 South City Park along Poyntz Avenue

Michaela & Alexis

South City Park Catalyst

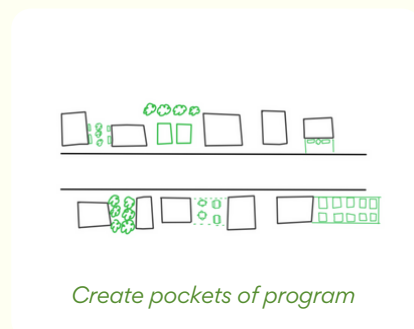
South City Park along Poyntz Avenue

Introduction

The South City Park Catalyst site presents numerous opportunities due to its proximity to Parkside Station and its highly trafficked location. Through discussions with community members, the class found that City Park is widely used and that Poyntz Avenue holds significant value primarily because of its connection to the park. This connection presents a strong opportunity to enhance the links between South City Park and the rest of Poyntz Avenue through an **amenity-rich, playful community corridor**. One of the main challenges identified was thoughtfully integrating new design elements with existing features to preserve what the community already values while improving connectivity.



Selected Kit of Parts



Design Narrative

The design proposal envisions new areas for leisure and activity along South City Park, aiming to support a variety of functions while improving transportation accessibility. This proposal addresses the need for multimodal pathways by accommodating biking, walking, and running along widened sidewalks, ensuring adequate space for all modes of movement.

The proposal was informed by community feedback collected in ARCH 715 and ARCH 750, with key themes including the desire for more vegetation, flexible seating options, improved lighting, dedicated bike infrastructure, and spaces for both relationships and recreation. After careful feedback analysis and site study, multiple design iterations were created to present possible solutions. Precedent studies played a critical role in shaping this proposal, offering insight into successful interventions in similar contexts.

The design follows key placemaking principles and strategies such as movement and seating, activity and sociability, and linkage. Given the popularity of City Park for both movement and relaxation, the design emphasizes improving existing pathways and recreational spaces while adding more seating along these routes.

- **Activity and Sociability:** Spaces were designed to foster community interaction, including a food truck hub and terraced seating.
- **Linkage:** Strategic connections to the linear trail, updated crosswalks, and expanded pathways for all modes of transportation ensure the site integrates well with the surrounding area.

The design was created with specific users in mind, including City Park visitors, nearby residents, and patrons of adjacent businesses, such as Parkside Station. The layout supports diverse uses, including walking, biking, and running through dedicated pathways. The terraced seating provides welcoming spaces for people to sit and enjoy coffee or meals after walking from Parkside Station, engage in outdoor games or picnics in the multiple open green spaces, or visit the food trucks near the waterpark and volleyball courts. This variety ensures the site meets a range of needs, including both social interaction and recreation.

The class recommends a phased implementation strategy, starting with smaller interventions such as sidewalk upgrades and the addition of seating. These early improvements will allow the community to experience immediate benefits from the proposal and provide feedback before more permanent changes are made.

This design not only focuses on enhancing connectivity and pedestrian accessibility but also incorporates community-driven elements that respond directly to the needs expressed by residents and stakeholders. The phased approach ensures the transformation of the South City Park Catalyst site is both sustainable and adaptable, fostering long-term community engagement and use.

Programming Research

Projects: ICT Pop-up Park & South Lamar Bike Lanes



ICT Pop-up Park designed to bring food and fun together. It is nestled between 2 buildings in downtown Wichita. The park includes food trucks, live music, games, activates, colorful furniture and active space for community to come together and engage.



Phase one of **South Lamar Bike Lanes** in Austin, TX and used as a precedent for the separation between the pedestrian, bike lane, and vehicular traffic through vegetation.

Site Analysis

Site Diagrams

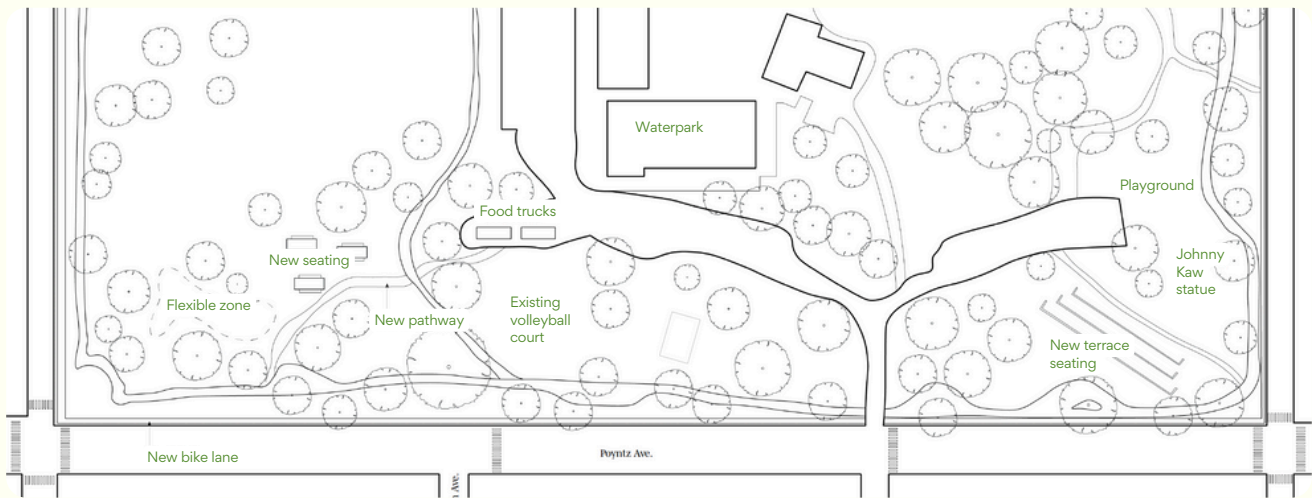
Man-made Features



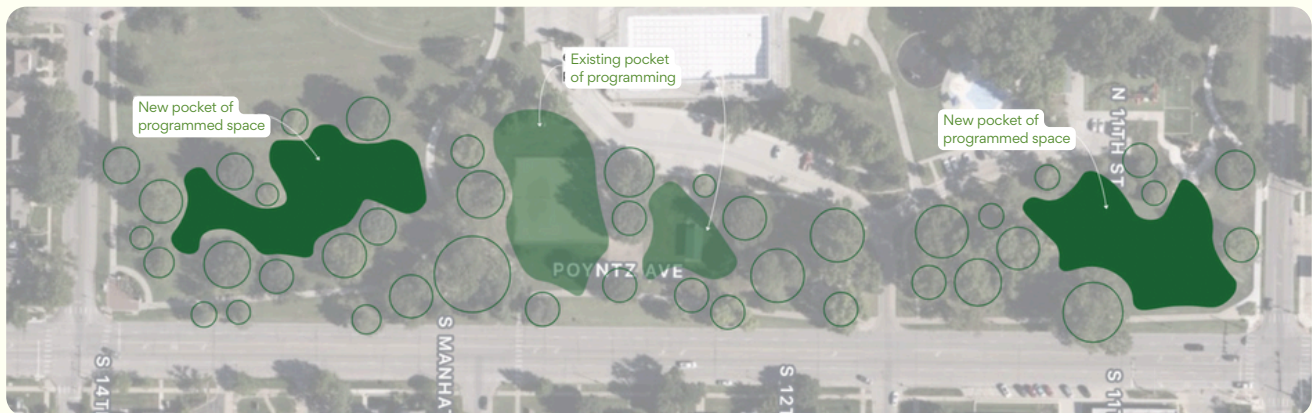
Natural Physical Features

Site Plan & Diagrams

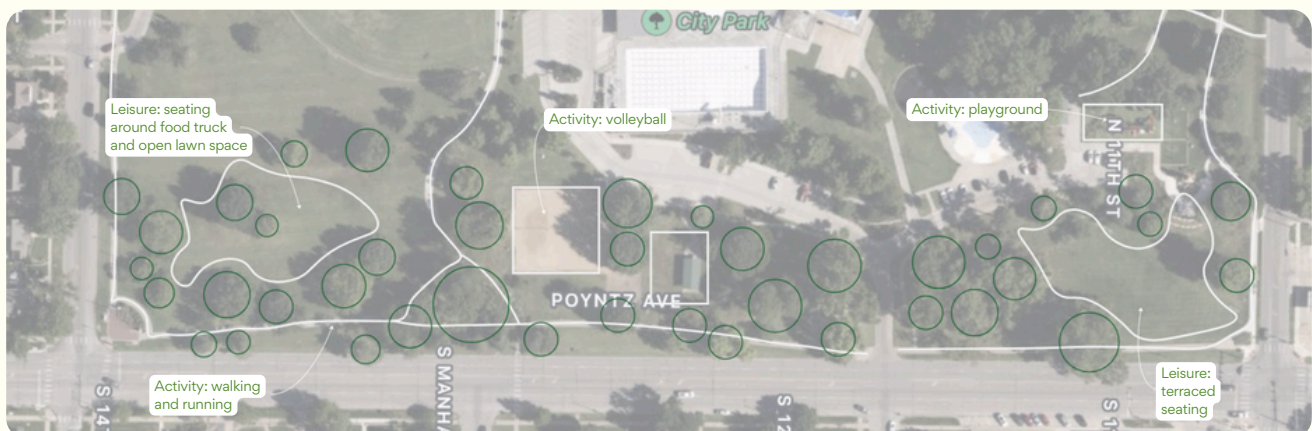
Site Plan



Pockets of Programmed Public Space Diagram



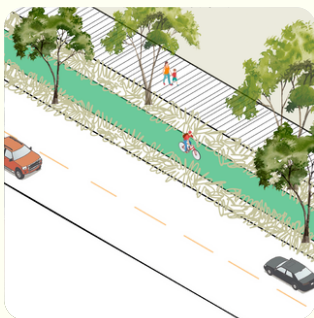
Divisions between Leisure and Recreational Activities Diagram



Widened, Flexible Amenity Pathway



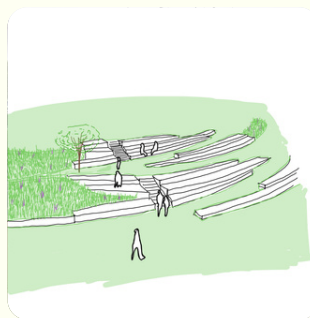
Key Moments



Multiple Modes of Transportation



Seating Along the Pathway



Terraced Seating into the Landscape



Flexible Green Space



Site 7

Intersection of Poyntz Ave and 11th Street

Brandon & Tanner

Poyntz to Park

Intersection of Poyntz Ave and 11th St

Introduction

Arguably one of the most important and busiest intersections along the Poyntz Avenue Corridor is the intersection of Poyntz Avenue and 11th Street. This area is adjacent to Parkside Station, City Park, City Hall, and the fire station connected to City Hall. One of the biggest concerns raised by the community is the desire for Poyntz Avenue to become more walkable and include more green space. The main goals of this project are to create a connection from City Park to Downtown by designing a more **walkable intersection and expressive gateway**, signifying the distinction between the two areas, and creating space that can expand on the existing activation of Parkside Station and City Park.

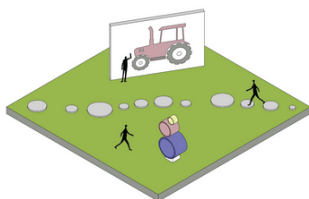
Before



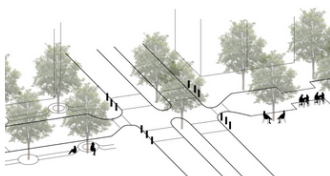
After



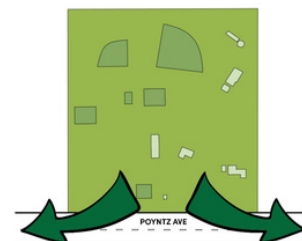
Selected Kit of Parts



Space for self expression



Outdoor seating



Expand City Park down Poyntz

Design Narrative

The Poyntz and 11th Street intersection already offers several advantages, including Parkside Station, which is a community favorite, and the ample green space provided by its proximity to City Park. Additionally, the area features wider roads with less traffic, allowing the opportunity to propose a road diet. This would provide more space for pedestrians, introduce new amenities, and bring the focus back to people, rather than vehicles. Community members have expressed that walking from City Park to Downtown can be very enjoyable if there is a more convenient and safe connection. There is also an opportunity to create public spaces for self-expression, expand City Park down Poyntz Avenue, connect existing circulation paths, and prioritize pedestrian circulation through new road design. These are all aspects the community has expressed interest in addressing.

One of the main challenges of this site is accommodating the fire station. The need to ensure enough room for fire trucks to respond to emergencies prevents the proposal from taking up too much of the road. As a result, the originally proposed center medians had to be removed to maintain adequate space for fire truck turn radii. Another consideration is the removal of existing parking lots to create more green space, which could be unpopular. To mitigate this concern, proper project phasing will be needed to ensure enough replacement parking spaces are available to meet the needs of businesses along Poyntz Avenue.

The design proposal is split into two phases. Phase 1 focuses on implementing several key features:

- An architectural gateway on the northwest corner of the intersection serves as a welcoming entrance into City Park. This gateway could be a permanent structure or a temporary feature of local art, fostering a sense of ownership and community involvement.
- Bulb-outs on three out of four corners of the intersection. Bulb-outs extend the sidewalk and curb outward into the street, creating shorter pedestrian crossing distances and improving visibility at key locations. This design reduces the intimidation factor of crossing the intersection, encouraging more frequent use of the Poyntz Avenue Corridor.

Implementing Phase 1 sets the foundation for Phase 2 and makes it more feasible over time. Phase 2 introduces the following changes:

- Reduction of front-facing parking lots and an increase in on-street angled parking. This adjustment creates an opportunity to extend City Park down the street, while providing businesses with a “front yard.”
- The sidewalk takes on a curved profile, which creates nodes for various amenities, such as seating, covered seating, and a bike repair station, among others. These spaces that previously served as parking lots will be transformed into pocket parks that complement nearby businesses and integrate into the City Park system.

The implementation of both phases brings pedestrian life back into focus and enhances the Poyntz Avenue Corridor, making it more inviting, accessible, and connected to the surrounding community.

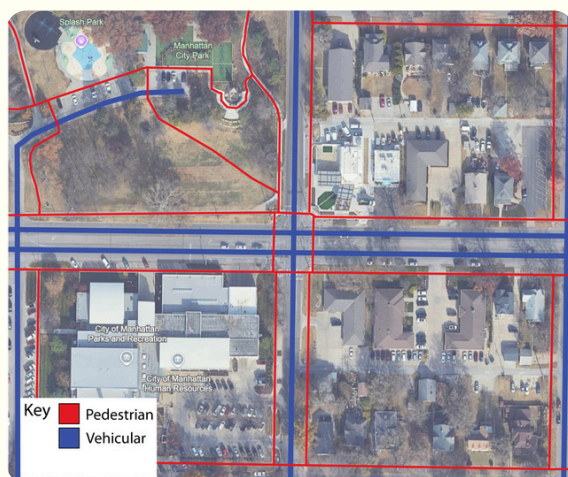
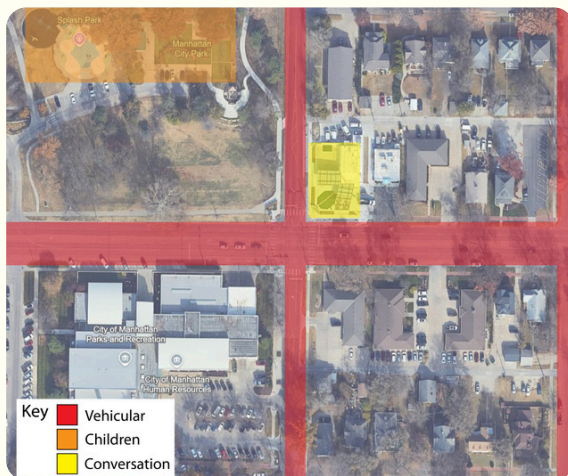
Programming Research

Projects: Meadowbrook Park, Marsha P Johnson State Park, Auburn Road, Grand Concourse, & Pacific Plaza Park



Site Analysis

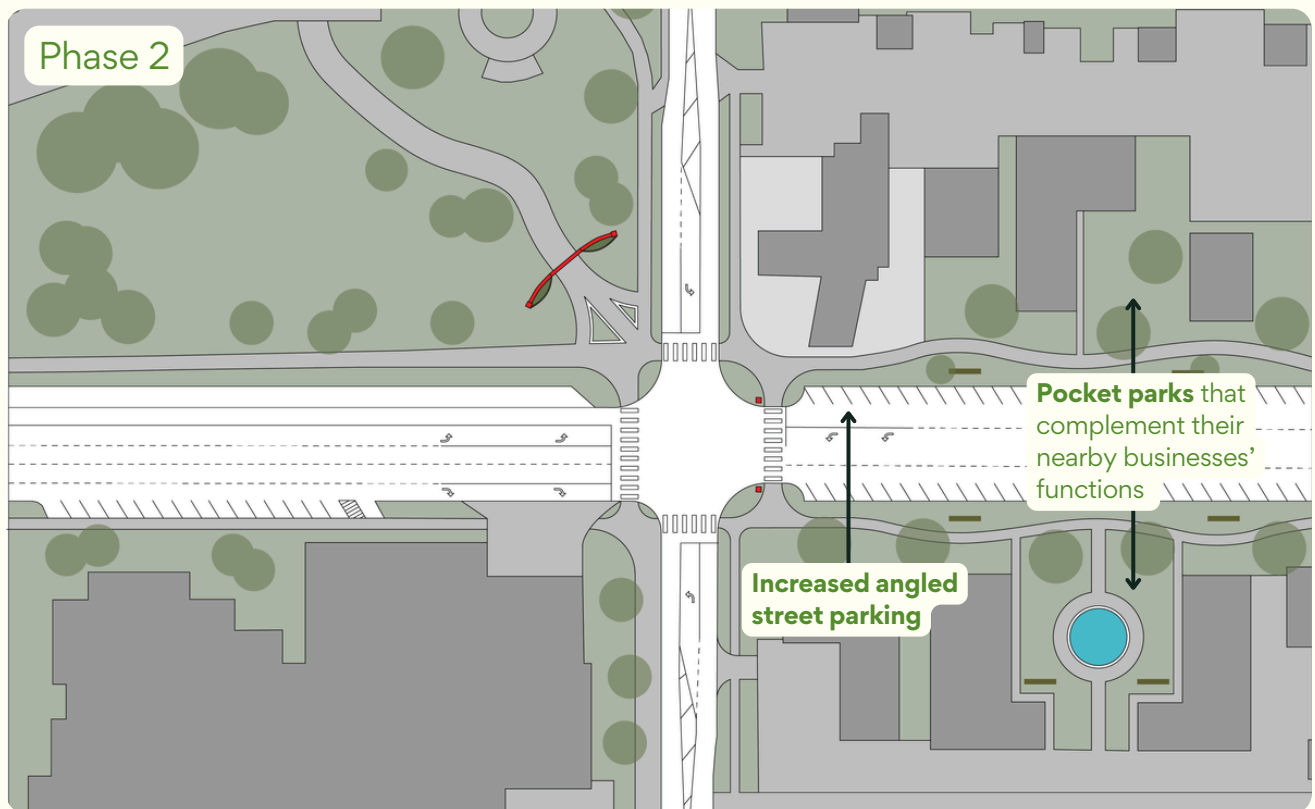
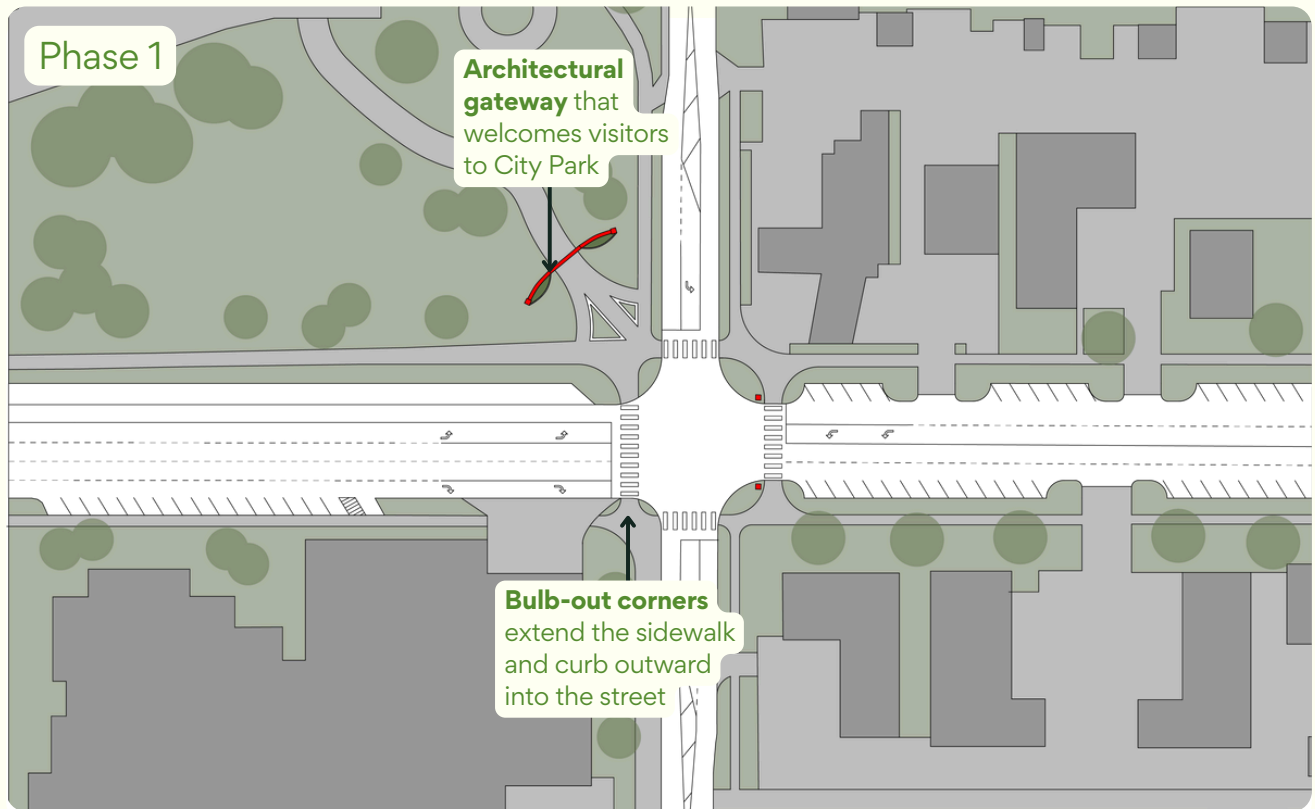
Site Diagrams



Site Photos



Site Plan



Pavilion and Flexible, Outdoor Seating

Original Intersection



New Intersection



New Intersection during Special Programming





Site 9

USD Central Office

South side

Emily & Rachel

Re-imagining the Built Landscape

USD Central Office South side

Introduction

The south side of the USD Central Office building is located between Houston Street to the north, 9th Street to the east, Pierre Street to the south, and 10th Street to the west. Currently, this area is underutilized and in need of a reimagined program. During community engagement activities and stakeholder interviews, three main concerns were consistently raised about the Poyntz Corridor: the need for mixed-use spaces, more outdoor gathering and recreational areas, and exterior seating. This conceptual proposal aims to address these concerns through a **mixed-use hub for community play**, engaging both the current and broader community needs.



Selected Kit of Parts



Design Narrative

The lack of utilized space on the south side of the USD Central Office presents several opportunities for transformation. The area, currently a recreational space, has the potential to offer large open spaces that fulfill the community's desires. Community engagement activities highlighted the need for more green space, seating, walkability, small restaurants and cafes, non-student mixed-use housing, and activated street corners. The USD Central Office South site is ideal for adding these elements due to its ample space. This site provides an opportunity to meet multiple community concerns while preserving the existing neighborhood character.

When analyzing the site, it is important to consider twelve urban quality criteria. The USD building site currently meets two of these criteria: mobility and options for play, exercise, and activities. The site offers wide open spaces that could be utilized year-round. However, it falls short in other areas. The site currently lacks regions designated for rest, socialization, or sitting, and it also lacks features that provide physical and sensory shelter. The site remains largely untapped and underutilized. Additionally, the surrounding area is highly residential, making it necessary not to disrupt the community but to enhance it. The goal is to create a space that serves both current residents and the broader Manhattan community.

The proposed design concept aims to create an area that integrates mixed-use spaces, outdoor gathering areas, and recreational spaces without disrupting the existing community.

- **Mixed-Use Development:** The northern edge of the site, closest to the old Manhattan High School building, will be redeveloped into a mixed-use space. This development will feature a ground floor with a café and retail space, while the upper floors will consist of condo-style apartments. The residential units will be aimed at individuals who are not Kansas State University students, filling a gap in Manhattan's housing market for non-student residents. This development will help bridge the gap between the more private neighborhood and the active Poyntz Corridor, fostering a connection between the two areas.
- **Recreational Courts and Green Space:** The existing pickleball courts will be relocated, and new recreational courts will be added, including sand volleyball and basketball courts. These courts will flank the east and west sides of the site, creating a central flexible green space that can be used for a variety of activities such as outdoor concerts, sporting events, craft fairs, farmers markets, and more. This space addresses the community's need for additional outdoor programming and green space.
- **Community Integration:** The overall design will enhance the connection between the community and the site, providing spaces for both relaxation and social interaction. The inclusion of outdoor seating areas, green zones, and public amenities will encourage more foot traffic and engagement from both residents and visitors.

The USD Central Office South site aims to reactivate an underutilized area with a design that enhances its functionality and accessibility. By introducing mixed-use development, recreational spaces, and more green space, the proposal addresses community concerns while preserving the site's character. This approach not only provides the community with desired amenities but also fosters a sense of belonging and connection, making the site a valuable asset for both the local residents and the broader Manhattan community.

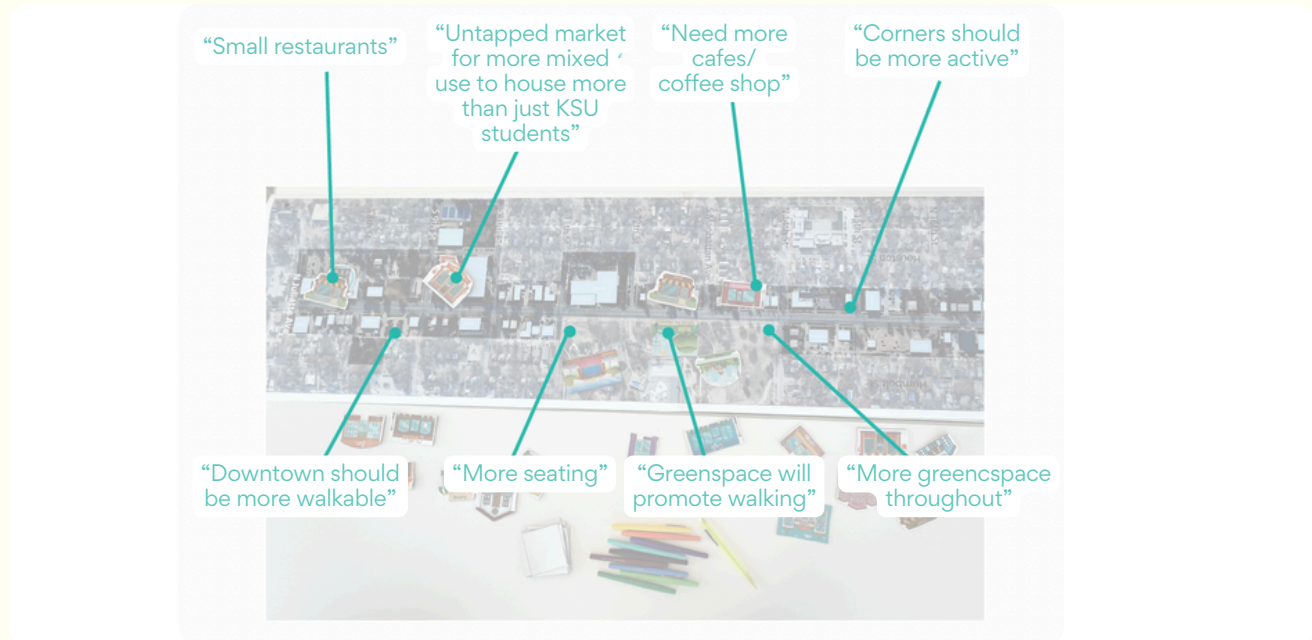
Programming Research

Projects: S*Park & Old Town at Creekside

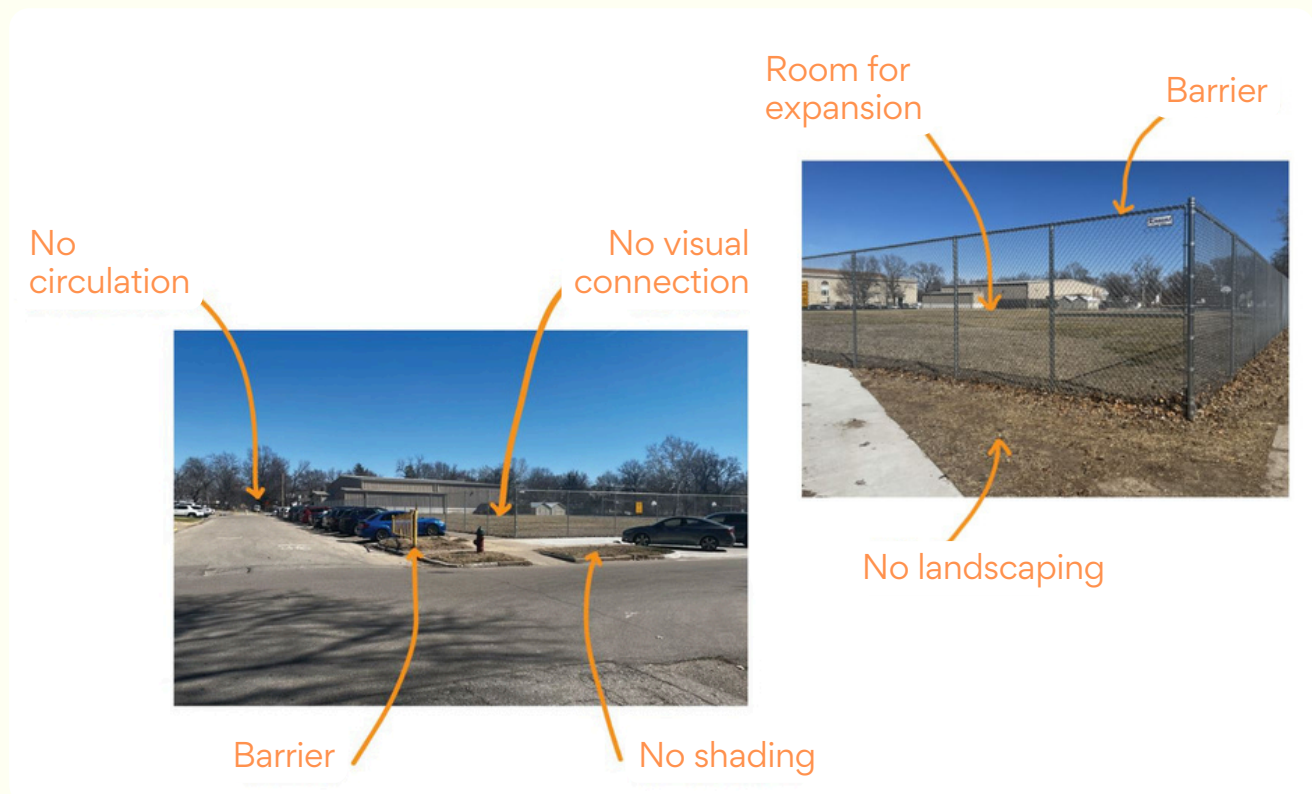


Community Input & Site Analysis

Community Input



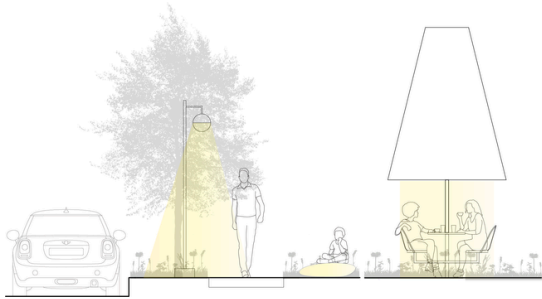
Site Analysis



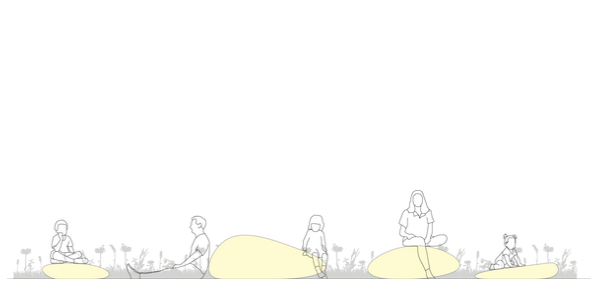
Site Plan



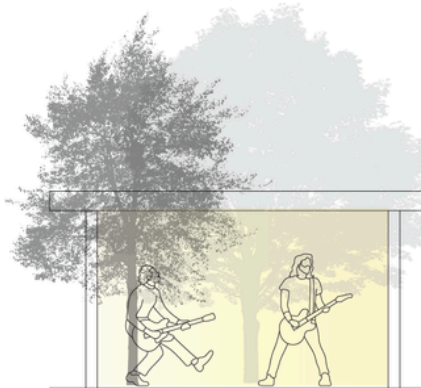
Pavilion and Flexible, Outdoor Seating



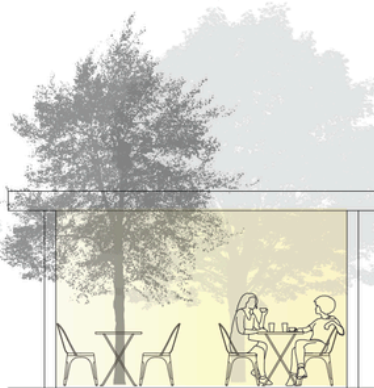
Multipurpose Social Zones



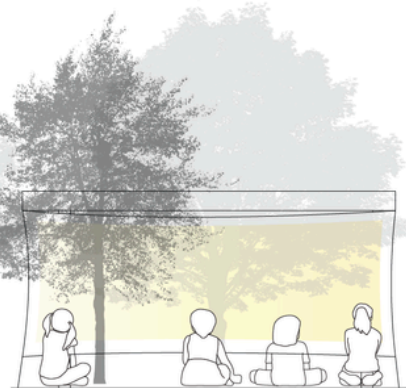
Playful Seating with Lighting



Stage



Dining



Moving Screen

Pavilion Uses

Pavilion with Outdoor Seating

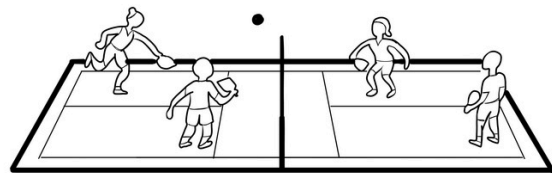


Mixed-Use Recreational Hub

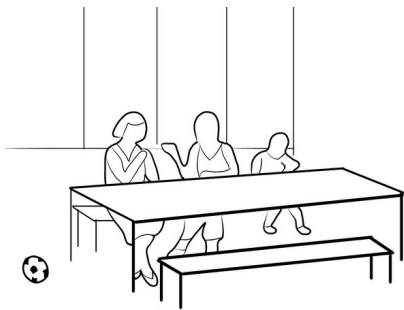
Pavilion Entry



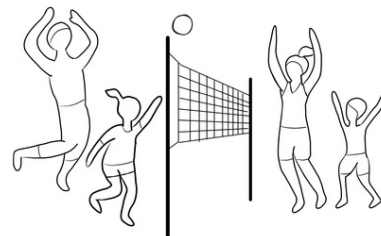
Playing on the the proposed basketball courts



Playing on proposed pickle ball courts



Resting on the exterior seating elements



Playing on proposed sand volleyball courts

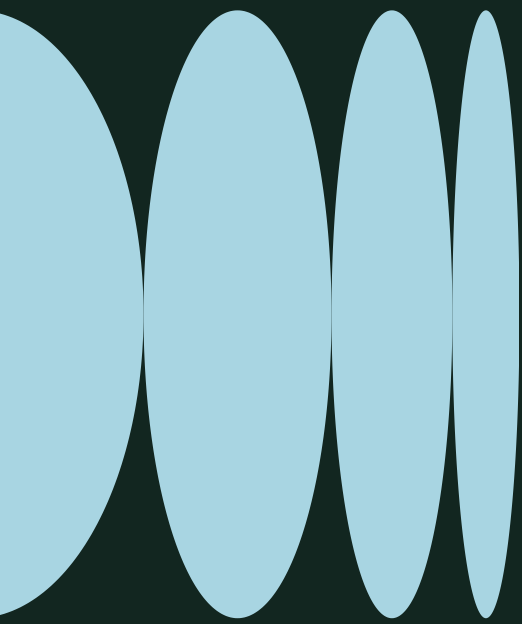
Activity Vignettes

References

Design Proposals

A+T. (n.d.) *Activators: public space strategies*. Independent Magazine of Architecture & Technology.
<https://aplust.net/tienda/revistas/Serie%20STRATEGY/ACTIVATORS-Public-Space-Strategies/>

Gehl Architects. (n.d.). *Twelve quality criteria*. Gehl Architects. [Twelve Urban Quality](#).



Reimagining Poyntz Avenue Corridor

Please direct any questions about this report, project, course, etc. to:

Prof. Gabby Coleman

gkc@k-state.edu