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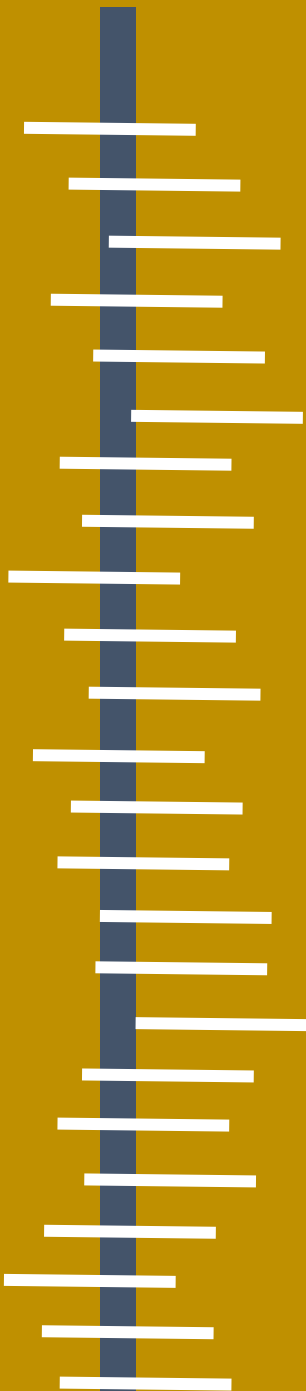
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Infra-Sutures:

*New Perspectives in Responsive Design
and Community Engagement*



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***The majority of photos included were taken by Richmond-based photographer, Schirra Hayes.**

INTRODUCTION

The world around us is telling a story.

Everything from the frequency of street cleaning in a neighborhood, to access to basic necessities like grocery stores and pharmacies, construct a subtle yet obtrusive hierarchy of how we value communities. This values system that shows up in the physical environment is rooted in the sociocultural values that have shaped every aspect of life.

While our country includes stories of determination, freedom, resiliency and hope, these values are juxtaposed with racial oppression and injustice. From the arrival of European settlers and the near extinction of Native Americans, to the abduction of enslaved Africans, ongoing migration of refugees, White flight and gentrification, the racialized movement of people across space and time has led to racial and socioeconomic segregation. In some ways, the concentration of poverty and deliberate disinvestment has functionally quarantined entire neighborhoods, isolating communities socioeconomically and often times physically.

In many cases, physical infrastructure has been used to reinforce this isolation or to tear through communities that fall at the bottom of our social hierarchy; but this plan seeks to bring racial and socioeconomic healing within the built environment through reconnecting communities physically, socially and economically through infra-sutures.

The idea of infra-sutures comes from dlandstudio in Montreal, QB, Canada which is a research and planning firm looking to physically reconnect communities disrupted by transit infrastructure in Montreal. This plan carries the spirit of this idea forward to include physical, cultural and economic infra-sutures through the redevelopment of public spaces.

The built environment is building a narrative, and without intervention and intentionality, that narrative will reinforce racial and socioeconomic hierarchies that continue to segregate communities. This plan is focused on building a new narrative of inclusion and equity through infra-sutures by:

1. Centering planning, programming and decision-making power with residents through community engagement efforts, and
2. Employing design principles that create opportunities for residents to build cultural and economic wealth.

Infra-sutures present an opportunity to purposefully activate the physical environment around us as grounds for cultural and economic healing and reconciliation, and this plan offers community engagement and responsive design principles to lead to this outcome.



Photo 1 - 9th Street/Manchester Bridge (Southside/downtown); Schirra Hayes

Context

Cities across most urban landscapes in the U.S. house neighborhoods that have unique stories of resilience, strength and joy; however, none of these neighborhoods have been shielded or immune from racial trauma and inequities that show up in the built environment. While the residue of this trauma remains, these neighborhoods have also been breeding grounds for incredible leaders, rich culture and a deep history that permeates the story of our nation. Today, many of these neighborhoods are experiencing a racial and socio-economic shift as they gentrify. The influx of middle- and upper-income White residents brings renewed investment, increased small business activity within commercial corridors, increased property values and other positive benefits to the community; however, these benefits come with the increasing potential of physical, cultural and economic displacement for low-wealth community members who have called these neighborhoods home for decades.

While gentrification is rooted in the exchange and development of housing on private property, this project examines the role of public space design and the cultural and economic power residents have within this shifting environment. While the Civil Rights Movement used legislation to address individual racism, there is still work to be done to dismantle institutional and systemic racism, which have shaped neighborhoods around the country. Planners have played and continue to play a vital role in the shaping of cities, both in triumphs and in failures. As a profession, planning takes the lead on how communities are structured, and in the same ways lawyers were on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement, planners have an equally critical role to play in the equitable evolution of cities.

These current realities amplify the need for infra-sutures as a strategy to address placemaking and place-keeping for physical, cultural and economic access particularly for low-wealth communities. In response, this plan seeks to view the built environment (bridges, parks, roadways etc.) as opportunities to advance cultural and economic equity. In order to make this possible, residents must be engaged to design these spaces in ways that affirm and amplify the neighborhood's historic, social and cultural norms while widening access to economic opportunity especially for low-wealth, people of color. Traditional forms of community engagement and culturally neutral design default to the dominant, White culture; however, this plan seeks to create a community engagement plan including culturally responsive design principles to aid in the redevelopment of public space. The intended impact is more equitable revitalization that creates cultural and economic flourishing for low-wealth people of color.

While this plan provides recommendations that can be applied to any redevelopment project of public space, the research and case examples provided will be focused on Richmond, Virginia.

Case example (Richmond, Virginia): Jackson Ward was decimated because of the construction of Interstate 95. Today, north of the highway lies Gilpin Court, opens acres of land and historic assets like the St. Luke's building, while cranes and new housing signify investment on the southern side. Photo Group 2 - I-95/Jackson Ward/Gilpin Court Northern edge; Schirra Hayes



Client Description

Richmond BridgePark Foundation (BridgePark RVA) is a nonprofit organization working to connect people across the City of Richmond through the redevelopment of underutilized transportation infrastructure. Since 2012, this organization has worked to engage stakeholders across the region in envisioning inclusive community spaces that bring diverse groups of people together. To-date, BridgePark RVA has worked with over 30 community organizations, schools and city departments to engage over 1,500 people in imagining this linear park. What started as a redevelopment idea for the Huguenot Bridge moved to the historic railroad bridge ruins from the Civil War, and has finally settled as a two-mile linear park connected through the adjacent Manchester bridge (Richmond Bridge Park Foundation, 2018).

This vision has grown to include a long-term vision for a fuller system of city connectors focused on two primary arterial streets: 9th St / Commerce Road and Leigh Street, with the aim to connect four neighborhoods to the river and each other. Those neighborhoods include Blackwell, Swansboro, Church Hill and Jackson Ward. The vision is to create connectors with pedestrians as the main user, activating bridges, roadways, paths and parks as spaces of intersection for Richmonders (Richmond Bridge Park Foundation, 2018). Efforts from this plan will support BridgePark RVA in engaging community members in the neighborhoods connected by BridgePark RVA in culturally responsive design in their own communities that lead to economic benefit.



Figure 1 – Map of BridgePark Focus Area



Project Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to develop a community engagement process that leads to infra-sutures where the redevelopment of public space leads to cultural ownership and economic power for residents and racial healing for the community. While this project is intended to be a guide for any community working to redevelop public space, the origins of the plan are rooted in Richmond, Virginia within the broader vision of redeveloping public space along 9th and Leigh Streets in Richmond, VA to be designed by and for the communities these bridges and roads connect.

Table 1 – Key Terminology for Plan

Term	Definition	Source
Equity	Equity is defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” ¹ The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.	Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, 2014
Inclusion	Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. ² More than simply diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.	
Racism	Racism is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities.	
Structural racism	Structural racism (or structural racialization) is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege White people and disadvantage people of color.	
Systemic racism	Systemic racialization describes a dynamic system that produces and replicates racial ideologies, identities and inequities. Systemic racialization is the well-institutionalized pattern of discrimination that cuts across major political, economic and social organizations in a society.	
Gentrification	Gentrification is defined as a process of neighborhood change that includes economic change in a historically disinvested neighborhood —by means of real estate investment and new higher-income residents moving in - as well as demographic change - not only in terms of income level, but also in terms of changes in the education level or racial make-up of residents.	Urban Displacement Project, 2019
Physical Displacement	As a result of gentrification, long-term residents are not able to stay to benefit from new investments in housing, healthy food access, or transit infrastructure.	
Cultural Displacement	Even for long-time residents who are able to stay in newly gentrifying areas, changes in the make-up and character of a neighborhood can lead to a reduced sense of belonging, or feeling out of place in one’s own home.	

Project Background

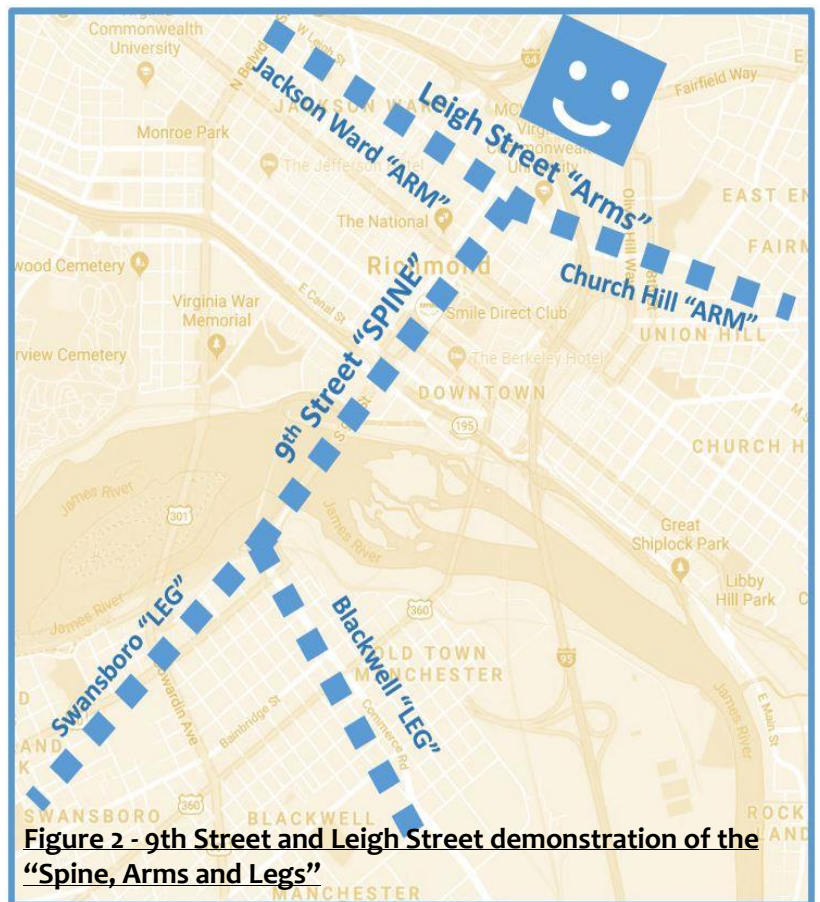
Since 2012, Richmond BridgePark Foundation has worked to engage stakeholders across the City of Richmond and the broader region in re-imagining how scars within the physical environment can be transformed into community assets. Its current phase started with a focus on the Manchester Bridge, which connects the Southside to downtown Richmond. Like so many other infrastructure investments, the bridge was designed for motor vehicle usage and underemphasized human-scale design principles. With obvious gaps in connectivity to the streetscape or access to river views, the Manchester Bridge, one of the most significant gateways to Downtown Richmond, serves as a barrier to engagement with the river and an impediment to safe and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle connection of the two sides of the City, amplifying the cultural and socioeconomic divide represented by the river's two sides. Today, BridgePark RVA has grown to envision a more expansive and inclusive treatment of two primary arterial streets that connect the four neighborhoods of Blackwell, Swansboro, Church Hill and Jackson Ward to Downtown Richmond.

The Body of Richmond

While 9th Street travels through the heart of Downtown, once it connects to Leigh Street, the neighborhood of Jackson Ward is to the West and Church Hill is to the East. When heading south, 9th Street becomes Commerce Road with the neighborhood of Blackwell at the Center and Swansboro to the West. Just beyond Blackwell, Commerce Road connects to the Oak Grove and Bellemeade neighborhoods, and eventually links to the Jefferson Davis Highway Corridor. On a visual analysis of the street grid, 9th street presents as a metaphorical “spine” with northern neighborhoods acting as “arms” and southern neighborhoods acting as “legs.” BridgePark RVA often refers to this potential set of connections as “the body of Richmond.”

The “spine” has been designed with input across the region from a diverse spectrum of stakeholders including school-aged youth and young professionals, in order to create an inclusive space accessible and attractive to people across the entire city. The “arms” and “legs”, however represent unique, individual communities with identities that should be celebrated through these improvements to the built environment.

The “arms” and “legs” connected through BridgePark RVA hold similarities to many inner-city communities around the country, and this project will focus on uncovering strategies and principles that can then be replicated in Richmond and beyond. A significant part of the challenge is that traditional forms of community engagement and standard design default to the dominant White culture. In response, this project will create a community engagement plan with responsive design principles so that redevelopment plans honor and celebrate existing culture and propels economic opportunity for more equitable revitalization.



RESEARCH CONTEXT: STRUCTURAL RACISM, RESIDENT EXPERTISE AND EQUITABLE PROCESSES

There are four core beliefs securing the foundation of this project. Those beliefs are: race has shaped the built environment; equitable revitalization should lead to cultural and economic wealth building; the process matters just as much as the completed project; and the expertise of residents should shape communities. In the sections below, these core beliefs are examined through literature. Each belief independently addresses important considerations for this project plan. Using research and thought leadership from articles and cases in other communities, the findings will ultimately inform the following questions:

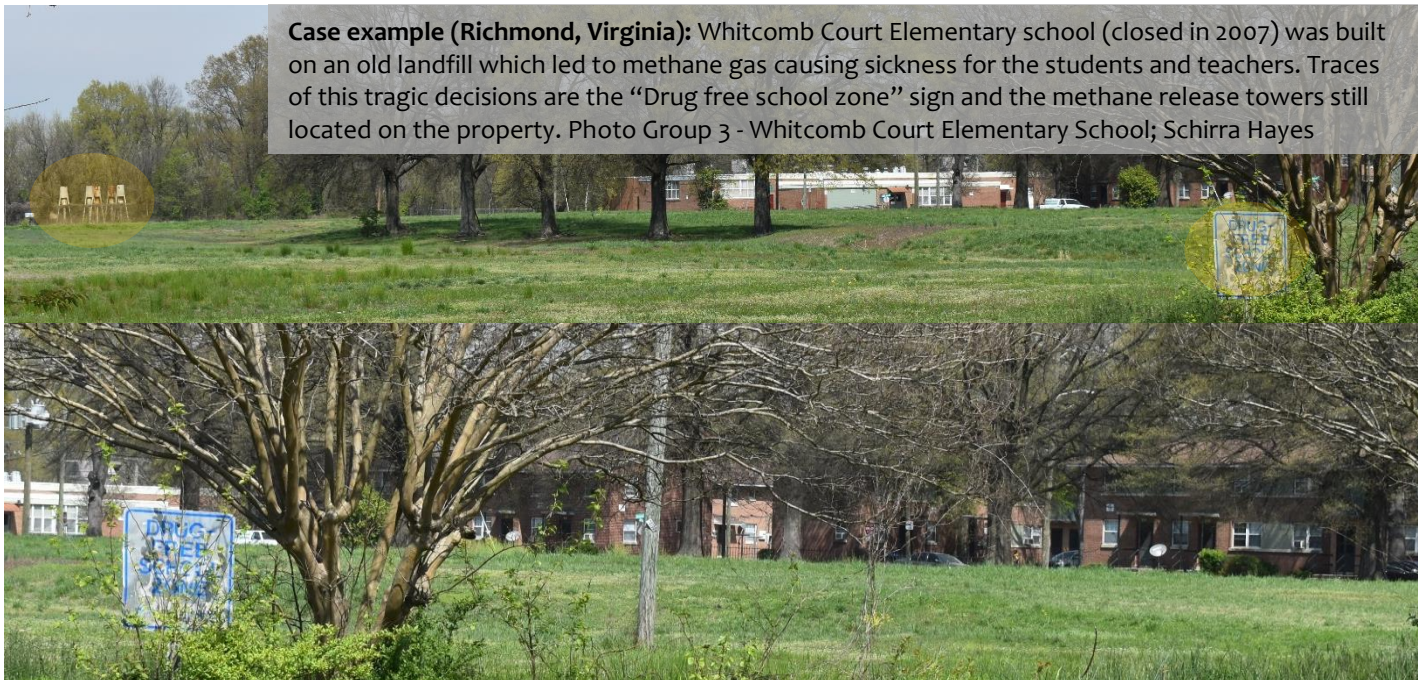
1. How has race affected the built environment in low-wealth, communities of color?
2. How can public spaces that bear the scars of racism be reclaimed through intentional design for cultural placemaking and equitable revitalization?
3. How can citizen expertise be captured through a community engagement process that leads to sociocultural and economic benefits for residents?

Racism in the Built Environment

The enduring legacy of racism is visible in the built environment. Strategies to achieve racial justice and equity, therefore, must include the built environment. Whether examining access to green space, food deserts, environmental racism, transportation, public housing, concentrated poverty or housing quality, there is no shortage of the signs of racism within our physical communities. Often times, inequities across race in education, poverty and health are used as examples of the impact of racism, and while this is true and important, these sociocultural determinants exist within place and space. The lived experience within those physical spaces contribute to the inequities more easily quantified through data like the social determinants of health, but this first theme acknowledges and surfaces examples of how racism has shaped the built environment.

From land use, vacancy and property values, to highway construction and brownfields, the physical development of neighborhoods of color have been significantly influenced by racist ideologies and bias. More practically, zoning and land use decisions have been influenced by racism (York, et al., 2014). These decisions create long lasting boundaries that concentrate poverty, isolate neighborhoods, perpetuate environmental racism and breed disinvestment. Redlining, segregation, and placement and quality of urban infrastructure all create inequities in the built environment motivated by race (York, et al., 2014).

Case example (Richmond, Virginia): Whitcomb Court Elementary school (closed in 2007) was built on an old landfill which led to methane gas causing sickness for the students and teachers. Traces of this tragic decisions are the “Drug free school zone” sign and the methane release towers still located on the property. Photo Group 3 - Whitcomb Court Elementary School; Schirra Hayes



Devaluing of Black Assets

Emerging research on the devaluing of Black assets by Dr. Andre Perry at the Brookings Institution directly ties the influences of racism to stifled economic access to wealth building for Black homeowners. According to his research, “We define the devaluation of housing in Black communities as the property penalty that characterizes an owner-occupied home in a neighborhood that is 50 percent Black.” When considering actual devaluation, devaluation adjusted for structural characteristics of the home, and devaluation adjusted for structural characteristics of the home and neighborhood amenities, the following trends emerged (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018):

1. "In the average US Metropolitan area, homes in neighborhoods where the share of the population is 50 percent Black are valued at roughly half the price as homes in neighborhoods with no Black residents."
2. "Metropolitan areas with greater devaluation of Black neighborhoods are more segregated and produce less upward mobility for the Black children who grow up in those communities"
3. "The devaluation of majority-Black neighborhoods is penalizing homeowners in Black neighborhoods by an average of \$48,000 per home."

Black homes within majority-Black neighborhoods are valued at less than those without Black people even when the housing stock and neighborhood characteristics are the same. The cumulative loss in value for Black homeowners equates to \$156 billion. This devaluing impacts Black homeowners' ability to equitably access wealth building through their homes, and while research is still underway to understand why, race has been the clearest correlative factor within the existing evidence (Perry, Rothwell, & Harshbarger, 2018).



Photo Group 4 - Gillies Creek Park (East End/Fulton); Schirra Hayes

(Murden, 2010)

Case example (Richmond, Virginia): The neighborhood of Fulton shows examples of the devaluing of both physical and cultural assets of the Black community. Urban renewal wiped out the urban, dense fabric of Fulton in the 1970s, and today the organic placemaking in Gillies Creek Park by Black residents has been ignored. An assortment of personal chairs, backyard tables and grills mark a popular gathering space for Black Fulton residents. The COVID-19 Social Distancing signage shows the city is aware of this as a gathering spot, yet no investment has been made. By contrast, Gillies Creek Park has had investments in disc golf and two BMX tracks.

After-Effects: Nonprofit Presence, Health and Life Expectancy

The culmination of segregation, disinvestment, concentrated poverty, and economic depression tends to trigger a response from service-based organizations and nonprofits. These organizations operate within the economy of the poor, so one of the subsequent signs of racial trauma is the concentration of nonprofits within a neighborhood. Research shows a positive correlation between income inequality, racial-ethnic diversity, and political engagement with an increased concentration of nonprofit organizations (Kim, 2015). From 2002 to 2012, the number of nonprofits increased by 42%, and it is believed that part of this was in response to the country becoming more diverse and governments growing increasingly dependent on nonprofits to subsidize public services. There is a recognition that governments cannot solve issues like homelessness, food access and affordable housing without significant support from nonprofits. (Kim, 2015).

Social determinants of health is an emerging term used by the nonprofit and health sectors to describe the impact of life outside the doctor's office on health. Housing is one of the most common social determinants of health, and beyond housing, research shows that place overall accounts for a large portion of racial health disparities. More specifically, the built environment and neighborhood context accounts for up to 76% of racial disparities for young men when considering health outcomes (life expectancy, mortality, heart disease, diabetes, cancer etc.); however, the level of impact shifted based on age (Finch, et al., 2008). It is suspected that young people show stronger evidence of disparities while older people show less because the culmination of their individual choices takes up a higher percentage (Finch, et al., 2008).

Even with these age distinctions, the culmination of these disparities literally can mean the difference between life and death. According to research done by Virginia Commonwealth University's Center on Society and Health, life expectancy differences within cities across the United States can vary dramatically even for neighborhoods only a few miles apart. In Richmond, Virginia, life expectancy decreases by 20 years when traveling less than five miles from Westover Hills, wealthy and predominately White, to Gilpin Court which is low-wealth and predominately Black. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated phenomenon. Other cities within their research study including Atlanta, Trenton, Miami, El Paso, Las Vegas, Tulsa and New York also show dramatic differences in life expectancy. The primary correlation in the differences stemmed primarily from the following factors (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015):

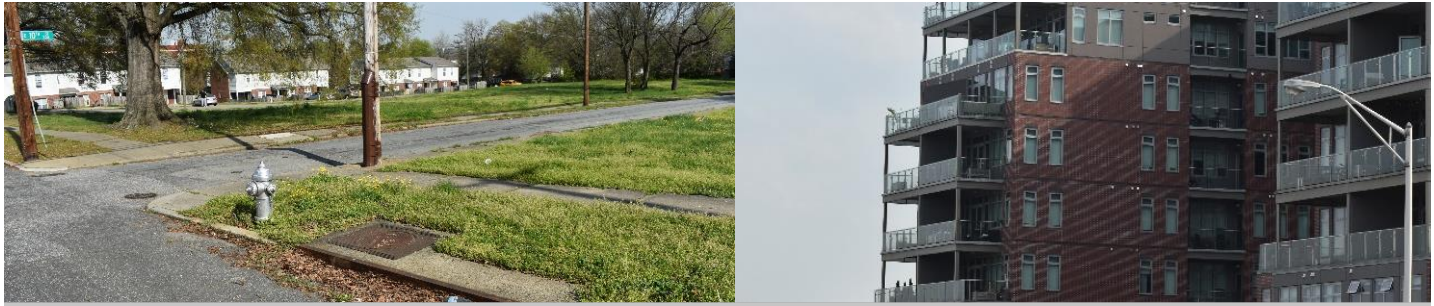
Health-related Predictors of Lower Life Expectancy

1. Education and Income
2. Unsafe or unhealthy housing
3. Limited opportunities for residents to exercise, walk or cycle
4. Proximity to highways
5. Access to primary care doctors
6. Unreliable or expensive public transit
7. Residential segregation

Unfortunately, many of these factors can be linked back to table 1, which shows the physical manifestations of racism within the local built environment. Together, this shows how the physical infrastructure within communities that have been influenced by race shorten the lives of residents.

Equitable Revitalization: Cultural and Economic Wealth Building

With the role of race in shaping the built environment as the backdrop, the need for equitable revitalization with a recognition of racial disparities comes to the forefront. Disinvestment has depressed property values in low-wealth communities of color, but new social norms and government-based incentives like the Opportunity Zones program are reversing those trends and causing the opposite of redlining with an uptick in concentrated investment (Matz, 2019). Many of the neighborhoods seeing this increased attention had low property values for decades and locations within the urban core, which make them more desirable as urbanization continues to grow around the world. Historic disinvestment makes these neighborhoods ripe for investors looking to make significant profits as property values begin to inflate because of the increased interest. Unfortunately, for many of these communities, revitalization efforts are only exacerbating the same racial and socio-economic disparities that already exist. However, revitalization that is more equitable is achievable.



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): The public housing community of Blackwell was torn down as a HOPE VI project in the late 1990s with promises of positive redevelopment. While some progress was made, more than 20 years later there are still acres of open land in Blackwell while an influx of new market rate and luxury housing development is happening just blocks away. Photo Group 5 - Blackwell - open acres of land from public housing demolition and Manchester development (Southside); Schirra Hayes

The first step to achieve revitalization that is more equitable is to have the community define what positive revitalization means to them. Residents should determine what they want their neighborhood to be, and all other planning and development work should start with resident voice. The next step is to anticipate the impacts of the development efforts and with foresight and intention work to actively combat the negative consequence of gentrification.

The consequences of gentrification are far reaching, and while displacement is the most common consequence found over half of the time, it was not the only consequence. The interrelated impacts within the gentrification process in addition to displacement include harassment and eviction, communal conflict, homelessness, and change to local service provision (Davidson, 2008). As noted earlier in this proposal, a high concentration of service organizations and nonprofits are actually a sign of disinvestment, but this concentration of services also are in jeopardy as neighborhoods gentrify. Displacement is by far the more common consequence of traditional revitalization efforts that are often inspired by government incentives and programs (Davidson, 2008). In order to achieve equitable revitalization, displacement must be addressed from a physical, cultural and economic perspective.

Displacement: Physical, Cultural and Economic

The dominant narrative of displacement is physical, with housing affordability serving as the anchor. As neighborhoods gentrify, increasing property values are one of the first indicators of a shift in who has access to live in the neighborhood. Physical displacement occurs when rents, home prices and residential property taxes increase beyond the point of affordability for residents who currently live in the neighborhood, forcing them to find housing they can afford in a new community.

One of the long-standing goals of the affordable housing community has been to create mixed-income, integrated neighborhoods of diversity. For some, an influx of new, wealthier residents into a predominantly low-wealth community, or by contrast, creating affordable housing for low-income people in high-wealth communities achieves the ideal mixed income community; however, this logic is not without challenge (Chaskin & Mark, 2015). One example of this was the redevelopment of public housing into three new mixed-income communities in Chicago: Oakwood Shores, Park Boulevard, and Westhaven Park. After studying the results, the researchers labeled this intended integration as incorporated exclusion where social and formal policing of the space led to the marginalization and isolation of former public housing residents (Chaskin & Mark, 2015). This strips who belongs within the community and can lead to alienation of people who once felt welcomed. Housing is tied to culture, and when new residents have sociocultural norms that are different from existing residents' cultural conflict and subsequent displacement can arise.

Cultural displacement occurs when the social and cultural norms of a community are dishonored and changed by new residents. It shows up in a myriad of ways ranging from violating the unspoken neighborhood rules of where to park, increased calls to law enforcement for non-criminal behaviors (ex: noise violations, suspicious activity claims etc.) and even access to the types of food, goods and services that had traditionally been accessible in a neighborhood (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015).

Cultural displacement is the culmination of independent decisions that typically bend towards the preferences of higher-powered (wealthier, often White) residents even when they are in the statistical minority. Similar to micro-aggressions, these individual decisions erode the sense of belonging and acceptance of the existing residents experiencing the shift in culture. The preservation of housing affordability and physical accessibility to the neighborhood is not enough to equitably revitalize a community unless partnered with cultural placemaking efforts that are responsive to the existing culture of a place (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015).

The third form of displacement is economic which is expressed through the loss of access to participation in the local economy. The primary way this happens is through unaffordable land and property. Commercial real estate affordability represents access to entrepreneurship, small business development and self-sufficiency, and increasing costs for commercial real estate limits access to those with higher income. Home ownership has been one of the primary tools of wealth building in the United States, and increasing property values limits access to this form of economic prosperity to those with higher incomes. Economics, culture and housing are all interdependent, and the first step to achieving equitable revitalization is to mitigate this displacement.

The Role of Arts & Culture in Community Development

While redlining, housing discrimination and concentrated poverty created the perfect storm of disinvestment, they left communities ripe for new investment with high margins of return from this economic depression. Government programs like opportunity zones incentivize new investments, positioning wealthy investors to benefit from depressed property values finally turning around in these communities.

The positive movement of property values signals a trend in economic growth, but the link between economics and Arts & Culture cannot be overlooked. The presence of art and its' role in the revitalization and gentrification of communities is contentious because research shows public and private investment in the arts can be triggers for gentrification (Zuch, Bierbaum, Chapple, Gorska, & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2018).

The nuanced relationship connecting beautification efforts with increasing neighborhood desirability causes some people to link arts expansion and neighborhood change. However, the relationship between public and private investment and the influence of the arts is much more complex. New research that compared Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York showed that gentrifying neighborhoods actually had the weakest presence of public art, and while commercial areas in gentrifying areas had public art, the same presence of art was found in neighborhoods without the potential to gentrify. Conclusions support using public art for communal good and relying on policy makers to fight displacement (Grodach, Foster, & Murdoch, 2018).



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): Murals line the Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge which serves as a primary gateway to the East End of Richmond, Virginia which is experiencing gentrification. Photo Group 6 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge Murals (East End); Schirra Hayes

Presence of Arts & Culture in Marginalized Communities

For low-wealth, communities of color, Arts & Culture are already embedded in the everyday experiences of residents and are often used as tools for placemaking and placekeeping. A case study from Chicago studied four unique communal spaces of Black life: Black Little League baseball, Black public housing reunions, Black digital commons, and Black lesbian and gay nightlife (Hunter, Pattillo, Robinson, & Taylor, 2016). This study offers a powerful counter-cultural narrative on the vibrancy and culturally rich experience of Black life in an urban, low-wealth Black community. For this community, poetry, spoken word, dance, music and the triumphant win of the all Black Jackie Robinson West Little League team victory at the US Little League World Series show a resilient and celebratory culture even in the midst of challenges (Hunter, Pattillo, Robinson, & Taylor, 2016).

Arts & Culture plays an important role in the reclamation of public space by marginalized people groups. While research points to constrained usage of public space for women, people of color, youth, elderly, gay men, lesbians and the homeless, there are also daily acts of resistance that typically include arts and culture to take back access to public space (McCann, 1999). Street performers and graffiti are prominent examples of this phenomenon. Pop-up markets and local street peddlers are also examples of Arts & Culture colliding for the defiance of social norms. This is further evidence of the complex role Arts & Culture play within the community engagement process and access to public space (McCann, 1999).



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): The Maggie Lena Walker and Bojangles Statues provide examples of public art memorializing historical Black figures. Photo Group 7 – Maggie Walker and Bojangles Statue (Downtown/Jackson Ward); Schirra Hayes

Investment and Wealth Building through Arts & Culture

Arts & Culture is a versatile tool used for celebration, defiance, and even blamed for inequity; however, within the context of equitable revitalization, there could be an opportunity to use Arts & Culture to trigger reinvestment in ways that lead to economic flourishing for low-wealth, people of color. While gentrification is happening in some traditionally low-wealth, communities of color across the country, many communities of color are still struggling with the impacts of disinvestment without any change in sight. They too desire equitable revitalization. Poor educational outcomes, high unemployment, and decreased life expectancy are common challenges for low-income people of color, and whether gentrifying or not, low-wealth communities of color grapple with lack of access to opportunity and upward mobility.

Within the context of equitable revitalization, Arts & Culture could be intentionally used to trigger investments where low-wealth residents of color have proactively been positioned to benefit both culturally and economically from that investment. Cultural and economic wealth are needed for self-sufficiency and agency. If art can be used to trigger investment, there may also be ways to plan this investment for equitable revitalization and wealth building for existing residents to own property, own their culture and ultimately own the option to live in and shape their community. As shown in figure 3 below, culture and economics are linked, and by using responsive design that celebrates existing culture, the anticipated ripple effect could lead to economic benefit.

As demonstrated in figure 3 below, when starting with a community of stars, neighborhood beautification efforts should be responsively designed by and for that community instead of generically designed for anyone. Prioritizing the desires of existing residents affirms their sense of belonging instead of devaluing their presence by designing for people outside of the community and inadvertently increasing external interest. Any level of investment should trigger an increase in property values which is why working to increase the supply of affordable home ownership opportunities to meet the demand is a critical step. Ownership is emphasized as a means of stabilizing housing costs and preventing dramatic increases in rents and subsequent evictions and physical displacement. In addition, ownership opportunities position residents to build wealth from the increase in property values through growing their equity. The ultimate differences in outcomes could mean wealth building, cultural preservation and stable housing instead of physical, cultural and economic development.

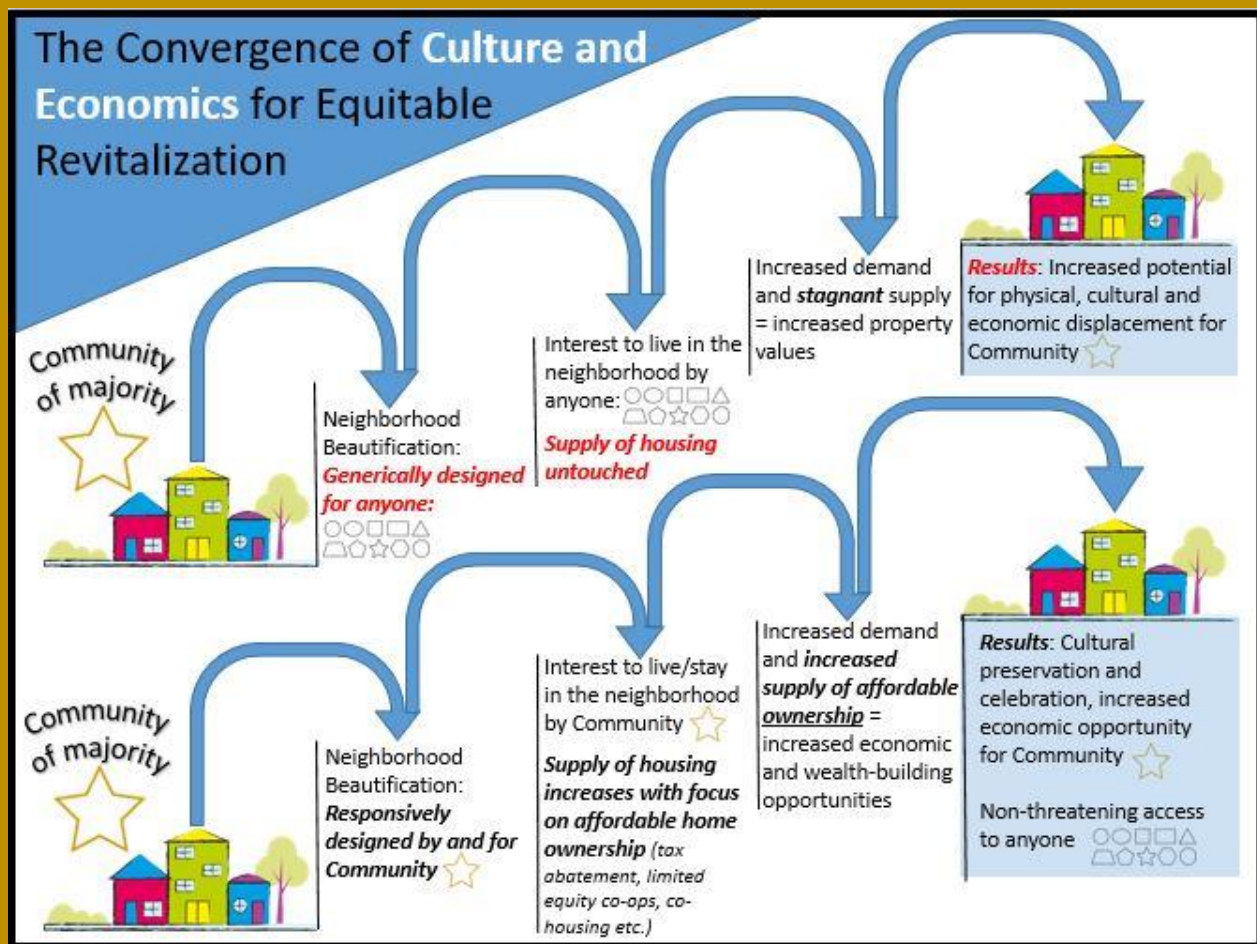


Figure 3 – the Convergence of Culture and Economics for Equitable Revitalization.

The Process of Community Engagement Matters

With equitable revitalization as the goal, the next step is to actually create an equitable engagement and planning process. The redevelopment of transportation infrastructure for multi-modal and human-scale use can be expensive, long-term work. It typically requires tens of millions of dollars of investment with many projects taking years to come to fruition. While the project itself creates a destination point, the journey should be reflective of the principles intended by the project which is why the process matters as much as the completed project.

One important step is examining the cycle and process steps of public participation. These four steps are:

- 1) Discover: Identification of the opportunity of problem to address
- 2) Plan: Determine how to address the problem or opportunity
- 3) Implement: Carry out the plan
- 4) Reflect and repeat: Evaluate the results and return to Discovery for ongoing improvement

The process itself creates opportunities for residents to travel on a journey that leads to positive and ideally sustainable outcomes for the project. Anchoring the process in purpose, ensuring appropriate resources to sustain the actual process, managing participation, and incorporating evaluation as the process evolves positions the participants to reach stronger outcomes (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013).

Community Engagement as Cyclical

Another perspective found through research is examining the process through the lens of a life cycle. By viewing the process as a series of subsequent events building upon one another to produce an outcome, each stage of the community engagement process takes on a significance with objectives and goals linked to the ultimate outcome. In the same way that the Kindergarten-12th grade curriculum creates a series of age appropriate lessons constructing a foundation of knowledge to be used for success in life through citizenship, employability and other life skills, community engagement process life cycles should be structured in stages that build on one another for the best possible outcome (McBride, Sherraden, & Pritzker, 2004). Without thoughtful, intentional stages with clear objectives leading towards the desired outcome, the actual outcome is in jeopardy. This further affirms the importance of the process (McBride, Sherraden, & Pritzker, 2004).

Within the planning field, procedural quality has gained a significant amount of traction as planning professionals embrace ideals of inclusivity, equity, mutual benefit etc. within the process as best practice; however, the acceptance of this ideal has not translated into widespread implementation. One of the major gaps is getting from process to product (MacCallum, 2008). Planning is often thought of as linear and logical, but these do not perfectly align with a fluid process with a wide range of paths and thoughts. As a result, the ideal participatory process can feel at odds with a direct result. This invites community engagement leaders and planners who believe in the value and significance of a participatory process to be willing to transition to a cyclical view of planning results that evolve instead of being stagnant (MacCallum, 2008). Figure 4 provides an interpretation of these ideals that outlines the cyclical process while also affirming deep levels of engagement through the process with the International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum of Community Engagement.

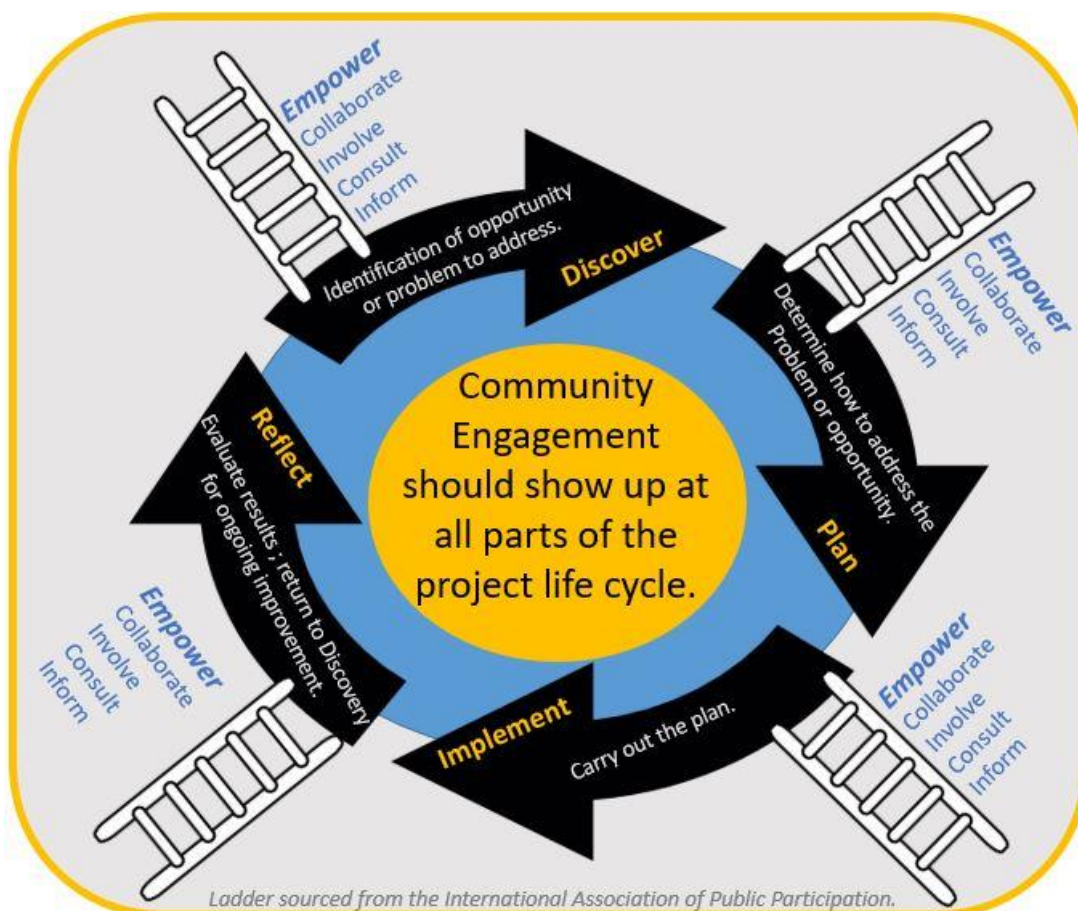


Figure 4 – Community engagement process and depth visualization

The Expertise of Citizens Should Shape Communities

Finally, residents are citizen experts in their lived experience and should be the primary voice shaping their own community. Neighborhoods are unique and have their own history and culture. Residents have the capacity and competencies to decide how they want to live. Whether by voting, volunteering at their church, participating in the Parent-Teacher-Association or calling the police to file a report, most residents engage within the voluntary, self-directed existing community infrastructure for civic engagement. Their interactions are self-directed and driven by their own desires and needs, but these interactions have been shaped by experience and history.

Research affirms communities feeling separate, distanced and powerless in influencing planning issues that affect them (Cowie, 2017). There are multiple examples of decisions that isolate, segregate and marginalize communities of color. This distrust is justifiable because the culmination of past efforts has led to the gap in life expectancy described in the earlier section on health disparities. In addition, planning is plagued by ongoing challenges, some of which are believed to be addressed when there is strong resident participation. Feeling on the outskirts of planning decisions that impact the resident creates an adversarial relationship where people are more likely to show up and provide their voice when in strong opposition versus during the stages of community engagement that are formative to project development.

Strengthening community engagement to center resident voices and learning how to overcome the sometimes-tense relationship between planners and residents can help address and overcome barriers to legitimate, sustainable plans. Using non-traditional forms of community engagement, like visual and performing arts, is a powerful tool for bridging these relationships and fostering participation in the formative stages of project planning (Cowie, 2017). The power and significance of stakeholder participation in producing stronger outcomes and in mutually beneficial experiences for the participants has also been affirmed through research. Strong resident participation is fostered when residents believe their voice matters and can see the potential outcome of their participation. The participation also has to move beyond tokenism, provide substantive opportunities for engagement and collaboration with respect, and honor for their input and time. Providing a process that is not rushed produces stronger rates of participation and more valuable feedback, and as a result, the affirmation of resident voice tends to lead to increased civic engagement outside of the project process (Wesley & Ainsworth, 2018).

Participation in the planning process is one of the first steps to engaging the expertise of residents and sharing power. Sherry Arnstein writes, "citizenship participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society." Arnstein draws a direct line from access to participation in the engagement process to political and economic power and agency. Through this line of thinking, wealth building opportunities for marginalized communities must include entrance into the systems controlling the destiny of their neighborhood. Without participation, there is no power (Arnstein, 2019).

"No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it to you in such a way that it becomes mine, my own. Rewriting you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk." – bell hooks (Hooks, 1990-1999)

When engaging resident expertise and sharing power, authorship cannot be ignored. Community members should be the authors of their neighborhood plan. Authorship points to power and privilege (Lake & Zitcer, 2012). Writing ability, translation and the freedom to choose how to listen and who to listen to are all part of the power held by planners and community engagement leaders. The filtering of communal voice and the tangible products credited to the author of the plan creates an often-unnamed discourse that can further distrust (Lake & Zitcer, 2012). The expertise and experiences shared through community members comprise the substance of participatory neighborhood planning. As shared in the section above on process, mutually beneficial participation in an equitable process matters; however, access to origination, authorship and ultimate ownership should rest in the expertise of residents.

METHODOLOGY

The research covers four key beliefs: racism in the built environment, cultural and economic wealth-building, the power of the process, and resident expertise. Because race has been a factor in planning decisions and neighborhood development, it must remain a factor now to pursue equity. While specific research on engaging low-wealth, people of color and culturally explicit design is limited, there are strong threads in research connecting all four key areas.

With this as the backdrop, the research methodology implemented through this process focused on gathering data from community engagement experts who have successfully worked with residents in low-wealth, communities of color to inform a community engagement process template for working with those who have traditionally been hardest to reach. Grounded in people’s experiences of their neighborhoods, the data collection process was aimed at pulling together strategies and techniques with the highest rates of engagement. The data collected has shaped the community engagement process and design principles aimed at reclaiming the spaces marked by racial scars for responsive design and placemaking for equitable revitalization. Ultimately this process will work to develop public spaces as infra-sutures.

Research Questions

The four research questions shaping this local research are:

1. How has race shaped the community you live and/or work in?
2. How has responsive design and community engagement played a role in seeing revitalization that benefits people of color and low-wealth residents?
3. How did you learn the history and culture of your community, and what role did that culture play in your engagement efforts and plans?
4. How should the community engagement process itself build the capacity of the community?

Data Collection

Table 2 – Research Questions and Data Sources

Index	Research Question	Data Collection	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
1	How has race shaped the community you live and/or work in?	Individual Interviews, Organizational Interviews, Photos	Residents, Community engagement experts, historians, Photos	Community-based organizations History books Demographics
2	How has responsive design and community engagement played a role in seeing revitalization that benefits people of color and low-wealth residents?	Individual Interviews, Organizational Interviews	Residents, community engagement experts, Photos	Community-based organizations
3	How did you learn the history and culture of your community, and what role did that culture play in your engagement efforts and plans?	Individual Interviews, Organizational Interviews	Historians, Residents, Community engagement experts	Community-based organizations
4	How should the community engagement process itself build the capacity of the community?	Individual Interviews, Organizational Interviews	Residents, Community engagement experts	Community-based organizations

Research Design

Individual and organizational interviews were used to learn the experiences of residents, nonprofit, civic, for-profit and government agencies and historians. Using similar questions, each person answered questions related to culture, history, community engagement and place. As shown in Appendix A, questions were sorted into four categories: culture, history, community engagement and their experience of place and space. The questions were organized to prompt learning about culture through their sense of identity. Subsequently, they were asked about history within the context of informing their perception of their culture. Interviewees shared how they gained access to their history and also shared how/if they see their stories being told in the physical environment around them. They then shared their experience in community engagement including their personal preferences and how they want to be engaged in addition to the ways they believe low-wealth, people of color who are traditionally the hardest to reach can be engaged. Finally, the identified places and spaces both public and private they enjoyed within their community and places and spaces that they did not feel comfortable of safe and why.

To close out the interview, as shown in Appendix B, a mapping exercise was also used to help participants share their experience of spaces in Richmond, Virginia. Using prompts related to comfort, safety, belonging, homogeneity and diversity, participants mapped their experiences and feelings within the physical environment. Responses ranged from individual properties to entire segments of town. Trends from the mapping exercise underscored places of income and racial segregation while also helping interviewees describe what made places feel safe. They also worked through the difference between safety and belonging which prompted more stories about their experience of public spaces.

In response to the interviews and mapping exercise, photos of significant places that surfaced as themes from several interviews capture an inventory of examples of places that highlight elements of the design principles and opportunities for infra-structures which have been peppered throughout the plan. Photovoice uses images as part of the research process, and because the built environment is a cornerstone of this project plan, capturing photos of spaces that demonstrate the core beliefs within the Richmond community has been central. Photovoice used in this plan create a catalog of evidence of racism's impact on the built environment, and documents spaces identified as formative to residents' experiences. The intentional use of photos is also an attempt to make the research findings accessible to residents, practitioners and planners alike. These interviews and mapping experiences have contributed to the foundation of the community engagement recommendations.

Data Sources

Table 3 – Methodology Reference: Interviewees

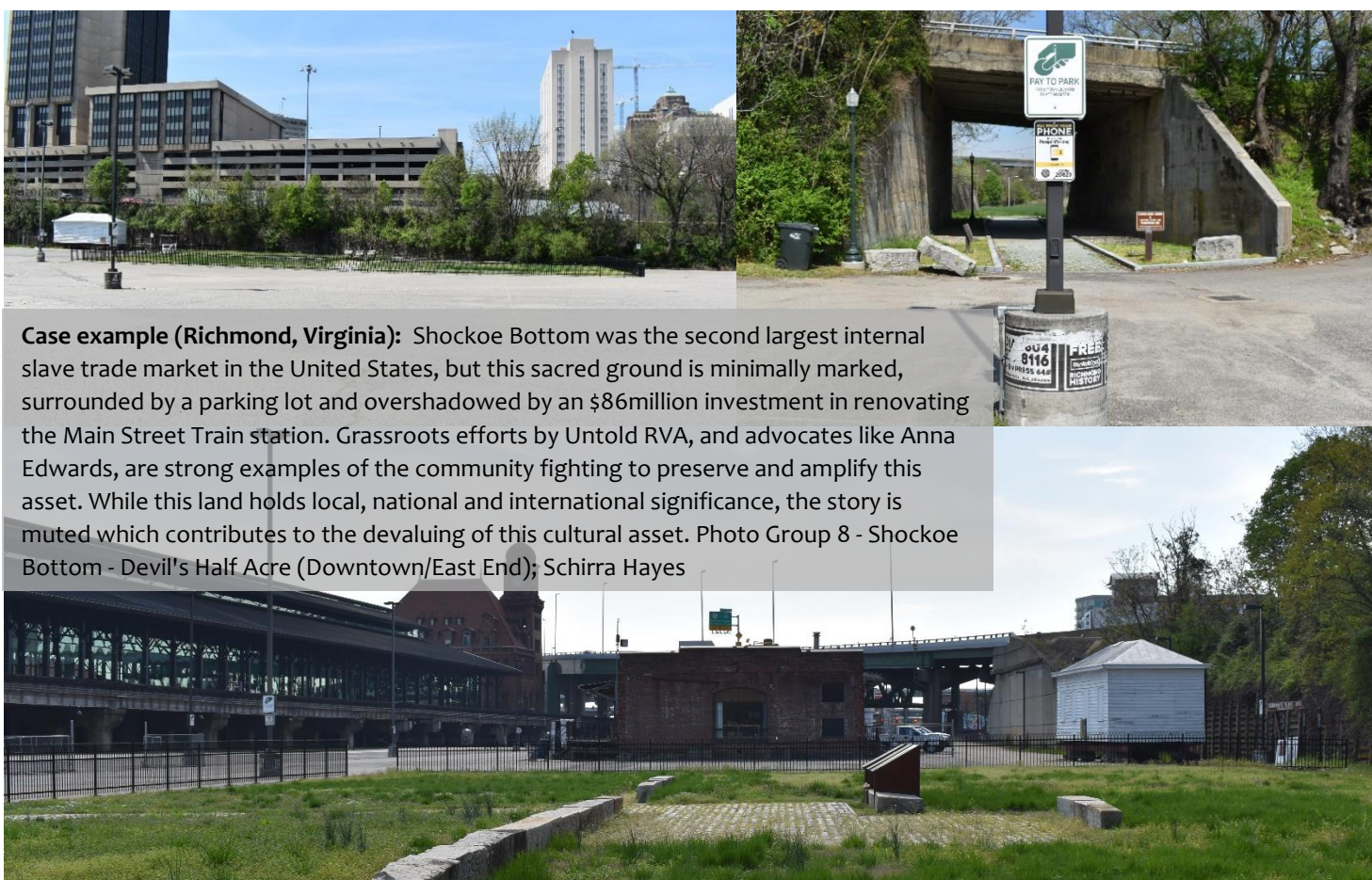
Category	Number of Interviews
Resident	11
Historian	7
Community Engagement Expert	12
Community Based Organization	8
Total unduplicated interviews	18
% People of Color	72%

PROJECT PLAN: FINDINGS

Research and interviews have affirmed the link between the physical environment around us and the significant role it plays in the formation and expression of values, ideals and priorities. As further context for the plan, listed below are the key findings that in combination with the core beliefs shape the recommendations.

Our history and culture are reflected in the physical environment around us. Culture is the manifestation of our identity; therefore, the way we design space is formative to who we are.

While we typically approach architecture and spacial design prioritizing how people use or interact with space, we rarely consider how spaces impact identity. From the presence or absence of sidewalks, to property values, we consciously and subconsciously learn who and what matters from the physical environment around us. Many times, our environment affirms the inequities that exist in our culture, and as a result, this plan works to use the power of place and space to subsequently work to dismantle inequity. The design of space and the story being told through the built environment around us should be elevated to the weight it actually bares.



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): Shockoe Bottom was the second largest internal slave trade market in the United States, but this sacred ground is minimally marked, surrounded by a parking lot and overshadowed by an \$86million investment in renovating the Main Street Train station. Grassroots efforts by Untold RVA, and advocates like Anna Edwards, are strong examples of the community fighting to preserve and amplify this asset. While this land holds local, national and international significance, the story is muted which contributes to the devaluing of this cultural asset. Photo Group 8 - Shockoe Bottom - Devil's Half Acre (Downtown/East End); Schirra Hayes

Culture is shaped out of our history, so the denial of access to our history provides a distortion of our true culture and identity.

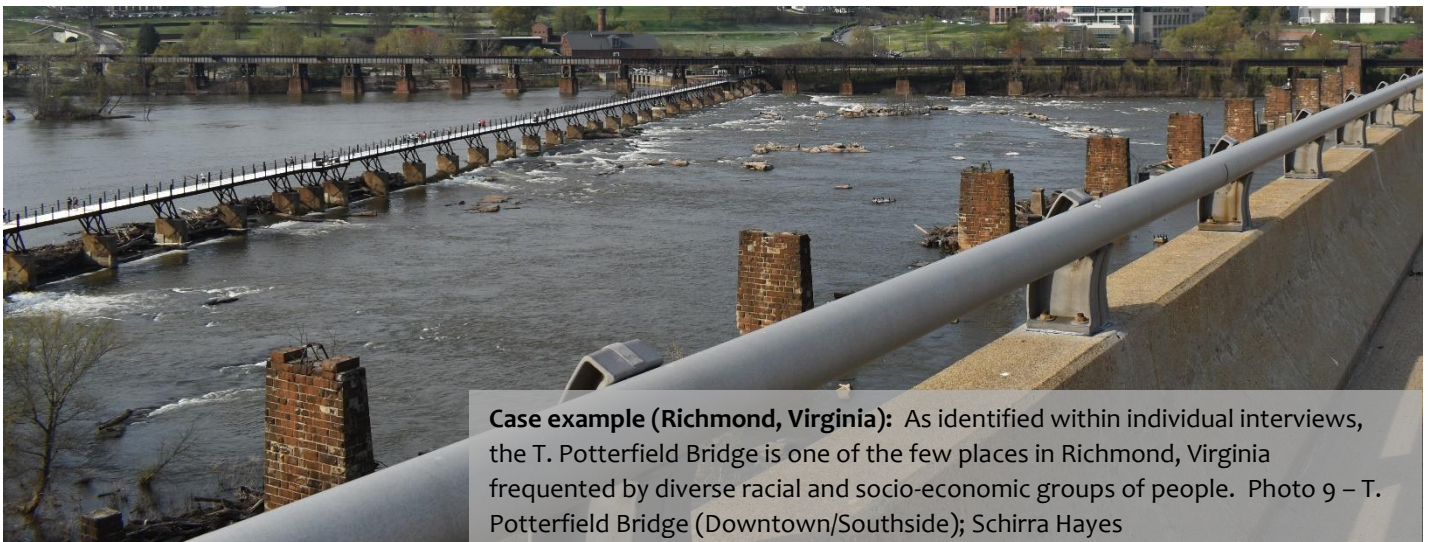
When the history celebrated in the built environment mutes the history of people of color and elevates positive narratives of dominant culture, the infrastructure works to re-write history as time progresses leaving those who experienced that past in the minority. The partial telling of history distorts the public's perception of what actually took place and therefore becomes complicit in substantiating inequity.

Story Spotlight: Access to History

“As a Black man who has lived in the East End for over 50 years, I remember going to school in the 1960s and 1970s. This was around the end of segregation, but integration actually led to more socio-economic segregation. I can imagine that schools with all Black students and teachers were a place where organically you were surrounded by Black culture and Black history, but unfortunately, I did not really learn about Richmond’s history until I was in my 40s and 50s. Some of that learning started because as my neighborhood started gentrifying, some of the young White folks moving in were asking questions about how the East End happened. There was deeply concentrated public housing, challenges with education and more. Their learning prompted my own learning, and I remember reading books and realizing that I was a part of the story I was reading. I lived the history I was reading about, but I had no idea the level of intentionality and blatant racism that contributed to my own experience.”

In order to achieve racial equity and healing, we must change our orientation and our proximity to people who are different.

Although history tells us integration has already happened, the data shows us that ending racial segregation actually birthed the combination of racial and income segregation. Proximity is the first step towards integration; however, our orientation and position within close proximity also has to change. Orienting one’s self to interact with and learn from a person of difference is part of what is necessary to achieve diversity, inclusion and equity. Proximity and orientation bring us into relationship with people who are different and challenges the assumptions, stereotypes and biases we all hold. Designing spaces that value interactions across diverse groups of people are an important part of achieving equity.



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): As identified within individual interviews, the T. Potterfield Bridge is one of the few places in Richmond, Virginia frequented by diverse racial and socio-economic groups of people. Photo 9 – T. Potterfield Bridge (Downtown/Southside); Schirra Hayes

Story Spotlight: Proximity and Orientation

The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia held an exhibition on vintage Black comic strips from the 1930's-1960's, and a group of middle school students came to the exhibit. The museum also has a permanent exhibit on the Klu Klux Klan, and two boys from the group, one Black and one White, got into a serious discussion after visiting the KKK exhibit. Because of the comic exhibit, the Museum had comic templates on the tables for reflection, and the two boys used the templates to create their own superhero called the KKK Stopper to protect Black people. Adults in the room were nervous when they initially saw the tense interaction between the boys, but their interaction showed that when given an opportunity, young people can grapple with hard realities of our past; and with reflection they channeled that into a joint, powerful response. These middle school boys were brave enough to have the conversation with one another, and although there were tense moments, they developed a unified response. We all can learn from these young men by changing our proximity and orientation to people who are different.

The physical environment around us has been curated with intention and purpose through planning violence, and this physical, cultural and economic trauma affirms the need for infra-sutures.

The wounds made from planning decisions are apparent – destruction of neighborhoods, concentrating poverty, demolition of social and cultural networks. Acknowledging that wounds come from trauma and violence communicates the power planning decisions have had, and raises the level of accountability for planning decisions moving forward. In many cases, the decisions themselves not only cause mental or social trauma, but actually came with the threat of actual violence against people of color. Reckoning with our past positions us to begin healing and to not repeat the same mistakes.



Case example (Richmond, Virginia): Confederate leaders like Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson are celebrated through a carefully curated Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia. Their cause included the ongoing enslavement of Black people which brutally and violently oppressed generations. Photo 10 - Robert E Lee Statue, Monument Avenue (West End); Schirra Hayes

We are all multicultural, so inclusion and diversity are non-negotiable.

Every person holds multiple cultures. Geography, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, class, family etc. all hold culture. This means as individuals we are inherently diverse and need spaces that acknowledge and celebrate multiple cultures.

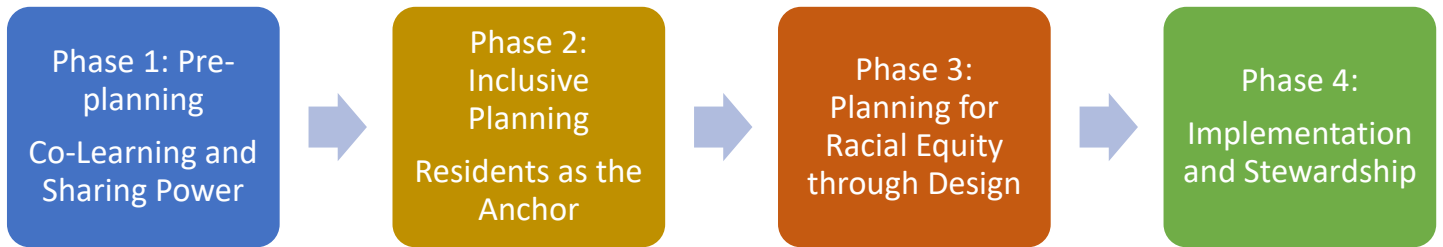
The usage and experience of public space creates opportunities for personal and communal transformation; therefore, people and communities must be centered in an ongoing process of engagement to build and preserve cultural ownership and economic power through the redevelopment.

Public spaces hold the transformative power to leave imprints on people and communities. This power is realized through intentional design and responsive programming that curate usage for transformative experiences. In order to achieve more equitable outcomes, residents must be anchored as leaders in a process that begins at the inception of the idea and lasts for as long as the space exists. The mission and goals of the redevelopment project are not limited to the physical construction of the space, but can instead be embodied throughout the process. The engagement of residents activates the potential for achieving equity and transformation.

These findings underscore the core beliefs of this plan that race has shaped the built environment; equitable revitalization should lead to cultural and economic wealth building; the process matters just as much as the completed project; and the expertise of residents should shape communities. In response to these findings, this plan offers community engagement strategies for the redevelopment of public space.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDING INFRA-SUTURES THROUGH CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Vision Statement: Through community engagement and culturally responsive design, communities previously scarred by the physical manifestations of racial trauma will pursue racial and socioeconomic equity through the redevelopment of public space with infra-sutures. With purposeful efforts to build cultural and economic wealth for low-wealth people of color, the process of redevelopment and expertise of residents will bring healing through restorative planning.



Phase 1: Pre-planning through Co-Learning and Sharing Power

At the inception of any idea for the redevelopment of any space within a community, certain considerations should be made in order to cause no harm and promote equity through project efforts. Ahead of any planning for redevelopment, begin with these pre-planning and shared learning goals.

Goal 1: Defer to the authority and power of residents.

Whether as a nonprofit, resident, advocate, ally, government entity or businesses, the initiator of the pre-planning process must be positioned to learn from the community most closely connected to the redevelopment project. Regardless of who the initiator is, they should begin learning about the community before they have established an agenda. If they have an agenda, they should learn before creating a development plan. If there is already a plan, they should be willing to change it. If the plan is set and cannot be changed, they should not engage the community.

Out of respect for the residents, never engage the community for the sole purpose of saying engagement has happened. Unless there is a genuine opportunity for resident input, the potential to do harm outweighs any potential benefits of engagement. Outreach to inform the community may be fitting, but not community engagement. If the organization comes without any definitive project in mind with the sole purpose of supporting the community in realizing its’ own vision, that is community organizing. Community organizing avoids many of the pitfalls of community engagement and outreach.

Table 4 – Community Outreach, Engagement and Organizing

	Resident Power	Resident Control	Resident Voice	Resident Participation
Community Organizing	High	High	High	High
Community Engagement	Medium	Medium	Medium-High	High
Community Outreach	Low	Low	Medium	Medium-High

1. **Objective 1.1:** Build authentic relationships with the community by prioritizing community-identified needs.
 - a. **Strategy 1.1.1:** Learn the history of the community. Communities have been evolving based on a foundation of intentional decisions and choices that have happened across time. In order to participate in the development of an equitable future, it is important to understand where inequities exist and how they came to be.
 - b. **Strategy 1.1.2:** Build authentic relationships with the people targeted for engagement. Traditional engagement efforts build transactional relationships, exchanging input, signatures or attendance for the approval of a project; however, authentic relationships are rooted in mutual respect and shared learning.
 - c. **Strategy 1.1.3:** Start with what the community needs/wants ahead of an idea. Whether employment, housing, transportation, health etc., listen to learn what is most important to residents to ensure the work is integrated with the vision residents see for their community.
 - d. **Strategy 1.1.4:** Hire community residents to serve as project leaders. Staff positions carry authority and contribute to the planning, implementation and daily execution of efforts. Hiring and paying residents to serve in these roles helps build shared power and ongoing co-learning into the infrastructure of the development effort.

Story Spotlight: Building Relationships

“I am a young Black man who is passionate about youth in our city. I spend time in the East End, particularly in public housing because I love being where my people are. I work professionally with youth, but my personal time is also spent on the basketball court, on the block or in my own backyard, typically surrounded by youth. I don’t really have a strategy for engagement; I just build relationships. It typically starts with one kid who I will mentor and build a relationship with. I’ll go to their house to meet their family, and soon I know all the youth and families on that block. Eventually, the other youth and families that are friends with that one teen, become part of my community too.”

2. **Objective 1.2:** Through transparency and vulnerability, build trust with the community and set realistic expectations.
 - a. **Strategy 1.2.1:** Be transparent about intentions, what resources are available and how resident feedback will be used. Building trust is a significant part of engagement. Without it, there will be low levels of participation and potentially pushback to the results, but transparency helps temper expectations and build trust.
 - b. **Strategy 1.2.2:** Acknowledge the bias and track record of the organization and start there in order to build trust. Many organizations have done harm to the community in the past. Acknowledging that history and what is being done to change course early in the process is important to getting residents to the table.

- c. Strategy 1.2.3: Anticipate push back because everyone will not be happy about the project. Disagreement is not failure and cannot be avoided; however, every effort should be made to cultivate a collective communal vision for the space and to carry out the plans determined by the community. When in doubt or the majority desires are unclear, defer to the desires of marginalized populations.
- d. Strategy 1.2.4: Create a memorandum of understanding, community benefits agreement or some other documented explanation and commitment of roles, responsibilities and expectations. Most redevelopment projects will require the participation of an organization or institution even if solely to serve as a fiscal sponsor, and whether it is a community-led nonprofit, government or some other organization, there needs to be documented expectations for transparency and trust building.

Goal 1 Richmond application: Engagement efforts in Richmond should focus on complete transparency in order to build trust within the community. Project budgets, funding sources, documentation of outreach and learning efforts, findings, obstacles and even places of failure should all be shared consistently and publicly with opportunities for ongoing feedback. Many communities-of-color in Richmond are challenged by unemployment rates more than double the regional and state averages, and because of this, engagement efforts often surface overcoming poverty through living-wage jobs as a priority. A demonstration of prioritizing this need would be to intentionally include living-wage job opportunities and workforce training into the redevelopment plans. If the project will require construction, landscaping, meeting facilitation etc., prioritize hiring local residents, and where there are known skills gaps, partner with workforce development organizations to prioritize training within the community.

Goal 2: Anticipate economic impact, and make an investment before extracting value or input from residents.

These suggestions are not intended to be completed by the leader of the project; however, there should be intentional efforts to connect with people and groups who already provide these services to ask them to offer these services within the community that will be most impacted by development efforts. Here are three specific areas to think about to help position residents to benefit most from economic impacts:

1. **Objective 2.1:** Support learning to build the capacity of people within the community to participate in the redevelopment efforts by investing in training within the neighborhood.
 - a. Strategy 2.1.1: Invest in local small business capacity building by partnering with organizations to provide training to become an approved city vendor, SWAM (small, women and minority-owned) business certification, small business development and coaching etc.
 - b. Strategy 2.1.2: Invest in resident leader capacity building by partnering with an organization to provide training on how to navigate city departments.
2. **Objective 2.2:** Support stability to prevent displacement as a result of increasing property values.
 - a. Strategy 2.2.1: Work with the local land trust (commercial and housing).
 - b. Strategy 2.2.2: Advocate for tax abatement or relief and critical home repair supportive services.
 - c. Strategy 2.2.3: Partner with organizations to provide financial coaching to increase financial stability and bankability of residents to participate in economic opportunities.
3. **Objective 2.3:** Support upward mobility by investing in education and opportunities for existing residents to benefit individually from the increased investment.
 - a. Strategy 2.3.1: Work with partners to offer classes and education in home and commercial real estate purchase and ownership.
 - b. Strategy 2.3.2: For existing property owners, work with partners to provide classes and workshops on renovation and rehabilitation with guides to local resources and incentives.

Goal 2 Richmond application: Partner with the Maggie Walker Land Trust and land bank, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Virginia LISC, Southside Community Development & Housing Corporation, the Small Business Administration, Chamber of Commerce and other organizations providing training, grants and other capacity building resources related to property ownership and financial stability. Curate a toolbox of resources and partner with organizations to concentrate capacity building efforts within neighborhoods connected to the redevelopment effort.

Story Spotlight: Building Resident Capacity

“When I worked for the City of Charlottesville as a planner, we held a Neighborhood Leadership Institute where residents could learn about planning, housing, transportation (etc.) in order to be agents of change in their community. So much of what happens is trying to engage people around a particular decision that is time-bound which can be really hard. We ask people to make a decision while also updating them on all this information it takes 2 years to master, so it is challenged from the outset. The Neighborhood Leadership Institute was a proactive way to help residents understand how the city works so they are equipped to interact and engage as change agents. Without this work to equip residents, most of what they may want to see happen in their own community will either be prohibitive or policed.”

Phase 2: Inclusive planning through resident-anchored engagement

After pre-planning is complete, transition into focusing on an inclusive engagement process to gather input from a broad range of residents and stakeholders within the community. Residents will be the greatest source of knowledge for understanding their culture which will create the foundations for the redevelopment effort. These strategies are focused on inclusion by giving power and control to community members through the engagement process. These strategies will also help move community engagement from feeling like an extraction of ideas, stories and intellectual property. The goals below provide important steps for accomplishing this effort.

Goal 3: Orient all engagement efforts around resident expertise.

1. **Objective 3.1:** Community voices must be centered in the conversation. While many ideas compete for significance, the voices of residents should be amplified and carry more weight than outside influences. Often times engagement can defer to people with more resources and engagement can be focused on who to attract to a neighborhood instead of who is already there. The voice, desires and experiences of the existing community must be the anchors of the engagement.
 - a. **Strategy 3.1.1:** Look for and rely on communal expertise to inform and guide efforts. The keepers of the community's history are often institutions, leadership programs, or places with intentional learning opportunities which usually require a level of privilege, acceptance, financial stability and/or comfort with White culture to access. This work can contribute to dismantling inequities in access to history by relying on the expertise of nontraditional experts.

- b. Strategy 3.1.2: Do not lead, facilitate. Approach engagement efforts as a facilitator, and not as an expert. Residents and community members are the experts, and the community engagement efforts should be about creating space to allow that expertise to shine through.

- 2. **Objective 3.2**: The most comfortable people in the room/process or space, should always be residents. When led by organizations and institutions, this changes the orientation of the people planning or creating the space because they should be the least comfortable. When led by residents, it means finding ways to ensure a diverse range of voices are heard and not only those who usually speak up. This means level-setting for people who normally speak on behalf of others or represent certain groups. Efforts need to be made to hear direct stories and input and not translation.
 - a. Strategy 3.2.1: The audience needs to include children, teens, young adults, seniors etc. When planning engagement efforts, think outside of the traditional box which pictures literate adults without any special needs as the audience.
 - b. Strategy 3.2.2: The audience also needs to thoughtfully include stakeholders with power (police, funders, political and business leaders etc.) as advisors to the planning process. Residents should lead and control the conversation, but it is important to include other stakeholders to create space for transformative conversation and to ensure plans do not become prohibitive or policed.
 - c. Strategy 3.2.3: Use a variety of techniques to engage diverse groups of people. Make engagement interactive by using images, small group discussions, games, art, visual preference surveys, legos etc. instead of lecture-based learning and speaking in front of large groups as the primary means of participation. Move away from the corporate feel and focus on engagement efforts being reflective of community culture.

- 3. **Objective 3.3**: Conduct early action projects to build trust and demonstrate a genuine willingness to listen and respond to community feedback.
 - a. Strategy 3.3.1: Use tactical urbanism to temporarily demonstrate possibilities. In addition to trust building, tactical urbanism provides an opportunity to get more specific feedback through testing ideas with temporary infrastructure before finalizing efforts. This can prevent concretizing mistakes and making best efforts to see the project reach its highest potential.
 - b. Strategy 3.3.2: Engagement efforts should be mutually beneficial, and prioritize meeting a felt need or desire within the community today and not just long-term goals of the project.

Goal 3 Richmond application: Applying goal 3 can be as simple as holding meetings outside the work day and as nuanced as having a community cookout that extends for most of the day because of social norms around time. It also means building relationships with organizations and groups like RVA League for Safer Streets, Community 50/50, 6PIC etc. because lack of participation may not mean people are disinterested, but they need to be exposed to new ideas within the comfort of relationship. Engagement techniques designed to be responsive to immediate community needs can include free tax preparation, free childcare with napping stations for parents of young children, yoga/mindfulness workshop for stress relief, paint nights, talent shows, free wi-fi hotspots, mobile health screenings etc.

Story Spotlight: Resident-centered Engagement

“Engagement has to change to meet the needs of the community. People don’t want to come to our meetings unless there is something positive for them to get out of it. This may sound crazy, but as a new parent, I would give anything to take a nap. Anyone who is a parent can appreciate the need for sleep. What if we offered free, professional childcare and offered napping stations where parents who were exhausted can take a break and get some rest? Maybe we can use a survey on their way out to get input on what we need, but the primary purpose is to meet a need in the community with our engagement as secondary. If engagement started with what the community wants, I think we could change everything and finally begin connecting with some of the folks who have been hardest to reach.”

Phase 3: Planning for Racial Equity through Design

The built environment plays an important role in culture and identity formation, so there needs to be intentional efforts to ensure the design of the redevelopment maximizes the capacity for equity and healing.

Goal 4: Purposefully incorporate design principles for racial equity.

1. **Objective 4.1:** Implement the equitable design principle of access.
Access for people who live in closest proximity to the public space with an intentional focus on people groups who have been marginalized is essential to achieving equity and shifting people groups from the margins to the forefront. Access to their history through arts and culture in the space anchors the work in intentionally acknowledging the power space holds and using that power for communal good.
 - a. **Strategy 4.1.1:** Design the space to celebrate culture and share history.
 - b. **Strategy 4.1.2:** Design and program the space with human voice. Physical design is only part of the experience, and when people’s interpretation of that history is present in the space, it activates the human experience and relevance to visitors. Whether through guided tours, signs with quotes, recordings etc. incorporate human voice.
 - c. **Strategy 4.1.3:** Integrate opportunities for diverse groups of people to participate. Visual and performing arts, sound, touch etc. should be considered within the design to ensure people of all abilities and learning styles have an opportunity to engage with the space around them.

1. **Objective 4.2:** Implement the equitable design principle of power.
The design of the space must be working to shift power into the hands of marginalized residents, and this accomplished by purposefully finding ways to give control and increase wealth connected to space into the hands of the surrounding community.

- a. Strategy 4.2.1: Mark the land, and give oversight and control to community residents. Land represents power and wealth, and setting aside physical portions of land to be used to celebrate communal culture especially for marginalized people is essential to achieving racial equity in the built environment.
- b. Strategy 4.2.2: Every aspect of the design, development and usage of the space that generates income must be economically benefitting people within the community.
- c. Strategy 4.2.3: Challenge traditional norms of statues and signs to tell a different story to a different audience. The world is evolving and the design of the space should embrace innovation.
- d. Strategy 4.2.4: Prioritize the oral histories of the people within the community whose stories would not have been traditionally written or translated into the mainstream sources of history. The community should hold the power to know, tell and control their own narratives in ways that are freely accessible.

Story Spotlight: Pedestals

When Kehinde Wiley experienced Monument Avenue, one of the first things he noticed was that the pedestals are what gave the monuments power. In contrast to monuments of people of color like Bojangles and Maggie Walker, the grandeur and scale of their design is far less significant because of the pedestal. Both literally and figuratively the pedestals show what stories we value. It also emphasizes the story of one person or individual, when no one is above reproach. Ideals and values reflective of a collective culture are what should be prioritized, while the stories we tell of people should be at the human scale and include a diversity of people in age, socio-economic status, ability etc. The space should inspire every person to see their own power and significance.

- 2. **Objective 4.3**: Implement the equitable design principle of belonging. Belonging is at the center of inclusion. In order for people to feel welcome and comfortable within public space, they need to feel connected to the space, and that comes through establishing a sense of belonging through how the space is designed.
 - a. Strategy 4.3.1: Through design features and programming, ensure visibility of people within the community. This can be through murals, photography or programming, but through whatever means, seeing aspects of who they are reflected in the space is critical.
 - b. Strategy 4.3.2: Design for regular visitation. From the design and placement of seating, spaces for play for all ages (children to seniors), integration of programming for planned or impromptu performances and celebrations, a diversity of uses inviting people to simply be is important to affirming that they belong and to prevent the space from becoming stale.

Story Spotlight: Belonging by Reflection

“Although I feel safe in Richmond, and I spend time leading community engagement around the city, I don’t actually feel like I belong anywhere in Richmond. This is because I don’t see myself. As a proud Latina, I feel like I belong when I see other people who look like me and who represent my culture. Actual people, food, art, dance, music all makeup my culture, and when I see myself, I belong.”

3. **Objective 4.4:** Implement the equitable design principle of transformation.
Considering the role of the physical environment in forming our culture and subsequently our identity, the design of the space should not only acknowledge that power, but use it to purposefully accomplish racial equity.
 - a. **Strategy 4.4.1:** Design the space to include celebration alongside the pain. Telling the history, especially of marginalized people often includes narratives of oppression; and while these stories need to be told, they must always be told in ways that highlight positive values like strength, determination, resilience, family, community etc. that celebrates how even challenging and dark parts of our past have positively shaped our culture.
 - b. **Strategy 4.4.2:** Build in space for reflection. Incorporating water, landscaping, places of sanctuary and retreat contribute to relieving anxiety and create space for relaxation. In a space that may also include challenging historical content, it is also critically important to provide space for people to process their own experience.
 - c. **Strategy 4.4.3:** Design the space to serve as an infra-suture. Consider the history of the land itself and determine how the space can be designed to repair wounds within the physical environment. This is done by looking for and working to close gaps. It could be a physical bridge or tunnel to literally connect communities, or it could also be reconnecting communities to their story and establishing a sense of identity.

4. **Objective 4.5:** Implement the equitable design principle of responsiveness.
A responsive posture should be taken for initial development of the space and should also be factored into the design as an ongoing value.
 - a. **Strategy 4.5.1:** Design the space to be both permanent and flexible. Just as museums have permanent and temporary exhibit halls, public spaces should do the same. Culture is constantly evolving, so spaces must also be permanently held to evolve alongside our changing narratives.
 - b. **Strategy 4.5.2:** Design the space from the lens of placeholding and placekeeping, but leave the placemaking to the community. The space should hold/keep space for the celebration of communal culture and opportunities for wealth creation; however, the community should fill those spaces with what matters to them.

Story Spotlight: Permanent and Flexible

“As a gay man, it was really important to me to find places that celebrate my sexuality. I needed to hear that it was ok to be gay, and I was so happy when I found that in a particular community organization. When the program message during week one was focused on affirming my identity, it was just what I needed, but after hearing the same program message for the 10th time, I was ready for something more. We all have deeply important messages that our souls need to hear, but if there is only one message being told, there is no reason to come back once I’ve heard it.”

Goal 4 Richmond application: Practical examples of applying goal 4 include in Richmond include:

1. Sharing history through monuments, murals, signage, performances, reenactments, digital/QR codes to online stories etc.
2. Celebrating culture by accommodating everyday social behaviors like adding tables and seating designed for playing spades and dominos, designing seating based on front porches or stoops, creating over-sized parking spaces for tailgating, design playgrounds with elevated seating areas for parents with multiple children to see the entire play area etc.
3. Catering for planning activities, childcare, construction, landscape design, maintenance, programming etc. every dollar spent on the space and generated because of the space should be in that community.
4. Designing spaces optimal for selfies and photos for social media, incorporating free Wi-Fi to serve as an outdoor library, arranging seating with space for wheelchairs, statues of children of youth, projecting images, and incorporating sound are all examples of giving power to the everyday experience of the community.

Phase 4: Plan implementation and ongoing stewardship

Once plans are complete, the final phase transitions to focus on the implementation of the redevelopment plans and the long-term, ongoing programming and stewardship of the space upon completion. This final set of goals create a pathway for ensuring equitable revitalization and racial equity continues through redevelopment efforts.

Goal 5: Create a plan for ongoing maintenance, community engagement and programming.

The initial design of the space is significant; however, programming influences people’s perception and impacts their sense of belonging. Create plans for programming to curate a narrative for the space without leaving usage results tied to the original intentions.

5. **Objective 5.1:** Develop resident-led power structures to support community stewardship of the space.
 - a. **Strategy 5.1.1:** Determine organization structure that protects resident ownership. Board structure, staffing requirements and channels of oversight and authority should build in requirements for resident leadership.

- b. Strategy 5.1.2: Where possible, ensure the ownership of land and/or any other assets related to the redevelopment project are jointly owned by the community. In cases of assets that appreciate in value, create infrastructure to allocate gains in equity for maintenance, sustainability and community benefit.
- 6. **Objective 5.2**: Establish programmatic priorities that value ongoing responsiveness to the community culture and priorities.
 - a. Strategy 5.2.1: Create plans for ongoing community engagement to remain responsive to community needs in perpetuity. Community engagement should not have a start and stop; it is an ongoing practice that should be built into the programming of the space even once the redevelopment work is complete.
 - b. Strategy 5.2.2: Plan for programming within the redeveloped space (festivals, markets, youth and senior programs etc.) that continues to affirm a sense of belonging through cultural affirmation of the community.

Story Spotlight: Usage Influences Belonging

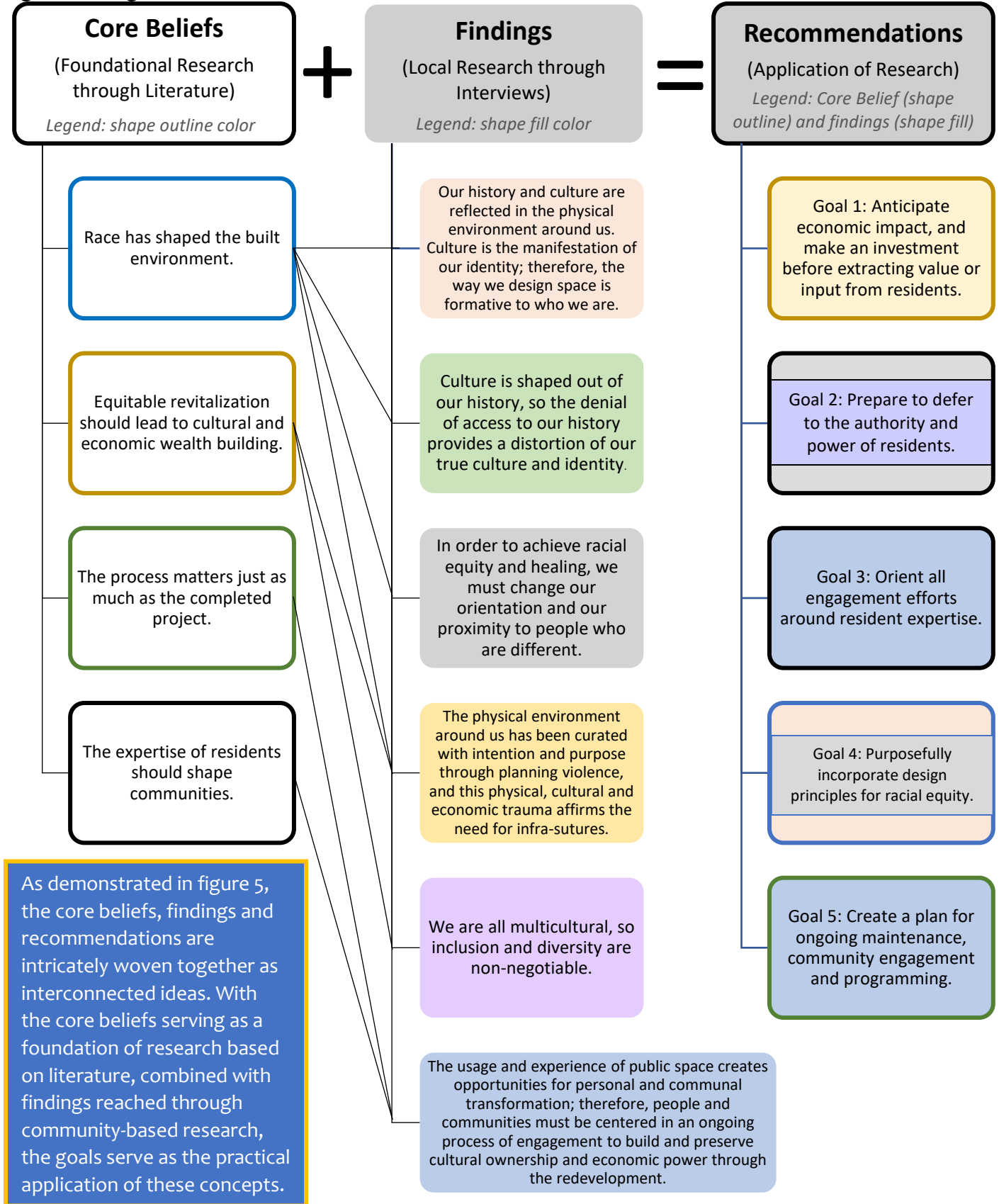
Affirming the importance of intentional programming

“One of my favorite places to go in Richmond was the lawn at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The outdoor space was beautiful with greenery, flowers, water features and my husband and I loved taking our children there. But when the protests to keep Confederate monuments began on Monument Avenue in response to Charlottesville, I no longer felt safe taking my beautiful Black family to that side of town. Those protests completely changed our comfort level, and although the museum just a few blocks away became a place we loved, the protests quickly reminded us that Monument Avenue and what it stood for was not safe for my Black family.”

- 7. **Objective 5.3**: Build structures to continue channeling economic benefit to the community.
 - c. Strategy 5.3.1: Dedicate a percentage of revenue generated from the property to be invested in ongoing wealth-building supports.
 - d. Strategy 5.3.2: Build the ongoing implementation of community-identified priorities into the long-term programming and partnerships.

Goal 5 Richmond application: Programming provides an opportunity to make an immediate impact before, during and after the physical redevelopment of space. The temptation to focus almost exclusively on the physical aspects of the project ignores the role that engagement and programming can play in accomplishing the goals of the redevelopment. Whether through a board, steering committee or some other means, formalize resident-led power infrastructure to steward the programming and development of the space. Protect resident leadership by requiring a percentage of the leadership and potentially staff to be members of the community.

Figure 5 - Integration of Plan Beliefs and Recommendations



Goal Implementation

Phase 1: Pre-planning -Co-Learning and Sharing Power

- **Goal 1: Defer to the authority and power of residents.**
 1. **Objective 1.1:** Build authentic relationships with the community and prioritize community needs.
 2. **Objective 1.2:** Build trust and set realistic expectations.
- **Goal 2: Anticipate economic impact, and partner to position residents to benefit.**
 1. **Objective 2.1:** Build the capacity of residents to participate in redevelopment efforts.
 2. **Objective 2.2:** Prevent physical displacement.
 3. **Objective 2.3:** Support upward mobility so existing residents benefit from increased investment.

Funding Recommendations
Prioritize collaborative fundraising with service providers who can be partners in reaching goal 2.

Phase 2: Inclusive Planning - Residents as the Anchor

Goal 3: Orient all engagement efforts around resident expertise.

- **Objective 3.1:** Community voices must be centered in the conversation.
- **Objective 3.2:** The most comfortable people in the room/process or space, should always be residents.
- **Objective 3.3:** Conduct early action projects to build trust and demonstrate a genuine willingness to listen and respond to community feedback.

Funding Recommendations
Include prospective funders and political leaders in engagement efforts to cultivate long-term buy-in.

Phase 3: Planning for Racial Equity through Design

- **Goal 4: Purposefully incorporate design principles for racial equity.**
 1. **Objective 4.1:** Implement the equitable design principle of access.
 2. **Objective 4.2:** Implement the equitable design principle of power.
 3. **Objective 4.3:** Implement the equitable design principle of belonging.
 4. **Objective 4.4:** Implement the equitable design principle of transformation.
 5. **Objective 4.5:** Implement the equitable design principle of responsiveness.

Funding Recommendations
Position phase 3 as the “quiet phase” of a capital campaign.

Phase 4: Implementation and Stewardship

- **Goal 5: Create a plan for ongoing maintenance, community engagement and programming.**
 1. **Objective 5.1:** Develop resident-led power structures to support community stewardship of the space.
 2. **Objective 5.2:** Establish programmatic priorities that value ongoing responsiveness to the community culture and priorities.
 3. **Objective 5.3:** Build structures to continue channeling economic benefit to the community.

Funding Recommendations
Pursue full-scale public-private partnerships for investments.

CONCLUSION

Ahead of the redevelopment of any public space is an opportunity to dismantle inequity, maximize cultural and economic wealth, and to contribute to the positive formation of cultural identities rooted in truth and celebration. What this plan proposes is a process that appropriately recognizes the social, economic and cultural weight public spaces hold and challenges them to reach their highest potential for communal good. The core beliefs of this project illuminate the significance of race in the built environment, affirm cultural and economic wealth building as primary outcomes of equitable revitalization, underscore the value of process, and the invaluable expertise of residents. The beliefs provide a foundation upon which the phased community engagement process is built, offering goals, objectives and strategies to practically conceptualize the implementation of infra-sutures. Starting from a place of humility where learning and power-sharing take precedence, planning efforts then move to inclusive planning, racial equity through design, and finally, structures for implementation and stewardship that sustain equitable outcomes.

This work is particularly relevant to our current realities which have been significantly changed by the coronavirus. Because businesses are closed, people are spending more time in public spaces. There is a growing appreciation for being outside as a retreat from social distancing, and for some people, this appreciation could continue after social distancing measures have been lifted. This current and potentially sustained uptick in patronage of public spaces only further affirms the need to be much more intentional about engagement and design of public spaces.

In addition, the coronavirus has shifted many businesses to operate virtually through teleworking, and some of these new norms could be sustained. When considering the economic implications of decreasing overhead costs, some companies could move towards smaller footprints designed for meetings and social interaction with less individual workspace. One possible result is an increase in newly vacant buildings and other infrastructure that could use the goals, strategies and objectives shared in this plan to redevelop some of those spaces for public use. Although the future holds many question marks, there is reason to believe that public spaces will only grow in their significance and importance in a post-COVID-19 society.

Whether in response to histories of oppression and resilience, or recovery from natural disasters and pandemics, the world continues to evolve, and with each day there is an opportunity for that evolution to trend towards equity. People and space are intertwined in ways that may never be fully understood, and this plan is about expanding our collective understanding of the linkages between public space, cultural and economic wealth creation, and acknowledgement of the legitimacy of resident power in an effort to achieve more equitable revitalization.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

From inclusion to equity

New perspectives in community engagement and responsive design

Context Setting:

1. Who am I and why am I here?

My name is Shekinah Mitchell and I am in my final semester of the VCU MURP program. All students are required to work on either a thesis or capstone project, and I am interviewing you as part of my research process for my Capstone project in partnership with BridgePark RVA.

2. What are the core beliefs underlying this project?

- The enduring legacy of racism is visible in the built environment, so strategies to achieve racial justice and equity must include the built environment.
- Equitable revitalization must include cultural and economic wealth building.
- The process matters as much as the project.
- Residents are citizen experts in their lived experience and should be the primary voice shaping their own community.

3. What are the goals of this project and research?

The goal of this project is to:

- Uncover physical landmarks in our community where inequities exist and present them as opportunities for restorative planning and communal healing.
- Challenge assumptions that public spaces are culturally neutral and therefore inclusive, and to instead see them as opportunities to reflect and respond to the history and cultural/social norms of people living near these spaces.
- Link neighborhood beautification projects to wealth building opportunities for current residents instead of a trigger for gentrification.
- Actual products:
 - Inventory of public spaces and infrastructure in Richmond that bear the scars of inequity.
 - Principles of culturally responsive design.
 - Corresponding community engagement process strategies that will help lead to culturally responsive design.

4. How will I use what you share?

Your story will help inform the development of those products by learning more about your experience in community engagement, uncovering history and culture and physical places in Richmond that are opportunities for equity.

5. Can I have your permission to record this interview and take notes?

Interview Opening:

(Once/if they provide permission to be recorded, start recording and state the following at the beginning of the recording):

- Date:
- Interviewee Name(s):

Interview Questions

These questions are prompts; however, this is subject to change based on how the conversation flows.

Culture

1. What does culture mean to you?
2. How would you describe the culture of your community?

History (culture has been shaped and birthed out of our past - let's talk about history)

1. How have you learned about the history of your community?
2. This project is grappling with how to use public spaces to more equitably share access to some of our hidden histories - particularly at the neighborhood level. Some examples of how we have done that in the past include Monument Avenue, Maggie Walker square, public signs/markers in Jackson Ward, murals, festivals etc. How do you see Richmond's history being told in the physical environment around us? What opportunities do you see to do this better?

Engagement

1. What does community engagement mean to you, and what is an example of community engagement that you believe was successful in benefiting the community?
2. What strategies or tools have you used to connect with others, and which do you feel have worked best?
3. There has been some progress made in eliminating barriers to get to public engagement meetings -addition of childcare, food, transportation support etc. While these help people get to a meeting, there is still an opportunity to think differently about how engagement is structured. Beyond presentations and/or informative lectures, how do you believe community engagement can be structured for more people, especially those on the margins (low-wealth, people of color), to be comfortable and fully engaged?

Place

1. What are some of your favorite spaces to be outside in Richmond (park, path, outdoor restaurant, street, backyard)? How would you describe that space and what do you like about it?
2. Are there places in Richmond you want to go, but do not feel comfortable, safe or like you belong? If so, what are those spaces and what would make you feel more comfortable going there? (pedestrian friendly, sidewalks, seeing others who look like me, comfortable seating, accessible, shade etc.)

Mapping

The last few minutes of the interview will involve using an enlarged map. Part of what I would like to do is identify places of significance for your personally and to learn about community perceptions of space in town. Here are the prompts for using this map:

Experience and perceptions:

1. Using the _____ marker provided, put a "+" in places you go where you feel comfortable and a "-" in places where you do not feel comfortable/safe.
2. Using the _____ marker provided, put a "+" in places where you feel a sense of belonging and a "-" in places you do not believe you belong.
3. Using the _____ marker provided, put an "=" in places where you see/interact with diverse groups of people.
4. Using the _____ marker provided, put an "=" in places that seem racially or socio-economically homogenous.

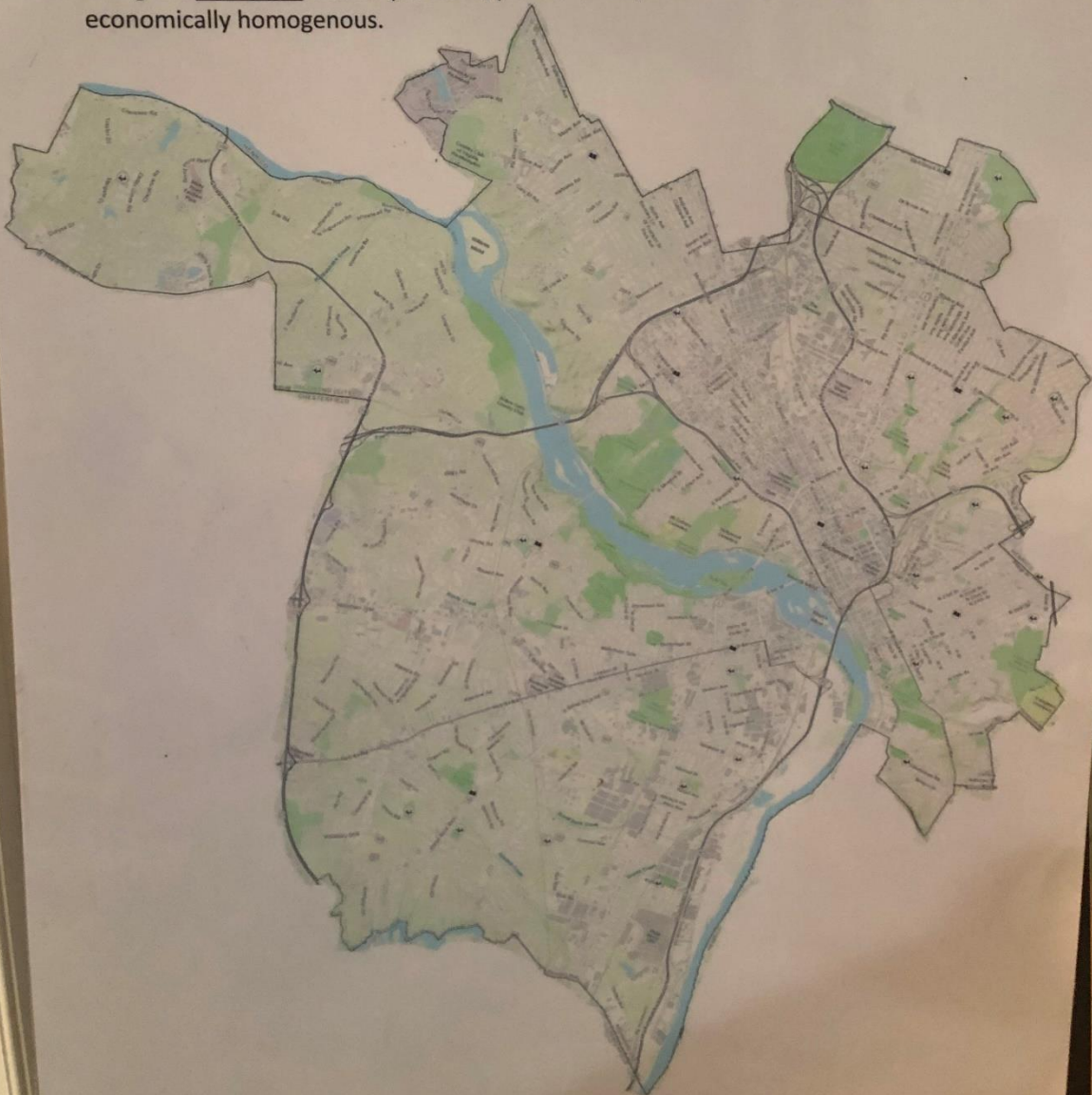
Appendix B: Mapping Exercise

From inclusion to equity:

New perspectives in community engagement and responsive design

Experience and perceptions:

1. Using the _____ marker provided, put a "+" in places you go where you feel comfortable and a "-" in places where you do not feel comfortable/safe.
2. Using the _____ marker provided, put a "+" in places where you feel a sense of belonging and a "-" in places you do not believe you belong.
3. Using the _____ marker provided, put an "=" in places where you see/interact with diverse groups of people.
4. Using the _____ marker provided, put a "#" in places that seem racially or socio-economically homogenous.



Appendix C: Design Principles Assessment

INFRA-SUTURE: PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE DESIGN

Principle 1: Access

Access to and access for should serve as cornerstones in the design of public spaces. Access for people who live in closest proximity to the public space with an intentional focus on people groups who have been marginalized is essential to achieving equity and shifting people groups from the margins to the forefront. Access to their history through arts and culture in the space anchors the work in intentionally acknowledging the power space holds and using that power for communal good.

Access Assessment	Does your project meet these Access Indicators?
<p>Indicator 1: The space must celebrate culture and therefore must share history. Based on the interviews, assume the people most closely connected to this story do not know it which further affirms the need to incorporate sharing history.</p> <p>*How is the history of the community, particularly for people of color, being told through the space?</p>	
<p>Indicator 2: The design of the space must include people's voice. Physical design is only part of the experience, and when people's interpretation of that history is present in the space, it activates the human experience and relevance to visitors.</p> <p>*How is the interpretation of that history being shared through human voice (tours, programming etc.)?</p>	
<p>Indicator 3: Integrate opportunities for diverse groups of people to participate. Visual and performing arts, sound, touch etc. should be considered within the design to ensure people of all abilities and learning styles have an opportunity to engage with the space around them.</p> <p>*How have diverse learning styles and abilities been factored into the experience of the space?</p>	

Principle 2: Power

The design of the space must be working to shift power into the hands of marginalized residents. One of the primary ways this is done it through purposefully finding ways to give control and increase wealth connected to space into the hands of the surrounding community.

Power Assessment	Does your project meet these Power Indicators?
<p>Indicator 1: Mark the land, and give oversight and control to community residents. The idea of land marks is not new; and it is central to culturally responsive design. Land represents power and wealth, and setting aside physical portions of land to be used to celebrate communal culture especially for marginalized people is essential to achieving racial equity in the built environment.</p> <p>*How is the project incorporating landmarks and permanently setting aside land?</p>	
<p>Indicator 2: Every aspect of the design, development and usage of the space that generates income must be economically benefitting people within the community. From preferred vendors for food in planning activities, childcare, construction, landscape design, maintenance, programming etc. every dollar spent on the space and generated because of the space should be in that community.</p> <p>*How is the project finding and hiring members of the community as vendors and contractors for all paid needs?</p>	
<p>Indicator 3: Challenge traditional norms of statues and signs to tell a different story. When Kehinde Wiley experienced Monument Avenue, his primary take-away was that the pedestals are what gave them their power. In contrast to monuments of people of color like Bojangles and Maggie Walker, the grandeur and scale of their design is far less significant because of the pedestal. Both literally and figuratively the pedestals show what stories we value. It also emphasizes the story of one person or individual, when no one is above reproach. Ideals and values reflective of a collective culture are what should be prioritized, while the stories we tell of people should be at the human scale and include a diversity of people in age, socio-economic status, ability etc. The space should inspire every person to see their own power and significance.</p> <p>*How is the space incorporating the elevation of ideas and values while also honoring individual stories at a human scale?</p>	
<p>Indicator 4: Prioritize the oral histories of the people within the community whose stories would not have been traditionally written or translated into the mainstream sources of history. Many of the “keepers” of history are within institutions, leadership programs or universities that require money and formal acceptance to access neighborhood level history. There must be a shift to placing the power back into the community’s hands to know, tell and control their own narratives in ways that are freely accessible.</p> <p>*How have the hidden, often oral, histories of people of color being told through the space?</p>	

Principle 3: Belonging

Belonging is at the center of inclusion. In order for people to feel welcome and comfortable within public space, they need to feel connected to the space, and that comes through establishing a sense of belonging through how the space is designed.

Belonging Assessment	Does your project meet these Belonging Indicators?
<p>Indicator 1: The space should be reflective of resident identities because people need to see themselves in order to feel like they belong. This can be through murals, photography or programming, but through whatever means, seeing aspects of who they are reflected in the space is critical.</p> <p>*Whether through images, statues, programming etc. how is the space serving as a mirror reflecting the identities of people within the community?</p>	
<p>Indicator 2: The space should be designed to be frequented more than once with intentional spaces for interacting with other people. From the design and placement of seating, spaces for play for all ages (children to seniors), integration of programming for planned or impromptu performances and celebrations, a diversity of uses inviting people to simply be is important to affirming that they belong and to prevent the space from becoming stale.</p> <p>*How has the physical space or programming been planned and designed to attract frequent usage?</p>	

Principle 4: Transformation

Considering the role of the physical environment in forming our culture and subsequently our identity, the design of the space should not only acknowledge that power, but use it to purposefully accomplish racial equity.

Transformation Assessment	Does your project meet these Transformation Indicators?
<p>Indicator 1: Design the space to include celebration alongside the pain. Telling the history, especially of marginalized people often includes narratives of oppression; and while these stories need to be told, they must always be told in ways that highlight positive values like strength, determination, resilience, family, community etc. that celebrates how even challenging and dark parts of our past have positively shaped our culture. Healing comes through discomfort, and the space should be designed to acknowledge the painful past while providing hope through the celebration of people and values shaped from that history.</p> <p>*How is the space sharing the painful history of the past from the resilient lens of people of color? How are the stories of triumph, resistance and overcoming in the midst of oppression being highlighted?</p>	
<p>Indicator 2: Build in space for reflection. One important way to do this is by incorporating access to nature especially within an urban environment. Incorporating water, landscaping, places of sanctuary and retreat contribute to relieving anxiety and create space for relaxation. In a space that may also include challenging historical content, it is also critically important to provide space for people to process their own experience.</p> <p>*How has the physical space been designed for reflection?</p>	
<p>Indicator 3: Consider the history of the land itself and determine how the space can be designed as an infrasuture to repair wounds within the physical environment. This is done by looking for and working to close gaps. It could be a physical bridge or tunnel to literally connect communities, or it could also be reconnecting communities to their story and establishing a sense of identity.</p> <p>*How has connectivity been factored into the design of the space?</p>	

Principle 5: Responsive

A responsive posture should be taken for initial development of the space and should also be factored into the design as an ongoing value.

Responsive Assessment	Does your project meet these Responsive Indicators?
<p>Indicator 1: Design the space to be both permanent and flexible. Just as museums have permanent and temporary exhibit halls, public spaces should do the same. There is an important message that has to be told repeatedly and preserved; however, if only one story is told, it disincentivizes ongoing interaction with the space. It makes the space stagnant and responsive only to the people and culture who participate in the onset of the work. Culture is evolving and changing all around us, so spaces must also be permanently held to evolve alongside our changing narratives.</p> <p>*How has the space been designed to permanently tell communally significant stories while also holding space to be responsive as new stories and opportunities arise?</p>	
<p>Indicator 2: Design the space from the lens of placeholding and placekeeping, but leave the placemaking to the community. The space should hold/keep space for the celebration of communal culture and opportunities for wealth creation; however, the community should fill those spaces with what matters to them. Examples include building in theater/performance space, walls that welcome graffiti and get repainted according to a schedule etc.</p> <p>*What infrastructure has been put in place for ongoing community engagement to shape programming?</p>	