

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

Theses

UMSL Graduate Works

8-25-2019

Leap of Faith Megaprojects: The Effect of Civic Dialogue on Megaproject Legacies in the St. Louis Region

Nathan Theus

University of Missouri-St. Louis, netwv5@mail.umsel.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsel.edu/thesis>



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Infrastructure Commons](#), [Models and Methods Commons](#), [Urban, Community and Regional Planning Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Theus, Nathan, "Leap of Faith Megaprojects: The Effect of Civic Dialogue on Megaproject Legacies in the St. Louis Region" (2019). *Theses*. 437.

<https://irl.umsel.edu/thesis/437>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the UMSL Graduate Works at IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact marvinh@umsel.edu.

Leap of Faith Megaprojects:

The Effect of Civic Dialogue on Megaproject Legacies in the St. Louis Region

Nathan Theus

Dr. Todd Swanstrom

PS 6494 Thesis Research

August 9, 2019

Table of Contents

- Abstract p. 3
- Introduction p. 4-6
- Literature Review p. 6-13
- Methodology p. 13-16
- Megaproject Cases Studies: p. 17-38
Lambert International Airport Runway Expansion Project
- Future Megaproject Overview: p. 38-49
National Geospatial Agency West Campus
- Conclusion p. 49-50
- Bibliography p. 51-56

Abstract

Megaprojects are unique capital improvements that are defined by their large-scale development plans and construction budgets. Industrial Belt cities, like St. Louis, are no stranger to these projects, and both government actors and private developers have walked hand in hand in planning and constructing megaprojects, while assuring the general public that the benefits would always outweigh the costs. Though there has been considerable quantitative research analyzing the statistical economic effects of various megaprojects, there has been relatively little discussion on other, specifically, qualitative means of analysis. This paper will examine the role civic dialogue has on the perceived and real successes of megaprojects in the St. Louis region and compare the reactions of the public to the promises made by developers. This study consults a mix of investigative and news reports along with primary source public forums and interviews to amalgamate an interpretation on whether specific St. Louis megaprojects are qualitatively successful. Finally, this paper observes that an outmoded “leap of faith” mentality, similar to that used during the golden age of megaprojects throughout the mid-1900s, is still used by St. Louis developers to sell the project to the public. It is important for both developers and the public to better understand the impact megaprojects have had on St. Louis’ history and how to plan their future execution in a way that secures both the goals of the developers and needs of the public.

Introduction

This paper aims at understanding how people in the St. Louis region and talk about and define the success of large-scale capital improvements and major investment projects, referred to loosely as megaprojects. With specific projects serving as a kind of example when encountering megaprojects today and in the future, this paper will explore both the legacy of megaprojects in the St. Louis area and the effect that public dialogue has had on them between the affected residents and developers. While recording and suggesting policy proposals are not the primary focus of this work, the discussion of megaproject planning and construction naturally lends itself to conversations about the democratic process and how various involved parties might better execute the development at hand. By bringing this dialogue to the forefront, the experience of St. Louis' residents might help further inform and expand upon the meaning of success regarding megaprojects. By including more qualitative accounts, developers and government alike might become better equipped to judge the value of their developments more holistically.

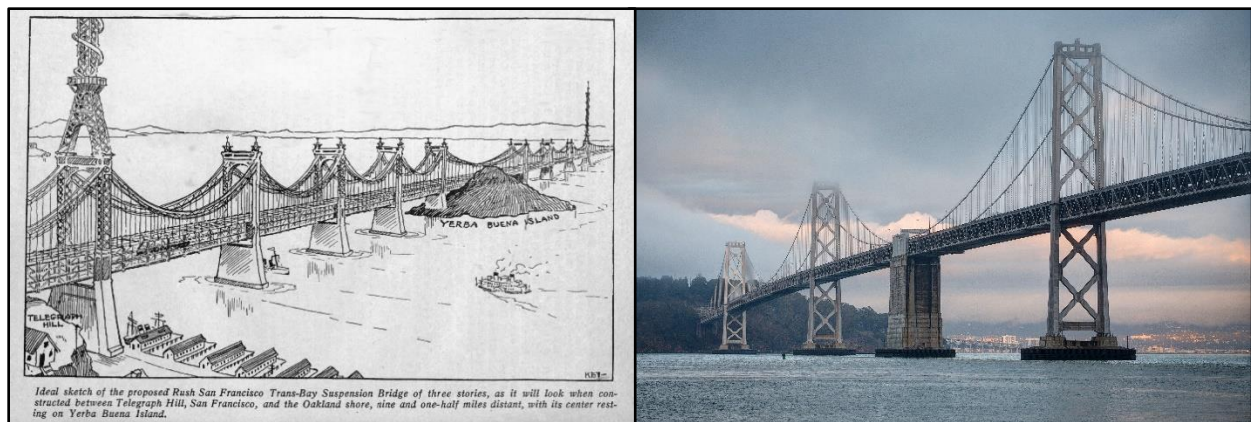


Fig. 1. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (pictured right) is a defining megaproject in California's industrial history. It has received numerous updates and overhauls which give it its defining features, a far different construction from the original design in 1913 (pictured left). Image right: Christian Schd, 2013.

St. Louis and the surrounding communities that generally form the greater St. Louis area are inherently different than other, larger cities in the United States. Traditionally, governments

in the more “hot market”¹ areas, cities with increasing populations and valuable land, have taken a direct, hands-on approach to megaprojects and the decision-making process, like in the construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in the early 1900s². However, the St. Louis experience tends to be far more organic and market oriented in nature. This is because the governments of both the city and the more fractured surrounding county are more decentralized and relatively weaker than their counterparts on the east and west coasts³. This makes the St. Louis example an interesting case study since it can also inform other legacy cities, similar to St. Louis, and respective developers what they might encounter when undertaking capital improvements of this nature.

Generally, the United States portrays itself as the greatest experiment in democracy, and this moniker is further enhanced by the role small communities have played in building and empowering the republic we experience today. Indeed, communities and the confluence of cultures between cities has been with this country from the beginning, thus the experiment of democracy has also been rooted in experiments in community development. Today, this experimental tradition has clearly left a legacy of both great achievements and complete disasters, especially in St. Louis. Though the approach and planning of community development has ebbed and flowed throughout the years, the same “leap of faith”⁴ mentality persists in the minds of many Americans, ensuring that experimental community development will remain the norm in some capacity for the foreseeable future.

¹ As defined by Alan Mallach in his book, *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America*.

² Karen Trapenberg Frick, “The Cost of the Technological Sublime: Daring Ingenuity and the New San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge,” in *Decision-Making on Mega-Projects: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Planning and Innovation*, ed. Hugo Priemus, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Bert van Wee (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2008), 239-262.

³ Brady Baybeck and E. Terrence Jones, *St. Louis Metromorphosis: Past Trends and Future Directions*. (Missouri Historical Society Press, 2004).

⁴ Brent Flyvbjerg, “Public Planning of Mega-Projects: Overestimation of Demand and Underestimation of Costs,” in *Decision-Making on Mega-Projects: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Planning and Innovation*, ed. Hugo Priemus, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Bert van Wee (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2008), 120-144.

It is this trend that informs the megaproject developments in St. Louis' recent past and, this study contends, still defines capital improvements today. This research has shown that megaproject construction often brings feelings of displacement, neglect, and power struggle to the forefront within public debates between residents and developers. It is important to record how these and ideas towards megaprojects both align and differ from those which are experience at the beginning and end of a project. The data as presented by the research of this paper suggests that the leap of faith mentality remains a primary influence on developers and governments, and the people affected by megaprojects equate the development as a negative force of change, using language similar to that within other controversial issues like the gentrification debate.

Literature Review

As the title suggests, megaproject design and construction in the United States has often been a story of lofty promises and hefty costs. Developers and governments alike have often tried to sell the taxpayer on largescale capital improvements as a means of improving daily life or economic activity in some capacity.⁵ They suggest that all people need to do is take a leap of faith to achieve colossal goals and expectations. This theme has been supported by almost every literary work and scholar who has studied the topic. However, it is important to account for the various aspects that play into megaproject organization. Both the perceived and measurable successes of these projects rely on media coverage, public approval, political feasibility, and

⁵ Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff, *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2003), 13.

resource costs, which in turn plays into overall project complexity. The intersection of all four of these realities defines the conversation surrounding these undertakings.

The term, “megaprojects” is often in reference to large civilian projects, such as the planning and construction of roads, dams, and bridges.⁶ As Rothengatter points out, the “mega” part of the projects is based on the scope of what each project is trying to accomplish. For example, megaproject can include traditional infrastructure improvements as those listed above, and they can also include large-scale energy production facilities, cultural marvels like stadiums, and areawide digital networking.⁷ St. Louis is an interesting example to focus on since it has seen its fair share of all types of megaprojects.

Altshuler and Luberoff explain in detail the four “political eras” in which megaproject took form in the United States. First, the pre-1950s era was defined by private development and planning. “Public” infrastructure projects such as factories, like the Ford River Rouge Complex in Detroit, and power plants, like the Pearl Street Power Station in New York, were inspired by market forces and followed through by industrialists. Costs associated with these projects were carried by private investors, and the role of government was to help secure the resources and the physical land required to complete the projects. However, this model gradually changed across



Fig. 2. The Gateway Arch is an example of a modern megaproject that serves a civilian use. While other plans for the Mississippi riverfront included a private business district, a bold plan to improve St. Louis’ tourism and recreational capacity was approved in 1935. Image: Daniel Schwen, 2011.

⁶ Werner Rothengatter, “Megaprojects in Transportation Networks,” *Transportation Policy*, 75 (2019): 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2018.08.002>

⁷ Rothengatter, “Megaprojects in Transportation Networks,” 1.

the country, specifically in urban settings where government spending on infrastructure was viewed as being intrinsically linked to public health and equitable economic growth.⁸ St. Louis was no stranger to this slow drift as well. With the adaptation of the automobile as the future of travel in the 1930s, the government of St. Louis reduced its reliance on franchising with private investors in favor of designing and planning roadways which would facilitate future urban growth.⁹ The trend towards government action in the St. Louis area came to a head in 1947, when the Missouri State Highway Department was founded following the federal Works Progress Administration's model.

The second era that Altshuler and Luberoff describe is what they describe as the "great megaproject era", a period where government and private forces worked in conjunction mirroring legacies directly inspired by the New Deal and the war on poverty.¹⁰ The measures of success of megaprojects in the 1940s and early 1950s shifted from revenue generation to the broader spectrum of general economic development. Large highways and airports received special attention across the country since they were shown to have direct economic impacts, and their success came from media attention and service expansion.¹¹ Indeed, this is where many of St. Louis' own road expansion projects and airport enhancement found their roots.

This is where the dialogue began to change across the country. As megaprojects spread throughout the 1950s-1960s, the most vulnerable demographics were being negatively affected. Almost all scholars agree that this period of rapid economic growth and capital development directly impacted those who had relatively little political power of their own. Since megaprojects

⁸ Altshuler and Luberoff, *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*, 10-11.

⁹ Mark Tranel, "The St. Louis Transportation Transformation." In *St. Louis Metromorphosis: Past Trends and Future Directions*, ed. Brady Baybeck & Terrence Jones (Missouri Historical Society Press, 2004), 171.

¹⁰ Altshuler, 13.

¹¹ Altshler, 19.

were and still are intrinsically tied to big business and big government, the relatively small political needs of individual communities have often been overlooked in the name of progress.¹² Therefore, governments and developers have since moved to more of a “do no harm” approach, in that direct disruption of communities is avoided.¹³ This has resulted in a sharp decline in urban reorganization projects like the implementation and expansion of interstates and new mass housing projects. Now, the megaproject legacy lives on in developments which are marketed as more economically inclusive and publicly popular.

The success of these projects is typically framed by time and cost performance, and as Di Maddaloni notes, this is where developers encounter their first round of roadblocks.¹⁴ Studies conducted in both the United States and the Netherlands suggest traditional methods used to analyze the economic benefits of megaprojects often fail since the “true costs” are nearly impossible to fully quantify. For example, in their analysis, Van Wee and Tavasszy found that cost-benefit analysis is a risky judgement tool since projects like roads typically have cost overruns at an average of 20 per cent higher than what was reflected in the prior analysis.¹⁵ Defining the costs that should be measured is difficult as well, since most reports tend to focus on hard evidences like material and labor costs. However, costs can also include “extra-

¹² Francesco Di Maddaloni and Kate Davis, “The Influence of Local Community Stakeholders in Megaprojects: Rethinking their Inclusiveness to Improve Project Performance,” *International Journal of Project Management*. 35, no 8 (2017): 1537.

¹³ Altshler, 29

¹⁴ Di Maddaloni, and Davis, “The Influence of Local Community Stakeholders in Megaprojects: Rethinking their Inclusiveness to Improve Project Performance,” 1538.

¹⁵ Bert Van Wee and Lorant A. Tavasszy, “Ex-Ante Evaluation of Mega-Projects: Methodological Issues and Cost-Benefit Analysis,” in *Decision-Making on Mega-Projects: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Planning and Innovation*, ed. Hugo Priemus, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Bert van Wee (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2008), 45-47.

financial” burdens, which include political lobbying efforts, legal fees, and the most important factor, the value of lost time. Lost time is especially critical to understand since it can manifest its costs to the project in a number of ways.¹⁶

As mentioned before, lost time costs (LTCs) can vary from being tangible costs in the form of material and finances, but they can also be subtler. For example, Boston’s Big Dig project, where the city partnered with federal departments and private investors to complete a host of infrastructure improvements expanding urban interstates, started to encounter tangible LTCs when the project initially missed its 1990 completion date. As time carried on, the costs associated with construction started to pale in comparison to the LTCs which included mounting legal fees, environmental damages, and political disappointments.¹⁷ While these were some of the more noticeable LTCs associated with the project, some other costs were being added to the projects total price tag. These included the costs of traffic congestion caused by construction, damages caused to properties outside the scope of the project, and the costs associated with developers having to research and secure new forms of funding in pay-as-you-go construction.¹⁸ Every problem the builders encountered



Fig. 3. Boston’s Big Dig is a controversial megaproject that saw the construction of new bridges, tunnels, and interstate highways to improve traffic flow and traffic control in Boston’s urban core. Complications and lost time took the \$4 billion project to costing over \$14.6 billion. Image: MassDOT, 2014.

¹⁶ Van Wee, “Ex-Ante Evaluation of Mega-Projects: Methodological Issues and Cost-Benefit Analysis,” 41-42.

¹⁷ Virginia A. Greiman, *Megaproject Management: Lessons on Risk and Project Management from the Big Dig*, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2013, 42-49.

¹⁸ Greiman, *Megaproject Management: Lessons on Risk and Project Management from the Big Dig*, 70-72.

racked up more LTCs, until finally the Federal government had to almost double its investment into the project to ensure it would be completed as envisioned within the original plan's parameters.

Scholars like Samset suggest that the only way to definitively conclude a megaproject is successful per its scope is to ensure that it fits within the promises and plans of all parties involved.¹⁹ This means that the only costs are those specifically listed, and if the project is carried out properly, no other LTCs will be accrued. While he and other academics note this as a viable means of judging success, others remain more skeptical, especially in the case of projects like the Big Dig. It is still more the trend that most megaprojects will require more time and more resources to complete than previously imagined. Thus, the question now rests on how to achieve success when LTCs are both inevitable and have the potential to dramatically impact the project's predicted economic benefits or increase the costs of execution. This is where other scholars suggest mass media and public perception become the kingmaker for megaprojects' big leap legacies.

Despite daunting cost overruns in cases like the Big Dig and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the overall perception of these projects is of success and public appreciation. While there are critics of them, the majority opinion agrees that the projects' real and perceived benefits outweigh their many construction and maintenance costs, once that they are completed. As some have noted, if a megaproject can be completed, it can begin shedding all the negative associations it garnered from the public during its construction.²⁰ Upon completion of a

¹⁹ Knut Samset, "How to Overcome Major Weaknesses in Mega-projects: The Neowegian Approach," In *Decision-Making on Mega-Projects: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Planning and Innovation*, ed. Hugo Priemus, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Bert van Wee (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2008), 173-174.

²⁰ Nuno Gil, Colm Lundrigan, and Jeffrey K. Pinto, *Megaproject Organization and Performance: The Myth and Political Reality*, Newton Square: Project Management Institute, Inc. 2017.

megaproject, there is a rush in the media about its lofty goals and positive impact on the community, often the same ideals pitched in the original plan for the development. However, prior to that point, public dialogue and media coverage will focus on the negative aspects since those are being experienced more acutely and are more sensational at the time. Public opinion is observed to sway in favor of the project once they can start using it.²¹ In the case of physical infrastructure that is accessible to all, public opinion and media attention tends to rebound more quickly. However, these sentiments are not as warm to potentially exclusive, environmentally risky, and invisible projects like stadiums, powerplants, and sewage networks respectively.²² Projects like these must rely of their success coming from another source other than what is found in the public sphere. Unfortunately, an analysis of those project's successes will have to be accounted in another research paper.

The last notable form of success is political feasibility. Despite infrastructure spending being a political topic that seems to span the political divides of most any government, megaprojects walk a tightrope between being scrapped during construction and defunded after completion. Di Maddaloni recognizes this and argues that developers must mobilize both the entities which control the resources for the project, and the people who will be getting the most benefit from the development.²³ If both parties are pleased with the megaproject as it is constructed and once it is finished, then the project is a success. While others do not offer policy alternatives which expressly focus on factional appeals, many megaprojects are observed to have overestimated demands.²⁴ Flyvbjerg, Di Maddaloni, and Gil recognize this as the potential

²¹ Altschuler and Luberoff, 224-225

²² Gil, et al, *Megaproject Organization and Performance: The Myth and Political Reality*, 57.

²³ Di Maddaloni, 1550-1551.

²⁴ Flyvbjerg, "Public Planning of Mega-Projects: Overestimation of Demand and Underestimation of Costs," 120-121.

alienation of stakeholders of the project. Projects that do not generate the economic impact or traffic they were planned to will often be branded failures even though they were completed and may be well maintained.

Discussing the means of testing the both the physical and perceived success of a megaproject also sheds light on the civic dialogue surrounding these developments. Public opinion matters in projects that are open to the public or funded by taxpayers and knowing the status of the megaproject will better inform developers of what they might expect from the people they are trying to engage. This is especially important in cases where the people who might use the megaproject will be expected to pay for its construction.²⁵ St. Louis is no exception to this approach, since much of its urban history has been marked by various megaprojects. While the nature of large-scale capital improvements continues to evolve, the standards for judging success will always revolve around perception and cost. Moving forward, I will discuss the way in which developers framed two significant megaprojects in the St. Louis region, how the public responded, how the project unfolded, and whether their completions redeemed them as successes or branded them as perceived failures.

Methodology

A discussion on the cultural legacy and public discourse of megaprojects in St. Louis requires a research emphasis on qualitative data analysis. As noted earlier, research has shown that public opinion has more to do with a megaproject's perceived societal impact than its statistical economic impact. Since recording perceptions is the goal of this paper and indeed the measure of success, the public's reaction will be gauged through various resources such as town hall meeting notes, public forum discussions, online discussions, and news coverage.

²⁵ Altschuler, 237.

Using these various sources, this paper will track the big leap promises made by the developers and record points where the media and public record echo and agree with the promises. For example, the developers of Pruitt-Igoe promised a solution to St. Louis' aging housing problem and the media and general public both agreed with the social need as stated by the developer. However, as many might point out, public opinion changed drastically in this case, thus this paper will focus on the legacy of megaprojects; public opinion later down the line, not just their immediate results.

The first level of analysis is to record a consensus on what the big leap promises made by the developers were for each respective megaproject. For the more recent megaprojects, the airport runway extension and the National Geospatial Agency West Campus (NGA), the developer's official publications online were consulted. Specific phrases which reoccurred multiple times across various publications serve as the measuring criteria. Once the promises were laid out, public forum resources were used to establish whether the public really bought into the promises or if they had this project forced upon them from the top-down. These ideas were measured by using a form of phrase and word content analysis, where positive and negative associations and other synonyms were tallied and recorded. Similarly to the example earlier, phrases and keywords which had common occurrences throughout these sources were used as criterion. This paper uses these results to showcase which feelings and ideas not only appear the most in the conversation, but also which items are potentially controversial.

Second, after the promises and public acceptance of them are measured. This paper reviews the megaproject's legacy after its completion. Similarly, to the process described above, word and theme content analysis was used to evaluate the overall positive and negative feelings the public associated with the megaproject. Judging themes is especially crucial to measuring

success, therefore all experiences and perceptions are scrutinized against the promises listed by the first level of analysis. Specific themes, like accounts of displacement or exclusiveness are typically judged as negative effects, since experiences like these do not align with the promises made by the developer nor the expectations of the public. Generally, public discourse during the financing and construction phases are not the primary focus of this paper, however the NGA development's case study will rely more on this approach since that case study is more of a prediction than a formal legacy analysis.

The inspiration for using this approach comes from the work of researchers like Pascal D. König. When writing for the *German Politics Journal*, he conducted a qualitative analysis of 1000 newspaper articles tracking the evolution of the 2015-2016 refugee debate in Germany. To do this, he primarily utilized reputable publications and sources where interviewees had firsthand access to the source material.²⁶ In a similar vein, I approached this research with high standards for my source material. News articles, like in König's work, serve as the backbone of this research. Every attempt was made to vet the source material for its relevance and closeness to the topic at hand. In addition to this, official developer publications and interviews were used to track what the developers were saying about their project. Other interest groups or parties marketing the project have been left out of this study to keep the discussion germane to what developers promise and what the public expects and eventually receives. Finally, a good faith effort was made to ensure sources reflect the political spectrum fairly. Each instance of content analysis thus consists of multiple articles from as many sources as possible, each relevant to the topic.

²⁶ Pascal D. König, "Intra-Party Dissent as a Constraint in Policy Competition: Mapping and Analyzing the Positioning of Political Parties in the German Refugee Debate from August to November 2015," *German Politics* 26, no. 3 (2017): 337-359.

As eluded to earlier, newspapers were of great value when researching this subject as they reported on both the developers pitch of the project at hand, and the public's general reaction to that pitch. Additionally, news articles and investigative reporting often track the progress of the megaproject's construction and recorded the evolution of public opinion throughout the process. Resources like these seem to depict a kind of arc in the dialogue surrounding the development of a megaproject, which is important in framing the ebb and flow of the debate and cultural impact. Furthermore, open-to-all-users public forums online offer a wide array of qualitative data since potentially more people can interact with that medium than they can at a townhall meeting. However, forum data must be used in conjunction with another's or with other source material since some might only harbor one side of the argument. Finally, this study includes some public interviews with residents of the neighborhoods where the future megaproject, the NGA, is going to be constructed. These interviews were conducted originally by graduate students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The names of residents have been omitted for privacy, but the original documents providing the quotes are listed at the end of this study. Since the project is not slated to be finished until 2024, there will be more time for the discussion to change and become more nuanced to its unique situation.

Megaproject Case Study: Lambert International Airport Runway Expansion Project



Fig. 4. Lambert International Airport in St. Louis County has typically grown to meet demand for more flights and carriers. However, the most recent runway extension, the runway on the left half of the picture above, is a megaproject which was aimed at expanding service capabilities and attracting more business, rather than responding to market pressure. This controversial gamble has left its mark on the city of Bridgton, Missouri and the airport's legacy. Image: United States Geological Survey, 2018.

Introduction: From its humble beginnings as an airfield which could only service light propeller planes and private balloons, Lambert international airport now boasts facilities which support jet fighter training and international commercial flights. As mentioned earlier, airports like Lambert received much attention in the 1940s and 1950s, and its multiple expansion and renovation projects were often treated as parts of a larger megaproject scheme. However, the most controversial expansion to the airport was the recent addition of the “11-29”, 9,000-foot runway in 1998, completed in 2006²⁷. As people might have expected, this expansion project took the airport's megaproject legacy to another level, since the new runway can be considered its own megaproject in terms of size, scope, promise, and cost. Now, Lambert's megaproject

²⁷ Daniel L. Rust, *The Aerial Crossroads of American: St. Louis' Lambert Airport* (St. Louis: Missouri History Museum History Press, 2016), 266.

legacy is informed by the dialogue exchanged in neighboring communities and in the St. Louis region.

St. Louis' international airport most recent runway expansion serves as an interesting case study since it fulfills the requirements of being both a complete failure and a total success when it comes to megaproject construction. This dichotomy the eyes of St. Louis residents and developers makes the airport development only more controversial. On the one hand, the expansion project is almost universally rejected by residents of the immediately surrounding communities because it served as a great force of displacement, inconvenience, and source of public health concerns. For the greater St. Louis diaspora, people feared wasteful spending, the impact the project would have on the city's economic competitiveness, and traffic flow between the city and county. The developers, and indeed the government, however, have remained largely pleased with the overall execution and planning of the project, despite public pushback. Many of the project managers suggest that the expansion was a success because it, unlike most megaprojects, came in under budget and was completed quicker than expected. Additionally, the LTCs and political costs of the project were predominately negligible since legal fees were properly accounted for and resolved and little to no construction delays were encountered. While scholars agree that managing costs and structural impact can indeed deliver a successful label to a megaproject's legacy, Lambert's generally negative public perception might yet withhold the airport from becoming a true success in St. Louis' continuing story.

Lambert's megaproject runway was planned in the 1990s as a response to the perceived need to maintain the airport's competitiveness and usefulness as Trans World Airlines' (TWA) main hub.²⁸ At this time, TWA as an aircraft company was in full decline financially, being

²⁸ Rust, *The Aerial Crossroads of America: St. Louis' Lambert Airport*, 234-235.

unable to compete with other national carriers like American Airlines and United Airlines. Despite this, Lambert was experiencing a golden age since TWA abandoned its holdings in New York and Chicago in favor of St. Louis.²⁹ TWA's reorganization was still good news for Lambert, and it gave developers the excuse they were looking for to solidify the airport's economic competitiveness. This was their leap of faith moment, and as Rust points out, the general public and most media sources seemed in favor of developing the airport as well, especially since the city was in the midst of losing another national airline.³⁰ In this case, the airport's runway expansion megaproject began with the ambitions of both the public and the developers aligned, a rare occurrence in megaproject history. Before progressing it should be noted, that despite the relative alignment between the public and the developers on Lambert's runway megaproject, the residents of Bridgeton, Missouri, the community which borders the airport, have always been wary, if not in outright opposition to most development strategies since their land and quality of life is typically perceived to be at risk.

Legacy of Success: After reviewing multiple print and digital sources, the conversation concerning the overall success of the airport runway expansion has to do with three primary victories: construction successes, a perceived improvement in economic competitiveness, and the enhancement of both city and state. Construction successes stem from terms referring to the fact that the megaproject came in under budget and within the planned timetable in addition to its mitigation of LTCs and political costs. The perceived improvement in economic competitiveness is a more difficult concept to grasp since actual numbers on the projects economic impact are at best a mixed bag. However, many developers and other media sources cite the megaproject as fulfilling its promise to advance St. Louis' business prospects and secure the airport's role as a

²⁹ Rust, 236.

³⁰ Rust, 235.

gateway to Missouri's markets. Finally, some suggest that the megaproject should be counted as a success since it has increased the intangible prestige of the region and state. These sources note how the project set records for the state and established development benchmarks for other in-kind developments to follow. While there were other points of pride that were researched, these three aspects appear to be the dominant argument for the airport runway expansion's legacy of success.

As expected, much of the success stories one might encounter originate from the developers themselves. But these sentiments are echoed by other independent outlets. For example, the *St. Louis Business Journal* was excited about the prospects of the megaproject throughout its development, and even lauded its ability to come in under budget.³¹ This article, like others, covers the three success stories which proponents of the megaproject offer as its defining legacy. By focusing in on the language, specific foci of the conversation emerge as primary, secondary, and tertiary talking points. For starters, when examining the successful construction argument, it is evident that the conversation breaks the talking points down to celebrating the budgetary efficiency of the project, the timeliness of the construction, and the equitableness of the project's impact. These are determined by the amount of times phrases sharing these sentiments appear in discussion or developer propaganda. Underscoring these accounts are key words germane to the successful side of the argument. For example, phrases concerning budgetary efficiency used the terms "within budget", "under budget", and "on-budget". Similarly, phrases discussing timeliness used common words like "completed", "on-time", and on, within, and as "schedule(d)". Lastly, discussion pertaining to equitable

³¹ Laurie Sybert, "Mayor: Lambert runway expansion to come in under budget," *St. Louis Business Journal*. 2004. Accessed May 4, 2019. <https://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/2004/04/26/daily57.html>

development used words alluding to the broader audience such as “travelers”, “business”, “region” and “community/residents”. By recording the phrase and word counts, it becomes clear which talking points were of capital concern for the developers, and what they have used to truly champion the message of the project’s successful construction.

Table 1.
Successful Construction Phrases and Key Words

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “under budget”	16	16	15	1	0
- Phrases concerning “on schedule”	17	25	19	6	0
- Phrases concerning “equitable development”	19	34	19	10	5
- Total of Phrases	48	75	53	17	5

As Table 1. points out, phrases concerning equitable development appeared most often within official publications with 19 different occurrences.³² When discussing the positive effect

³² Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “How was the Airport Expansion Program completed ahead of schedule?” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080502075447/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id263.asp>
Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “Lambert Expansion delivered Missouri’s first traffic tunnel,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080502075438/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id262.asp>
Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “The Expansion Story,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080501193743/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id261.asp>
Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “Greater Efficiency,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070603222217/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id260.asp>
Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “On the Move,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071020233738/http://lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id259.as>

that the runway expansion would have on businesses, the developers say, “As a community, we have already reaped benefits from the Lambert Expansion because most of its \$1 billion budget has gone to St. Louisans and St. Louis-based companies, including a number of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.” Inclusive language appears to be the primary selling point for the project success, especially since the key word usage had more positive association than negative. For example, when debating the impact that project would have on residents, the developers note the negative impact of having to demolish 2000 homes to make way for the runway, however, they balance that message by suggesting that the tax money will be made up for and that aid was given to displaced families and businesses. While the discussion of equitable development is paramount to this conversation, it is still far too contested within the publications, with outright positive associations with the words making up just over half of the occurrences. Therefore, while equitable development might have been the most talked about success story, the phrases concerning budgetary efficiency might serve as a more concrete message of success since it only has one non-positive association with its key word count.

Coupled with the message of a successful construction, the economic competitiveness argument is arguably the most important element for the airport to secure as a victory. Indeed, this area is the most contested with the developers lauding various accomplishments while the general public claims that this was all a waste. As mentioned earlier, the positive message for the runway expansion’s impact revolves around fulfilling promises set by the developers and the public at the project’s onset and achieving real, economic and business improvements around the

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program Fact Sheet,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080130141823/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id269.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “Major Deliverable of the Airport Expansion Program,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071020233812/http://lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id266.asp>

region. As one might expect, the developers and government claim that they did reach these goals thus securing a definitive win for the people of St. Louis and Missouri. Despite Lambert's decline as a regional hub by the time the runway was completed in 2006, officials still argued that the runway "it's still attractive to new entrant carriers...the runway was a good investment for the future of the St. Louis area."³³ Therefore, quotes like these informed this paper's research as to which words and phrases to count for the argument for economic success. When recalling the fact that the megaproject fulfilled many of its promises and delivered its deliverables, developers are recorded using words like, "promise", "as planned", and "award/successful". Furthermore, improving economic competitiveness includes improving regional business capacity, using ideas like "increase travel", "more business", and "efficiency".

Table 2.
Successful Economic Competitiveness Phrases and Key Words

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning "fulfill promises"	81	192	167	21	4
- Phrases concerning "improve business"	38	44	40	2	2
- Total of Phrases	119	236	207	23	6

Overall, this section had the most phrase counts and key word usages out of the positivist, those sources using primarily supportive language of the project, arguments. Before one gives full credence to the overwhelming presence of these claims within these testimonies, it is

³³ Rust, 267.

important to note that promises, in terms of megaprojects, can be as narrow or broad as the developers want them to be. Originally, the goals and scope of the airport runway expansion project were narrowly defined, albeit, in vague terms. As mentioned earlier, economic development and maintaining a competitive edge remained key selling point for the developers and St. Louis government. Former St. Louis City mayor, Francis Slay was recorded saying that the project was, “Critical to continuing the region’s economic momentum is an airport that is efficient, so the airlines can serve our growing demand for air service.”³⁴ Despite the latter part of the claim being arguably untrue based on statistical evidence, the ideas that he mentions are central to the development promises made by the developers.³⁵

According to developer publications and select media announcements, the runway not only met the vague, narrow goals as listed at the project’s inception, but also a host of other specific objectives that are proudly accounted in online sources and historical materials. Some of the specific promised completed by the project included repeated mention of a new route for Lindbergh Blvd. (appeared eight times), improved access to Natural Bridge Rd. (appeared seven times), the construction of a new airfield fire station (mentioned three times), improved airfield monitoring systems (appeared two times), the building of a new school in the Pattonville School District (mentioned twice), and the expansion and preservation of the local labor market (mentioned twice). The only negative word associations emerge from the sources acknowledging the “acquisition” of residential, business, and religious properties in Bridgeton, MO, a strategy which was, “a wrenching decision.”³⁶

³⁴ Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, “A message from the mayor of the city of St. Louis,” *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 30, 2019.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071020233730/http://lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id257.asp>

³⁵ The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, “New \$1.1 Billion Runway Lies Quiet in St. Louis,” *Aviation Pros*. 2006. Accessed May 10, 2019. <https://www.aviationpros.com/home/news/10395713/new-11-billion-runway-lies-quiet-in-st-louis>

³⁶ Vincent C. Schoemehl Jr., “Plane Truth: Lambert must be Expanded-Area can Prosper only if it meets Challenge of Increasing Air Travel,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 25, 1989.

Improving business of the St. Louis region is probably one of the more controversial claims the positivist camp can maintain regarding the expansion. Economic figures surrounding the airport are a mixed bag, but the developers and government have never wavered in their belief that the project has done more good than ill.³⁷ In an interview with local media, reporters asked St. Louis Comptroller Darlene Green about the continuing costs of the runway and whether or not its economic impact outweighed the lost economic potential from the demolished section of Bridgeton. She commented that the project fulfilled its promise to the region and that there was no loss in business or resources since the project was funded by internal sources.³⁸ Assuming local businesses which were not bought out for the project's construction were not significantly hampered, then one might assume, like the *St. Louis Business Journal* and the *Post-Dispatch*, that the influx of cash and increased travel within the region would boost local businesses. This explains why the developers only note the demolition of schools and religion buildings as a noteworthy loss to the community, in terms of economic development, rather than the reduction of residential and commercial properties.

³⁷ Ken Leiser, "Little-used runway Pros, cons: Airport says it's a selling point; former neighbors still angry," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 2009, Accessed April 16, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/news/little-used-runway-pros-cons-airport-says-it-s-a/article_364a3e80-6365-568e-9222-c9a9963642cd.html

³⁸ "Internal Sources" refer to resources from airport ticket sales, luggage fees, private contributions, etc. No public funds or tax revenue was levied for the construction of the runway extension. Elliott Davis "You Paid for it – Lambert's Billion Dollar Runway," *Fox 2 News – St. Louis*. 2013, Accessed April 15, 2019, <https://fox2now.com/2013/05/06/you-paid-for-it-lamberts-billion-dollar-runway/>

Table 3.
Successful Prestige Enhancement Phrases and Key Words

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “set records”	8	18	18	0	0
- Phrases concerning “set example”	6	17	15	2	0
- Total of Phrases	14	35	33	2	0

Wrapping up the last significant argument for the project’s success is the belief that the legacy of the development has substantially improved St. Louis’ prestige. Table 3. notes that despite the relatively few times these stories are given, they still carry staunch defense of the project’s overall success. When encountering various publications and discussions, specific words alluding to the setting of records and examples for other developers to follow repeatedly arise at the end of each source. Indeed, relatively few sources from the developer’s voice actually highlight the setting of records when compared to the media. For this study, the developers of the megaproject had one article devoted to celebrating the achievement of the Lindbergh Blvd. tunnel compared to the three from outside media sources. In counting the records, mentions of the Lindbergh tunnel were counted in addition to mentions of other “firsts” for Missouri.

Across the developer publications, there are seven mentions of records being set for the St. Louis region and the State of Missouri. The final mention came from the St. Louis Business Journal, noting the record amount of money saved by the project coming in under budget.³⁹ The

³⁹ Bill Raack, “Feds Grant Airport \$25 Million for Noise Abatement,” *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR, ND*. Accessed May 18, 2019, <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/feds-grant-airport-25-million-noise-abatement#stream/0>

total amount of records set by the project, by most accounts, is thus four separate records. First, the project gave Missouri its first traffic tunnel with the Lindbergh Blvd. reorientation.⁴⁰ Second, the megaproject saved \$21 million by coming in under budget.⁴¹ Third, the runway expansion was the largest earth-moving project in the St. Louis area.⁴² Finally, construction of the project was safer than the industry standard, with the number of instances when worker required medical attention due to accident or injury 31 percent under the average.⁴³ As one might expect, out of the 8 recorded instances of developers and media sources talking about these records, none had any negative or neutral word associations. While these talking points might be small in the grand scheme of the argument in favor of the project's legacy of success, these seem to be the least controversial since all sources seem pleased to set new records. If nothing else, as Mike Minges stated, "[these] offer us a chance to really emphasize the potential of positive growth in our region."⁴⁴

While record breaking and setting stands as a positive selling point for the developers and media, those who claim the project was a success also point to the project's more social achievements. The timeliness of its construction was, for example, attributed to, "agencies and organizations [checking] their individual agendas at the door and working together cooperatively."⁴⁵ As many scholars have observed, LTCs are quickly amassed through construction snares like worker disputes and equipment shortages. While developers credit effective planning, the media celebrates proper safety and worker compensation as the reason

⁴⁰ Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, "Lambert Expansion delivered Missouri's first traffic tunnel," *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008.

⁴¹ Sybert, 2004.

⁴² Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, "Lambert Expansion delivered Missouri's first traffic tunnel," 2008.

⁴³ Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, "How was the Airport Expansion Program completed ahead of schedule?" *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008.

⁴⁴ Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, "Lambert Expansion delivered Missouri's first traffic tunnel," 2008.

⁴⁵ Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, "How was the Airport Expansion Program completed ahead of schedule?" 2008.

why the runway expansion did not encounter these seemingly omnipresence barriers in megaproject construction. Therefore, the efficiency of the project's completion and care for the people involved, including the residents of the surrounding localities, are touted as models for other developers to follow. Ideas like "work closely with", "collaboration/cooperation", "award-winning", and "best practices" informed the content of this study. Again, like the previous aspect, there were no recorded negative associations with these terms.

According to both the developers and individual media outlets, the legacy of success for the runway expansion largely relies on a discussion of its construction efficiency and effective planning. While some of the argument's elements might be controversial, standing in contrast to quantitative data and negative word associations, the message is largely united and potent. As interested parties continue defending Lambert International Airport's legacy of success, it might be more beneficial for them to bring more attention to the project's history of setting the bar higher for all megaprojects, especially since there are no recorded negative associations with accomplishing new feats of engineering. The stark lack of reporting on the project's involvement in supporting the local community, setting industry standards, and engaging with best practice solutions hinders the positivist message about the success of the runway's legacy.

Legacy of Failure: Lambert International Airport's handling and construction of the runway expansion is also viewed negatively by a significant portion of the St. Louis population, despite the successes discussed above. Unlike the success narrative, the legacy of failure overwhelmingly focuses on feelings of displacement, concerns about wasteful spending, and post-completion shame. The first element of failure is the most prominent, especially since over 3000 properties were physically moved or destroyed to make room for the megaproject's construction and legal obligations. Residents from all around the airport share stories of

displacement, especially in regard to noise problems, health concerns, and physical loss. In addition to this, sources from the greater St. Louis area concentrated the resources needed for the construction and the cost-benefit analysis of the project. This manifests itself in a discussion over the efficient use of tax dollars and whether the project's cost outweighs its perceived uselessness. Lastly, when people talk about the runway expansion project, they tend to use language that is associated with shame, in that many are displeased with the level of sacrifice that was required for what was gained. While a true measure of economic benefit and loss will have to be left for an additional study, the conversations of failure do stand in stark contrast to what the general public was talking about at the conception of the megaproject.

Feelings of displacement can be recorded across almost all media sources covering the runway expansion project. In addition to the developer's publication acknowledging the demolition of homes as a "wrenching decision", media sources and individual people tend to focus on the stark number of demolitions and forces of exclusion. While sources account the physical displacement of people as a negative factor, many also note that many of the homeowners were offered fair market value for their homes, potentially saving them from a decreasing housing market. One observer writes, "It was a blessing in disguise to many people who were trapped and then offered more than fair market value and moving expenses to escape their rapidly declining property values and search for better lives and locations."⁴⁶ That sentiment, while possibly true for many displaced homeowners, was not the experience of the majority of interviewed residents. Alternatively, one Bridgeton resident recalls, "We would have been doing a lot better over there, but now all [the homes] are gone for no reason."⁴⁷ These

⁴⁶ Comment by 'Dave' responding to a comment by 'Corl' in Ben Mutzabaugh's, "New \$1 billion runway opens this week, but it's not needed anymore," *USA Today*, August 30, 2007, Accessed June 5, 2019. https://web.archive.org/web/20070830212520/http://blogs.usatoday.com/sky/2006/04/st_louis.html

⁴⁷ Davis "You Paid for it – Lambert's Billion Dollar Runway," *Fox 2 News – St. Louis*. 2013.

personal accounts showcase the dichotomy between the experience of St. Louisans when it comes to displacement. Therefore, it is important to be aware that not all discussions of the demolitions were inherently negative.

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “physical displacement”	49	110	10	2	98
- Phrases concerning “emotional displacement”	20	34	0	0	34
- Total of Phrases	69	144	10	2	132

Table 4. captures the disparity between the discussion surrounding physical displacement, especially considering when critics of the megaproject almost never concede positive word associations with any of their talking points. When counting these phrases, words referring to the lost properties were noted but had to be keenly judged whether people were celebrating the opportunity to escape a “neighborhood in decline” or lamenting the loss of a “viable community”.⁴⁸ In addition to the mention of the lost properties, words like “moved”, “pressured”, and “destruction/demolition” were key for building the final count. Out of the 110 key words represented in the table above, “destruction/demolition” dominated the discussion (used almost exclusively in a negative associative manner) representing 50 of the 110 key words.

⁴⁸ Kathie Sutin, “Lambert – St. Louis Airport Expands Runway,” *Construction Equipment Guide*, 2006, Accessed April 16, 2019. <https://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/lambert-st-louis-airport-expands-runway/7299>

As some reporters noted, the scale of destruction carried out by the megaproject was simply shocking for many residents, thus possibly explaining the negative backlash against the completed project.⁴⁹ However, despite the overwhelmingly negative association with physical displacement caused by the expansion, there are still sources which claim that the project was good for the area, and future research should focus more on the conversation within Bridgeton and compare it to the greater, regional conversation.

In addition to this, many St. Louisans also share feelings of emotional displacement towards the megaproject. Interestingly, many of these opinions come from outside the Bridgeton community, displaying the scale of which the development had on the whole region. This emotional displacement manifests itself in two major ways, according to media sources and personal interviews. First, people are recorded feeling pressured to be nomadic, even when they are homeowners in Bridgeton. Second, people feel as though megaprojects and other developments cannot be stopped or changed, no matter how communities stand up for themselves. Out of the 20 phrases recorded pertaining to emotional displacement, all had negative word associations. People used terms like, “waste of time”, “if we move away, we won’t be missed”, and “we are waiting to be told to leave” to express their angst.⁵⁰ Out of the sources consulted, there were 34 instances of these key words being used to describe one of both aspects of the emotional displacement conversation. Furthermore, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch kept up with the evolution within this debate recording many similar sentiments throughout the 1990-2003 period.⁵¹ One Post-Dispatch article even recorded affected people as “refugees” while

⁴⁹ Davis, 2013.

⁵⁰ In reference to a collection of sources: Ken Leiser, “Little-used runway Pros, cons: Airport says it’s a selling point; former neighbors still angry,” 2009.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, “New \$1.1 Billion Runway Lies Quiet in St. Louis,” 2006.

⁵¹ Full list of articles consulted can be found in supplemental bibliography. Refer to Rust, 244-251 for immediate reactions.

they were relegated to temporary housing during the period of transition.⁵² While this analogy did border on the extreme compared to other examples, it does capture the sympathy non-Bridgeton residents felt towards their afflicted counterparts.

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “resource wastefulness”	38	72	0	12	60
- Phrases concerning “insufficient benefits”	14	28	0	12	16
- Total of Phrases	52	100	0	24	56

Another central message from critics of the runway expansion focused on challenging the construction successes and promises narrative coming from the developer’s side of the conversation. While proponents of the project celebrated its efficient use of allotted resources and effective planning, opponents, especially residents of Bridgeton, countered those successes by claiming that the whole project was a waste of precious resources. Again, this is where the larger conversation within the St. Louis region aligned with the local residents and business owners, a message that was further emphasized upon the project’s completion. “Wastefulness” refers to the fact that the real usefulness of the new runway was not immediately realized after its completion as air traffic had declined significantly at Lambert since the project’s inception. Critics of the project were quick to latch onto the irony that the airport built an expensive new

⁵² St. Louis Post-Dispatch, “Demo Limbo,” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 18, 2003, Accessed June 5, 2019. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/docview/1905539271/56E27D9177304BCAPQ/3?accountid=14595>

runway for no new customers and an increasingly dwindling service base. Statistics aside, it is important to note that every opinion article, especially those stemming from local media like the River Front Times, Post-Dispatch, and Fox 2 News, made mention of runway's lack of use throughout the early 2000s.

The sources consulted record 38 accounts of this issue, with many more mentions throughout the Post-Dispatch's archived articles from before 2004. Opinion pieces, especially from politically-left source material argue that the money could have gone to building something more useful to the regional economy, infrastructure, or even the people of Bridgeton.⁵³ Terms like "we could have", "if only", and "instead of" litter these sources. There also appears to be a sense of inevitability, once the project is started, there is no way of stopping it, even if the market gives out from under it. Four different sources make note of the fact that the project pressed on despite decreasing economic activity. The River Front Times hit a chord with readers in 2003 with its, "the bulldozers rolled on" critique, sparking online commenters to critique other regional developments with, "the bulldozers roll on".⁵⁴

As depicted in Table 5., most associations with wastefulness were negative. However, the neutral use of these terms are up for debate and could also be potentially considered negative. These associations are in reference to more neutral articles which had the goal of informing people of the statistical facts rather than making note of the irony. For example, this study consulted two short St. Louis Public Radio articles which were more like memos to the public rather than opinion pieces.⁵⁵ These references are considered natural because credence is given to

⁵³ River Front Times, "Best Boondoggle," *The Riverfront Times*, 2003, Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/best-boondoggle/BestOf?oid=250876>

⁵⁴ River Front Times, "Best Boondoggle," 2003.

⁵⁵ Associated Press, "Lambert's new runway opens today," St. Louis Public Radio – NPR, 2006, Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/lamberts-new-runway-opens-today#stream/0> and Matt Sepic, "Airport, Bridgeton settle suits over runway expansion," St. Louis Public Radio – NPR, ND, Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/airport-bridgeton-settle-suits-over-runway-expansion#stream/0>

both sides and stated matter-of-factly, “Lambert traffic fell after the September 11th attacks and again after American Airlines cut nearly half its flights there. But airport officials say it's still needed for future expansion, and they note the strip will be useful in bad weather, too.”⁵⁶

Table 6.
Failure of Shame Phrases and Key Words

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “unfair sacrifice”	5	10	0	4	6
- Phrases concerning “lost legacy”	17	17	0	6	11
- Total of Phrases	22	27	0	10	17

Lastly, there was an element of shame represented within the critics’ arguments. To many, the airport runway expansion serves as both a moment when St. Louis was perceived to have betrayed its residents, and as a reminder of a long-gone golden era. While this study could not find enough sources comparing the feelings of betrayal by the airport with those feelings experience by residents of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, similar language was used between the two experiences. Many residents, especially those in surrounding communities, often felt like they had become politically disenfranchised. Multiple sources recorded how people were angered by how the county government did not adequately stand up to the ity government during the planning process. Both Bridgeton and St. Charles voted to oppose the runway expansion, but the courts ruled in favor of the megaproject.⁵⁷ John O’Connell, a former St. Louis City Councilman, summed up many concerns when he was quoted, “How can we continue to let the

⁵⁶ Associated Press, “Lambert’s new runway opens today,” 2006.

⁵⁷ Rust, 244-249.

City of St. Louis, which represents 11 percent of the population...continue its destruction of St. Louis County?"⁵⁸

Most St. Louisans would contend, now that the project is completed, that the sacrifice to build the project, was not worth the effort, resources, time, or displacement. Here, none of the key words, like “worth”, “mistake”, “wrong direction”, and “unfair”, have positive connotations unlike in the general displacement point. When the media or individuals specifically discuss the fairness of the whole project, they use negative language like, “I still feel very vehemently that it wasn't a good plan...I knew it was going to be a lot of tax money spent in the wrong direction, and it's come to pass that is exactly what happened.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, media sources focus in on the lost money in addition to the personal sacrifices residents had to make. For example, Fox 2 News reports,

“The runway cost just over a billion dollars to build but it is just used 17 percent of the time. This year Lambert made a total \$78 million dollars in debt payments. Lambert still owes \$632 million dollars on the runway, a tab that won't be paid off until 2031. Then there's the human cost. The project forced out...homes and businesses in the City of Bridgeton. That's meant the loss of \$3 million or more in property taxes since the properties were demolished. That money could have gone to pay for things like schools, fire protection, libraries.”⁶⁰

Feelings of betrayal and unfair treatment are a difficult concept to measure on their own since they are typically made manifest in a variety of other complaints. The quote above even notes other conversation points explored earlier in this section. However, it also records the tradeoff between what could have been and what was promised by the megaproject.

The “lost legacy” argument stems out of what this study finds to be a lingering sense of shame St. Louisans feel about the apparent demise of their city. Population trends aside, St.

⁵⁸ St. Louis Post-Dispatch, “Lambert’s 17-year itch hurts the region,” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 27, 2000, Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/docview/1905104007/E4F8E63973C247C5PQ/282?accountid=14595>

⁵⁹ Ken Leiser, “Little-used runway Pros, cons: Airport says it’s a selling point; former neighbors still angry,” 2009.

⁶⁰ Davis, 2013.

Louis City has been hemorrhaging its positive legacies for arguably the past few decades, especially regarding its feats of engineering. Developers seized on the opportunity to turn the trend of urban decay around with the runway expansion megaproject, trusting that it would usher in a new era of growth for the city and county. However, this has arguably not been the case, and the diaspora still longs for a return to the boom days of St. Louis. Terms referring to Lambert International Airport as a “hub” and the city as an “economic engine” of sorts, appear relatively often in the debate. People lament that the runway not only did not deliver on its economic promises, but that it also has not salvaged the legacy of St. Louis as was promised. Francis Slay reported that the airport would become a hub from travel again. The River Front Times groans that the “hub” has only shrunk and continues to do so.⁶¹ Since sources seem to be longing for the conditions of the past, most of the associations within the phrases were negative. However, there is some discussion of neutrality as well. Sources discussing the lost legacy of St. Louis also contain calls to let “history be history”.⁶² This study considers these sentiments within the conversation as more neutral because the sources quoted desire moving forward with existing assets and realities, rather than trying to maintain an illusion of past splendor. Former Bridgeton Mayor Conrad Bowers is often quoted saying, “Regardless of how we felt in the past, the actions we took in the past, that's done, that's history. We're moving ahead as a city. We're moving ahead as a municipal airport, and I am pleased with the progress.”⁶³ This exact quote appeared in 10 different sources, two from St. Louis Public Radio, and eight from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Those who stand in opposition to the megaproject argue that its legacy aligns more with failure because it failed to deliver on promises, was a waste of regional resources, and

⁶¹ River Front Times, 2003.

⁶² The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. “St. Louis Airport, Bridgeton End 20 Year Dispute.” Aviation Pros. 2007. Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.aviationpros.com/home/news/10392471/st-louis-airport-bridgeton-end-20-year-dispute>

⁶³ Sepic, ND.

perpetuates an unobtainable ideal that “hub days” of the airport will return. While there should be something said for the project’s timely completion and budgetary efficiency, the media and general population have come to hold the runway as a glaring failure largely because it remains underutilized. People have difficulty remembering the hype and optimism when the project was initially unveiled in the 1990s and have replaced those visions with feelings of powerlessness. While not all future developments in the St. Louis region spark this kind of debate, Lambert’s new runway remains a testament to “the bulldozers roll on”.

Analysis: The conversation surrounding the legacy of Lambert International Airport’s 11-29 runway seems to hinge on the discrepancy between the values of both sides of the debate. Generally, those who insist that the runway expansion project is successful refer to hard statistics and construction achievements more often than any other talking point. On the other side, those who refer to the megaproject as a failure highlight feeling powerless and betrayed rather than digging into the murky economic impact. The content analysis for the positivist camp shows that their arguments are more controversial both within their own source material, and within the regional discussion. While an observer might note that official publications which report on both the good and the bad of a project is a sign of transparent governance, it also proves that there is substantial weight behind the concerns of affected citizens and other St. Louisans awaiting future megaprojects.

Moving forward, the discussion on the success or failure of the project depends on both sides being able to bridge this gap between principles. Despite the very real attempts made to mitigate displacement, the fact that the construction proceeded despite market decreases served to sever trust between county residents and their respective governments. The best path forward is to mend that trust and, as Bowers said, let “history be history”.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch captured the evolution of this conversation very well in its coverage of the project from its ambitious beginnings to its unceremonious completion in 2006. As Rust contends, “the Post-Dispatch a consistent champion of the project, now said ‘if we had to do it over again, we wouldn’t.’”⁶⁴ This study used a variety of sources to glean the conversation around the runway expansion’s legacy, however, the Post-Dispatch’s archives of hundreds of articles served as a primary inspiration. As stated, the Post-Dispatch was firmly in support of the project throughout the 1990s, but its tone changed between 1999-2001 when market threats and feelings of displacement were becoming louder than construction successes. While many articles did not make it into the phrase and word counts due to concerns about skewing the results of this study, the account of Lambert’s story is in-depth and broad across all sources.

⁶⁴ Rust, 267.

Future Megaproject Overview: National Geospatial Agency West Campus



Fig. 5. Cleared land (pictured left) in the St. Louis Place neighborhood awaits construction of the new NGA campus (artists depiction right). To make room for the development, residences were demolished or physically moved to another location. Image left: St. Louis Post Dispatch, 2018. Image right: McCarthy HITT, 2019.

Introduction: The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is a unique entity within the Federal government’s defense and intelligence apparatuses. At a glance, the NGA offers combat support to all branches of the armed forces and advises policymakers and the president in three primary areas. These include plotting counterterrorism measures, identifying and tracking weapons of mass destruction, and monitoring global political crises.⁶⁵ In addition to being headquartered in Springfield, Virginia, the NGA has satellite locations in Arnold and St. Louis, Missouri. Now, the St. Louis branch has been getting recent attention from the national media and is setting the St. Louis populace abuzz with anticipation and anxiety.

NGA’s impact on the St. Louis region might be as diverse as its operational mission. Not only does the agency already employ over 3000 local residents, but it also draws in transient actors who feed the economy of St. Louis.⁶⁶ However, what makes the NGA an interesting case study is the fact that it is dramatically expanding its offices through the construction of a second headquarters in the blighted area of north St. Louis City. At the end of 2018, city officials and

⁶⁵ National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, “About NGA,” NGA.mil, 2019, <https://www.nga.mil/About/Pages/Default.aspx>

⁶⁶ NGA.mil, 2019.

the federal government approved the NGA's expansion into north St. Louis by officiating the deal and signing over 97 acres of previously residential areas to the federal government.⁶⁷

According to the government's best estimates, redevelopment of the land and construction of the NGA campus will cost \$1.7 billion and be completed in 2024.⁶⁸

Unlike the case of Lambert's 11-29 runway expansion project, this megaproject technically does not have a legacy yet since it is not completed. While most scholars agree that a true assessment of the project's success and failures cannot occur until the first few years after completion, St. Louis developers and citizens are already talking about economic impact, feelings of powerlessness, lofty promises, and sullen conspiracies. Thus, this study will look to the future and offer a prediction on how the conversation about this megaproject will inform its yet unrealized legacy.

Redevelopment strategies for the more impoverished northern side of St. Louis city have been a familiar point of discussion in the development community. First, the area has been largely defined by the legacies of two major development legacies, the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects and developer Paul McKee's Northside Regeneration Redevelopment Area. While Pruitt-Igoe's legacy in the city's history is



Fig. 6. The Pruitt-Igoe housing complex was a housing megaproject designed to solve St. Louis' affordable housing crisis in the 1950s. Though it ultimately proved to be an economic and cultural failure, its legacy proved that some residents' lives could be improved through megaprojects, even if only briefly. Image: The Pruitt-Igoe Myth, 2011.

⁶⁷ Kae M. Petrin, "St. Louis transfers land to Federal Government for New Transformative NGA Facility," St. Louis Public Radio-NPR, December 13, 2018, Accessed May 30, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-transfers-land-federal-government-new-transformative-nga-facility#stream/0>

⁶⁸ NGA. Mil, 2019.

one of mismanagement and unfulfilled promises, its planning and construction proved to northside residents that megaprojects were not only viable in blighted communities, but that they could also have some measured successes with lasting legacies of their own. Pruitt-Igoe showed many residents that megaprojects had tremendous potential to resolve public needs and that these developments could do “more good more quickly” than the more gradual forces of the market.⁶⁹ For example, Pruitt-Igoe provided up-to-date living accommodations at low cost to the renter. Though mismanagement eventually degraded these amenities, many residents were happy that their living conditions had improved from the 19th century tenements they were occupying previously. Divergent from Pruitt-Igoe’s example, the Northside Regeneration Redevelopment Area (NRRA) is increasingly being viewed as a looming failure with few to no benefits to north city residents. This series of projects, costing around \$8.1 billion, is aimed at renovating the housing stock of north St. Louis and transforming blighted neighborhoods into attractive and active communities.⁷⁰ However, to this date, only one project has been completed, and as of June 2018, the City of St. Louis has taken measures to sever ties with the NRRA citing breeches in various community development agreements.

Future Legacy: With these two examples paving the way for future developments in the north side of the city, it is evident the NGA planners have learned to champion a community improvement message while actively engaging residents to preempt feelings of neglect and distrust. People in favor of the NGA expansion into the northside have begun highlighting the precursors of a successful legacy in the form of predictions about the project’s economic impact.

⁶⁹ Alexander von Hoffman, “Why they Built the Pruitt-Igoe Project,” *Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University*, 2002.

⁷⁰ Kae Petrin, “Once promised for rehab, vacant buildings owned by developer Paul McKee Now Scar City’s North Side,” *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR.*, November 30, 2018, Accessed June 1, 2019. <http://apps.stlpublicradio.org/northside-properties-2018/index.html>

Those who predict that the project will be a resounding success tend to fall back upon three primary talking points: NGA will expand employment opportunities in St. Louis, the project will rescue and reshape the blighted neighborhoods of the northside, and the institution will be a permanent, positive investment in the region.

Table 7.
Potential Successes Phrases and Key Words

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “employment opportunities”	15	40	35	3	2
- Phrases concerning “neighborhood rehabilitation”	11	24	10	1	13
- Phrases concerning “permanent investment”	7	15	9	3	3
- Total of Phrases	33	79	64	7	18

As things stand, both the developers and most media outlets seem in agreement that the NGA site will dramatically change the employment in the region, if not also in the surrounding neighborhoods. When interviewed, Vice Admiral Robert Sharp claimed, “We see it as a game changer not only for our agency but for the (geo-intelligence) community, the intelligence community. It’s really going to evolve the way we as an agency interact with academia and industry.”⁷¹ People are starting to expect the St. Louis region to begin tailoring education and job market training to fit the high-skilled positions affiliated with the NGA. Regardless of whether

⁷¹ Jacob Barker, “Take a look at what Uncle Sam has planned for north St. Louis,” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 10, 2019, Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/business/local/take-a-look-at-what-uncle-sam-has-planned-for/article_c7b8bee1-2304-5730-b7c3-0e53b3a91994.html

the NGA can keep employing vast numbers of college graduates, there seems to be a general prediction that many St. Louisans are going to try to obtain working positions with the new NGA campus. However, this debate only accounts for about two-thirds of the phrases concerning “employment opportunities” in Table 7. In addition to this, people are also starting to talk about supplemental employment within businesses around the NGA megaproject. In an interview, John Cruz with Rise Community Development in St. Louis points out that there might be some limited growth in businesses around the West Campus project to supply high-paid government employees with food, light retail, and other simple goods. This idea is echoed by some residents in the area as well, so much so, that in addition to John Cruz’s interview, resident interviews account for the remaining four phrases per Table 7. Key words in this count include terms as simple as “employment” and “workforce”, but also more complex ideas like “labor pool expansion”, “skill building”, and “business connected to the community”. Words and terms like these are prevalent throughout the source material.⁷²

No discussion about the future of north St. Louis would be complete without predictions about how much the disadvantaged neighborhoods in the area will be changed by such an ambitious and expensive project. As Table 7. shows, this subject is also the most controversial within the positivist camp. Almost all individual interviews used in this study included personal ideas about future land use, demographic make-up, and neighborhood character once the megaproject is completed. One northside resident predicted that, “the housing will be different. You won’t see any more of these old brick houses.” In contrast, a contractor from Illinois who

⁷² Len Toenjes’ reporting on this discussion proved useful in defining which key words and ideas were most germane to the subject matter.

Len Toenjes, “Next NGA West project could be game changer for St. Louis employment opportunities,” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 25, 2019. Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/len-toenjes-next-nga-west-project-could-be-game-changer/article_ccdaf985-62cd-5a7b-bdf8-011ec915c7d1.html

was interviewed while working in the area argued, “Nothing is going to happen. Mr. McKee owns all these houses and he’s going to sit on them until someone gives him an amazing offer.” While there are other examples of people suggesting that change will not be drastic, the developers of Next NGA West are promising significant improvements to the community through broad community development initiatives.

When discussing the changes, housing, economic attainment, and public education appear at the forefront of the word counts. Negative word associations within phrases concerning neighborhood rehabilitation stem from the looming threat people perceive coming from Paul McKee and his community development organization. Both the media and interviewed residents recognize that his hand will determine much of the future housing stock throughout the northside, especially around the NGA site.⁷³ Despite the city’s official “break-up” with McKee in the summer of 2018, he and his organization maintain their official promise to build housing near the NGA site on the land they own. While previous contracts would have ensured low-income and single-family homes, there is some concern now in whether housing development will continue in an equitable manner or if McKee will ignore the character of the neighborhood in favor of selling properties to high-income government employees.⁷⁴

While feelings on housing are a mixed bag, the remainder of positive associations arise from developers and residents being excited to repopulate and redefine the neighborhoods. During a resident focus group, homeowners across the northside remained hopeful about the caliber of new neighbors their communities would soon welcome. They noted how new in-

⁷³ Jacob Barker, “Still stuck with Paul McKee, St. Louis officials pledge to do redevelopment differently in the future,” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. March 23, 2019. Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/still-stuck-with-paul-mckee-st-louis-officials-pledge-to/article_b094fe94-42f8-5398-a032-258d646850ae.html

⁷⁴ Maria Altman, “McKee announces new partnership and housing near NGA,” *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*, June 7, 2016. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/mckee-announces-new-partnership-and-housing-near-nga#stream/0>

movers would probably spur beautification projects, but more importantly, that more city resources would be sent to the northside. Of the ten positive word associations within the neighborhood rehabilitation conversation, eight had to do with “more resources” and “more attention”. One woman who had move from the northern St. Louis Place neighborhood to the southern Botanical Heights redevelopment noted that the NGA would probably change the legacy of crime in the northside. She said, “The residents want change, but it’s the drifter who come here to hustle and beg who hold us back.” Indeed, there has been some concern among residents that systemic poverty, disenfranchisement, and crime might hamper future development of the community, but people seem to remain confident in NGA’s ability to shake loose that history soon. While still controversial, the promise of neighborhood rehabilitation still serves as a selling point for a potential megaproject success story.

The benefits of the NGA megaproject being a “permanent investment in the community” are also somewhat mixed. People hoping for a successful and positive impact from the megaproject are hoping that the long-term presence of the campus will gradually uplift the surrounding neighborhoods. Few media sources discuss this idea, but scholars often talk about the effect “anchor institutions” have on a community. While these anchor institutions typically refer to educational and medical facilities, the NGA campus is assumed to be among their ranks as a principle anchor within north St. Louis. Three regional developers during a panel interview recognized this reality as a potential boon for the underdeveloped communities on St. Louis northside but remain unsure about how quickly improvements to the area will spread. Words referring to this concern make up the negative word associations in this section. Throughout the interview, slow growth was only mentioned three times.

	Phrase Count	Key Word Count	Positive Word Association	Neutral Word Association	Negative Word Association
- Phrases concerning “feelings of displacement”	10	11	1	0	10
- Phrases concerning “history erasure”	10	11	2	0	9
- Total of Phrases	20	22	3	0	19

While developers and many residents are truly hopeful for the NGA megaproject, the media and other residents still fear what legacy will be left behind. Those who are skeptical of the project’s ability to be counted as successful are already talking about displacement concerns, the negative effects of gentrification, and the potential for decades of history to be forgotten by the St. Louis collective. While equitable development is already an official goal of the NGA, developers will have to tread carefully when building in communities that have already experienced so much economic, social, and psychological hurt. Table 8 captures the distribution of words associated with the two main talking points which typically dominate skeptical discussions. It is evident that those who are skeptical in their assessment of the future megaproject have more cohesive resolve within their talking points, with little to no discrepancy between the total amount of key words used and their negative associations.

As seen in the debate surrounding Lambert International Airport’s runway expansion project, feelings of displacement run strong throughout the development conversation with Next NGA West. First and foremost, many sources jumped on the most literal physical displacement story St. Louis has experience in its recent history. Back in 2017, a historically significant three-

story house was physically moved from its original position in the demolition zone for the NGA project, to a safer location further north into the relatively stable St. Louis Place neighborhood.⁷⁵ Media sources and residents alike were thrilled about this since it preserved history, a family's legacy, and the value of the local housing market.⁷⁶ As depicted in Table 8, the only three words with positive associations in this section came from this story. Those three words were two accounts of the idea "enrich the community" and one use of the word "only" This, so far, is the only property to be saved by physical relocation from NGA related demolition.

Sensation aside, feelings of displacement are made manifest through discussions about a perception of displacement and an overarching fear that the culture and story of the neighborhood will be forgotten. One media source noted that preliminary construction and demolition efforts in preparation for the NGA megaproject have already had a negative impact on people living around the development zone. Specifically, residents have complained about health issues like an uptick in childhood asthma and other respiratory infections.⁷⁷ Quotes from residents include, "Why would you bring all those rock and dirt and dust right next to the school?" And, "I had to hold my breath walking to the car sometimes." A resident who lives in Old North, a neighborhood just east of the NGA development site, recalls how pollution and the perception that nothing can be done about it puts unfair pressure on people and only encourages people to move away rather than return to the city. He asserts, "We need young people to feel like they can make a home here...regardless of race, we can't keep our kids here." This idea that the family unit was somehow under attack by the NGA project appeared 7 times out of the 11

⁷⁵ Maria Altman, "St. Louis moves 3-story house out of NGA site," *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*, February 26, 2017, Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-moves-3-story-house-out-nga-site#stream/0>

⁷⁶ Altman, "St. Louis moves 3-story house out of NGA site," 2017.

⁷⁷ Ryan Delaney, "Dust bowl created by NGA project demolition blamed for sickening kids, teachers," *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*, May 14, 2018, Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/dust-bowl-created-nga-project-demolition-blamed-sickening-kids-teachers#stream/0>

total word associations. The other repeating notion was that government employees will work, play, and maybe even live in the community, thus changing the culture of the community once the project is completed.

Back in 2015, before the NGA even decided to use north St. Louis as its expansion destination, the first conversations about erasure emerged with a petition to preserve St. Louis's northside. Residents amassed 95,000 signatures to "save northside" in the hopes that a future NGA megaproject might not destroy dozens of historic houses and other properties.⁷⁸ One long-time resident of the area said, "'Our homes are a lot more than brick and mortar. Our homes are our heritage. They represent the lives of our fathers and our grandfathers who struggled to become a part of this nation, to own land.'" Much of the northside represents St. Louis' rich German heritage, complete with large, multi-thousand square foot houses, beautiful cathedrals, and even two old breweries. Sentiments like these permeate the discussion today. As another resident feared when interviewed in 2019, "They pretend like all the people in the community never existed. Maybe they put up a few plaques or markers to show what used to be here..." Despite the city saving one historic house since 2015, many others have been demolished to make way for the future megaproject. The few residents that still call the disadvantaged community home are still afraid a new-build megaproject will inspire further degradation of the historical elements of the community, slowly redefining the areas without recognizing the past.

Analysis: Qualitative content analysis proved more limited when analyzing the conversations surrounding a project which does not have its own latent legacy yet. While there are elements of legacies that are already being discussed among St. Louis residents, there is no strong argument yet for those predicting a successful narrative, and too few talking points to

⁷⁸ Maria Altman, "Residents ask NGA to drop north St. Louis site," *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*, May 6, 2015, Accessed June 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/residents-ask-nga-drop-north-st-louis-site#stream/0>

drive the message of the skeptics. After reviewing personal interviews collected by UMSL and media materials, it would seem that this conversation is headed for the same clash of principles that is experienced within the Lambert runway expansion project's conversation. This study predicts that once the Next NGA West campus is completed, people arguing for a successful legacy will mainly focus on engineering achievements like moving a whole house and economic indicators like increased household income in these more blighted neighborhoods. Additionally, those who will argue that the legacy is one of failure might levy the displacement narrative but supplement it with the threat of historical whitewashing. In the end, more research will have to be conducted upon the megaproject's eventual completion in the early 2020s.

Conclusion

Economic development and the promises thereof were central to the planning and marketing of megaprojects during the golden era of megaprojects throughout the 1940s and 1950s. While national trends have largely shifted away from the get in and get dirty mentality of that era, megaprojects in St. Louis still seem to be based on that paradigm. Drawing on the conversations revolving around the future NGA megaproject and the recently completed 11-29 runway expansion project, developers are still asking St. Louisans to make a leap of faith on large-scale economic development initiatives, promising great economic return even when market forces or community legacies might point to another reality.

In a way, though, St. Louisans depend upon this leap of faith mentality as the basis of their judgments. Those who would suggest that a megaproject is successful champion the positive economic impacts and accomplishments achieved during construction of the megaproject. This paradigm is especially visible with the runway expansion as some people and media sources agreed with the developer's assertion of success strictly because of the project was

completed on-time and under budget, a rare occurrence for megaprojects. These successes often perfectly align with the developer's promises for economic development and success benchmarking. Alternatively, conversations which contend that a project is a failure tend to reflect strong feeling of betrayal and disenfranchisement, which assumes that the promises made by the developers were tangible possibilities to begin with. This conversation arises across St. Louis' megaproject history. Furthermore, the experience of the new NGA site is showing signs that the conversation might go in a similar direction, especially if the economic impact of the project is not felt by the residents who live in those disadvantaged communities now. Making good on promises is paramount for almost any megaproject striving to be remembered as successful. However, if the promises cannot be delivered in full to the target audience which originally accepted the project's pitch, then feelings of displacement, betrayal, and failure will creep into the public forum, sabotaging the megaproject's legacy.

Those who study the impact of megaproject on their surrounding society have often looked to the measurable economic effects and LTCs as a standard of measuring success. However, as the St. Louis experience exemplifies, not all projects which clear the traditional benchmarks are accepted by the larger diaspora as successful. Therefore, developers, concerned citizens, and researchers would be better suited to employ a mix of qualitative and quantitative research to assess the legacy of a specific megaproject. St. Louis has had its fair share of successful and failed megaprojects. The Gateway Arch and the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects stand as polar extremes for successful and failed legacies. Projects like the runway expansion and NGA might fall somewhere in the middle of the two legacy polarities for now, but their future legacies of either success or failure depend on how people discuss their impact on their locality, city, and region now, and as time goes on.

Bibliography

Altman, Maria. “McKee announces new partnership and housing near NGA.” *St. Louis Public*

Radio-NPR. June 7, 2016. Accessed June 2, 2019.

<https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/mckee-announces-new-partnership-and-housing-near-nga#stream/0>

Altman, Maria. “Residents ask NGA to drop north St. Louis site.” *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*.

May 6, 2015. Accessed June 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/residents-ask-nga-drop-north-st-louis-site#stream/0>

Altman, Maria. “St. Louis moves 3-story house out of NGA site.” *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*.

February 26, 2017. Accessed June 2, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-moves-3-story-house-out-nga-site#stream/0>

Altshuler, Alan and David Luberoff. *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2003.

Associated Press. “Lambert’s new runway opens today.” *St. Louis Public Radio – NPR*. 2006.

Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/lamberts-new-runway-opens-today#stream/0>

Barker, Jacob. “Still stuck with Paul McKee, St. Louis officials pledge to do redevelopment differently in the future.” *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. March 23, 2019. Accessed June 2,

2019. https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/still-stuck-with-paul-mckee-st-louis-officials-pledge-to/article_b094fe94-42f8-5398-a032-258d646850ae.html

Barker, Jacob. "Take a look at what Uncle Sam has planned for north St. Louis." *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. April 10, 2019. Accessed June 2, 2019.

https://www.stltoday.com/business/local/take-a-look-at-what-uncle-sam-has-planned-for/article_c7b8bee1-2304-5730-b7c3-0e53b3a91994.html

Davis, Elliott. "You Paid for it – Lambert’s Billion Dollar Runway." *Fox 2 News – St. Louis*. 2013. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://fox2now.com/2013/05/06/you-paid-for-it-lamberts-billion-dollar-runway/>

Decision-Making on Mega-Projects: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Planning, and Innovation. Edited by Priemus, Hugo, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Bert van Wee. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2008.

Delaney, Ryan. "Dust bowl created by NGA project demolition blamed for sickening kids, teachers." *St. Louis Public Radio-NPR*. May 14, 2018. Accessed June 2, 2019.

<https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/dust-bowl-created-nga-project-demolition-blamed-sickening-kids-teachers#stream/0>

Di Maddaloni, Francesco and Kate Davis. "The Influence of Local Community Stakeholders in Megaprojects: Rethinking their Inclusiveness to Improve Project Performance."

International Journal of Project Management. 35, no 8 (2017): 1537-1556.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.08.011>

Flyvbjerg, Bent. "Why Mass Media Matter to Planning Research: The Case of Megaprojects."

Journal of Planning Education and Research. 32, no. 2 (2012): 169-181. Doi:

10.1177/0739456X12441950

Gil, Nuno, Colm Lundrigan, and Jeffrey K. Pinto. *Megaproject Organization and Performance:*

The Myth and Political Reality. Newton Square: Project Management Institute, Inc. 2017.

Greiman, Virginia A. *Megaproject Management: Lessons on Risk and Project Management from the Big Dig*. Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. 2013.

Hoffman, Alexander von. "Why they Built the Pruitt-Igoe Project." Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University. 2002.

Jones, Terrence E. "The Municipal Market in the St. Louis Region: 1950-2000" in *St. Louis Metromorphosis: Past Trends and Future Directions*. Edited by Baybeck, Brady and E. Terrence Jones, St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2004.

König, Pascal D. "Intra-Party Dissent as a Constraint in Policy Competition: Mapping and Analyzing the Positioning of Political Parties in the German Refugee Debate from August to November 2015." *German Politics* 26, no. 3. (2017): 337-359.

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "Greater Efficiency." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070603222217/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id260.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "How was the Airport Expansion Program completed ahead of schedule?" *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20080502075447/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id263.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "Major Deliverable of the Airport Expansion Program." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071020233812/http://lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id266.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "Lambert Expansion delivered Missouri's first traffic tunnel." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080502075438/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id262.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program Fact Sheet." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080130141823/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id269.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "On the Move." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2007. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071020233738/http://lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id259.asp>

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "The Expansion Story." *Lambert-St. Louis International Airport Expansion Program*. 2008. Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080501193743/http://www.lambert-stlouis.com/e/newwebsite/id261.asp>

Leiser, Ken. "Little-used runway Pros, cons: Airport says it's a selling point; former neighbors still angry." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 2009. Accessed April 16, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/news/little-used-runway-pros-cons-airport-says-it-s-a/article_364a3e80-6365-568e-9222-c9a9963642cd.html

Merrow, Edward W. *Industrial Megaprojects: Concepts, Strategies, and Practices for Success*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2011. Accessed July 15, 2019.

Mutzabaugh, Ben. “New \$1 billion runway opens this week, but it’s not needed anymore.” *USA Today*. August 30, 2007. Accessed June 5, 2019.

https://web.archive.org/web/20070830212520/http://blogs.usatoday.com/sky/2006/04/st_louis.html

National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. “About NGA.” NGA.mil. 2019.

<https://www.nga.mil/About/Pages/Default.aspx>

Petrin, Kae M. “St. Louis transfers land to Federal Government for New Transformative NGA Facility.” St. Louis Public Radio-NPR. December 13, 2018. Accessed May 30, 2019.

<https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-transfers-land-federal-government-new-transformative-nga-facility#stream/0>

Petrin, Kae. “Once Promised for Rehab, Vacant Buildings owned by Developer Paul McKee Now Scar City’s north side.” St. Louis Public Radio-NPR. November 30, 2018. Accessed June 1, 2019. <http://apps.stlpublicradio.org/northside-properties-2018/index.html>

Raack, Bill. “Feds Grant Airport \$25 Million for Noise Abatement.” *St. Louis Public Radio – NPR*. ND. Accessed May 18, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/feds-grant-airport-25-million-noise-abatement#stream/0>

River Front Times. “Best Boondoggle.” *The Riverfront Times*. 2003. Accessed June 1, 2019.

<https://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/best-boondoggle/BestOf?oid=2508761>

Rothengatter, Werner. “Megaprojects in Transportation Networks.” *Transportation Policy*. 75

(2019): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2018.08.002>

Rust, Daniel L. *The Aerial Crossroads of America: St. Louis’ Lambert Airport*. St. Louis:

Missouri History Museum Press, 2016.

- Sepic, Matt. "Airport, Bridgeton settle suits over runway expansion." *St. Louis Public Radio – NPR*. ND. Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/airport-bridgeton-settle-suits-over-runway-expansion#stream/0>
- Sutin, Kathie. "Lambert – St. Louis Airport Expands Runway." *Construction Equipment Guide*. 2006. Accessed April 16, 2019. <https://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/lambert-st-louis-airport-expands-runway/7299>
- Sybert, Laurie. "Mayor: Lambert runway expansion to come in under budget." *St. Louis Business Journal*. 2004. Accessed May 4, 2019. <https://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/2004/04/26/daily57.html>
- The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "Boldly Going Nowhere...Yet." *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 2006.
- The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "Demo Limbo." *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. December 18, 2003. Accessed June 5, 2019. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/docview/1905539271/56E27D9177304BCAPQ/3?accountid=14595>
- The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "New \$1.1 Billion Runway Lies Quiet in St. Louis." *Aviation Pros*. 2006. Accessed May 10, 2019. <https://www.aviationpros.com/home/news/10395713/new-11-billion-runway-lies-quiet-in-st-louis>
- The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "Lambert's 17-year itch hurts the region." *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. October 27, 2000. Accessed May 28, 2019. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/docview/1905104007/E4F8E63973C247C5PQ/282?accountid=14595>

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "St. Louis Airport, Bridgeton End 20 Year Dispute." *Aviation Pros*. 2007. Accessed May 11, 2019. <https://www.aviationpros.com/home/news/10392471/st-louis-airport-bridgeton-end-20-year-dispute>

Toenjes, Len. "Next NGA West project could be a game changer for St. Louis employment opportunities." *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. June 25, 2019. Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/len-toenjes-next-nga-west-project-could-be-game-changer/article_ccdaf985-62cd-5a7b-bdf8-011ec915c7d1.html