

THE EPHEMERAL PLAN

THE BROOK ROAD TRIANGLE

A TEMPLATE FOR TEMPORARY PLANNING IN THE CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2014

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PREPARED FOR:
THE CITY OF RICHMOND, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The projects would not have been possible if not for the numerous individuals and organizations who were so generous donating their expertise, resources, and time. First, a thanks to Comfort, Max's on Broad, Pork Chops and Grits Café, and Saison for providing delicious food to fuel the meetings. A thanks to Gallery5 for providing refreshments and an overall great space to conduct the meetings. A special thanks to my panel members, Meghan Barbato, Dr. Meghan Gough, James Hill and James Smither for guiding me through this professional development process.

Furthermore, this experience has become the highlight of my graduate career thanks to: Alex "Chuck" Beatty, Giles Harnsberger, Max Hepp-Buchanan, Tyler King, Kathleen Onufer, Naomi Siodmok, and Shawn Winter.

Finally, thank you Tyler Potterfield-planner, friend, mentor-for all the spontaneous knowledge (Richmond-centric and otherwise) that you've bestowed upon me.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In traditional long-term planning, if a plan is fortunate enough to come to fruition, implementation occurs over the course of a few years if not decades. Then, only once it is fully implemented will the community have the ability to assess its impact in the long-term. Due to this process many ideas and efforts to improve a community never come to fruition or often fail. The Ephemeral Plan seeks to amend this through providing a more streamlined, proactive approach to implementation.

Similar to staging a house for sale with temporary components to improve the space, the Ephemeral Plan demonstrates the way a space can be transformed through the rapid implementation of low-cost, high-impact temporary pilot projects. Additionally, the process fosters stewardship by using community discussions to influence the design of these small-scale solutions. In turn, these solutions can be immediately assessed and either altered accordingly or implemented more permanently. The Ephemeral Plan serves as a formal template for temporary planning, or short-term action plans that can inform long-term change.

The Ephemeral Plan: The Brook Road Triangle document is the first foray into temporary planning for the city of Richmond. In order to give the plan context, the Ephemeral Plan process was applied to a space that is currently being revitalized along Brook Road, in the Jackson Ward neighborhood of downtown Richmond. Based on research that incorporates observational analysis, community involvement and personal accounts, the Ephemeral Plan template argues the need for a more efficient, community-based approach to plan implementation for the city of Richmond.



Existing conditions along Brook Road looking from Broad Street.



CLIENTS


The Ephemeral Plan was requested by the Planning and Preservation division of the Planning and Development Review department of the city of Richmond (PDR) and it fulfills the requirements of the Master of Urban & Regional Planning program in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. The mission of PDR is to create and maintain a high quality of life for the citizens, businesses, and visitors of Richmond through providing planning and enforcement services to enhance the city's built and natural environments. The division of Planning and Preservation is responsible for a wide array of long-range planning initiatives that include, but are not limited to, enhancing and implementing current plans and community planning initiatives.¹

The secondary client is the Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA). Recognized as a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization, DNA seeks to retain and expand the residential and business base, improve the appearance and perception of their downtown community and collaborate with other community resources and agencies to ensure an adequate voice and representation for those they serve.²



FIGURE 1



 Study Area

0 1/2 1 2 3 4 miles



PLAN PURPOSE

PDR is requesting a formal template that addresses plan implementation initiatives through the use of temporary planning, or tactical urbanism, to increase the efficiency of the long-term planning process. Tactical urbanism is a concept that utilizes short-term pilot projects to inspire long-term change.¹ The goal of the Ephemeral Plan process is to design solutions that are ephemeral, or temporary in nature, with the intention to influence more permanent iterations that coincide with the mission of the city's Master Plan.

The Ephemeral Plan serves to change the traditional –often bureaucratic– plan implementation process into an expedited, community-driven process. Instant implementation is crucial to the Ephemeral Plan as it allows the community to experience a variety of possible solutions in a shorter period of time, without having to filter through the lengthy administrative process that plagues many municipalities. This rapid implementation allows for exposure to different variations of solutions and faster results. Subsequently, these efforts may lend themselves to more substantial investments and permanent improvements in the long-term.² This plan is an incremental planning approach that uses site-specific pilot projects that can be tailored to various neighborhoods according to community input.

The Ephemeral Plan is a tool that furthers goals of the Richmond Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2008. Its process reduces the amount of effort, money, and time it would normally take a plan to fully come to fruition. A traditional plan consists of many phases, but the outcome can change according to political and budgetary influences, which can negatively impact the overall effectiveness of the original plan or keep it from being implemented. Large-scale community revitalization solutions that require major public funding and several years to implement command higher risks that may prove inefficient when measuring their return on investment.³ The Ephemeral Plan suggests using the interim time to test multiple solutions on a smaller scale. This allows a plan to take shape within a shortened time frame producing instant results that can be assessed and either permanently implemented or revised and re-implemented until a final solution is found.

Short-term action plans allow flexibility, which can help carry a community's vision through various economic cycles, political cycles, and other influences. This flexibility comes from having a heavier reliance on community resources, translating to less-needed financial support from government entities, thus allowing for less bureaucracy and more democracy.

The Ephemeral Plan: The Brook Road Triangle demonstrates the Ephemeral Plan process through the use of an underutilized space in downtown Richmond, **FIGURE 1**.

The space, formed by West Broad Street (Broad), North Adams Street (Adams) and Brook Road (Brook), is referred to in this plan as the Brook Road Triangle, or the Triangle, see **FIGURE 2** and **FIGURE 3**. It is at the nexus of the Jackson Ward neighborhood and the Arts and Cultural District and provides an opportunity for a higher and better use of space.

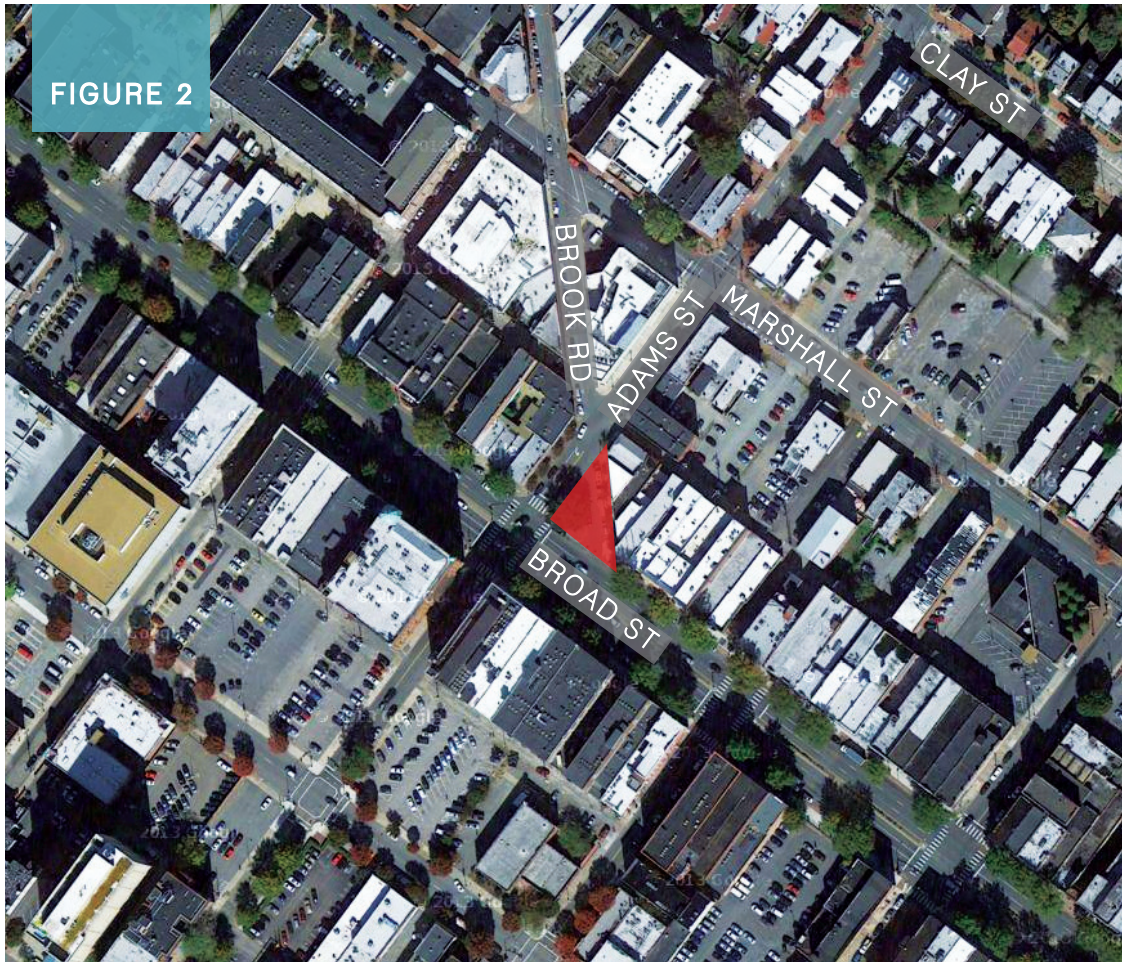
Once a major thoroughfare and gateway into the city in the early 19th Century, Brook Road diminished into a low-trafficked side street during the mid to late- 20th Century.⁴ Recently the area surrounding the Brook Road Triangle is seeing growth both economically and physically. In the past decade the area saw new small businesses and galleries open in previously vacant storefronts; recent construction of a new restaurant; and designation as the Arts and Cultural District.

The First Fridays Art Walk, or First Fridays, which takes place on the first Friday of each month in the Arts and Cultural District, encourages pedestrian traffic and patronization throughout the area. However, the flow of pedestrian traffic is disrupted by the Brook Road Triangle, which creates a disconnect. The Triangle divides the area due to its automobile-centric design, inadequate connectivity and lack of activity.

In its current state, the Triangle impedes a pedestrian's instinctive ability to easily continue down Broad, negatively impacting businesses located east of Adams. For these reasons, the Brook Road Triangle serves as a prime study area in which to demonstrate the Ephemeral Plan.

Thus, the goal of *The Ephemeral Plan: The Brook Road Triangle* is twofold:

- to determine a solution for the Brook Road Triangle
- to utilize the process as a template for efficient plan implementation



A...

PROCESS THAT
TRANSFORMS
THIS
GRASSROOTS
EFFORT FROM
MERELY 'COOL'
TO 'USEFUL.'



STATE OF THE ART

Many localities and entities undertaking community revitalization and redevelopment efforts are discovering hardships in the realm of long-term plan implementation due to economic cycles and its subsequent influence on budgetary and political support. To combat this problem, several organizations including design firms, non-profits, and municipalities are looking to Tactical Urbanism, or short-term, often self-funded efforts that lead to permanent change.^{1,2}

Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change, Volume 2 discusses the main goals of Tactical Urbanism and provides a background of its evolution from a grass-roots, guerilla movement into a catalyst for long-term planning and economic development in municipalities around the world. The principles of Tactical Urbanism resonate highly with the goals of the Ephemeral Plan:

- A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change
- An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges
- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations
- Low-risks, with possibly high reward
- The development of social capital between citizens and public/private institutions²

The Dallas-based consulting group Team Better Block advocates tactical urbanism, exercising the aforementioned principles in their community-improvement projects around the world.³ As practitioners of tactical urbanism, Team Better Block devises ways to re-program underutilized urban areas into complete streets often using general quick, inexpensive, high-impact changes. Their solutions range from implementing simulated traffic calming measures such as bike lanes and curb bump outs, to retail with pop-up shops in vacant storefronts. The projects foster the growth of social capital by encouraging the use of materials that are borrowed from within the community or built by the community, essentially crowdsourcing materials and talent. Crowdsourcing, or the practice of sourcing ideas, volunteers, and materials from within the community, enforces and strengthens community bonds and increases stewardship.

Similar to “Better Block” projects, the Ephemeral Plan heavily uses the bottom-up approach, but seeks to enhance unique characteristics of the space that can have a direct effect on the user experience.⁴ The Ephemeral Plan addresses community revitalization issues in a more formal, in-depth process that transforms this grassroots effort from merely “cool” to “useful.”

In 2008, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) started to devise ways to activate near-vacant commercial corridors and boost local neighborhoods through the use of the Temporary Urbanism Initiative (TUI). TUI is a working group started by a forum in which public, private and non-profit stakeholders addressed topics related to economic development. TUI focuses on vacant spaces throughout the city and helps local residents devise ways to foster economic development in their respective neighborhoods.^{5,6} Initially DCOP looked at “quick-win” projects to demonstrate what was possible to local stakeholders. These catalyst projects utilized existing public resources and city-owned parcels that allowed for faster implementation and established credibility for following projects.⁵

The Mayor’s Innovation Delivery Team (IDT), established in Memphis, TN, developed as a way to foster neighborhood economic vitality in “dead spaces.” Prior to developing their own initiatives, IDT found inspiration in Team Better Block and their 2010 project in Memphis.⁷ The project, which allowed entrepreneurs temporarily to occupy vacant storefronts and community stakeholders to paint bike lanes along a major thoroughfare, resulted in the opening of eight new businesses in vacant storefronts and 12 million dollars of private investment. One of the resulting initiatives developed by IDT is MEMfix, which permits temporary street events, helping to revitalize blocks with temporary uses and low-cost

materials. To streamline the process for community-led projects, IDT followed the city’s permitting process to identify problems they encountered and provide solutions.⁷ IDT is currently working with the local government officials and citizens to understand the potential for temporary projects and implications for strategic and effective investments.⁵

“A Pattern Language” provides structure to engage with the community by allowing participants a platform on which to discuss problems and solutions. The authors of “A Pattern Language” addressed and found solutions to urban issues through the use of physical, social, and urban design components, or patterns that interact with other patterns to form a larger system, or language. The book provides 253 patterns of various scales that apply to any community.⁸ Each pattern relies heavily on community interaction with the spaces and how people actually use the space, rather than for what the space was originally designed, for example sitting on a table that was not originally designed for sitting on. In this way the authors noted ways to create design solutions based on community members’ perspectives rather than designers’ perspectives, another major aspect of the Ephemeral Plan. Several patterns from “A Pattern Language” help give structure to the community meetings.



The 35th Street Better Block in Norfolk allowed community artists to sell (or rent) their wares, provided temporary pedestrian infrastructure, and allowed city officials to experience outdoor, cafe-style seating for existing restaurants.

THE EPHEMERAL PLAN PROCESS

CHART 1





APPROACH + METHODS

The Ephemeral Plan uses historical and observational analysis along with community engagement and community-led urban design to produce solutions. The plan process, shown in **CHART 1**, illustrates how temporary urbanism can work in Richmond. The Ephemeral Plan upholds three major principles as used by *muf* architects in London:

Value what is there
Define what is missing
Nurture what is possible¹

Historical Analysis provides information on the evolution of the study area through the use of photographs, newspaper articles and other archives.

Pre-implementation Observations are modeled after William H. Whyte's *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and consists of observing the way people interact with existing conditions in the study area.

Literature Analysis uses the preceding observations to determine applicable design solutions based off *A Pattern Language* a compilation of 253 design solutions derived from physical, social, and urban design interventions.²

Community Engagement brings community advocates and stakeholders together through two charrettes and two discussions

to create solutions based off the research and their personal experiences with the study area.

Implementation brings the solutions to fruition with crowdsourced materials and community and volunteers.

Post-implementation Observations consist of observing how people interact within the study area with the implemented solutions.

Once Post-implementation Observations are conducted, the community convenes once more to determine whether or not solutions improved the study area. If the community believes the solutions were successful the solution will be proposed to the city and go through the administrative process to become permanent. If the solutions were not deemed successful a new process will begin, starting at the Pre-implementation Observations step.





ROADMAP TO THE DOCUMENT

This document serves as a template for implementing a temporary plan in any community that warrants improvement.

Research is a major component of the Ephemeral Plan. It consists of five major parts of analysis: Historical Analysis, Pre-Implementation Observations, Literature Analysis, Community Engagement, Implementation, and Post-Implementation Observations. Historical Analysis provides helpful information on the study area, providing answers to how the space was used in the past. This analysis allows for community building and also lends itself to reasons for repurposing existing infrastructure that may still exist in the area. Pre-implementation Observations and Literature Analysis occur simultaneously and help to inform Community Engagement and Implementation which subsequently affects the post-implementation observations. Each part revolves around the three main tenets:

Value what is there
Define what is missing
Nurture what is possible¹

The Research + Template section which consists of the five parts of analysis uses italicized language to provide a template to illustrate the process in general. The non-italicized language that follows illustrates how the process is used in relation to the Brook Road Triangle.

The following section, Creating Permanent Solutions, describes how to determine when a pilot project is ready to become permanent and the resources necessary to establish permanence.

Perpetuating the Temporary discusses the alternative to the preceding section. If the pilot projects did not warrant permanence or if other factors affect the transition to permanence, this section identifies how to maintain the temporary solutions until resources can be identified.

The conclusion summarizes the Ephemeral Plan Process as it pertains to the Brook Road Triangle. This section identifies the challenges and opportunities that materialized since the plan took place and the implications for its use in other communities.

Participants' evaluation of the plan process along with meeting documentation is provided in the appendix.



A view of the horse fountain looking across Broad Street to the Masonic Temple, c.1910. *Courtesy of Shorpy.com*



HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

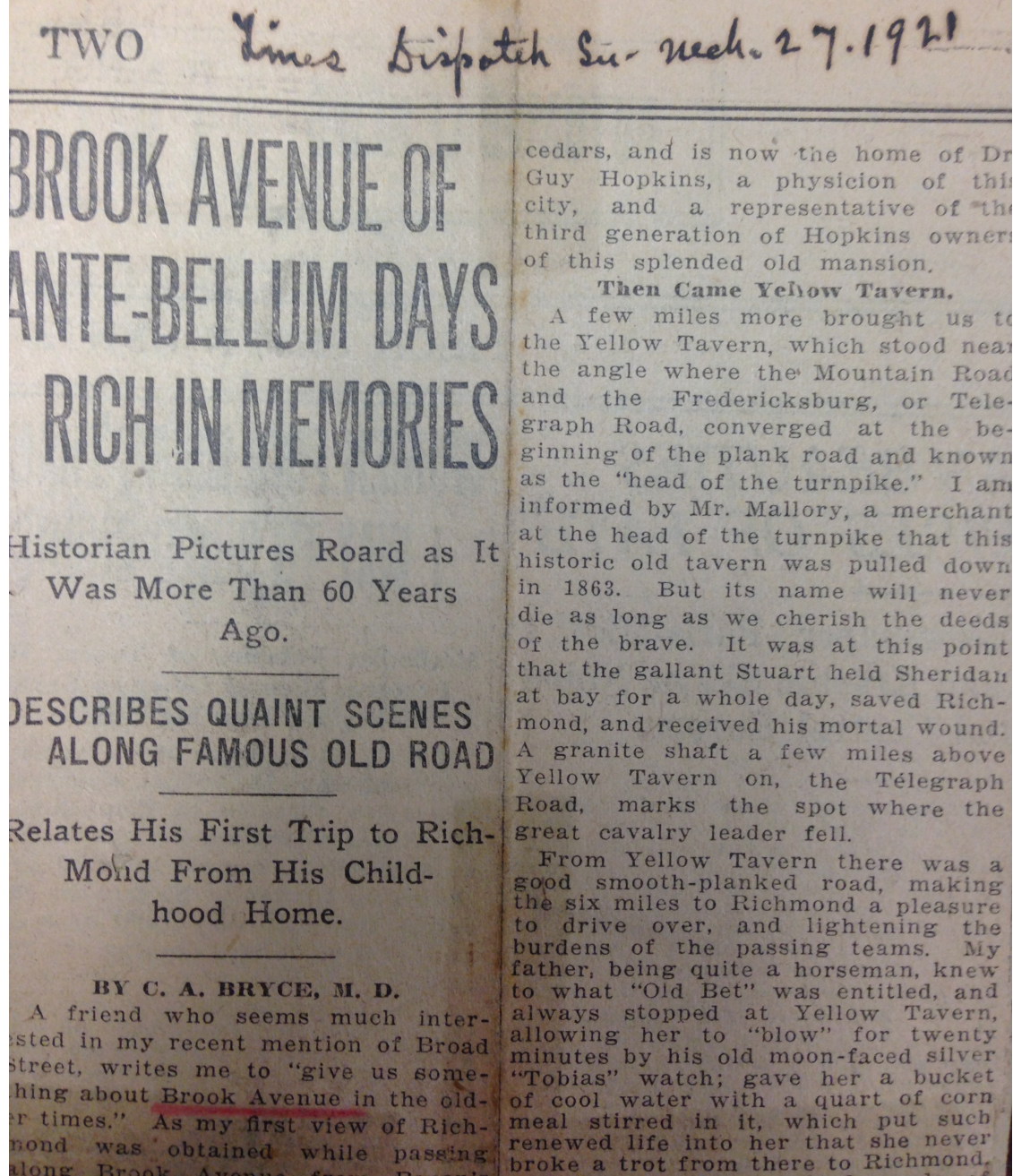


Providing an Historical Analysis of the study area will help “Value what is there” and familiarize participants with past uses and potential creative solutions that may still prove relevant to the nature of the space. This analysis answers many questions the community may have regarding the physical elements of the space such as architecture, antiquated infrastructure, or other elements considered distinct or unique. Based on when and where the space was created, background information may be severely limited. Personal accounts, periodicals, photographs, and other records should be used to illustrate culturally significant points in time. This data lends itself to conversation and serves as a catalyst for ideas amongst community members.

The Valentine Richmond History Center provided a plethora of information regarding the Triangle. Several images provided an idea of how the space was used and its evolution through time to its current state.

Formed along what was once a major thoroughfare into the city in the 1800s, the study area served as a gateway into the city complete with markets and other commercial spaces along Brook Road. In 1907, City Council approved the placement of a seven-foot, five-ton watering fountain for use by horses and humans alike. Considering its strategic location, the fountain allowed passersby to rehydrate before traveling out of the city or into the city, see **FIGURES 1-6**. With the onset of the automobile, roads began to form a triangle around the fountain, creating a space for automobiles to park and blocking the fountain from being used by humans or horses. The eventual construction of a paved traffic island saw the removal of the fountain and the construction of a median to help regulate traffic, its current use today.

FIGURE 1



A local doctor recounts his childhood trips along Brook Road for the Times-Dispatch in 1922.

FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 2: The study area in the 1920s, looking North along Brook Road.

FIGURE 3: Looking East, many businesses surrounded the study area in the 1920s.

By GEO. W. ROGERS:

Old Fountain's Removal FIGURE 4

Editor, The News Leader:

The removal of the fountain from the center of the triangle formed by Broad and Adams Streets and Brook Road, formerly Brook Avenue, throws the spotlight on an area with a background as colorful as that of Strawberry Hill.

The handsome, seven foot, five ton continuous dispenser to man, animals and canines, was unveiled in 1908, it is built of highly polished Maine granite trimmed in bronze. It was erected under an ordinance adopted by the City Council Oct. 25, 1907, reading in past as follows: "The City of Richmond hereby expresses a desire to receive and does hereby accept a fountain from the National Humane Alliance. The City of Richmond hereby guarantees the erection of same and the furnishing of a continuous water supply and the proper and permanent care thereof, and hereby fixes a suitable location for said fountain in the center of that triangular lot bounded by Broad, Adams and Brook Avenue."

The triangle in its earlier days was known as "Hell's Half Acre" and from the reading of yesteryear it appears as if its sobriquet was well earned and maintained for many years. It was the terminus of Richmond's first and most historic commercial avenue; Richmond's first expressway, the Brook Turnpike, chartered in February, 1812, ran from Hell's Half Acre to Dabney Williamson's Tavern, located about

the first "avenue" in the State and most likely several States.

When the site for the monument to Major-General James Ewell Brown Stuart, CSA, was under consideration, the triangle was considered not only from location and availability, but it was said to have been the last resting place of General Stuart while being brought from the battlefield to the residence of his brother-in-law, Dr. Brewer, at 210 West Grace St., where he died the next day, May 12, 1864.

THE NUMBER ONE AVENUE, the main gateway and the last stopping place before entering the rapid growing city, was also an up and coming village itself. Combination stores and residences, small manufacturing, wholesale houses and other active businesses were established on both sides of the zigzagging highway, which was also well dotted with taverns and other thirst quenchers.

Across the branch, which served many useful purposes and where the first toll gate was established, were the large stockyards, team boarding stables and tobacco and cattle weighing stations. Just beyond were the large residences, with acreage, of many of the prominent butchers and sausage makers, with their slaughter houses and refining plants in the rear, some distance from the homes but not always far enough to free the odors.

Here also was the famous rendezvous of Buck Jones, a two-

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The editor of The News Leader describes the history of the triangle in an article from 1950.



Blonde Ave. Horse trough



FIGURE 5: By the 1920s paved streets and the proliferation of automobiles increased the need for traffic regulation.
FIGURE 6: Automobiles began to park in the space around the fountain in the 1930s.

FIGURE 1





PRE-IMPLEMENTATION OBSERVATIONS



Pre-implementation Observations, modeled after “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces of small urban spaces,” provides data on the physical characteristics of the space and the way people interact with what is there. The data collected from these on-site observations will inform the community members and designers of the current state of the space first hand, influencing future design solutions. This analysis proves stronger with multiple sessions of observation, with at least three sessions on different days and at different times of the day. Evening observations may present even more opportunity for analysis and may provoke more creative programming. It is preferable to observe during high-traffic times as well as low traffic times to understand the versatility of a space and to discover when and where issues arise. As previously stated, it should be kept in mind that evening observations may present a whole host of different issues.

Observing the Triangle over three different days, at three different times, helped to determine troubled areas in the space and troubled areas leading into the space. These troubled areas consisted mostly of hostile relationships between pedestrians and vehicles, most likely caused by a lack of pedestrian infrastructure; disregard of traffic signage; and increased business activity in the area. This mixture creates a dangerous environment for both pedestrians and vehicles alike.

When observing the area, pedestrians who crossed Adams or Brook to reach the study area, whether it was their final destination or if they merely traversed through it, were counted, see **FIGURE 1**. Additionally vehicles that crossed through the Triangle by way of Brook Road were also counted. More than half, or 58%, of those who traversed the study area were pedestrians, indicating a need for more pedestrian infrastructure in and around the Triangle. Of those 23%, crossed Brook and Adams without using any pedestrian infrastructure. The original study area consisted of the Triangle and the segment of Brook bounded by Adams and Broad, however upon more observation it was determined that one major problem area occurred just outside of the Triangle at the intersection of Adams and Brook where a majority of pedestrians crossed without any pedestrian infrastructure and where



vehicles rarely came to a complete stop at the stop sign.

When moving through to the northern corner of the study area pedestrians did not use crosswalks at the intersection of Adams and Broad, the only intersection with crosswalks in the study area, but instead chose a more direct route that crossed the streets at random, represented in **FIGURE 6**. The discontinued sidewalk through the Triangle dissuaded a small number of pedestrians however those brave enough ventured to walk on the space allotted by the 8-inch wide curb, others maintained their route and walked on the street without any buffer between themselves and vehicles.



Less than half of those who passed through the area, or 42%, drove a vehicle down Brook, where, unless impeded by oncoming traffic on Adams, they did not come to a complete stop, despite a stop sign on Brook.

FIGURES 2-5 depict the physical condition of study area.

These observations helped to determine topics for literature analysis and subsequent discussion at the community meetings.



FIGURE 6

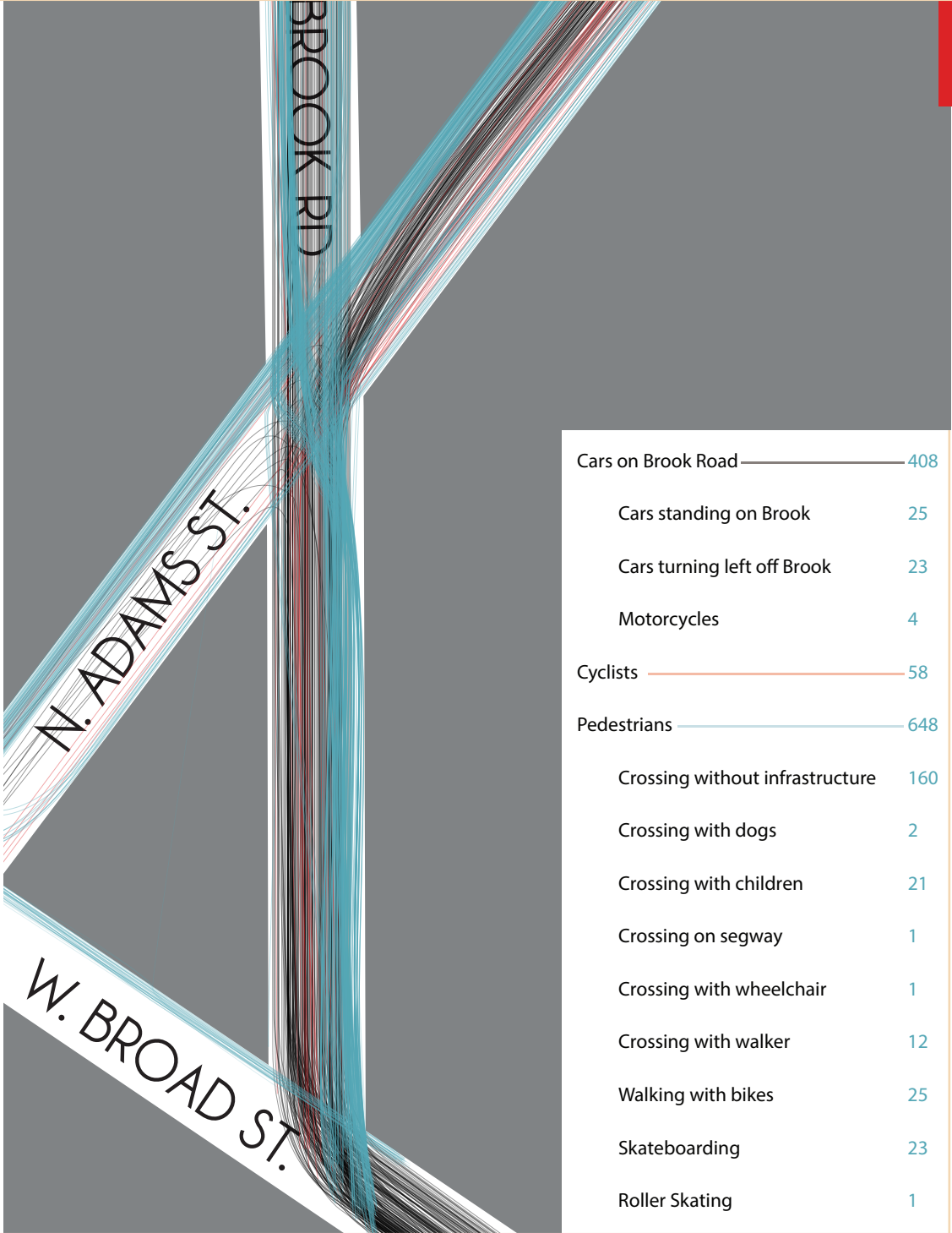




FIGURE 1

An activity pocket in Oslo, Norway provides an enclosed space for passive recreation.



LITERATURE ANALYSIS



"A Pattern Language" is used to establish a structure for the discussion and design process. Relevant patterns from the book help guide the site-specific design process.¹ It is not uncommon for some patterns to coincide with participants' own observations and analysis.

Identifiable Neighborhood (18) discusses how "people need an identifiable spatial unit to belong to." The relevant points discussed in this pattern revolve around the perception that people describing their neighborhood may cite its general boundaries, but will have relevant knowledge confined to an area within two or three blocks of their residence

Community meetings revealed this same pattern. Although marketed throughout the Jackson Ward neighborhood and beyond, the most active participants appeared to reside or work within four or five blocks of the Triangle.

Road Crossing (54) argues that pedestrians will always feel inferior to vehicles despite having the right-of-way (ROW). In order to remedy this inherent fear of vehicles, the pattern suggests ways to elevate road crossings.

When applying this theory to Brook Road, creating an elevated ROW was not financially feasible, however alternative road crossings, as determined by the community meetings, suggested public art crosswalks that are highly visible to drivers. Additionally, many participants suggested closing Brook Road in order to create a more versatile space that could accommodate food vendors and café-like seating (discussed in the following patterns).

Small Public Squares (61) helps to validate the purpose of the community meetings. This pattern discusses how “a town needs public squares; they are the largest, most public rooms, that the town has. But when they are too large, they look and feel deserted.”

To maintain the unique scale it was necessary to define the Triangle by its inherent attributes (i.e. curbs, sidewalks, roads). Not only did this pattern provide a workable scale for the community members, allowing them to visit and analyze the space in a timely manner, it allowed them to conceptualize and create solutions to tangible issues. The community members quickly discerned solutions to create a space in which they felt comfortable alone or participating with others.

Street Café (88) like the previous pattern, **Small Public Squares (61)**, directly relates to the Triangle. The pattern suggests “the street café provides a unique setting, special to cities: a place where people can sit lazily, legitimately, be on view, and watch the world go by.”

Participants explored the possibilities of outdoor activity from nearby restaurants by illustrating the need for seating along sidewalks facing the Triangle. Many community members situated themselves on the sidewalk and discussed the possibility of having a sidewalk café.²

Food Stands (93), a complement to **Small Public Squares (61)** and a supplement to



A food cart in Mexico City, Mexico provides late night fare.

Street Café (88), help to perpetuate the urban community member’s lifestyle by providing “simple, inexpensive food on the street, on the way to shopping, work and friends,” see **FIGURE 2**.

Although it was not immediately addressed, many residents expressed the need for more informal and quick ways to satisfy hunger while at the same time enjoying the outdoors. Participants discussed how it may activate the road, if closed to vehicular traffic, and how it may invite activity and entertainment.

Activity Pockets (124) imparts that activities and people in public squares often gravitate along edges and enclosures, thus the way to activate a space is to create multiple edges and enclosures within a given space, see **FIGURE 1**.

Several participants of the community discussed ways in which the space could accommodate performances, busking, and speeches. In many ways, participants suggested they would like to see an at-



A tree enhances a small public space in Stockholm, Sweden.



A multi-functioning sitting wall in Copenhagen, Denmark.

grade “soap box” which would allow for such activity along the edge of the Triangle. Other discussions touched on the idea of using planters to create a sense of intimacy within the Triangle if Brook were vehicle-free.

Tree Places (171) helped to shine light on a controversial issue: whether or not the oak proved beneficial to the space. This pattern suggests that if a tree does not create a social space for people, it may not receive necessary maintenance such as trimming. Therefore it is necessary for the tree to help provide a social space people value, only then will the tree prove its worth, see **FIGURE 3**.

Participants who sought to keep the oak tree as they integrated it into their design schemes cited this concept. Several members wanted to remove the tree while the majority believed it should stay.

Sitting Wall (243) highlights the importance of maintaining a flow between two separated spaces. The pattern suggests allowing people to sit on the boundaries of joint spaces along sitting walls, or low walls accessible by many, see **FIGURE 4**.

Participants suggested a similar solution along the Triangle’s angled walls that define the planting bed for the oak tree. To maintain inclusivity, some participants suggested designing seating conducive to urban recreation, such as skateboarding.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



To encompass each of the principles: “Value what is there,” “Define what is missing,” and “Nurture what is possible,” Community Engagement consists of four meetings: two community meetings and two charrettes. The community meetings determine the value of certain aspects of the neighborhood that should and should not be preserved. Discussions at each meeting provide first-person accounts of the history of the space and its current use, giving context to the process. These discussions build informal partnerships that can help direct focus on the peculiarities of each space.¹ The charrettes serve as a way to engage the community to produce a series of small action plans that serve as solutions to these issues. It is important to conduct these meetings in consecutive weeks. Carrying out the meetings in this manner harnesses the enthusiasm and energy prevalent in many initial community meetings that can often dissipate when too much inactive time exists between meetings.² This model expedites the entire implementation process, allowing participants to reach their goal sooner, helping to increase support and instill confidence in future municipal matters.³

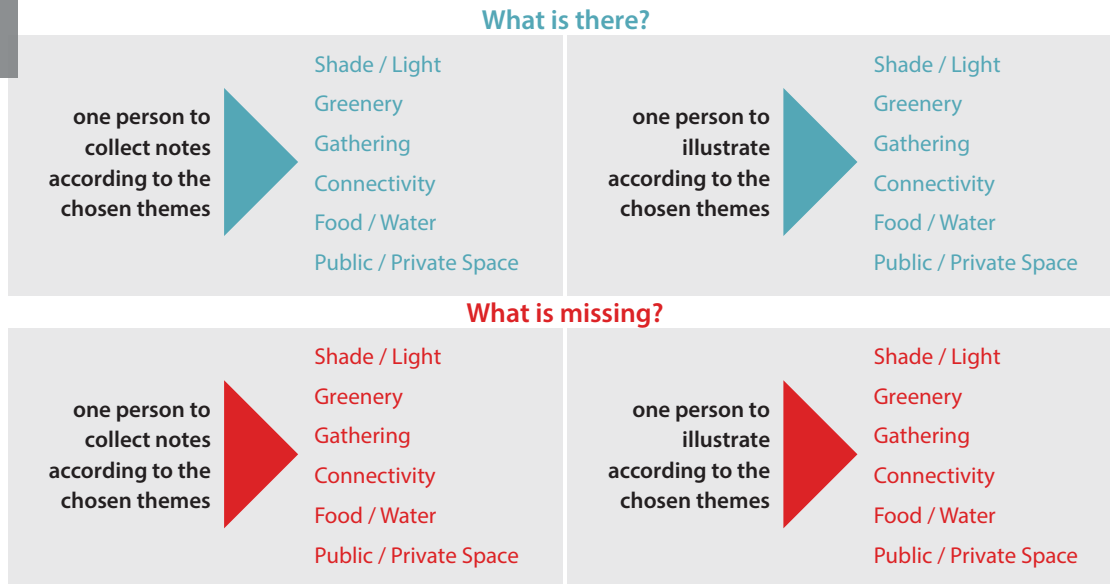
Various marketing tools ranging from printed material to social media should be used to reach different segments of the community such as community members, city staff, and designers. Posters and fliers should be disseminated among local businesses and

gathering places such as Churches, cafés, and barbershops that are highly conducive for socializing. Posters should link to a social media platform that provides similar information. Social media establishes a more active marketing process allowing flexibility in how people receive updates and notifications, see Appendix 66-69.

The inaugural community meeting serves as a kick-off that allows stakeholders such as city officials, designers, residents and those who work in the neighborhood to come together and discuss ideas and issues in an open, secure environment. This first meeting must set a positive, enthusiastic tone to attract participants to return.⁴ A comfortable, informal setting with food, music, and if possible, libations, at every meeting helps foster quality discussion. Contributions from local, neighborhood businesses help emphasize the idea of community. The ensuing interactions foster development of human capital by bridging cultural gaps and building relationships that may not otherwise form.¹

When the time comes to implement the pilot projects, these interactions among the community members prove imperative. It will be necessary to crowdsource materials and skills to bring the community visions to fruition. This step is crucial in both building solutions for the community as well as building community itself.

CHART 1



First Meeting (discussion)

The first meeting allows participants to become familiar with each other, and provides time for participants to meet and discuss the ways they are tied to the space. The refreshments stimulate conversation that segues into more formal discussions about the study area.

After the allotted time for socializing passes, a presentation about the area history, observations, and the literature research provides background and relates the chosen themes to the space. Once the presentation concludes, the participants divide into groups to conduct their own onsite analysis and observations of the study area. Each group is provided with paper, pencils and a facilitator to designate the tasks.

After denoting “what is there” and “what is missing” at the site according to the themes, the groups return to the meeting space to further determine what they see as the biggest opportunity and biggest challenge according to each theme. Each group is then asked to present the largest challenge and the largest opportunity they observed. These observations are then used as topics in the following meeting.

The first meeting for the Triangle consisted of 36 people divided among six groups. Each group was lead by a facilitator that provided guidance throughout the entire process, designating one person for each task, illustrated in **CHART 1**. The facilitators led their respective groups out to the Triangle to assess what was there and what

Theme	Feedback
Shade / Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic lighting program (bonus points for highlighting the tree) • Electronic murals on vacant walls • Address the absence of color
Greenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowers, maybe fruit-bearing trees and shrubs to attract people to linger • Maximize the tree's shade for pedestrians • A way to create public/private space (green screen, planters)
Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide seating (around the tree and/or around the triangle) • Installation that allows people to congregate, interact with the space, leave a mark • A place to recite, speak, busk (should be level with audience) • A versatile place for both the urban athlete and the leisure wanderer
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosswalks • Designated pedestrian path is needed around the triangle • Planters/balusters to close off vehicular traffic along brook road
Food / Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place for street-food vending options, lower-price point than surrounding places • Water feature that provides potable or non-potable water
Public / Private Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-use tables and seating for both the public and the private restaurants

was missing according to the designated themes of Shade/Light; Greenery; Gathering; Connectivity; Food/Water; and Public/Private space. They identified the biggest challenges and biggest opportunities through notes and illustrations. Once they recorded their observations, the groups discussed what aspects of the space should be improved, enhanced, altered or removed. Each group came to a consensus on what they perceived to be the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity for each category. The results from each group provided a foundation that drove the rest of the Ephemeral Plan process.

Second Meeting (charrette)

The second meeting serves as the first charrette. The purpose of the second meeting

is to conceptualize what is possible. It allows community members and designers to work together to address the challenges and opportunities that materialized from the previous meeting. This collaboration helps educate the participants on design practices while challenging designers to accommodate the participants' visions in a realistic, temporary design. The meeting produces initial sketches that will influence the final design for the pilot projects.

The second meeting for the Triangle was a charrette for community members and designers. The synthesized notes from the previous meeting served as a plan of action for this charrette. The participants at this meeting divided into two groups, each headed by a designer. The group sketched

and designed solutions and enhancements to the major challenges and opportunities brought to light in the first meeting, see **FIGURE 1** and **FIGURE 2**. The groups used the outline of suggestions (**CHART 2**) as a guide to inform their conceptual design. This process produced a number of solutions that varied on the scale of temporary implementation, ranging from providing movable café seating to stationary, potable water features.

Most participants believed closing the segment of Brook between Adams and Broad to vehicular traffic would be beneficial and would allow more opportunity for gathering in the space. A majority of the solutions formed around the notion of closing this segment of Brook.

Up-lighting was suggested to better highlight the oak tree to create a landmark for the neighborhood. Providing seating directly under the tree, with café-style tables and chairs on Brook addressed the issue of not having enough usable shade. Participants suggested placing flowering plants and ornamental trees in the Triangle to address the issue of greenery. The groups discussed the possibility of placing planters on Brook to signify the closure of the street to vehicular traffic while at the same time protecting the interest of pedestrians. Participants supported creating an open air-public speaking area within the Triangle, which was suggested by a long term resident that alluded to a similar space located in the Triangle in the 1980s. In terms

of connectivity, most participants wanted a continuation of the sidewalk down the Adams side of the Triangle and crosswalks along Brook and Adams. To pay homage to the large fountain and provide relief to passersby in hot weather, some participants suggested placing a potable water feature in place of the tree, or under the tree if it was decided the tree would stay. Several participants supported the idea of providing a space for food trucks during First Fridays and other neighborhood events. To take advantage of the Arts and Cultural designation, many participants believed an interactive installation or electronic murals on vacant walls would help boost the presence of the community.

Third Meeting (charrette)

The goal of the third meeting is intended to refine the design solutions produced by the previous meeting. This second charrette places the designer in the role of facilitator to better influence pragmatism and aesthetics in the design of the pilot projects. This may entail altering certain components of the proposed solutions to better fit within the temporary nature of the exercise. Designers and participants should be encouraged to analyze the preliminary sketches and designs from the previous meeting to produce a final product by the end of this meeting. This charrette serves as the final design-oriented meeting before the solutions are presented to the community for critique.

The third meeting for the Triangle produced finalized design solutions for the Triangle

details of the Triangle assessing proposed design elements and their impact on spaces to determine if the outcome would produce the desired effect. When the groups returned to the meeting space, they made final adjustments to the proposed solutions to streamline the implementation of each pilot project without sacrificing the original purpose.

Due to the crowdsourcing nature of the Ephemeral Plan, café seating and planters were not unique to the site and required less time to conceptualize. Therefore more time was allotted to address the design of the crosswalks, public-speaker space, and decking components that would allow seating directly under the tree, see **FIGURE 3**.

To ensure all superfluous design elements were eliminated, each solution was conceptually deconstructed to its fundamental essence. An example was the elimination of a bench and planter combination designed as part of the decking platform under the oak tree. By removing this component, the original intention of creating a shaded space under the tree remained without the increase in time and resources needed for the bench and planter construction. The resulting sketches provided basic and efficient design solutions that directly addressed the issues determined in the first meeting, see Appendix 70-85 for diagrams, notes, and sketches from all three meetings.

FIGURE 2

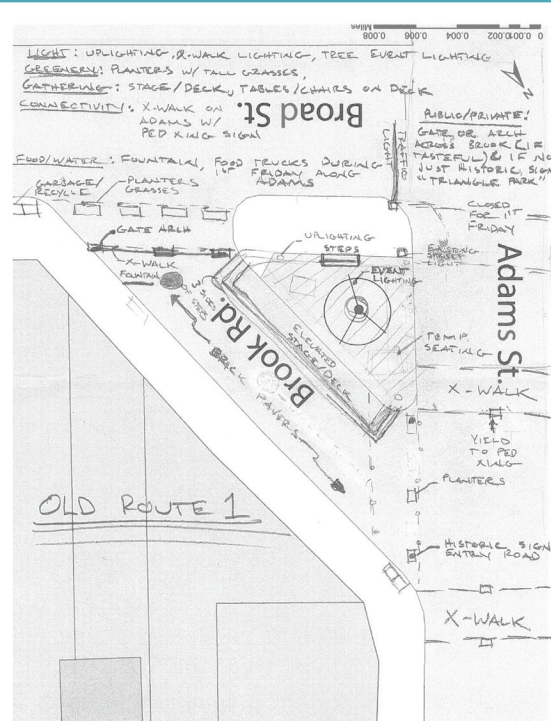
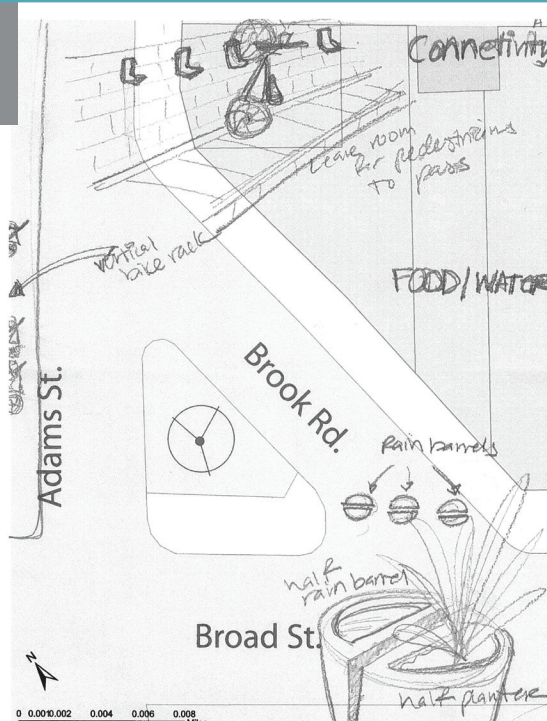
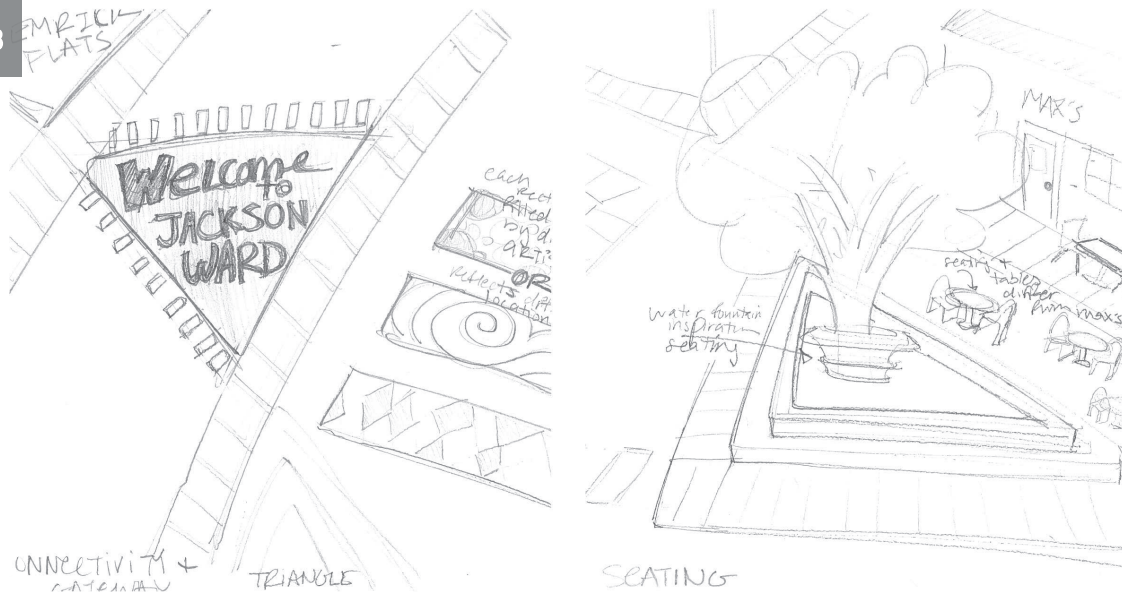


FIGURE 3



Fourth Meeting (discussion)

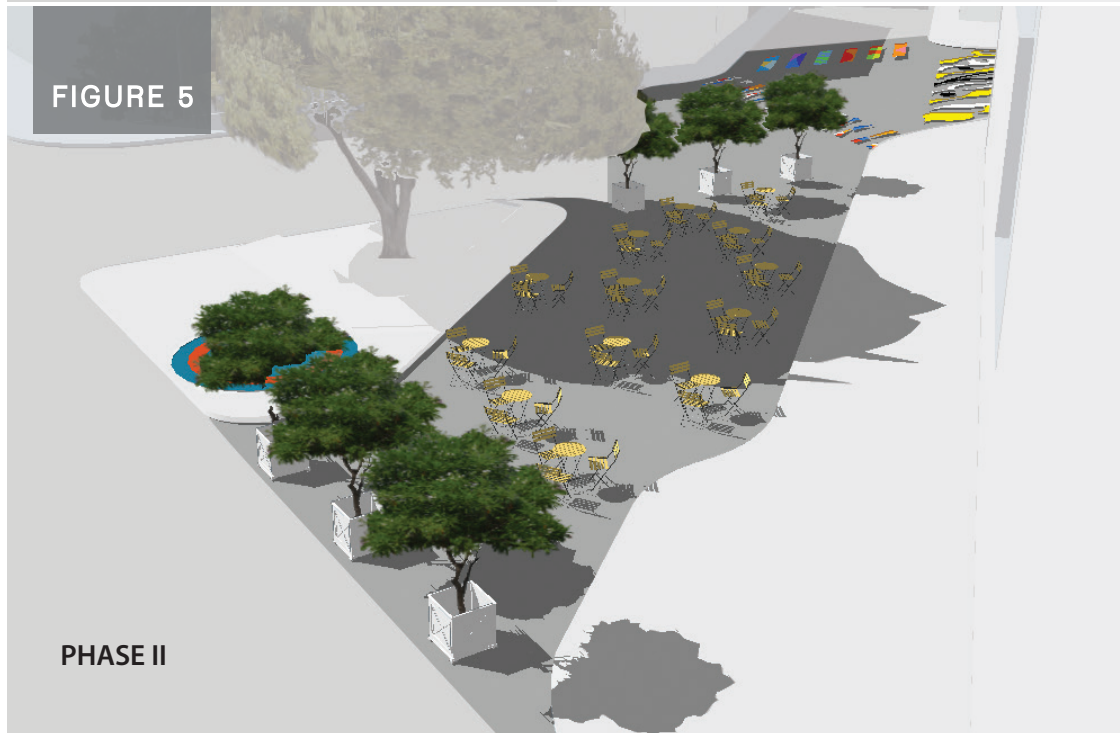
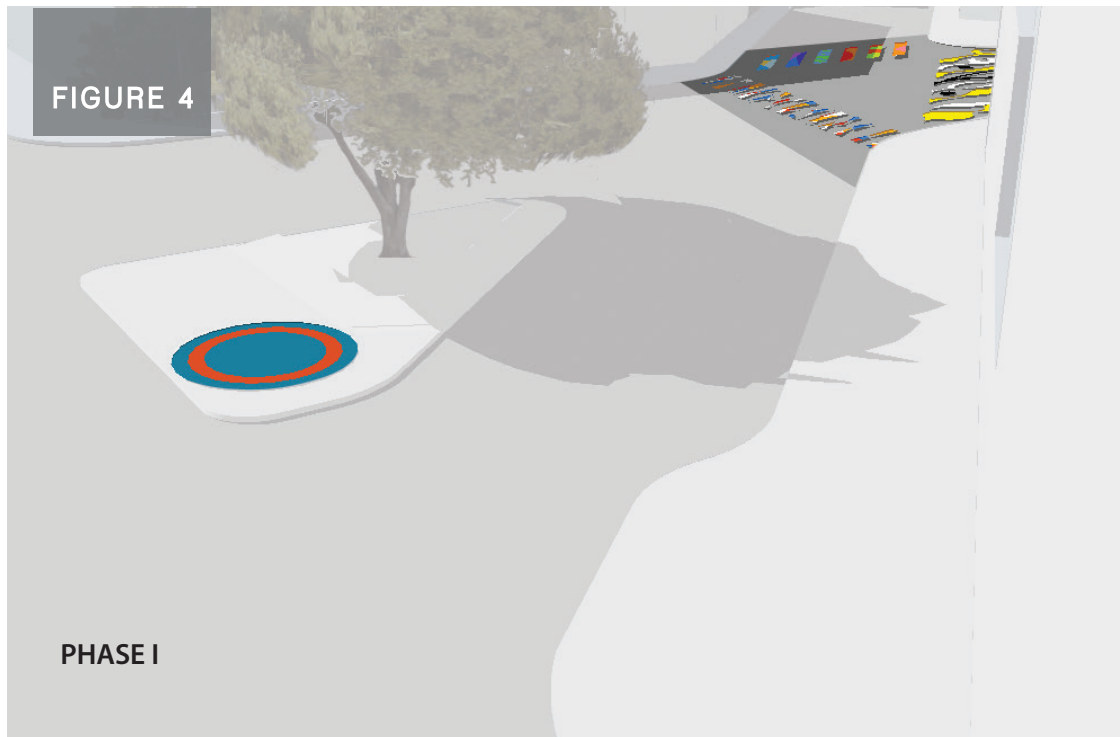
The fourth meeting reveals the final design solutions for the pilot projects. This meeting is a spring board for discussion to critique and identify which phases should be implemented first. The presentation consists of an overall summary of the past four-week process to provide information to those who may have participated intermittently. It describes major takeaways from each meeting, and details how each component of the process is integral in determining the most appropriate temporary design solutions. After the presentation, the subsequent discussions help identify concerns the participants might have regarding the pilot project designs and the general implementation process. Representatives from the city and the design community should be present to answer

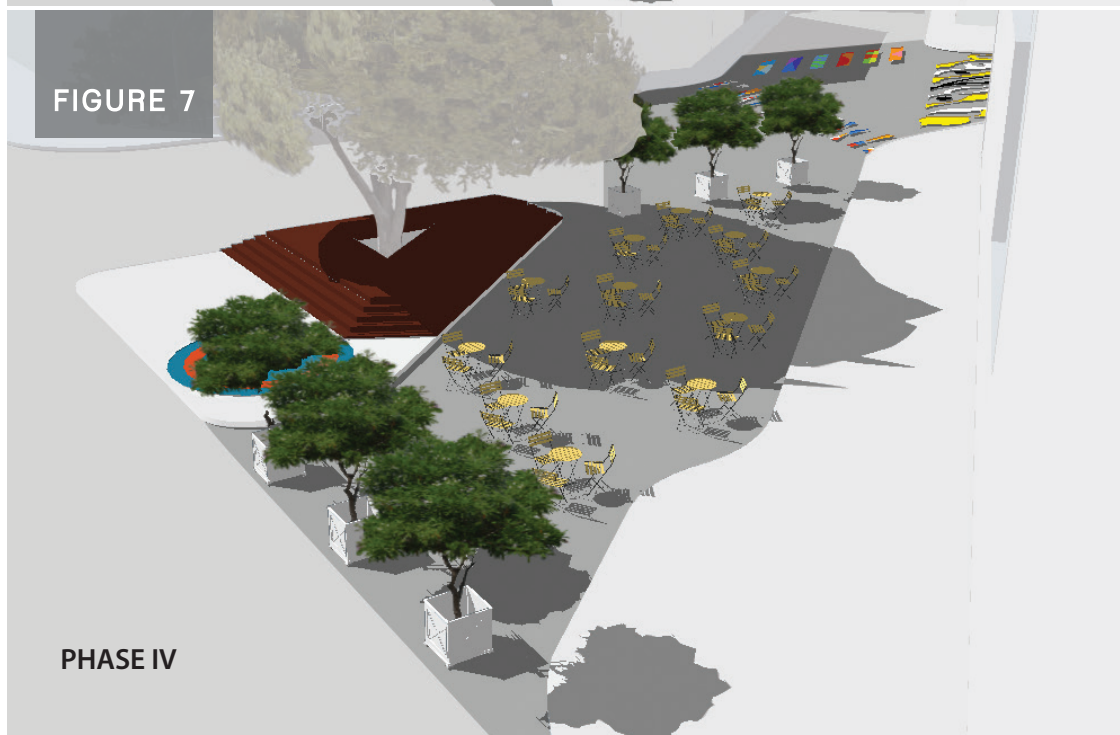
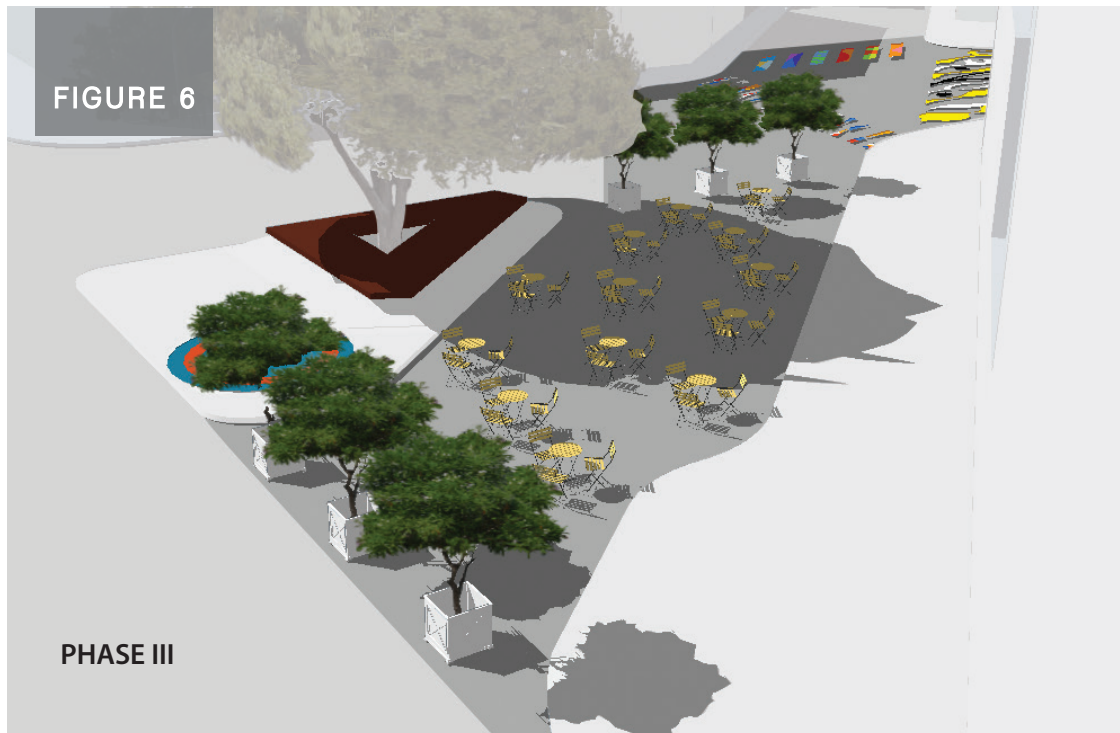
specific questions such as what permits may be necessary to carry out the pilot projects. This last meeting allows the community members direct interaction with officials who will oversee and carry out the design solutions.

Participants at the fourth meeting of the Brook Road Triangle discussions included community stakeholders, city officials, and design professionals. A brief presentation covering the entire four-week process preceded the presentation of the pilot project design solutions and their phases, **FIGURES 4-8.**

Phase I

The crosswalks and speaker circle, which can be designed and implemented with the use of colorful tape, will serve as the first phase.







A rendering of all four phases implemented.

This phase addresses the absence of color in the space and fosters creative expression from the community. The crosswalk design lends itself to several uses and can serve not only as pedestrian infrastructure but also as a mechanism to illustrate the history of the neighborhood through the use of more permanent street murals. Additionally the speaker circle provides an interactive component that can be used by any passersby. Using tape allows flexibility for altering the design if necessary.

Phase II

Securing the necessary permits for a temporary street closure is essential to the implementation of this phase as it depends on effectively closing a small segment of Brook to vehicular traffic. Non-permanent planters placed along the edges of the closed segment of Brook, along with tables and chairs throughout the space, will enable heavier pedestrian use, accommodating more gatherings. Depending on the type of plants used, the planters can create a public/private space by providing separation from

passing vehicles on Broad and Adams, creating an outdoor room. The oak tree and planters would provide usable shade by those at the tables and chairs on Brook. In order to gain a better idea of how the space may be used, it may be fortuitous to implement Phase II during first Fridays or another special event in order to observe the space when exposed to a high volume of pedestrian activity.

Phase III

Though not dependent on the street closure, Phase III will provide another space for pedestrians to gather within the study area. The construction of an elevated platform deck just above the soil and root system will provide a space for people to enjoy the shade of the tree without negatively impacting the health of the tree.

Phase IV

A supplement to Phase III, Phase IV considers the creation of a tiered structure around the periphery of the Triangle, utilizing the beveled walls of the tree plot for structural support. This will further allow people to linger in the space longer, even if Brook is not closed to vehicular traffic indefinitely. Of the four solutions chosen this phase will require the most time and resources.

The participants discussed each phase and the designs assigned to each. Minor tweaks were made on the design before carrying out the implementation process. Several participants questioned the

administrative process and its impact on implementation.

City officials and other professionals in the field responded with how a plan of this nature would be implemented. They discussed projected time lines and the necessary permitting process that would pertain to the individual phases. As the pilot projects are temporary in nature, most would require a special events permit and/or a permit to work in the right-of-way (see page 59, Creating Permanent Solutions).



Community activists came together to implement the crosswalks in Phase I.



IMPLEMENTATION



When the time comes to implement the pilot projects, the previous interactions among the community members and the relationships developed with the city officials will prove crucial to implementation. To ensure a positive experience for all involved it is necessary to understand the permitting process for the more labor-intensive solutions and to maintain due diligence throughout the process. Once the permitting process is understood and underway, it will be necessary to crowdsource for materials and skills to bring the community visions to fruition.

To maintain the low-cost budget and temporary nature of the Ephemeral Plan approach, it is necessary to acquire materials, tools and other resources from the community. Following the Better Block example materials should be borrowed or built. Buying materials should be a last resort, as this will require financial support, which could serve as an added obstacle to the project.

Crowdsourcing helps a community maintain its sense of ownership and fosters civic pride. Furthermore the collaboration needed for building certain components of the pilot projects can help develop social capital by pairing unskilled participants with skilled participants, allowing the community to transfer skill-sets to one another.¹

The planning process for the Triangle benefitted from a very active core group of community activists within the community meetings who implied they wanted to begin implementation as soon as possible. As participants of the meetings began to discuss ways to begin implementation, city officials at the meeting listed a number of people to contact at in the zoning and permitting departments. In the following weeks, facilitators of the community meetings met with city officials to discuss the overall plan and the logistics of implementation. City officials determined the first phase, the crosswalks and the speaker circle, did not warrant any permits. The second phase which consisted of removing vehicular traffic along Brook, would require a street closure through a permit such as a "Special Events Permit" or a "Work in Street and Alley Permit." The third and fourth phase, the elevated platform deck and tiered structure, would require a building permit based off the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).² The implementation of these phases would necessitate the addition of engineered drawings and schematics that adhere to the statewide building code.

The community activists decided to implement a part of the first phase of the plan, the crosswalks, with the intention of seeking ways to implement other phases at a later date. They decided to align the



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3

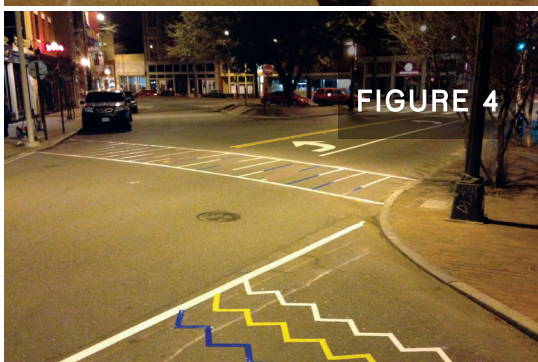


FIGURE 4

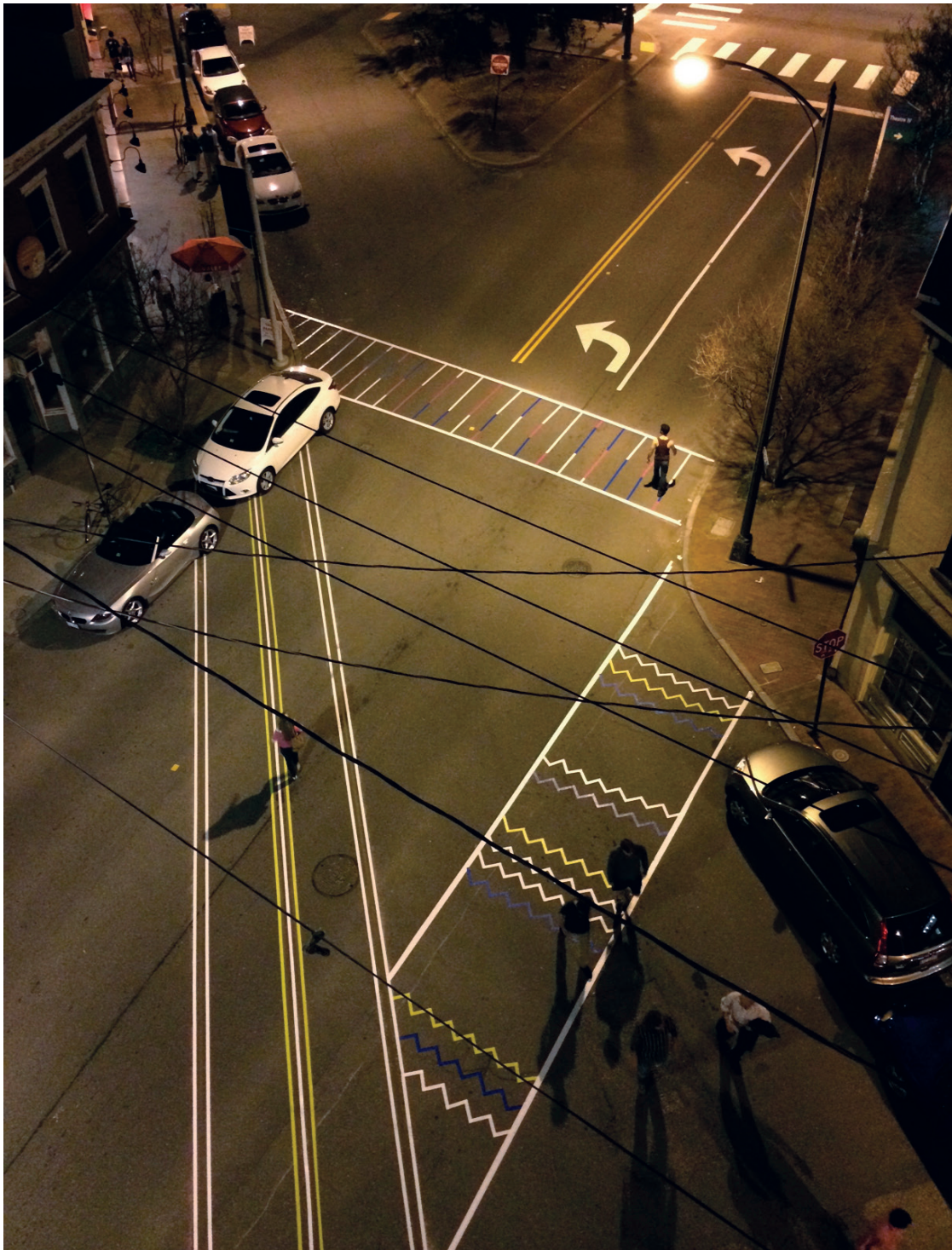
The paths were swept before using the chalk to plan out the duct tape crosswalks.

implementation of the crosswalks with the next month's First Fridays, a month away. The community activists began to plan the layout and design of the crosswalks. Utilizing data from the Pre-implementation Observations they laid out the crosswalks according to the most traveled paths, forming a triangle. To understand the quantity of supplies needed, they measured the width and the length of each path. This led to designs that ranged from simplified patterns that could be implemented over the largest section of street to more complex patterns that could be implemented over the shortest section of street. This range of design complexity allowed for creativity and safety during implementation. The community activists pooled personal money together to purchase special duct tape to maintain the design integrity of the crosswalk designs. Based off these designs, the community activists decided to implement the crosswalks on the eve of First Fridays.

FIGURES 1-4 show the process of implementing part of Phase I.



The implemented crosswalks at the intersection of Adams and Brook, looking north.



View of the intersection of Adams and Brook from the adjacent building. *Courtesy of Peggy M. Walz.*



POST-IMPLEMENTATION OBSERVATIONS



The Post-implementation Observations determines whether or not the implemented pilot projects successfully address the issues in the study area. The analysis occurs in a discussion during a community meeting. This may prove to be the concluding meeting to the plan or the first meeting for a new round of solutions. Prior to the meeting, it will be necessary to contact the participants to notify them of this follow-up meeting to ensure they are observing the effects of the pilot projects.

The discussion of the solutions should focus on whether or not they address the issues mentioned in the meetings. If the majority of attendees agree that a solution or mix of solutions adequately address the issues, then efforts should be made to create a permanent solution. If the majority of attendees agree that a solution or a mix of solutions does not adequately address the issues, then efforts should be made to begin another planning session. If there is mixed feedback, another planning session should be undertaken to determine solutions before starting the process again (illustrated on page 20) .

The Post-Implementation Observations for the triangle began right after implementation. Ongoing observations will be conducted in the weeks following implementation to determine whether or not the crosswalks address the issues previously discussed in the community meetings.

Observations began with documentation of the first night the crosswalks were fully laid out allowing people to interact with them. On the following pages **FIGURES 1-4** show several pedestrians utilizing the crosswalks to cross Adams and Brook. Several pedestrians inspected the crosswalks to determine what materials were used. It was observed by several community members that several vehicles slowed down when approaching the intersection with some coming to a complete stop at the stop signs. Although valets started to park vehicles at the ends of crosswalks, pedestrians still used the path until they reached the parked vehicles at which point they walked around them. More thorough Post-Implementation Observations are planned in the coming weeks, following the same documentation pattern conducted in the Pre-Implementation Observations.



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3





Renderings show how the Brook Road Triangle could look if the solutions progress into permanent installations.



CREATING PERMANENT SOLUTIONS

The Ephemeral Plan should be used as a tool to implement permanent solutions in a more efficient manner than current traditional planning allows. The main goal of the Ephemeral plan is to address local planning problems with community-influenced ideas through the implementation of short-term, low-cost pilot projects that can lead to permanent change.¹ If the pilot projects are successful, following the research component, it is necessary to determine how to create permanent iterations of those solutions.

In addition to Post-implementation Observations that address the issues discussed in the community meetings, other metrics should be considered to assess how pilot projects impact the area. The addition of businesses within the community or an increase in patronage is one major outcome that can determine the feasibility of this approach. Quantifying new storefront occupancy and/or determining if there is a correlation between pedestrian traffic and revenue for existing businesses is another. Observational analysis in the style of William H. Whyte may gauge of social capital development within the study area as well and may help the community inform their decision on the success of the projects.

If the community members at the concluding meeting verify the solutions have a positive impact, the next step is

to secure appropriate permits and to document the pilot project for a formal proposal to various city entities for permanent implementation.

When considering the Triangle, the implementation of anything in the public right-of-way (ROW) needs to be reviewed further by PDR, the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and unique departments such as the Urban Forestry Division. Once the city departments validate the pilot project, it goes under review of the Urban Design Committee (UDC) and possibly the Planning Commission where it may or may not be approved as an encroachment. If it is not approved, adjustments have to be made before it can be permanently installed.

If the pilot projects are seen as a positive influence on the community but cannot be installed permanently for any reason, the community stakeholders and community organizations should partner to plan for future maintenance on the pilot projects until they can become permanent. The maintenance of these pilot projects is critical to the continued well-being of the area. A steady and reliable source for providing resources will assist in maintaining the projects. This can be developed through partnering with or creating a Business Improvement District (BID).



The Brook Road Triangle in its current state.



IMPLICATIONS FROM THE BROOK ROAD TRIANGLE

In regards to *The Ephemeral Plan: The Brook Road Triangle*, certain aspects of the plan worked more than others proving that some components should remain throughout every process when possible:

Designers

Although this is a very community-oriented plan, design practitioners should be present at the second and third meeting to help guide the design process. Without designers present at these meetings, the plan will not produce quality pilot projects. Designers bring a different perspective to the process and usually provide a wider creative spectrum, displaying different approaches to certain problems. Securing volunteers or community members that are in the design field, particularly architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design, will help enhance the overall product.

Proximity, Food, Drink and Ambiance

The location of the community meetings was a major factor because it provided a productive working environment. Since the study area was located about a block away from the meeting location, the participants were able to conduct onsite analysis, which enabled them to observe and discuss the state of the space. The meeting location also was in close proximity to neighborhood restaurants, some of which provided sponsorship, or snacks, for the meetings. These establishments became settings for

participants to carry on the conversation once the weekly meetings ended, and saw the returns from their sponsorship.¹ Similarly, providing food and drink on site provided a comfortable atmosphere for the participants as many came to the meetings after work. Although not necessary but highly encouraged, sourcing the snacks from neighborhood restaurants helped emphasize the notion of community. Light background music provided an informal setting that allowed conversation and socializing.

Permitting

Depending on the types of solutions that materialize from the community meetings, certain permits may be necessary. For example, the decking component in Phase III did not require a building permit because an alternative temporary structure consisted of pallets and plywood that covered the soil at the base of the tree. If the decking were constructed as a platform, it would require engineer-level schematics, a building permit, and an inspection before it was allowed for public use.² Additionally, any activity in the street would require a permit to close down any ROW, including a Special Events permit or an Application to Work in Streets and Alleys permit. Time should be allotted for the administrative approval for projects of this scale. However if there is a large event that closes the street, it may be fortuitous to reach out to the

organizers to see if the pilot projects could be implemented in conjunction with their event.

Retail

This Ephemeral Plan did not address pop-up shops, or temporary retail, as a component to any pilot-projects. Pop-up shops, such as the one in [FIGURE 1](#), should be considered when working in areas with a supply of vacant storefronts. In order to open a pop-up shop in a vacant storefront, it is necessary to contact the property owner. If the owner allows the temporary use of his or her space, then the next step is to secure a temporary certificate of occupancy (CO) from the city. Depending on the condition of the building, this could take no less than a week if the space has electricity and meets building code or it may take longer if it does not meet code.

Post-Community meeting Developments

Sometime after the community meetings concluded and before phase one of the implementation processes began, a few community members contacted me about relevant issues that pertained to the Ephemeral Plan or the study area:

City Budget and bike Lanes

Since the conclusion of the community meetings, a series of local discussion has turned to the city budget and the subject of underfunded projects. One major topic of contention is the ongoing discussion surrounding the allocation of funds for the implementation of bike lanes in time for the



The Wheelist, a pop-up bicycle shop and cafe at the 35th Street Better Block in Norfolk.

2015 World Road Cycling Championships. A richmondoutside article says \$3 million is needed to implement over 20 miles of bikeways and a lack of funding is hurting neighborhood projects already approved and ready for bids from contractors. If applied to this case, the Ephemeral Plan would shift the responsibility of implementing seemingly expensive capital improvement projects from the city to the respective communities that would benefit from these projects. The ephemeral plan process would enable the implementation of these proposed projects on a community scale. At this scale, implementation would not only require lesser funds, but foster community bonding while fabricating a comprehensive network of bike infrastructure on a larger scale.

The Accident

According to some witnesses, a pedestrian was crossing Brook at Broad, causing a Jeep,



about to turn North on to Brook, to stop abruptly resulting in a Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) bus rear-ending it, [FIGURE 2](#). This account provides proof that if the Brook Road segment in question were closed off to vehicular traffic, it may have prevented the accident. Closing this segment of Brook Road would limit haphazard yielding and discourage turning unless at established intersections such as the one at Adams and Broad where there is more signage and traffic lights.

Participant Feedback

Due to the large community engagement component of this plan, it was pertinent to gather feedback from participants to assess their views of the implementation process. To review responses please see the Appendix.

Conclusion

The Ephemeral Plan: The Brook Road Triangle was a trial run for structured temporary planning in the city of Richmond. The plan is designed to work within various communities and sites and seeks to address a wide range of planning issues including, but not limited to, place-making; alternative transportation, and reprogramming . Under the Ephemeral Plan, these issues are addressed through temporarily implementing solutions produced by the local community of stakeholders and designers. Through this plan neighborhoods come together to build, develop, and maintain stronger, longer lasting communities that will better accommodate change for years to come.



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APPENDIX

MARKETING THE MEETINGS

Initially, two separate fliers were designed attract community members and designers and handed out to each group respectively. One week before the first meeting a larger poster was designed for the larger, general audience. Creating difference announcements were necessary to attract professional designers and community members. The utilization of a social networking platform allowed notification of the community meetings to reach a wider audience.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Attention!
Architects
Designers
Landscape Architects
Urban Designers
Urban Planners

Brook Rd.
N. Adams St.
W. Broad St.

What can we improve here?

Let's design quick and temporary improvements to help create a great public space that interacts with its surroundings.

Join the first discussion: **What is there and What is missing?**
February 5th // 6pm // Gallery 5 (200 W. Marshall Street)

snacks provided by:
Saison

It will be up to the professional designers to translate the community's wants and needs into creative and functional temporary designs (1-2 week turnaround period) that will be implemented for a brief time in the spring.
Please contact sonj@vcu.edu or Facebook search **The Ephemeral Plan: Brook Road** if you have any questions or concerns, RSVP highly recommended.

DESIGNERS



Attention!
Jackson Ward
Community Members

Brook Rd.
N. Adams St.
W. Broad St.

What can we improve here?

Let's create improvements to help create a great public space that interacts with its surroundings.

Join the first discussion: **What is there and What is missing?**
February 5th // 6pm // Gallery 5 (200 W. Marshall Street)

snacks provided by:
Saison

Community members are needed for ideas on what should be done along this segment of Brook Road to create a friendly and inviting public space.
Please contact sonj@vcu.edu or Facebook search **The Ephemeral Plan: Brook Road** if you have any questions or concerns, RSVP highly recommended.

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Attention!
Jackson Ward
Community Members
and Designers

Brook Rd

N. Adams St.

W. Broad St.

N

What can we improve here?

Let's make improvements to help create a great public space that interacts with its surroundings.

Community members and designers are needed for ideas on what should be done along this segment of Brook Road to create a friendly and inviting public space. Please contact sonj@vcu.edu or Facebook search [The Ephemeral Plan: Brook Road](#) if you have any questions or concerns, RSVP highly recommended.

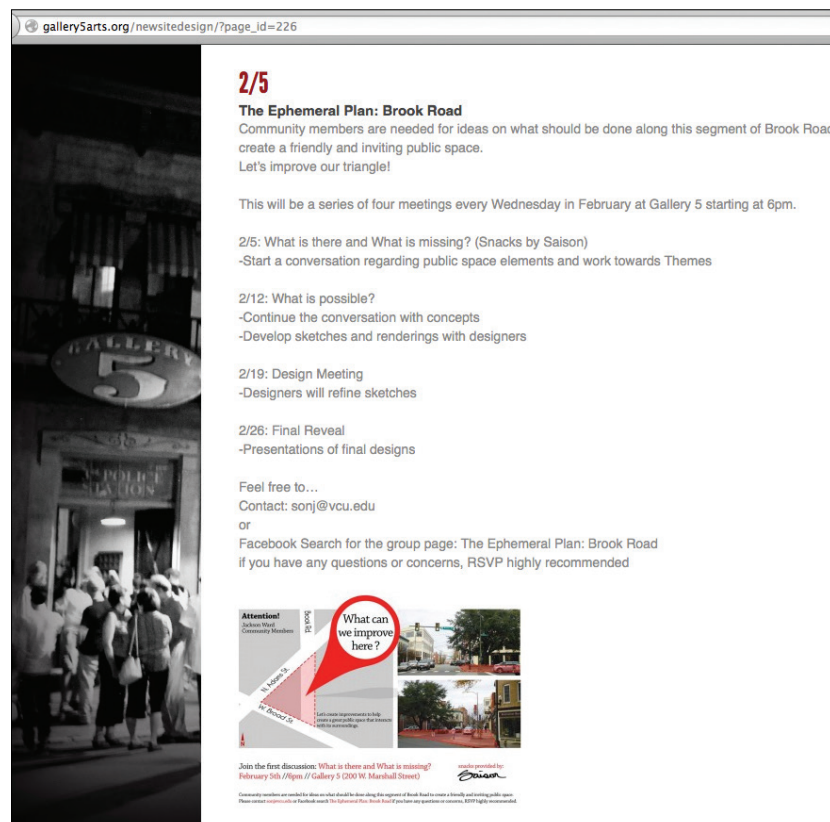
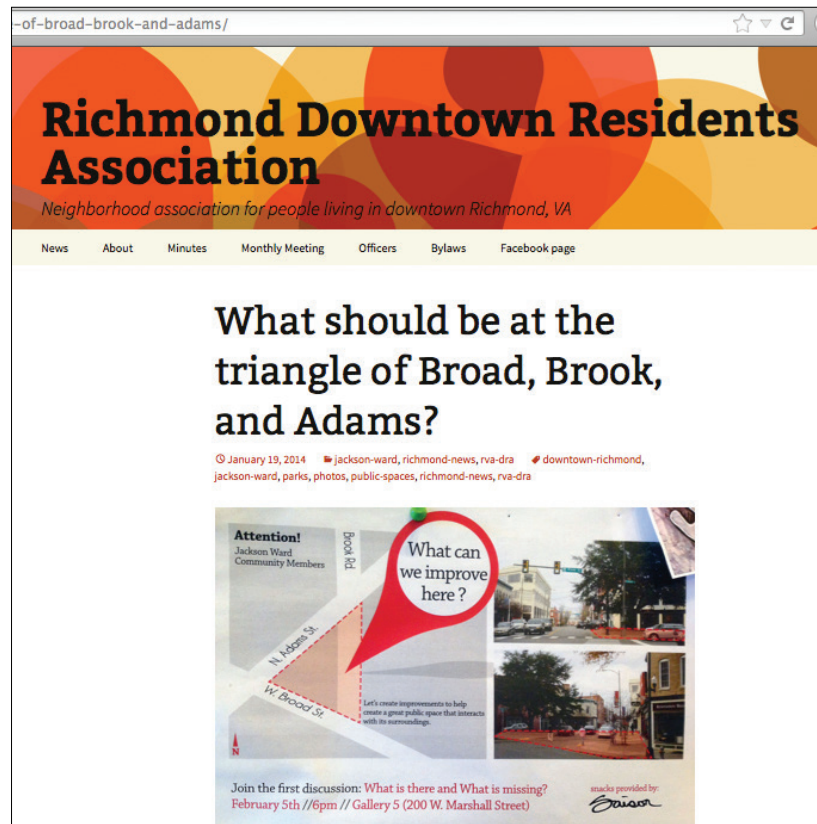
Join the discussion every Wednesday in February // 6 pm // Gallery5 (200 W. Marshall Street)

February 5th // What is There and What is Missing?
 February 12th // What is Possible?
 February 19th // Design Workshop
 February 26th // Designs Revealed

These discussions are made possible by these wonderful Jackson Ward establishments.

FLEXIBILITY IN MARKETING

Concise and minimal marketing language allowed for faster dissemination among different networks.



GREATER JACKSON WARD NEWS

A member of the **rvanews** network.

MENU



How can we improve the intersection of Broad, Adams, and Brook?

We all know the quirky little triangle of land at the intersection of Adams, Brook, and Broad. It doesn't have a sidewalk on all three sides, there are a few trees, and some days you will see bikers or skaters working on their kickflips. Grad student, Josh Son, is investigating how this space can be used and wants our help.

Every Wednesday evening, a conversation will take place at Gallery 5 to discuss **February 5: What is there and What is missing?**

- Start a conversation regarding public space elements and work towards themes

February 12: What is possible?

- Continue the conversation with concepts
- Develop sketches and renderings with designers

February 19: Design Meeting

- Designers will refine sketches

February 26: Final Reveal

- Presentations of final ideas

Questions may be answered at sonj@vcu.edu. Check out the Facebook group page [The Ephemeral Plan: Brook Road](#).



Join the first discussion: **What is there and What is missing?**
February 5th // 6pm // Gallery 5 (200 W. Marshall Street)

maps provided by:
sonj

Community members are needed for ideas on what should be done along this segment of Brook Road to create a friendly and inviting public space. Please contact sonj@vcu.edu or Facebook search [The Ephemeral Plan: Brook Road](#) if you have any questions or concerns. RSVP highly recommended.

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Posted in [community](#), [Design](#), [property](#), [redevelopment](#)

Tagged [Adams Street](#), [Broad Street](#), [Brook Road](#), [community discussion](#), [Gallery 5](#)

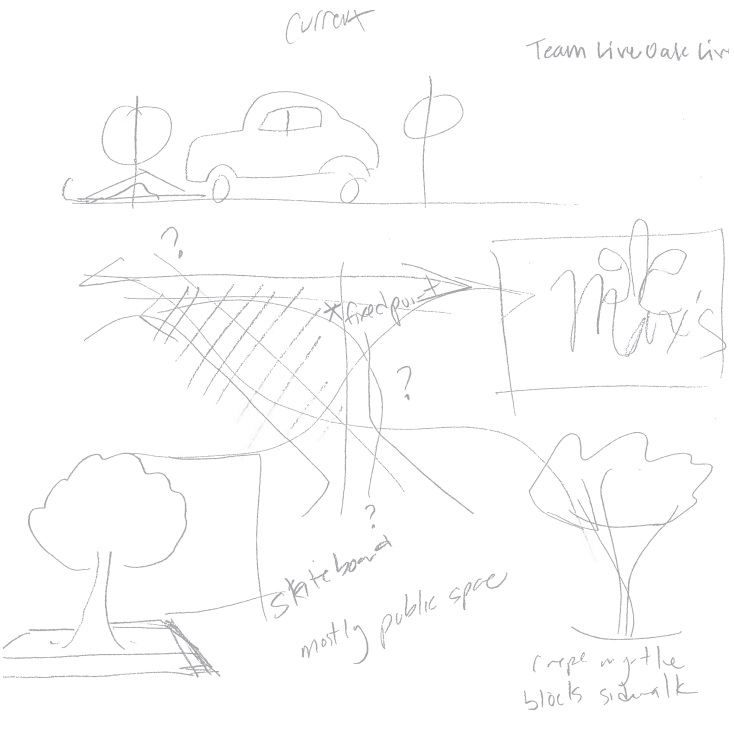
MEETING 1 DOCUMENTATION



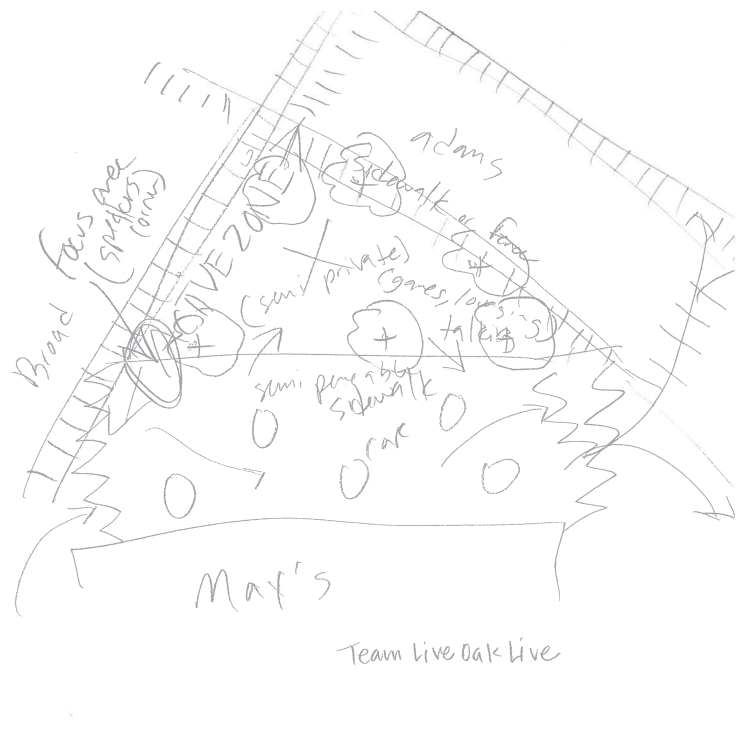
Team Live Oak Lives

TEAM
Live Oak Lives

Challenge	Opportunity	
balance light & shade tree cover, w/ paved way	sidewalk cafe umbrellas	Shade Light
crepe myrtles take ped space	grassy, flat area welcoming	Greenery
space is not accessible due to creped sidewalks	close street (brook)	Darting
lack of access to central space	add sidewalk on Brook close Brook w. bollards	Connectivity
allowing public access to privately used space	sidewalk cafes food trucks @ First Fridays	Food/Water
public space is not welcoming or accessible	tables - restaurant & public use tables	public/private
sidewalk impeded by crepe myrtles		



Team Live Oak Live



Team Live Oak Live

MAP WHAT'S MISSING

SHADE/LIGHT, GREENERY, GATHERING, CONNECTIVITY

bench



sign



vendor?

Sidewalk



Crosswalk

flowers



Flowerbeds

Artwork



lights



Chess



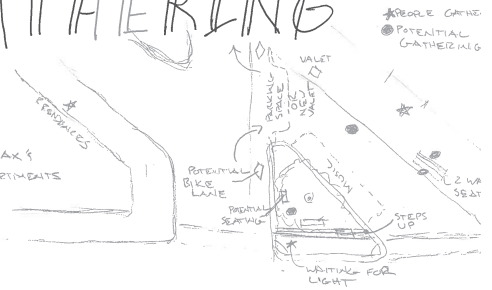
Decorations



GATHERING

What's there?

WALKS OUT FRONT OF MAX'S
OF APARTMENTS



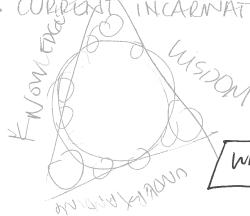
What's missing?

STRUCTURES (PLANTERS ETC.)
SEATING UNDER EXISTING TREE

SHADE & Light!

What's there?

A LARGE TREE WHICH GIVES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY WISDOM & REVEALS THE LENGTH OF TIME THIS SPOT HAS BEEN IN ITS CURRENT INCARNATION.

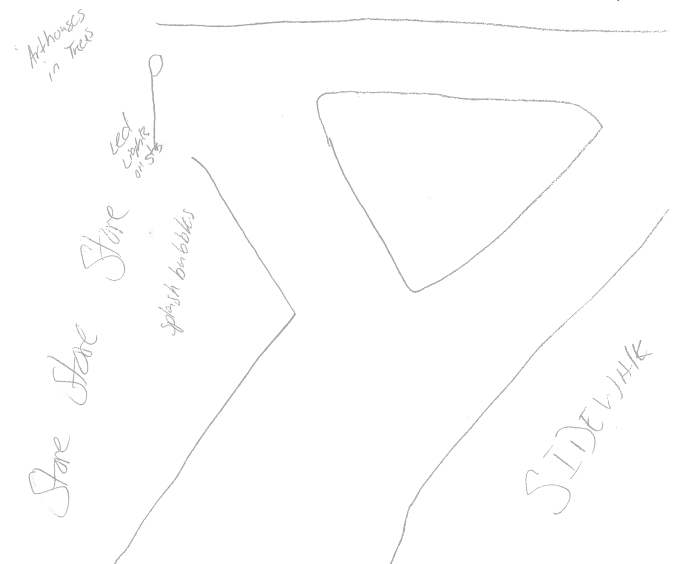


What's missing?

A PLACE FOR SPEAKERS TO STAND (SHOULD NOT BE AN ELEVATED SPOT). IT SHOULD BE A CIRCLE FOR THE SPEAKER TO STAND IN. THIS SPACE ALSO NEEDS SPOTS FOR THE LISTENERS. CALL THEM CIPHERS. THEY SHOULD ALL BE THE SAME SIZE TO REPRESENT EQUALITY.

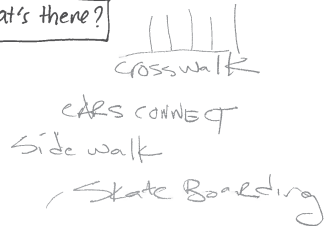
MAP WHAT'S HERE...

SHADE/LIGHT, GREENERY, GATHERING, CONNECTIVITY



CONNECTIVITY

What's there?



What's missing?

→ approach to the tree
crosswalk

Tree walls
some brick
some not

Tree protection w/ sidewalk
pedestrian safety
Trimming Tree

greenery

What's there?

Medicinal Plants
x = tree (Cape myrtle)

medicinal planters



What's missing?

shade, canopy
lights in trees
hammock
benches
everything other than just

big tree & cape myrtles

TEAM AWESOME -
KATHLEEN

it is missing - canopy is where ppl are not
clean might outline the triangle - matching to
road median

"pretty little lights" - hammock a string
potlight the tree

at night or Halloween

hello - dog bathrooms; pet waystation - dispensers
baggies

OPPORTUNITY: circular space around tree - steps
↳ cup, teacup
lights in tree
place to hang out,
noticeable, welcoming -
destination

CHALLENGE: traffic - no crosswalk, small space,

Abner Clay Park

it: grass

bubbles hanging from tree - community participation
"birdhouses for art ideas"

splash bubbles on street - color

LED lights - runway to art
walking into art world - go on explore"

at night - teacups, ice cream shop, "cute first date"
table around tree - like Disneyland teacup

up for people to leave mark - chalkboard table/wall
"chalkboards love the bank - steps could be a way
access and give ritual

access within here's & street - temporary space

sculpture/sculpture for gathering but movement than
- bike lane through

root-tenor of value versus long-term transformation

Facilitate Overlook Notes - 2 plans - 1 w/ road closed + 1 w/ tap

Shade/light

only sun in midday only 2 street lamps

artistic lighting - something more interesting of

Greenery - sense of color since the mural has been gone

trees not doing much for space - Triangle tree takes a
smaller plants so there's room for flowers/plants

If we cut down tree we'd be surprised at how much space there is

at walk

the space big enough for gathering? - leads to
- esp. to create a totally for que gathering. - take up more
- destination space - stage

Connectivity - Treat Sidewalk as Broad as possible - Relapse space
Sidewalk on cell sides, not angled bricks

X Walk

Traffic is best

Should be able to walk down Adam's steps to Broad

- tree is so protected that it's unapproachable
- other trees are not well-maintained - tree wells
- lack of pedestrian safety

- large tree - important as marker of age
- anchor - the tree has seen it all

- speakers & listeners - circle - not elevated
- * cypress - pecto, sericus, reppers - versus Δ

- was a gathering space for 15 years ago - t-shirt shop nearby

Exit towards Broad

- events - First Fridays!

- part renders in space - in Δ - during First Fridays

- sidewalk all the way around
crosswalks

- flowers

- artwork in the midtown

- lights in the tree - decorated for holidays

- chess table

- place for vagrants to sit down for a second - it's okay to use

- permanent versus temporary with inhabiting space

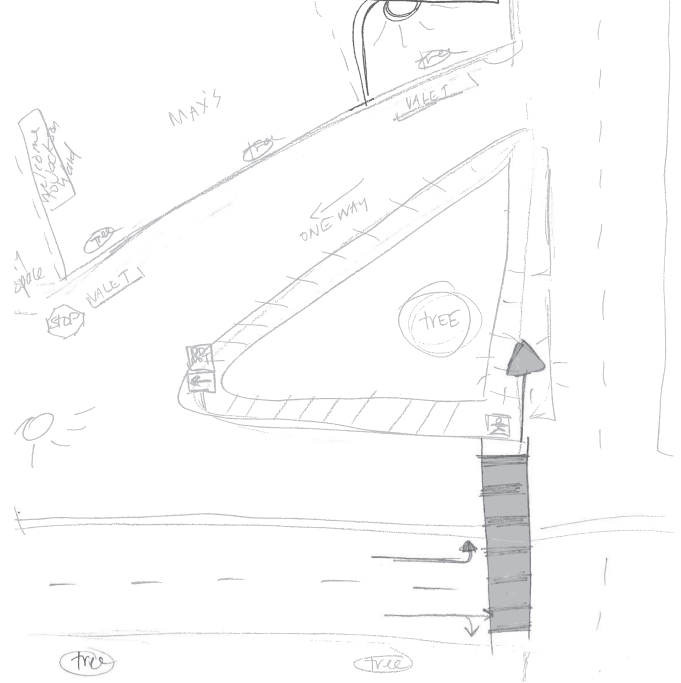
- how is it different than waiting for a bus?

- natural crosswalk / paint the street D

What Is Missing? - MAP



What Is There? - MAP

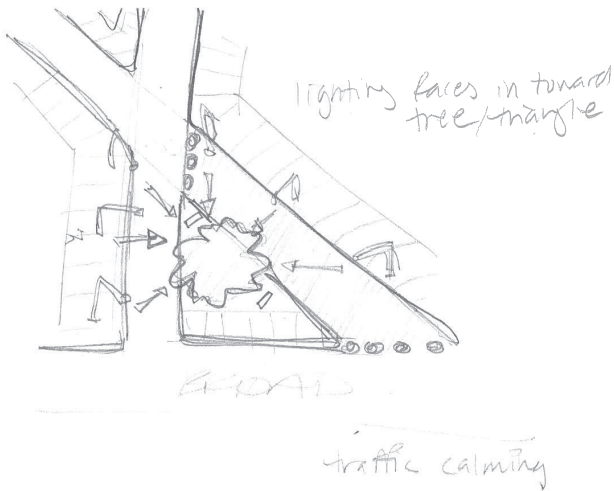


Shade/Light	What is there? - NO/YES	Greenery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SINGLE STREET LIGHT TREE BLOCKS OTHER LIGHT ON BROAD VERY SHADY DARK, EMPTY STOREFRONTS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUGE TREE (DOMINANT) TRIANGLE OTHERWISE BARE DOES THIS BEAUTIFUL TREE GIVE A MESSAGE? YES? SAD, BARELY TREES OUTSIDE MAX'S
Gathering	Connectivity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANKLED SLOPED BARRIER SINGLE SIDEWALK CURB, ST. SIDE PEOPLE WAITING FOR CARS (VALET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VALET SHUTTING DOWN PARKING ONE CROSSWALK (3 INTERSECTIONS) PEOPLE DASHING ACROSS STREET VALET'S ALTERNATE BACKING UP AGAINST TRAFFIC SINGLE "DO NOT ENTER" SIGN 	

Shade/Light	What is missing? - NO/YES	Greenery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of LIGHT UNDER TREE NO OTHER LIGHTS (could be LEDs) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOW SCAPING TREE SALICINELLA
Gathering	Connectivity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LACK OF PLACES TO SIT TRASH RECEPTACLES OUTDOOR PATIO VALET LANE (EXCLUSIVE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO LEFT TURN FRONT WALKWAYS AROUND TRIANGLE PATIO EXTENDING LOW WALKWAYS, NO BARRIER EMPTY STOREFRONT NEXT TO MAX'S TECHNOLOGICAL DESIGN (PROJECT POS, MULTIS ETC) BETTER "STOP" SIGNS FOR DIAGONAL PART OF BROOK 	

Challenge	Opportunity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Layout (raised) limits potential to gather in Low tree branches Dark Traffic Bigger space in front of Max's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project lighted art on wall low in front of Max's seating (flowerbeds) Benches along Brook, all around + 1/2 triangle circular bench around tree Pop-up seasonal store/crafts in empty storefront next to Max's side space TRASH CANS
Gathering	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks missing on Adams/Broad side missing crosswalks Getting better signage stop sign, no left turn Lots of confusion, not very orderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional crosswalks, signage to reduce auto volume + provide predictable flow Remove parking spaces on Broad in front of
Connectivity	

<p>Worce, Mon 14 Aug 2018</p> <p>Team Shaw</p>	<p>10/25/2018, 6:00-8:00 S.A.</p>
Challenge	Opportunity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocked by tree Electric in triangle * No sense of safety Dark business fronts at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light up the tree Draw people in swap lights for LEDs more welcoming *
Shade/Light	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Other lack of greenery raised level inside triangle feels separated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limb up seasonal variety, changes flowerbeds that tie together those on Broad Opportunity abounds * Green year round
Greenery	



Shade/light: C/ ~~side for~~ Adams
 shade ~~none~~ for pedestrians
 challenge: No shade on side walks except
 by where there are no people
 LHM: No lighting on Adams street
 not human scale

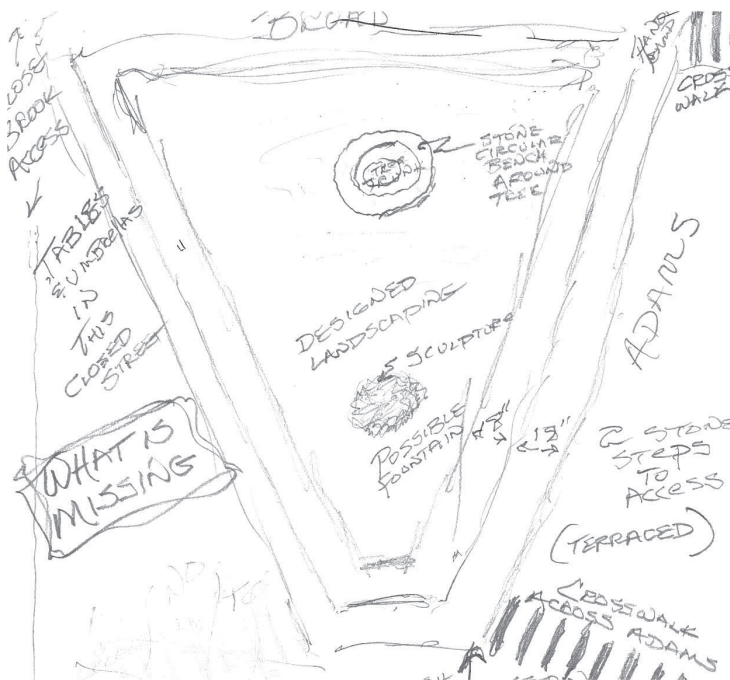
Greenery: C/ no grass/flowers
 provided trees offer nothing
 - not welcoming
 - year round green

o/ celebrate tree, oldest tree

Gathering: C/ Not people friendly - no place to be
 doesn't indicate to P where to go
 in two cars can drive erratic

o/ close Brook
 - outdoor seating, bring more attention
 to local businesses [Moby's]
 - temp eating guarantee people don't see it

Connect: C/ no crosswalks "with west"
 easy to
 unclear where



growing path space
 connecting

Collective

"water"
 High-Mow
 2
 Taraka
 graffiti
 Saita
 Low
 Sam Mkt

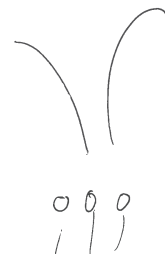
ADA Ramps

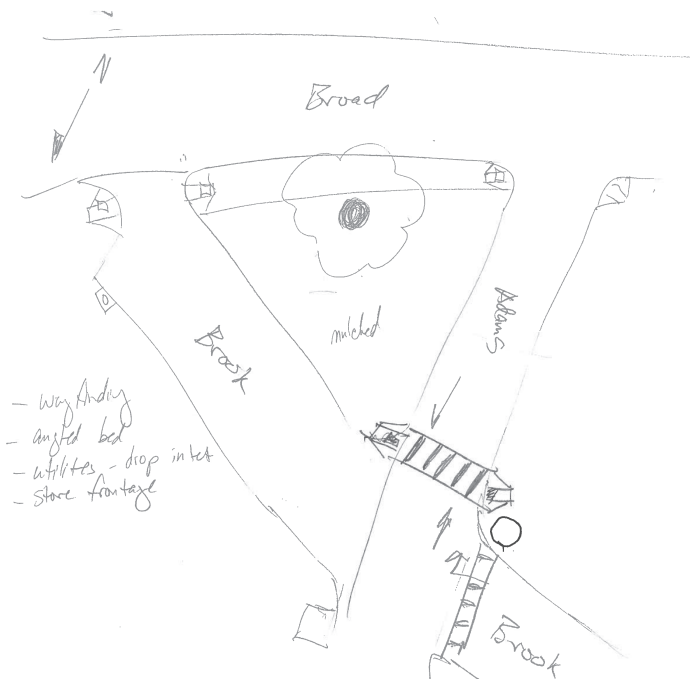
1 better

access to use space

Maybe 2 steps/place to sit
 circular bench

Ted's vote





connectivity: cars; no pedestrians/sidewalk;
(except on south side)

shade/light: little shade from tree, good daylight; lots
of pavement

plants/greenery: 1 tree; mulch

gathering space: for valet and restaurant goers, no public
bike racks

food/fitz access: high-end food; no water

Triangle Δ Collective
What's there

Challenges

- no gathering space; not for people
- interruption in traffic
- Max's might try to dominate space

Opportunities

- close Brook & Broad
- tubs, chairs, umbrellas } separate
- create outdoor seating
- closing street opens up more parking
- raise level of street
- or install stone seating

~~Triangle~~ Triangle Δ Collective

shade/light: satisfied w/ shade & ped scale
lighting

- ground light shining upward

Greenery: stone bench around base of tree

plantings in corners of triangle

stone pavers (honeycomb) permeable

Tree Must Stay - focal point of

- should be trimmed from bottom up

Gathering space

Gathering Space: benches, terraced steps

* public art w/ water element

close of street and place tables and chairs

Current design prohibits gathering

Connectivity: traffic coming from too many angles -
unpredictable and dangerous

* Welcome to

Jackson Ward

Sign -

gives identity to

space; makes it a gateway

water

Food

4-high end restaurants

Needs more moderately priced cafes

install crosswalk on Brook & Adams

close block

crosswalk across Brook

stop sign at Brook & Adams

2. What is missing Notes: Shade, light, greenery, gathering work with 4) Turnpikes connecting, road, water, etc

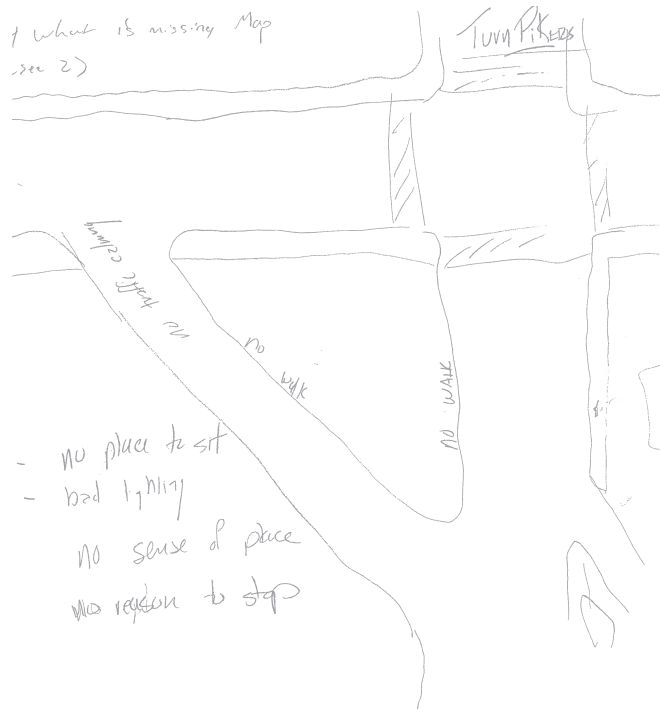
What is Missing

- No Pedestrian
- No Viable stopping Calming
- No place to sit
- No good lighting
- No Bicycle parking to park
- No sidewalk island
- No Permap
- See to VII

3. What is there Map! (see 1)



4. What is missing Map (see 2)

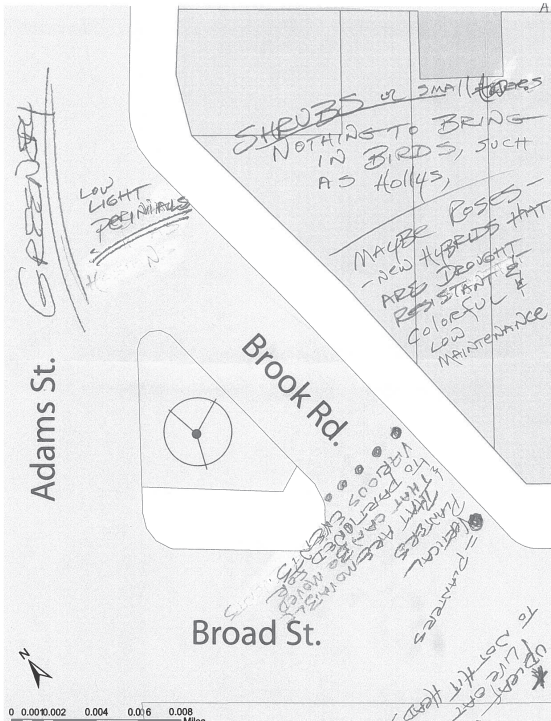
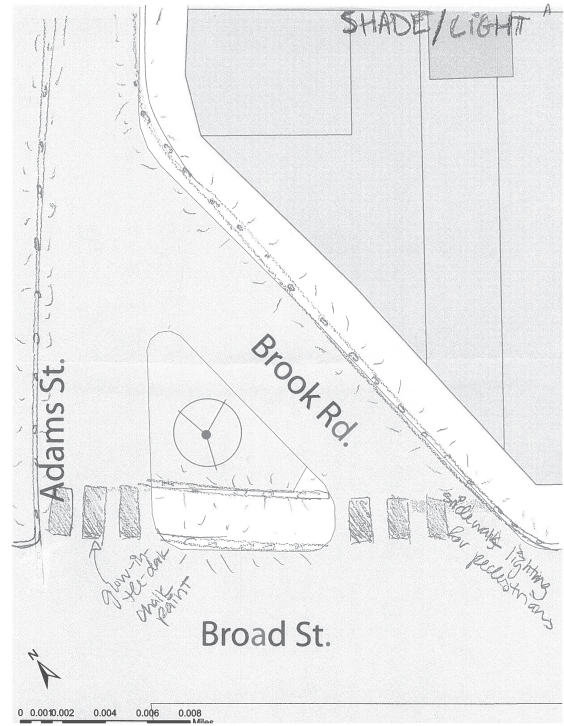


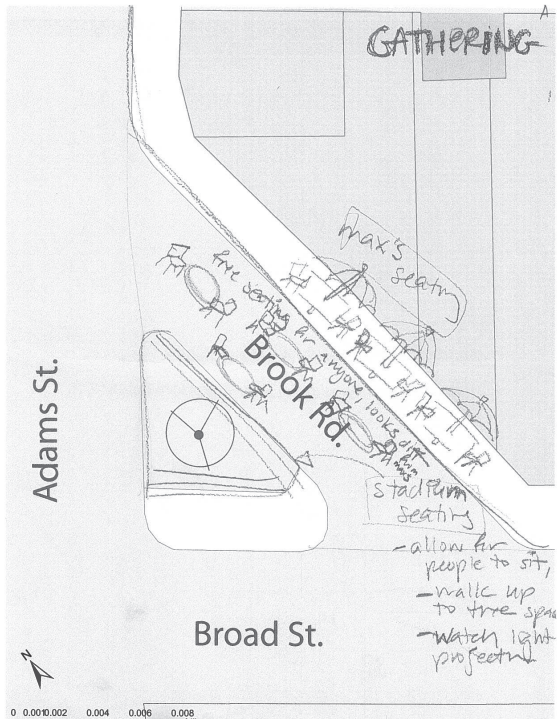
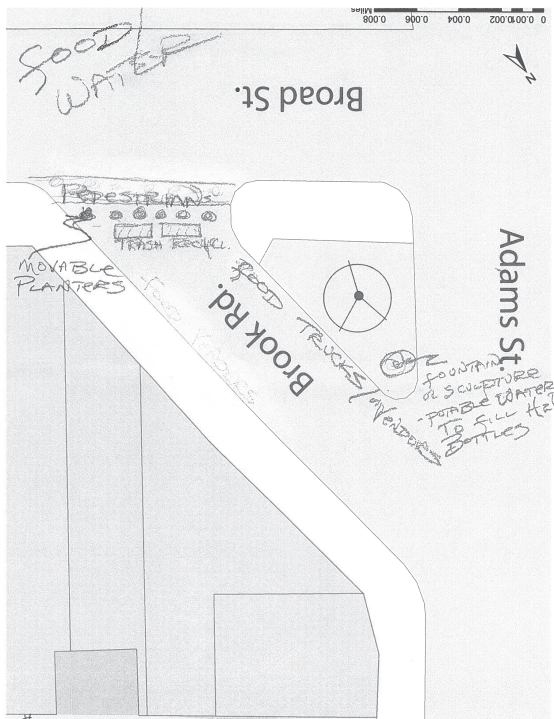
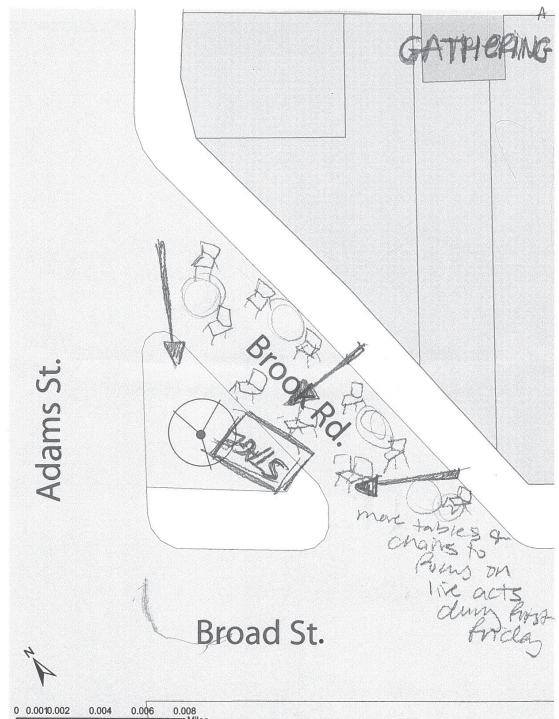
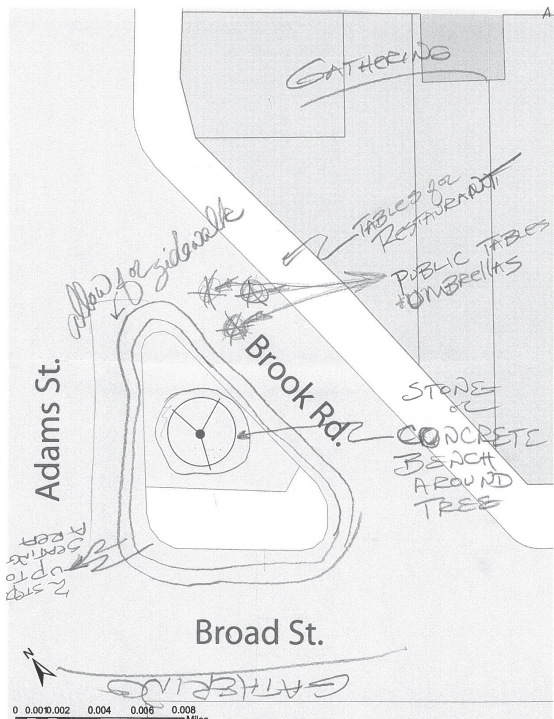
5. What is there Notes: Greenery, Shade, light, gathering, connecting work with 3) road, water, etc

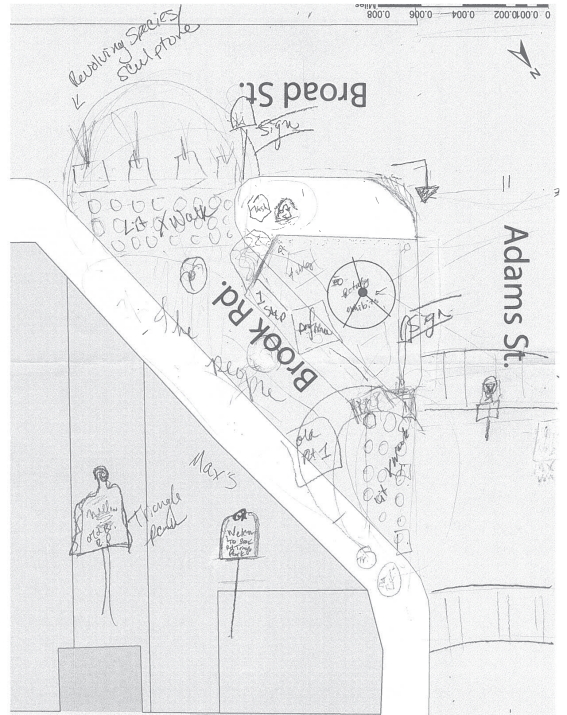
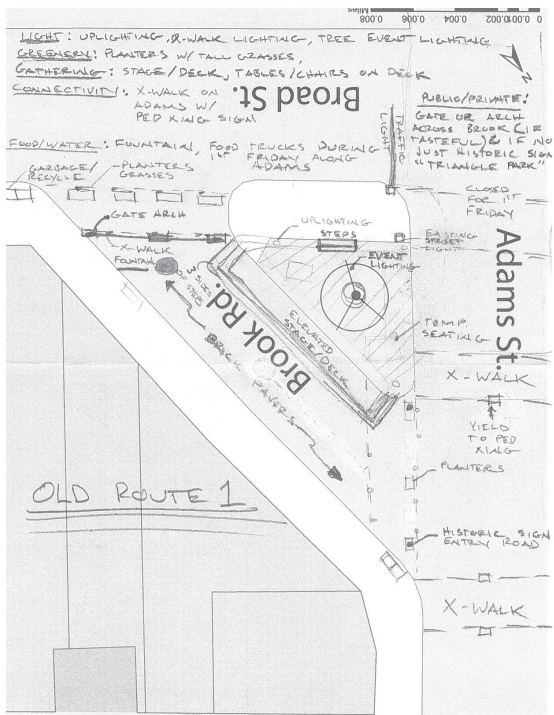
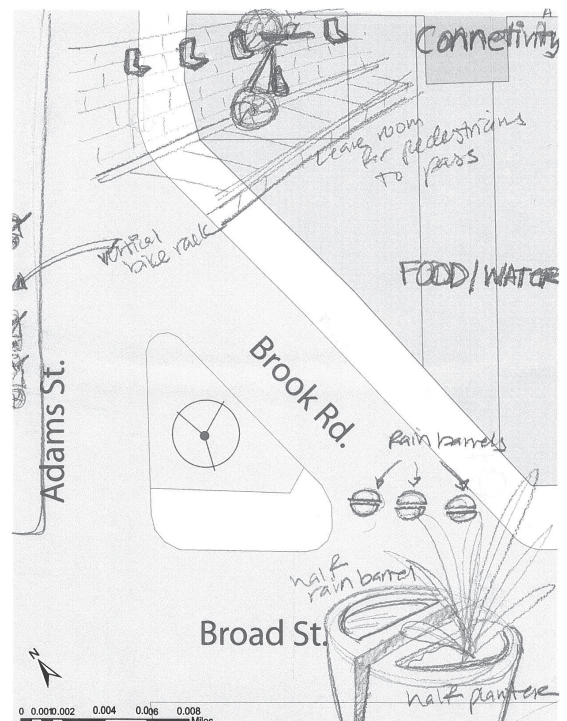
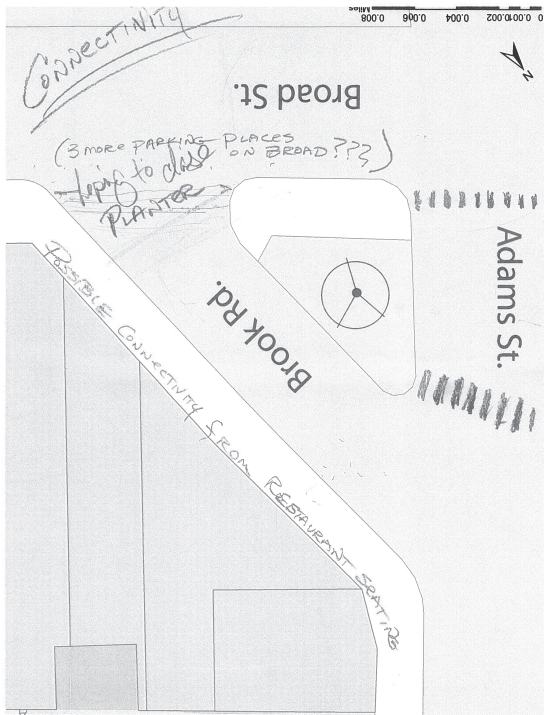
Turnpikes

- Greenery: One tree in triangle + dirt surrounding with no vegetation
- Shade/Light: tree creates some shade. Trees South west - Only one street light @ Max's 4 on at triangle corner
- Gathering: No cross walk @ triangle, dangerous for pedestrians. No cross walk from Max's to other side of road. Pedestrians cross in front of triangle traffic pattern
- Trees: Grace Myrtils don't work bk of the entrance 3 Butchered trees @ Max's
- Vallet @ Max's is causing traffic problems
- Dangerous traffic pattern

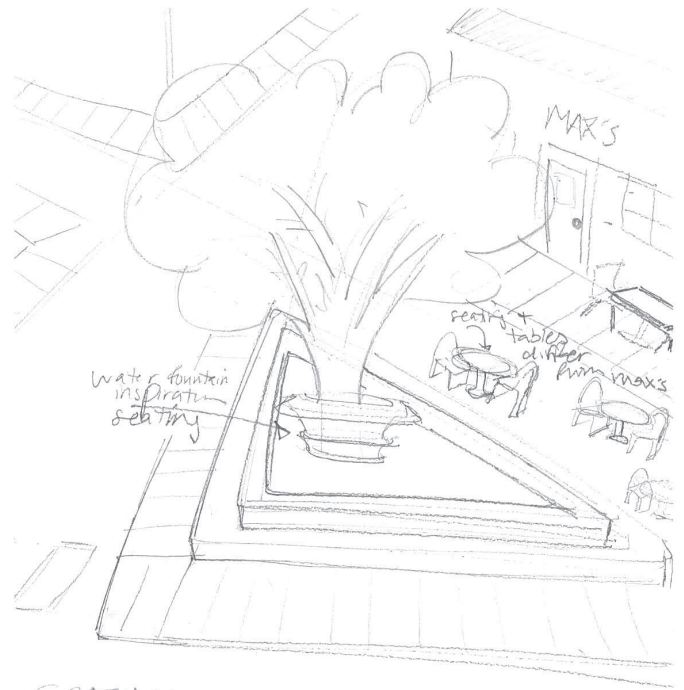
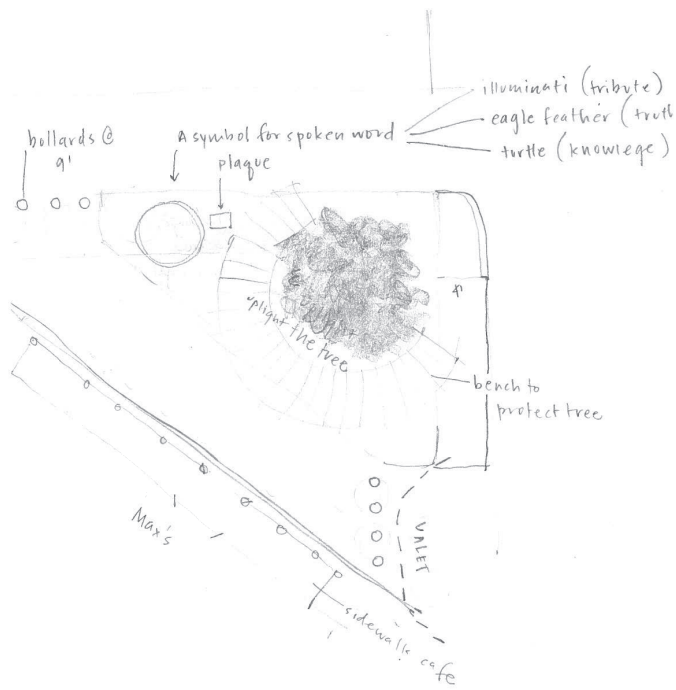
MEETING 2 DOCUMENTATION



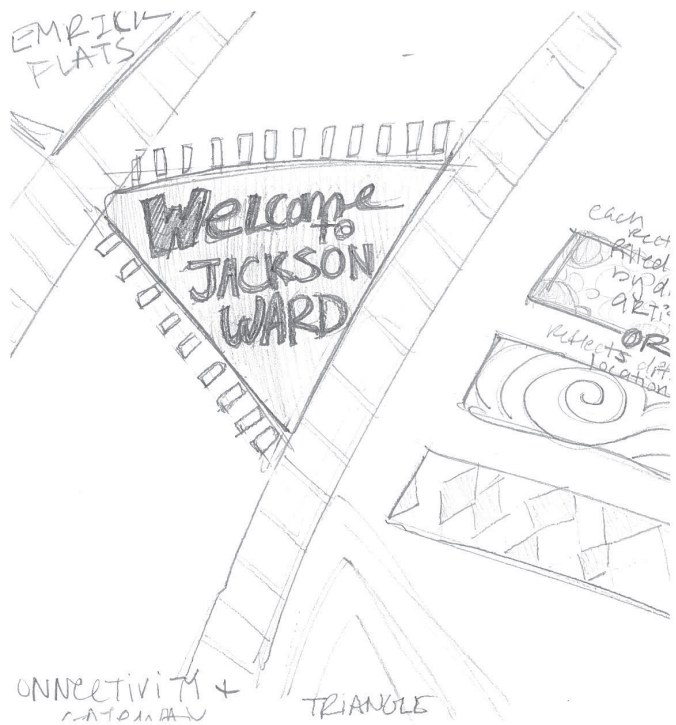




MEETING 3 DOCUMENTATION

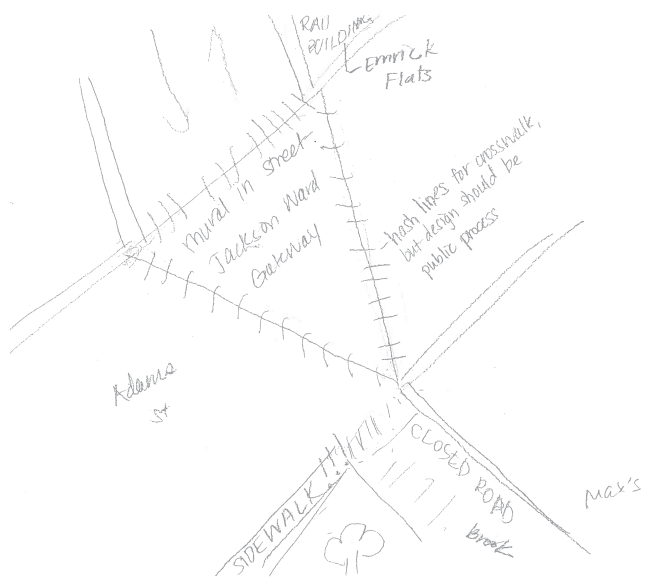


SEATING



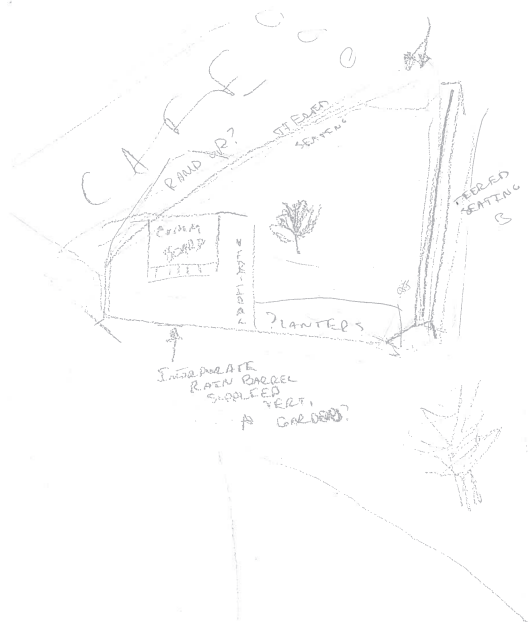
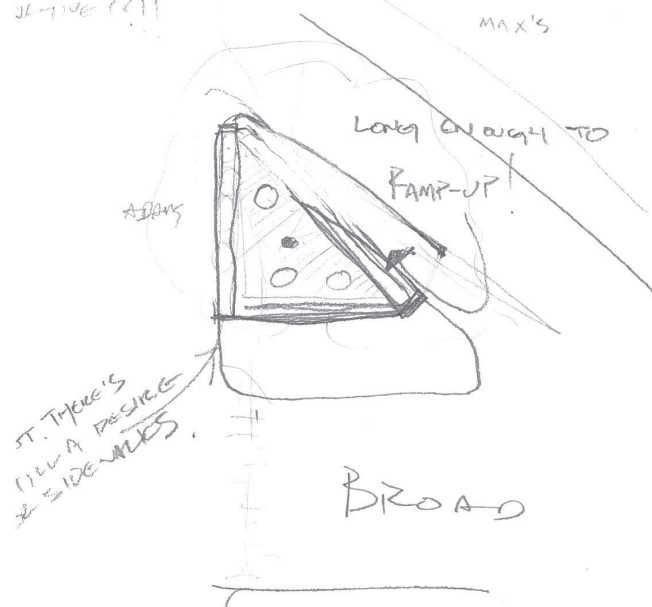
TEAM GIVE POWER



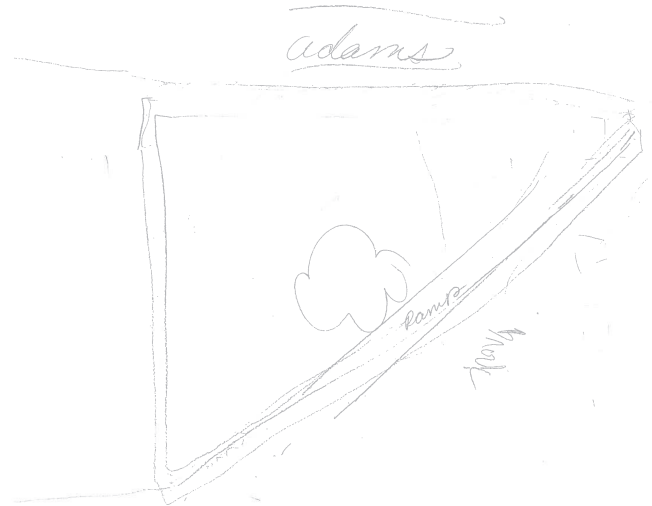


"DO YOU THINK THERE SHOULD
BE A RAMP? MAYBE IT'S
MORE THAN A RAMP?"

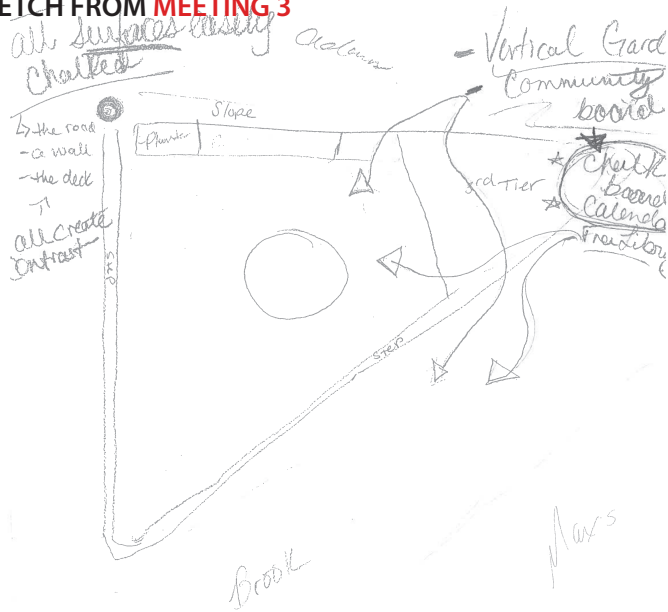
KINGING BACK
ALIVE???



DARK CHZ.



SKETCH FROM MEETING 3



have to remedy MIA sidewalk on Adams

gathering water together

increase elevation
road crosswalk

mutual crosswalk
triangles mirroring each other
view back to intersection & triangle

modular planters

platforms - in parallel parking spots

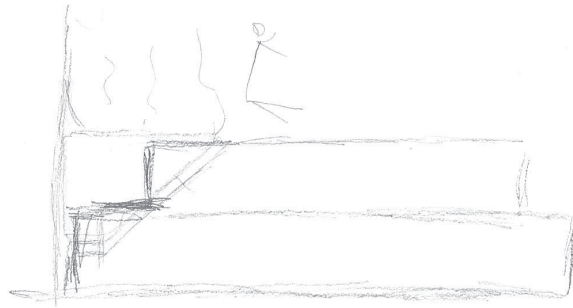
balance beam or walk in street

architectural bench - art-based, sculptural (inspired by fountain)

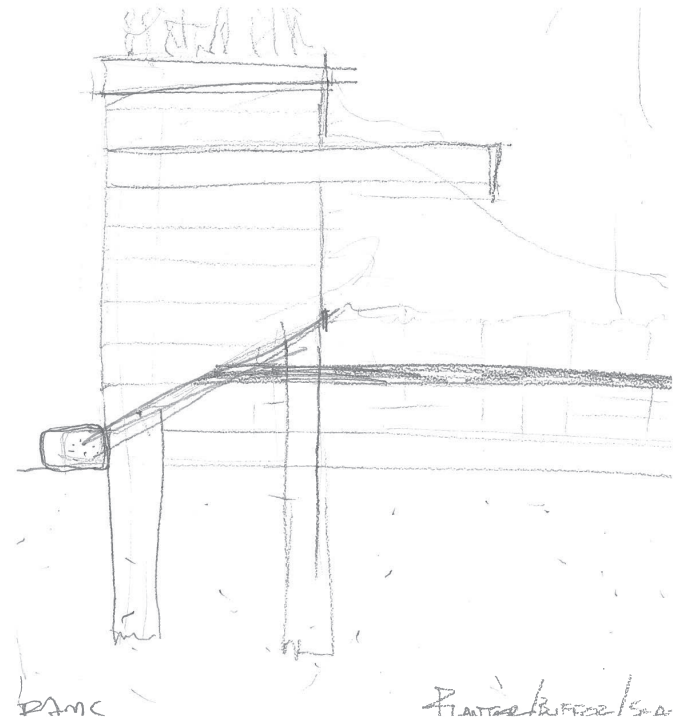
L around tree

L or focused towards triangle

Steps come up higher



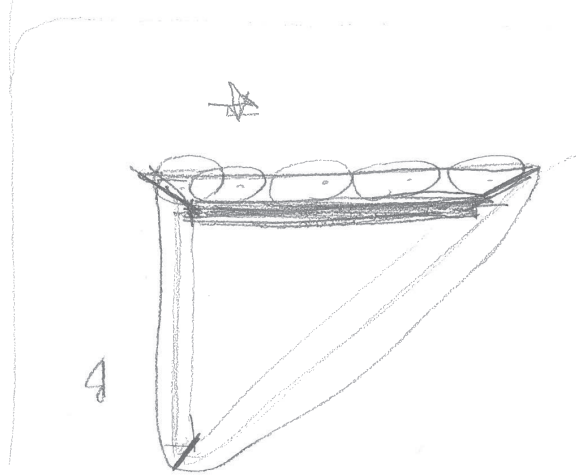
Broad



Pine

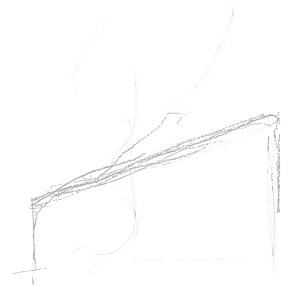
Pine

SKETCH FROM MEETING 3



Wooden Deck

- Pumping out?
- Street-facing canopy
- Grassy to grass
- Something tactical
- Community building
- Side wall
- Long-fingered brook
- Low slope
- Feeding site
- On deck



LINE → Florida
classmate

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

Several participants were asked to evaluate the Ephemeral Plan process, below are three participants' responses.

Participant 1

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

4.5 years

How well do you feel your concerns were addressed in the meetings?

Very well, and because of the way the meetings were done, it was also possible for me to see how many other ideas there were. Because the meetings helped us see how complicated (and simply full of potential) the issue was, I was less likely to feel offended if my ideas, or ideas from groups I was in, did not come through in the final plan.

How did this series of community meetings compare to other community meetings or meetings that you've participated in, in general?

The background info posted on Facebook really helped me to feel inspired to listen as well as give my ideas. The fact that interesting photographs were posted along with great quotes about design (I recall something about a principle that the essential function and architecture of a place should inspire design) helped me to get inspired by the old water fountain and the slower pace of life that corner must have enjoyed before it was re-purposed primarily for the car. I think the Valentine history museum discussions are equally inspiring, but I really appreciated that this event was so focused on a small piece of real-estate. There was a friend of a friend there from Chicago who was a great moderator and very passionate about best practices in Urban Design. Having this kind of diversity of people at the meetings really made them stand out for me.

If more city meetings were run in this format, would you attend?

I would love to, and it also seems to me that this is an amazing real-world exercise for VCU urban planning students. I will be curious to see how urban planning students will be able to work with community groups, MOB and the Partnership for Smarter Growth (now located on Brook 50 feet from the proposed crosswalks!).

How important was the atmosphere of the meetings (i.e. venue, food, and music)?

The food was huge, Bill Miller at the Valentine describes that they do food before their events because they really want it to feel like a family discussion. Having food come from so close by intensified the experience even more.

Do you feel more empowered in your community after participating, if so how?

I don't so much feel empowered to push my ideas, as I feel empowered to participate in community consensus. The fact that this is not a design that will be set in stone makes me feel very empowered.

Did you feel more in control?

I'm not sure I feel more in control, but perhaps better able to discern which community conversations

I could be a part of and which ones would not be productive for me. This exercise had a limited scope, was full of people ready to hear other ideas, and was moderated by folks whose main agenda seemed to be to hear the community and apply good urban planning principles. I learned a lot from the whole process, but that also reminds me that if I am too worried about my sense of control I may not be looking out for the best of the community.

What would you suggest to enhance the meetings?

I was really impressed to see Jim Hill and Tyler Potterfield there, it would have been interesting to see other city folks there, perhaps some of those who are more passionate about being bureaucrats than about design and urban walkability? Of course only provided they are there to listen and learn, bringing in more adversarial type city Hall folks could put a damper on things! If any other such meetings are as good as these I would be impressed. I think it would be important to continue doing good advertising to bring in diverse and engaged crowds and to continue to bring in some of the inspiring folks such as Jim Hill and Tyler Potterfield. Having such experts there who are willing to be part of the process is the best way to ensure a good process! A perfectly moderated process with less informed and more opinionated participants would be a tough sell.

Participant 2

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

I've lived in the neighborhood for over 2.5 years, and plan to continue to dwell in this part of town for a while.

How well do you feel your concerns were addressed in the meetings?

The structure of the meetings lent themselves to well rounded discussions. The smaller groups allowed many concerns to be considered, and reporting back to the larger group allowed us to see which concerns echoed throughout the room. The environment was comfortable, and people freely piped in approval and disapproval of ideas in a friendly way.

If more city meetings were run in this format, would you attend?

The meetings were much more interactive and interested in the opinions of the people than your typical community meeting, and that was what kept me coming back. I knew this was a space where people who cared about the space would share ideas and collaborate. It would be refreshing to see more city and community challenges faced with citizen input and planning like this project did.

How important was the atmosphere of the meetings (i.e. venue, food, and music)?

Having refreshments, beer, music, and conversation leading up to the discussion allowed for a layer of comfort with the room to be established before working with other participants in a small group. I think this was vital to the sense of community necessary to work together, as well as a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors.

Do you feel more empowered in your community after participating, if so how?

The experience has excited me to participate in community planning and inspired me to consider

what other community projects one could plan using this model. It is empowering to see citizens coming together to make positive changes in a neighborhood. It was also empowering to gain insight on how to approach the planning process with the City once the ideas are formulated.

Did you feel more in control?

Participating in this does give me hope that regular people can make an impact on this city. In that sense, I see that the people do have a certain amount of control over smaller projects. However, I still feel powerless when it comes to those in power who feel it is best “sell” our city...

What would you suggest to enhance the meetings?

The facilitators were a great help in keeping the discussions comfortably structured. I really think the whole thing went well, and I’m happy that the Ephemeral Plan is moving forward.

Participant 3

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

I moved to Jackson Ward in the summer of 2006

How well do you feel your concerns were addressed in the meetings?

Fairly well. It was a group setting so the focus wasn’t solely on what I wanted for the triangle.

How did this series of community meetings compare to other community meetings or meetings that you’ve participated in, in general?

I enjoyed the community aspect, the opportunity to work with others on an issue important to me, as opposed to just hearing a speaker talk.

If more city meetings were run in this format, would you attend?

Yes.

How important was the atmosphere of the meetings (i.e. venue, food, and music)?

Very important. It made it less of a dry, boring chore and more of an interactive social event.

Do you feel more empowered in your community after participating, if so how?

I’ve always felt like neighbors had the power to affect change and a series like this put me in touch with others who are eager to do the same.

Did you feel more in control?

Not necessarily. Since this was more of an abstract project with no funding, it’s not like we truly had control of changing the triangle, but I enjoyed the discussion of what could be.

What would you suggest to enhance the meetings?

A way to get the word out about them to more of the neighbors who might want to be involved in the process.

