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TACTICAL URBANISM ON A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS: A Case Study of *Crossroads on Dickson*

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Honors Capstone

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Tactical Urbanism is a method of creating temporary, low-cost interventions in a city's built environment, aiming to test new ideas, gather community feedback, and create momentum for larger-scale changes. The approach is characterized by its focus on quick, iterative projects that can be easily implemented and adjusted, rather than large, expensive initiatives that take years to complete. Examples of Tactical Urbanism projects include pop-up bike lanes, parklets, and community gardens. The goal is to encourage community participation, foster a sense of ownership, and create a safer, more livable, and inclusive city.

In spring 2022, a class called "Walk, Bike, Link" taught by Prof. Jim Coffman, designed *Crossroads on Dickson*, a Tactical Urbanism project on West Dickson Street. The design proposed to change the appearance of the street by painting a pattern across the pavement in an effort to make drivers more cautious and aware of the pedestrian presence. Unfortunately, the project could not get approved before the end of the semester. *Crossroads on Dickson* attempted to utilize Tactical Urbanism strategies to address the specific need for pedestrian safety near the University of Arkansas campus. It envisioned the street as a shared space for both cars and pedestrians, rather than prioritizing one over the other.

This capstone defines Tactical Urbanism and investigate the differences between implementing a Tactical Urbanism project on and off the University of Arkansas campus. The capstone then uses descriptive case study methods to analyze West Dickson Street and the *Crossroads on Dickson*

project from the "Walk, Bike, Link" class in the Spring of 2022. The case study analyzes the project's design, processes, and context in the university setting. It answers key internal questions such as why the project wasn't approved and provide a new Tactical Urbanism case study for both northwest Arkansas and university contexts.

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Saturday, February 2nd, 2019, University of Arkansas Architecture student Andrea Torres was struck and killed by a driver while using a crosswalk on Garland Avenue, University of Arkansas campus. The driver was cited for failure to yield to a pedestrian at a crosswalk and for the use of a handheld device while driving. There were 33 pedestrian accidents reported between 2017 and 2022 on the University of Arkansas campus - 25 of which were reported to have occurred at a pedestrian crosswalk.¹

The University of Arkansas Campus is a densely populated and dynamic environment acting as a pedestrian hub in the heart of Fayetteville. As of Fall 2022, 30,936 students, 1,490 faculty members, and 3350 staff members bring the campus to life as they rush between classes, laboratories, cafeterias, dormitories, and so much more.² Throughout all hours of the day, the campus is bustling with pedestrian activity. Like many Universities around the world, the campus is a part of the city it resides in, impacting the urban fabric in significant ways.³ The University of Arkansas is very much submersed within the city of Fayetteville as students, staff, and faculty commute to campus daily. With such high commuter and pedestrian traffic within and around the university, pedestrian and vehicular traffic often intersect. The story is always the same, the streets surrounding and within the campus are designed for the convenience of cars while pedestrians are funneled to crosswalks where they can request

permission to cross the street. This precarious dance results in a hazardous environment for the thousands of people moving around campus on foot or bike. The standard twelve-foot-wide asphalt lanes subconsciously communicate to the vehicle operator that they are on a typical street where they do not have to be concerned with pedestrian interference, thus placing the pedestrian at risk.⁴ Pedestrian accidents are a leading cause of injury and death on college campuses.

Tactical Urbanism projects can be utilized to address the blurry interface between pedestrians and vehicles on and around the university campus. By implementing low-cost, temporary, and often grassroots initiatives and interventions, universities can create safer and more livable spaces for pedestrians, while also testing out new ideas and gathering feedback before making more permanent changes.⁵ Tactical Urbanism utilizes innovation and experimentation to find solutions to the complex problem of pedestrian safety, while simultaneously improving the quality of life for all members of the community.

Spring of 2022, Professor Jim Coffman taught a class titled "Walk, Bike, Link" in which we discussed Active Transportation planning and how it is an integral part of any community or regional planning process. Throughout the course, a deeper understanding was gained of the possibilities of

1 Evans, S. (2017, March 14). UA Student Struck by Vehicles on Campus Typically Hit in Crosswalk. The Arkansas Traveler. Retrieved from https://www.uatrav.com/news/article_042bcb6e-0904-11e7-a896-2f39e19926dc.html 26

2 "Arkansas Department of Transportation. (2021). Arkansas Department of Transportation: System Information & Research. Retrieved March 26, 2023, from Annual Average Daily Traffic Estimates by County: <https://www.ardot.gov/divisions/system-information-research/traffic-information-systems/maps/>"

3 "Mohammed, A. M., & Ukai, T. (2022). University Campuses as Agents for Urban Change. *Environmental & Socio-economic Studies*, 10(1), 22-37."

4 "Sadik-Khan, J., & Solomonow, S. (2016). *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. New York, New York: Penguin Publishing Group."

5 "Smith, M., & Shazeen, T. (2015). *Tackling Tactical Urbanism: Exploring the Potential for Improved Social Spaces on Queen's University Campus*. Queen's University, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Kingston, Ontario."

transportation strategies and their placemaking outcomes. With frequent discussion of Sadik-Khan's book titled *Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*, the topic of tactical urbanism was introduced.⁶ By utilizing Tactical Urbanism strategies, Sadik-Khan was able to enact change in the urban landscape in New York by combating the endless wasteful cycle of expanding automobile infrastructures, with proposals that changed the way streets were used in one of the biggest cities in the world.

Inspired and ready for change-making, the "Walk, Bike, Link" class began to develop a Tactical Urbanism design proposal for the University of Arkansas campus on West Dickson Street between North McIlroy Avenue and Garland Avenue ([Figure 1](#)). The project proposal was titled *Crossroads on Dickson*. The class identified a site on the University of Arkansas campus that receives high pedestrian traffic that is forced to cross vehicle paths. In a report done by The Arkansas Traveler, freshman student Wendy Stewart states "...[pedestrian safety] it's especially bad at the top of Dickson."⁷

This Honors Thesis Capstone Project attempts to answer the question of why *Crossroads on Dickson* was not approved through interviews with key stakeholders and the documentation of *Crossroads on Dickson* as a case study. A case study of *Crossroads on Dickson* is necessary for documenting and evaluating the proposed Tactical Urbanism project on the University of Arkansas

Campus, allowing us to better understand why the project was not implemented. Through a design decision-making qualitative case study approach,⁸ the story of *Crossroads on Dickson* can provide insight that "...can directly influence policy, procedures and future research".⁹ Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders Ammen Jordan and Dane Eifling, investigate the differences between implementing Tactical Urbanism projects on the University of Arkansas campus versus the City of Fayetteville. Furthermore, the interviews attempt to answer the question of why *Crossroads on Dickson* failed to get approved, and what changes are necessary to get future projects implemented.

Questions of Inquiry Guiding Capstone:

- What qualities of W Dickson Street make it an ideal candidate for a Tactical Urbanism project?
- How did *Crossroads on Dickson* respond to the issues of the site?
- How have the constraints of being on campus impacted the design of *Crossroads on Dickson*?
- How does implementing a Tactical Urbanism project on campus differ from doing so off campus?
- Why was *Crossroads on Dickson* not Implemented?
- How can Tactical Urbanism be more appealing and beneficial to College Universities?

6 "Sadik-Khan, J., & Solomonow, S. (2016). *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. New York, New York: Penguin Publishing Group."

7 "Evans, S. (2017, March 14). UA Student Struck by Vehicles on Campus Typically Hit in Crosswalk. The Arkansas Traveler. Retrieved from https://www.uatrav.com/news/article_042bcb6e-0904-11e7-a896-2f39e19926dc.html"

8 "Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods)* (4 ed., Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, California, United States: SAGE Publications, Inc."

9 "Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2016). *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers* (3 ed.). Teachers College Press."



Figure 1. University of Arkansas campus map, Crossroads on Dickson Site on West Dickson Street between North McIlroy Avenue and Garland Avenue. Noah Berg, 2023

What is Tactical Urbanism?

While relatively young, Tactical Urbanism is a topic well-known by many city planners and transportation coordinators. In the early 2000s, Tactical Urbanism emerged out of growing frustrations with the bureaucratic process of traditional urban planning.¹⁰ Tactical Urbanism does not claim to be a solution, it is the testing of a hypothesis. All too often solutions are implemented with little to no efficacy, or they have tunnel vision on fulfilling a specific party's interest. These solutions have commonly supported the concept of car-based urban areas where vehicle infrastructure dominates the urban environment.¹¹ Tactical Urbanism is a practice that combats the arrogant nature of vehicle infrastructure planning through short-term implementation of small-scale projects to test efficacy for future change. According to Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia in their book *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-term Change* (2015), "Tactical Urbanism is an approach to neighborhood building and activation using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies." The focus on experimentation and flexibility using temporary materials and low-cost strategies enables individuals, businesses, citizen groups, and governments to affordably test new ideas before deciding on long-term change. These incremental projects and policies can be tested and adapted to best benefit the community and ultimately have a lasting impact. This strategy has proven to be very effective in implementing functional and beneficial changes to the urban landscape.

Tactical Urbanism can be a strategy for place-making. Utilizing a collaboration of community members, designers, and other stakeholders, Tactical Urbanism projects serve the interest of the people in many different forms from pop-up parks and gardens to traffic regulations and art installations. Ultimately the goal is often to make public spaces more livable and enjoyable. Tactical Urbanism utilizes a broad variety of project strategies to achieve the desired outcome. All of which are low-cost and temporary. Lydon and Garcia provide a "Tactical Urbanism toolbox" to use in any project: barrier elements, landscaping elements, surface treatments, signage, street furniture, and programming.¹² These simple elements in any combination can be used to change the way we perceive and interact with the urban landscape, thus creating a "place". Tactical Urbanism is Tactical Placemaking.¹³ The transformation of public spaces through Tactical Urbanism can have a place-making effect. Installations as simple as painting the street can effectively alter the appearance and/or interaction with the urban landscape resulting in effective place-making.

Tactical Urbanism can be initiated by different interest groups. The City of Fayetteville welcomes its citizens to come forward with their own tactical urbanism proposals. Lydon and Garcia categorize Tactical Urbanism into three generalized interest groups:

10 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2015). *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-term Change* (1 ed.). Island Press."

11 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2016). *Tactical Urbanist's Guide To Materials and Design* (1 ed.). The Street Plans Collaborative."

12 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2016). *Tactical Urbanist's Guide To Materials and Design* (1 ed.). The Street Plans Collaborative."

13 "Wyckoff, M. A. (2014). Definition of Placemaking: Four Different Types. *Planning and Zoning News*."

- Initiated by citizens to bypass the conventional project delivery process and cut through municipal bureaucracy by protesting, prototyping, or visually demonstrating the possibility of change. This activity represents citizens exercising their "right to the city."
- As a tool for city government, developers or nonprofits to more broadly engage the public during project planning, delivery, and development processes.
- As a "phase 0" early implementation tool used by cities or developers to test projects before a long-term investment is made.¹⁴

These categories are essentially broken down into citizen/focus group-driven projects, City outreach-driven projects, and preliminary installations of city or developer projects. Within the first category lies a deeper, more complicated, conflict-driven history behind the concept of Tactical Urbanism than Lydon and Garcia let on.¹⁵

Tactical Urbanism may be a relatively new term; however, its fundamental concepts can be traced back to a more radical history. David Spataro presents a critical view on Tactical Urbanism as it has been framed by Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia in his article, "Against a de-politicized DIY urbanism: Food Not Bombs and the struggle over

public space." Behind the small-scale "justice-inspired actions" lies the struggles over the public realm that formed the concept of Tactical Urbanism. Spataro claims that Lydon and Garcia present a "whitewashed" version of DIY urbanism that is not accurate with the struggles faced by activists advocating for better use of public space.¹⁶ The history of DIY urbanism culture is heavily influenced by political activities such as "Reclaim the Streets" where people protested the development of vehicle infrastructure in the UK.¹⁷ Acts of resistance in the Reclaim the Streets movement included "closing roads off to traffic while opening them to the art of living."¹⁸ This movement was an act of protest against the government and one where the re-purposing of streets as a place for the public as opposed to a dedicated transportation channel.

Tactical Urbanism is fundamentally a derivative of DIY Urbanism. Gordon C. C. Douglas is an assistant professor of Urban Planning and Director of the Institute for Metropolitan Studies at San Jose State University. Douglas defines DIY urban design interventions as "unauthorized yet ostensibly functional and civic-minded physical alterations or additions to the urban built environment and forms analogous (however abstract) to official planning and streetscape design elements."¹⁹ This definition is intentionally vague such that there is no fine line in association with DIY urbanism. Ultimately, DIY

14 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2015). *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-term Change* (1 ed.). Island Press." Pp. 42-50

15 "Visconti, L. M., Sherry JR, J. F., Borghini, S., & Anderson, L. (2010, October). Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the "Public" in Public Place. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 511-529."

16 "Spataro, D. (2015, July 09). Against a de-politicized DIY Urbanism: Food Not Bombs and the Struggle Over Public Space. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 9(2), 185-201. doi:10.1080/17549175.2015.1056208"

17 "Ben Holtzman, C. H. (2007). Do it yourself... and the movement beyond capitalism. *Constituent imagination: Militant investigations//collective theorization*, pp. 44-61."

18 "Carmo, A. (2012). Reclaim the streets, the protestival and the creative transformation of the city. *Finisterra*, pp. 103-118."

19 "Douglas, G. C. (2018). *The Help-Yourself City: Legitimacy & Inequality in DIY Urbanism*. New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press." pp. 20

Urbanism projects are “unsanctioned” physical interventions that are intended to objectively improve the urban fabric. Another term often associated with the unsanctioned practice of altering urban spaces is Guerrilla Urbanism. Throughout history, as Spataro has pointed out, these unauthorized interventions are often forms of protest. The delineating factor between Tactical Urbanism and DIY urbanism is sanctioned vs unsanctioned, however even this can be debated depending on the project. The first Tactical Urbanism category identified by Lydon and Garcia in which urban alterations are initiated by citizens toes the line between Tactical Urbanism and DIY urbanism depending upon whether the project is authorized.²⁰ This delineation between sanctioned and unsanctioned practice is important in the branding of Tactical Urbanism so that it can be a tool for the people that the local government or municipality supports.

Tactical Urbanism in Fayetteville and the Greater NWA Region:

The City of Fayetteville Arkansas has embraced Tactical Urbanism. In 2016, the City of Fayetteville adopted a tactical urbanism policy as part of its comprehensive plan, recognizing the value of citizen-led initiatives in improving public spaces. This policy provides guidance for citizens and community groups seeking to propose their own tactical urbanism projects and outlines a process for gaining approval from the city. The city has a page on its website dedicated to informing and

involving its community. On this website, one can provide feedback on existing Tactical Urbanism projects, learn how to propose their own project, apply for project approval and funding from the city. The city has held workshops on Tactical Urbanism, and funded projects such as the mini-roundabout installation in February 2017 ([Figure 2](#)).²¹

Other Tactical Urbanism projects in the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas include:

- Stump Seats: Razorback transit bus stops
- North School Ave. & Spring Street: Mini Roundabout
- Bike Lanes: Temporary bike lanes using tactical urbanism strategies.
- Wood & MLK: artistic Crosswalk and intersection treatment
- Rock & Mill: Intersection treatment
- Dickson Street: parklet in front of Blackboard Grocery
- Church & Center: pedestrian-friendly intersection
- Holly Street: creating a complete streetscape
- Fayetteville Montessori/green Acres: traffic calming
- S. Washington and 9th intersection paint²²

The city of Fayetteville’s efforts to encourage community participation and activism is seen through its efforts to define a process for Tactical Urbanism projects. Not only is the city enabling the public to voice concerns about their streets, but they are also promoting community engagement by listening to their ideas and proposals and enabling them to implement them. This is a powerful move

20 "Initiated by citizens to bypass the conventional project delivery process and cut through municipal bureaucracy by protesting, prototyping, or visually demonstrating the possibility of change. This activity represents citizens exercising their "right to the city."" (Lydon and Garcia, 2015. pp. 20)

21 "Eifling, D., Porter, L., & Schaffner, R. (Spring 2017). Mini-Roundabout Pilot Project: Final Report. Fayetteville, AR."

22 "Tactical Urbanism. (n.d.). Retrieved from City of Fayetteville Arkansas: <https://fayetteville-ar.gov/3268/Tactical-Urbanism>"



Figure 2. Mini-Roundabout Tactical Urbanism Project, Fayetteville Arkansas 2017

in the right direction for urban planning. Tactical Urbanism promotes community engagement and encourages the public's participation in urban planning.

Tactical Urbanism on the University of Arkansas Campus:

The story goes a little differently for the University of Arkansas. Despite having much higher quantities of pedestrian traffic, the University of Arkansas has no system in place to listen to and consider the students' interest in the campus urban planning. As a hotspot for bike, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic, the University of Arkansas would greatly benefit from

having procedures in place to promote, approve, and execute tactical urbanism projects.

At the University of Arkansas, pedestrian-vehicle accidents are a leading cause of student injury. There were a reported 33 pedestrian accidents between 2017 and 2022 on the University of Arkansas campus - 25 of which were reported to have occurred at a pedestrian crosswalk.²³ In her graduate thesis, *A Spatial Analysis of Student Safety and Perception*, Casey Goodman surveyed students' perceptions of safety on the University of Arkansas campus. With many factors considered, Goodman mapped the locations where students reported

23 "Evans, S. (2017, March 14). UA Student Struck by Vehicles on Campus Typically Hit in Crosswalk. *The Arkansas Traveler*. Retrieved from https://www.uatrav.com/news/article_042bcb6e-0904-11e7-a896-2f39e19926dc.html"

Perceived Areas of Greatest Danger

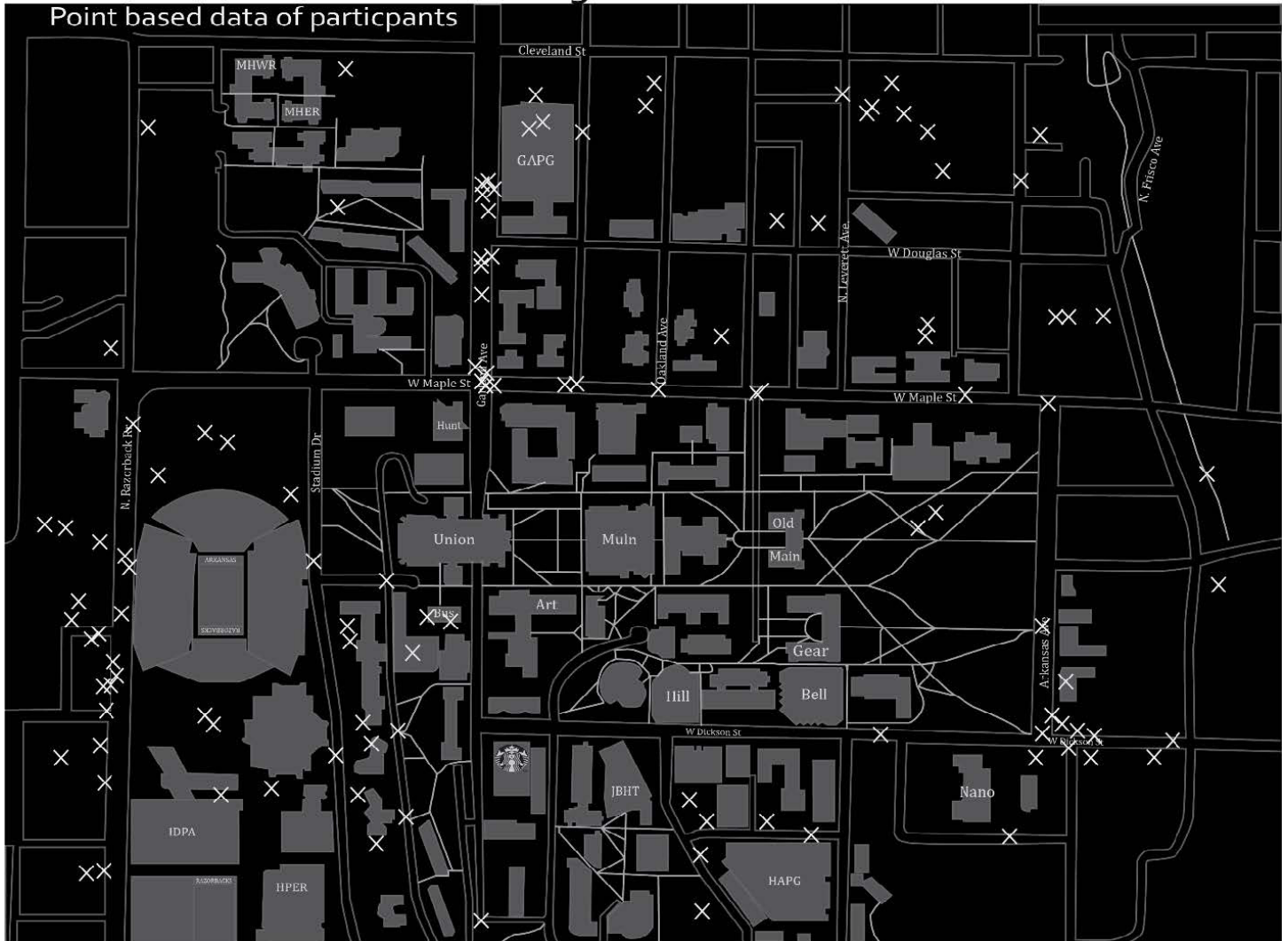


Figure 3. Map indicating responses to their perceived areas of greatest danger, Cartography by Casey Goodman

feeling unsafe or dangerous. These identified locations overlap closely with major crosswalks on the University of Arkansas campus revealing pedestrian safety to be a major concern for students (Figure 3). This data was collected not long after Andrea Torres was hit and killed by a distracted driver when crossing Garland Ave on February 2nd, 2019.²⁴ Because of this, the participant's responses are likely directed towards pedestrian hazards but should remain just as valid given that the majority of the roughly 35,000 people on the University campus

are parking and walking to their destinations. There are over fifty designated pedestrian crossing locations on the UARK campus with multi-directional crosswalk intersections only being counted as one crossing location (Figure 4).

²⁴ "Goodman, C. (2020). A Spatial Analysis of Student Safety and Perception, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Graduate Thesis and Dissertations. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/3699>"

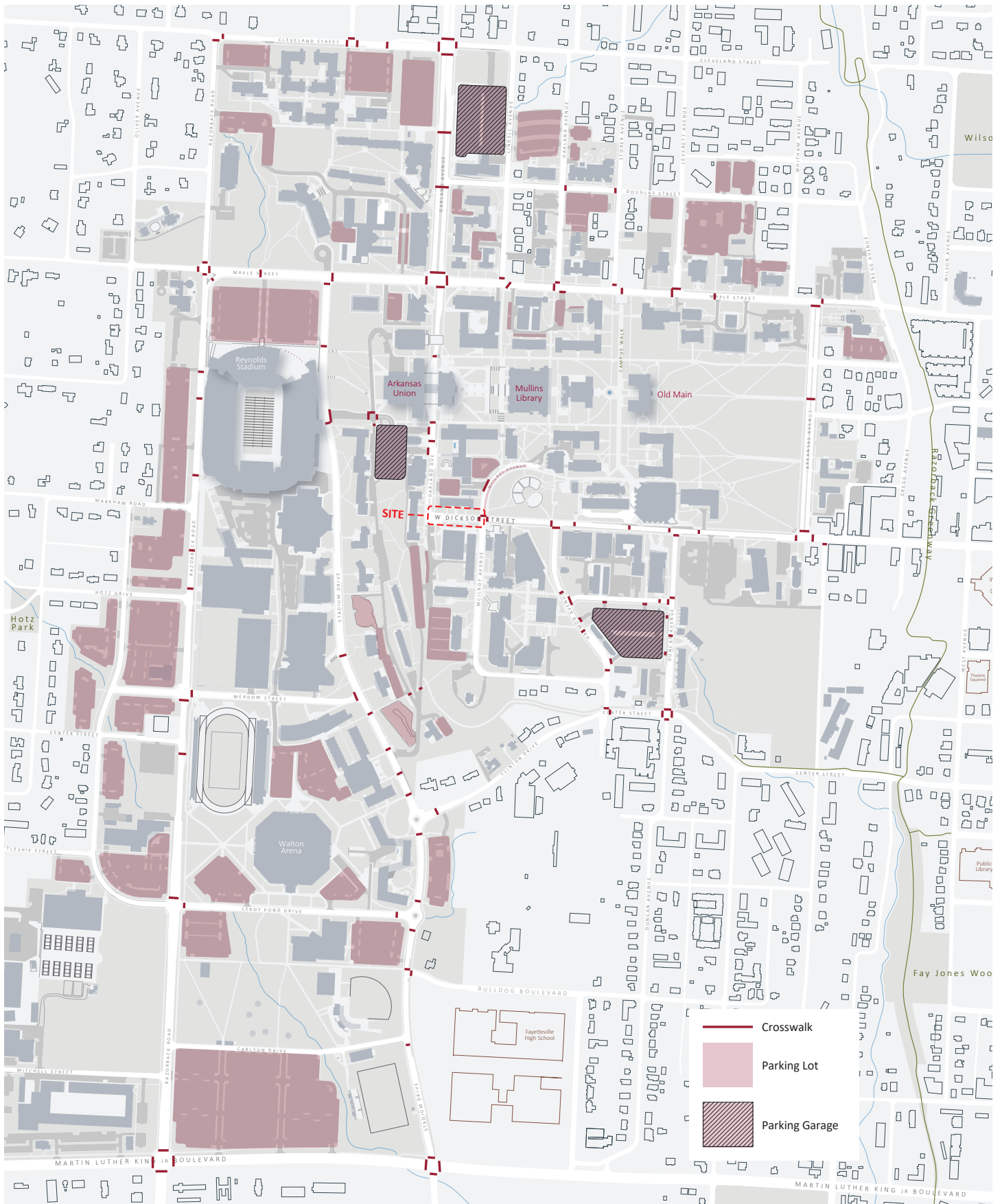


Figure 4. University of Arkansas campus map, Crosswalks and Parking lots/garages identified, Noah Berg 2023

A case study of *Crossroads on Dickson* is necessary for documenting and evaluating the proposed Tactical Urbanism project on the University of Arkansas Campus, allowing us to better understand why the project was not implemented. Through a design decision-making qualitative case study approach,²⁵ the story of *Crossroads on Dickson* can provide insight that "...can directly influence policy, procedures and future research".²⁶ The case study focuses on the decision-making processes and stakeholder involvement in the design and implementation of the project.

Starting from the beginning, the case study gathers information on the approach and methods used by the "Walk, Bike, Link" class. These are explained with reference to assignment descriptions and an interview with Professor Jim Coffman.

The site of West Dickson Street is evaluated as a candidate for a Tactical Urbanism project through observations of the existing site. The existing conditions of the site were noted and evaluated for potential improvement. Both pedestrian and vehicle circulation were diagrammed to analyze how the site is utilized in its existing conditions. Brainstorming sessions were reflected upon to understand the initial ambitions of the class which aimed to ultimately improve the pedestrian safety conditions of West Dickson Street. These ambitions were followed closely as they were translated into design iterations that adapted to the collaborative feedback provided by key stakeholders. Each stakeholder was identified and their interests and investments

in the site were diagrammed to reflect their role in the critique of the project as it evolved into its final form that satisfied the stakeholders' concerns and interests.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders with roles in active transportation on the University of Arkansas campus and the city of Fayetteville. These interviews with active transportation and planning experts Ammen Jordan and Dane Eifling, investigate the differences between implementing Tactical Urbanism projects on the University of Arkansas campus versus the City of Fayetteville. Furthermore, the interviews attempt to answer the question of why *Crossroads on Dickson* failed to get approved, and what changes are necessary to get future projects implemented.

One limitation of this approach is the potential for recall bias in the interview responses due to the passing of time between *Crossroads on Dickson* and the generating of the case study. Additionally, the expert interviewees likely project a conflict-of-interest bias due to their existing and or previous employment by the University and city of Fayetteville. However, the purposive sampling strategy will ensure that a diverse range of perspectives is represented in the study from both the University of Arkansas and the City of Fayetteville's points of view.²⁷

25 Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods)* (4 ed., Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, California, United States: SAGE Publications, Inc."

26 Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2016). *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers* (3 ed.). Teachers College Press."

27 Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2016). *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers* (3 ed.). Teachers College Press."

SUMMARY & EVALUATION OF CROSSROADS ON DICKSON

Crossroads on Dickson emerged for the Spring of 2022 “Walk, Bike, Link: Active Transportation and Placemaking” class taught by Professor Jim Coffman. With Tactical Urbanism being a key topic of the class, Professor Coffman wanted to incorporate a Tactical Urbanism project into the course curriculum. Intending to increase pedestrian safety, we set out to identify the site for the Tactical Urbanism project.

West Dickson Street between North McIlroy Avenue and Garland Avenue was selected because of the high pedestrian traffic occurring throughout the day (Figure 5). West Dickson Street currently divides the central campus and some of its most frequented dining halls and school buildings. The topography of the University of Arkansas campus directs students to the top of the hill where Dickson Street terminates in front of Gregson Hall, creating a bottleneck

where pedestrians are forced to cross W Dickson Street from all angles. Its existence as an access road for vehicles is essential for the service of the surrounding buildings and public transit. However, the ratio of pedestrians to cars provokes the question: why is West Dickson Street designed for vehicles while primarily being used by pedestrians as opposed to a pedestrian space that allows vehicle access?

The intentions of *Crossroads on Dickson* were to temporarily modify West Dickson Street to increase pedestrian safety. Many options were considered such as narrowing the allowed space for vehicles by placing barrier elements, placing plants as barriers and providing shading, providing games for students to relieve stress...etc.

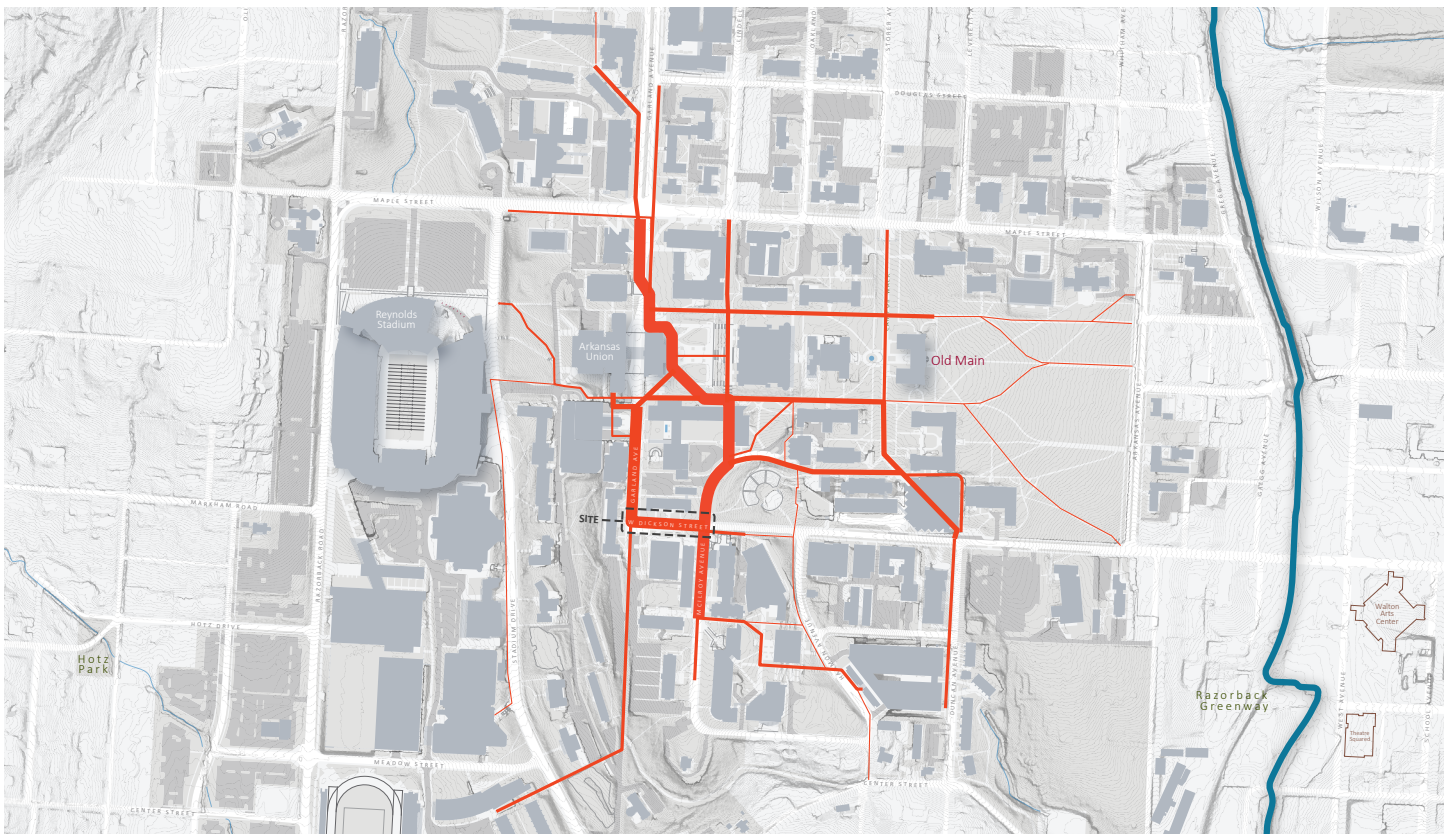


Figure 5. University of Arkansas campus map, Pedestrian Preferred Route Diagram, (Source: Office of Sustainability 2022)

Project Committees and Class Organization:

The class was organized into 8 committee groups that specialized in different aspects of the project: Design, Precedent/Approval, Public Survey, Activities, Procurement, Branding/PR. Each student worked on two or more committee groups to ensure collaboration and productivity. The intention behind the committees was so that the work was dispersed, and each group could move the project forward in their roles. The committees would meet weekly to present progress and get feedback from the class. [Figure 6](#) diagrams the dependencies of the committees showing how they were reliant on being collaborative.

University of Arkansas Stakeholders:

Meeting with University of Arkansas stakeholders was a crucial aspect of the project. With a vested interest in projects on the University of Arkansas campus, stakeholders from a variety of different departments were a key part of the design and approval process ([Table 1](#)). Through working with these stakeholders, we were able to better understand the needs of the sight from the university's perspective, as it serves as a key access road to the contextual buildings on top of the hill. By soliciting input and feedback from the stakeholders, the Walk, Bike, Link class was able to produce a design strategy that listened to the needs of the university and students, proposing a design that benefits everyone.

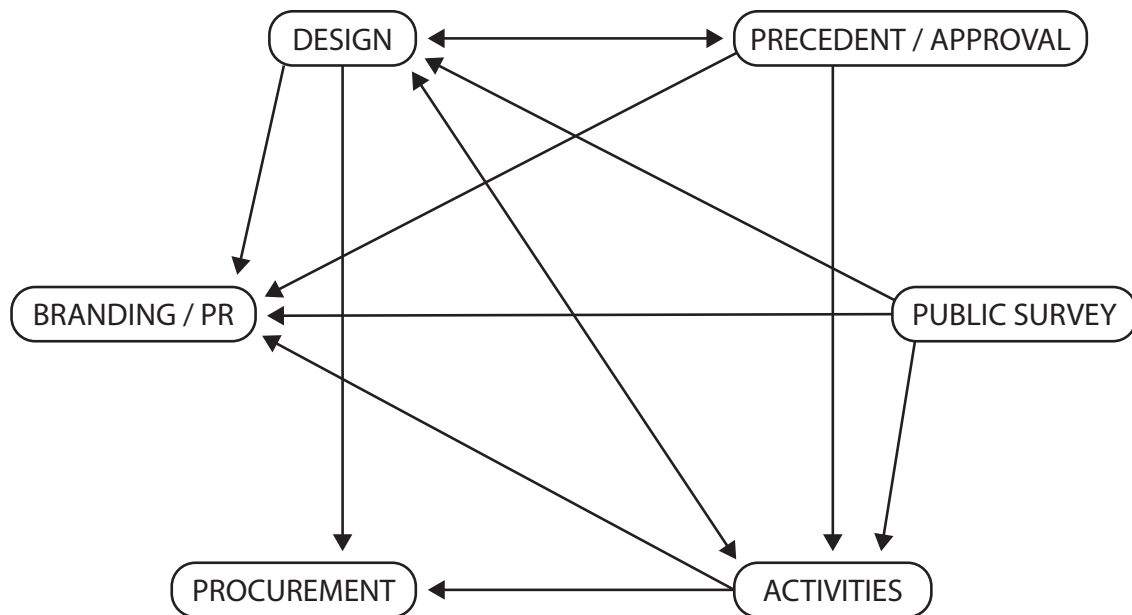


Figure 6. Committee Interaction Diagram, Crossroads on Dickson (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

Table 1. List of Stakeholders and Roles/Job Titles, Information taken from the University of Arkansas Campus Directory 2023

Stakeholders	Department	Role / Title
Danielle Best	(PHPL) – Facilities Management (ENHS) – Environmental Health and Safety	Campus Safety Officer, Project/Program Specialist
Eric Boles	(SUST) - Office of Sustainability	Director of the University of Arkansas Office for Sustainability, Executive Secretary of the UA Sustainability Council
Ammen Jordan	(SUST) - Office of Sustainability	University of Arkansas Active Transportation Coordinator
Lynne Bell	(DINA) - Division of Student Affairs	Assistant Vice Chancellor for Business Services
Todd Furgason	(FPPM) – Facility Planning Administration	Campus Planner
Corporal Allen Lee Porter	(PBSF) – Public Safety	Community Outreach and Involvement liaison for the University of Arkansas Police Department
Gary Crain	(PBSF) – Public Safety	Police Captain
Jay Huneycutt	(FPPM) – Facility Planning Administration	Director of Campus Planning and Design
Adam Waddell	(TRST) – Transit Program	Director of Razorback Transit
Kevin Shackelford	(WRKM) – Work Management	Construction Coordinator
Ethel Goodstein	(FJAD) – Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design	Professor of Architecture and Associate Dean of the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design
Dean Mackeith	(FJAD) – Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design	Dean and Professor at Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design
Dane Eifling	City of Fayetteville Arkansas	City of Fayetteville Mobility Coordinator

Site Evaluation of Existing Conditions:

West Dickson Street separates the North portion of campus from the South. Directly North of West Dickson Street is vital student hubs such as the Union and the University Library not to mention the majority of on-campus student housing and large colleges. As it exists, West Dickson Street between Garland Avenue and McIlroy Avenue is a block-long crosswalk. Although a crosswalk is provided at the intersection of W Dickson St and McIlroy Ave, students cross the street East of McIlroy Ave at random (Figure 7). Meanwhile, the street is open to vehicle traffic at all hours of the day. The existing street is two lanes and twenty-five feet wide, straddled by ten-foot-wide sidewalks and other pedestrian paths (Figure 8, Figure 7). These wide lanes result in overly confident drivers, thereby

increasing the likelihood of reckless driving and pedestrian-vehicle accidents.²⁸

28 "Sadik-Khan, J., & Solomonow, S. (2016). Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution. New York, New York: Penguin Publishing Group."



Figure 7. Existing Conditions of West Dickson Street Site, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR. (Source: Noah Berg 2023)



Figure 8. Existing Conditions Diagram Sketch, Red: Pedestrian crossing zone. Green: Grass Area, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link, Sketch by Milo Barns)

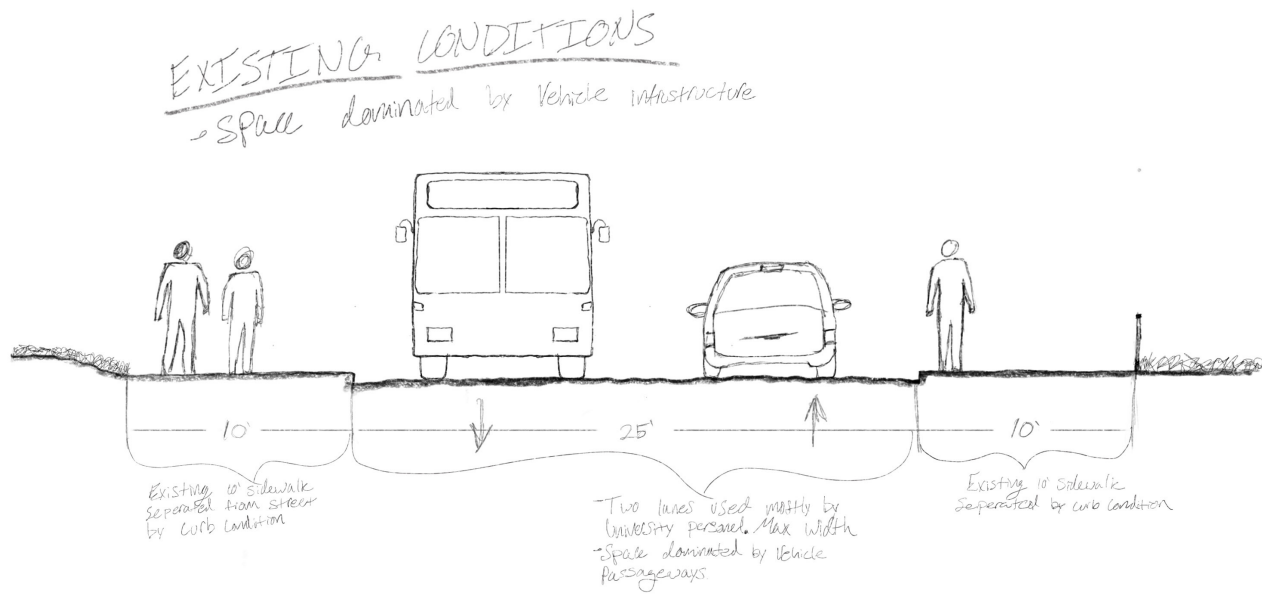


Figure 9. Existing Street Section of West Dickson Street Facing West, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

Table 2. Ideas Generated via initial brainstorming session, "Walk, Bike, Link" Class March 2022

TACTICAL STRATEGY	BRAIN STORMED IDEA
Barrier Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize elements to narrow vehicle path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture Signage Landscaping
Surface Treatments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paint the road to signify new vehicle paths and attract the attention of drivers
Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use seating and tables to activate the pedestrian space and create a place that can be used for relaxation (outside of the vehicle path)
Landscaping Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place planters to create a barrier between vehicle traffic and pedestrian spaces Planters can provide shading to open outdoor space
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize branding of <i>Crossroads on Dickson</i> to create awareness of the potential of Tactical Urbanism projects on campus Re-purpose Fay Jones Monolith
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fayetteville animal shelter (finals week student stress relief) UAPD K9 Pups Allow student organizations to set up booths to interact with students Provide games for students to relieve stress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenga Corn hole Hopscotch Ladder ball Spike ball Large-scale checkers? Food vendor Space to set up booth (reference UARK "Taste of Fayetteville")

Design Evolution - Iteration_01

With initial ambitions of transforming the block-long crosswalk into a pedestrian-focused space, brainstorming sessions produced a wide variety of tactical urbanism strategies to redesign West Dickson Street. Each strategy outlined in Lydon and Garcia's *Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials* is considered and elaborated on such as barrier elements, surface treatments, furniture, landscaping elements, signage, and programming (Table 2).²⁹

With the speculation that we would be able to minimize the vehicle pathway on West Dickson Street to a single lane – based on observations of the quantity of vehicle traffic –, we brainstormed a variety of programming that could take advantage of the extra space.

The initial design scheme that we presented to the stakeholders focused on minimizing vehicle space and maximizing pedestrian space using temporary street paint and barrier elements such as furniture or planters. The newly acquired pedestrian space would be open for seating, games, student organization booths, and other activities that are common outside the student union. The objective was to create a space that relieved stress as we were quickly approaching finals week and the end of the semester. Barrier elements such as planters were also considered to be placed on the edge of the North sidewalk in front of Gibson Hall. By narrowing the perceived width of the road, a driver proceeds with more caution as the perceived margin for error is reduced (Figure 10, Figure 11).³⁰

29 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2016). *Tactical Urbanist's Guide To Materials and Design* (1 ed.). The Street Plans Collaborative."

30 "Sadik-Khan, J., & Solomonow, S. (2016). *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. New York, New York: Penguin Publishing Group."

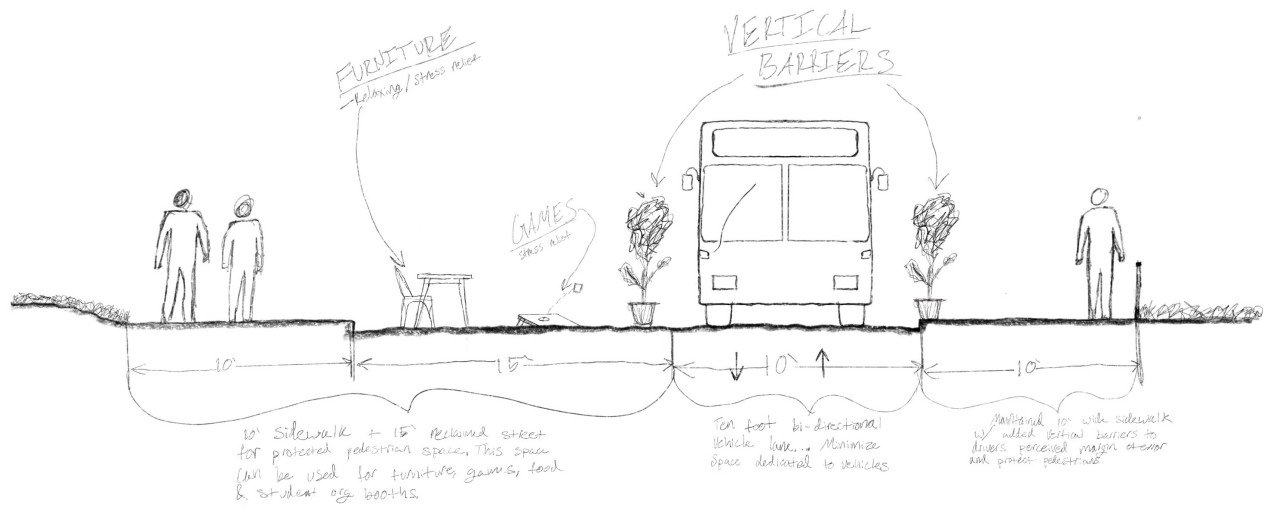


Figure 10. Design Iteration "01" Street Section Sketch of West Dickson Street Facing West, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

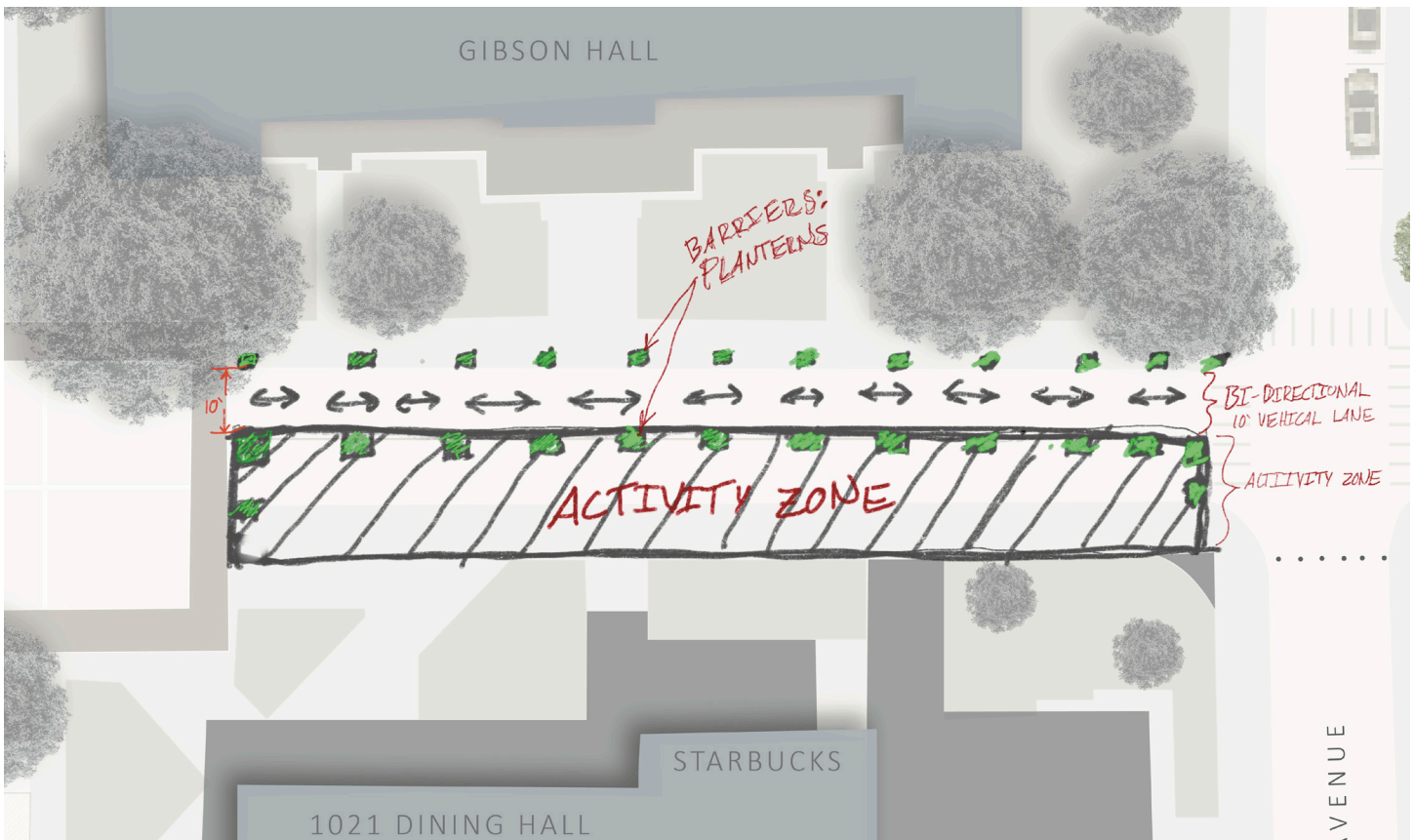


Figure 11. Design Iteration "01" Site Plan Sketch of West Dickson Street, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

Design Evolution - Iteration_02

After presenting our initial concept to the stakeholders, we listened to their concerns and modified the design. One of the most impactful inputs presented by one of the stakeholders is that a necessary width must be maintained for emergency vehicles to use the site to service the contextual buildings. After receiving input from the fire marshal, it was declared that a twenty-foot margin must be maintained for firetruck access. This greatly impacted the design by limiting the amount of space that we could deem as protected pedestrian space. Consequently, the protected pedestrian space was limited to the five feet of the street that remained in addition to the ten-foot sidewalks ([Figure 12](#), [Figure 13](#)).

Design Evolution - Iteration_03

With such a large area having to be maintained for vehicle access, we directed our focus toward painting the street with a design that altered the perception of the street's purpose. Initial schemes played off the idea that West Dickson Street functions as a block-long crosswalk, with the proposed pattern imitating a crosswalk design ([Figure 13](#), [Figure 14](#)). However, after an internal review, the Walk, Bike, Link class decided to avoid designing a pattern that had a resemblance to a crosswalk. The intention was to have a design that re-imagined the relationship between pedestrian and vehicle. By creating a pattern that resembled a crosswalk -although abstracted-, we were unintentionally creating a design that insinuates the streets primary function is a path for vehicles as apposed to a space that functions equally for

pedestrians. We transitioned towards creating a repeatable pattern that can be aggregated across the street. [Figure 15](#) shows a few iterations of a hexagonal pattern in which we explored manipulating the density of the aggregate through void, variance in color, and size of the hexagons. The goal was to create a design that was irregular so that it was eye catching to drivers and has a perceived textual quality. The final design fills the entirety of West Dickson Street between McIlroy Avenue and Garland Avenue ([Figure 16](#)). By extending the pattern from curb to curb throughout the block and adding interactive elements such as furniture, West Dickson Street would take on a hole new feel as a space designed for pedestrians that allows vehicle access.

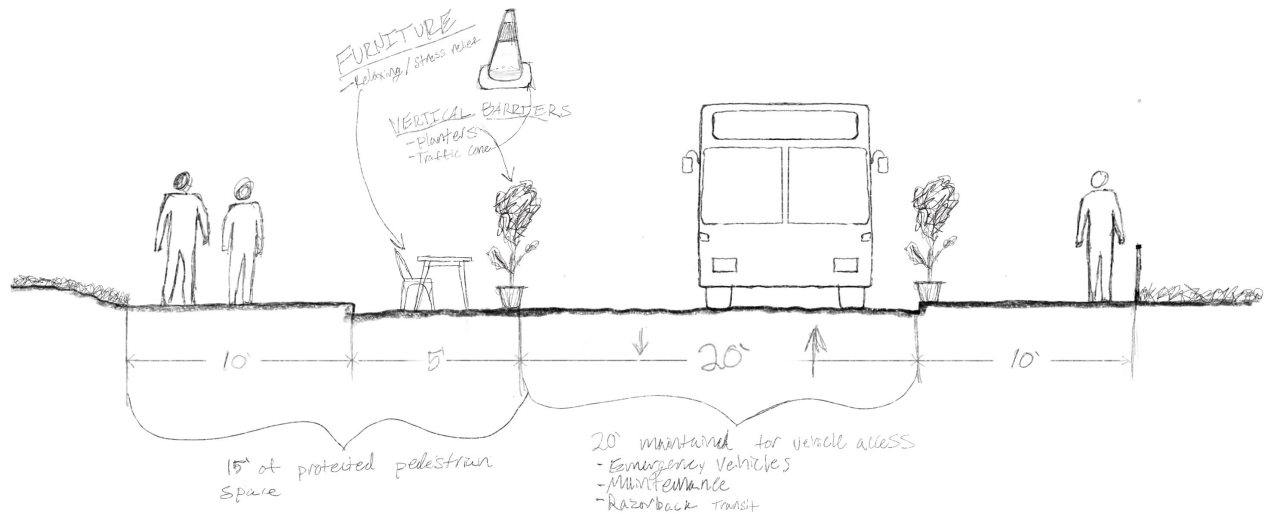


Figure 12. Design Iteration "02" Street Section Sketch of West Dickson Street Facing West, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

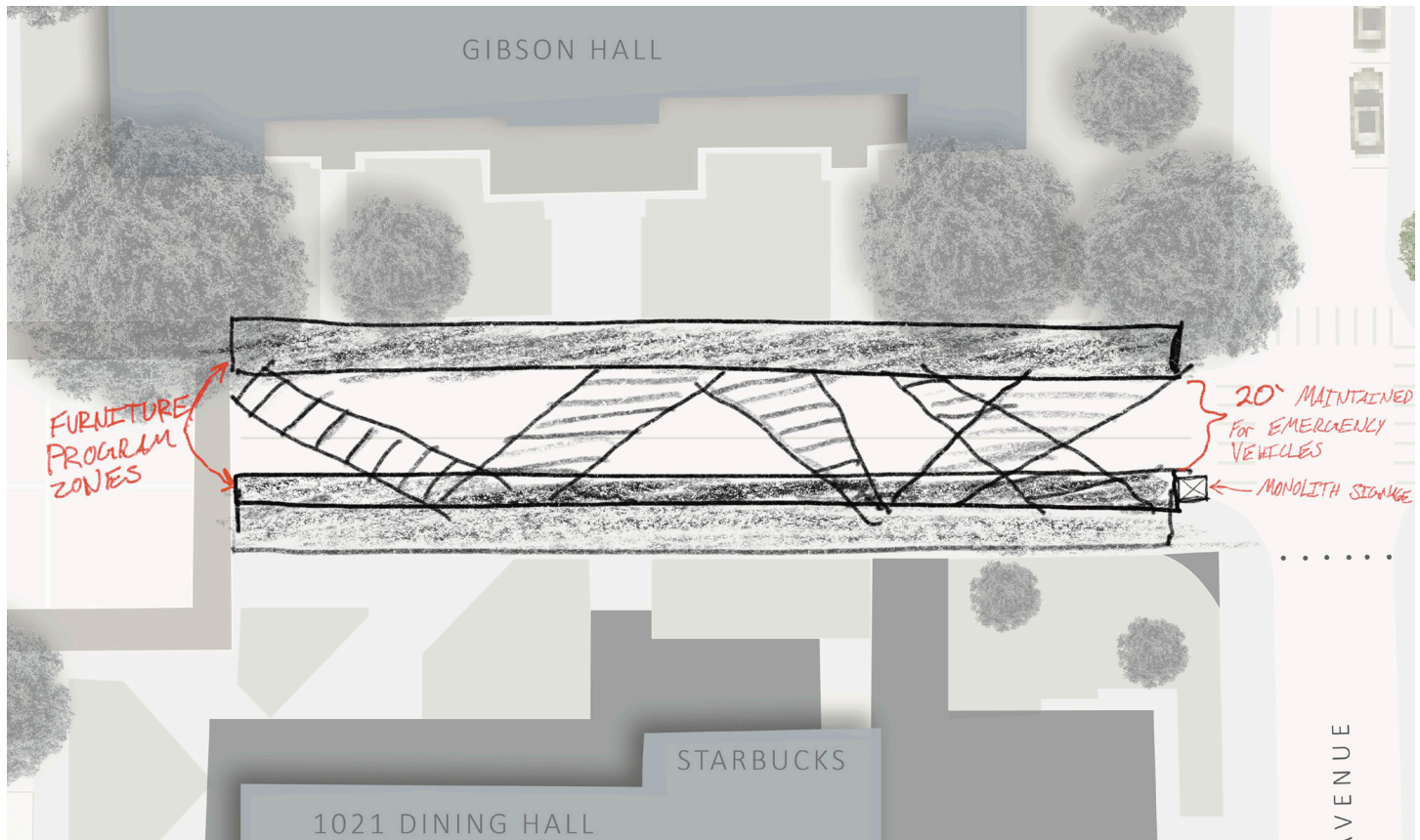


Figure 13. Design Iteration "03A" Site Plan Sketch of West Dickson Street, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)



Figure 14. Design Iteration "03A" "Block-Long crosswalk" paint pattern of West Dickson Street, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)

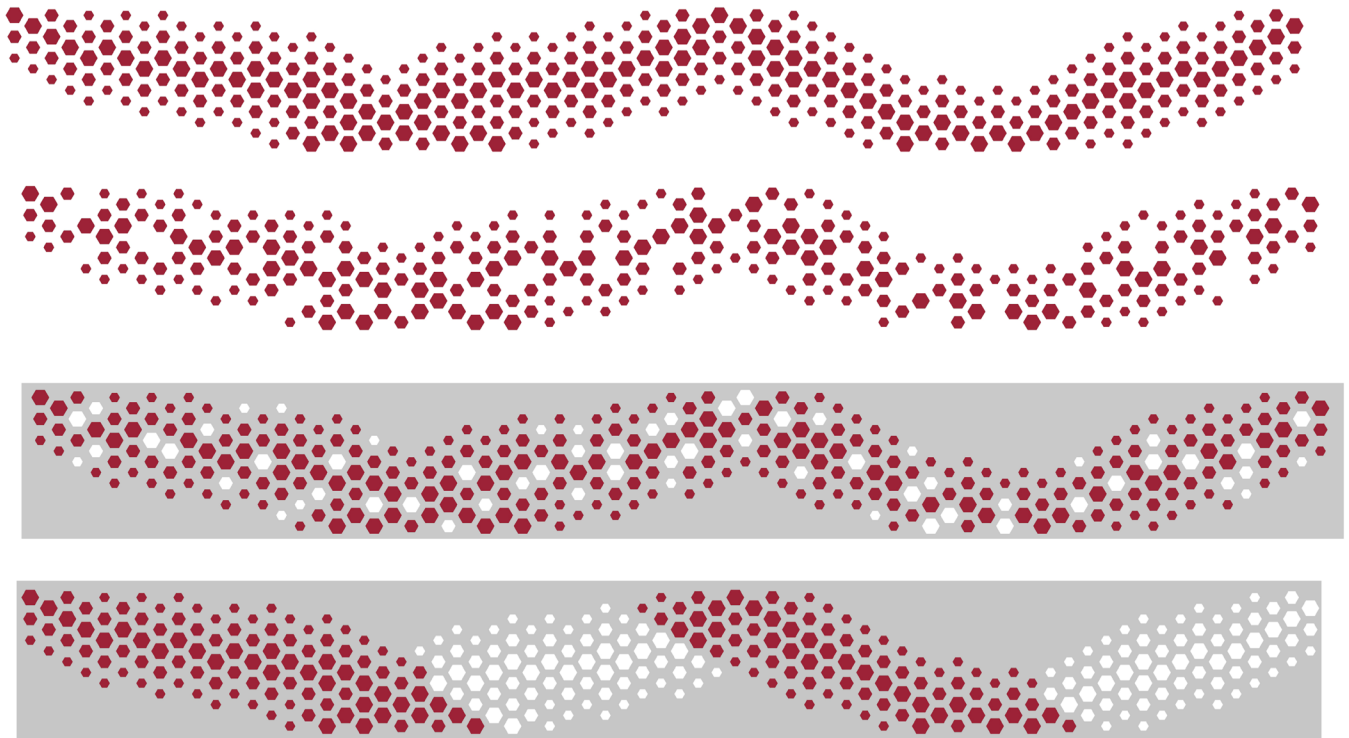


Figure 15. Design Iteration "03B" four alternate paint patterns of West Dickson Street, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)



Figure 16. Final pattern design of Crossroads on Dickson, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link 2022)

Installation:

By the time this final design had been decided upon, it was the end of April and we were in a rush to have the street painted before finals week. While the design committee worked on cutting out stencils for painting (Figure 17) and the procurement team went about acquiring materials such as paint and donated plants and traffic calming elements (traffic cones, flags, reflective tape...etc), I met with Corporal Allen Porter and Police Captain Gary Crain to discuss safety measures during installation. We planned the sequence that we would be painting in - beginning with the South East corner of the street and painting the East-bound lane entirely before moving on to the West-bound lane. This ensured that half the street would remain open for vehicle passing. Wearing reflective vests, two students - one on the west and

one on the east - would direct traffic while the rest of the team worked on maneuvering the stencils and painting the street.

The Email Titled "Crossroads Event Determination"

Everything was in place and ready to be executed. However, although the stakeholders were on board with the design, none of them were able to give us the official approval for installation. All stakeholders were in a position to voice concerns and say no to certain proposals that might affect their department, but no one had the authority to say yes and/or was willing to go on record granting permission for us to install the project. Nonetheless, we carried forward with the intention of painting West Dickson Street the weekend of May 7-8th.



Figure 17. Design Committee: Milo Barns, Isaac Diaz, Landon Butler, Landyn Green, cutting out stencils for painting the street, Crossroads on Dickson, (Source: Walk, Bike, Link 2022)

Wednesday May 4th, we received an email from Scott Turley - the Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities - with the subject line "Crossroads Event Determination". Facilities Management, in consultation with University Administration was prohibiting the execution of *Crossroads on Dickson*. He stated the following concerns:

- Establishing a precedent for a facility reservation that incorporates extended usage of an uncontrolled public street, especially one that would take place over multiple days.
- Inability to affirmatively control the event over time from a safety perspective, including actions that could arise outside the

management oversight of the organizers.

- While low probability, the potential for a serious injury in the event there was an accident.³¹

³¹ Scott Turley. Crossroads Event Determination: concerns with project resulting in denied approval request

University Hesitant to Experiment with Public Image

One of the biggest challenges faced in trying to get *Crossroads on Dickson* approved was the lack of Tactical Urbanism precedent on University campuses. Many Universities are known for being innovative and progressive, however, a project like *Crossroads on Dickson* struggles to gain support as it advocates for a change in vehicle infrastructure norms on a pedestrian dense campus through modifying the appearance of the street. While the University of Arkansas encourages student experimentation within their studies, a University as a municipality may be more cautious when experimenting with projects that effect their public image. A project like *Crossroads on Dickson* may contribute to how the public perceives the University and ultimately the branding of the University itself. The municipalities that are Universities are "service-oriented organizations" that have been "[...]pushed to brand themselves as having a set of unique and desirable attributes that appeal to potential students."³² In efforts to strengthen the image of "prestige" and "quality," Universities are hesitant to experiment with projects that may impact public image indirectly, or quite literally through the changing of the appearance of the street.

"Tactical Urbanism" Labeling Connotations

To understand the universities hesitancy in enabling such projects, it may be important to

acknowledge the history of DIY Urbanism in which Tactical Urbanism is derived from.^{33,34} Stemming from protest-driven urban interventions, Tactical Urbanism may still carry a connotation of conflict for those who have not yet been given the sales pitch by Street Plans Collaborative.³⁵ Admittedly, one of our failures in the two months of trying to get *Crossroads on Dickson* approved was in educating the University of the concept of Tactical Urbanism. Dane Eifling, the Mobility Coordinator for the city of Fayetteville when interviewed about what went wrong with the *Crossroads on Dickson* project and why it wasn't approved, he stated how today they are referring to these project types as "quick-builds". Eifling states the Tactical Urbanism can come across as sounding "militant". This change in labeling still maintains the low-cost, temporary, and scalable intentions, however, does not carry the weight of the term "Tactical Urbanism".

In an interview conducted with Ammen Jordan, the University of Arkansas Active Transportation Coordinator, we discussed how Tactical Urbanism can be re-branded so that projects using tactical Urbanism strategies were not directly labeled as such. Off the top of his head, he suggested "Community lead safety Initiatives". While not perfect, it begins to suggest that instead of labeling the project after the strategy that is Tactical Urbanism, we use an objective-driven approach. If we were to present the project all over again, not as a Tactical Urbanism project, but as a "Student-lead

32 "Sung M. & Yang s. (2008) Toward the Model of University Image: The Influence of Brand Personality, External Prestige, and Reputation, Journal of Public Relations Research, 20:4, 357-376, DOI: 10.1080/10627260802153207"

33 "Spataro, D. (2015, July 09). Against a de-politicized DIY Urbanism: Food Not Bombs and the Struggle Over Public Space. Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability, 9(2), 185-201. doi:10.1080/17549175.2015.1056208"

34 "Douglas, G. C. (2018). The Help-Yourself City: Legitimacy & Inequality in DIY Urbanism. New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press."

35 "Lydon, M., & Garcia, A. (2015). Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-term Change (1 ed.). Island Press."

Pedestrian Safety Initiative," where we are painting the street to create a safer pedestrian crossing zone, then perhaps we would have had a different reaction from the University. As Ammen points out, "safety is a universal interest" and if the project pitch was more focused on the safety initiatives rather than hosting a Tactical Urbanism project on campus, then perhaps it would have been received differently and approved in time for installation.

Lack of Application and Approval Processes

Another one of the biggest hurdles *Crossroads on Dickson* faced, was identifying who we needed approval from to do the project. While many stakeholders were involved, no one had the authority to give the go-ahead. There is no system in place for the student body to propose such a project. After meeting with stakeholders for months, they assured us that they were on board but can not be the ones to grant approval. Ammen Jordan, works to coordinate across administrative units to achieve active transportation infrastructure improvements through working with campus planning and facilities and other campus stakeholders. In his role he is constantly trying to get projects approved and stakeholders on-board to make projects happen. In his interview, he states that one thing that he struggles with and that inhibited *Crossroads on Dickson* is that there is no outlined processes for approving and implementing such project proposals, unlike the city of Fayetteville in which there is a well established application and approval process since 2017³⁶. This creates an added challenge to have Tactical Urbanism projects approved and implemented on University campuses. Jordan

goes on to say that "stakeholders have perceived jurisdiction" and that makes it difficult to know what stakeholders are necessary to be involved in certain projects. He suggests that there are three categories of stakeholders: those responsible, those who should be consulted, and those that should be informed. The scope of the project determines which stakeholders fall into which category, and that the overall consulted, informed process needs to be designed and implemented with campus planning. An approval process needs to be established for student-lead, experimental, installations or prototypes that challenge normative planning and design on University campuses, similar to that of the City of Fayetteville.

36 "Tactical Urbanism. (n.d.). Retrieved from City of Fayetteville Arkansas: <https://fayetteville-ar.gov/3268/Tactical-Urbanism>"

Why was *Crossroads on Dickson* not Implemented?

In conclusion, there were several factors that resulted in the failure of *Crossroads on Dickson* as a student-lead Tactical Urbanism project on a University campus. After developing *Crossroads on Dickson* as a case study, and conducting semi-structured interviews with City and University representatives, it is deduced that the most significant contributing factors to the failure of *Crossroads on Dickson* was the branding and representation of the project, as well as the absence of procedure within the University to approve such a project.

The lack of Tactical Urbanism precedent on university campuses resulted in the challenge of educating the University about the concept of Tactical Urbanism and its low-cost, experimental, and scalable intentions. When seeking approval for the project, too much emphasis was placed on Tactical Urbanism itself, which is derived from urban interventions as protest, which may not be very appealing to Universities. Instead of assigning such a project the label of "Tactical Urbanism," emphasis should have been placed on the objectives of *Crossroads on Dickson* which were to redesign the streetscape of West Dickson Street to increase pedestrian safety when crossing the street. Perhaps if the label of Tactical Urbanism was replaced with a more objective driven statement such as "redesigning streets for pedestrian safety", Universities would have a different perception of the projects being proposed.

The absence of a well established application and approval process created further difficulties in identifying stakeholders and getting approval from the right authority. Therefore, In order for future projects of this nature to be effectively approved and executed, Universities need to establish an approval process for student-led, experimental installations or prototypes that challenge normative planning and design on university campuses, similar to that of the City of Fayetteville.

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"Walk, Bike, Link" Class and Committee Roles

Jim Coffman

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Students:

Avery Lake

Cameron Riffle

Devin Tabor

Diego Ayala

Isaac Diaz

Landon Butler

Landyn Green

Milo Barns

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Noah Berg

Rebekah Crowley

Thomas Rohrbach

Cory Morris

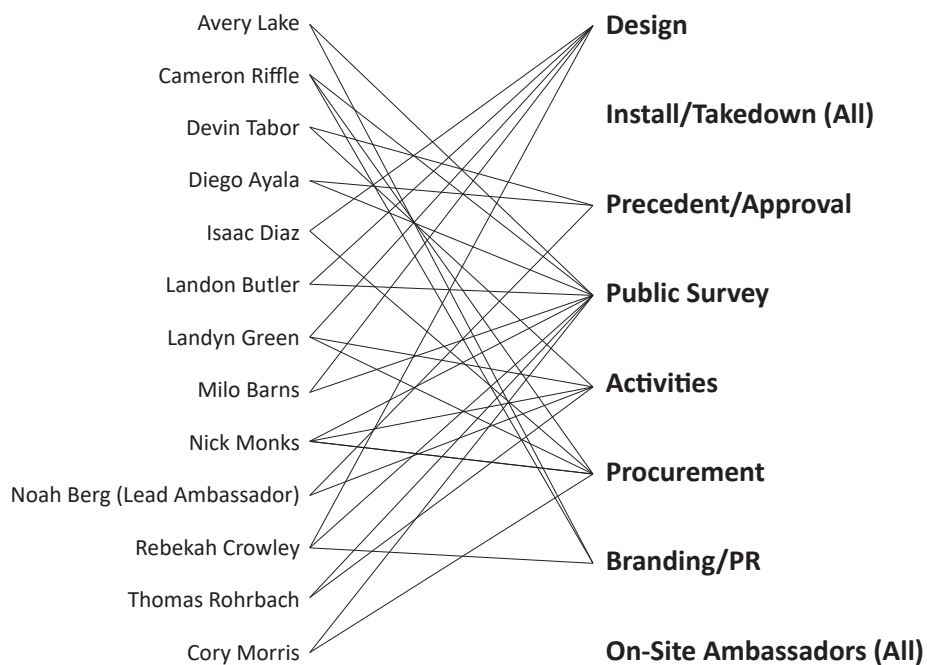


Figure 18. Student Committee Roles (Source: Walk, Bike, Link)