

2011

seized space : two projects for poughkeepsie, new york

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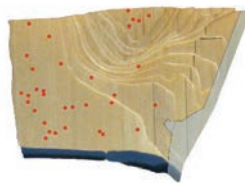
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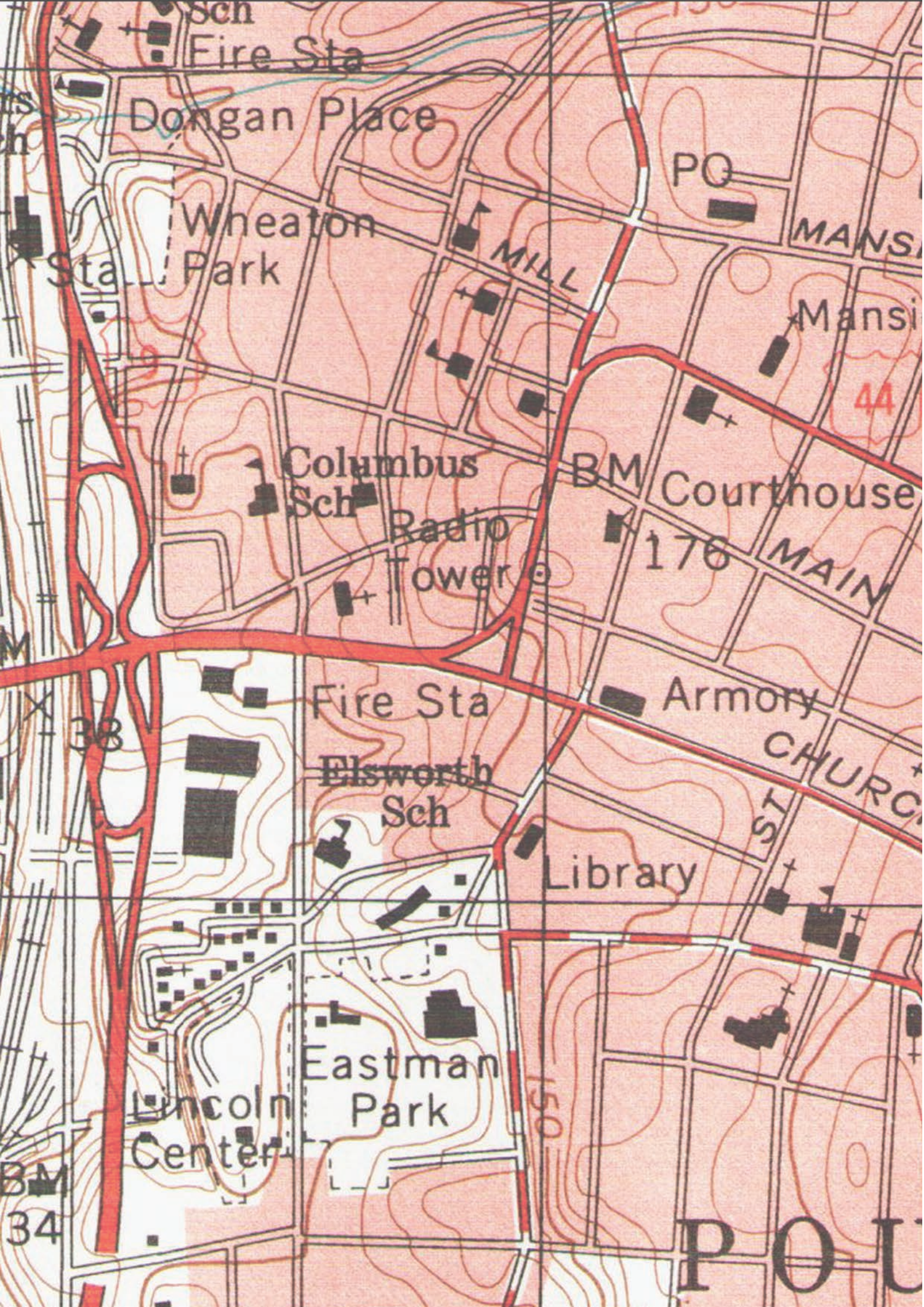
seized space

two projects for poughkeepsie, new york



ethan fischer

urban studies thesis project, spring 2011



Fire Sta

Dongan Place

Wheaton Park

PO

MANSI

MILL

Mansi

44

Columbus Sch

BM Courthouse

Radio Tower

176

MAIN

Fire Sta

Armory

Elsworth Sch

CHURCH

Library

Eastman Park

Lincoln Center

POULSON ST

BM 34

38



seized space

Ethan Fischer
Urban Studies at Vassar College
Senior Thesis Project, Fall '10 & Spring 2011

All text, photos, maps, and diagrams are from the author, unless otherwise noted.

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“What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.”

In June of 2009 a series of two-foot high neon blue letters that spell out “POUGHKEEPSIE” was installed on a triangular patch of grass formed at the convergence of two strands of an arterial highway near the heart of the city’s historic downtown. Also installed, behind the letters, was an eighteen-foot sculpture that evokes the sail of a ship and the many vessels that once landed at the city’s edge in the deep waters along the bank of the Hudson River. “We thought that the triangle needed to be more welcoming,” commented Barbara Peelor, a local resident who is part of an organization that worked with the city government to have the sign built. “We wanted something with a strong connection to the city and how we’re moving ahead. You can see it immediately. Poughkeepsie needs to be returned to its original glory.”¹

¹Nina Schutzman,
“Mixed Feelings
Greet New City Sign,”
Poughkeepsie Journal
08 June 2009.

The triangle was well chosen for the site of a welcome sign. Located at what we may now consider the city’s center, as it is its most widely traversed intersection, the sign hails visitors, commuters, and passersby who drive passed it en route to locations in the city or, more commonly, to locations outside the city’s boundaries. “I see it everyday when I drive across the Mid-Hudson Bridge from my home in Clintondale,” stated commuter Karen Palazzo. “I like it. I think it represents what Poughkeepsie is becoming, since the city is undergoing a lot of changes.”²

²Schutzman, 2009.



The Poughkeepsie
Welcome Sign

The sign is somewhat effective at performing its intended purpose. It is highly visible and to some travelers it may mark an entrance to the city or allude to a sense of place, a local history, and a core. It may stand as a symbol of the centralized place that Poughkeepsie once was, or may also evoke visions of the city's future. By the accounts of those who worked to have it built, these are its intentions; in short, the sign was conceived to help reestablish a center in a city that was once referred to as the 'Queen City of the Hudson' but has since declined and perhaps has even 'fallen from its original glory.' This decline can be traced in large part to the exodus of residents, particularly those of middle and upper socioeconomic status, from the city's core to suburban communities located outside of its boundaries, a trend that began in the 1950s and continues to define the spatial organization of the region today. The sign's location at the intersection of the roadways that facilitated movement from Poughkeepsie may serve as a reminder not of an idealized past but of the ways in which alterations to the built environment in and around the city have contributed to its decline. The sign welcomes visitors to a city that was once a political, economical, and cultural hub in the Hudson Valley, yet it is quickly sped past by drivers who experience little more of city's streetscape than its arterial highways.



“Poughkeepsie Pawnbrokers” and “King Richards Hair Classics” in the Middle-Main section of the city.

The welcome sign project does, however, help to illuminate some of the challenges faced by the city and its inhabitants. Over the last few years some local residents and groups, notably Middle Main Revitalization and Walkway Over the Hudson, have taken action to address the city’s needs and in doing so have encouraged others to take part. Since its founding in 2008, Middle Main, a private non-profit organization associated with Hudson River Housing, has coordinated the efforts of property owners, business owners, and residents to improve a section of the city’s historically rich Main Street. The organization’s stated objective is to “advocate for, support, and undertake efforts to improve conditions for residents in the Middle Main neighborhood in order to create a more attractive, safer, and more inclusive community.” Middle Main works to meet this objective by “improving housing quality and increasing resident pride and investment in the community



View from the Walkway Over the Hudson.

-munity.”³ The Walkway Over the Hudson, a private non-profit organization, formed in 1992 with the goal of reopening the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge as a pedestrian crossing. For years the group worked to secure funding for the project, and the Walkway opened in October 2009, arguably constituting the most dramatic alteration to the city’s built environment since the reopening of Main Street to automobiles in 2001. Hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors have since visited the Walkway.⁴ The organization continues to develop new projects to improve the Walkway, building on its mission is to “inspire people to connect to the beauty of the Hudson Valley,” and to offer “public enjoyment of the bridge’s historic architecture, the scenic wonders of the Hudson River Valley and the diversity of its recreational and cultural activities.”⁵ It also “encourages visitors to explore the numerous fine eateries, shops, and cultural attractions to be found throughout the City of Poughkeepsie.”⁶ Though Middle Main and Walkway Over the Hudson operate at different scales and interact with different yet overlapping publics, they share goals of inspiring interest in Poughkeepsie, demonstrating the potential for citizens, even those who seemingly have little influence on the planning process (at least in the traditional sense), to affect small- and large-scale changes to the built environment.

³“About Middle Main,” Middle Main Revitalization, 15 Feb. 2011. <<http://middlemain.com/>>.

⁴Joseph Spector, “Attendance Increases at State Parks,” Poughkeepsie Journal 21 Sept. 2010.

⁵“About,” Walkway over the Hudson, 21 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.walkway.org/>>.

⁶“Walkway Over the Hudson Visitors Guide,” (Walkway over the Hudson, 2009).

The two projects presented within this work, propounding theoretical spatial interventions for the City of Poughkeepsie,

are inspired by the potential for small yet determined groups of citizens to enact such changes. Each project is divided into three temporal phases: the immediate, implementing certain tactics devised to encourage residents to temporarily seize spaces for representation and recreation; the short-term, enacting landscaping strategies to alter the built environment in ways that better reflect residents' needs; and the long-term, during which structures are built to ensure that future generations have free and open access to explore and inhabit the city. Inherent in the design of each project is the belief that the type of change described above is the only kind that can effectively work toward a vision for the city that is better equipped to address the wants and needs of its inhabitants

The project focuses on the potential tactics that may be used to start a process of making and remaking the city rather than on the potential strategies. Margaret Crawford makes the distinction between tactics and strategies in *Everyday Urbanism*:

strategies establish a 'proper place,' either spatial or institutional, such that place triumphs over time. Political, economic, and scientific rationalities are constructed on the strategic model. In contrast, a tactic is a way of operating without a proper place, and so depends on time. As a result, tactics lack the borders necessary for designation as visible totalities: 'The place of the tactic belongs to the other.' Tactics are the 'art of the weak,' incursions into the field of the powerful. Without a proper place, tactics rely on the seized opportunities, on cleverly chosen moments, and on the rapidity of movements that can change the organization of space.⁷

⁷Margaret Crawford, et al., eds. *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 9.

The tactics presented here were conceived to assist inhabitants who have had minimal influence on their physical environment in claiming "spaces for representation" and to encourage "seized opportunities" in time and space.⁸ The vision for these projects is a city in which everyday spaces for representation challenge institutional representations of place so that the two may more closely reflect each other. The architectural strategies presented here attempt to imagine what this city might look like.

⁸See Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, (New York: Guilford, 2003) 33.

Seizures in time and space have the potential to radically alter the physical city. Jeffrey Hou, works closely with the theories of *Everyday Urbanism*, writes, "There are diverse means through which individuals and groups can engage actively in the contestation and remaking of public space, and the city by extension... Although the

actions may be informal and erratic, they have helped to destabilize the structure and relationships in the official public space and release possibilities for new interactions, functions, and meanings.”⁹ According to Hou, these actions do not necessarily take the appearance of radical citizen insurgency yet they nonetheless work to radically contest and remake the highly regulated and controlled public spaces of the city.

⁹Jeffrey Hou, ed. Insurgent Public Space, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) 2.

Public spaces dissuade and even, at times, prevent certain forms of use. Excluded citizens, however, whether consciously or subconsciously, work to subvert the city’s exclusionary mechanisms. In her work *On the Plaza*, Setha Low focuses on the notion of “protest,” which evokes images of aggravated civilians ‘taking to the streets’ in opposition to those in power. Low argues, however, that this is only one form of protest, and perhaps even the least common. She writes that protest takes form in three different shapes: manifest, evident in public demonstrations during which marginalized groups aggressively appropriate public space; latent, demonstrated by the struggle for symbolic representation in the built environment; and ritualistic, marked by public events during which citizens are temporarily given the right to use space within the city. These actions may go unnoticed, as resistance often “occurs behind the backs of those who are being resisted,” yet they still have the potential to “temporarily invert the everyday social structure and hegemonic meanings of public space.”¹⁰¹¹ The distinction between manifest, latent, and ritualistic protest is useful for understanding how everyday actions may function to contest and remake public space.

¹⁰Mona Domosh, “Those ‘Gorgeous Incongruities’: Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City,” Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Jun., 1998: 212.

¹¹Setha Low, On the Plaza, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003) 183 - 185.

Also significant to an understanding of the city as contested space is Michel de Certeau’s distinction between space and place. By de Certeau’s definition, place refers to an order or arrangement of elements distributed in relationships of coexistence. It is static, stable, proper. In contrast to place, space exists when one takes time and movement into consideration, and thus is “composed of intersections of mobile elements... In short, space is practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers.”¹² One can approach the city of Poughkeepsie as a collection of spaces and not places; it is the individual narratives, or “spatial stories,” that are the main subjects of study. These narratives become the mechanisms through which boundaries and limits have been placed and also how they may be challenged and ultimately removed.

¹²Michel De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 212.



Left: Peace sign graffiti on Church Street
Right: Biker gang temporarily seizes Main Street



These projects have been significantly influenced by the theory of the “Right to the City.” David Harvey writes:

The right to the city is... a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart’s desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.¹³

¹³David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review*, Oct. 2008: 23.

The tactics and strategies presented in each project aim to ensure this right: the right to open access and spatial sovereignty. The goal is not to form a singular, institutional representation of place, but rather to foster an environment which promotes inhabitants’ ability to influence both everyday movement through space as well as the physical characteristics of place. Thus the projects seek to secure the right to the city for residents of Poughkeepsie.

Crucial to the projects’ design is an appreciation for the history of the City of Poughkeepsie. In regard to the construction projects that were undertaken in the city in the 1920s and 1930s as a result of his direct influence, Hyde Park native Franklin Delano Roosevelt felt that the projects stood as “permanent memorials and reminders of the continuous thread of history linking the past, present, and future. [Roosevelt] knew that his social programs



Offices on Mill Street

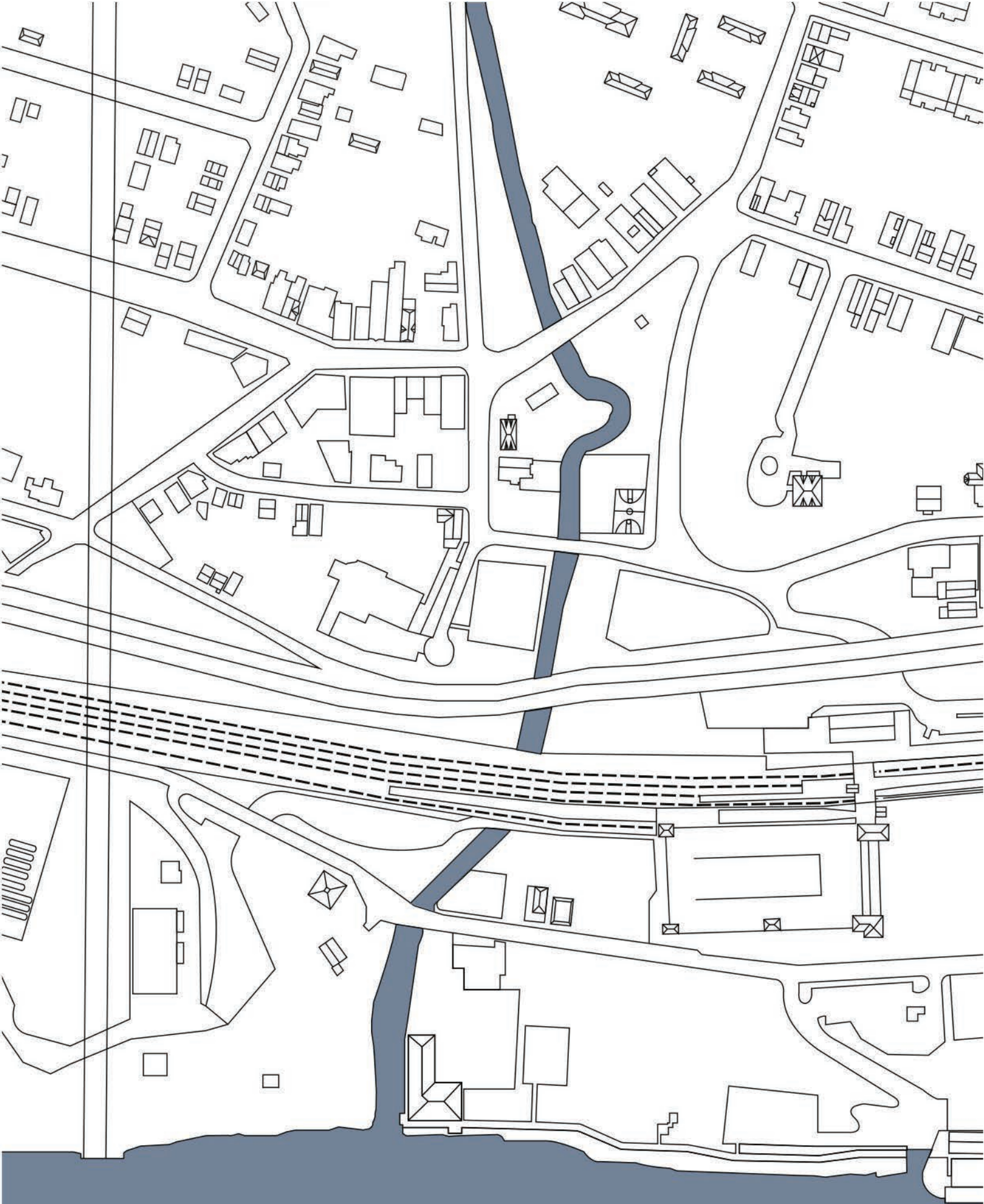
might well disappear under a later administration, but he was confident that buildings like the [Poughkeepsie] post office would remain as bonds between the times of his Dutchess County ancestors, himself, and future generations.” The project echoes these views. Though social practice may change drastically over time, contemporary inhabitants are linked to the past and to the future through traces found in the built environment. Reading these traces provides insight into changes in the use of spaces of the city and enriches our daily experiences in space. The project’s design highlights historical traces so as to emphasize the differences between the city of the past and the city of the present. These differences prove useful when devising tactics and strategies to alter the contemporary spaces of the city.

The first phase of each project is immediately feasible, as it relies on individual actions rather than on built interventions. Its process can be started by simply handing out pamphlets to visitors or inhabitants, or by leaving pamphlets at carefully chosen locations to be discovered. The second and third phases would require longer-term planning and investment, and thus can be considered to be in some sense theoretical. However, if the first phase was to be implemented, the latter two could potentially be implemented in some form by other groups or organizations. This progression represents the theory that individual and collective actions of inhabitants can be highly influential in determining the course of

¹⁴Harvey Flad & Clyde Griffen, Main Street to Mainframes: Landscape and Social Change in Poughkeepsie, (Albany: Excelsior, 2009) 131.

traditional planning methods as long as these actions become too powerful to be ignored. As de Certeau writes, “what the map cuts up, the story cuts across.” The spatial story has the power to influence the map’s development.

Inspiring interest in the city and advancing the creation of community poses numerous challenges. Despite its intention to address these challenges, the Poughkeepsie welcome sign project, an institutional form of self-representation, has had little impact on the daily lives of the city’s inhabitants. The projects presented here, though not designed as solutions, seek to have more of an impact by helping to provide voice to some of those who have had an inadequate ability to determine the spatial organization of their city. Only by ensuring the right to the city can we begin to meet the challenges that face Poughkeepsie.

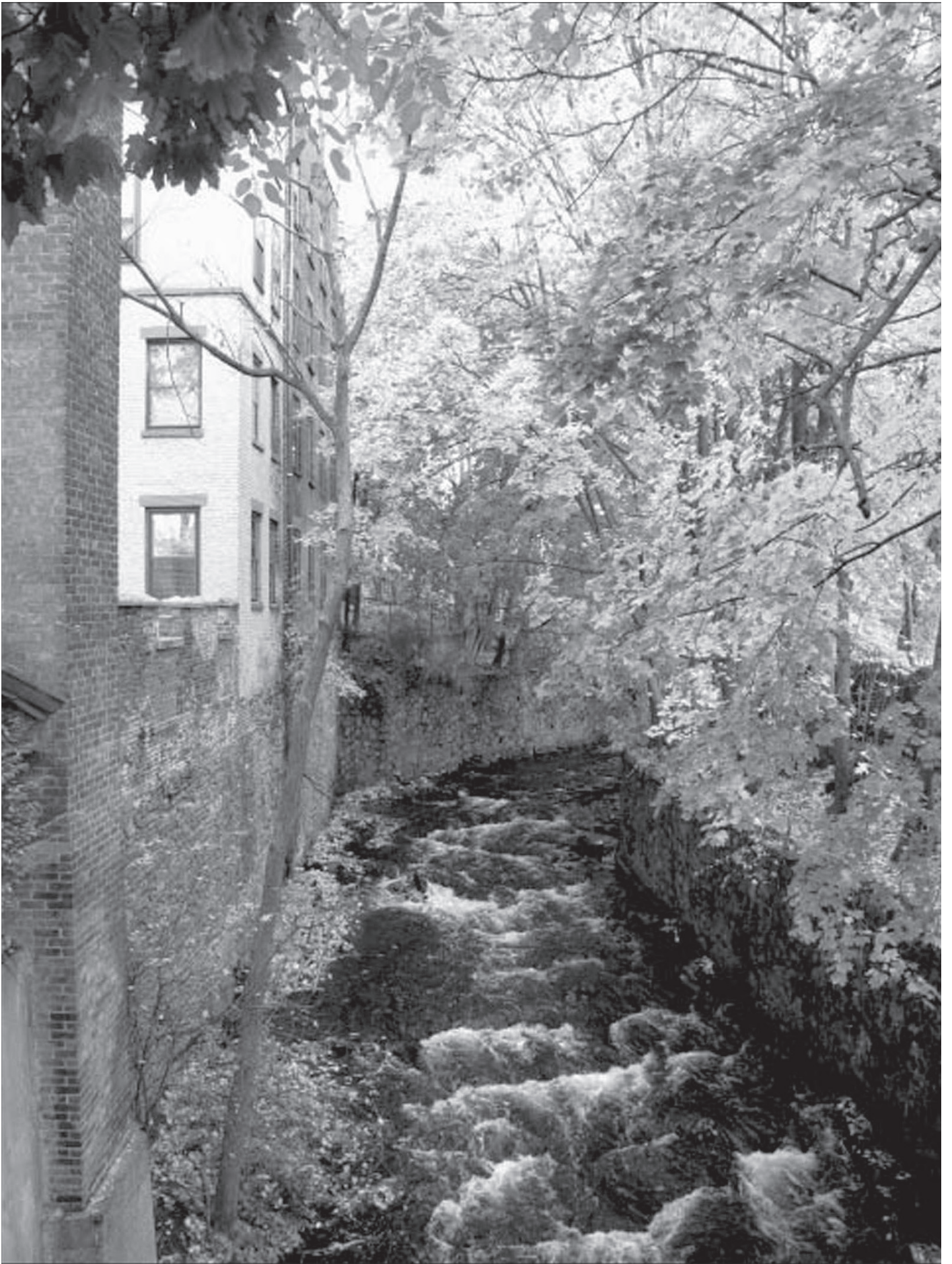


Rediscovering the Fall Kill

“The Fall Kill? What is that?”

Anonymous Poughkeepsie Resident on Mill Street

Poughkeepsians seem to have ignored or forgotten the Fall Kill, the narrow creek from which the city takes its name, which snakes through the north end of the city before descending the city's ridge to meet the Hudson River. A bit of comical evidence to supports this perception. When asked about the creek while standing inside of auto mechanic's shop that stands directly adjacent to it, one local resident, a clerk at the shop, was unaware of what it was or even that it existed. The Fall Kill is not much of a landmark in the part of Poughkeepsie where the auto shop is located. Looking out from the shop window, all that the clerk can see is a small stone embankment no more than ten feet wide and the back facades of abandoned buildings beyond it. Exiting the shop and crossing a chain-link fence, however, reveals that there is in fact a creek beneath the stone retainer, though its water is slow moving and a layer of garbage coats many parts. Bottles, a rusty shopping cart, pieces of broken machinery - all of these objects are among those that sit in the water, waiting to be permanently lodged in the mud below or perhaps to make it down stream, passed the creek's diving waterfalls, and into the Hudson River.



¹"Fall Kill Creek Watershed," Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, 25 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.clearwater.org/environmental-action/environmental-justice/watershed-management/fallkill-creek-watershed/>>

Many Poughkeepsians do know what the Fall Kill is, yet when asked about it they often seem confused about why anybody would be curious to study it as a potential site for recreation. According to Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, a private non-profit environmental organization that planned a short cleanup project in the summer of 2010, the Fall Kill has had "a history of being ignored," most recently used as "a dumping ground, or as the setting for unlawful activity such as drug trafficking."¹ Views along publicly accessible sites make it difficult to see the creek as anything more than an eyesore. How indeed could it be possible for anybody to imagine the creek, as it has come to be described, as an interesting site within the city?

There is more to the Fall Kill, however, than what these views and accounts reveal. If a viewer could manage to cross under the concrete and steel cavern formed beneath Route 9 and exit out onto a perched ridge overlooking the train station, then he/she would be standing near the middle of a waterfall formed as the Fall Kill meets and descends the city's ridge. At this small stretch between Route 9 and the railroad tracks, the sound of the creek's flow overwhelms the ears to such an extent that it becomes possible to ignore the sounds of the cars above and trains below. The shapes of the water transfix the viewer as it dances down the smooth stone and into the dark tunnel below. It is here, hidden below and between massive pieces of transportation infrastructure on which thousands of people travel each day, many of whom are unaware of its existence, that the Poughkeepsie Fall Kill reveals itself as one of the city's most exciting and awe-inspiring sites.

²See "Holding Pattern," Interboro Partners, 25 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.interboropartners.net/2011/holding-pattern/>>

Developed following dozens of site visits that required jumping, climbing, trespassing, and near falls into the water, Rediscovering the Fall Kill encourages residents to reintroduced themselves to a waterway that has been forgotten over the course of the last two hundred years of city's development. The project also seeks to stitch back together the cityscape with the waterfront, first severed in the middle of the 19th century when the first railroad tracks were carved through the riverfront hills and neighborhoods, by reimagining the Fall Kill as a scenic corridor used by residents to cross from one section to the other. The project seeks to accomplish its goals not by redesigning a section of the city, but rather by revealing it.²

Site History

The City of Poughkeepsie owes much of its history to its adjacency to two waterways, the Hudson River and the Fall Kill. Whereas the former connected the area to a regional flow of goods and people and endowed it with an important position as a port between New York City and Albany and beyond, the latter provided the means for a local economy among early settlers who harnessed the flows of its water and transformed it into a productive resource. The Fall Kill was an important site for the Wappinger Indians who inhabited the region prior to American settlement. They referred to the area as “apokeepsing,” translated as “Reed-Covered Lodge by the Little Watering Place,” and according to local legend it was at this little watering place that Dutch settlers first interacted with natives, though they referred to the waterway as the Fall Kill.³ These settlers referred to the area as “Rust Plaetz,” or Resting Place, as it served as a camping site for those traveling through the Hudson Valley.⁴ Both names reflect the area’s geographic advantages, and suggest close links between the waterways and the city’s development.

Poughkeepsians became increasingly divorced from the Hudson River and the Fall Kill over the course of the last century-and-a-half as a result of several social trends and infrastructure projects, including the decline of river usage, industrialization, the expansion of the city’s footprint, and the construction of new transportation arteries. Up until the mid-eighteenth century residents frequently utilized the Hudson River to gather resources, move goods, travel, and for recreation. The construction of railroad lines through the city in the 1850s, coupled with the resultant rise of industry alongside them, significantly altered the ways in which residents interacted with the river. As the railroad tracks were placed so near to the river bank, “gone were the days of easy access to swimming, boating, skating, sledding, and other recreations.”⁵ Between 1850 and 1900 the waterfront became home to many smoking factories and warehouses, including two iron works, the Matthew Vassar brewery, the Adriance, Platt and Company, a maker of mowers, reapers, and plows; Caire Pottery Works; the Poughkeepsie Glass Works; the Innis Dye Works; DeLaval, a manufacturer of precision tools; and the William T. Reynolds Company, a “major purveyor of grain and feed.”⁶ Moving people and goods became much more efficient by rail than by water, and thus gone too were the days of the city’s vibrant port. Only one of the city’s three historic landings exists today; located just south of the Main Street termi-

³Flad and Griffen, 134.

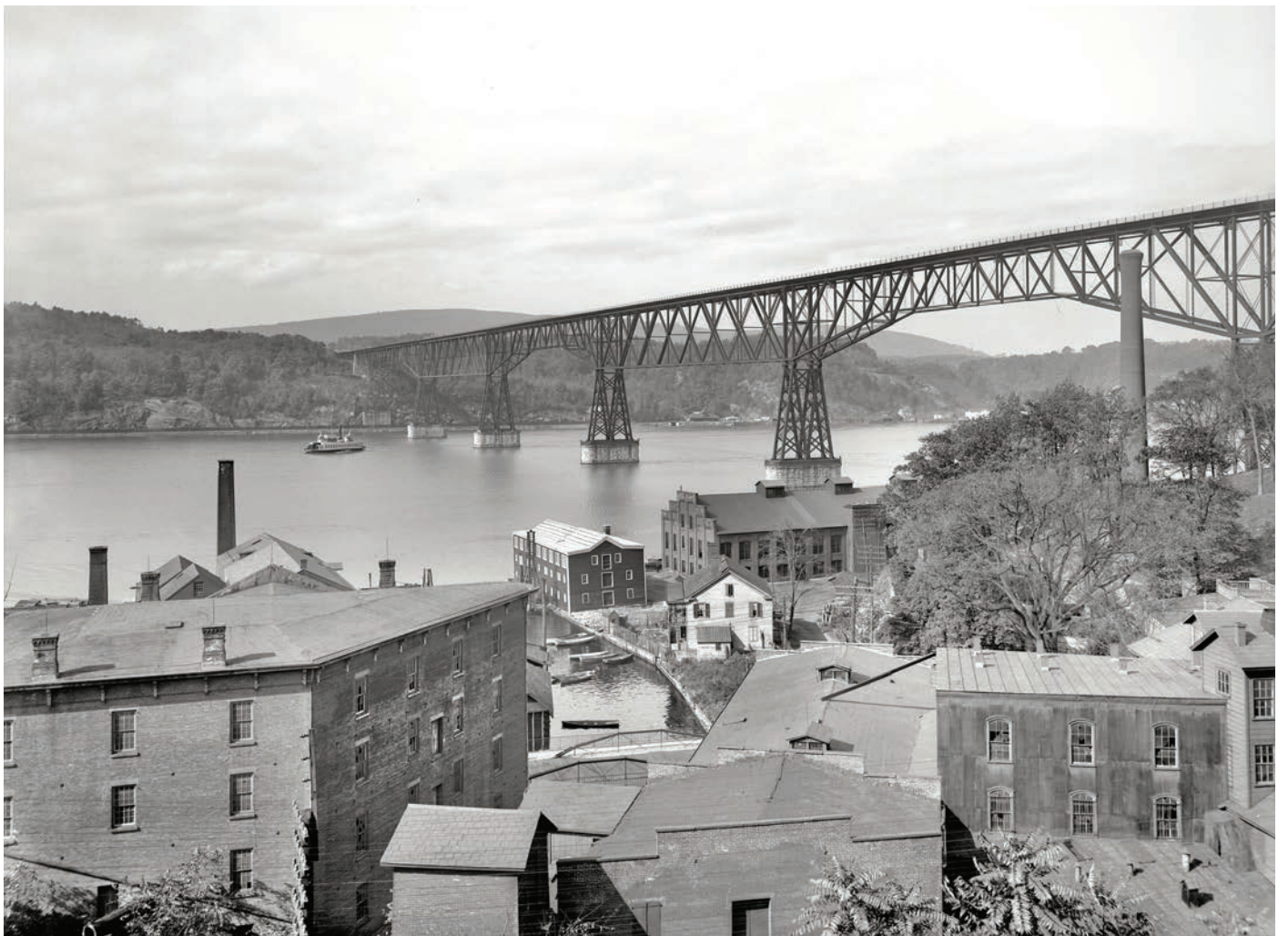
⁴Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, “How the City of Poughkeepsie was Founded,” USGenNet, 12 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ny/county/dutchess/dutch/Hist/pkpse.htm>>.

“Washington Varsity: June 1913,” Shorpy Historic Photo Archive, 15 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.shorpy.com/node/409>>.

⁵Flad and Griffen, 35.

⁶Steve Hopkins, “On the Waterfront: Plucky Poughkeepsie Perseveres Through Thick and Thin,” Hudson Valley Chronic, 01 Jul. 2009.

“Poughkeepsie Bridge: 1905,” Shorpy Historic Photo Archive, 10 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.shorpy.com/node/10190>>.



nus, this landing has been closed off to the public and is rarely used to dock ships. The construction of Route 9 above and through Poughkeepsie in the early 1960s further severed the river from the cityscape. Today, only four streets within the city cross Route 9 and the railroad tracks, severely limiting residents' access to parks along the water.

In the 1870s a tall fieldstone wall was constructed around the Fall Kill to control the flow of its waters, and in the early twentieth century portions were sent underground to allow for residential development.⁷ Buildings in the area have been oriented with their backs turned to the Fall Kill, thus preventing views of and access to it. The waterway's most picturesque sections, its three dramatic waterfalls, have been rendered inaccessible as a result of the placement of Route 9 and the rail lines. Few Poughkeepsians encounter the Fall Kill during daily experience; it is, for the most part, a forgotten piece of the city's geography and history.

The waterfront is far from void of recreational activities, however. Waryas Park, located along a strip of the Hudson between Main Street and the southern edge of the Fall Kill and adjacent to the Poughkeepsie Train Station, is often crowded with visitors who use the park's walking paths, skatepark, playground, chess tables, and gazebo. The most common activity among all age groups, it seems, is simply watching the river – even during the coldest winter nights, residents can be seen sitting in their cars in the large parking lot located at the center of the park with their engines idling and their eyes fixed on the water. “I walk down to the park in the evenings,” local resident Elmore Alexander stated, “it's got some nice elements.”⁸

In the last ten years the city government has taken an increasing interest in waterfront revitalization. In 1998 the city enacted the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, through which it seeks to “restore, revitalize, and redevelop deteriorated and underutilized waterfront areas for commercial, cultural, recreational, and other compatible uses.”⁹ The Waterfront Advisory Committee, a group of 13 local residents appointed by the mayor and the Common Council, is now responsible for approving plans from developers interested in building along the waterfront. In the past few years two projects have been approved and completed at the northern edge of Waryas Park: the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum and the Piano Factory Lofts. Though the two projects have brought

⁷Flad and Griffen, 130.

⁸Elmore Alexander, personal interview, 25 Nov. 2010.

⁹“Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan,” Waterfront Advisory Committee, 1998.

activity to the area, further development has been slow as a result of the difficulty that visitors have in accessing the site.

Autumn in Waryas
Park

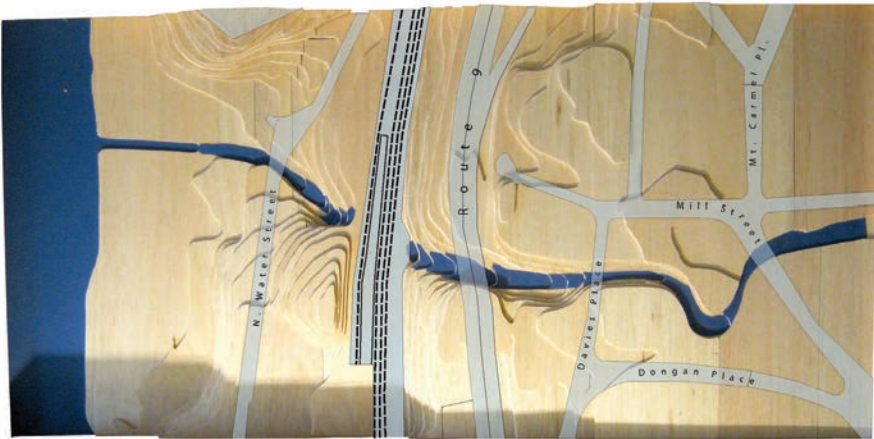




topography



streets



railroad



buildings

200' 100'



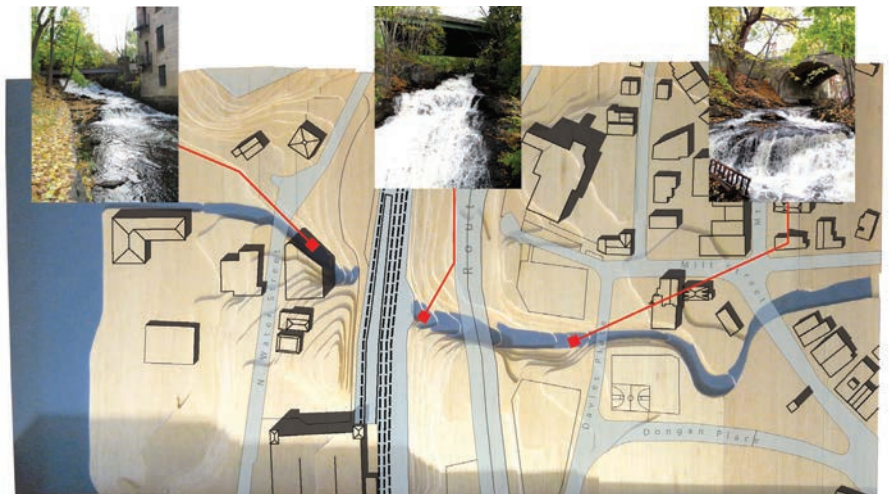
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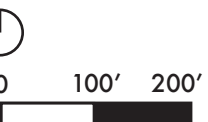
parking



context

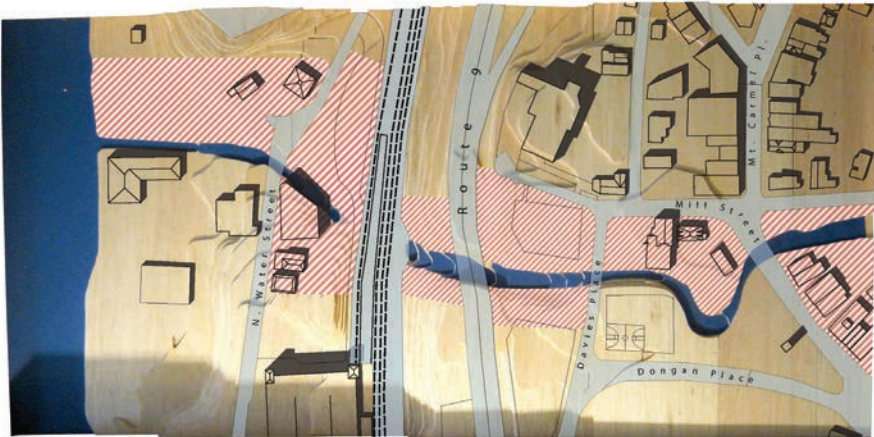


waterfalls

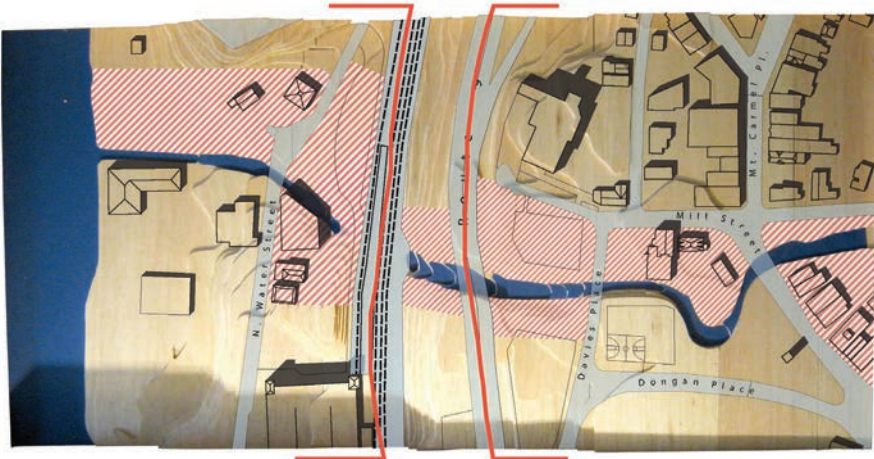




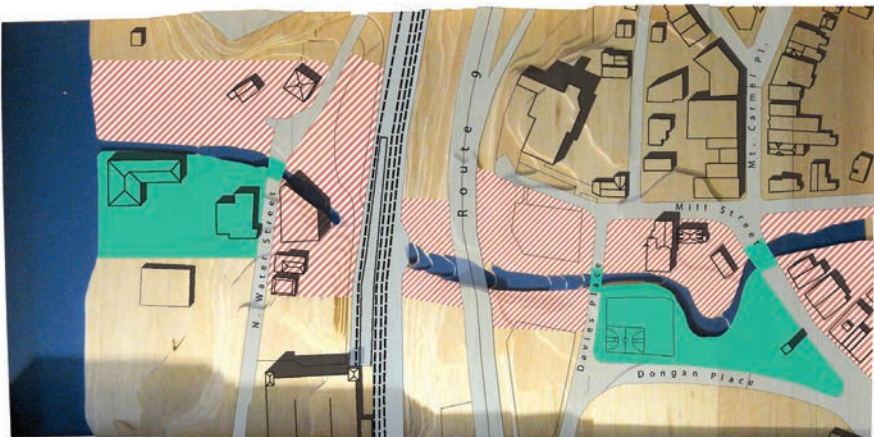
publicly accessible sites



publicly inaccessible sites



impermeable boundaries

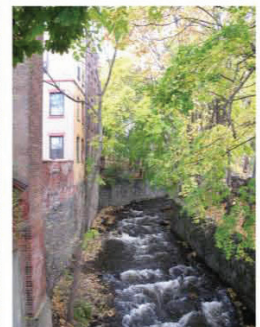
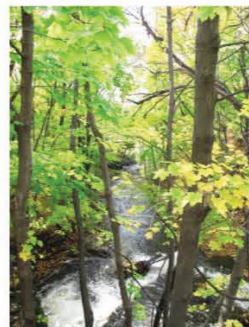
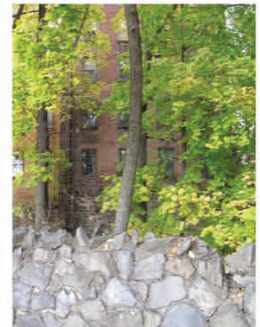
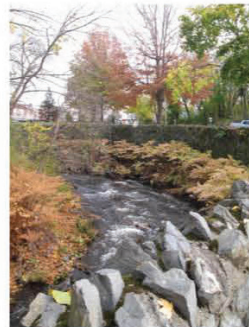


all sites

Views from publicly inaccessible sites (nice!)



Views from publicly accessible sites (not so nice)



The Fall Kill Project is broken down into three phases: “Reintroducing,” “Reclaiming,” and “Reactivating.”

Phase 1: Reintroducing the Fall Kill

This first phase aims to encourage residents and visitors to visit the Fall Kill by providing them with instructions on how to access it. These instructions are provided in two different pamphlets, one of which serves as a guide to accessing sites that are currently open to the public and a second that serves as a guide to accessing those that are not. Residents who follow the first guide will find modest views of the Fall Kill: views from streets that cross high above it, from Waryas Park, and from the Walkway Over the Hudson; those who follow the second will find themselves standing near the bottom of a thirty foot waterfall that is hidden beneath Route 9 and the railroad tracks. This is an area of the city that is rarely seen and that does not exist on most maps.

The pamphlets are to be placed at strategic locations: at tourist centers, local businesses, and in residents’ mailboxes. If successful, this phase would allow visitors to temporarily give the site new meaning. At chosen moments, the Fall Kill would cease to be an ignored and forgotten area of the city, but rather it would be transformed temporarily into a site for recreation and exploration. The process of sharing stories of visits to the site would challenge demarcated boundaries that have been placed around the site. This would be a remarkable achievement, and one that could work to extend the city’s recreational sites, promote interest in its history, and influence the process of planning for the future.



under davis place bridge

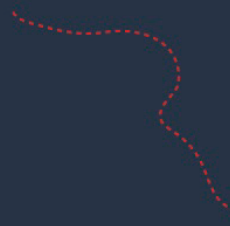


under route 9



on the rail line

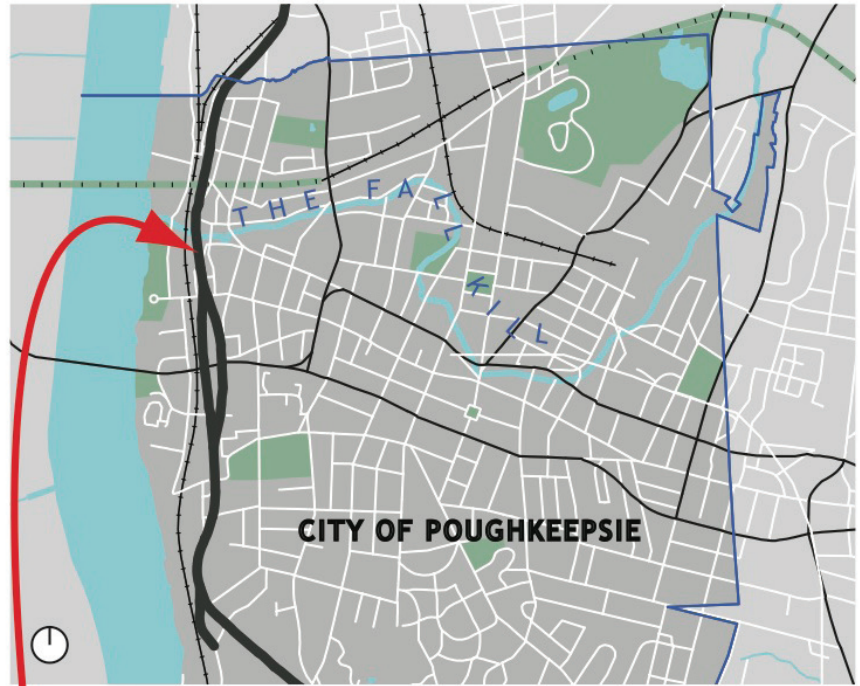
Reintroducing the Fall Kill



View from the railroad tracks

A guide to help residents and visitors find the best views of the city's hidden waterfalls

Pamphlet designed by Ethan
Urban Studies at Vassar Col



Ever been to the Fall Kill, the narrow creek from which the city takes its names that snakes through the north end of the city? Most residents have seen it (its jumps out every now and then from behind a house or under a roadway), but few have seen its most dramatic sections: the fast-moving waterfalls that dive down the city's ridge.

Though there are many obstacles preventing accessibility, including the city's railroad tracks and Route 9, this pamphlet makes it easier for you to locate and explore the creek and its remarkable waterfalls.



n Fischer
lege

DIRECTIONS TO POUGHKEEPSIE'S HIDDEN WATERFALLS

Route 1: The Underpass
risks: jagged rocks, raging current
final view: great!



Step 1:
Locate red dumpster in the train station parking lot.

Step 2:
Walk around the dumpster and find the gap in the chain link fence. Walk through.



Step 3:
Walk under the overpass.



Step 4:
Climb down the jagged rocks (rope should come in handy).



Step 5:
Enjoy a pleasant view of the waterfall!



Things you may need:



Step 5:

Enjoy a pleasant view of the waterfall!



Step 4:

Cross the railroad tracks. Be careful! Trains can move pretty quickly.



Step 3:

Disregard the security booth. If a guard asks, just tell him that you're looking for waterfalls.



Step 2:

Walk through the gap in the row of trees at the end of the parking lot.



Step 1:

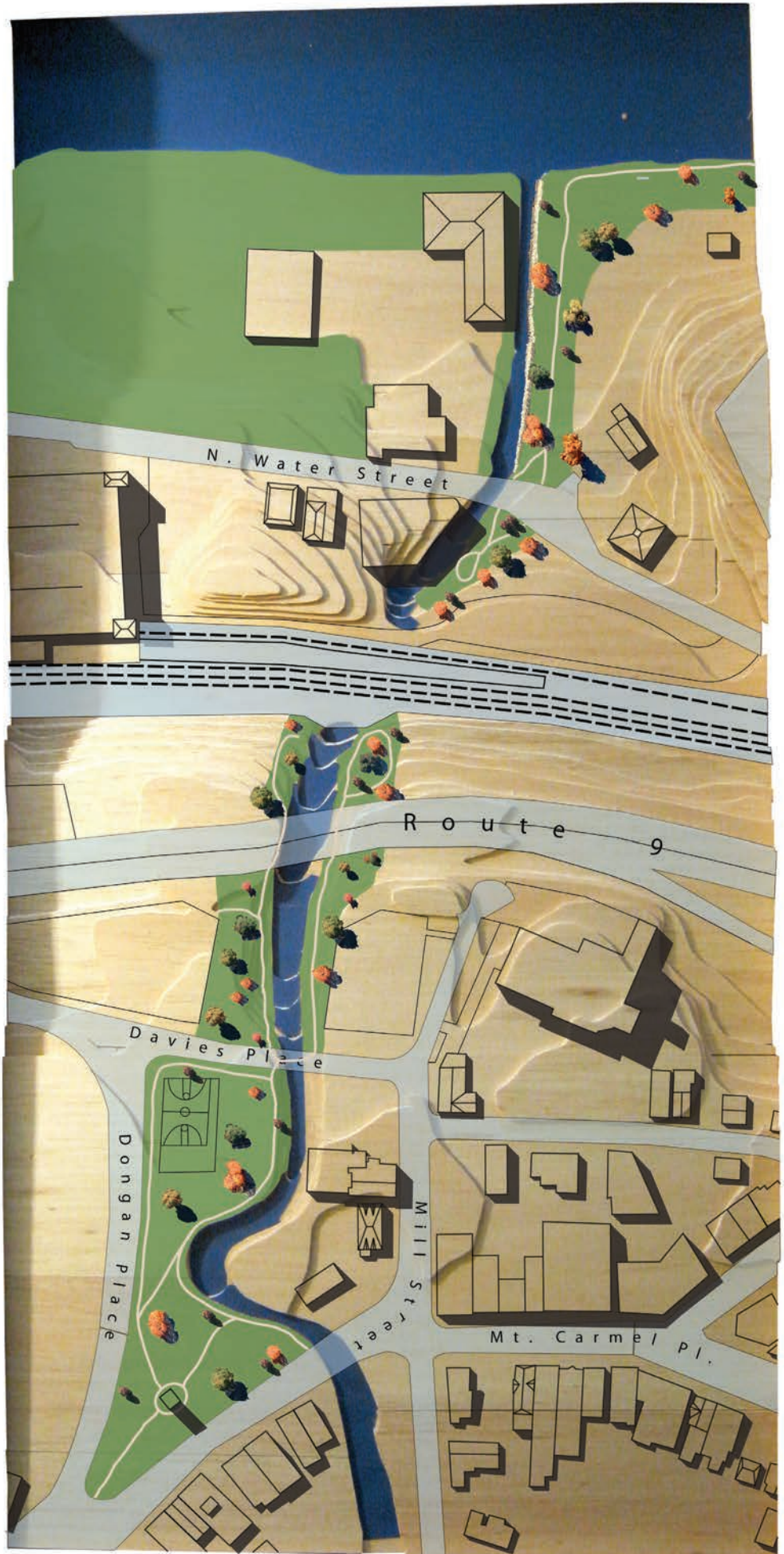
Locate the Piano Factory (80 N. Water Street). Find the building's parking lot, and walk through it.

Route 2: The Rail Line
risks: speeding trains, security
final view: awesome!

Phase 2: Reclaiming

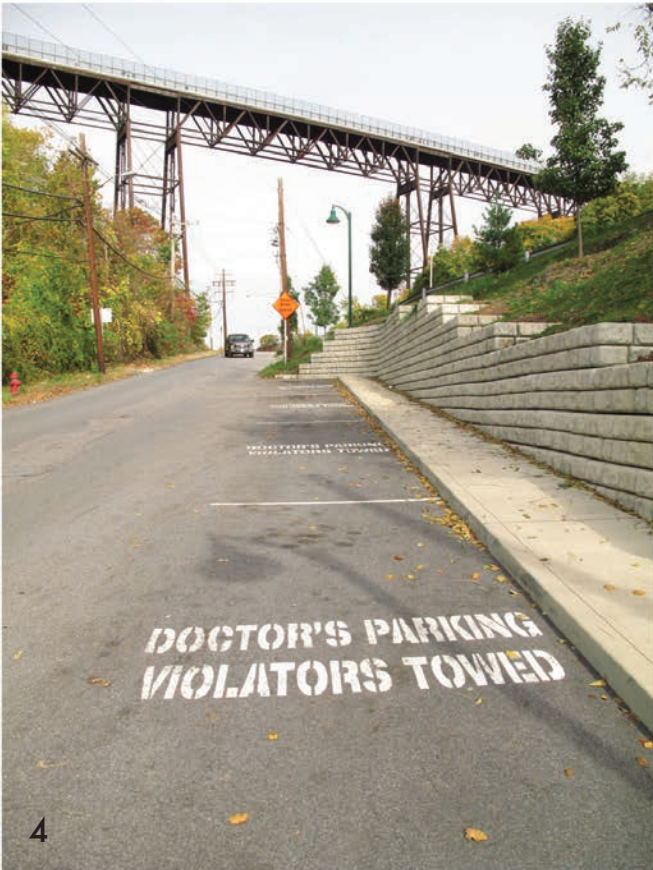
The second phase follows a more traditional approach: the creation of a landscape plan for the area. This plan calls for two dirt walking paths to be built, one on each side of the railroad tracks, to provide easy and safe travel along the Fall Kill. The first path would lead from the elevator of the Walkway Over the Hudson south along the waterfront and then east along the northern edge of the Fall Kill. The second would lead from Mill Street west through Dongan Park and under Route 9, culminating at the top of the city's most dramatic waterfall. The placing of these paths would require the cleaning of debris that has collected alongside the Fall Kill as well as the installation of overhead lights along the path and inside the cavernous shelter formed beneath Route 9. The two paths would not be connected, as the railroad tracks constitute too large and dangerous a boundary to be easily crossed.

While the first phase allows for the site to be temporarily opened to alternative uses, the second would allow it to be opened permanently, reintegrating it back into the city.



site model with
landscape plan







landscape plan
before / after
1 waterfront
2 davies place
3 dongan park
4 water street

Phase 3: Reactivating

The third phase is intended as a vision for the area in the long-term, and involves the placing of pavilions along the newly laid Fall Kill path. These pavilions would be designed for and by local residents, and would be commissioned by private individuals and groups working in conjunction with the city government. This third phase would remain open for as long as possible so as to ensure that inhabitants could choose to add or remove pavilions for an indefinite period of time.

For example, residents of Poughkeepsie's North End neighborhood may advocate for and finance the construction of a Community Center/Business Space at the intersection of the Fall Kill and Mt. Carmel Place, a bustling business strip that serves as the community's meeting point. This new building would provide Fall Kill visitors with a place to explore upon leaving the walking path and would bring investment and interest to a neighborhood that has worked hard in the last few years to increase its visibility.

Or perhaps local residents would call for the construction of a small rec-center in Dongan Park to replace the rusted swing sets that currently sit along the Fall Kill. This rec-center could reinvigorate a seldom-used park and serve as an entrance to the Fall Kill path.

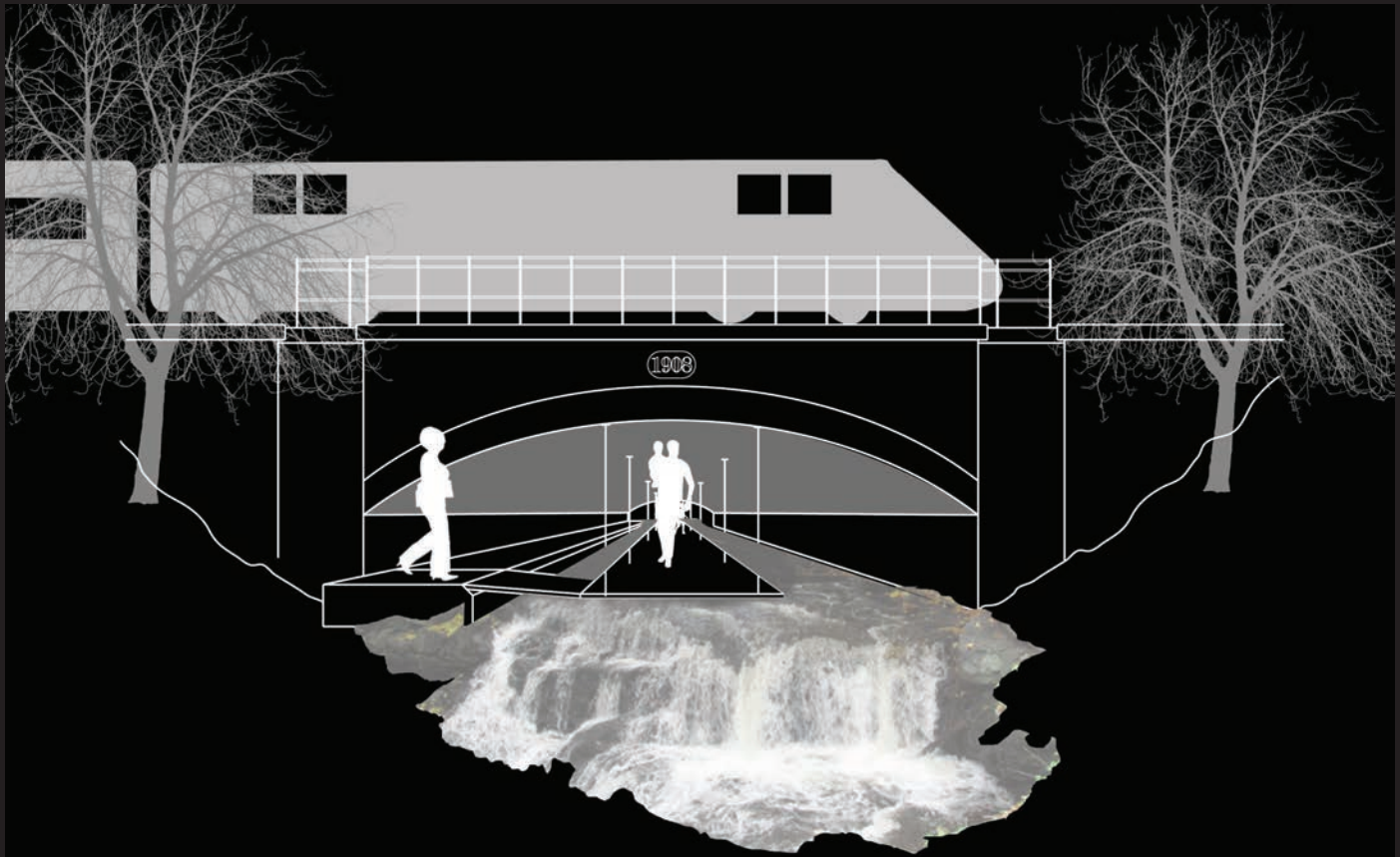
Perhaps the city would also be interested in building a walking pier to extend onto the river at the former site of the Upper Landing, once Poughkeepsie's busiest. This pier, located at the nexus of the Fall Kill and the Hudson River, would reopen an important historical site and provide recreation for the many who enjoy sitting and watching the river's flows.



Presented here is a fourth idea: the adaptation of the stone tunnel under the railroad tracks through which the Fall Kill travels on route to the Hudson. Inside the walls of the tunnel, which are just tall enough to be walked beneath and wide enough to fit three people across, a bridge would be built above the water to allow visitors to walk through. The tunnel's walls would be reused as screens on which colorful light displays would be projected. Inspired by the "psychedelic boat scene" in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and the works of artists Bruce Nauman and James Turrell, the tunnel would connect both strands of the Fall Kill paths and thus provide continuity to the area's new landscape.¹⁰ Designed to be fun and inspiring, the Fall Kill Tunnel would also serve to highlight the profound impact that the railroad line has had on residents' access to certain areas of the city, and most significantly, would reunite the waterfront with the cityscape.

¹⁰See: "Willy Wonka Original Psychedelic Boat Trip," YouTube, 10. Nov 2010. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Zail7Gdqro>>





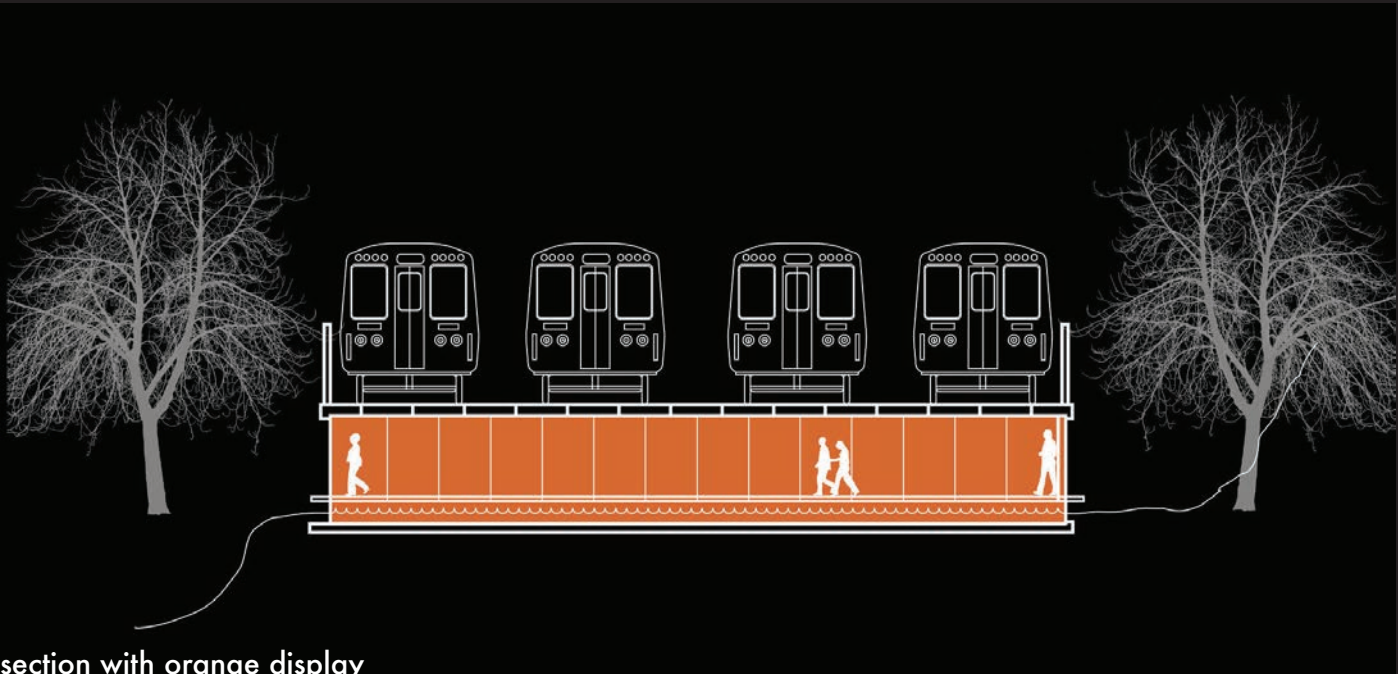
elevation



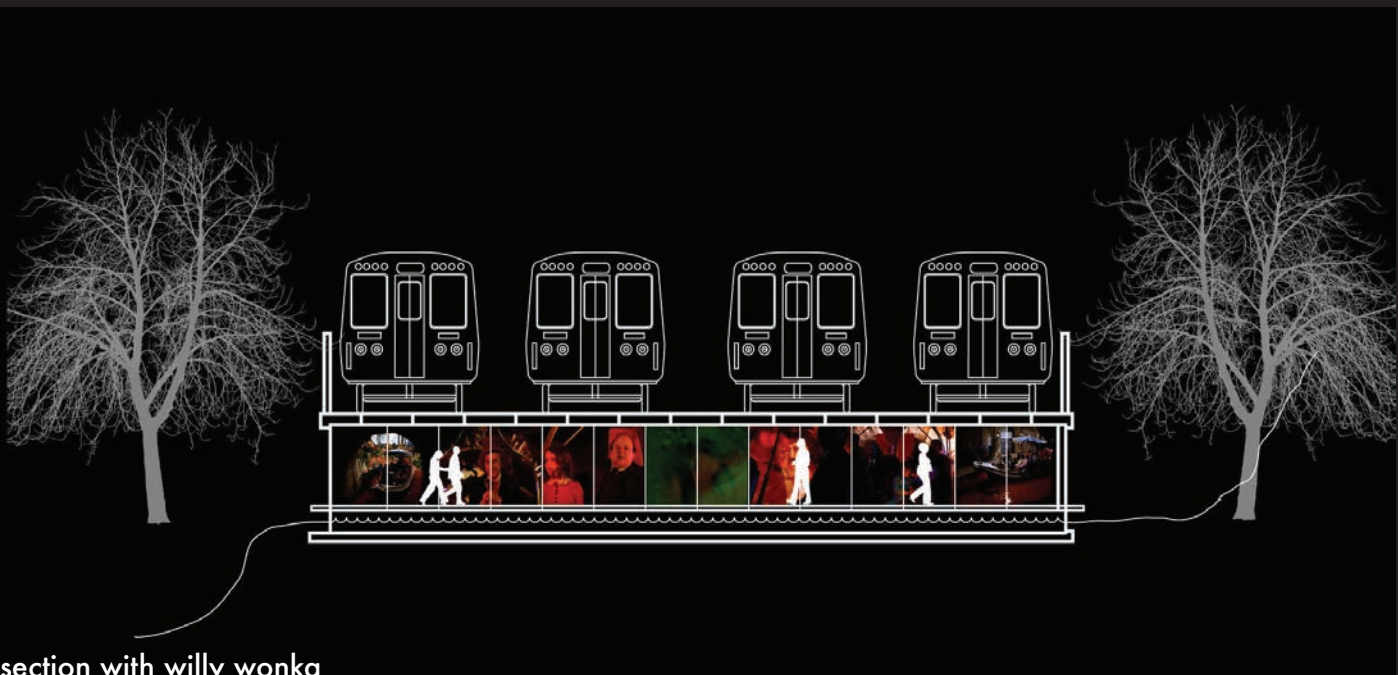
section



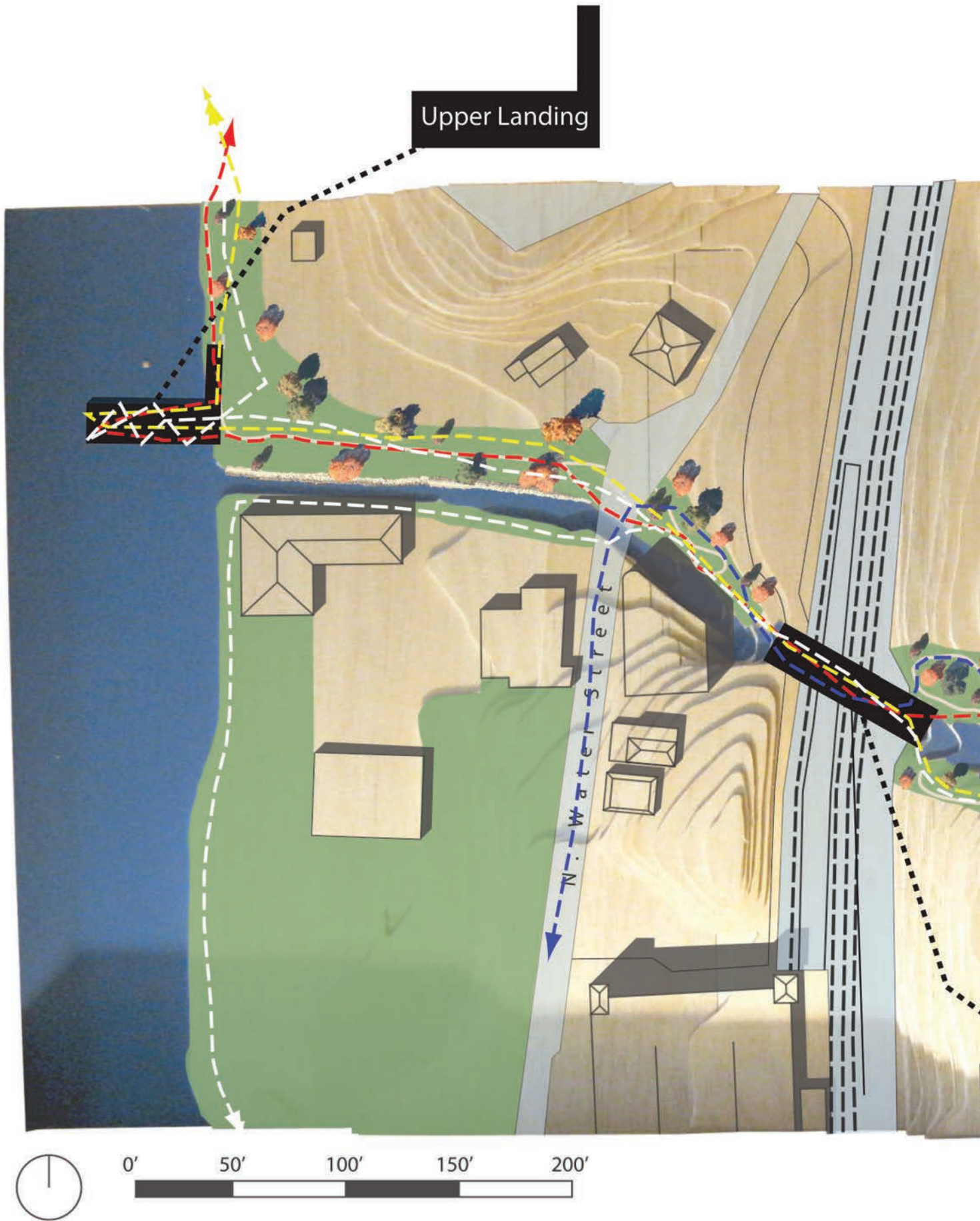
section with neon display

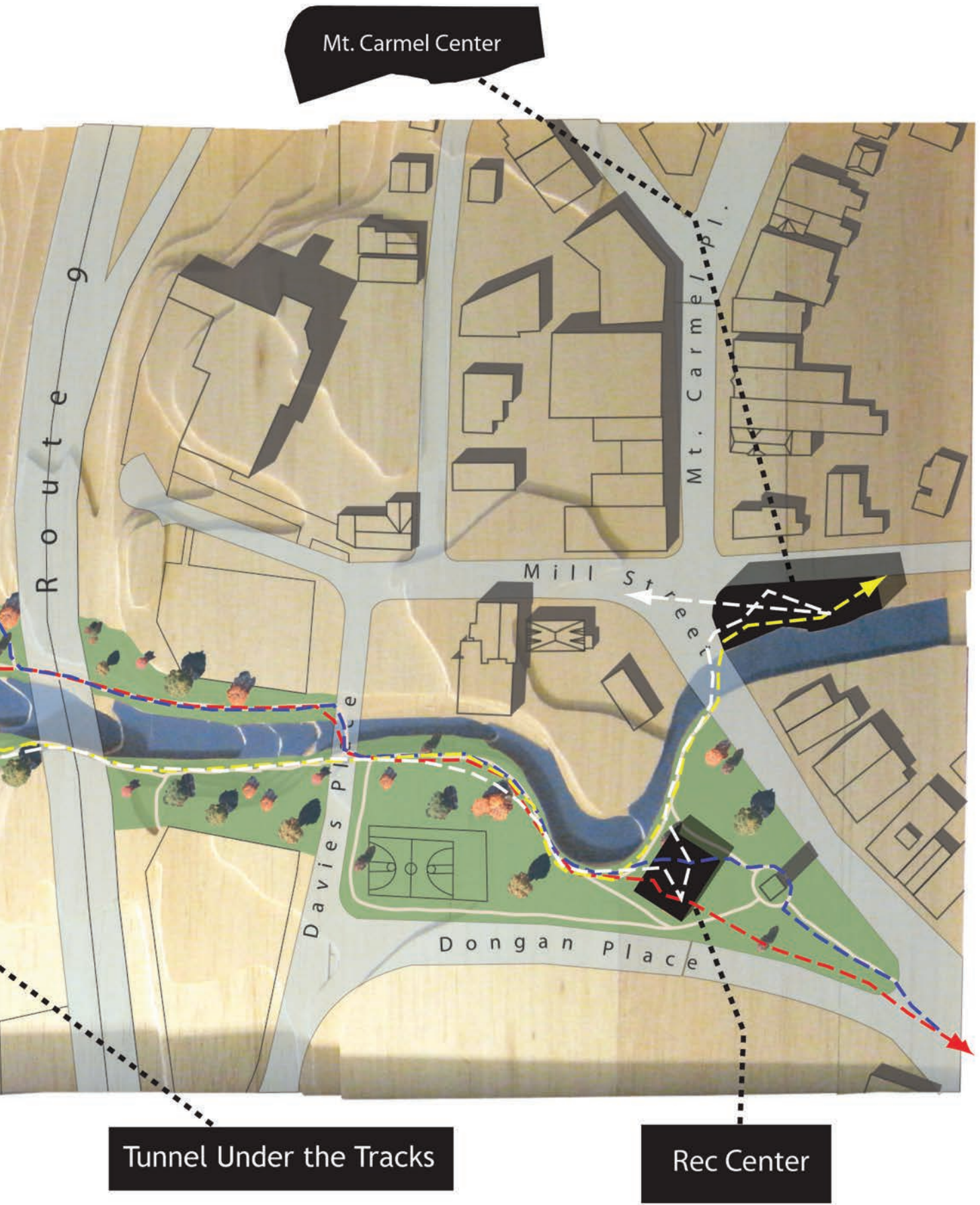


section with orange display

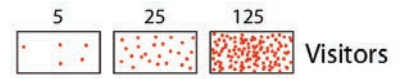


section with willy wonka

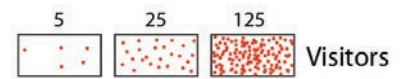




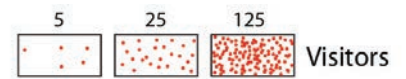
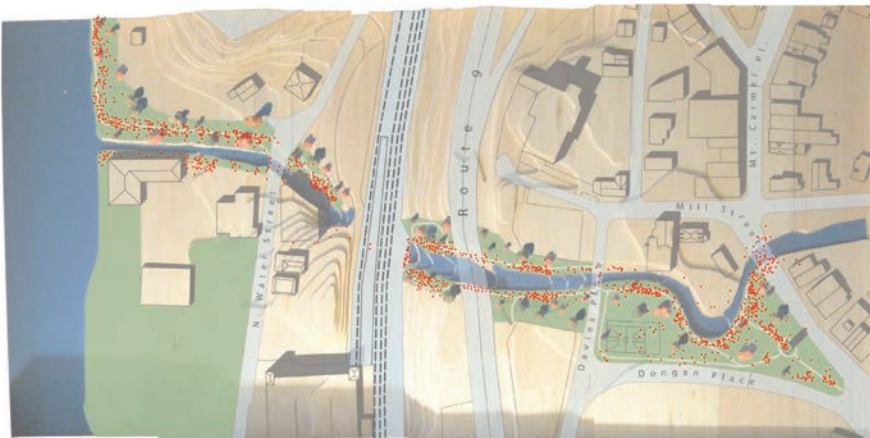
final plan with paths



visitor dot density, current



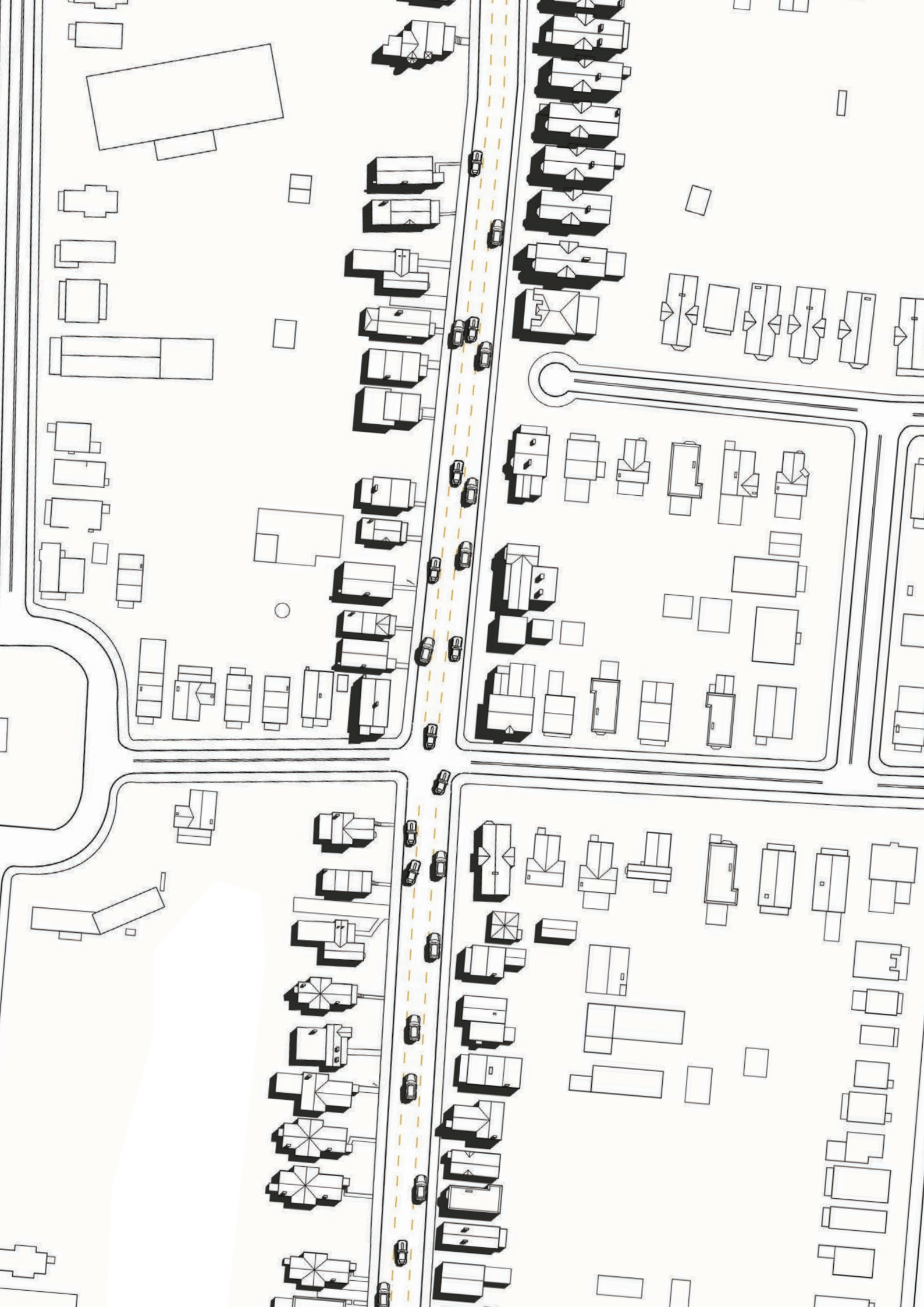
visitor dot density, phase 1



visitor dot density, phase 2



visitor dot density, phase 3



Reclaiming Church Street

“It is not an exaggeration to say that Poughkeepsie is on the threshold of a complete rebirth. The coming year, and the years to follow, will see a physical change so vast as to make our city unrecognizable to those who have known it in the past.”

Victor C. Waryas, Mayor of Poughkeepsie, January 1963

“Well it’s pretty hard... people who own houses here are not gonna step back, you know, they’re not gonna give up, but they’re not gonna change the highway.”

-Dale Simmons, Church Street Resident, March 2011

Standing on the sidewalk at 265 Church Street on calm spring afternoon, I observe a streetscape that in many ways seems quite ordinary. With my back to the roadway and my eyes focused on the colorful wood-frame or brick houses that line the street, some elaborate, some more modest, I am struck by how similar they are to the buildings that line any of the others streets in the surrounding area. Dale Simmons, owner of the building and a local resident, watches over as a new family, a middle-aged couple and their three daughters, move their furniture from a rented truck parked on the sidewalk into their new home. Dale seems quite content, and for good reason. She has rented an apartment that has sat vacant for several months, and happily offers a hand to one of her new tenants as he carries an old television set into the apartment. After we exchange greetings, I ask Dale if she would be willing to answer a few question about the street, to which she eagerly agrees. “How long hav - ” I begin to ask, but my voice is muffled out by a pack of cars and trucks that have just begun to speed down the roadway at 40 miles per hour, making



it difficult for Dale to hear. As the pack of cars speeds on, leaving a temporary moment of quiet before the the next pack zooms by, I begin to ask Dale about life on Church Street, which, as Dale and I both know, is not an ordinary street at all, but is rather quite exceptional – a strange amalgam consisting of one part residential street and one part high-speed federal highway.

“Well, it’s pretty hard,” Dale begins. “As from a landlord’s point of view it’s very hard to rent, because it’s a high traffic area. Children are – people are afraid for their children, so what we have to do is decrease our rent to make it more attractive. You know, but we put soundproof windows in so it’s not as bad, but it’s really not a residential area anymore. People who own houses here are not gonna step back, you know, they’re not gonna give up, but they’re not gonna change the highway.”¹

This conversation with Dale is interrupted every minute or so by another pack of cars, and during these interruptions I turn to observe the streetscape. Church Street may have seemed to be

Dale watches as her new tenants move in.

¹Dale Simmons, personal interview, 25 Mar. 2011.



284 Church Street

quite traditional while I had my back turned, but as I look down the roadway my eyes cross many curious and untraditional elements. To begin with, the roadway is quite expansive, at least one lane wider than any of the other streets in the area. Its three lanes all travel in the same direction, a rare phenomenon for a three-lane residential street. The houses that line the roadway are pushed up close to a narrow sidewalk, and front yards are perhaps half the size as those seen fronting buildings located along other streets in the neighborhood. What is perhaps most startling in that there are no cars parked on the street. On-street parking is not permitted on federal roadways, which explains why the new family has parked their truck directly on the sidewalk rather than at the curb, blocking pedestrian access. Though Church Street may feel like a traditional residential street at certain calm moments during the day, it is not usually so ordinary. It is a federal highway, called U.S. 44/55/ the Eastbound Arterial, a three-lane, high-speed transit artery for automobile drivers moving through the city.

Reclaiming Church Street is a project designed to encourage Church Street residents to contest the dual nature of the street by providing tactics and strategies that may be used to open the street to alternative uses both temporarily and in the long term. Rather than focusing on large-scale strategies for reversing the impact of urban renewal projects citywide, which would likely inflict more inconveniences on residents, the project looks closely at one small stretch of land, a two block section of Church Street between South Hamilton and South Cherry Streets, and on how it may be adapted for and by residents to be safer and more livable.

Site History

Church Street residents did not always have to share their roadway with a federal highway; in fact, the Arterial was not opened to traffic until 1979. Located just two blocks south of Main Street, Church Street was one of the first to be laid out in Poughkeepsie, and formed the city's southern boundary in the latter half of the 18th century. It appears on a map dated 1799, a map that also shows the location of the church after which the street was named as well as the names of some of its earliest residents.² That church is now gone, as are the Smiths and Coones that once lived adjacent to it.

Nearly all of the buildings that line the two-block section that is the focus of this project were constructed between 1885 and 1930, a period of rapid growth during which the city continuously expanded out from its center.³ At the time that these houses were built, Church Street was comparable to other roadways in the neighborhood. It ran one-lane wide, and provided on-street parking along both edges. Houses did not push up against the roadway as they do today, but rather were recessed behind large front yards and wide sidewalks.

In the late 1940s, planners at the New York State Department of Public Works began to examine traffic flows at 28 carefully chosen locations within the city in order to propose suggestions for alleviating automobile congestion. Following months of careful observation, the department presented a document in 1947 entitled the "Report on State Arterial Highway in the Poughkeepsie Urban Area" in which it identified Church Street as one of three roadways in the city on which drivers suffered from particularly large "deficiencies" in traffic capacity. This report, made up of a collection of colorful drawings, rendered photos, and seemingly scientific graphs, was the first of many proposals for the construction of a high-speed East-West transit artery along Church Street. According to the report, this new roadway would cut down projected travel time through the city for the year 1960 from sixteen minutes to just under five, and would be capable of delivering peak hour traffic volumes of up to 2,000 drivers.⁴

²Henry Livingston, "Corporation of the Village of Poughkeepsie, Surveyed May 10th 1799," Vassar College GIS database.

³"Parcel Mapping," Dutchess County Parcel Access, 12 Mar. 2011. <http://geoaccess.co.dutchess.ny.us/parcelaccess/parcelaccess_map.htm>

⁴New York State Department of Public Works, Report on State Arterial Highway in the Poughkeepsie Urban Area, 1947.



NYS Department of Public Works, "Proposed Mid-Hudson Interchange, Poughkeepsie, NY," 1947

In 1953, the city, in conjunction with the state, began to design plans for the construction of a North-South arterial to be carved through the western edge of the city. By 1963, the same year that Mayor Waryas gave his now memorialized "Rebirth" speech, this first project was in well underway. Completed in 1966 at a total cost of \$14 million, the North-South arterial, now known as Route 9, was the largest and most dramatic infrastructure project that city had even undertaken. The project imposed "a heavy cost" on neighborhoods and families: "it bulldozed its way through historic neighborhoods, created a real and a perceptual barrier between the river slope area and the [city's] central core," and resulted in the demolition of 178 buildings, displacing an approximate total of 200 families.⁵ Its construction evokes the attitude of Bob Dylan's "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," a song that was recorded while the project was under construction: "You must leave now take what you need you think we'll last... but whatever you wish to keep you'd better grab it fast."⁶

⁵Flad & Griffen, 211 - 214.

⁶Bob Dylan, "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," Bringing It All Back Home, 1965.

After addressing the city's north-south traffic issues, planners fo-

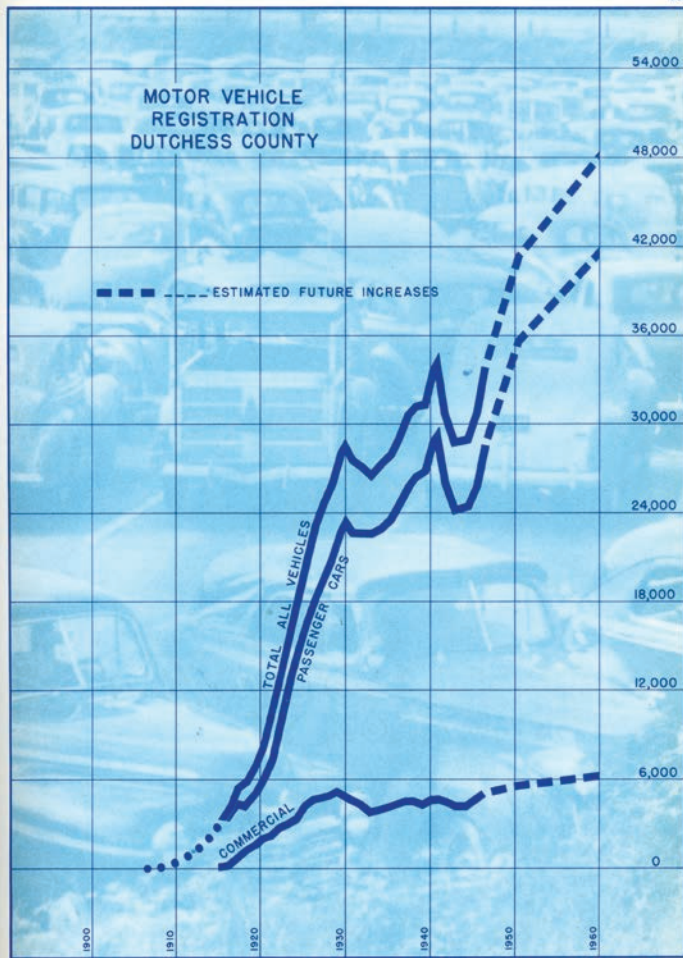
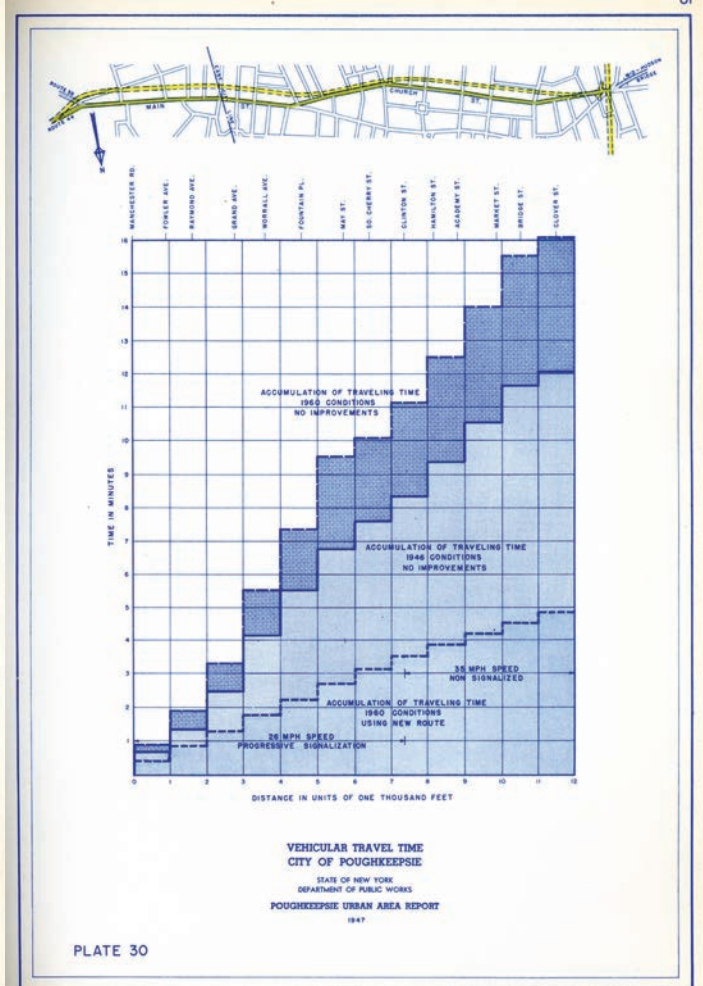
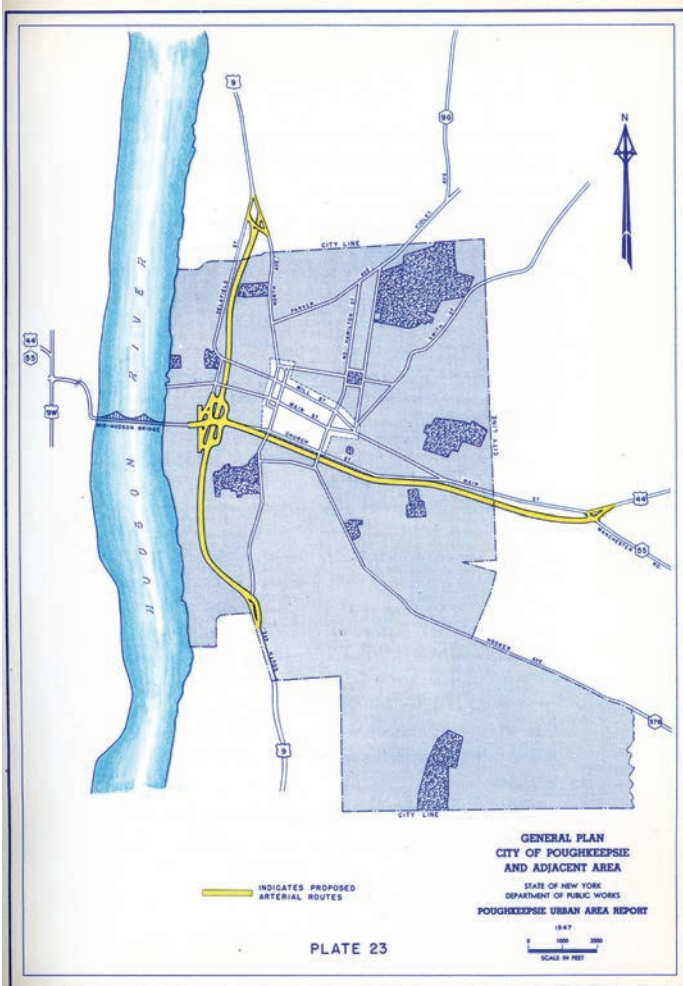


PLATE 7



focused their attention to east-west flows. In 1966 the city planning board presented a proposal for an east-west arterial to cut through the city and connect to the Mid-Hudson Bridge, a project that the board argued would relieve congestion and facilitate movement into the city's center. By 1974 the New York State Department of Transportation had finalized plans and started construction on the two strands of the East-West Arterial, one strand providing westbound movement along Mill Street and the second providing eastbound movement along Church Street. The plans called for the widening of both streets, requiring that residential lots be cut to make room for three lanes of traffic. Ignoring opposition from local residents, city and state officials seized front yards along the two streets and simply paved over them. The Arterial officially opened in 1979, and has provided high-speed travel through the city ever since.⁷

⁷Flad & Griffen, 214.

The construction of the east-west arterial had a profound impact on the city's neighborhoods. According to Flad and Griffen, the project "displaced forty-eight owners and fifty-nine tenants, as well as twenty-six businesses, led to the further loss of the city's tax base, and become a primary factor in the demise of Main Street as a major retail area in the county."⁸ Real estate values along Church Street suffered, and today the houses that line the roadway are mostly rental properties. The conversation with Dale highlights the challenges facing Church Street residents since the construction of the arterial. When asked if she knew many of her neighbors, she responded: "No. When I first bought it years ago, you kinda introduced yourself to the neighborhood... But not really, not really... there's really no space to congregate as a community." When asked why so few people used their front porches, Edgar Rivera, a local resident and a student at Vassar College, commented, "People don't really like to sit in the front. It's such a loud space... I think that most people use their backyards more."⁹ Church Street is "no longer a residential area," at least in the traditional sense, as a result of the high-speed highway.

⁸Flad & Griffen, 214.

⁹Edgar River, personal interview, 18 Mar. 2011 .

Left:
NYS Department of Public Works, 1947. Identifying a problem (Top: "Motor Vehicle Registration, Dutchess County," "Peak Hours Traffic Volumes") and proposing a solution (Bottom: "General Plan," & "Vehicular Travel Time").

Today, the dual nature the roadway serves as a reminder of the attitudes that planners had toward residents during the era of urban renewal. Victor C. Waryas' prediction for Poughkeepsie's "complete rebirth," now memorialized on a plaque in the waterfront park named after him, was no exaggeration. During the period between 1963 to 1979, the City of Poughkeepsie was

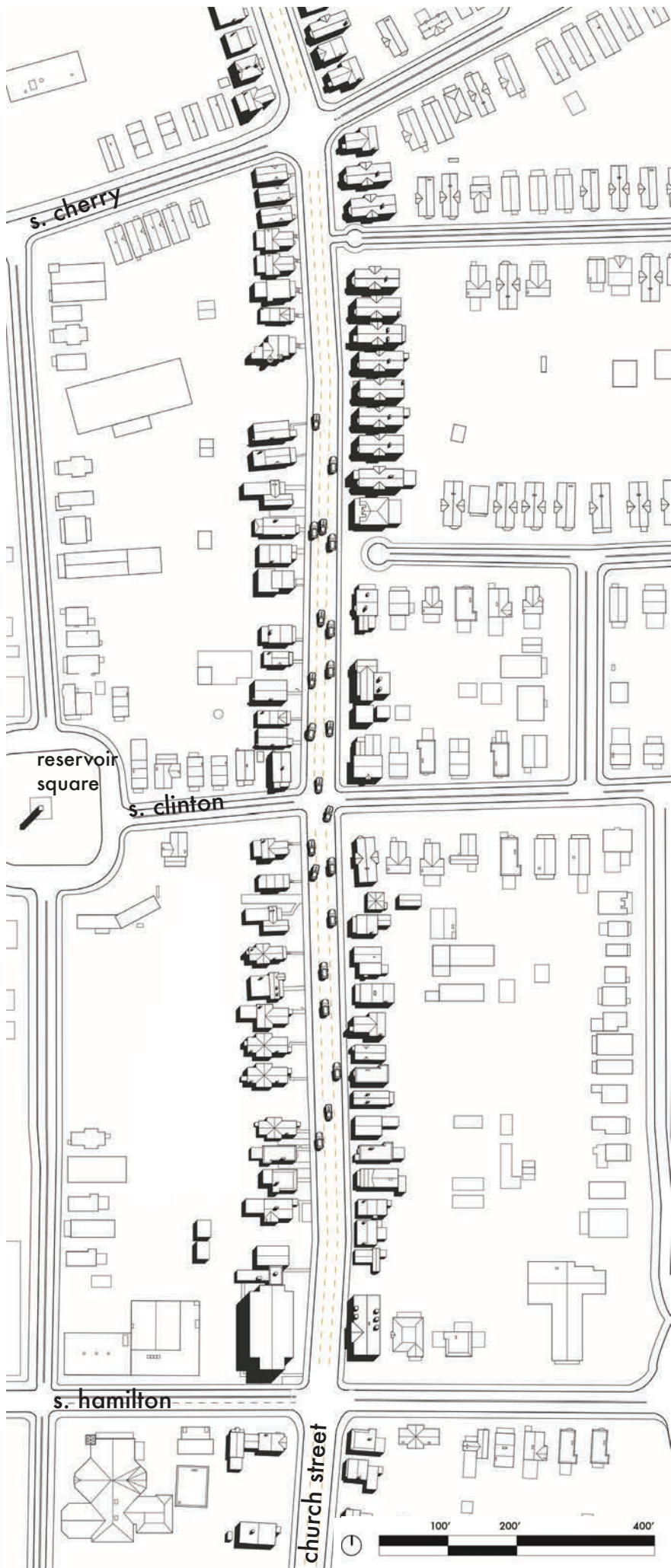
put through profound physical changes that drastically impacted the ways that inhabitants interacted with the streetscape and with each other. The projects that were undertaken in that era affect contemporary residents on an everyday basis, providing efficient transportation for some yet profound inconveniences for others.



A man crossing Church Street in winter



The Arterial under construction, 1977. Image from Flad and Griffen, 212.



church street site plan





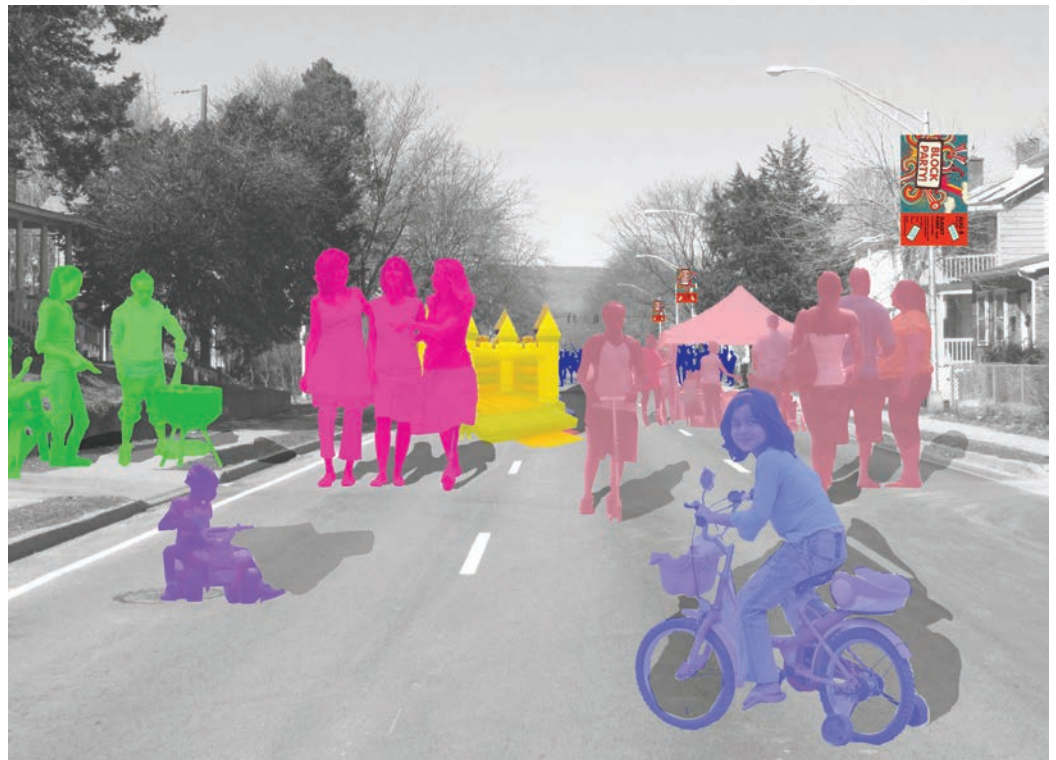


Phase 1: “Seizing the Street”

The first phase of the project involves residents participating both individually and collectively in tactics designed to allow them to temporarily seize space on and along the roadway. The tactics are listed on a poster that is to be placed in mailboxes along Church Street. A total of eleven tactics are described: the Jaywalk, the Critical Mass, the Bourbon Street, the Closed Lane, the Block Party, the Speed Bump, the Kramer, the Janette Sadik-Khan, the Tahrir Square, the Paris '68, and the Tiananmen Square (see poster for descriptions of each tactic). The tactics are intended to be both rhetorical and comical, and constitute all three of Low's distinctive types of protest: manifest, latent, and ritualistic. Though rhetorical, the poster presents the idea that residents have the ability to contest the disruptive nature of the roadway and to temporarily seize space for alternative uses.

On the back of the poster is an axonometric map of the two-block section of Church Street titled “Who are the people in your neighborhood?” It included representations of the 65 houses that line the street, and grid lines on which residents can fill in the names of their neighbors. The map is intended to encourage residents to meet and mix with their neighbors, and thus aims to facilitate the creation of a stronger sense of community on a block that has been made to feel unsafe as a result of the arterial.

church street block party



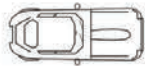
church street, may 1968



Seize the Street!



A Church Street Resident's Guide to Claiming Space Along the Arterial



Poster Designed by
Ethan Fischer
Urban Studies
@ Vassar College



Do you have a lot of contact with your neighbors?

"No. Not really. You know, it's a melting pot of a lot of different types of people, but people mostly go to work, come home, and there's really no space to congregate as a community."
-Dale Simmons,
Church Street Resident

Are you looking for space along Church Street to meet with friends and neighbors, but find it difficult given the 40mph traffic that whizzes down the roadway? If so, this pamphlet provides 11 tactics that will allow you to temporarily seize the street for whatever uses you and your neighbors need. These tactics will temporarily transform the high-speed federal highway into the residential street that it once was.

Disclaimer: Some of these tactics may be illegal and may lead to your arrest. Be careful, but don't give up on the hopes of seizing your street!



The Jaywalk

A common and simple tactic, The Jaywalk requires one or more brave residents to cross the street in front of oncoming traffic. If drivers are attentive enough (fingers crossed!) then they will stop, and the street will momentarily be yours!



The Speed Bump

What do you need to construct your own speed bump? According to one DIY website, all you really need is a high-powered drill, rebar, wire mesh, a whole lot of pre-mixed cement, water, and a few shovels. How hard could it be?

This tactic is very risky but would drastically slow down traffic on Church Street!



The Tahrir Square

Take to the streets! Down with the arterial, down with the arterial!



The "Critical Mass"

A popular tactic among bicycle enthusiasts, the critical mass requires a large group of citizens to coordinate and meet at a specific time and place to "take over" the street and halt normal car traffic. If enough people participate, then drivers will find it impossible to navigate around the group.



The Bourbon Street

Ever drive down Bourbon Street in New Orleans' French Quarter? If you have, you know that hundreds of tourists holding "hand grenades," throwing beads, and drunkenly yelling make it extremely difficult to travel faster than 3 mph. All you need for this tactic is to find a good hand grenade recipe, ignore open container laws, and march down the street like you're Reggie Bush!

The Closed Lane (Image 1)

We see a variation of this tactic in use all the time: a driver pulls over to the side of the road, turns his/her hazard lights on, opens the hood, and pretends to try to fix whatever part has steam coming from it before calling AAA. The lane is becomes unusable to other drivers until the tow truck arrives. You don't even need a busted down car to implement this tactic – all you need to do is pretend.



The Block Party (Image 1)

If residents can have block parties on other streets in the city, why can't the residents of Church Street? Well, lets check our local laws on this one... All you need is some tables and chairs, a makeshift stage for a hot dog eating contest, and a few bouncy slides!

The Kramer

For the Seinfeld lovers out there, this tactic requires a bucket or two of gray paint, a roller, and a slow moving car. Just dip the roller and hold it down over the lane markers as a friend drives down the street. Instead of three high speed lanes, the arterial will be just one in no time! Driver won't know what to do!



The Janette Sadik-Khan (Image 2)

Been to Times Square recently? If so, you've surely noticed something unusual – patio furniture in the middle of the street!

The Paris '68 (Image 3)

All you need for this tactic is a bunch of burned-out cars, some rocks, and perhaps something written by Guy Debord in your back pocket. "La barricade ferme la rue mais ouvre la voie!"



The Tiananmen Square

It only takes one brave person to stop a whole battalion of tanks! Well, in this case, a whole battalion of cars!

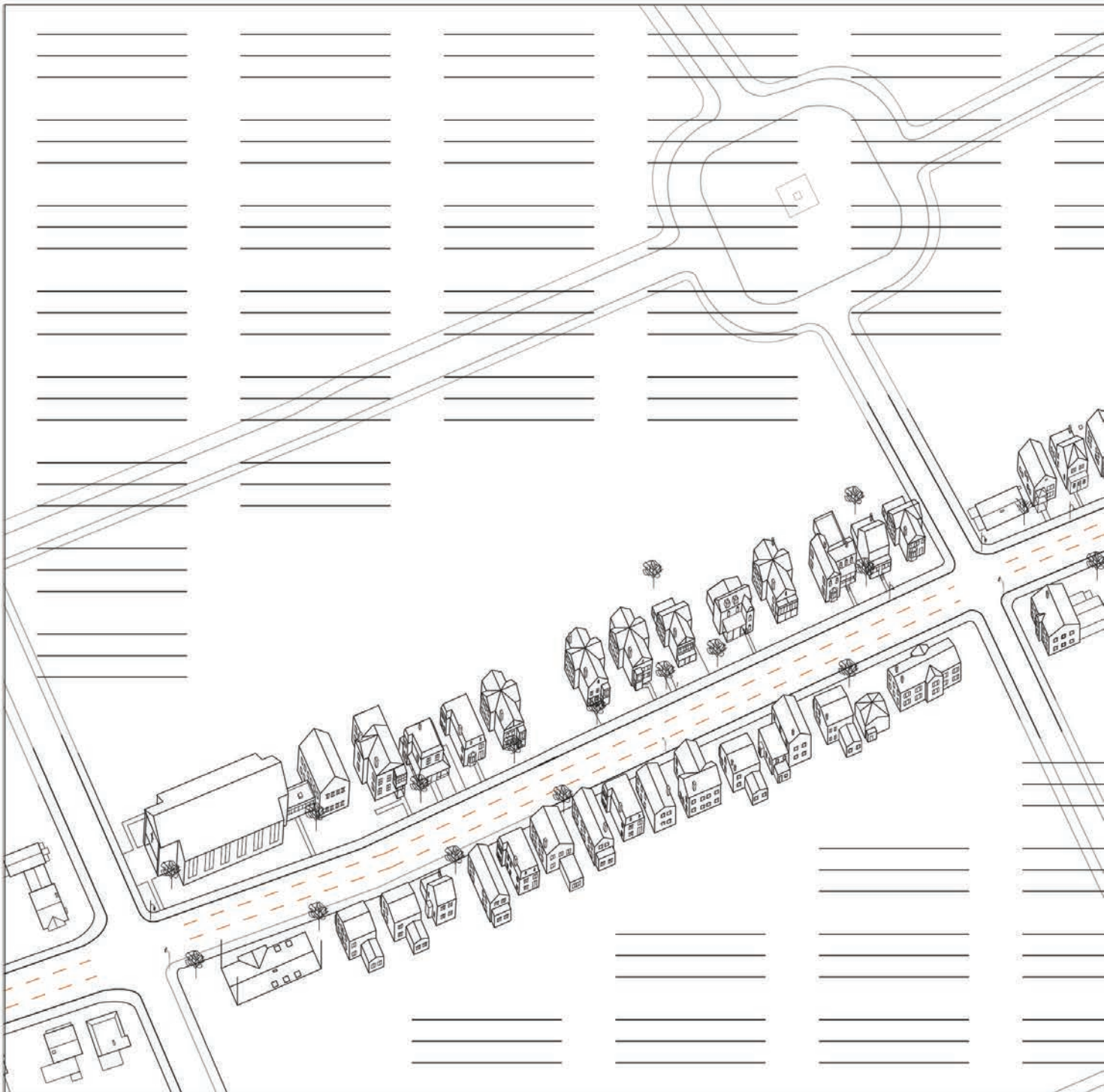
The "Seize the Street" poster

who are the people in your neighborhood?



Fill in the names of your neighbors! Also, draw a picture between the lines of Cherry Street for the next hundred days. You can meet and greet your neighbors, or just see them. This entire neighborhood is yours to explore. You can meet some of the people who live in the houses. You can have a barbecue.

To the right of the map, a list of names is provided for neighbors. The map shows how the neighborhood is laid out. It is a grid of streets with a central area that is not a grid. The map is a top-down view of a neighborhood with a grid of streets and a central area that is not a grid. The map is a top-down view of a neighborhood with a grid of streets and a central area that is not a grid.



spaces below with the
 your Church Street neigh-
 ng this two block stretch
 S. Hamilton Street and S.
 reet are 65 buildings and
 s of neighbors for you to
 hang out with. Fill out
 e poster, and you'll have
 ebody from each of the 65
 You'll be jumping from
 e to barbeque in no time!

ght is an example that
 ow you can fill out the
 's easy! All you need to do
 e and start meeting the
 your neighborhood!

265. *Diana Taylor*

Michael Bloomberg

267. *Roger R. Rothenberg*

Patricia Rothenberg

Andrew Rothenberg

269. *Dale Simmons*

Gregory Simmons



Who Are the
 People in Your
 Neighborhood?

Phase 2: “The Church Street Canopy”

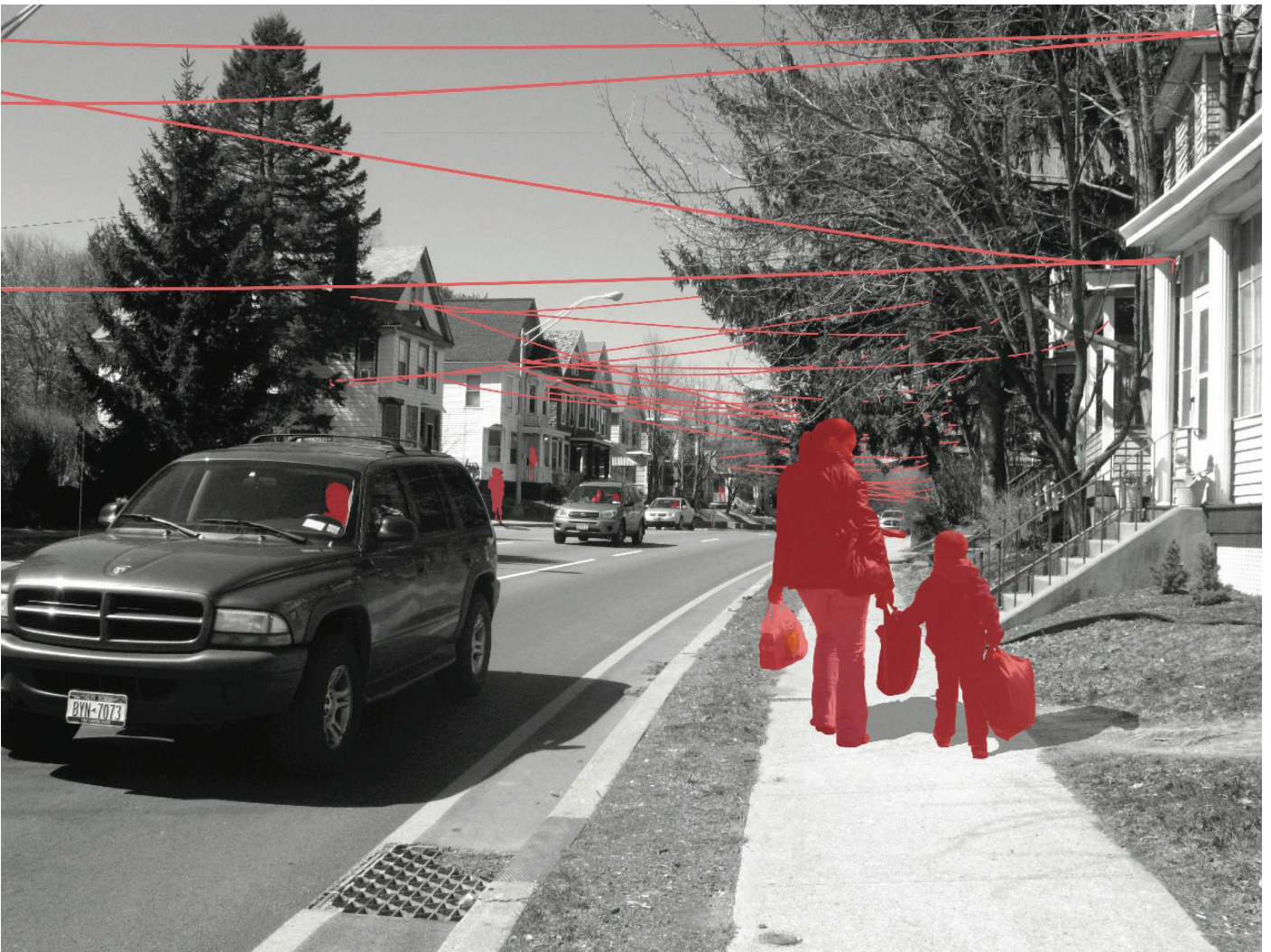
The Church Street Canopy Project is a public art installation to be constructed above Church Street / U.S.55. The project intends to highlight the dual nature of the roadway, referred to by residents as both Church Street and the Eastbound Arterial, and the effects of this duality on the neighborhood. Once known only as Church Street, the roadway took on a new name and new meanings for residents in the 1970s after its transformation from a traditional residential street into a three-lane federal highway. Presently, the hundreds of cars that speed down the street each day have made it difficult for residents who inhabit the dozens of single and multi-family homes along the roadway to meet and interact with each other. Residents on one side of the street find it difficult to maintain relationships with those living on the other side, as it requires both good timing and courage to cross the three lanes of high-speed traffic. Inspired in part by the holiday street banners that bring color to public streets in various neighborhoods in New York City, the project aims to encourage residents to participate individually and collectively in the construction of the canopy. When completed, the canopy will stand as a strong visual reminder to drivers traveling on the Arterial that hundreds of residents call the roadway home.

canopy project rendering

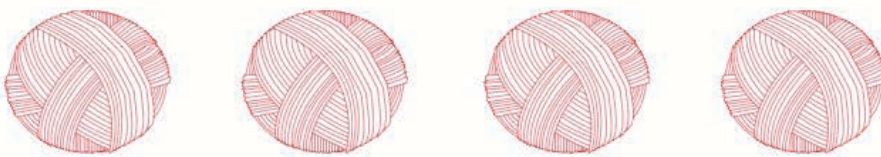
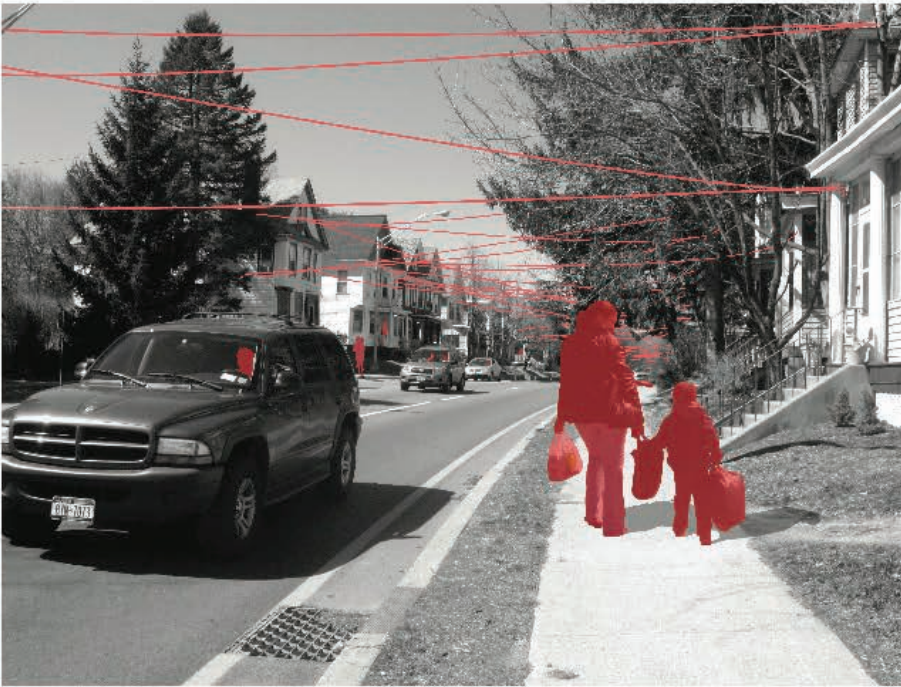
The canopy will be made out of strands of red yarn that will be hung on houses, trees, and streetlights along Church Street. Balls of yarn will be left at six locations along the roadway to be used by you, the residents of Church, to help construct the canopy. The installation of the canopy requires five easy steps to be repeated hundreds of times, once or twice by each resident. The five steps are:

1. Introduce yourself to the neighbors who live directly across from you. Ask if they'd be interested in participating with you.

2. Grab a ball of yarn from one of the six pedestals located on Church Street between South Hamilton and South Cherry Streets.
3. Wait for traffic to pass. Toss the ball of yarn across the roadway to your neighbor. Make sure to hang on to one end of the thread!
4. Tie the end to something high up (for example: a second story window, a tree branch, or a streetlight).
5. Talk to your other neighbors and encourage them to participate as well!

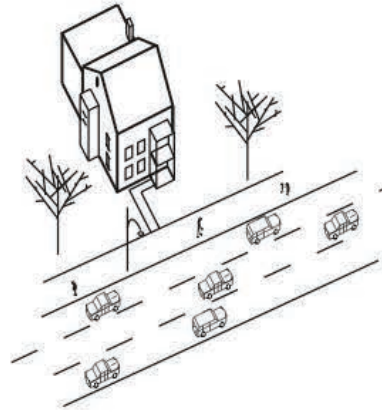


the church street canopy project



a public art installation
to be constructed above the
arterial by
church street residents

project co
ethan
urban s
vassar
spring



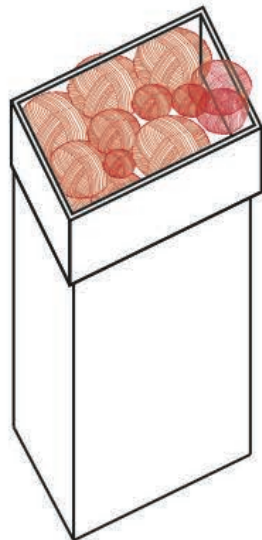
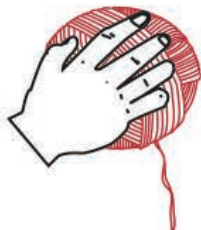
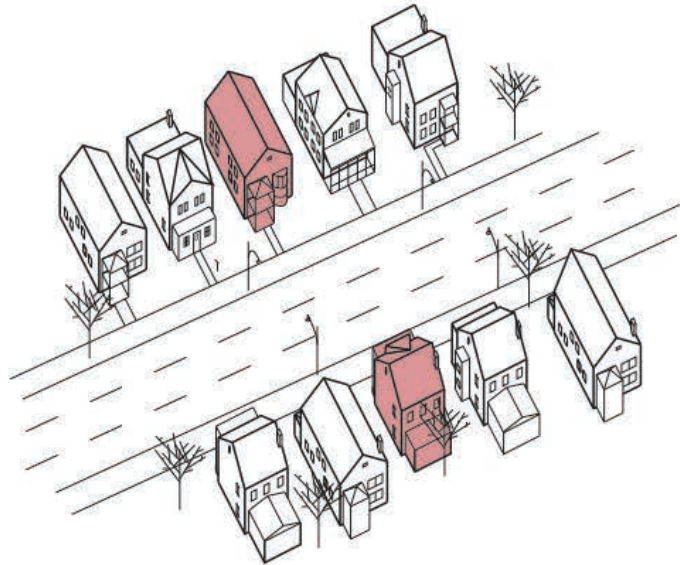
the church street canopy project is a public art installation to be constructed above church street / U.S.55 in poughkeepsie, ny. the project intends to highlight the dual nature of the roadway, which is referred to by residents as both church street and the easbound arterial, and how this duality has affected the neighborhood. once known only as church street, the roadway took on a new name and new meanings for residents in the 1970s when it was transformed from a traditional residential street into a three-lane federal highway. today, residents who inhabit the dozens of single and multi-family homes that line the roadway are limited by the hundreds of cars that speed past their homes each day. residents on one side of the street find it difficult to maintain relationships with those living on the other side, as it requires both good timing and courage to cross. inspired in part by the holiday street banners that bring color to public streets in various neighborhoods in new york city, the church street canopy project aims to encourage residents to participate individually and collectively in constructing the canopy. when completed, the canopy wil stand as a strong visual reminder to drivers traveling on the arterial that hundreds of residents call the roadway home.

conceived by
fischer
studies @
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building the church street canopy

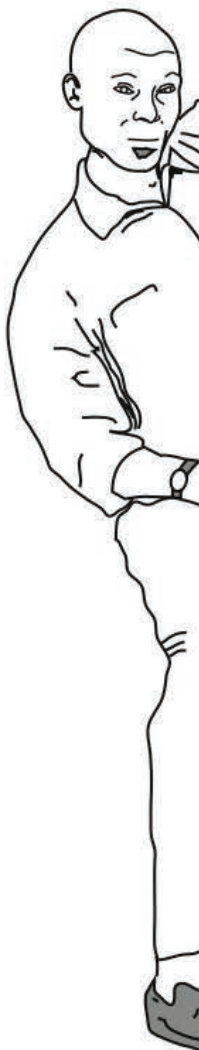
five easy steps

1. Introduce yourself to the neighbors who live directly across from you. Ask if they'd be interested in participating with you.



2. Grab a ball of yarn from one of the six pedestals located on Church Street between S. Hamilton and S. Cherry Streets

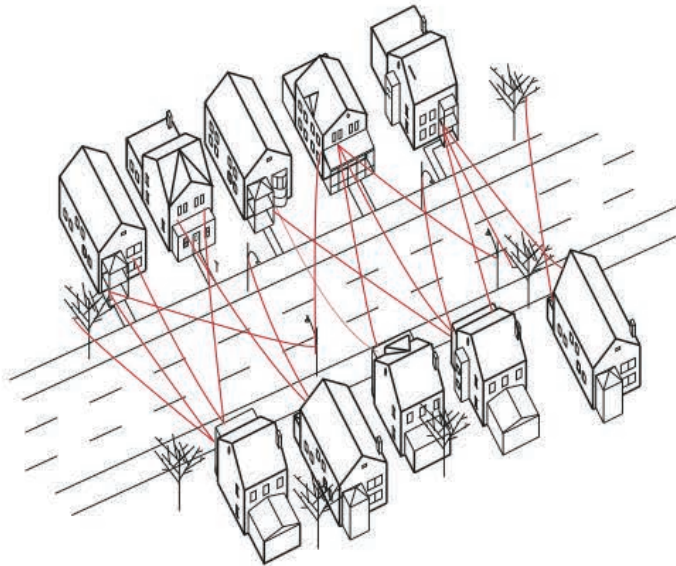
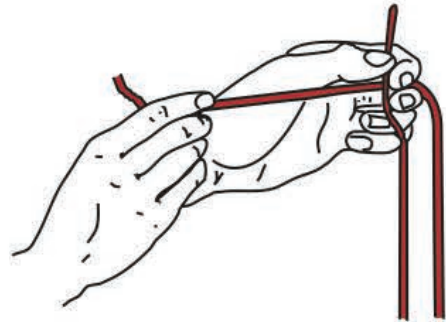
3. Wait for traffic to clear the roadway to ensure to hang



oy



4.
Tie the end to something high up (say, a second story window, a tree branch, or a light pole).



ffric to pass. Toss
varn across the
your neighbor. Make
g one end of the thread!

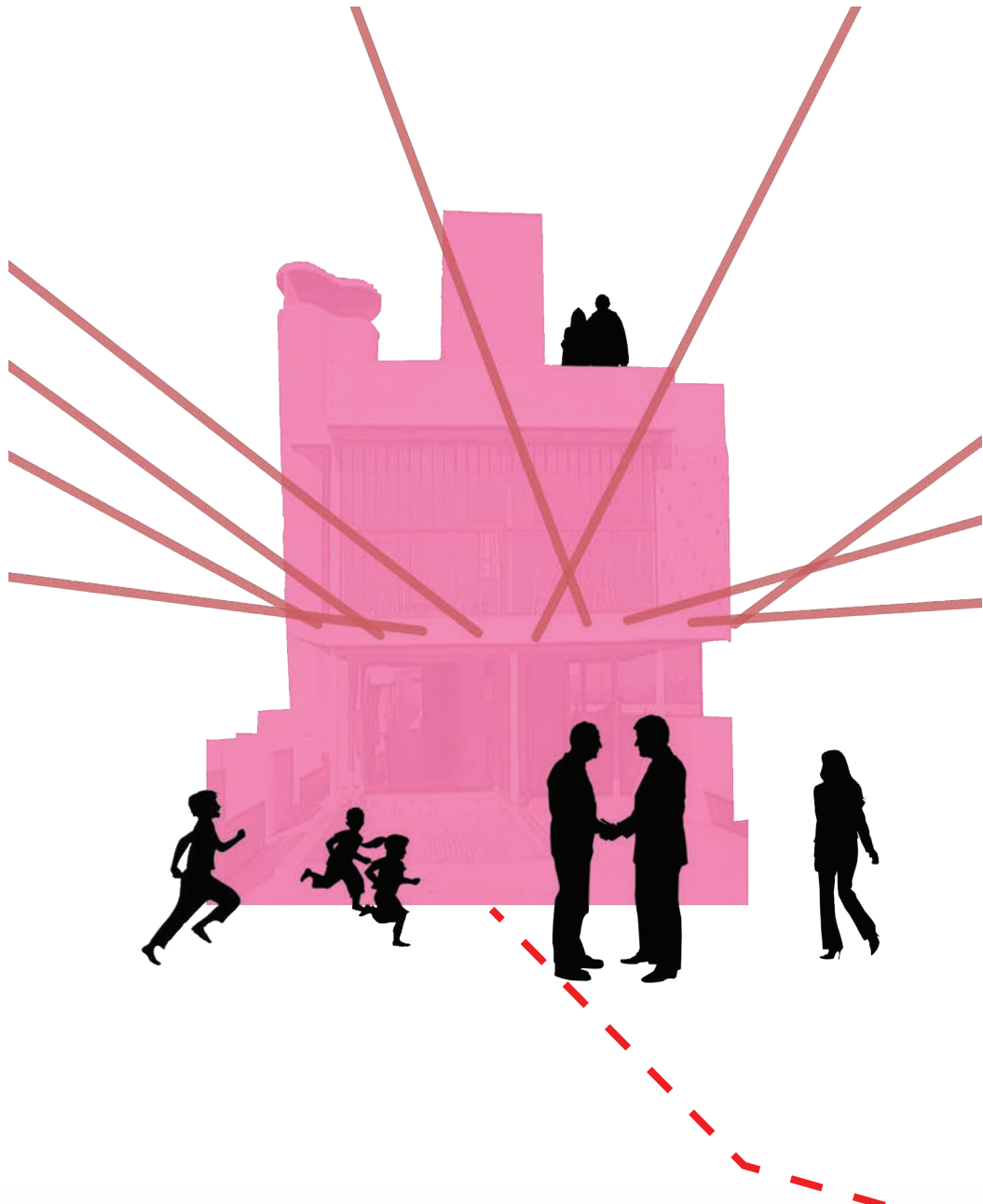
5. Ask other neighbors to participate as well!

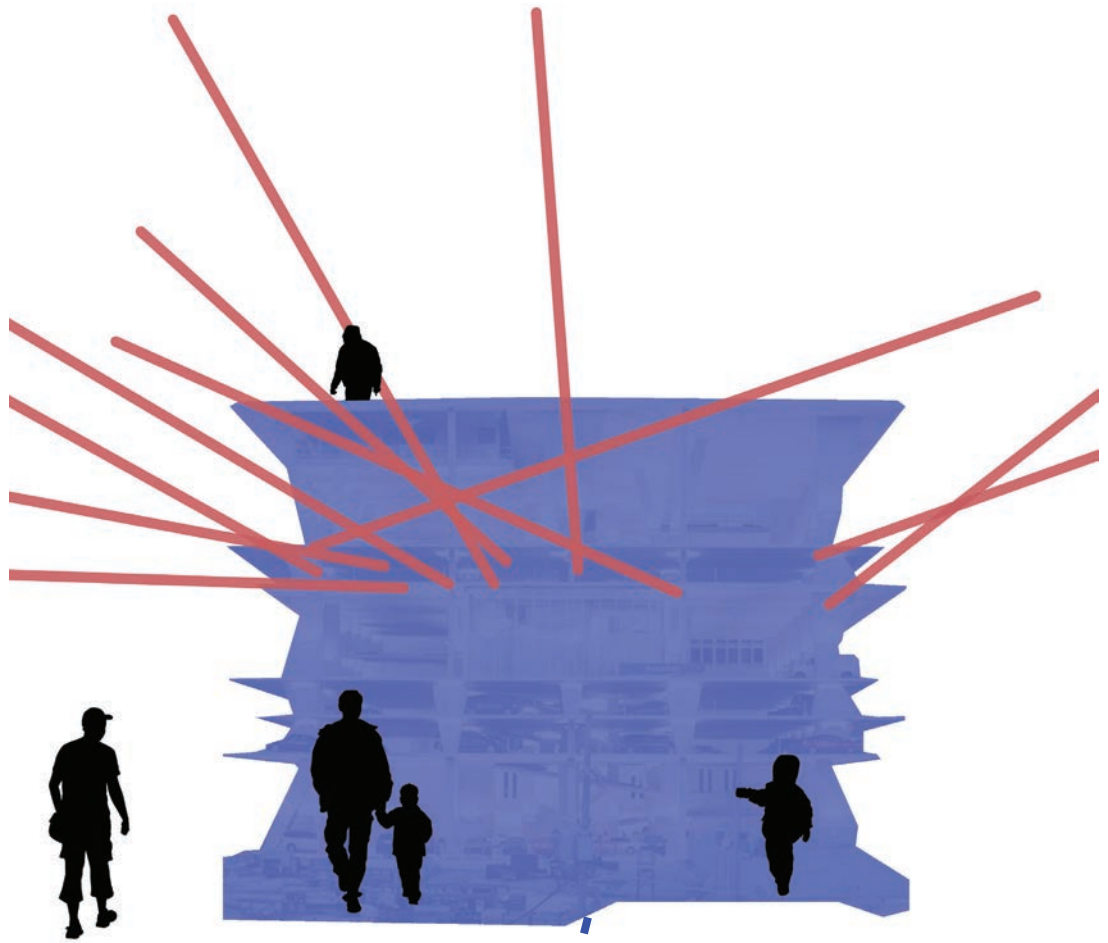
Phase 3: “The Municipal Living Rooms”

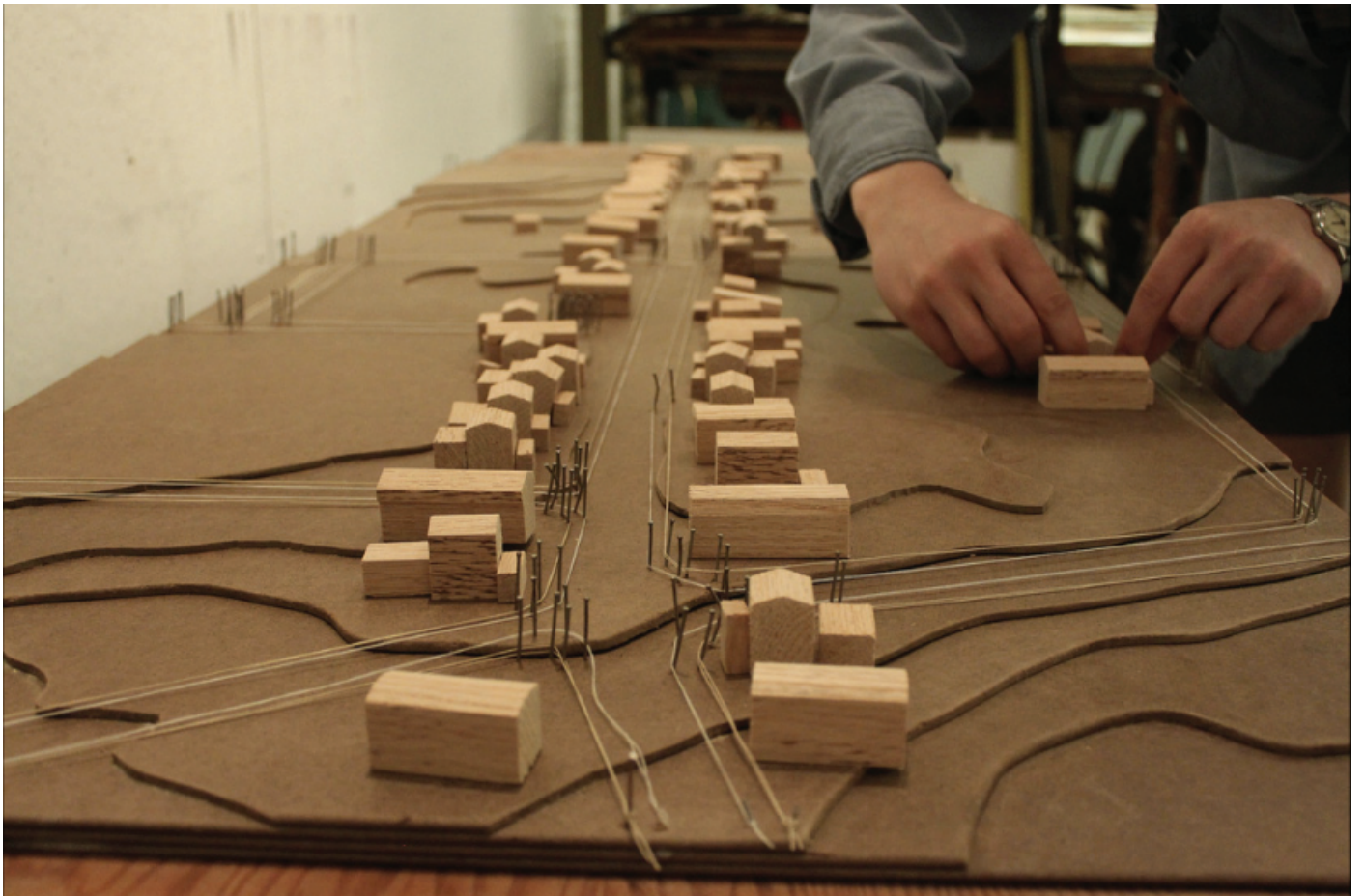
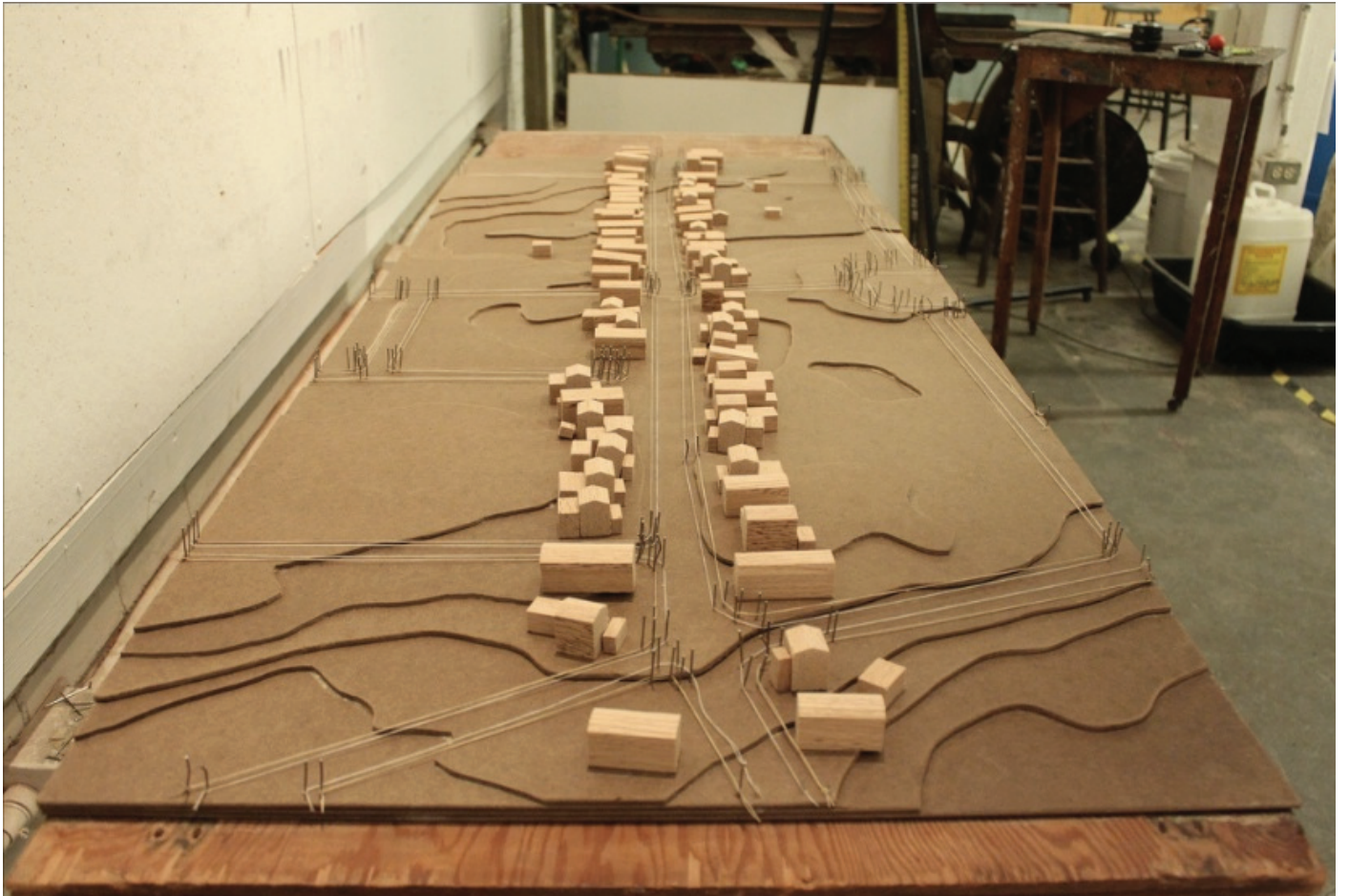
The paving of the arterial over Church Street arguably left one positive benefit for residents in its wake, though this benefit has not yet been realized. In order to make up for the parking spaces taken from the street by the new highway, the city purchased approximately one parcel per block, razed the buildings on each site, and constructed a series of municipal parking lots on top of them. These new lots, though perhaps not so great for those residents who once inhabited the parcels before they were acquired, can be seen as new public spaces within the city.

There are two municipal lots located on Church Street between S. Hamilton and S. Cherry Streets. Both are currently underused; at any point in the day, no more than half of each lot is filled. Responding to the perceived lack of space for residents to congregate as a community, this phase calls for the lots to be readapted into “Municipal Living Rooms,” which will provide residents with two centralized locations to meet and interact with each other. The Living Rooms will be designed using input from residents, and will likely include amenities such as parking, community rooms, a kitchen, and open-air play spaces.











Afterword

Mona Domosh, "Those 'Gorgeous Incongruities': Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Jun., 1998: 212.

"Just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do thousands upon thousands of individual acts of insubordination and evasion create a political or economic barrier reef of their own. There is rarely any dramatic confrontation, any moment that is particularly newsworthy. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not to the vast aggregation of petty acts that made it possible."

On a Sunday afternoon in the spring of 2011, just days after finishing the second project, I set out on a ride through Poughkeepsie to visit the two sites that had been the focus of several months of study. I thought of it as something of a celebration, a time to visit the sites without a camera, sketchpad, or audio recorder, and as an opportunity to reflect on the work I had finished.

As I made my first turn and slid passed homes on Grand Avenue, I was struck by a feeling that the city was awakening from months of hibernation after the winter season melted away. People appeared in front of their homes, some tending their lawns, others playing, and many searching through old objects at an impressively large yard sale. These views filled me with a feeling of apprehension rather than excitement. I doubted that I would witness anything comparable at the Fall Kill or on the sidewalks of Church Street.

As I snaked my way through the eastern edge of the city and turned on to the westbound arterial, my mind became filled with images from the "Report on State Arterial Highway in the Poughkeepsie Urban Area." I thought

"No Playing in City Street, Sec. 14-23," Roosevelt Avenue & W. Maple Street.

about the meticulous work that the state had done: its scientific growth projections, its traffic flow graphs, and its impressive maps depicting the wide yellow lines of the new arterials superimposed on the narrow blue street grid. Such a tight approach, so seemingly practical. First identify large-scale problems, then plan solutions. That is how you improve the city.

By the time I turned the corner at North Hamilton Street to visit a bridge overlooking the Fall Kill, I was no longer in a celebratory mood. My mind was busy working out new maps and diagrams – perhaps one plotting population density around the Fall Kill, or another displaying hourly traffic flows on Church Street. I would have to cut my ride short and head back to the studio to tighten up my projects. Finished? No. How could I have even thought that?

I reached the bridge on North Hamilton Street Bridge and peered over the ledge at the creek below. To my surprise, the Fall Kill's water was traveling quickly, no longer stagnant as I had observed months earlier, a phenomenon that I attributed to the recent rainfall. The layer of garbage had been cleaned away by flows, save for a few collections trapped behind lodged pieces of metal. I looked over my shoulder and saw a couple of landscapers digging and planting seeds along the stone embankment that contained the creek. The woman whose side lawn they were working in stood on her porch watching over them, perhaps imagining herself sitting on top of the stone wall next to the flowers that would soon rise from the soil. On the other side of the street an old man, jacket in hand, walked along the creek in an abandoned parking lot that had on its entrance a sign reading "No Trespassing."

I turned my bike around and began to head south, past Main Street, to the mutational highway/residential site that is Church Street. As I reached the roadway and looked to my right, I noticed a group of people in the distance standing on the sidewalk and facing the oncoming traffic. I got closer and saw that there were about ten people, some adults, some children, holding signs up

for drivers to read. Though I didn't necessarily sympathize with their political views, I was encouraged by the presence. Perhaps they weren't the only people standing on Church Street's sidewalks.

As I approached the cul-de-sac formed at the end of Virginia Avenue, an avenue that connected to Church Street before the construction of the arterial, I stopped to observe three young children riding their bikes around the circular dead end. Their mother stood in the center of the cul-de-sac, watching over as they rode around her. As I turned to the old brick house behind me, I observed an elderly couple sitting on their porch, looking inquisitively down at me. I decided that it was time for me to move – I didn't want anybody to feel like I was intruding. Before heading on I took one last look toward the cul-de-sac. As I turned I saw that the eldest of the three children heading toward me. He peered down to see that no traffic was coming, jumped the curb, and sped out in my direction. Just before reaching the center of the street, he stopped and paused for a moment with his eyes fixed on me before letting out a wide and mischievous grin. His mother called after him and the smile broke. He jerked his bike around and pedaling back to the curb. For that short moment, that young kid stood in the center of Church Street looking like he owned the place, and I biked on laughing to myself.

I never did get back into the studio to make those maps. A few days later, however, I got into my car and drove to a few tourist centers in the area where I left a few dozen copies of the Fall Kill pamphlet. Maybe some adventurous or loony types will find them and give the instructions a shot. On my way back from dropping them off, I stopped at 265 Church Street, the same building where I had met Dale months before. I rang the bell, but nobody answered. After a moment's hesitation, I decided to leave a stack of "Seize Church Street" posters on her doorstep. Maybe she'll make good use of them.

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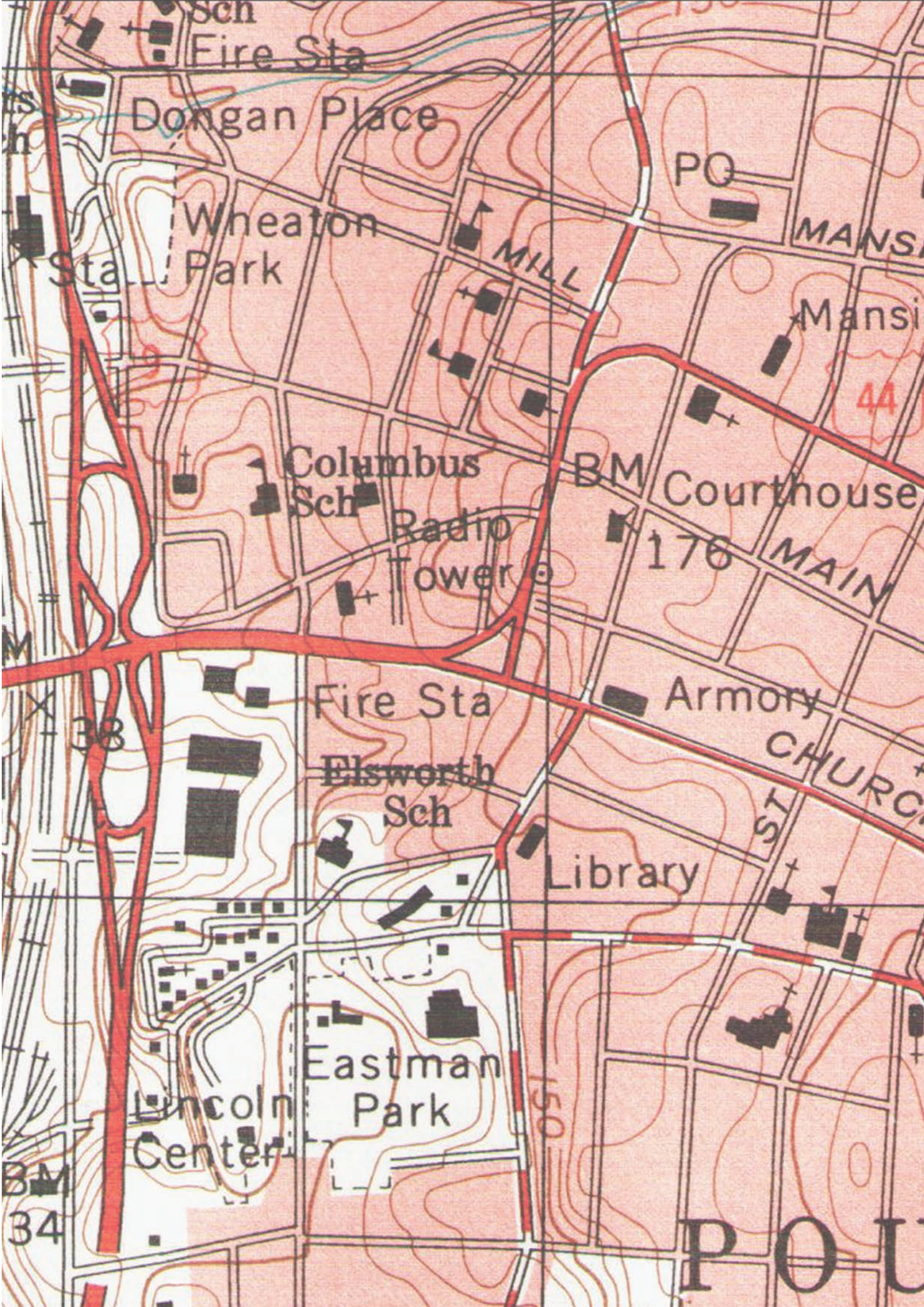
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