DREAM PLAY BUILD

HANDS-ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR ENDURING SPACES AND PLACES

JAMES ROJAS AND JOHN KAMP
ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR HANDS AND SENSES IN CREATING A MORE WALKABLE WORLD
1. BRIEF BACKGROUND ABOUT OURSELVES/WORK
OVERVIEW

2. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WORKING WITH OUR HANDS AND SENSES
OVERVIEW

3. PROJECT PROFILES / HOW WE DO IT
4. Q AND A

OVERVIEW
1. BACKGROUND

Both saw how community engagement wasn’t working / problems with top-down design / initially developed new ways through artmaking.
SINCE THEN, 1,000s of WORKSHOPS, SENSORY-BASED WALKING TOURS, WEED WALKABOUTS, POP-UP MODELS, PUBLIC-SPACE PROTOTYPING, AND MORE
ALL WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR HANDS AND SENSES TO DREAM UP, BUILD, AND CREATE A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL
2. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR HANDS AND SENSES
WHY THROUGH THE HANDS AND SENSES?
THE TALKING BRAIN IS, LOOSELY SPEAKING, THE PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX
KEEPS US FOCUSED ON THE HERE AND NOW AND (PERCEIVED) NEEDS FOR SURVIVAL.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TYPICALLY INVOLVES LANGUAGE AND SPEAKING, FIRING UP THE SELFISH/SURVIVAL-FOCUSED PART OF OUR BRAINS.
THIS IS LARGELY WHY PEOPLE SAY SIMILAR THINGS AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND FOCUS LARGELY ON NEGATIVES.
“MORE PARKING!”
“LESS TRAFFIC!”
“NO DENSITY!”
TALK-BASED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GIVES US THE FALSE SENSE THAT PEOPLE DON’T HAVE IDEAS BEYOND THESE TYPICAL CONCERNS.
IT ALSO FAVORS THOSE WHO ARE LESS AFRAID OF CONFRONTATION AND WHO ARE COMFORTABLE WITH PUBLIC SPEAKING.
THIS FURTHER SKEWS OUTCOMES AS ONLY CERTAIN KINDS OF PEOPLE END UP SPEAKING.
AS SUCH, OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO GET PEOPLE OUT OF SURVIVAL MODE SO THAT THEY CAN BE EXPANSIVE WITH THEIR THINKING.
WORKING WITH OUR HANDS AND ENGAGING OUR SENSES DOES JUST THAT.
WE FIRE UP DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR BRAIN, NOT JUST THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE.
AND THEN CAN SINK INTO A STATE OF PLAY.
WE CAN BE ASPIRATIONAL AND COLLABORATIVE
BUILD YOUR IDEAL DIRIDON STATION AREA

USE THE OBJECTS ON THE MODEL TO DESIGN...

A PLACE THAT LOOKS, FEELS, AND SOUNDS COOL!

EVENT BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

SAN JOSE JAZZ

PLACE IT! INTERACTIVE PLANNING

TAP INTO OUR CORE VALUES.
EQUITY WITHOUT SAYING EQUITY.
AND TAP INTO OUR SENSORY KNOWLEDGE OF SPACE.
3. PROJECT PROFILES / HOW WE DO IT
My favorite place in my neighborhood is this sidewalk.
USING WALKING AS A TOOL FOR SPARKING PEOPLE’S CREATIVITY
EXPLORING 63RD STREET WITH YOUR SENSES
63RD RUNS EAST-WEST THROUGH OAKLAND, BERKELEY, AND EMERYVILLE
IT IS NOT A MAIN THOROUGHFARE; ITS CHARACTER CHANGES IMMENSELY THROUGHOUT ITS LENGTH, AND THUS IT IS A PERFECT STREET FOR A SENSORY-BASED WALKING TOUR
ONE GROUP STARTED AT ONE END, ONE AT THE OTHER
WALKED TOWARD EACH OTHER WHILE EXPLORING THE STREET WITH OUR SENSES
INSTEAD OF ONE GUIDE, EVERYONE’S SENSES ARE THE GUIDE.
IN THE PROCESS, PEOPLE GET INTO A SENSING STATE - THE PERFECT SPACE TO BE IN FOR BEING CREATIVE
CONVERGED ON AN ARTSPACE DEDICATED TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MACHINALOCI
THERE PEOPLE BUILT MODELS OF A REDESIGNED 63RD STREET
THERE PEOPLE BUILT MODELS OF A REDESIGNED 63RD STREET
THEIR MODELS WERE INFUSED WITH THEIR SENSORY IMPRESSIONS FROM THE WALK
PEOPLE BUILT TREEHOUSES, WATERWAYS DOWN THOROUGHFARES, FIGURED OUT HOW TO CREATIVELY MAKE CERTAIN CROSSINGS FUN TO WALK ACROSS AND NOT SCARY, ETC.
THESE WALKING TOURS CAN ACTUALLY BE DONE VIRTUALLY AS WELL.

My favorite place in my neighborhood is this sidewalk.
DURING THE PANDEMIC, WE TRANSLATED THE MODEL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS AND SENSORY-BASED EXPLORATIONS INTO A VIRTUAL FORMAT

My favorite place in my neighborhood is this sidewalk.
WINTER OF 2021 WE WERE APPROACHED BY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY TO DEVELOP A SERIES OF ONLINE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR A LOWER-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD IN LONG BEACH
SERVED AS A CATALYST FOR LOBBYING AND ORGANIZING TO ADVOCATE FOR STATION

PEOPLE WENT TO PLACES THEY LOVE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD AND FILMED THEMSELVES TALKING ABOUT WHY THEY LOVED THEM.

My favorite place in my neighborhood is this sidewalk.
WE THEN SPLICED THE VIDEOS TOGETHER INTO A VIRTUAL WALKING “TOUR,” WHICH WE WATCHED ONLINE
PEOPLE THEN BUILT MODELS OF THEIR IDEAL WASHINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD.
USED HANDS-ON METHODS TO TRAIN THE RESIDENTS IN HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR PLANNING IDEAS AND STRATEGICALLY ENGAGE WITH PLANNING PROCESSES.

AVENUES EXPLORED

LONG-RANGE PLANNING
For exploring the creation of a plaza zone and other zones that could include many of the creative ideas that have emerged.

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY
For creating a tree-planting and maintenance plan and strategy for the neighborhood; learn about how to create thriving spaces for more plants and wildlife.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
For consulting about organizing larger campaigns and involving more people.

COUNCIL OFFICE
For establishing relationships in support of projects, lines of communication, perspective, strategies; establishing the Anaheim Corridor as a learning corridor.

PARKS AND REC
For maintaining new green/gathering spaces and creating/promoting cultural programming for the spaces.

OTHER RESIDENTS
For uniting people within the Washington Neighborhood around these projects; engaging with more people; organizing the community to promote safety; for residents being involved in and leading their own model-building workshops.
APPLIED FOR A GRANT TO FUND A PLAZA PROTOTYPING EVENT WHERE RESIDENTS COULD TEST OUT THEIR IDEAS FROM THEIR AT-HOME MODELS IN REAL TIME AND SPACE
THEY ALSO GOT TO CREATE MOCK BIKE/PED CONNECTIONS TO THE SPACE
WE DOCUMENTED THE PROCESS AND ALSO TRAINED PARTICIPANTS IN HOW TO LEAD THEIR OWN MODEL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS.
THEY NOW HAVE THE PLANNING, DESIGN, AND ADVOCACY TOOLS FOR MAKING THEIR DREAMS FOR A PLAZA COME TO LIFE.
PROJECT 2: THE SOUTH COLTON LIVABLE CORRIDOR PLAN

SOUTH COLTON LIVABLE CORRIDOR PLAN
Strategies for Community Resilience and Upliftment
A YEAR-LONG PROJECT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SOUTH COLTON IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SOUTH COLTON HAS SUFFERED FROM YEARS OF PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO THE REST OF THE CITY AND REGION.
INCLUDING THE CITY TRANSFORMING ONE OF SOUTH COLTON’S MAIN STREETS INTO A TRUCKING ROUTE.
IN AN EXIT INTERVIEW FOR THE BOOK, LONGB TIME RESIDENT ADRIAN CHAVEZ SAID OF THE SOUTH COLTON OF TODAY, “EVERYBODY DRIVES. EVEN IF IT’S ONE BLOCK. NOBODY WALKS.”
WOULD ULTIMATELY RESULT IN PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES, DESIGNS, DRAWINGS, AND A PLANNING DOCUMENT - THE LIVABLE CORRIDOR PLAN
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RENDERING BY GAURAV SRIVASTAVA
UNLIKE TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, WE ENGAGED THE RESIDENTS THROUGH THEIR HANDS AND SENSES TO GENERATE CREATIVE IDEAS FOR HOW TO BETTER THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
THESE EVENTS INCLUDED A HANDS-ON MODEL-BUILDING WORKSHOP, A SENSORY-BASED WALKING TOUR, AND A POP-UP MODEL
THE HANDS-ON AND SENSORY-BASED NATURE OF THE ENGAGEMENT UNEARTHED INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT COULD NOT HAVE EMERGED THROUGH, SAY, A SURVEY.
LED TO A NEW AND GROUNDBREAKING KIND OF DESIGN OVERLAY WHERE THE RESIDENTS PLAYED JUST AS MUCH A ROLE IN IT AS THE DESIGNERS.
UNCOVERED A DIY URBANISM - HOW RESIDENTS WERE TAKING WALKABILITY AND ENHANCING THE PUBLIC REALM INTO THEIR OWN HANDS
DIY URBANISM -
DIY URBANISM
FLIPPING THE SCRIPT: WE PLANNERS/DESIGNERS LEARNED AS MUCH FROM THE RESIDENTS ABOUT IMPROVING THE PUBLIC REALM AND WALKABILITY AS THEY DID FROM US.
TREATING THE STREET ITSELF AS A PLAZA AND EXTENSION OF THE FRONT YARD.
THE STREET AS A TRANSACTIONAL SPACE - SIMPLY A MEANS OF SHUTTLING CARS FROM POINT A TO B.

THE STREET AS A SPACE THAT CREATES A RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS USERS.
RATHER THAN FORBID THESE KINDS OF DIY INTERVENTIONS IN THE STREET, SIDEWALK, AND PARKWAY, THE RESULTING PLAN ENCOURAGED THEM.
SAMPLE STREET SECTION ENCOURAGING DIY INTERVENTIONS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY.
HIRED BY THE SAFE ROUTES PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE A SET OF TRAINING TOOLS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH IN URBAN DESIGN
A PLACE IT! GUIDE TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

How to engage students, families, and staff of all backgrounds in imagining, designing, and building more walkable and roll-able routes to school
ONE TOOL WE WANTED TO CREATE WAS A VIDEO SHOWING HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE KIDS IN...
1. EXPLORING STREETS WITH THEIR SENSES
2. BUILDING MODELS OF THEIR IDEAL STREETS FOR WALKING AND ROLLING

THESE ARE THE CARS
THE KIDS WERE THE PERFECT AGE FOR THE PROJECT, AS THEY WERE VERY UNFILTERED WITH WHAT THEY SAID.

THESE ARE THE CARS
MAXIMUM
WALK
AND
ROLL
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SMART
THANK YOU / Q AND A