### Key Differences Between Community Design and Traditional Design Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Design</th>
<th>Traditional Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Human-Oriented</td>
<td>• Corporate or Institutionally Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group and User Oriented</td>
<td>• Single/ Client Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Process and Action Oriented</td>
<td>• Building and Project Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concerned with Meaning and Context</td>
<td>• Concerned with Style and Ornament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bottom Up Design Approach</td>
<td>• Top Down Design Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive</td>
<td>• Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Democratic</td>
<td>• Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Francis, 1983

Engaging the Grassroots

April 15, 2009
Contents

I. Research Outline
II. Place
III. Problems and Benefits
IV. Theory
V. Data Collection
VI. Results

Engaging the Grassroots  April 15, 2009
Research Outline

Engaging the Grassroots

April 15, 2009
### Towards Sustainability in Arts Districts: Benefits of Creative Participatory Processes in Achieving Social Mutualism

#### GOAL
**More abundant life:**
- Economic benefits (regional): Markusen
- Entrepreneurs (create profit areas)

#### PROBLEM
**Challenges with maintaining arts, and artists due to standard practices of community design.**
- Physical / Cultural / Policy
  1. Gentrification (economic—too expensive)
  2. Gentrification (cultural change), fears, loss of autonomy and control
  3. A rigid public participation process: A planning process that is not flexible and responsive to cultural specificities and need in neighborhoods. Lack of focus on the cultural economy in planning

#### SOLUTION
**Design should encourage:**
- Sustainability (longevity, equity)
- Environments of Social Mutualism

**Define Social Mutualism**
(Hester 2006)

**Define Sustainability**

- Understanding Perspectives
  - Find areas for mutual passion/interest
  - Find sensible ways to bring people together and for people to be continually be brought together

- Sustainable design is participatory. Community centered goals with community actors/activists.
- Benefits of Participation in design of arts and cultural districts (Zukin 1987)
- Strict economic ventures are not sustainable (Artworks model)

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**Engaging the Grassroots**

April 15, 2009
My Response

Research the history/dynamics of NoDa
Timeline of NoDA District founded by artists
Johnston Mills Evictions
Art as the catalyst for development (site pictures, developments, press releases)
Current state Economic Decline/Pause

Questionnaire for key informants for insight in achieving mutual design and solutions found via research

Engage the arts community in the participatory process
Designing a meeting in that is culturally significant to the area. Engaging the artist activist who are the salt of the community.

Conclusions
Outcome of the show.
(Images, Advertisements, Catalogue, Comments from sign in booklet/suggestions)
Spark the imagination of planners, developers
Did this: bring people together, create space for collaboration, what is collaborating
The artwork by showing the perspectives of the artists, of critique shows that we have to do better, as community designers.
• North Davidson can be described as a natural cultural district.
  – Natural cultural districts are neighborhoods that have organically spawned a variety of cultural assets. These are areas with a dense array of artists, organizations, activities, and businesses that set that area apart from other areas. These areas and cluster of activities often occur initially without government intervention or the insight of economic developers.
The Creation of NoDa
The Historic North Davidson Main Street

New Condos
Johnston Mills
Salvador Deli and Market
New Arts Entrepreneurship
Area 15 at Parkwood

Free Store

The Muraled Roofless Building

Proposed Development

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Benefits and Problems

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April 15, 2009
Benefits: “A more abundant life”

• FDR made arts funding a matter of national pride during the new deal era.
Benefits: High Tech Industry

- Richard Florida’s works on the creative class and creative cities show how urban areas with a strong cultural base including artists, encourages increased high tech industry along with other benefits. Through natural clustering zones with concentrations of art and culture spur innovation.
• Ann Markusen explores the benefits of arts to regional economics. As entrepreneurs, many artists create new markets. Additionally as artists travel they bring funding from economies outside of their region into the local base.
Benefits: Increased Real Estate Values
Benefits: Revitalization

• In Philadelphia, block groups with more cultural assets, such as artists, creative shops, books stores, small cultural centers, performance halls, or dance troops were shown to be four times more likely to experience population increase and poverty decline.
• Arts and culture clearly are linked with economic impacts in urban areas. But it is not the only part of the story. Arts affect economic revitalization through its social impact. Activities that bridge and bond create more civic engagement. Civic engagement translates into community benefits, even economic ones.
Problems: Gentrification

- In North Davidson two affordable housing units were closed by the City of Charlotte in 2005.
- Johnston Mills was resold to Mercury Developers.
- A diverse group of artists and non-artists called Johnston Mills home.
Problems: Rapid Cultural Change

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Problems: Planning and Design are Captive of Real Estate Interests

- ...[M]any [cultural planning efforts] operate on the basis of “if we build it, they will come” mentalities, favor ephemeral tourists over their own residents as patrons, over-invest in large-arts facilities that become expensive white elephants in the longer run, focus on particular districts (and the real estate interests that have a stake in them), and fail to build decision-making frameworks where artists, smaller scale art organizations, and a multiplicity of distinctive cultural communities can participate in cultural planning. At its worst, cultural planning at the state and local levels becomes captive of particular real estate interests, cultural industries, and cultural elites, and thus fruitful ground for consultants who promise great plans that often turn out to be window dressing. (Markusen 2008)
Benefits and Problems

Benefits

• “A more abundant life”
• High Tech Industry
• Regional Economic Benefits
• Improved Real Estate Values
• Revitalization

Problems

• Gentrification
• Rapid Cultural Change
• Resident Relocation
• Arising challenges with Community Power Dynamics

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Engaging the Grassroots
• **Social Mutualism Theory**
  – Create Environments of Social Mutualism

• **Social Justice Theory**
  – Engage the Grassroots
  – Democratic Design

• **Participatory Design Theory**
  – Facilitate Informal Participatory Processes

• **Sustainability**
  – “Work Your Way Out of a Job” (McNally 2009)
1. Create Environments of Social Mutualism

- Social mutualism occurs when groups that are typically in opposition, and may be of differing interests, social statuses, political beliefs, race, or religion, come together and associate. There is an interrelatedness that is observed in contexts of social mutualism.

- Social mutualism can occur through designs that encourage congregation through form.

- Social mutualism can also occur through the process of community design.
2. Engage the Grassroots

During a Clemson Advancement Foundation lecture in February 2009, Ann Markusen closed her presentation stating that there were three major areas which need serious development.

- Community-based, artist engaged activism
- Strong arts and cultural agencies at the city level with sustained funding
- Coalitions of arts and cultural constituencies participating in policy and planning

(Markusen 2009)
The Role of the Grassroots in NoDa

- In many arts districts, such as NoDa, artists were the principal designers of their community for many years until development interests gained speed. Arts communities tend to have a spirit, and tendency towards grassroots activism.

- Cultural Revitalization based on:
  - cultural ties
  - social networks
  - multi-tiered community leadership

- Engaging these grassroots oriented community arts activists can pose a challenge for the development world--designers, planners, and developers.
Participatory Processes

- **Challenges with participation the field:**
  - Diversity and differences in communities
  - Regulated and institutionalized participation
  - Community challenges expressing complex issues

- **Informal participatory processes with a base in grassroots leadership are a partial solution to these challenges.**
3. Facilitate Informal Participatory Processes

– Through animated interactions, building of trust, experiential learning, and spontaneity, informal activities and processes can serve as important vehicles for creative meanings, social relationships, and collective actions that enable planners to navigate the cultural and political terrain of community differences. (Hou 2007)

• Equipping community members with the tools they feel that can best help them express themselves should be taken into consideration as designers look into participatory activities of both the formal and informal nature. Participatory processes can be apart of the culture of a community. They encourage engagement and excitement in the community critique, analysis, and design process.

• Creating this type a participatory event was a goal of this terminal project.
4. Sustainable Community Design

“Work your way out of a job”
-Marcia McNally 2009

- Sustainable community design is about empowering a community base.
- Democratic
- A sustainable community is mobilized.
- Design and planning professionals certainly have important roles in community design. Community Support empowerment and mobilization is one of the most significant of these roles.
Data Collection

- Site Analysis
- Mapping
- Interviews
- Online Questionnaire
- Gentrify Me: Art Show
- Community Feedback
Process

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Analysis

Locate Dispersed Community Players

Begin Conversation/Questionnaire

Involve in Arts Based Community Building Process
Questionnaire

- Directed to those connected with the arts community.
- Online
- Distributed through e-mail
- Linked on websites
- Questions used: rating scale and open ended
- All respondents identified themselves as artists with a great deal of familiarity with the area.
Community Change in North Davidson

The next few questions ask your opinion about the culture of the North Davidson area.

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements on the culture of the North Davidson Area, using a 1-5 rating scale where (1) means “Strongly agree” and (5) means “Strongly disagree”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The North Davidson area encourages diverse interchange.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North Davidson area fosters a culture of ethnic diversity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The North Davidson area is welcoming to people with varying gender and sexual preference identities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgy artwork is frequently on display in NoDa.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and area university students often frequent the North Davidson area.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Is NoDa losing its funk?

- YES
- NO

Additional Comment
Contribution to the North Davidson arts scene

- All of the respondents considered themselves contributors to the NoDa art scene.
- 1/3 have lived in the area.
- Community is not being defined by neighborhood only.
Potential areas for development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you be interested in any of the following in the North Davidson area?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in an affordable artist's live/work building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in affordable artists’ work-only studio building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A multi-disciplinary artists’ center with training, equipment, performance, and presentation space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure: Artists’ Interest in Art Centered Development
75% of respondents have hang out spaces or in the North Davidson area where they interact with other artists to give and get feedback and find out what is going on within their community of artists.
Creating a more artist-friendly place

- Affordability
- Arts Space
- Balance of Development Types

- Arts-Oriented Businesses
- Artist Housing
- Varied Arts Events
- Workshops
“Does the North Davidson area provide adequate support for artists?”

- The results were mixed.
- Individual business owners were highlighted as leading in arts advocacy in the North Davidson area.
Artists on the culture of North Davidson

Indicate how much do you agree with the following statements where (1) means "Strongly agree" and (5) means "Strongly disagree".

- The North Davidson area encourages diverse interchange.
- The North Davidson area fosters a culture of ethnic diversity.
- The North Davidson area is welcoming to people with varying gender and sexual preference identities.
- Edgy artwork is frequently on display in NoDx.
- Youth and area university students often frequent the North Davidson area.

The bar chart shows the percentage of agreement for each statement.
Is NoDa losing its funk?

90% say Yes.

“Most of the things that are springing up in this community are disconnected from the arts. The businesses that support the arts are losing business and new expensive housing is being built right in the area that is the arts district. The very things that draw people to the North Davidson area (the arts and the artists) are being forced out of this area because it’s being built over them, not for them or with them in mind.”

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Cultural costs and benefits of development

In your opinion, what kind of effect has new growth and development had in the North Davidson area on each aspect listed below? Please answer using a 1-5 scale where (1) means "Very positive" and (5) means "Very negative":

- Very Positive
- Somewhat Positive
- No Effect
- Somewhat Negative
- Very Negative
- N/A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vibrancy of the arts scene</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the area</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic diversity</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability of older local businesses</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open space for outdoor activities and concerts</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous involvement in community design

• 75% of responding artists have no previous involvement in the community design process.
Perceptions of power dynamics

Who Leads

In your perception who leads development efforts in North Davidson's arts districts?

- City of Charlotte Government: 50%
- Private Land Owners: 17%
- Community residents including Artists: 17%
- Other, please specify: 17%

Who Should Lead

In your opinion who should lead development efforts in North Davidson's arts districts?

- City of Charlotte Government: 33%
- Private Land Owners: 17%
- Community residents including Artists: 17%
- Other, please specify: 17%
- Public Good: 17%
- Personal Interest: 17%

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Perceptions of power dynamics

Mecklenburg County Recently Acquired All properties on Cullman within FEMA Zone.

Johnston Mills and attached Mecklenburg Mills: Vacant.
On coming together

- Find ways to meet, and respond to individual and group concerns.

- The second point is that community members and artists alike are looking for a greater deal of transparency with regards to development and community planning. There is a desire for planning goals to come internally from those communities and integrate their definitions of culture and success.

- The third point goes back to a key dilemma with cultural zones. These cultural activists are looking for, yet infrequently find, methods for increased and equitable profitability from the success of these districts. Developers frequently reap economic gain through the success of the cultural zone, while key cultural players struggle to receive their share.
Questionnaire Summary
• How we choose to represent information collected, particularly people’s values, views, and attachment to place can be a challenge in public involvement especially when pursuing democratic design values.
Designing a Process for Artist and Community
• Through the fine arts context, in which artist are typically accustomed to expressing their political opinions, aspirations and observations, the topic of community change through the perspective of artists is explored.

• The art show is designed to bring together a group of artists, representative of those typically not included in the planning process.

• In the context of the gallery the artist perspectives are validated through being on display and discussion is encouraged in a setting where artist have equal and valuable say in development trends.
Involvement in the art show event was initially offered to artist members of God City. God City is a artist collaborative of young, emerging, African American artist’s whose work is typically reflective of social political events.
Call to Artists:

Gentrify Me is an art show dedicated to the artist’s experience and perspective on community change and neighborhood redevelopment. Artist’s culture and entrepreneurship are often the catalyst for community revitalization, while the realities of rapid economic development and displacement are often the outcome.

If you are an artist who currently lives in an arts district...
If you are an artist who has voluntarily or forcibly been located out of an arts district...
If you are an artist who is a community activist...
If you poet, writer, or musician with reflections on the topic...

...we would like to include your work and stories in our efforts.

The show will be held at Dialect Gallery in NoDa for the month of April. The art show will also be marketed to city planners, developers, the artist community, and the NoDa neighborhood, so this will be a great opportunity to have your voice heard and art seen. Bring greater awareness to gentrification in arts districts.

For more information contact:
Meika Fields
meikafields@hotmail.com
Antoine Williams
Antoine Williams

- Antoine is a member of God City artists collaborative.
- His pieces reflect the closing of two affordable housing units in NoDa and resident relocation.
- During a winter meeting with Antoine in a NoDa coffee shop the community design conversation turned to Hester and sacred places.

http://proceedings.esri.com/library/userconf/proc95/to150/p1072.gif
Tomika Elise Logan
de’Angelo Dia
Moye
Chadwick Cartwright
Laura is a painter and printmaker. She entered a nearly 10 year battle with the Town of Davidson as she tried to protect a historical landscape adjacent to her home from urban infill.
Jasiatic

- Jasiatic is a photographer that lives in NoDa.
- While initially she was unsure about what to contribute to the project, that quickly changed.
- Her downtown photo shoots soon became public happenings.
- She photographed local icons, such as hip hop musicians, in their former sacred places.

The Cipher, 2009

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April 15, 2009
Meika Fields
• I am interested in an aesthetic of urban decay and blight.
• I used some site analysis photos to develop a small series on the North Davidson area.

Cordelia in View, 2009

The Roofless, 2009

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April 15, 2009
The gallery setting is a traditional place for dialogue in the arts.
I designed the space to facilitate conversation about community change in NoDa.
Gentrify Me: Opening
April 3, 2009

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April 15, 2009
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April 15, 2009
The show is up for the entire month of April at Dialect Gallery in the historic arts district. The show was designed to educate and bring together a large important community in the arts district, as a way to foster heightened civic activity and further actions. Many artists had not been involved in the community design before. Early Outcomes:

- Future events are in the planning process including a “Fat City Reunion”
- The show was advertised in Charlotte newspapers.
- My interview about the project is in the April 7 issue of Creative Loafing.
- Potential for a traveling exhibit that expands.
- Discussion about an annual NoDa reunion.
Community Feedback

Engaging the Grassroots

April 15, 2009

We want to hear from you.

What is most precious about NoDa now that you feel might be lost with further development?

What is most precious about NoDa now that you feel might be lost with further development?

What is most precious about NoDa now that you feel might be lost with further development?

It has already lost so much of the “working” artist vibe. I would like to see affordable housing and work space for artists.

The diversity and capturing beauty that can be found here could not sustain itself with further encroaching commercial development. Mecklenburg County no more than in most under developed areas than in NoDa.

-Tammy Melachin

-Community Feedback-
Results
Results

- The participatory process related to the specific community culture of North Davidson.
- It was both holistic, democratic, and outcomes of the social mutualism can begin to be seen.
- This process can serve as a way to collect community data that increases social capital, strengthens the arts community and empowers grassroots community artists which are the foundation of community design in many cultural districts.
The final component of my project is the design of an arts catalogue for the *Gentrify Me*.

The catalogue includes the history of NoDa, an essay on gentrification in arts districts, information about the artists and their work, artist surveys, and community feedback.

The catalogue is a resource for artists and community activists interested in navigating community design.
• Values are meant to inform our design approaches and design outcomes.