BEYOND TEMPORARY: PRESERVING THE EXISTING BUILT ENVIRONMENT WITH TEMPORARY URBAN INTERVENTIONS

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Abstract

Urban planners, economic developers, community-based organizations, and government agencies are increasingly using small-scale, temporary urban interventions as tools to revitalize historic downtowns and neighborhoods. These interventions are being integrated into larger, incremental planning initiatives that seek to stimulate redevelopment and inform long-term planning goals. They depend on public engagement to envision and plan a quick and affordable transformation of blighted areas of historic neighborhoods with aesthetic improvements and temporary uses. Through creative mediums they allow communities to experiment with ideas that highlight the economic and viable potential of the existing built environment.

Temporary urban interventions are powerful forms of direct community action that generate preservation activity at grassroots levels. By emphasizing local history and existing built assets to inform the planning and development of historic neighborhoods, these interventions share similar goals and values with preservation. Given that temporary urban interventions are being used by various professions with whom we, as preservationists, are aligned, they should be under the purview of historic preservation.

This thesis examines how historic preservation practices can enhance temporary urban interventions as a redevelopment tool by identifying common values and goals, stakeholders, and analyzing case studies. Following major findings and recommendations, this thesis proposes a collaboration between temporary urban interventions and historic preservation to ensure that such initiatives surpass the temporal realm and become a formal, long-term solution to the revitalization and preservation of the existing built environment.
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Introduction

Temporary urban interventions are a cost-effective, incremental approaches to redevelopment that are used by urban planners, government agencies, economic developers, and community-based organizations to tackle problems and re-imagine solutions to blighted, commercial corridors and lifeless public spaces of historic downtowns and neighborhoods. They are being implemented into the existing built environment for short periods of time, from a weekend to three months. They are often attached to a larger event, such as a street festival or an art show, and momentarily transform the existing built environment with improvements such as painted buildings, bike lanes added to streets, and temporary retail stores and cafes. The interventions aim to address the perception of place, to attract economic and pedestrian activity, and to promote direct community action in the preservation and planning of the existing built environment.

Temporary urban interventions are not unlike preservation-based planning initiatives. They are increasingly being used as a redevelopment tool for the historic built fabric and preservationists should participate in the process. Preservation would enhance the process and guide these initiatives beyond the intervention and into permanent changes.

Objective of Thesis

There are various types of unplanned interventions happening in cities and towns that are implemented as small-scale actions to the existing built fabric in order to incite discussion and goad long-term changes. With such names as guerrilla urbanism, do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism,
and pop-up urbanism, these tactics are being referred to as tactical urbanism and are being recognized as an urban design movement.¹

This thesis focuses on specific kinds of interventions that, while they may include some of the above-mentioned tactics, rely on the interpretation of the existing built assets through history and direct public action. In essence, the definition of temporary urban interventions relates directly to interventions concerned with the concert of buildings, streets, sidewalks, lampposts, and other physical elements in the existing built environment that lend to the creation of neighborhoods.

Historic preservation and temporary urban interventions both serve as redevelopment tools for the historic built environment and this thesis examines how they can collaborate. It will define the concept of “temporary urban interventions”; identify similar goals and values among historic preservation and temporary urban interventions; and describe and analyze the problems that temporary urban interventions are striving to resolve.

The first chapter will explore how historic preservation matured from a practice of preserving singular buildings to an endeavor concerned with the holistic assemblage of built environments. The second chapter will look at the history of temporary urban interventions - tracing its evolution as an urban planning strategy for governing authorities in medieval Europe to its democratization as an informal, community driven tactic for revitalization. The third chapter will examine the intersection between the theory and practice of temporary urban interventions and historic preservation through the analysis of three case studies. Recommendations for improvements, as well as opportunities where historic preservation can guide and assist the

challenges will be proposed for each case study. This thesis concludes with final comments, and an ideal model exemplifying the collaboration of historic preservation with temporary urban interventions.
Chapter 1

Historic Preservation: Evolving Values and Tools

Historic preservation has developed into a profession that focuses on the value and significance of entire neighborhoods and cities. Preservation in the United States began as a social and cultural grassroots movement that lacked legal structure and professional background. In the past fifty years, it has evolved from preserving the historic character of tangible assets to an important aspect of planning that aids in the protection and revival of the existing built environment.

Historic preservation has become instrumental in broader planning processes that focus on how existing built assets enhance livability of communities. In order to achieve this objective, history, education, and public participation are integral elements of the preservation planning process. Preservation planning provides a forum for dialogue and advocates for public engagement in defining values of built assets and preservation issues.²

Importance of Preserving Place

Historic preservation began in the United States as a movement to forge an American identity through the protection of singular buildings, monuments, and public lands.³ In 1858, the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association launched a campaign to raise funds to acquire and restore George Washington’s estate in Mount Vernon, Virginia. This instance of preservation established


both a standard for private efforts to fund the restoration of patriotic landmarks, as well as an interpretive model that would define the preservation movement throughout the nineteenth century. In 1906, the Antiquities Act was passed and gave the President of the United States authority to set aside public lands as national monuments. With the passing of this Act, preservation became a national endeavor that was regulated by agencies and governed by laws.

**Preservation and Planning: Historic Districts**

Since its inception, historic preservation in the United States has been a collaborative effort among various stakeholders, including housewives, architects, lawyers, doctors, and ministers. While it began as a movement concerned with the protection of national monuments, structures, and land, it evolved to support the regulation and protection of the historic built environment.

By the twentieth century zoning emerged to codify and confront the obstacles between private ownership of property and profitable urban investment, blocking uses of land that compromised neighborhoods. While zoning restricted property rights, it became accepted since it promoted stability and enhanced property values. With the assistance of planning tools like zoning, surveying, and financing, preservation began to focus on the symphony of building and neighborhoods.

The first “historic district” in Charleston was created with an innovative use of zoning. In the 1920s the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwelling Houses was formed in Charleston,

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South Carolina to combat the capital infiltration of Standard Oil filling stations. The group of “society” women from the Old Battery District of Charleston sought the assistance of the state. In 1930 the women, supported by alarmed civic leaders, were able to acquire a city ordinance that established the Old and Historic Charleston District. Boundaries were set for an overlay district and an architecture review board was created. The creation of the Old City District in Charleston, South Carolina in 1931 spearheaded a device for integrating planning and preservation in the control and regulation of urban growth. In the decades to follow, several cities, such as New Orleans for the Vieux Carré neighborhood and Boston for Beacon Hill, copied the Charleston method to protect neighborhoods from capital and development infiltration.

Role of Citizen v. Professional

At the turn of the twentieth century, planning in the United States became professionalized and codified due to a national desire for reform and rationalization of the urban built environment through aesthetics and beautification of cities. The White City at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 influenced the regulation and design of the existing built fabric and propelled the City Beautiful Movement.

The City Beautiful movement influenced urban planning in the United States, as well as inspired societies like the Municipal Art Society and the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society to band together and advance legislation in aesthetic regulation. In 1956 the Bard Act, which worked on the assumption that aesthetic control of property in the interest of

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6 Wallace, 182.
7 Wood, 17.
public good is a legal exercise of power, was passed. This legislation allowed localities in the State of New York to pass local laws to protect landmarks. The Municipal Art Society in New York City saw the potential for the Bard Act to act as enabling legislation and pushed for its application as a means to amend New York City’s zoning code to include aesthetic zoning. It was believed that zoning regulations should be broadened to include various aesthetic considerations that would assist in the preservation of historic and architecturally significant neighborhoods and buildings.

The post-World War II American city was transformed by urban renewal and highway construction. Large swaths of blocks, and at times entire neighborhoods, were razed for large-scale federal and state projects. These efforts were met with grassroots resistance that sought to protect the existing built fabric of cities and inner-city lifestyles. Jane Jacobs, then the editor of Architectural Forum, and other prominent professionals like sociologist Herber J. Gans and architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable, organized oppositions to urban renewal projects arguing that “destroying old buildings destroyed the fabric of healthy urban communities.” Resistance to urban planning practices was further impelled by Jacob’s 1961 publication of the Death and Life of Great American Cities. In this book Jane Jacobs criticizes city planning and rebuilding practices like urban-renewal and introduces new principles that celebrate the inner-city as she experienced in New York City and observed in other American Cities.

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9 Wood, Preserving New York, 234.

10 Wallace, 187.

As the resistance to urban renewal grew, inner-city, middle class constituencies began to support preservation. Neighborhoods became involved in the movement to protect their lifestyle and environs from demolition. The device of historic districts spread prominently in New York City as a solution to the problems afflicting neighborhoods. Architects, lawyers, historians, and not-for-profit organizations became involved in protecting city neighborhoods by pushing for legislation that would protect historic communities.

Motivated by the power given to local municipalities with the Bard Act of 1956, neighborhood leaders in New York City sought to pass historic and aesthetic zoning. In 1958 a movement for a Brooklyn Heights Historic District had commenced. With the passage of the Landmarks Law in 1965, Brooklyn Heights was designated New York City’s first historic district. The success of Brooklyn Heights inspired historic districting throughout New York City with the designation of neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Manhattan.  

Grassroots movements in opposition to urban renewal and change advanced the profession of historic preservation. The designation of historic districts and demonstration to preserve buildings, such as Pennsylvania Station, brought historic preservation to the forefront of national attention. In 1965 an assembly by the National Trust and Colonial Williamsburg issued the manifest, “With Heritage So Rich” that condemned unrestrained growth as a danger to national identity. A legislative campaign followed and Congress responded with the passage of the National Preservation Act in 1966. With the passing of the National Preservation Act, historic preservation in the United States became regulated and controlled by a governing body.


13 Wallace, 188.
“And from an emphasis on buildings, [historic preservationists] have come to understand the equal importance of the garden, open spaces, and streets around them - that is, of the connective tissue that binds the built world into an organic, life-sustaining whole.”


As described by Jane Jacobs, the architectural scholar James Marston Fitch was an activist that “cared about putting his resources and erudition to everyday use for popular, everyday benefit.” Fitch’s writings on historic preservation and his 1982 book *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World,* propose a professional field that exceeds the protection and restoration of singular works of esthetic and national importance and integrates a larger social, cultural, and environmental context.

As urban renewal became less popular there was a shift in planning that focused on the integration of community concerns and inclusive planning processes. Historic preservation was a grassroots movement that was legally strengthened by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. With an emphasis on public participation action it was integrated into the rubric of planning. Preservation encourages active and ongoing interest of affected parties like citizens, professionals, businesses, and government agencies; creates partnerships among stakeholders.


and community organizations, and promotes collaborative exchange and discussion of
information between planners and the public.\textsuperscript{18} By the 1980s the professional field of
preservation had expanded its vision of functions and shaped a systematic approach to its
practice that incorporated surveying, evaluation, districting, and zoning tools of the planner.\textsuperscript{19}

With the founding of the National Trust Main Street Center in 1980, local assets that
include historic, cultural, and architectural resources, local enterprises, and community pride,
were leveraged in a national effort to reclaim and revitalize the commercial hubs of American
towns and cities. The National Trust Main Street Center coordinates with local programs and
communities throughout the country in the rehabilitation of buildings and revitalization of
downtowns and commercial districts by using small-scale, innovative approaches such as a
temporary urban intervention in Oyster Bay, New York. With preservation values and tools,
Main Street programs have been successful in revitalizing commercial hubs throughout the
United States.

There are several financial resources available for the protection and redevelopment of
the historic built environment. Federal and state tax credits, state grants, and local restoration
incentives are examples of financial resources that assist in the revitalization of historic buildings
and neighborhoods. These tools, along with local community organizations and advocacy
groups, strive to generate preservation activity among individuals, communities and developers.

www.cr.nps.gov/hps/pad/plancompanion/PublicPartic/.

\textsuperscript{19} Birch, 204.
Today communities recognize the value of preservation from both a design and economic development point of view. Municipalities are including a preservation element in their comprehensive plans and at a minimum incorporating preservation techniques. Historic preservation has been instrumental in community revitalization and often serves as a central element in a community's comprehensive plan. However, as the existing built environment changes new challenges are presented to preservation.

Federal and State Historic Tax Credits have been reduced and cut due to the nation’s fiscal crisis. For example, the State of Rhode Island has eliminated its State Historic Tax Credits, and other states, such as Missouri, Virginia, and Maryland, have reduced their funding or experienced a decline in its application. Additionally, there are also limitations to qualify for state resources and credits. In the State of New York, commercial properties must be listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places to receive tax credits, as well as be located in census tract areas that are at or below the state medium family income. Decreased resources and limitations on properties discourage property owners and communities from participating in preservation.

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Conclusion

Historic preservation has evolved from a movement concerned with the protection of singular buildings and monuments into a profession dedicated to the protection and management of the historic built environment. From its inception as a grassroots movement, it was propelled to national prominence through the voice and action of citizens. Preservation emphasizes history and generates public participation action in assessing significance of neighborhoods and its built assets. Through the power of place, its people, and history, historic preservation has become an integral component in the planning and development of the existing built environment.
Chapter 2

Temporary Urban Interventions: Shaping the Existing Built Environment

Temporary urban interventions are reshaping communities by addressing social, political, economic, and aesthetic issues. These interventions capitalize on the existing assets -- from the physical fabric to the intangible history of the place -- and engage citizens in a conversation about how they image the future of the places they live, work, and play. They have been used with increasing frequency in recent years to stimulate economics and physical improvements, as well as to create more livable neighborhoods.

Urban planners, economic developers, community-based organizations, and government agencies are implementing informal interventions to inform incremental urban plans that achieve a larger vision. With the existing built environment as a laboratory, temporary urban interventions explore solutions to the restructuring of neighborhoods. Under such guises as tactical urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, DIY urbanism, and pop-up hoods, temporary urban interventions depend on and stimulate action from the community to create broad, long-lasting improvements to the existing built environment.

The key ideas of temporary urban interventions -- highlighting existing built fabric and civic engagement in process -- have been around for centuries whilst the concept has only resurfaced in the past few decades. They have been instrumental in addressing problems in the built environment, such as poor perception of place, planning gone awry, lack of community engagement, and abandonment of buildings. With local history and public participation, temporary urban interventions propose solutions and initiate plans in the reshaping of places.
Power of Place and Perception

From the Middle Ages to the 1800s, government agencies, rulers and religious leaders have organized festivals, processions, and demonstrations as a means to advance national agendas, such as master planning initiatives, political dominance, and economic stimulation. With the public as the target audience, temporary spectacles were platforms through which the built fabric and history were manipulated to incite support and pride.

Festivals, processions, and demonstrations were often implemented during a shift in leadership and governance. The events were devised to offer new narratives of the city and state, with the cityscape as the stage set and the public as the audience. Local history was instrumental to the narrative and was amplified to rebrand the image of place. For example, military and religious processions in Rome, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, capitalized on antiquity by accentuating and adorning its buildings, public spaces and streets with architectural elements that were associated with Ancient Roman authority, such as triumphal arches and gates.\textsuperscript{24} For the reception of Charles V in 1535, who had nine years earlier conquered and ruined the city, Rome underwent an extensive reinvention to proclaim its significance as a city.\textsuperscript{25} Streetscapes, the built fabric, and the national psyche were enhanced and transformed with architectural relics, elements, and ephemeral military decoration that evoked antiquity. These architectural manifestations aesthetically embellished the existing built environment and capitalized on the symbolism association with Imperial Rome -- insinuating a similar political, economic, and military dominance for the current regime. The symbolic power of ancient

\textsuperscript{24} Martha Pollak, \textit{Cities at War} (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 244.

\textsuperscript{25} Pollak, 236.
Roman triumphalism is exemplified by an eye witness account of Pope Julius II’s *Solenne Possesso*, or procession, of 1513:

> “On 5th December [1503] the pope arrived at San Giovanni [in Laterano] to have himself crowned . . . from Castel Sant’Angelo to Campo dei Fiori seven triumphal arches, the most beautiful that had ever been made in Rome, were constructed . . . and there was a ‘gran macchina’ with a man inside; when the pope passed, it opened up; it was one of the most beautiful things ever made in Rome . . . Many old times exclaimed that never before has so many triumphal arches been created for the pope.”

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Processions influenced the reshaping of the built environment by initiating long-term planning proposals. For Charles V’s entry procession back to Rome in 1536, streets and buildings were cleared and redesigned to exhibit Rome’s antiquities and ornaments.

27 The French Renaissance writer, François Rebelais, witnessed Charles V’s entry during his travel to Rome. As described by Rebelais, “By order of the Pope a new road was made for the procession... to make this road quite straight and level more than 200 houses were pulled down, and three or four churches were leveled to the ground.”

28 Leading designers were commissioned to intervene in the existing built fabric by rearranging spaces, and regularizing and improving buildings to a historical ideal that demonstrated to the public the potential of place.

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27 Pollak, 236.


29 Pollak, 236.
Festivals in Post-Revolution France were implemented across the country to celebrate the triumph of the Revolution and to motivate the new state. Festivals were choreographed with parade routes that strategically highlighted the classical and medieval section of cities and terminated with new routes that exhibited recent construction and advancements. These festivals intended to reinterpret history and efface traces of the ancient régime. They informed the transformation of the urban fabric and assisted in forging a new identity for Post-Revolution France. These spectacles ignited the imagination of the public officials and citizens, and functioned in a short-time span as urban design proposals for improvements to towns and cities. The reshaping of cities was a tool that governing authorities used to express their political agenda and temporary urban interventions provided the platform for execution.

The Rise of Planning and Aesthetics

Temporary urban interventions were implemented by rulers, popes, and regimes as tools to control and manage the perception of place and the built environment. However, with a marked shift in politics and theory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, enhanced by the French and American Revolutions that restructured political authority away from the absolutist state, the management of the built environment in the western world became a more democratic process with codified laws about development and land-use.

Formalized and professional planning was introduced in the late-nineteenth century as a direct response to urbanization and industrialization. The rapid growth of cities resulted in over-


crowding, pollution to air and water ways, and overdevelopment. In the United States, the planning movement was initiated by a desire for reform and rationalization of the urban built environment. Professionals began to explore ways to control land-use and regulate the development of cities.

The first planners were an amalgam of professionals concerned with the development and aesthetics off the existing built environment, such as architects, engineers, lawyers, and real estate agents. The planning movement was essentially local in focus, with a support base of politicians, businessmen, and volunteer civic activists, but highly organized on the national level.³² Planners presented prescriptions and master plans for improving the quality of cities, with zoning order and capital budget as the most successful of their efforts. For the first two decades of the twentieth century, planning would refine and codify its movement, establish professional qualify criteria; create a solid base of citizen support; and mobilize sufficient political strength to make planning a legitimate profession.³³

The notion of master planning, reform and beautification of the city was exemplified by the White City at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 led by Daniel Burnham. As surmised by Burnham in 1910 at the first international meeting of city planners in London, “the inception of great planning of public buildings and grounds in the United States was in the World’s Fair in Chicago.”³⁴ Highlighting the Beaux Arts style as the appropriate architectural language for monumental buildings, the White City emphasized symmetry and grand vistas as a


³³ Birch and Roby, 195.

guide in urban planning. The Exposition expressed the country’s desire for order and monumentality in the beautification of cities. It had a profound influence on the regulation and design of the existing built fabric and inspired the City Beautiful Movement at the turn of the century.

The Rise of the Citizen

The control and shape of the built environment has historically been organized and implemented by a governing authority. The roots for public engagement in the process were prompted by theory and practice of grassroots movements interested in reclaiming the existing built environment.35 Citizens began to question top-down master planning projects, such as urban renewal and use-based zoning, as neighborhood blocks were razed for the construction of large-scale towers and highways.

In 1961 Jane Jacobs wrote the *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In this treatise, Jacobs criticizes the urban renewal policies of the 1950s and zoning’s separation of uses, holding them responsible for the decline of cities and neighborhoods. As expressed by Jacobs, “This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities.”36 The importance of the built environment, as stressed in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is the importance of the existing built environment. Characteristics of old neighborhoods like narrow streets, pedestrians, and sidewalks with people and activity, are revered as attributes to the social and economic health of cities.37 The contradictions and variations of the existing built fabric in

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37 Ibid. 4.
neighborhoods foster a sense of community, economic activity, and vitality. “Where our city streets do have sufficient frequency of commerce, general liveliness, use and interest, to cultivate continuities of public street life, we Americans do prove fairly capable at street self-government.”

Jacobs’ writings and activism influenced planning professionals in the proceeding decades and inspired community and grassroots advocacy campaigns to protect neighborhoods from demolition. Her efforts helped shape new ways of thinking about the city and about preservation; marking a shift in historic preservation from a movement dedicated to historic, aesthetic, and significant built assets, to an endeavor concerned with the social, cultural, and economic viability of the existing built environment.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades marked by social unrest. With demonstrations and struggles for Civil Rights, Anti-War, and Free Speech, citizens fought to reclaim the control of rights, place, and individuality from the government. Furthermore, opposition to the federal government’s leadership, programs, and resources used to address problems of urban development grew among citizens and professionals.

In 1962 citizens in New York City, many of which were elite professionals like architect Philip Johnson, art critic Aline Saarinen, and Jane Jacobs, took to the streets with picket signs, some that read “Save our Heritage” and “Action not Apathy,” to protest the slated demolition of Pennsylvania Station.

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38 Jacobs, Death and Life, 121.

39 As noted by Douglas Martin in “Jane Jacobs, Urban Activist, is Dead at 89” and Peter Dreier in “Jane Jacobs’ Radical Legacy,” aside The Death and Life of Great American Cities, several books commented on the social injustices and triggered a movement of reform in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. These include Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962), which documented the negative effects of pesticides on the environment and helped engender the environmental movement; Michael Harrington’s The Other America (1962), a study on poverty in America; Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique (1963), the manifesto of modern feminism that effected perceptions of relations between sexes; and Charles Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael’s Black Power (1967), which influenced the civil rights’ transformation toward black separatism.

Urban planning was also undergoing changes as planners were siding with residents against the power of city development agencies and were searching for alternatives strategies that included citizens in the decision-making process. From the search for alternative approaches derived advocacy planning. Coined by the planning theorist Paul Davidoff in his 1965 article “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning,” Davidoff analyzed urban planning practices particular to urban renewal and made proposals for the future of planning that advocated the participation of citizens in the process; “a practice which openly invites political and social values to be examined and debated.”

In his article, Paul Davidoff expresses the concept of advocacy planning as promoting alternative plans by agencies other than government, such as private, public and non-profits. This would stimulate city planning by informing the public of alternative choices and bring about new ideas and alternatives to planning. In essence, advocacy planning addressed problems with the practice of urban planning and proposed ways in which the government can collaborate with organizations and citizens to arrive at the best solutions. By the 1970s advocacy planning, commonly referred to since as “community planning,” had evolved into new ideas and organizations that attempted to tackle problems in the existing built environment. While the exact model is not practiced, it is regarded as the basis for progressive planning today.

The federal government’s role in addressing problems in the urban environment declined in the 1970s as citizen advocacy became powerful and urban planning shifted its toward local

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municipalities with the Housing and Community Act of 1974.\textsuperscript{44} By the 1980s the concept of neighborhood revitalization was central to the redevelopment of cities. Such initiatives are based on the concept that government funds resources to local municipalities and organizations, which in turn assist communities in redevelopment efforts.

As federal funding dwindled, these initiatives evolved to be collaborative efforts among city governments, foundations and increasingly the business community.\textsuperscript{45} The creation of larger collaborations aim to mobilize community residents and bring local stakeholders together to assist in the redevelopment of neighborhoods in cities. Neighborhood revitalization initiatives remain a dominant approach to urban planning and include programs like Living Cities, a collaborative of foundations and financial institutions that aims to improve the quality of life and the redevelopment of communities; Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, which aims to revitalize working-class neighborhoods; and Smart Growth America, a coalition of advocacy organizations that promotes the development and enhancement of walkable and comprehensive communities with mixed-use buildings, public transportation, and open space.

In the second half of the twentieth century the role of the citizen influenced urban planning by localizing planning initiatives, increasing public participation in the planning process, and incorporating community. However, many planning initiatives that provide financial resources to redevelop and revitalize cities and neighborhoods remain convoluted, with funding stemming from one organization and filtering to another, and then passing a few more hands before arriving to a property owner or a business entrepreneur. While many


\textsuperscript{45} Halpern, “Neighborhood-Based Initiatives,” 129.
redevelopment projects are still predominately organized and implemented by city planning agencies and real estate developers, the public’s influence has grown to not only inform large-scale plans, but incrementally mold the built environment to meet its needs.

**A New Moment: Reclaiming the Built Environment**

“The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them). It creates shadows and ambiguities within them. It inserts its multitudinous references and citations into them (social models, cultural mores, personal factors). Within them it is itself the effect of successive encounters and occasions that constantly alter it and make it the other's blazon: in other words, it is like a peddler carrying something surprising, transverse or attractive compared with the usual choice. These diverse aspects provide the basis of a rhetoric. They can even be said to define it.”46 Michel de Certeau, 1984.

Michel Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980) expressed the importance and role of the individual in shaping the city. Like Jane Jacobs, Certeau observed the city and recorded his findings in the chapter *Walking in the City*. In this chapter he outlines how individuals unconsciously navigate the city and re-appropriate spaces to serve daily needs. By creating a dialectic relationship between strategy and tactic, he defines strategy as the organization of the environment by professionals and institutions and tactics as the manner in which the everyday person navigates and uses the constructed environment. Certeau argues that everyday life is influenced by the rules and products already existing in culture, yet are never fully determined by the plans of organizing authorities. Stating that “[p]erspective vision and prospective vision constitute the two-fold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that

can be dealt with.” Michel Certeau concludes that the capacity of defining the subtleties of the city belongs to the everyday user.

The direct action of the citizen and his/her role in shaping the built environment has become more pronounced in the past several decades as informal approaches to revitalization and redevelopment of urban areas have increased. In the latter half of the twentieth century, suburbanization and post-industrialization -- transformation of the labor market from manufacturing to service, information, and research industries -- has afflicted neighborhoods that once thrived with economic stability and activity. The decades during which residents and businesses moved further outside of urban areas and manufacturing industries come to an end, negatively affected cities and towns and punctuated them with functionally obsolete and blighted buildings and sites. The recent fiscal crisis has exacerbated these conditions. As public and private funding for redevelopment has become sparse, cities and towns are experiencing an increase in vacant buildings and sites.

For the past several decades, the notion of temporary use as a solution to vacancy has become part of the planning discourse. The authors of Temporary City, Peter Bishop and Leslie Williams, have noted that Europe and North America are lacking resources, power and control to implement formal master plans. The result has been looser planning visions and

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design frameworks that are phased packages of smaller, often temporary initiatives that target the current potential of sites.\textsuperscript{51}

Temporary urban interventions are finding support from landowners, developers, and city authorities.\textsuperscript{52} They have resurfaced in the past few decades as initiatives to solve immediate problems with vacancy, support innovative employment opportunities, and draw attention to the potential of future development. Since the collapse of the socialist system in the late 1980s and early 1990s, government authorities in Eastern and Central Europe have been exploring temporary uses.

Berlin, Germany has served as a valuable resource for the study and research of temporary use initiatives. After reunification, Berlin experienced a drastic post-industrial transformation and economic restructuring that, despite a building boom, resulted in high unemployment and an abundance of vacant buildings and sites.\textsuperscript{53} While many East Berliners moved west for employment, others, often of a creative class, were drawn to East Berlin for affordable rents and vacant buildings.\textsuperscript{54} There was a standstill in East Berlin between the collapse of the existing built environment’s previous uses and the beginning of new development.

During this interim time, artists, musicians, and creative professionals took advantage of vacant buildings and sites and created new, unplanned activity that transformed the built fabric.

\textsuperscript{51} Bishop and Williams, 3.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{54} Bishop and Williams, 165.
into active communities. As Peter Arlt noted in his essay “Urban Planning and Interim Use,” “Berlin became a Mecca for everyone involved in art and culture, attracting many involved in these areas as well as others who had contacts in the scene.” Temporary urban interventions became a cultural movement that fostered a creative economy through the reuse of the existing built fabric. The state recognized these initiatives as redevelopment tools and adopted a cultural development strategy that commissioned studies of temporary activities, as well as sought ways to support them.

Extensive studies have been conducted on the implementation of temporary uses in Berlin, with Studio Urban Catalyst serving as an invaluable record of interim solutions to urban problems. The studio documented almost one hundred temporary use projects in disused sites or buildings across Berlin and in 2003 published their findings in Urban Pioneers. Their research began as an exploration of what seemingly appeared to be spontaneous and unplanned temporary initiatives and revealed that temporary users had definitive aims to utilize vacant spaces for the development of ideas. Temporary use initiatives created an environment of experimentation that fostered new cultures and economies; serving as effective tools in the creation of new ideas for future development. Studio Urban Catalyst concluded from their studies that these initiatives are most effective with the action and support of owners and municipal authorities.


57 Bishop and Williams, 166.

58 Studio Urban Catalyst, 4.

59 Studio Urban Catalyst, 5.

60 Ibid.
The book *Temporary City* explores the rise of interest in temporary urbanism, focusing on the United Kingdom and London in specific, and surmises that conditions that encourage temporary urbanism are not global, but pertinent to cities that are part of the post-industrial economy.61 Such initiatives are serving as strategic alternatives to capital-driven urban development concepts and traditional state-initiated planning in cities and towns that lack financial resources or have declining populations, such as Detroit and Cleveland.62

This emerging field aims to improve use and livability in existing neighborhoods with the central objective of activating towns and cities at the street, block, and building scale. From officially sanctioned “parklets” in San Francisco and the pedestrianization of Times Square, New York, to bottom-up projects like neighborhood retail pop-ups and streetscape improvements, temporary urban interventions are planned and implemented by a host of actors that include local citizens, government officials, professionals and community leaders.63 Through creative mediums that include the restoration of storefronts, pop-up buildings on vacant lots, sidewalk cafes, art, and landscaping, temporary urban interventions depend on and stimulate community involvement in the identification of historic significance of neighborhoods and the envisioning and planning of permanent solutions.64

These initiatives are referred to by various names that include guerrilla urbanism, do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism, community-based arts projects, and pop-ups; and in conjunction as

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61 Bishop and Williams, 6.

62 Studio Urban Catalyst, 23.


64 Lydon, 7.
tactical urbanism. They are actions that draw attention to problems in the existing built environment, hoping to initiate discussions and ideas that will inspire long-term changes. For example, the tactic of “weed-bombing” spray-paints overgrown foliage and weeds in different colors to beautify a neglected space. While the names are new, unfamiliar, and ever-changing, the actions and intentions have been used throughout history.

The term “pop-up” is applied to planning initiatives that are unplanned, or unannounced, temporary economic incubators like retail stores, restaurants, and even neighborhoods. In the case of Popuhood in Old Oakland, California, blocks of abundant, vacant retail spaces along a historic main street are filled with temporary businesses for six months to generate economic activity. Moreover, temporary uses and structures acting as place-holders are not uncommon to urban planning and construction projects. During World War II, for example, mobile homes were erected in Seattle, Washington around new aircraft factories for workers, along with temporary, wood-framed, prototype malls. These “pop-up” buildings allowed for workers and the factory production to commence before the new town was constructed.

Temporary urban interventions have been used throughout history as tools to reshape and develop the urban built fabric. While they began as platforms to advance national agendas like master planning initiatives, political dominance, and economic stimulation, they have evolved into redevelopment tools used by the public to address issues in the existing built environment that are overlooked or untenable by local authorities.

65 “Tactical Urbanism Volume 1,” Street Plans Collaborative, PDF, 1.
66 Ibid.
Conclusion

Initiated by citizens, temporary urban interventions are attracting the attention of governments, planners, developers and communities as they provide solutions through temporary actions and uses to the revitalization of the existing and historic built environment. They not only incite discussions about future redevelopment, but instill in the planning process a preservation ethic by emphasizing existing built assets, public participation, local history, and economic incubation.

Temporary urban interventions share many of the same goals as historic preservation. They are powerful forms of direct community action that leverage existing built assets like urban fabric, historic buildings, and infrastructure, as well as look at history to arrive at redevelopment ideas and solutions. As expressed by the influential preservationist James Marston Fitch, the built world “should be restored for their original population.”69 Temporary urban interventions place in the hands of the public a tool with which they can regain the power of creating place.

Chapter 3

Case Studies: Transformative Initiatives

In order to examine the intersection between the theory and practice of temporary urban interventions and historic preservation, I have chosen three case studies in historic neighborhoods that share similar development challenges: urban commercial corridors that experienced decline and are today characterized by high-vacancy, lack of pedestrian and business activity, and buildings in disrepair. What differs between these case studies is the protagonist for change. In Anacostia, Washington D.C. it is government agencies; in Oak Cliff, Dallas it is grassroots initiatives, and in the hamlet of Oyster Bay, New York it is part of a national Main Street initiatives.

In each study, a temporary urban intervention was implemented to achieve certain goals, including the protection and promotion of the existing built environment, awareness of history, engaging community, the instigation of street activity, and economic revitalization - all of which are preservation goals. The interventions tapped into the potential of the existing built fabric through temporary uses, restorations, improvements, and community celebration. These temporary urban interventions aimed at revitalizing communities through local history, public participation, and the existing built assets.

Temporary urban interventions and historic preservation share similar goals, values, and planning practices. Through these case studies, the potential for a symbiotic relationship between historic preservation and temporary urban interventions will be examined. Preservation could benefit from short-term actions that create opportunities for advocacy and community.
involvement. Likewise, existing preservation tools and practices, such as grants and tax credits specific to historic structures, could facilitate transforming temporary urban interventions into long-term realities.

**Case Study I: Grassroots Initiatives, Better Block Project**

The Better Block Project is a community-based planning tool that assists community advocacy groups in implementing temporary urban interventions at the scale of the block to areas that are in physical disrepair and lack pedestrian and economic activity. The project’s goals are to activate the street with pedestrian activity and building spaces with temporary uses that will inspire future and long-term use. The Better Block intervention was executed on a blighted, commercial corridor block in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas, Texas.

**Case Study II: Main Street Initiatives, 48x48x48**

In collaboration with the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, the not-for-profit organizations of DoTank:Brooklyn and Street Plans Collaborative implemented a community planning tool called 48x48x48 in Oyster Bay, New York. The 48x48x48 model executes a 48-hour intervention that informs a 48 week action plan, and concludes with a planning vision for the next 48 months. The Audrey Avenue Extension was chosen as the project site due to its abundance of vacant retail and commercial buildings, and a lack of thriving activity.
Case Study III: Government Initiatives, Washington D.C. Temporary Urban Initiatives

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) has instated a Temporary Urbanism Initiative that seeks to reverse the negative perceptions associated with vacant urban sites or spaces. The initiative spearheaded an investment of resources into temporary or ‘pop-up’ retail stores and arts venues that seeks to transform vacant spaces into vibrant destinations. The commercial corridor in the historic neighborhood of Anacostia was chosen as a site for one of the DCOP’s “Temporiums,” or temporary urbanism projects, due to its abundance of vacant buildings and lots, and an emerging art scene.

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Grassroots Initiatives, Better Block

Grassroots

“[As we] waited for superman to come and buy and save this building, [we realized that] he’s not coming...we need to get our best friends in there working on their passions, whether that be making coffee, or teaching kids, or fixing bicycles. And so that best way to save a building is to make it functional in our current economy.”

Andrew Howard, Cofounder, Better Block, 2013.

Oak Cliff, Dallas is a distressed urban commercial corridor that is characterized by vacant buildings and lack of business and pedestrian activity. It is representative of many similar commercial corridors that have become part of the American city’s landscape. Such areas are often plagued by negative reputations that are associated with crime, poverty, and blight. But, they were once the thriving, economic hearts of larger residential communities. However, as American cities transformed post-World War II through urban renewal projects and suburbanization, these commercial hubs and neighborhoods experienced a “perfect storm” - residents and businesses were moving to new suburbs, people were no longer shopping downtown, governments stopped investing in these areas, and zoning transformed these urban arteries into one direction highways to facilitate auto-dependence.

Professionals, including preservationists, planners, and developers have attempted to grapple with revitalization and economic incubation of distressed and neglected urban commercial corridors. The various methods common to the redevelopment of the existing built fabric include developers buying and restoring properties, government initiatives that provide broad plans and financial incentives for restoration, and preservation tools that identify historic

71 Andrew Howard, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, January 24, 2013.
significance and tap into state and national resources for assistance to individual property owners. While these methods of revitalization may have some instances of success in the past, the recent economic crisis and strict budgeting of city and state has posed problems and setbacks.

Communities today can no longer rely on broad government planning initiatives nor developers to save their existing built environment. Furthermore, many such initiatives do not address the needs of the community and instead result in the demolition of their built assets and attract a new class of residents that push the existing community out. Preservation planning has often provided an alternative that incorporates public participation and the protection of the existing built environment. However, financial resources are scarce and not every commercial district is blessed with landmark-worthy examples of historic buildings. Communities have realized that they must take control of their built environment and mold it to serve their best needs. As described by Jane Jacobs, “cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Temporary urban interventions return the creation of cities back to the public.

The Better Block Project

The Better Block Project is a grassroots community-based planning model that rebuilds neighborhoods, block by block, with direct community action. It assists community advocacy groups in implementing temporary urban interventions in the form of a street festival to auto-dependent and blighted commercial neighborhoods that tend to have vacant or “underperforming” buildings. Residents develop, plan, and execute improvements to existing

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buildings, find new retail uses, and close streets for outdoor seating, sidewalk vendors, and bike lanes. The Better Block Project captures the imagination of the community and can be instrumental in informing future long-term planning by allowing residents to see what neighborhoods could look like, as well as test and explore the potential for revitalized economic activity in an area.

From its goals and practice the Better Block Project is characteristic of preservation planning, yet refers to describe its mission as a quality of life or a small business incubation demonstration tool. Oak Cliff was, and continues to be, associated with negative publicity and neglected historic buildings and streets. Not only did concerned residents need to convince the City of Dallas that Oak Cliff’s historic commercial corridors have economic potential, but most importantly they needed to rouse the community to be active in the preservation of the built fabric. By using the context of place and with goals that include pedestrian activity, buildings with uses, small business incubation, and “planning,” the Better Block Project aims to change the perception of place through existing built assets, public participation, and history.

Spearheaded by Go Oak Cliff, a not-for-profit advocacy organization that focuses on supporting and inspiring the Historic Oak Cliff Community, the Better Block Project was encouraged by the developer-led redevelopment of the Bishop Arts District in Oak Cliff. Over several decades, the Bishop Arts District was redeveloped into a walkable, two-block commercial center with restaurants, retail, and small businesses.

The Better Block Project was developed and launched by local community activists, Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard, from Oak Cliff, Dallas. As a member of Go Oak Cliff,

Roberts has started several not-for-profit organizations that include Bike Friendly Oak Cliff and the Oak Cliff Transit Authority, and has led the preservation and land marking of the Texas Theater in Oak Cliff. Howard is an urban planner whose focus has been context sensitive design and complete street implementation. Together they collaborated to create a community-driven revitalization tool that didn’t rely on real estate developers, city planners, and preservation. As Andrew Howard described in an article for Mother Earth Living, “I felt we should just roll up our sleeves and start fixing out blocks one at a time instead of waiting for some broad, comprehensive citywide initiative. The community often gets angry with the city. They don’t realize that we are the city, and when we collectively organize - even if there are just twenty of us - we can actually move an initiative forward.” Relying on affordable and donated materials and the work of volunteers, the Better Block Project was conceived as a way for the community to directly save buildings and reuse them, along with the existing fabric, in the revitalization of neighborhoods.

**Place and Challenges**

Located on the South bank of the Trinity River, two miles south of downtown Dallas, Oak Cliff was one of the city’s first streetcar suburbs. The area began as a farming settlement in the mid-1800s and developed into a middle to upper-middle class town incorporated in 1890. Oak Cliff was annexed to the City of Dallas in 1903 and connected to the downtown with

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76 Howard, Interview.

streetcar lines. Most of the area south of the Trinity River is today referred to as Oak Cliff, though much of it was never part of the original town.

As one of Dallas’ older neighborhoods, Oak Cliff has significant architectural, social and cultural assets. Oak Cliff’s proximity and connectivity to downtown Dallas historically attracted middle and upper-middle class residents that were able to live in “suburban” environs and commute to work. The area has retained a distinct neighborhood identity with a pre-World War II street grid made for both living and working; with streetcar lines flanked by low-rise retail that supported the surrounding residential neighborhoods composed of Victorian, Craftsman Style bungalows, and Four-square prairie houses. Additionally, Oak Cliff has several historic sites that include the Texas Theater, where police finally captured Lee Harvey Oswald, and the burial site of infamous outlaw Clyde Barrow in Western Heights cemetery.

Oak Cliff remained prosperous until the mid-twentieth century when the streetcars closed and the City’s attention turned to new suburban development in North Dallas. Since the postwar era the City of Dallas has placed its support and funding in its northern car-dependent suburbs. For the remainder of the century, tax dollars, businesses, banks and improvements were filtered to the northern sectors and populations moved to the new suburbs. Additionally, local ordinances were modified to provide ample parking for the car-dependent consumer. The commercial corridors along former streetcar lines had on-street parking only and merchants were


80 Lackey, “Oak Cliff History in a Nutshell”.

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unable to acquire Certificate of Occupancies. The older, former streetcar neighborhoods were neglected and experienced disinvestment. Oak Cliff, and streetcar suburbs in general, gradually deteriorated and fell into disrepair.

The 1970s brought to Oak Cliff changing demographics mixed with limited growth and prosperity. Court-mandated busing was enforced to achieve racial balance in schools, housing deteriorated, property values were depressed, and the problems with blight were ignored. The neighborhood demographics shifted from predominately white, middle-class residents to an influx of working-class African Americans. The area abounded with half-way houses and crime. By the 1980s a group of local activists, referred to as the “urban pioneers”, began to move into the neighborhoods and form local neighborhood organizations, such as the Old Cliff Conservation League.

These “urban pioneers” converted large, older homes back to single family houses and fought with City Hall for stricter code enforcement, better city services, fund allocation, and council representation that would later be addressed by the City in 1990. Concurrently, the developer Jim Lake, Sr. bought and developed properties in a commercial district off a former streetcar line, along Bishop Avenue. Lake’s efforts instigated an eventual revitalization of the Bishop Arts District that took several decades. When asked of his decision to buy run-down properties, Jim Lake, Sr. replied, “I just though it needed saving.”

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revitalization of Oak Cliff staggered through the following decades, the spirit of Jim Lake, Sr. and the “urban pioneers” would become springboards for future preservation action.

In 1990 Oak Cliff continued to be associated with crime, racial diversity, and poverty, despite the recent efforts by Jim Lake and the “urban pioneers” to change the landscape and image of the area. As described by Connie Martinak in 1989 when she moved back to her native Oak Cliff after twenty-five years, “It looked like London after World War II.” Areas were blighted by rows of boarded-up apartments, furniture in front yards, and debris in weeded lots. With the City of Dallas continuing to focus all of its resources and services on the wealthier, northern area, residents of Oak Cliff felt neglected, like “second-class citizens.”

Frustrated by the City’s continual inattention, community residents threatened secession of Oak Cliff from Dallas in 1990. The City contended that like most major cities at the time, it simply had limited resources. As stated by City Councilman Jerry Gilmore in 1991, “Dallas has real problems, but dividing our resources in not the way to solve problems.” However, given that Oak Cliff contains a third of city’s population, evenly distributed among whites, blacks and Hispanics, and half of its land mass, the City of Dallas did respond to the threat of secession and increased services, such as garbage removal, allocated funds for the tear-down of severely blighted buildings, and published a city works project that encouraged more neighborhood businesses to bid.

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87 Lackey, “Oak Cliff History”.


Oak Cliff is a diverse neighborhood of Dallas. While several of its historic residential sections retain longtime residents, the neighborhood experienced depopulation in the postwar years as people and businesses moved to new suburban development in North Dallas and attracted African-American communities. In the 1990s, diverse Latin communities began moving to the neighborhood. In the past decade Oak Cliff, especially North Oak Cliff, has been attracting twenty- and thirty something self-described activists who have brought an urban ethos to the area. As described by Andrea Grimes in an article for the *Dallas Observer*, “they ask for forgiveness, not permission, when turning steamy-hot urban blocks from asphalt roadways into mini-parks for undertakings like the Better Block Project, a quality of life experiment in walkability.”

Taking cue from the earlier “urban pioneers,” they have expanded and formed various community organizations like GoOak Cliff and Bike Friendly Oak Cliff; and several local newspapers and blogs such as the Oak Cliff Advocate, Cliff Dweller, and Oak Cliff People Magazine.

Local community organizations have been instrumental in changing the perception of Oak Cliff and creating a more livable neighborhood. The restoration of the Texas Theater, led by Jason Roberts of Go Oak Cliff, was a milestone for the Oak Cliff community. The Theater is currently a movie house and it has become an anchor for the block. Roberts also created a bike share program called Bike Friendly Oak Cliff that has assisted to both promote cycling and expose people to the interesting history of Oak Cliff, with bike rides such as the trail of Lee Harvey Oswald.

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91 Jason Roberts, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, February 21, 2013.
Additionally, these local neighborhood groups and leaders have been working with a
corporation of developers to promote the pedestrianization of Oak Cliff commercial corridors.
One area in specific is the Bishop Arts District, which has attracted developers since the
mid-1980s when Jim Lake Companies began investing and restoring retail buildings along
Bishop Avenue, a former streetcar line in Oak Cliff. These initial developments attracted artists,
coining the area “The Bishop Arts District.” Jim Lake Companies’ efforts attracted other
developers to invest in the area, such as David Spence of Good Space Inc. Spence, a former
lawyer in not-for-profit community development, became interested in preservation and turned to
the restoration and adaption of historic buildings as a means of economic development for
distressed communities.92 The concurrent activities of community activist groups and developers
have significantly impacted the development of the area, ushering zoning and infrastructure
changes. Most recently, the City Council passed the Bishop/David Plan, which provides the area
with a $2 million dollar economic development grant. The grant allows developers a large break
on parking required by law, mixed-use development in areas that were barred by zoning laws,
and allows for wider sidewalks, street furniture and landscaping.93 After two decades, the
Bishop Arts District has grown into a pedestrian, mixed-use, retail area.94

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93 Jim Schutze, “Oak Cliff Becomes Cool Embracing What Other Parts of Dallas Have Fought: Builders, Bikes and
94 Scott Reitz, “Hattie’s Helped Build Bishop Arts, and 10 Years Later People Still Coming.” *Dallas Observer*, 3
years-later-they-re-still-coming/.
Figure 1.  
Oak Cliff is a large neighborhood located southwest of downtown Dallas.  
(Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 2.  
A 1920s postcard titled “Oak Cliff Viaduct and Dallas Skyline.”  
(Source: www.oakcliffyesterday.com)

Figure 3.  
A 1930s photo showing the streetcar crossing the Trinity River from downtown Dallas into the Oak Cliff neighborhood.  
(Source: www.oakcliff.org)
Figure 4.
A 1928 Interurban Trolley map showing the streetcar lines that ran from downtown Dallas directly into Oak Cliff and along its commercial corridors. (Source: www.dallashistory.org)

Figure 5.
Since 2000, the population of Oak Cliff has decreased by 16%. Additionally, the majority of current residents have “white collar” jobs, such as Management, Professional, and Related Occupations, and Sales and Office Occupations. (Source: usa.com, 2010 Census Data)
Intervention

The Better Block Project was created and initiated by Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard. They had been involved and witnessed the revitalization of the Bishop Arts District into a viable, pedestrian district. The Bishop Arts District shared physical characteristics to many of the commercial corridors in Oak Cliff that arose around streetcar stops: low-rise, prewar retail structures built to the property line, sidewalks and streets. They believed that if pedestrianization worked for the revitalization of the Bishop Arts District it could work for other areas of Oak Cliff.

Unlike the Bishop Arts District, which relied on substantial funding from private developers, the Better Block Project sought to create a model that relied on local grassroots efforts to achieve results. The Better Block Project was designed as a quick, incremental and affordable redevelopment approach that could produce temporary improvements to a neighborhood and be featured in an event, such as a weekend street festival. By transforming an area into a thriving, retail destination for a weekend the project demonstrates to the community, and the city at-large, the economic and livable potential of distressed historic commercial corridors. The Better Block Project aims to facilitate changes by attracting local businesses, redefining the perception of place, and by initiating the discourse of how to use the existing built assets to arrive at long-term redevelopment ideas. Development, planning, and preservation efforts in Oak Cliff, such as the Bishop Arts District, were slow-moving and Better Block strove to provide the public with a tool to implement change quickly.

To initiate their project model, Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard identified another former streetcar stop six blocks away from the Bishop Arts District at the 400 Block of North
Tyler Street at the intersection of West 7th Street. Comprised of low-rise buildings -- one two-story building and the remaining single-story -- the area has several vacant retail spaces, and a widened road and narrowed sidewalks to accommodate two lanes of one-way traffic. The two lanes of traffic have encouraged cars to speed through North Tyler Street, rendering the pedestrian crossing of the street difficult. Moreover, one side of the block was zoned as “light industrial” while the other as “residential.” This type of zoning is incompatible with the historic use of the buildings. Additionally, it deters small businesses and merchants from inhabiting the spaces, resulting in unused, vacant spaces and the inability of merchants to acquire necessary permits to open businesses. Several of the vacant spaces have been appropriated by squatters.95

As the Better Block team investigated the history of the area, they realized that the zoning ordinances in place dated back to post-World War II, when the streetcars where removed and Dallas developed into an auto-dependent city. Incompatible to the inherent pedestrian nature of streetcar commercial corridors, the team deduced that most of the local ordinances deterred the activation of small business incubation with prohibitive fees, permits, and restrictions. For example, cafe seating and landscaping required expensive permits and fees, and the installation of awnings and sidewalk merchant stands were prohibited.

In order to show the possibilities of the neighborhood without being limited to the current regulations, the Better Block Project applied for a special event permit that allowed them to add sidewalk cafes and product stalls, landscaping, and pop-up businesses in the buildings. The project team hoped that once local businesses were setup in temporary spaces they would see the economic potential of the space and go through the efforts -- permitting, loans -- to make their

95 Kayli House Cusick, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, March 05, 2013.
business permanent. In essence the Better Block Project in Oak Cliff served as a platform that allows communities to break all the zoning rules and create with the existing built fabric, for a temporary time, their ideal community.

The Oak Cliff project assembled a group of community activists, artists, and volunteers that included engineers and architects that donated their services; and collaborated with local non-profits that included Go Oak Cliff, a non-profit news, advocacy, and quality of life organization focused on supporting and inspiring the Historic Oak Cliff Community. Groups were created to develop and install temporary pop-up businesses. The project reached out through emails, social media, and newspaper postings to local entrepreneurs and residents interested in installing restaurants, cafes, bike shops, boutiques and galleries, and property owners were asked to participate and allow access to spaces for pop-up shops. As Jason Roberts, the cofounder of Better Block and Go Oak Cliff, expressed in his White House Blog: Champions of Change: Winning the Future Across America, “What we lacked in funds we made up for in community!”

With a team and a plan in place, the Better Block Project in Oak Cliff set out to make the event happen. For twenty-four hours, volunteers, community leaders, and property owners worked on installing the event space. The temporary businesses included a flower shop, a coffee shop, and a children’s art studio. Buildings were painted different colors to distinguish retail spaces, storefront windows were uncluttered, cleaned and designed to highlight the temporary business within, and lights were strewn across the street. With narrow sidewalks, plants, tables,

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96 Cusick, Interview.

and chairs were brought in to redefine an enlarged pedestrian area and to create outdoor public space and cafe seating. Additionally, a permit was taken out to reduce the car right-of-way from three lanes to one, slowing-down traffic, and allowing space for cars to park and a painted bike lane.98

For the weekend of April 10 to 11, 2010 the North Tyler Street Block was activated with pedestrians and street activities. Over 500 people turned out for the event, which local community residents, citywide citizens and council member. A kiosk on the street provided information about the event, and the various zoning ordinances broken to achieve the streetscape activity were posted in storefront windows. The transformation of North Tyler Street was impressed the community.

The Better Block Project Oak Cliff was well received by the residents of Oak Cliff and representatives of the city. As described by a participant, "Unbelievable, so cool to see what people can do when they come together and have a vision and create community instantly."99 Scott Griggs, a Dallas city council member from Oak Cliff, has described the Better Block Project as an excellent alternative to a charrette—a traditional style of meeting to take public input on urban-planning efforts.100

Pleased with the results and curious to test the replicability of the Better Block Project, Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard planned and implemented a second Oak Cliff Better Block Project on the 1300 Block of West Davis Street. The event attracted 3000 people. Thereafter,


100 Cusick, Interview.
Roberts and Howard began a consulting firm called Team Better Block that assists other cities stage demonstration.

The Better Block Project in Oak Cliff, Dallas was organized and executed by a strong network of community organizations, activists, and residents, without which the project would have failed. Moreover, the planning and physical construction of the intervention was the responsibility of the community. This type of public participation, or direct action, places the stewardship of the project in the hands of the community, who in turn are responsible to push ideas and plans forward after the event. While many challenges exist overcoming such obstacles as zoning, parking, traffic, and restoration of buildings, Oak Cliff has a strong community-based support system that assists business owners and residents in overcoming obstacles.

The Better Block Project in Oak Cliff kicked-off the often lengthy process of changing infrastructure and improving buildings. For the past decade Oak Cliff has been proactive through its several community-based organizations and events, such as bike tours, in redefining its reputation from blighted and dangerous to a hip, bike-friendly, urban neighborhood. The intervention magnified Oak Cliff’s new image by allowing people, residents and visitors, to physically see and experience the changes. Moreover, with the invitation of council members, the event caught the attention to the City of Dallas. The project revealed to property owners and the community the economic potential of places long regarded as hopeless.

“The Better Block does have a real magic for all at once opening people’s eyes to what this or that corner could be,” said developer David Spence. “It’s the property owners who have to be relied on to make it work. And that’s slower going.”

The intervention has drawn businesses

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and building restoration to the West 7th Street block at North Tyler Street. One of the project’s pop-up businesses, the multidisciplinary art studio Oil and Cotton, signed a permanent lease after the event and continues to serves as an anchor for the area. Other retail spaces have been leased and occupied by mainly businesses, such as offices. Additionally, several buildings have been improved and restored by owners, while others have been bought by new owners and are undergoing renovation.  

Challenges still exist for the redevelopment of the area despite new businesses, some building improvements, and improved zoning restrictions. The one-way traffic on West 7th Street remains an obstacle. As expressed by owner of Oil and Cotton, Kayli House Cusick, the two-lanes currently dedicated to one-way traffic encourages speeding cars, compromising both the facility of crossing the street as a pedestrian and the connectivity among retail spaces on either side of the street. Moreover, the existing zoning rules require more parking for retail spaces than the existing parallel parking affords.  

Fortunately, the City of Dallas city has been lenient with zoning and is in the process of rezoning the Oak Cliff neighborhood, and is taking community recommendations that came out of the Better Block Process into consideration. As of August 2012, the buildings included in the intervention have been amended into the Davis Street Special Purpose District, a planned development district that changed zoning ordinances to promote commercial development. Significant zoning modifications in Oak Cliff have included the allowance of mixed-use

104 Cusick, Interview.
development on commercial streets and tolerant parking requirements for businesses.

Additionally, in December 2010 the Federal Transit Administration awarded a $23 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to support a proposed transit project to provide streetcar service from downtown Dallas back to Oak Cliff. In March, 2013 the Dallas Area Rapid Transit had announced the approval of a deal that will provide two of its streetcars to run on tracks in Oak Cliff.106

Today the Better Block Project has grown and proven to be an effective model for other communities. Since the first project in Oak Cliff, Dallas, there have been over forty Better Block Projects in the United States and the development tool has been applied abroad to projects in Australia, Canada, and Tehran, Iran.

Figure 6. Better Block Oak Cliff site is six blocks from the Bishop Arts District, which has been redeveloping for the past couple of decades. (Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 7. A satellite image of Better Block Oak Cliff site -- the 400 block of North Tyler Street. (Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 8. A ‘Before and After’ image of the Better Block Oak Cliff demonstrating the improvements made to the street and buildings, such as painted retail spaces, street lamps, and bike lanes. (Source: betterblock.org, Accessed May 2013)
Figure 9.
Retail spaces 410 to 420 North Tyler Street were painted different colors for the intervention. (Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 10.
For the intervention, North Tyler street was narrowed to one lane of traffic with on-street parking, a bike lane, and seating along the sidewalk. (Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 11.
An example of exterior modifications made to retail spaces: exterior painting, exterior decorations like bicycles, and storefront enhancements. (Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)
Figure 12. For the intervention, the pedestrian right-of-way was extended into the street, where sidewalk cafes and public spaces were created with landscaping, chairs, and tables.
(Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 13. A “pop-up” cafe with outdoor seating.
(Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 14. A fruit truck on the northeast corner of North Tyler Street.
(Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 15. The Better Block project extended into the night with entertainment in the street.
(Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)
Figure 16.
A book store with a sidewalk book stand at 416 North Tyler Street. Local ordinances do not allow sidewalk vending stands.
(Source: Jason Robert, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 17.
Signs were placed outside of “pop-up” retail explaining how current ordinances deter businesses, such as excessive fees for sidewalk cafés.
(Source: Jason Roberts, Picasaweb Gallery)

Figure 18.
Parcels 906, 407, 410 were part of the Better Block Oak Cliff intervention. In August 2012 these parcels were amended into the Davis Street Special District, a City of Dallas planned development district, changing the zoning to commercial.
(Source: Dallas City Hall, GIS Zoning Maps, www.dallascityhall.com/zoningweb/)
Analysis

Oak Cliff, Dallas demonstrates the many challenges facing redevelopment and economic incubation of distressed urban commercial corridors. With zoning and parking issues that the city is beginning to evaluate and change, the North Tyler block at West 7th Street is hopefully slated for positive changes. The Better Block, aside from demonstrating the potential of the area, has also kicked-off the beginning of an incremental planning process.

The Better Block Project was the result of community organizations having tried several techniques and methods to arrive at saving their historic built. Their initial efforts targeted the saving and preservation of important historic buildings, such as the Texas Theater. With the success of preserving a singular building, the community turned to saving blocks of buildings, which to them represented a rich past but also the key to a prosperous future. While there has been preservation and revitalization activity by developers in Oak Cliff, the community searched for ways in which they could assist in and speed the process without relying on developers and city officials; hence in a community-driven, affordable manner. Although the founders of the Better Block Project may shy away from using the term historic preservation, it was, in fact, the preservation of their built environment that instigated the search and development of an affordable, hands-on approach to reclaim the built assets, reputation, and planning of their neighborhood.

The process with which the Better Block approaches redevelopment is similar to preservation planning. In the case of Oak Cliff, Better Block and residents were moved to save buildings and put them to a use that serves the community. The concert of buildings they aimed

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107 Roberts, Interview.
to protect were part of the neighborhood's history; commercial buildings that once were the neighborhood's heart of commerce and activity. Additionally, the history of the area as a commercial corridor along a streetcar line informed the composition of buildings and infrastructure to promote pedestrian connectivity among various businesses.

The reasons for not defining the practice of Better Block Projects as historic preservation is unclear. Andrew Howard has stated that the impetus of the project was to save old buildings and give them a new purpose, preferring to call what they do as “quality of life” or “small business incubation” instead of preservation. As gleaned from interviews with both Andrew Howard and Jason Roberts, it appears that the field of preservation has negative associations relating to codified, expensive restorations and encapsulation of the past at the consequence of future progress. However, what is overlooked by the Better Block, or possibly misunderstood, is preservation’s ability to guide public action and community collaboration in the physical and economic revitalization of the existing built environment.

Although historic preservation and the Better Block Project are regarded as separate and different, they have both evolved similarly; from saving singular buildings to a larger concentration of the existing built environment. Furthermore, they are both redevelopment tools that promote street activity and small-business incubation. Temporary use interventions have been noted as being most effective with professional or government assistance and the presence of a preservationist as a consultant would balance the informal nature of such interventions with

108 Howard, Interview.


110 The Main Street Four-Point Approach implemented by the National Main Street Center is a preservation-based economic development tool that leverages historic, cultural, and architectural resources, http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/#.UY0um5VqMkZ.
the formal aspect of preservation planning.\textsuperscript{111} Preservationists, as described by James Marston Fitch, should be generalists who “see their own special area of expertise as being only one strand in a larger fabric.”\textsuperscript{112} Preservation would be one component of the larger intervention that would equip the community with tools to manage and control the revitalization of their Oak Cliff district.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations for the Better Block Project are informed by the analysis of the first Oak Cliff intervention on the 400 block of North Tyler Street. They incorporate historic preservation tools and resources as a means to exemplify how preservation can assist and guide temporary urban intervention in the redevelopment of historic built assets.

*Longer Activation of Spaces with Pop-Ups Businesses*

As currently devised, the street and commercial spaces of Better Block Projects are activated with temporary business for a weekend, during which a street festival draws people to “see” the potential of economic redevelopment. While permits, such as a special events permit, are often needed to curate the street into a pedestrian-friendly environment, the project would benefit from having the temporary businesses remain for a longer period after the weekend event. As in the case of Pop-Up Hood in Old Oakland, California, local entrepreneurs collaborated with property owners and the City of Oakland’s Community & Economic


Development Agency to allow temporary businesses to activate long-vacant spaces for 6 months, free of charge. The benefits of allowing businesses to remain for a longer periods are that it would provide a better measure of the public’s reaction, as well as continue to attract people to the area after the intervention.

Staging the Better Block Project Periodically in the Same Area

The founders of Better Block Project, Jason Roberts and Andrew Howard, have been encouraging cities to commit to the project for two-years, staging the event in same district monthly or quarterly. This tactic would allow the area to continue attracting people, as well as test various types of businesses for the district.

Preservation Consultant

Support for devising, planning, and executing the community’s long-term objectives and goals is needed. The strongest critiques of the Better Block Project are the lack of comprehensive long-term goals and objectives, and insufficient support and knowledge subsequent to the intervention to propel development and revitalization, such as financial resources and budgeting. As expressed by Council member Delia Jasso, “You can show people what it looks like, but then they have to get busy to raise money or advocate for us to put money in the budget for it. I support Better Block, but I think there should be more thought put into phase two, which is neighborhood engagement, and phase three, which is funding to make it permanent.”

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114 Ross, “Building a Better Block in Oak Cliff”.
The Better Block Projects are implemented and concerned with the existing built environment and implement a process that resembles preservation planning: one that relies on the historic built environment to arrive at economic and viable solutions to redevelopment. While the Better Block Project in Oak Cliff does not emphatically promote history, culture, and architectural assets, these elements appear to be part of the process. However, the should be enhanced by a professional who directly works with the historic built environment -- a preservationist. A preservation consultant would work with the community leaders and residents to understand the history of place, identify the existing built assets that lend to revitalization, and develop goals; all of which will directly inform the intervention and long-term planning objectives. Additionally, a preservationist would bring advocacy tools, as well as identify financial resources particular to the revitalization of existing built environments.

Preservation Plan for Identifying Historic Built Assets

A preservation plan would assist the community leaders and residents of Oak Cliff in identifying, assisting, protecting, and enhancing the historic built assets that will inform the intervention and guide the long-term revitalization of the area. Overseen by a preservationist, the plan maps and identifies the resources relating to the existing built fabric, such as zoning, surveying, and financing, that allows the community to capitalize on its historic assets for redevelopment.
Preservation Plan for Enhancing Long-term Planning Goals and Objectives

In the initial planning phase, the preservation plan addresses the built fabric and historic resources. By identifying the area’s existing built assets and previous development approaches, the research will aid the community in devising long-term goals, objectives, and new planning approaches that will ultimately inform the intervention. The preservation plan will also contain and organize all the pertinent information regarding the intervention and its subsequent results, such as the goals and objectives accomplished, results and analysis, the long-term plan, as well as the identification of financial resources that would assist in the rehabilitation of the existing and historic built fabric and infrastructure.

Given the challenges facing the area, such as zoning and parking, the preservation plan would need to account for incremental changes to the neighborhood. For example, under the City of Dallas’ Neighborhood Revitalization and Historic Preservation Program there are Urban Neighborhood tax credits for retail conversion and restoration. In the case of the DHRH tax incentive for converting ground floor into retail, the building must be zoned as retail when applying for the credit. Tax credits, along with other national, state, and local neighborhood and business revitalization resources like the Texas Main Street Grants, will be included in the preservation plan and accessible to the community and property owners.
For the past decade the hamlet of Oyster Bay, New York has experienced several advances in preservation through Main Street initiatives. With the guidance of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, the hamlet has been able to revitalize most of its historic downtown, as well as preserve several historic structures. Despite successes facilitated by Main Street initiatives, areas in Oyster Bay’s downtown have suffered from disinvestment and are characterized by empty retail spaces, buildings in disrepair, and a lack of economic activity.

Main Street initiatives are preservation-based revitalization strategies that have been adopted by towns throughout the United States to bring back the thriving commercial activity of small businesses that once defined the American Main Street. By using local assets that include historic, cultural and architectural resources as leverage to reclaim and revitalize commercial hubs in cities and towns, Main Street initiatives overlap with historic preservation in encouraging active use.¹¹⁵ They are local organizations that are coordinated throughout the country by the National Trust Main Street Center and have been effective in the rehabilitation of buildings and revitalization of downtowns and commercial districts through small-scale, innovative approaches.

The National Trust Main Street Center (the Center) provides assistance, advocacy and support to smaller, local organizations. The Center promotes revitalization strategies like the Main Street Four-Point Approach, which is a preservation based economic development tool, and network coordination. However, the mission, management, and implementation of Main

¹¹⁵ Erin Tobin, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, February 6, 2013.
Street Initiatives is governed and overseen by the local organizations and can result in broad initiatives that need guided direction. As in the case of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, its mission to promote and assist businesses with economic development was unattainable until other objectives, like community collaboration, were in place.

Moreover, the collaboration among other Main Street Associations needs to be enhanced. The 48x48x48 temporary urban intervention model was implemented in Oyster Bay, New York as an innovative Main Street initiative. In discussing temporary urban interventions, specifically the 48x48x48 intervention, with Erin Tobin from the Preservation League of New York State, she was not familiar with the concept nor the Oyster Bay initiative. However, once she understood the initiative, she had several examples of similar approaches applied by Main Street organizations in New York State.\textsuperscript{116} Given that temporary urban interventions often deal directly with downtowns and economic development, a more open exchange of approaches, results, and analysis of findings would benefit Main Street initiatives.

\textbf{48x48x48}

In 2010 DoTank:Brooklyn partnered with the Street Plans Collaborative to create the 48x48x48 redevelopment model for the Build a Better Burb competition in Long Island, New York. The model was devised as a replicable temporary intervention that can be implemented by communities into the existing built environment as a means to incubate vacant buildings and inactive streets with businesses and people. The 48x48x48 model strives to address economic challenges common in small downtowns. DoTank:Brooklyn, alongside the Street Plans

\textsuperscript{116} Tobin, Interview.
Collaborative, worked with the Oyster Bay Main Street Association to implement the 48x48x48 in the hamlet of Oyster Bay, New York.

DoTank:Brooklyn is an interdisciplinary organization of planners, designers, and architects whose members come from various organizations that have included Project for Public Spaces, Street Plans Collaborative, and other NYC-based planning, design, and architecture firms. As opposed to a “think tank,” DoTank works to improve planning, designing, and building of place through actions, or “doing.”

Founded and based in Brooklyn, DoTank:Brooklyn works with local partners and community activists in the New York City area to arrive at results and solutions to urban issues through public participation and community contribution. DoTank:Brooklyn has organized creative presentations that explore and enhance the urban environment. Some of their projects include the 2010 Bring to Light, a nighttime arts festival, and Williamsburg Walks, where they organized a public art competition, a diverse schedule of programming that varied by block, and walking tours of the neighborhood, all of which encouraged the public to “Rethink Our Public Space.”

The 48x48x48 model is divided into three phases of time: a 48-hour temporary intervention, or street fair, that informs a 48 week action plan and concludes with a long-term planning vision. The model emphasizes community participation and cooperation in the planning and execution of the intervention. It proposes temporary improvements and uses for

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underused buildings and streets with the hopes of inspiring the community to see the future potential of its built assets. The short-term intervention serves as an onsite laboratory with which communities can explore and discuss needs and long-term solutions. The intervention acts as a first step in the visioning and planning of long-term change for and by the community.

The 48x48x48 temporary intervention model relies on community meetings and collaborative efforts in its planning and execution. It focuses on using the existing built fabric to present immediate results and accomplishes many of the same goals as preservation - the involvement of the public in redeveloping and preserving the historic built fabric. Isaac Kremer, the former Executive Director of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, believes that these interventions “put preservation on the table as a vehicle to save buildings, with a fraction of the resources and bigger economic and social gains. They link short-term efforts with more comprehensive and long-term changes.”

Kremer was pleased with the results at Oyster Bay and believes that temporary urban interventions set the process of preservation in motion.

**Place and Challenges**

The hamlet of Oyster Bay is located on the North Shore of Long Island at the mouth of the Oyster Bay Harbor. As one of eighteen hamlets and eighteen villages that comprise the town of Oyster Bay, which spans from the North Shore to the South Shore of Long Island, New York, Oyster Bay Hamlet was considerably larger before several of its parts were incorporated as separate villages. In Nassau County the hamlet of Oyster Bay is part of the New York Metropolitan area and is the eastern termination of the Long Island Railroad Oyster Bay Branch.

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120 Isaac Kremer, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, February 1, 2013.
Oyster Bay was originally inhabited by the Matinecock Indians, who for 1000 years were one of thirteen tribes present on Long Island. In 1615 Oyster Bay was discovered by the Dutch explorer Adriaen Block. While its original settlement date is unclear, Dutch Europeans maintained an influence in the area. The harbor’s connection to the Long Island Sound, and in turn the Atlantic Ocean, established Oyster Bay as a center for maritime trade for Dutch and English merchants, fishers, and ship builders. With contested settlements between the Dutch and English, the hamlet came under heavy Quaker influence in the 1660s. A century later, Oyster Bay had a significant role in the Revolutionary War while under British control. The Sons of Liberty met in the hamlet as early as 1765 and one of its residents, Robert Townsend, acted as a spy among British troops on behalf of General Washington.

For centuries the Oyster Bay harbor and waterfront has attracted water-dependent industries, some of which still exist today. The various industries have included shipbuilding, whaler and schooner industry, and commercial oystering and shellfish. Additionally, the hamlet’s seaside location has also lent it a reputation for leisure activities like yachting. With a working waterfront, a harbor, and a coastline on the Long Island Sound, Oyster Bay has attracted visitors, short-term residents, and long-term residents since the mid-19th century.

Oyster Bay’s popularity and growth was facilitated by the extension of the Long Island Railroad’s Locust Valley line to Oyster Bay in 1880. The Oyster Bay train stop was established as a means to connect New York and Boston by way of a steam boat on the Long Island

123 “History,” video on Oyster Bay.
Sound. The train service provided fast and reliable transport to and from New York City and resulted in many of the summer residents becoming year-round residents. Oyster Bay’s proximity to New York City made it a favored destination for the wealthy residents of New York City, such as Louis Comfort Tiffany and Cornelius van Schaak Roosevelt. Having spent his childhood summers in Oyster Bay, President Theodore Roosevelt built his permanent home, Sagamore Hill, in nearby Cove Neck and lived there from 1885 until his death in 1919. During his presidency, from 1902 to 1908, Roosevelt brought the executive branch of the federal government to Sagamore Hill for the summer months. Having presided over the Country in Oyster Bay, Roosevelt’s residency enhanced the hamlet’s image as a destination for leisure, being coined the “nation’s summer capital” at the turn of the twentieth century.

The area surrounding Oyster Bay hamlet expanded rapidly in early 20th century as many old family farms were purchased and turned into Gold Coast estates. Despite the expansion in the area, the hamlet retained much of its character, developed from early Dutch and English Settlements and its close connection with the water. Oyster Bay hamlet has a significant history that is expressed and narrated in its existing built fabric. With copious historic buildings and sites, the management and protection of the hamlet’s historic built assets have been a focus of the community for the past few decades.

124 “Town History”.
126 Ibid.
Downtown Oyster Bay began to experience disinvestment when the National Register-Listed Oyster Bay Long Island Railroad Station was abandoned for a new platform in the 1990s. The historic train station, located downtown at the end of Audrey Avenue Extension, had become too small to accommodate larger, double-decker trains. The station anchored the area with activity and retail for over a hundred years. The new platform was constructed a few blocks away and disconnected the activity from local businesses, devastating the area around the historic train station and parts of downtown. Without the commuter and visitor foot traffic, the area experienced record high vacancies and buildings were falling into disrepair as maintenance was being deferred.\footnote{Kremer, Interview.}

Many attempts were made to return the downtown of Oyster Bay back to its former, bustling self. Business mogul, Charles B. Wang, began buying properties in downtown since the early 1990s. Wang invested $50 million dollars in over 85 properties, many of them historic. His interests in downtown lead the community to hope that his efforts would act as a catalyst to revitalization.\footnote{Bill Bleyer, “The Pearls of Oyster Bay: Town, Community Groups Try to Preserve Historic Sites,” \textit{Newsday} [Long Island], November 20, 2011.} Unfortunately, Wang’s investments in downtown and his involvement with community organizations resulted in few restorations and inadequate or vacant use of many of his properties.\footnote{John A. Bonifacio, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, March 6, 2013.}

Citizens concerned with futile redevelopment efforts met in 1999 to discuss the future of Oyster Bay and how to preserve and revitalize its downtown. A year later they formed the not-for-profit Oyster Bay Main Street Association (the Association). The Association adopted the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street approach for economic development and...
created a board of directors that consisted of residents and various professionals, including architects, business owners, teachers, bankers, and community activists.

The Association’s initial years were dedicated to the Main Street approach, yet were focused with the interpretation of history and insufficient parking in downtown. The results were small projects like informative kiosks about historic assets and parking lots. The Association was overwhelmed with community opposition for projects such as installing a carousel in a park and establishing a Theodore Roosevelt Museum. With few projects that reflected its objectives, the Oyster Bay Main Street Association reassessed its mission by focusing on community collaboration and the enhancement and promotion of a thriving, attractive downtown. With the support of the community, the Association was able to provide assistance to the organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring of Oyster Bay’s historic assets and community.

The Oyster Bay Main Street Association began working with the community and building partnerships with local organizations like the Gold Coast Mansions Historic Long Island Alliance. Through collaborative efforts, the Association found the social and financial support it needed to carry out large preservation projects that included the restoration of the Octagon Hotel. For example, the Association pulled together in 2008 the Oyster Bay Preservation Roundtable, a coalition of local groups and people that included Raynham Hall Museum, Oyster Bay Railroad Museum, and the North Shore Land Alliance. The Roundtable has been instrumental in gathering funds to save and preserve many historic buildings and championed the

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133 Bonifacio, Interview.

preservation of the threatened Octagon Hotel, where Theodore Roosevelt campaigned for the presidency. In the past decade, the Oyster Bay Main Street Association and community leaders have generated more than $30 million of investment, improved more than 60 historic buildings, and attracted more than 50 new businesses.135

The collaborative approach to preservation in Oyster Bay proved effective for the Main Street Association. As Philip Blockyn, the executive director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, stated in an article for Newsday [Long Island] “The Town seems to actually want to do something, whether its through landmarking, funding or actual purchase, . . . It’s encouraging people.”136 The economic crisis of 2008 constrained or stopped state and federal grants and funding for preservation efforts. Fortunately, the Oyster Bay Main Street Association was occupied with the completion of significant preservation projects, yet the need for innovative and cost-effective initiatives to keep ideas moving loomed.

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136 Bleyer, “The Pearls of Oyster Bay”.
Figure 19.
Greenwich -- Oyster Bay Ferry, 1920s.
(Source: Oyster Bay Historic Society; 83 mm x 139 mm.Summers Collection, 97.010.035)

Figure 20.
Railroad Station, Oyster Bay, L.I.
(Source: Oyster Bay Historical Society, ca. 1900 - 1906)

Figure 21.
Oyster Bay is a predominately upper-middle class hamlet with a high Median Household Income of $79,427. Additionally, Oyster Bay has experienced a slight loss of population (1.75%) since 2000.
(Source: usa.com, 2010 Census Data)
Intervention

When DoTank:Brooklyn approached the Oyster Bay Main Street Association in 2010 to have their town implement a downtown demonstration project - a 48 hour intervention - the Association accepted. The Oyster Bay Main Street Association had made significant progress with preservation efforts. Community involvement and membership was at an all-time high, the Octagon Hotel had been recently restored and dedicated, and overall preservation activities were thriving. DoTank:Brooklyn’s proposal was regarded as an amazing and affordable opportunity that would build on the Association’s momentum and advance preservation ideas in the community.137

Despite the Association’s success in restoring and landmarking buildings, business incubation, specifically downtown near the historic train station was minimal.138 Audrey Avenue is anchored at one end by the historic Oyster Bay Long Island Railroad Station and the town hall at the other. Since the LIRR train station platform moved, the once thriving Audrey Avenue Extension has been marked by empty storefronts, vacant offices, buildings in physical disrepair, and few public space amenities.

DoTank:Brooklyn partnered with the Oyster Bay Main Street Association and the Street Plans Collaborative, an urban planning, design, and research-advocacy firm who leads the Tactical Urbanism Salon, a conference/meeting of individuals, organization, and local government departments who meet in different cities seeking new ways to overcome existing challenges in the built environment.139 The intervention began with several weeks of planning

137 Kremer, Interview.
138 Kremer, “48x48x48”.
and meetings in which community members and the organizers of the intervention came to the table and looked at what has happened in this area, what factors have deterred its development, and what does the community want to get out of the intervention; resulting in an intervention plan that would directly inform the long-term goals and objectives constructed by the community.

Local history played a significant role in the planning of the 48x48x48 intervention. By researching and analyzing the area, and town’s, built assets, such as the historic train station, and important historical touchstones like Theodore Roosevelt, the community was able to assess what makes Oyster Bay unique and capitalize on those elements. Additionally, they sifted and analyzed some twenty-five years worth of master plans to understand the long-term process of downtown that hasn’t lead to long-term change. The knowledge obtained from understanding local history provided the community with insight to new approaches and ideas.\textsuperscript{140}

The 48x48x48 team and the community identified development opportunities for revitalization -- Local Food, Commerce, Transportation, Social and Civic, and Public Space.\textsuperscript{141} These opportunities were then organized into a set of future objectives that included attracting local vendors to vacant spaces; promoting healthy lifestyles with a farmers market; creating a destination at the Railroad Museum for entrepreneurial incubation; promoting pedestrian traffic through bike-use and a possible future bike-share program; improve access to the Teddy Roosevelt Park at the end of Audrey Avenue, adjacent to the old train station; and setup a

\textsuperscript{140} Mike Lydon, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, January 29, 2013.

\textsuperscript{141} “48x48x48,” PDF.
concierge service at the historic train station that can support local businesses.\textsuperscript{142} To envision these goals in action, the components of the intervention were designed around them.

With the assistance of online social media for advertising and organization, teams of local residents were created to assist in the physical execution of the temporary intervention. The Oyster Bay 48x48x48 teams created “pop-up” stores with local merchants in vacant storefronts, organized local workshops and classes held by local businesses and organizations, attracted mobile food vendors and a farmers market, and created an outdoor cafe at the Oyster Bay Railroad Museum. Public space was instrumental in connecting the various elements of the intervention, but also to engage the public. At the far end of Audrey Avenue Extension, a children’s park with water features and play sand was implemented on an empty green space in front of the train station, and umbrellas, chairs, and landscaping were placed along the length of the street to create public gathering spaces. Additionally, the street was painted with Applied Shared Use Lane markings, or “sharrows,” to improve bicycle access.\textsuperscript{143} During the weekend of June 12 and 13, 2010, the Audrey Avenue Extension was temporarily closed and infused with social activities and residents.

The 48x48x48 model was successful in engaging the public in the understanding, planning, and execution of the 48x48x48 intervention for the Audrey Avenue Extension. The initial planning phase allowed the community to establish long-term goals that informed a well-executed, and affordable, intervention. With a minimal budget, DoTank:Brooklyn’s 48x48x48 intervention offered the Oyster Bay community an opportunity to take a massive leap from what

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\end{footnotesize}
it was accustomed and ultimately directed the Oyster Bay Main Street Association’s preservation efforts to move further in the direction of revitalization.\textsuperscript{144}

As expressed by Mike Lydon of the Street Plans Collaborative, the success of the 48x48x48 intervention was attributed to direct community participation. Isaac Kremer, then the Executive Director of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, was instrumental in rallying the community and creating a strong local presence on the project.\textsuperscript{145} In addition to promoting preservation, two of the pop-ups, a farmers market and motorcycle museum, became permanent tenants that today serve as anchors to future revitalization of Audrey Avenue. The intervention was a successful platform with which the community was able to explore the potential of their local built assets, envision future change, and participate in short-term action that informed future planning; in turn partaking in innovative preservation planning.

\textsuperscript{144} Kremer, Interview.

\textsuperscript{145} Lydon, Interview.
Figure 22. The 48x48x48 project site in Oyster Bay, New York is located near the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park and the Oyster Bay Harbor. (Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 23. The project site along Audrey Avenue Extension begins at the town hall and terminates at the historic Oyster Bay Long Island Railroad Station. (Source: Google Maps, 2013)
Figure 24. Community meetings, directed by members from Street Plans Collaborative and DoTank:Brooklyn, were instrumental to the planning of the intervention. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 25. History and historic built assets informed the intervention. This image shows photos of significant buildings in Oyster Bay that were researched. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 26. From the community meetings, long-term redevelopment goals and objectives were established for three scales of time: 48 years, 48 months, and 48 weeks. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)
Figure 27.
Chairs and umbrellas were placed in the street to create public gathering spaces.
(Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 28.
Audrey Avenue Extension was closed for the intervention and signage was used to direct residents to various venues.
(Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 29.
A “pop-up” cafe was created at the Railroad Museum to explore the idea of incubating the institution with retail.
(Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)
Figure 30.
A children’s park was constructed on unused lawn in front of the historic Oyster Bay Long Island Railroad Station, creating outdoor activity, as well as drawing people to the end of Audrey Avenue Extension. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 31.
The “pop-up” Motorcycle Museum, 20th Century Cycles, remained in the space after the intervention, serving as an anchor for future development. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)

Figure 32.
Bike “sharrows” were painted on the street to demonstrate improved bicycle access. (Source: Mike Lydon, Street Plans Collaborative)
Analysis

Despite extensive preservation efforts promoted and facilitated by the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, the area around the historic, and former, train station remained disinvested and blighted since service moved to a newer platform. The 48x48x48 temporary urban intervention fostered the preservation ethic of Oyster Bay to advance in the direction of neighborhood revitalization. The intervention exposed the community to redevelopment opportunities and ideas for the Audrey Avenue Extension area, and allowed them to test it in the existing built fabric as a street festival.

With a diverse team of professionals that included urban planners and architects, as well as the assistance of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, the planning phase of the 48x48x48 intervention was approached with a preservation-like ethic. History, community perspectives, and the existing built assets informed the execution of the intervention and long-term goals.

Dotank: Brooklyn’s 48x48x48 intervention model explores the potential of incremental planning in preservation. When funding is lacking or approaches to tackle challenged areas are exhausted, the idea of taking small steps to arrive at a whole solution can be advantageous. Aside from initiating changes in a short period, it allows for experimentation of the built environment, and most importantly capitalizes on public participation in arriving at a comprehensive redevelopment plan.
Recommendations and Analysis

The following recommendations for the 48x48x48 model are informed by the analysis of the Oyster Bay intervention on Audrey Avenue Extension. They incorporate historic preservation tools and resources as a means to exemplify how preservation can assist and guide temporary urban intervention in the redevelopment of historic built assets.

*Longer Activation of Spaces with Pop-Ups Businesses*

The 48x48x48 model would benefit from keeping the temporary businesses in the retail spaces for a longer period after the intervention. As in the case of Pop-Up Hood in Old Oakland, California, local entrepreneurs collaborated with property owners and the City of Oakland’s Community & Economic Development Agency to allow temporary businesses to activate long-vacant spaces for 6 months, free of charge. The benefits of allowing businesses to remain for a longer periods are that it would provide a better measure of the public’s reaction, as well as continue to attract people to the area after the intervention.

*Staging the 48x48x48 Oyster Bay Intervention Periodically in the Same Area*

By drawing people to Audrey Avenue Extension monthly or every few months with an intervention, the area will become more attractive to businesses. Additionally, this tactic would allow for the community to test different types of businesses that would best meet their future goals.
Preservation Plan

A preservation plan would enhance the already existing preservation activity inherent to the 48x48x48 intervention model by mapping and identifying all the resources that are available for revitalization. By documenting the historical research; recording long-term planning goals and objectives; analyzing and assessing the intervention; and identifying available financial resources, the preservation plan would serve as a guide to incremental implementation of planning.

The Audrey Avenue Extension fits the New York Main Street Grant criteria of having an area of sustained physical deterioration, decay, neglect, disinvestment, and several substandard, vacant residential, and commercial buildings. The New York State Main Street Grant provides $500,000 in funding, which can be distributed through Streetscape Enhancement, Building Renovation, and Creation of Downtown Anchors. In addition to grants, there are also tax exemptions that aid in business improvements, such as the Business Investment 485-b Plan that allow for partial tax exemption over 10 years.

Preservation Consultant to Guide Follow-up Community Meetings and Enforce Long-term Redevelopment Plan

A preservationist would have enhanced all phases of this intervention, yet in the case of Oyster Bay the final phase would have benefited most from the continued direction of a professional specialized in the planning and redevelopment of historic built environments. The reconvening of community after the event to reassess and establish long-term objectives and

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future planning was inadequate and not well-integrated. Several weeks need to be dedicated to this portion of the process and a professional, like a preservationists, should guide the community through the process.

Follow-up meetings would allow the community to assess the results of the intervention and review and edit the long-term goals and objectives established in the initial planning phase. A preservation consultant would continue the efforts of revitalization by guiding the community in constructing long-term objectives and plans, as well as bring to the table tools like advocacy and the identification of financial resources that would assist the community leaders, property owners, and residents in redeveloping the Audrey Avenue Extension.
Government Initiatives, Washington D.C. Temporary Urban Initiatives

The historic neighborhood of Anacostia, Washington D.C. was selected by the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) as one of four sites to undergo an innovative art and cultural strategy for revitalization. The Temporary Urbanism Initiative, or “Temporium”, was instated by the DCOP in 2010 and through art and culture-related programming temporarily activates vacant commercial buildings and neighborhoods and transforms them into vibrant destinations for defined lengths of time. These innovative initiatives aim to highlight the economic potential of built assets and inform long-term development of communities.

With limited finances due to the recent economic crisis of 2008 city governments have been more open to alternative approaches to drive development in communities. Moreover, the slumped real estate market and construction activity has lead to a rise in vacant buildings and empty lots, which coupled with depleted budgets has made the idea of temporary use more attractive to governing officials. As observed by Peter Bishop, the former director of design for the city of London and coauthor of The Temporary City (Routledge, 2012), "There's been a perfect storm of factors that have contributed to these ideas..., It's a confluence of tough economic times, the emergence of a new kind of creative culture, and a preponderance of stalled development and vacant properties."148 The city of San Francisco has embraced the temporary urbanism initiative From Pavements to Parks, which converts utilitarian and often underused spaces in the street into publicly accessible open spaces, and the New York City Department of

Transportation has implemented a similar initiative referred to as Pavement to Plazas, as well as Gutter Cafes, which converts on-street parking into cafes.

Cities are relying more on temporary uses as large-scale development projects are stalled or master plans are taking longer to execute than anticipated. They are increasingly experiencing difficulties with the maintenance of these urban spaces; waiting for better times when a developer can complete the plan. In response they are turning to temporary solutions and finding that sustainable development and challenged city areas are best carried out incrementally.149 As expressed by Ethan Kent, vice president of the New York-based nonprofit Projects for Public Spaces, “Small changes, sometimes built around minimum design and extensive programming, can spur momentum for larger, more permanent ones.”150

The District of Columbia Office of Planning, Temporary Urbanism Initiatives

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) has instated a Temporary Urbanism Initiative to reverse the negative perception associated with vacant urban sites or spaces.151 As a result of the global economic crisis in 2008, sites and buildings across the United States are in varying states of redevelopment, demolition, pre-development, or adaptive reuse and resulting in a temporary state of vacancy.152 Vacancy has become part of the urban conditions and


150 Greco, “From Pop-Up”.


152 Driggens and Snowden, “District of Columbia,” 2.
Temporiums, or temporary urbanism projects, have become the DCOP’s initiative to transform vacant spaces into vibrant destinations, hoping to inform permanent development.

The DCOP was awarded a $250,000 grant from ArtPlace, a collaboration of leading national and regional foundations and banks that invest in art and culture strategies to revitalize communities, that was administered in four emerging creative neighborhoods, with artists and innovative entrepreneurs. Beginning in 2010, the Temporary Urbanism Initiative spearheaded an investment of resources into temporary or ‘pop-up’ retail stores and arts venues. The initiatives use vacant storefronts for weeks at a time, allowing residents, entrepreneurs, and developers to see the potential of underperforming commercial streets as vibrant corridors. This initiative seeks to fill vacant and underused spaces with programming that generates foot traffic and attracts visitors.

Temporary Urbanism Initiatives promote neighborhoods through creative planning approaches that capitalizes on local community’s assets, and are intended to be low-risk methods to demonstrate the potential of space and foster civic engagement. From conversations with the District of Columbia Office of Planning and Philip Hutinet from ARCH Development, a not-for-profit community-based organization, these initiatives are more about economic incubation through planning and development than historic preservation, even though preservation activity may be a result. Washington D.C.’s Temporary Urbanism Initiatives share many of the goals and practices common with temporary urban interventions happening at grass-root levels throughout the United States, yet rely on the City and its partners to steward the intervention.

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153 Ibid., 2.
154 Philip Hutinet, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, March 7, 2013.
Place and Challenges

Located in the southeast quadrant of Washington, D. C., Anacostia is bordered by the Anacostia and Potomac rivers on the west, Southern Avenue on the east, and Good Hope and Naylor Roads on the north. Anacostia’s name derives from the Nacochtank, or Necostan, Indians that lived on the banks of the Anacostia River for 3000 years. John Smith encountered the Nacochtank Indians while sailing up the Potomac River in 1608. Soon after his encounter, Anacostia became a trading spot for the English and Indians, and was later claimed by the English as part of the Maryland Colony.155

From early European settlement until the Civil War, Anacostia was the home to tobacco, corn, and small grain famers. Uniontown, what would today be considered he historic section of Anacostia, was developed in 1854 as a working class neighborhood with most of its residents employed across the river at the Navy Yard. The initial subdivision of Anacostia carried restrictive covenants prohibiting the sale, rental, or lease to any Negro, Mulatto, and in general anyone of African and Irish descent.156 During the Reconstruction Era in 1867, housing was developed in Hillsdale by the Freedman’s Bureau, a U. S. federal government agency that aided freedman, or recently freed slaves. Hillsdale was made up of homes that were rented and leased to blacks, and in turn raised money for higher education (Howard University as one of the recipients).157

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Anacostia began as a white suburb that post-Civil War opened its doors to freed slaves. One of its first African American residents was Frederick Douglass. Known as the “Sage of Anacostia,” Douglass moved to Uniontown in 1877 and resided in the house formerly owned by the original developer of the area.\textsuperscript{158} Anacostia became part of the City of Washington in 1878 with about fifteen percent of its residents African Americans.\textsuperscript{159}

Today Anacostia is largely African American and boasts a rich heritage that dates back to the 17th century. Furthermore, its historic core retains most of its mid-to-late 19th century low-scale, working class buildings and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic building stock of Anacostia is comprised of small-scale brick and wood frame buildings. Houses have projecting porches that with varied rooflines create a strong rhythm along the streets. Mostly Italianate, Washington Row House, and Cottage Style with some Queen Anne interspersed, each house is uniquely defined with decorative details and architectural elements such as porch trim, iron fences, windows and gables treatments.\textsuperscript{160}

Historically, a geographical divide has existed between Anacostia and the rest of Washington D.C. that has negatively effected its growth and development. Dating back to the 17th century, bridges have been constructed and destroyed in attempts to connect the City of Washington to Anacostia, with visions of expanding the city in that direction.\textsuperscript{161} By the end of the 19th century the 11th Street Bridge, replaced in the 1960s by a more modern bridge, connected Anacostia to the rest of Washington D.C. With centuries of disconnection, the growth

\textsuperscript{158} “Anacostia,” \textit{National Park Service}.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.

and development of Anacostia by the 20th Century was stunted in comparison to the rest of the city. In 1928, Anacostia was significantly more rural than any other section in the District. It accounted for five percent of city’s total population and possessed forty percent of the District’s vacant land; more than half the land intended for commercial and industrial use in comparison to residential dwellings.¹⁶²

Post-War development also posed problems for Anacostia with rapid population growth, poor zoning laws, and suburbanization. In the 1950s Washington D.C. experienced a shortage of housing due to an enormous population growth and the federal government’s reemphasis on centralization of its bureaucracy within the central part of the city.¹⁶³ Federal housing development initiatives and local zoning laws promoted haphazard growth and discouraged home ownership.¹⁶⁴ Federally funded housing projects were being constructed in Anacostia in the 1950s and further advanced by the 1967 Commissions Plan, which constructed new public/subsidized units.

Moreover, desegregation of schools caused de-enrollment of white students in public schools. These factors eventually lead to “white flight” with middle-class whites and African American residents moving to the suburbs, while the lower and working classes stayed. By the 1970s schools in Anacostia were over capacity, the federal and D.C. governments owned more buildings through foreclosures than in any part of the district, and 75% of Anacostia’s land was zoned for apartments when an 80% rate of single family occupancy was required by zoning in


¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ “East of the River: Continuity and Change,” Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, PDF.
other parts of the city.\footnote{165} Anacostia had a low level of homeownership, vacant buildings, rising crime rate, and a growing drug problem.\footnote{166} In addition, the city moved many of its undesired services and institutions to Anacostia, such as Blue Plains Sewage Treatment Plant, impounded cars, and the city’s mentally ill.\footnote{167}

For the following decades, Anacostia was one of the poorest sections of Washington D.C. Besides issues with drugs, crime, and unemployment, it also suffered from inadequate social and recreational services.\footnote{168} ARCH Development, a not-for-profit organization, began offering job training and housing assistance to the community in the early 1990s. While their focus has shifted to economic incubation through the arts, they have been consistent in assisting the community of Anacostia. With the rise of real estate values in central Washington D.C., Anacostia is attracting the interest of developers and the city. As one of the most affordable areas in the district, current zoning and planning for redevelopment promotes single family homeownership, shopping centers and recreational facilities. Anacostia is currently attracting attention that is initiating change as the City attempts to bridge a class gap and promote the area for redevelopment.

Blighted and abandoned properties pose a challenge to current neighborhood revitalization efforts. Yet, with an affordable, historic housing stock, a burgeoning arts scene, and a central commercial corridor just outside the center of Washington D.C., Anacostia has been attracting new residents. The Historic Anacostia Block Association has assisted and advocated


\footnote{166}{Ibid.}

\footnote{167}{Halnon, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/anacostia/race.html.}

the restoration and refurbishing of homes in the area. Although the community has encountered difficulties on its road to revitalization, it is the general belief that Anacostia will overcome its obstacles. As expressed by Charles Wilson, the president and cofounder of The Historic Anacostia Block Association, in the article “Where History Welcomes Revision; Where We Live: Anacostia,” "We've had our bumps in the road, [but] we've seen a lot of improvements over the past year or so, and I believe we will continue to improve. I believe that when the economic revitalization boom comes again, historic Anacostia is set to reap the benefits of it."
Figure 33.
The neighborhood of Anacostis is located across the river from the central district of Washington D.C.
(Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 34.
Rosie’s Row is an example of historic row houses in Anacostia.
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, March 29, 2008)

Figure 35.
Historic homes along W Street, SE in Anacostia.
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, October 2005)
Figure 36.
Anacostia has a high rate of unemployment (32%) and a low Median Household Income of $27,964.
(Source: usa.com, 2010 Census Data)
**Intervention**

The District of Columbia Office of Planning was awarded a $250,000 grant from ArtPlace to be administered in creative neighborhoods. The Office of Planning has created Arts and Culture Temporiums, a term specific to projects that place temporary uses in vacant storefronts or spaces. The Temporiums transform vacant and/or underutilized storefronts and empty lots into an artist showcase/village for 3-6 months. The District has targeted four different neighborhoods -- Anacostia, Brookland, Deanwood, and Central 14th Street, NW -- for varying types of Temporiums that vary from singular buildings to entire commercial corridors.

For the Arts and Culture Temporium in Anacostia a three month art festival titled Lumen8 Anacostia was created to activate storefronts and vacant lots with art galleries and local artist-related activities. The title Lumen8Anacostia concentrated on the word lumen (a measure of light), Ward 8, Washington D.C., and the historic neighborhood of Anacostia.\(^{169}\) It is meant to describe the idea of the Temporium as a shining light on the neighborhood and is loosely based on all-night art events like Nuit Blance found in cities such as Paris andToronto\(^{170}\)

The District of Columbia Office of Planning partnered with ARCH Development Corporation, a not-for-profit organization that owns a number of storefronts in Historic Anacostia.\(^{171}\) Founded in 1991 ARCH Development Corporation is a community-based organization that uses the arts and the creative economy (an economy of innovative entrepreneurs, artists and professionals in fields such as research, technology, education and culture) as part of a comprehensive, collaborative approach to community revitalization in the

\(^{169}\) Driggens and Snowden, 5.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.

\(^{171}\) Hutinet, interview.
Anacostia community of Washington D.C. Since it’s inception, ARCH Development has provided small-scale neighborhood and business development through housing and training programs. In 2004, the organization began to focus on art and culture as a means to achieve its goals. ARCH Development has been promoting arts and cultural activities as a means to fuel economic growth, while providing programming for residents that is currently unavailable.

Anacostia was identified as a neighborhood that can develop into an arts district through studies such as the Creative DC Action Agenda, a study that examines ways to implement and support creative employment and opportunities, and the Small Area Plans, a revitalization strategy, that were conducted by the District’s Office of Planning. The Temporium set out to address issues in the community, such as challenges with unemployment, vacant storefronts, and a persistent negative perception that it is an unsafe neighborhood, through a celebration of community that capitalized on its existing creative scene.

Lumen8Anacostia was planned as a three month festival of music, art, and light that would transform the Anacostia neighborhood into a nighttime destination for local and Districtwide residents. In preparation for the event, ARCH Development held numerous public meetings over ten weeks at its art gallery and distributed surveys to residents to get a sense of the community’s needs and opinions regarding Lumen8Anacostia. From the surveys filled, it was deduced that the community’s concerns and objectives for the event lay first and


173 Hutinet, Interview.


175 Driggens and Snowden, District of Columbia, 4.

176 Driggens and Snowden, District of Columbia, 4.
foremost in storefront improvements and secondly in hosting the event.\textsuperscript{177} These meetings helped ARCH development at a strategic plan for the event with the community’s assistance.

Lumen8Anacostia took place from April to June 2012 on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, between Good Hope Road SE and Morris Road. The eastern side of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue falls within the Anacostia Historic District and is characterized by 19th century and turn of the century low-rise brick commercial buildings, defined at times with cornices and/or elaborate Italianate entrances, and more modest pre-World War II, often single-story, brick commercial buildings with simple parapets. The west side of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue is predominately parking lots, except for the northern two blocks south of Good Hope Road, which are low-rise commercial buildings in the historic district. Aside from the historic district, the area is also distinguished by the 1940s historic “Anacostia” green neon sign at 1115 Good Hope Road SE that is considered the traditional gateway to “Historic Old Anacostia,” and the Big Chair sculpture, located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, and V. Street Southeast.\textsuperscript{178} The Big Chair is a 20 foot-high public artwork that was constructed as advertisement for the local Curtis Brothers Furniture in 1959. Once considered the largest chair in the world, it is an icon for the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{179}

Lumen8Anacostia was a multi-venue showcase of the local art scene with 62% of featured artists from Anacostia and neighboring communities. The intervention strove to highlight the economic potential of the neighborhood through its rich history, culture, and built

\textsuperscript{177} Hutinet, Interview.


assets. Temporary uses were implemented in vacant buildings and vacant lots. Vacant storefronts and buildings housed galleries; over a half mile of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue was filled with site-specific installations of projection art, sculpture, interactive media, sound installation and performance; and the parking lots and vacant sites featured mobile concert stages, temporary art installations, concessionaires and vendors. The commercial corridor hosting the event was bathed in a neon rainbow light that assisted in attracting visitors at night.

On opening night the iconic Anacostia Big Chair sculpture was illuminated by rainbow colored, neon lighting. The former D.C. Police Evidence Warehouse was transformed into a “Lightbox,” a venue for music arts, and creative vendors. The popular D.C. restaurant Busboys and Poets operated a pop-up restaurant out of the warehouse for the first two weekends. From the high guest volume of opening night, thirty additional Temporium Spaces were inducted into the event in vacant spaces. Local restaurants in proximity to the festival had record-high sales during the three month event, with opening and closing night as the best evening in sales records ever. Moreover, neighborhood residents felt pride in their local artists and excitement about new nightlife and art opportunities in their community. As expressed by local resident and featured artist Tommie Adams, “It’s exciting to see people know that we are an arts community, because that’s not how people perceive the area... It’s helping the community evolve, people are taking pride in this event. This is a neighborhood-changing event.”

The Temporium attracted visitors, encouraged conversation, and demonstrated the potential of Anacostia to attract a mix of retail. By attracting greater attention to the growing

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180 Hutinet, Interview.


182 Driggens and Snowden, District of Columbia, 4.
creative economy in Anacostia, the Arts and Culture Temporium aimed to encourage greater investment in Washington D.C.’s creative economy and attract new artists and arts organizations to the community. Since the event, ARCH Development has continued to bring art and small businesses to the neighborhood. As owners of properties in the area and with properties donated by developers such as Four Points, there has been an increase in long-term rentals in Anacostia. Many of the vacant buildings used last year for Lumen8Anacostia are currently rented with long-term leases. A pharmacy moved into one of the spaces, along with retail and dental offices, and the H Street Playhouse plans to relocate to Anacostia.\textsuperscript{183} With increases in rentals and a general consensus of progress, Lumen8Anacostia will return the following year, becoming an annual festival.

Lumen8Anacostia has drawn entrepreneurs and businesses to the area. While some view the attention and development as positive for the community, others residents have expressed concerns and unease of gentrification. As stated by Charles Wilson, resident and cofounder of The Historic Anacostia Block Association, “I think we all want change, but we want to be able to control what that change looks and feels like. It felt a little bit like we were losing control of how we want that change to happen.” Wilson does acknowledge that the event was effective in branding Anacostia to outsiders. However, he feels that Lumen8Anacostia highlighted the economic potential of the area more than the history and people Anacostia.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{183} Hutinet, Interview.

\textsuperscript{184} Charles Wilson, Interview with Fernanda Sotelo, New York City, March 14, 2013.
Figure 37.
A satellite image of the Lumen8Anacostia site along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue.
(Source: Google Maps, 2013)

Figure 38.
A map of the Anacostia Historic District in relation to Lumen8Anacostia. Many of the buildings involved in the intervention fall within the historic district.
(Data: Google Maps, 2013; Author: Fernanda Sotelo)
Figure 39.  
The historic “Anacostia” neon sign at 1115 Good Hope Road, SE is regarded as the traditional gateway to “Historic Old Anacostia.”  
(Source: Wikimedia Commons, November 2009)

Figure 40.  
The Anacostia Design Center was used as gallery space and at night was lit up with neon lights.  
(Source: David Y. Lee, Copyright Arch Development Corp.)

Figure 41.  
The iconic Big Chair sculpture was illuminated for Lumen8Anacostia.  
(Source: David Y. Lee, Copyright Arch Development Corp.)
Figure 42.
The Lightbox is the former D.C. Police Evidence Warehouse and was transformed into a venue for music, arts, and creative vendors. (Source: David Y. Lee, Copyright Arch Development Corp.)

Figure 43.
Local artist Sheila Crider showcased her work in one of Lumen8Anacostia’s galleries. (Source: David Y. Lee, Copyright Arch Development Corp.)

Figure 44.
During Lumen8Anacostia, Mama’s Kitchen sign was creatively repurposed as an ode to the Ancostia River. (Source: David Y. Lee, Copyright Arch Development Corp.)
Analysis

Lumen8Anacostia was a grand temporary urban intervention, large in its project site, as well as long in its implementation. Coordinated among developers, community-related partners, and the D.C. Office of Planning, the Temporium had ample funding and government support. The intervention focused more on the development potential of the area than on the existing, and historic, built assets along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. While it was able to attract investors, it fell short of one of its primary goals, community development.\footnote{One of Lumen8Anacostia’s objectives, as stated in the December 2012 Public Sector Digest by Driggens and Snowden, is “stimulate community building,”\textsuperscript{5} .}

The organizers of Lumen8Anacostia missed many opportunities to foster community engagement. ARCH Development reached out to the community by organizing public meetings at the organization’s art gallery, as well as prepare surveys for the community to express their objectives and goals.\footnote{Wilson, Interview.} However, these tactics weren’t far-reaching. Meetings should have been held at a various places throughout Anacostia that included local community, religious and cultural centers. Additionally, outreach strategies should have been conducted with the assistance of local community and cultural organizations, such as Historic Anacostia Block Association, the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site and the Anacostia Community Museum.

Most residents will agree that the project brought well-needed positive attention to the neighborhood and has assisted in restoring formerly boarded up buildings into businesses. However, given that Anacostia has a high employment rate and a homeownership rate of only 30\%, many residents in the community felt that the intervention did not fully incorporate the
goals and objectives necessary and wanted by the community.\textsuperscript{187} The economic development plan devised focused heavily on economic incubation of art and other professional businesses and should expand its focus to include other business developments that would also serve residents. Local entrepreneurs could have been invited to participate in the event as one of the temporary “pop-up” businesses, assisting the local community in developing employment, as well as diversifying the uses of the event.

Historic preservation can bridge the gap between the community and the Temporium by promoting public participation through the understanding of Anacostia’s history and significance, and by guiding active community planning. While the festival has been successful in drawing new residents and developers, Lumen8Anacostia needs to further attract local residents to actively partake in the re-visioning of Anacostia.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations for the Washington D.C. Temporary Urban Initiatives are informed by the analysis of the Lumen8Anacostia Temporium. They incorporate historic preservation tools and resources that will assist and guide the enhancement of the long-term objectives of the community, the role of public participation, and the knowledge and assistance required for the community to be part of the long-term redevelopment of Anacostia.

Preservation Consultant to Enhance Public Participation and Community Collaboration

Lumen8Anacostia was held along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, which borders on the Anacostia Historic District and contains many historic assets. With the guidance of a preservationist throughout the process, the intervention could have been more informed by the history of Anacostia and its existing built assets. A preservationist would have aided a comprehensive collaboration with local organizations and institutions, outreach to local residents, as well as brought a stronger public participation ethic to the intervention by including them more directly in the planning, participation and execution of the intervention.

The period following the Lumen8Anacostia event would benefit from continued engagement of residents. A preservationist would guide property-owners and the community in planning and initiating long-term goals in the redevelopment of the area’s existing built environment though the preservation/restoration of its built assets. Preservationists are familiar with facilitating redevelopment of existing built environments -- the National Trust Main Street Center uses a strategy based on preservation planning. The preservation tools used for revitalization, like preservation plans, advocacy, and financial resources, would assist redevelopment efforts of Anacostia’s commercial corridor.

Preservation Plan to Engage the Community and Property Owners in Redevelopment

By working with the community on establishing goals and objectives, a preservation plan will lay-out a long-term redevelopment plan. Given the abundant historic resources along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, a preservation plan would assist the community in identifying key structures for development as anchors. From the history of place and the mapping, surveying,
and identification of existing built resources, the community and organization leaders would have a better understanding of the significance of the built fabric and implement intervention ideas that best use the existing built assets. Additionally, the preservation plan identifies preservation planning tools and financial resources available for the restoration of buildings.

With the preservation plan as a guidebook, property-owners would have a better sense of the financial incentives available to restore properties and attract long-term tenants. Washington D.C. has several incentives for property-owners in the renovation of properties, specifically retail and commercial. These incentives often filter through many hands before arriving to property owners and tend to be confusing to understand.\(^{188}\) The preservation plan would aid property owners in understanding the benefits and how to acquire them. The Neighborhood Tax Increment Financing is an economic redevelopment tool offered to developers and property-owners of Anacostia that captures future tax benefits of real estate improvements in order to pay for present costs of improvements.\(^{189}\) There is also the Storefront Façade Improvement Program that offers funding, indirectly, to property-owners for general improvements.

In order for the community to be involved in the redevelopment of Anacostia they need access to tools and incentives that are comprehensible. A preservationist and a plan would place these tools in the community’s hands; allowing them to be actively involved in the creation of permanent, positive changes to their existing built environment.

\(^{188}\) The Storefront Façade Improvement Program provided by the Washington D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development, offers to community-based non-profit organizations, who in turn offers matching grants to property owners for general repairs and the installation of an architectural elements such as storefront systems, and awnings, “Storefront Façade Improvements,” \textit{The District of Columbia: Department of Housing and Community Development,} Accessed April 1, 2013, http://dhcd.dc.gov/service/storefront-facade-improvement.

Chapter 4

Proposal for an Ideal Model

As my case studies showed, the most important aspects of temporary urban interventions are: Direct Public Participation, Long-term Goals and Objectives, Continued Activation of Spaces and Periodic Interventions, Analysis of Intervention Results and Reassessment of Long-term Goals, Professional Guidance from a Preservationist throughout Intervention, and a Preservation Plan. As expressed in the case studies, preservation is not as strong as it could be in the interventions and it brings needed tools and resources to the table. Below is my proposal for a new intervention model that is strengthened by preservation.

The proposed intervention model is divided into three phases that focus on different aspects of the intervention. Several weeks will be dedicated to Phase I, which will include the preparation and planning of the intervention, the establishment of community goals and objects, as well as the commencement of a preservation plan that will be continuously updated throughout all phases. The implementation and execution of the intervention materializes during Phase II. The final phase, Phase III, reconvenes community members over time to assess the results of the intervention and community goals, plan for future actions, such as reestablishing goals and objectives, planning a future intervention, and working with property owners and possible business owners in accessing available restoration and small-business financial resources, and finalizing the preservation plan that will serve as a guidebook for redevelopment.
**Phase I: The Plan**

Temporary urban interventions can be initiated by any citizen concerned with the state of the existing built environment. While Phase I of the intervention delves further into the establishment of a team and identification of a site, the plan needs to be instigated by both a preservationist and a community representative, and carried into the first phase collaboratively.

Phase I is the longest and most intense phase of the intervention in which the project team, the project site, the devising of the intervention plan and length, outreach and collaboration, public participation methods, and the preservation plan are established. During this phase logistics like owner permission of property use and necessary permits to execute the intervention are resolved, as well as finding local entrepreneurs to incubate spaces, and combing local businesses and professionals for donated materials, such as local florists for plants and hardware stores for paint and supplies.

**Create a project team.** In this first phase, a team is created that will direct the collaboration of various players and devise the planning of the intervention. A preservation professional will assist and oversee the process with local community leaders. They will assemble a team comprised of professionals like urban planners and architects, who will guide the design and plan of the intervention; graphic designers to assist with advertising; councilmen and government representatives to facilitate any issues with local ordinances; college students for creative ideas; and property owners and local residents, who best understand the challenges affecting the neighborhood.
In this phase, existing resources like community groups, local preservation associations, neighborhood organizations, and cultural and religious institutions will be identified.

**Establish outreach methods and community collaboration.** Outreach methods should be established and executed early in the phase to attract residents to the meetings, as well as to begin promoting the event. The demographics of the area need to be researched to arrive at the best techniques to reach target audience.

Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, should be used to connect to community residents. Flyers placed in local community centers, grocery stores, university campuses, the local YMCA, library and neighborhood establishments such as restaurants and ice cream stores. Additionally, local community and neighborhood organizations, such as historic preservation associations, museums, and bike-share programs, should be invited to collaborate.

**Organize meetings and promote community engagement.** Meetings will serve as the primary platform for devising the intervention and would benefit most as work sessions. The first couple of meetings will be dedicated to establishing outreach and collaboration within the community and choosing a project site. Meetings should be organized weekly at local community centers, public schools, and religious institutions. They should also rotate locations so that they can be accessible to various members of the community.
Community Engagement

There are several innovative internet resources that enhance community engagement remotely with personal computers, tablets, smartphones, and kiosks, which are placed in key location like libraries, grocery stores, and transportation hubs. Crowdbrite is an online collaboration space that allows residents to participate in meetings online, while Metroquest is a digital engagement software that establishes a website with information relating to the intervention like videos of online meetings, follow-up minutes, surveys, and polls.190

Surveys and Polls

The community’s needs and expectations are necessary to establish future goals and objectives, which will inform the design and implementation of the intervention. Polls and surveys will assist in establishing concise community objectives. Surveys and polls should be continuously used throughout Phase I to arrive at decisions relating to project site, to establish the list of goals and objectives, and to vote on intervention ideas.

The surveys and polls will seek to understand the community’s perception of place: the built assets that are most important, the places they most appreciate in the neighborhood, and the problems most affecting the built environment. They will also seek to understand the redevelopment priorities of the community, such as a for grocery stores, better transportation infrastructure, or more job opportunities.

Remote accessibility to surveys and polling is imperative to reach as many of the community’s residents as possible. Kiosks can serve as remote sites for polling and surveys, as well smartphone applications like Wufuu, Pollcode and Micropoll that will not only assist in creating and publishing surveys and polls, but will also allow residents to poll from their hand-held devices and from social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook.\textsuperscript{191}

**Identify the area of Intervention.** The project team will identify a few target areas in the neighborhood that can serve as the project site. These interventions tend to be most effective when implemented in areas that have had difficulty redeveloping despite formal planning initiatives. It should be comprised of no more than a few blocks that are characterized by several vacant buildings and lots with a potential for redevelopment. For example, a commercial corridor with vacant retail spaces, sidewalks, and existing transportation infrastructure could serve as a model to highlight the pedestrian nature of the proposed intervention. With the identification of a few areas, the final choice of site should be voted on by the community residents and finalized within the first couple of meetings.

**Attach the intervention to an event.** An event, such as a street festival, culinary festival, bike race, and art show expresses the theme of the intervention and draws residents from the community and surrounding neighborhoods.

Establish the length of the intervention. The intervention can be implemented for a weekend, several months, or periodically throughout the year. Such decisions are contingent on the authorization of property owners and local ordinances.

For interventions that will occur over a weekend, property owners need to be contacted for permission to use their spaces, and necessary permits, such as a special events permit, need to be pulled from the city. In such instances, implementing the event on weekends periodically throughout a year or two is most effective; allowing the community to explore several ideas, as well as attracting people to the area continuously.

For longer activation of vacant spaces, the property owners need to agree to lease the spaces for free, or a reduced rent, and city authorities need to approve the initiative. While this process is longer and requires more effort and permits, it is effective in establishing new local businesses, as well drawing a constant flow of people to the area.

Begin the Preservation Plan. The preservation plan will be used throughout the intervention process to not only document the planning and results of the intervention but also inform the intervention. In Phase I, the preservation plan will identify the historic built assets, history, current state of existing built environment, the challenges of the environment like zoning and parking, as well as establish the community’s future goals and objectives. From the understanding of history and the built environment, the community can better establish a plan that taps into significant built resources, such as transportation infrastructure and historic
buildings, that will serve as anchors for future redevelopment. The preservation plan will also identify local, state, and national financial resources that can assist property owners in restoring buildings in the future.

**Develop Temporary Businesses.** The goals and objectives from the preservation plan will inform the types of businesses that will develop in vacant spaces. Flyers, social media, and kiosks will provide advertising platforms for local entrepreneurs interested in incubating spaces and participating in the intervention.

**Phase II: The Intervention**

The second phase focuses on the execution of the intervention, which usually happens over a few days’ time. The outreach and collaboration efforts of Phase I have advertised the event to an extent that a strong base of volunteers, property owners, temporary entrepreneurs, and donated supplies have been assembled.

**Create task teams.** Task teams will be established to implement the intervention. Examples of teams include landscaping, building painting and restoration, street lighting and embellishments, set-up of retail spaces, bike-lane creation, and carpentry and skilled work. Similar teams will be needed to take-down and clean event.
Phase III: The Future

The last phase of the intervention should be as intensive as the initial planning phase as the project team and community evaluate the results of the project, assess the future goals and plans, and finalize the preservation plan.

Organize follow-up meetings. Once the intervention has terminated, the community will reconvene for several weeks to analyze the intervention and assess the future goals and objectives. Surveys and polls should again be used to gather the community’s opinion of the intervention. This phase should be guided by a preservationist, as it will finalize the preservation plan.

Finalize the preservation plan. The preservation plan will record the findings and results from the intervention, with which the future goals and objectives will be reassessed. The most successful uses will be identified, as well as future uses that can be tested and implemented in the future. The plan will conclude with guidelines of how to continue the redevelopment and activation of the area, such as establishing future interventions and noting how and when financial resources can be used.

Concluding Remarks

The proposed ideal model for temporary urban interventions differs from the analyzed case studies in that a preservationist is brought into the intervention at the beginning to facilitate the process. These interventions are working towards the same goals as preservation -- economic
development, using existing built assets, and the engagement of the community who will ultimately steward the efforts to long-term development. The guidance of the preservationist is paramount for the understanding of the various nuances that create place and for ensuring that the repurpose of the existing built environment benefits its community.
Conclusion

In looking at Oak Cliff, Dallas; Oyster Bay, New York; and Anacostia, Washington D.C., it is revealed how powerful temporary urban interventions are in getting people involved, transforming neighborhoods’ identity and economic potential, and instigating changes to the existing built environment. These interventions propose solutions to neighborhoods with blighted, vacant historic built fabric when traditional redevelopment tools, such as urban planning, real estate development, and preservation planning are inaccessible or ineffective. In turn, they also get to the heart of the problems afflicting neighborhoods – looking at the history, the buildings, zoning, and economic conditions that have led to their demise. Temporary urban interventions promote direct community action in the decision-making and planning of neighborhood redevelopment and rely on the community to experiment with ideas that will inform long-term planning goals and objectives.

As redevelopment tools, temporary urban interventions generate preservation activity at a grassroots levels. They invoke the power of place, history, planning, aesthetic, and public participation as preservation. Throughout history they have been implemented as experimental strategies in the shaping of the existing built environment. These interventions have served as means with which authorities advanced national agendas, such as planning initiatives and economic stimulation; have created new narratives for place by evoking past glories of history and architecture; have influenced planning ideals with theories of idealized antiquity, such as the City Beautiful Movement; and have resurged as direct tools for citizens to actively command and repurpose the existing built environment. Temporary urban interventions have a transformative capacity that supply immediate results to problems in the existing built fabric.
Temporary urban interventions are proving to be opportunities for preservationists to steward the revitalization of blighted historic neighborhoods. Oak Cliff, Dallas; Oyster Bay, New York; and Anacostia, Washington D.C. are examples of the many historic neighborhoods in the United States that pose challenges for historic preservation. In these cases, temporary urban interventions served as innovative models that initiated the preservation of the existing built environment. By featuring history, existing built assets, and public participation as principle integers in the equation for redevelopment, temporary urban interventions share similar goals and values with historic preservation. Given that such initiatives are being used by various professionals with whom we, as preservationists, are aligned, they should be under the scope of historic preservation.

The enhancement of temporary urban interventions with preservation tools and resources would foster the preservation ethic inherent in these initiatives. Moreover, these communities would benefit from the guidance of preservation during and after the event. The collaboration of historic preservation and temporary urban interventions has the power to bridge the gap between formal and informal redevelopment initiatives and ensure that community-driven interventions to the existing built environment continue beyond the temporary.
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