

Curbing Conservation

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A Chronicle of the Pike Pine Conservation District

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Introduction

contemporary culture the power to construct a collective history. Looking at Seattle today, there are no stories of the native peoples to remind us of their connection to the land. Collectively, people of the past have erased that parts of history and society as they see fit. Preserving a neighborhood provides the same contentions. Preserving a place is a constant struggle to honor the collective stories of people who came before us, but in addition to that it is for the future. Having historical buildings, seasoned establishments, and community leaders sustained within their community is imperative to conservation and healthy neighborhoods. Older buildings provide affordable commercial and residential spaces. As a resident of this older buildings. Conservation isn't the only anecdote to the myriad of issues that plague cities. Conservation is a simple idea that some things are worth keeping around. Conservation is multifaceted and when applied it should be done in a manner that honors its nuances.

Project Context: District, question, methods

ABSTRACT

Conservation districts are found in cities across America. They focus on responsibly developing areas that have historical significance, cultural relevance, or unique architectural features. In the case of Capitol Hill, all of the above components are present, and it became Seattle's only conservation district in 2009. My project chronicles this conservation district, through interviews with neighborhood advocacy groups, architectural analysis, and a literature review. This conservation district has three goals (1) to encourage the preservation of existing buildings, (2) support small businesses, and (3) preserve neighborhood character.

Persistent challenges and public controversy has led the conservation district through four phases of revisions. My report will include a timeline of these amendments and their impact on the built environment. In addition to a timeline, I have crafted three policy proposals that strengthen the conservation district's impact of each of its goals. By engaging with stakeholders of the conservation district, field research, and reviewing best practices, I have explored the effectiveness of the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District.

METHODS

Starting in order of my process, I first looked at the PPCOD's design review. The design review provides strategies and design elements used to maintain the ordinance's requirements. The design review establishes concrete techniques in order to preserve the character structures.

Next, I move to goal two, to "support small businesses." First I consulted the ordinance to see how they intend to fulfill this goal. Then I moved on to interviews with neighborhood business owners, the Pike Pine Neighborhood Urban Council (PPUNC), and the Greater Seattle Business Association(GSBA). In addition to understanding the perspective of small businesses, I also looked at community activism that seeks to support small businesses in order to formulate, incentives to be included in the PPCOD.

And lastly, I cautiously look at goal three to "preserve neighborhood character." As character isn't defined, I sought to understand the character that PPCOD was meant to preserve. This can be found by understanding the time in which the PPCOD was first devised.

In understanding the goals, I hope to unmask their intentions and furthermore, I plan to strengthen them, by proposing a reccomendation for each of its goals.

Brief History of the Corridor

AUTO ROW

Located directly above downtown Seattle, the Pike/ Pine Corridor became home to the automobile industry in the 1920's. The corridor was lined with auto dealerships and auto repair shops. This led to a distinct architectural style which included large showrooms, strong, sturdy brick structures, and large windows. These characteristics were easy to adapt to restaurants, practice spaces, retail, and bars as many are used now. The density of the corridor made it pedestrian-oriented as well as attractive for visitors, and residents alike. The auto row had declined by the 1940's. The corridor experienced a period of desolation until the 1970's where the neighborhood was occupied by bohemians, queers, and artists who sought out the affordability of the neighborhood.

TODAY: PEOPLE OF THE HILL

Auto shops still remain but, Capitol Hill is primarily a haven for artists and a neighborhood for the LBGTQ community. These convergences were due in part to Seattle's liberal ideologies that gained steamed in the 1970s as well as i-5's construction isolating Capitol Hill from the downtown area which provided affordable housing. Today, Capitol Hill is far from isolated with a light rail station coming in last year, and similar to other neighborhoods in Seattle, this one is far from affordable.

Residents range from young and transient to old and eccentric. It is an eclectic mix of queer, artists, normies, hippies, and quickly becoming a neighborhood for tech workers in South Lake Union and downtown. That being said, there is no succinct voice of the hill, except for the property owners who initiated the conservation overlay district and have called for the subsequent amendments to it.

Rapid changes in Seattle as a whole can be reflected within this neighborhood. "A fifth of the neighborhood's households now make more than \$100,000 a year. In 2000, only one in 17 crossed that six-figure threshold, according to research firm Experian (Romano, 2016)." Besides the class shift, same-sex households have seen a decline of 23% in the neighborhood.



Conservation vs. Preservation



There are many benefits to historical preservation and conservation districts that go beyond heritage and culture. Preserving older buildings is environmentally and economically conscious. Maintaining older builders creates natural stock of affordable housing. Preserving older structures instead of putting them in landfills and sourcing new materials is an efficient process of energy conservation. Conservation and preservation districts are often emphasized because of cultural displacement, but beyond social welfare, conservation districts have universal advantages.

Conservation districts vary largely from preservation districts. Preservation districts are strict, and delineate areas that hold a "historic significance or integrity (PPCOD, 2009)." This can create a museumification of a place where districts experience increases in property value and lack redevelopment. A conservation district takes a flexible approach, the district is able to grow to the needs of the neighborhood and developers in a way in which the past is respected and changes are moderated. Sometimes referred to as *Preservation Lite*, this nickname comes from the design of development lacking in specificity and congruency which tends to remiss binding regulations. Each model includes "development restrictions and design controls to remove underlying pressures for the incompatible development (Miller, 2004)." The City of Seattle's senior land use planner, Garry Papers, said the Pike/Pine Overlay District's intention is to "create incentives and techniques for developers to retain structures in a sensitive way." Sensitivity remains objective, still conservation districts follow a combination of these approaches in order to find a balance between progress and preservation. Page 5

LINE ALLER . Built Environmer

Goal 1: Encourage creative ways to preserve existing buildings

2009: Pike/Pine Conservation District is in effect



The Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District is a community led and city council established ordinance. PPCOD is at the center of Seattle's densest neighborhood, Capitol Hill. As the city sees rapid growth, property in Capitol Hill continues to be highly valuable. Its allure for development put stress on community members as well as its historic and architectural character.

Conversations of conservation began as early as 1998, yet it wasn't official until 10 years later. The Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District (PPCOD) was put into effect in 2009. Its champions which included Seattle City Council member, Tom Rasmussen, to local homeowner and developer, Liz Dunn. PPCOD provided incentives to developers to maintain the character of the neighborhood as well as restrictions in order to keep its uses intact. These new restrictions focused on limiting height of new development and preservation of buildings from the auto row era.

Most notably, these original provisions did not include a design review. This is a question that I have reached out to the City of Seattle Urban Planning department for more information on its original absence.1 In summary, the original guidelines sought to protect the small businesses and the pedestrian landscape of the corridor; this is shown by encouraging mixed-use structures, limiting square footage, and by lacking a parking requirement.

The 2009 District Provisions included: ·· Conservation is added into Overlay District ordinance "Better maintain character of the Pike/Pine neighborhood" · Includes pedestrian zoning designation · Discourage large single use structures · Balance residential with commercial · Encourage retention of existing structures (75 years old or more) relating to auto row · Square feet limits of commercial uses with exception to performing arts spaces and parking/access · Floor size limits · Minimize bulk by adding a landscaped courtyard · Retaining character structures on a lot. · No required parking

City of Seattle, PPCOD, 2009

There have been four phases to the ordinance...

2010: DESIGN REVIEW AND ENVIRONMEN-TAL CONSERVATION METHODS

In 2010, a review of recent development was conducted to see what designs functioned well in the corridor. The intent of the recent development review was to improve upon and identify what would be added to a required design review. The surveyors found that when preserving structures it is crucial that the historical structure be the focus of design. Some of these guidelines can be visualized by studying the Packard/Foley building's structure, built in 2010. The Packard-Foley building represents a problematic design by its monochromatic appearance, lack of set back from the original structure and lackluster entrance. This design also lacks a defining entrance as well as prominence as it sits at a

corner of a busy intersection.



Barulich, Laren. "Controversial Development: Packard Building" 2016.

In order to strengthen the neighborhood's architectural atmosphere a required design review was put forth. With the design review in place in October of 2010 additions to PPCOD included, "a set back requirement to reduce bulk of upper stories, emphasizing the main entrance of buildings, corner lots should reinforce the street corner, first floor facade at human level,contrast the old structure from the new, do not overpower the character structure, and add landscaping when possible (PPCOD, 2010)."



Department of City Planning, NYC Planning Glossary, 2010.

These development design guidelines, stressed the differentiation between the old and new parts of a building. This entails that the original structure and the new construction have a transition into one another in color,,

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style, or materials. Another issue that was motivated from the Packard-Foley Building was the lack of set back from the original facade to the stories above. As the structure rises above the street level for seven stories there is a daunting effect on the pedestrian. While the Packard/ Foley building stands a mixed use space it created a dialogue on what features begin to define the neighborhood's character. This had a direct impact on the design review guidelines in the conservation corridor. And while the Packard building created a mixed-use space, with floor to ceiling windows for a pedestrian friendly streetscape, its bulky extension from street level to the highest floor did the opposite. Furthermore, the entrance has no distinctive qualities, this is specifically problematic as it is on a very active street corner. In conclusion, the Packard building resembles an office building instead of an activated space for residents, small business owners, and patrons.

The new design guidelines were adopted in October of 2010. Less than 3 months later the 12th Ave Arts building was proposed for the district. The 12th Ave Arts project is unique in that it was built atop a surface parking lot. This site provided a unique opportunity to represent the initiatives of PCCOD starting from the ground up. 12th Ave Arts is mixed-use building, which maintained the Overlay District's intent to encourage art spaces, by building a theatre in the new construction. The effects of the design review are highlighted within the creation of the 12th Ave Arts space. Most prominently is the setback of the stories above the first floor. Also, notice the 12th Ave Arts sign is bold creating an emphasized entrance.



Barulich, Laren. "New Development: 12th Ave Arts." 2016.

The 12th Ave Arts building exemplifies the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District's provisions by providing a mixed use space, with large windows on the pedestrian level to enhance walkability, incorporation of affordable housing, and a theatre for art productions. This case can provide a template to how to build in the area for other developers who choose to forgo saving a character structure.

Continued...

Another example of the ordinances guidelines being executed in their most sincere intent is the building at 501 E Pike St.



Barulich, Laren. "A Model for Redevelopment: 501 E Pike St." 2017.

2011: DEVELOPER INCENTIVES ADDED

PelleOn December 12th, 2011 developer incentives were added in order to further encourage the preservation of the original structure. These are called Transit of Development rights or TDRs. In essence, when the structure of the building remains they can then add an additional story to their building. The additional square footage increases the developer's' profit margin and in turn keeps some existing architecture intact. Critics of this allowance argue that the guidelines of what counts as a remaining structure are too vague (Woo, 2016). This ambiguity has led developers to preserve the shell of a building to appease the letter of the law. The amount of character structure remained is defined as a facade at pedestrian level. This became a phenomenon coined as facadism (Woo, 2016). Despite its controversial objectives, TDRs were included the design review, and it was updated to include suggestions for how to ensure that the additional story upheld aspects of PPCOD's initial resolutions.

2016: DESIGN GUIDELINES REVISITED AND UPDATED

coIn 2016, the Pike/Pine Neighborhood Design review guidelines were revised and updated by the Makers Architecture and Urban Design. This update came after the 2014 amendment "to respond to issues raised by development occurring in the area (Woo)." Essentially, development in the neighborhood had happened at unprecedented levels. It became clear that design concepts must be specific in order to be effective. These design concepts included a strict setback minimum of 15 feet, an emphasis on texture of structures, and connectivity to transportation as well as foot traffic. The emphasis on texture is particular to this review as it calls out "false gable and inconsistently detailed balconies." This departure, has the potential for a more distinctive architectural approach when additions are built upon character structures. Within

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Continued..

this revision are appeals for open space, be it a courtyard, or balcony. Ideally, the structure would enhance street space. In sum, this update creates little negotiations for departures of the design guidelines, and implores developers to maintain consistency in quality of materials used in the original character structures.

On July 25, 2016, a land use application was submitted to add 5 stories above the Kelly-Springfield landmark building. The Kelly-Springfield building has undergone large waves of change within last year. In October of 2015, the Value Village thrift store vacated the structure. Legacy Commercial then allowed a collective of community arts organizations to lease the space while the property owner prepared for its development. Because of its consistent use, centralized location, and conspicuous façade the building's design is sure to garner attention. As for the building's landmark status, like many in the area, it only protects its façade, meanwhile, the interior can be completely removed. The proposal, includes ground floor retail space, and office space above. The Kelly-Springfield building is likely to break ground next year.



Barulich, Laren. "In Process Development: Kelly-Springfield Building." 2016.

Its design includes a "quiet backdrop" (setback) to reduce the bulk of the additional structure, a retention of the timber supported architecture style in the interior as a character element, as well as a visual distinction of old versus the new. This design proposal is successful in adapting the interior's most celebrated features while preserving the exterior's façade fully. It seems as though this new development has already begun to take note of the new design guidelines. As far as the consistency and quality of materials used to construct the additional floors; that remains to be seen.

Considering the Packard development in 2009 and now the Kelly Springfield building's design, there have been clear positive advancements in maintaining character structures, as well as transitions from new to old. The Kelly-Springfield building, now a protected landmark is undergoing a redevelopment. The rendering below has been directly impacted by the latest design review. It has significant

Amendments and Adaptive Reuse

Continued...

features including adapting the current space with the new space and letting the previous continue to demand the design. The architects intend to keep all out facing windows original or to be replaced with replicas, and then replace or clean all aging bricks. The setback provides urban outdoor space and prevents the pedestrian from feeling impinged upon.



Legacy Commercial, "1525 11th Ave: Rendering" 2016.

In many senses the development in the area has become more considerate, but in no way has it slowed. In looking at the above examples, it is clear that while the Pike/Pine Overlay District's guidelines provide a lot of variation. To truly preserve the neighborhood, the guidelines must have an approach broader than strictly architecture. I will now highlight examples of when architecture and the neighborhood are able to unify.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Chophouse row is an exemplary example of honoring the architecture and the context of the community. Designed by Dunnes + Hobbes, LLC. Chophouse row was previously a muscian practice space known as Chophouse Studios. "Chophouse Row is conceived as a way to merge past, present and future; repurposing existing structures and knitting new and old together in a forward-looking prototype that stimulates and supports its neighborhood (Graham Baba Architects, 2015)." Chophouse Row was completed in 2015 and it embodies the tenets of the Pike/ Pine Conservation district, by maintaining the previous structure, providing small retail spaces, and adding to the character of the neighborhood as a mixed-use building that includes affordable housing.



Barulich, Laren. "New Redevelopment: Chophouse Row." 2017.

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Adaptive Reuse and Analysis

Continued..

Taking the title of "largest starbucks in on the planet," this case of adaptive reuse shows the potential and creativity when a space is repurposed. While the outside is only slightly renovated with new doors, it provides a useful



Barulich, Laren . "Adaptive Reuse: Starbucks Roastery and Tasting Room." 2017.

GOAL 1 ANALYSIS / RECOMENDATION

While the I learned quickly that the or-

dinance primarily focuses on ways to preserve the built environment of the neighborhood. There is opportunity to review designs and building projects is happening in real time. There is a lot to be learned from the previous case studies, including stricter guidelines, focus on community engagement, and opportunities for density alongside aesthetics. In order to understand if character is being respected or preserved we must exhume these institutions to understand where they went and what is underway. There are steps being taken to make sure that locals are aware of project beyond a "Notice of Proposed Land Use" sign. There have postcards sent to all neighbors impacted by a new development that include meetings and contact information for the

project.

What I am recommending is to not

simply tell community members about a project, but instead give them a part of the project to physically contribute to.



Barulich, Laren . "Ellen Forney's Walking Fingers" 2017.

Local artist, Ellen Forney, was apart of the new link light rail station. This was a massive project that didn't need to look to the community to fill the station lobby's but the result and intent speaks volumes to those who use the space each day. Developers must resource locals if they want their projects to fit within the context of the neighborhood as the conservation district requires.



Goal 2: Support Small Businesses

Business in the Corridor

Affordability, Space, Vacancy

ORDINANCE SAYS...

There is one concrete example in the PPCOD of how small businesses in the corridor could be supported. In section, 23.73.008, Table A, it says structures "shall include commercial spaces at street level for small, individual business establishments that average 2,000 square feet or less in size." PPCOD continues to rely on development and the built environment to supply all the needs of the ordinance. This measure is inadequate in supporting small businesses, as it does not specify whether it supports existing businesses or new businesses. These initial findings forced me to look into other organizations in the area. I spoke with the Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA), the Pike Pine Urban Neighborhood Council, developers, and local business owners in order to understand the impact of the conservation district's second goal.

OUTREACH

On April 13th, 2017, I met with Matt Landers of the Greater Seattle Business Association. Matt is the GSBA's Public Policy and Communications Manager. He has lived in the neighborhood long enough to see many changes and has worked intimately with business relocations. As we walked around the corridor, he motioned towards the small business spaces in the Excelsior Building. He then went on to say "I was surprised they kept the small units, although the businesses that were there before could not afford those spaces now. Its not so much about the small space but instead about having affordable space." As we walked along the corridor it was like I was seeing it for the first time. Matt knew the history of all the businesses we passed even pointing out some I had never noticed before, like the Bean Box next to Bill's on Broadway, where one subscribes to receive high quality coffee in a box monthly. Matt goes on to say "this is a good use of space here, its manufacturing, its coffee, its Seattle." Most unsettling about this business tour was all the vacant retail spaces. There were entire blocks vacant. I asked him about the vacancies and Matt said "Developers won't make their rents affordable, so they sit vacant." As I wandered through the empty pavilion of Pine Motorworks, it becomes clear that it's not about the community here at all.

While Matt's theory of developers being solely profiteers wasn't controversial, I wanted to get to the source. I reached out to three developers, including Hunter's Capital, Pike Motorworks, and the management at Excelsior to find out how commercial spaces are filled. Hunter's Capital was the only

Vacancies on every block...

developer that returned my requests for information and they are coincidentally, one of the few developers whose spaces remain completely occupied.

Hunter's Capitol takes great care in ensuring that their facilities host businesses that match the neighborhood's character. I spoke with their chief broker, Jill Cronauer, who gave me insight into their tenant selection process. Here is some examples of the questions they ask:

What is the neighborhood lacking?

Who is the target market?

Who are the other building tenants or neighbors? What/who would be a good compliment?

Space configuration – what would fit well?

In addition to these questions, Hunter's Capital also considers the amount of rent each tenant can pay based on their industry and business history. After speaking with Jill, it became clear that this was a consuming endeavor that many developers simply did not have patience or desire for. So the vacancies sit. The question then becomes what is the point of requiring retail spaces if they are also not required to be filled. Let's get back to the Excelsior Building in order to understand how spaces are not an inherent solution.



Barulich, Laren . "Exselsior Building." 2017.

CASE STUDY: THE EXSELSIOR BUILDING

The Exselsior Building, the original tenants (Le Frock, Edie's Shoes, Wall of Sound, and Bauhaus Coffee) could no longer afford the rents. While I was working on this project Edie's was going out of business in its new location in the corridor. Relocation's disruptions has a ripple affect of consequences. One of which is losing a customer base that might not have known the name of a shop, but knew were it was located.

Once again the issue of vacancy rears its head. Half of the commercial spaces that the Excelsior Building hosts remain vacant. While its doing better than many other development projects in filling their spaces, I still reached out to their leasing team in order to understand how that choose tenants, but did not get a response.

Business in the Corridor

Beyond the built environment



GOAL 2: ANALYSIS / RECOMMENDATIONS

This leads me to a proposal to support small businesses. PPCOD needs to add, "no retail spaces at the pedestrian level can remain vacant for longer than 6 months after residents live in the building." This would force developers to offer affordable rents and truly support small businesses within the corridor.



Barulich, Laren . "Vacant Space: Exselsior Building." 2017.

When these commercial spaces remain vacant, the district is not being conserved. Seattle is often proud of its "Shop Local" small business campaign, but an omnious future for the corridor would be to have no small shops at all. From my time spent looking at the corridor over the last year, it is frightening to admit that this is a possibility. Developers could stop caring about filling these spaces and continue to leave them empty as they already do.



Barulich, Laren . "Empty Business Listing, Full Apartment Building"

2017.





Goal 3: Preserve neighborhood character

Neighborhood Character

Past, Present, Future

ORDINANCE SAYS...

In the ordinance character is almost solely accompanied by structure. Character structure in the ordinance is defined by buildings that are "75 years or more, and consistent with architectural patterns (PPCOD, 2016)" within the corridor. Some departures from character structure include, "enhance mixed-use character" "historic character" and "architectural character." It quickly becomes obvious that character is neither defined nor separated from the built environment. Its easy to avoid defining character, because character is something that is intangible. One could pontificate that character lies within the people that call the neighborhood home, but questions quickly arise asserting who they are and why they are the purveyors of character. So while the organizers of PPCOD avoided defining character that made a point to make this a goal and that is problematic. In this section, I plan to engage with the term character and its relationship to the Pike/Pine Corridor.







How do other conservation districts do it?





CASE STUDY: CONSERVING CHARACTER IN DALLAS

Dallas has fifteen neighborhood conservation districts (City of Dallas, 2009). With its first conservation district program starting in 1986. A stark contrast to Seattle with PPCOD being their one and only and effective in 2009. Dallas is different from Seattle in many ways, climate, size, and population to name a few. Most importantly is the residents of Dallas' desire to conserve their neighborhood.

The way the conservation district in Dallas operates is within a governance located within the neighborhood and outside of the monolithic city institutions. This has provided a level of flexibility and autonomy to the residents of the conservation districts that Seattle does not posess. Therefore, conserving a character structure or neighborhood feature is streamlined and specific to the community's desires. Most surprisingly to me is the district's explicit recoginition of a conservation district's prupose to "conserve an area's distinctive atmosphere (City of Dallas, 2009)." The amibuguity of those words can have a powerful impact, and while PPCOD does not mention neighborhood and character together at all in the ordinance there is no potential to conserve it.

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Neighborhood Character

Past, Present, Future

AWARENESS ISSUE

While the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, and GSBA were familiar with the PPCOD ordinance, most business owners in the corridor were not, and only one said they were vaguely familiar with it. The Pike Pine Neighborhood Urban Council were very familiar with the PPCOD. I spoke with the director of the non-profit, John Feit. He said that PPCOD "provides an indirect benefit, it get the developers to understand where we are coming from and what we would like to see in the neighborhood." John said this casually, but it made me wonder what the conservation district would look like if simple more people knew that it existed.

GOAL 3: ANALYSIS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Preserving Character of a neighbor-

hood should remain ambigous like Dallas Conservation Districts have done. This gives power to the neighborhood to decide what it is that gives the area character, and the influence to preserve. However, people must know that there is a conservation district within the neighborhood. As people in the district remain unaware of its goals, there is no way for it



Barulich, Laren . "Arts District Signage." 2017.

This brings me to my final recommendation. Awareness to the conservation district. The Capitol Hill Arts District has done a good job in adverstising their cause. Capitol Hill Arts district labels accompany street signs and when I attended community forums there was a representative there able to answer questions and give updates on the district. This conservation district would benefit greatly from transparency in decision making as well as allowing residents to understand how the conservation districts intends to conserve.





The coulda, woulda, shouldas

What I Learned

Its been a bumpy ride...

THIS WASN'T WHAT I EXPECTED

Taking on a subject as large and varied as conservation and character is not something I would recommend. I am still absolutely fascinated and often disapointed by what history is preserved and what is diregarded. In the case of a neighborhood that I have had the privilege to call home for the last 8 years, it was a worthy cause to explore.

With that in mind, I was swept away by goal 2, support small business. Supporting small business owners inherently preserves older structures, and neighborhood character. I also found it to be completely neglected, while simulataneously easy to remedy. If I could re-do this project I would focus on profiling small business owners in the corridor in order to tell their stories and show how they preserve community and character of the corridor.

My journey to get this project to many forms, I started with more experimental ideas but feared that my project would not fit into the year-long research, implementation, and presentation process. In hindsight, I had the right idea and knowing what I know now, I would have stuck with some of my original intentions. That being said, I learned a lot from this project including, indesign, photoshop, photography, outreach, and organization. All of which are skills that I wanted to leave the University with.

All in all, I am grateful for this project and for the push of Community, Environment, and Planning.







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