

ACSA Collaborative Practice Award

2016-2017 Winner: Submission Materials

Dotte Agency

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University of Kansas



DOTTE AGENCY

Connecting Communities and Tackling Problems through Design

Dotte Agency is a university-led design hub that fosters interprofessional collaboration amongst students and faculty of architecture, design, business, and public health in order to improve food access and physical activity in an underserved urban community. This approach has the potential to re-imagine how universities and communities can work together as partners in health, and help to train students and faculty willing and able to emerge from silos in order to tackle wicked problems in the built environment. From targeted improvements to civic infrastructure (parks, streets, bikeways, sidewalks); to the development of programs (walking clubs); to data visualization through mapping to make problems and opportunities evident; to physical prototyping of elements (benches, bike racks, signs), we use design to proactively make the case for an improved public realm.

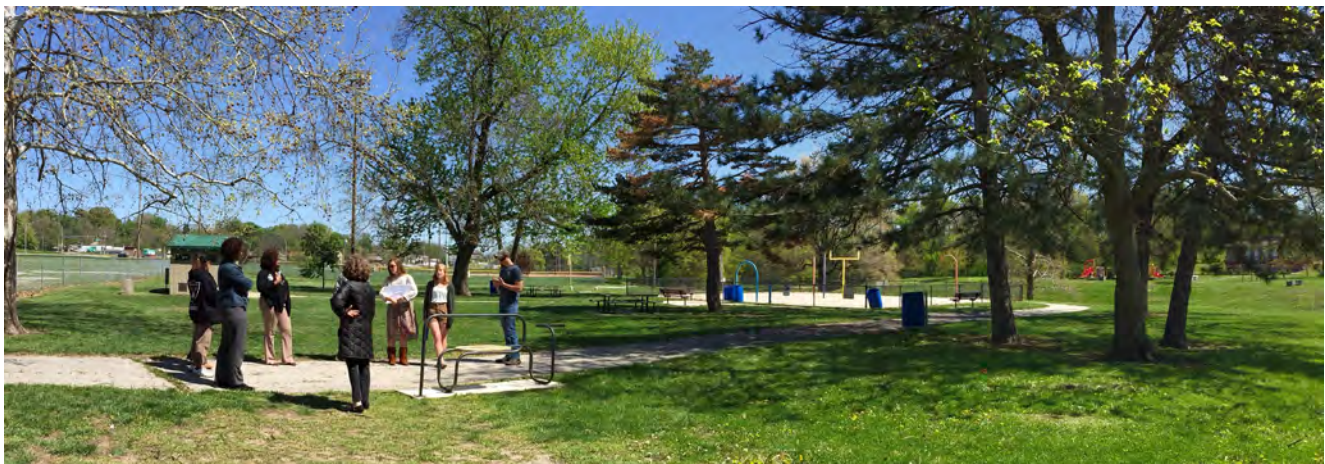
BACKGROUND

Wyandotte County, Kansas is home to one of the most racially diverse counties in the country. However, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings, Wyandotte County also ranks last among counties in Kansas for both health behaviors and for social and economic factors of health.¹ The principle city in the county is Kansas City, KS (KCK).

This distinction prompted the launch of Healthy Communities Wyandotte (HCW) in 2011. By adopting a theory of Collective Action, HCW began convening multidisciplinary stakeholders into action teams focused on key health issues: Education,

1. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings 2012. Accessible at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

Looking at a fitness station/bench prototype with community members.



2. See Committee, C. and T. S. A. (CTSA) C. C. E. K. F. (2011). Principles of Community Engagement. NIH Publication No. 11-7782; and Arnstein, S. R. (1969) "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35(4), 216-224.



Above: Community cookout to build citizen participation and trust.
Right: Soliciting citizen participation for a park revitalization project

Infrastructure, Nutrition, Communication, Fetal Infant Mortality, Health Services, Tobacco, and Policy. Dotte Agency works as a key collaborator with the *Nutrition Action Team* and the *Infrastructure Action Team* to support community-led initiatives.

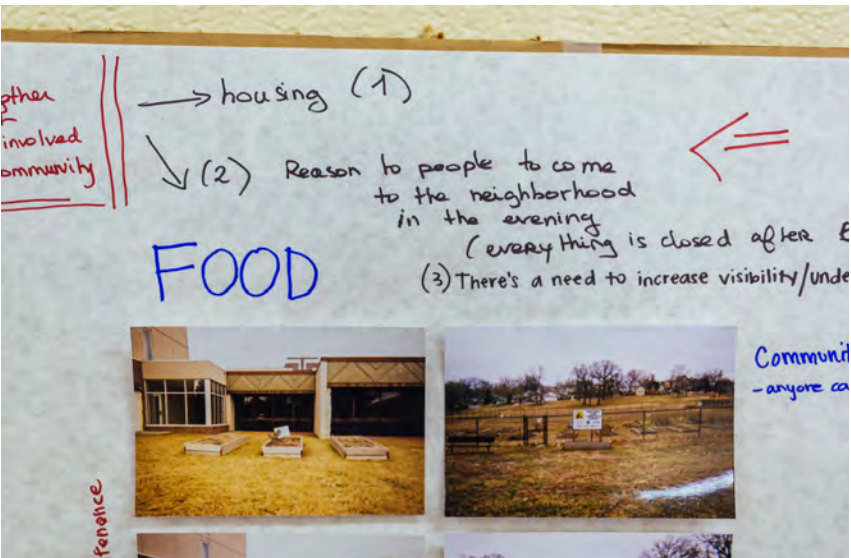
Through funding from diverse non-profits and the public health department, Dotte Agency works with interdisciplinary partners to utilize design as a tool to improve access to fresh food in food deserts and increase safe and walkable places in KCK. Over the last two years, Dotte Agency has brought resources to these issues by connecting students and faculty from the University's School of Architecture, Design, and Planning; the School of Medicine; the School of Business; and the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences. These courses are typically available to students on an ad hoc basis, relating to the changing needs of our community partners for specific resources to take on original projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

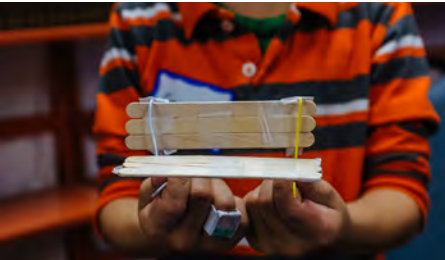
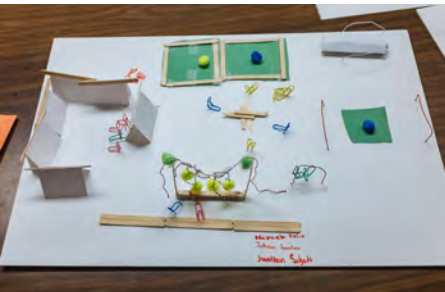
Dotte Agency adheres to principles of community engagement on a spectrum of empowerment, with Citizen Control on one end, and Manipulation on the other.² The goal is to first build trust within the community, and then seek to elevate the community's aspirations for a higher quality of life through their participation in any intervention. In our work we strive to adhere to NIH's

Nine Principles of Community Engagement

1. Be clear about the goals with the population and communities that are being engaged.
2. Know the community, including its norms, history, and experience with engagement.
3. Build trust and relationships. Get commitments from formal and informal leadership.
4. Collective self-determination is the right and the responsibility of all community members.
5. Partnering with the community is necessary to create change and improve health.
6. Recognize and respect community cultures and other factors of diversity when designing implementation approaches.
7. Sustainability results from mobilizing community assets and developing capacities and resources.
8. Be prepared to release control to the community, and be flexible enough to meet its changing needs.
9. Community collaboration requires long-term commitment.



Citizen participation in PhotoVoice project exploring food access in underserved KCK neighborhoods. Citizens took photos with disposable cameras and then met to annotate the images and discuss barriers to healthy food access. This course was a joint offering for architecture students and for public health students, co-taught by a faculty member from each program.



Above: Design charrette at local elementary school at the beginning of a design-build project for a new garden shed in a community garden, which sits across the street from the school. University students worked with elementary students to gather design ideas and explore how design works. The bottom image is the final garden shed installed in the garden. This past year, for the first time, salad greens from the garden were harvested by the elementary students and served in the school cafeteria.



Pop-up panels in use at a 5k run event. The principle behind the pop-ups is that you can go to where people are.



Pop-up panels in use at the actual site of a design-build studio project.



Pop-up panels in use at a neighborhood association meeting

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

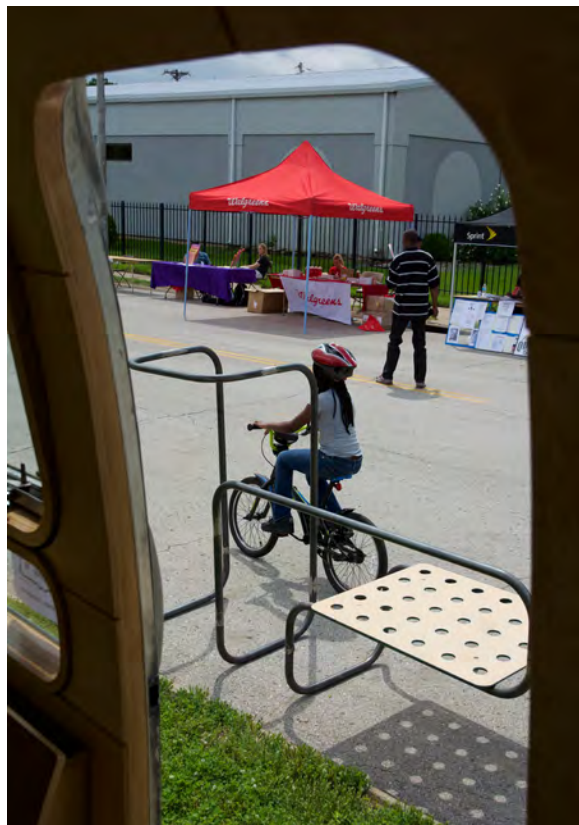
We have developed a series of engagement tools and strategies for building citizen participation. From pop-up panels, that allow us to take presentations on the road (or in the field); to a modified airstream trailer for mobile exhibitions and events; to a donated storefront for physical presence in the community, all of these tools allow us to make connections where the people are and where we can draw them in.

Below and opposite page: The Dotte Agency storefront is a 500s.f. space donated by a community partner so that we can have a physical presence in the community. It allows us to keep maps and models on display, convene meetings and have a classroom space in Kansas City. Our university is 35 miles away and the regular studio space is on campus so it gives us space to work out of when we are in town. We also have given keys to many of our partners so they can use its resources and as a meeting space when we aren't in town.





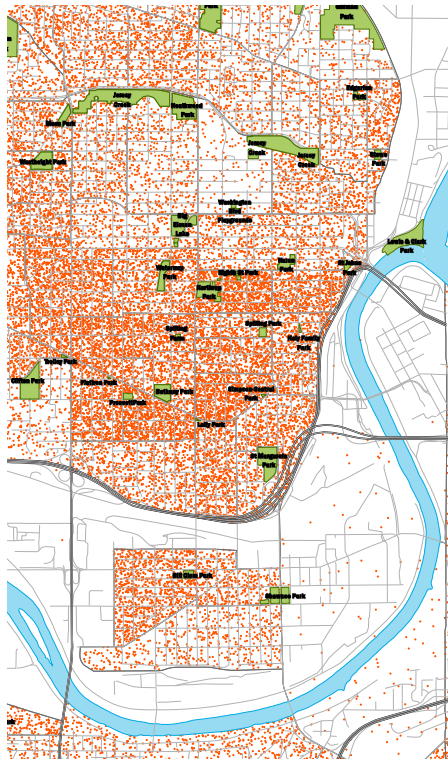
Mobile Collaboratory in use at the site of a future hike/bike trail on the Kaw River levee, soliciting opinions from citizens active in the biking community.



We renovated an airstream trailer into a "Mobile Collaboratory," that we use as an engagement tool for public exhibitions and events. The renovation took place in a third-year, undergraduate design-build studio project. For this event, a community health fair and 5k run, we were using it to exhibit and solicit feedback on some park bench/fitness station prototypes that were done in a different design-build studio.



Mobile Collaboratory in use as a "Story Catcher," with an oral historian collecting personal stories of citizens at a levee trail event.



6. Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2009). *Beyond discourse: Notes on spatial agency. Footprint, (4), 97–111.*

SPATIAL AGENCY THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED DESIGN

Rather than simply mimicking the existing pro bono model for design, Dotte Agency is seeking to develop a sense of ‘spatial agency’ within its students, where their skills and capacities can be used to co-develop systems that are healthy and equitable. From the initial phases of ideation and research to the development of new prototypes and policies, design thinking skills can afford interprofessional teams innovative new ways to address the public health issues of today and for tomorrow.

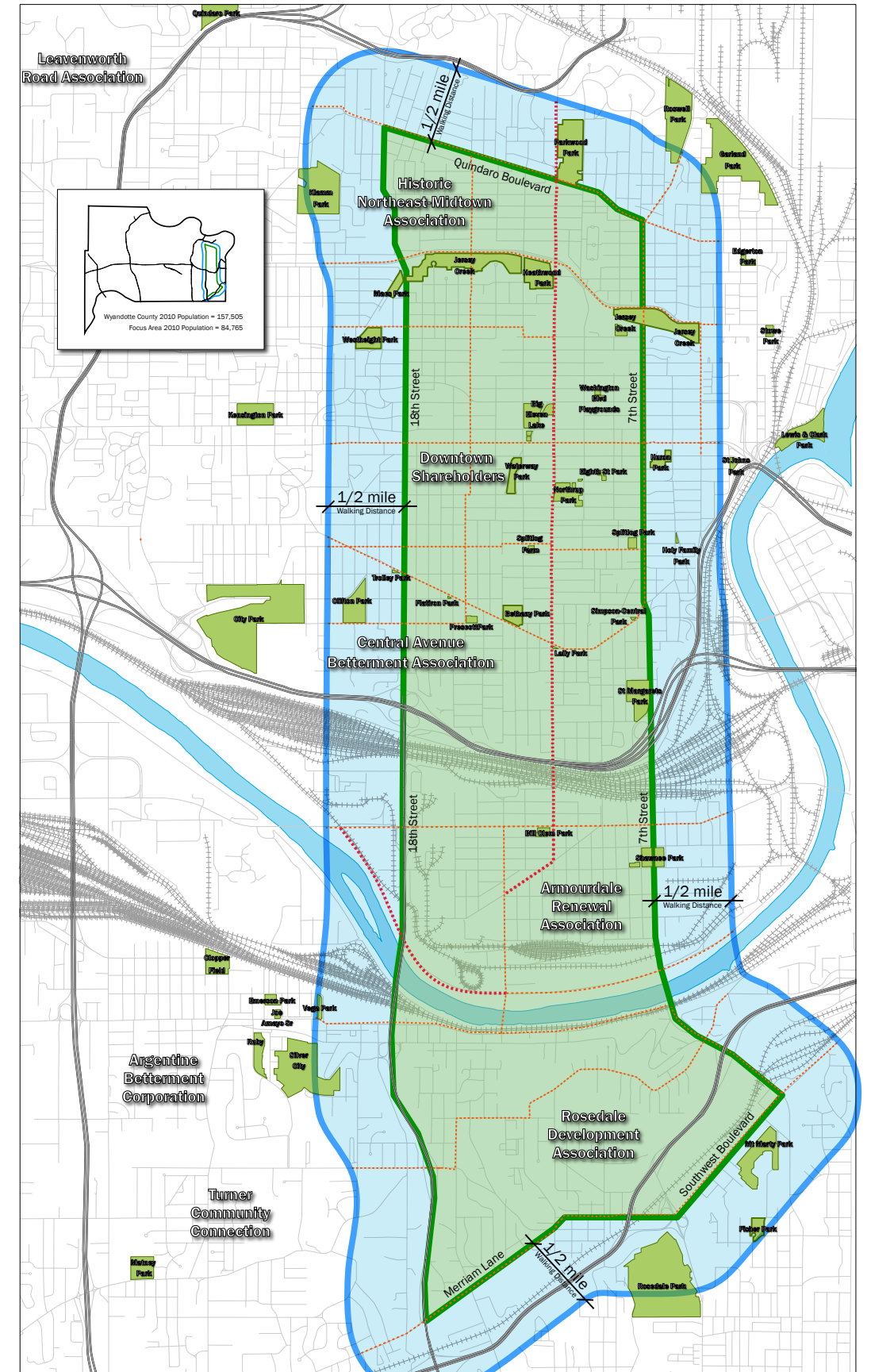
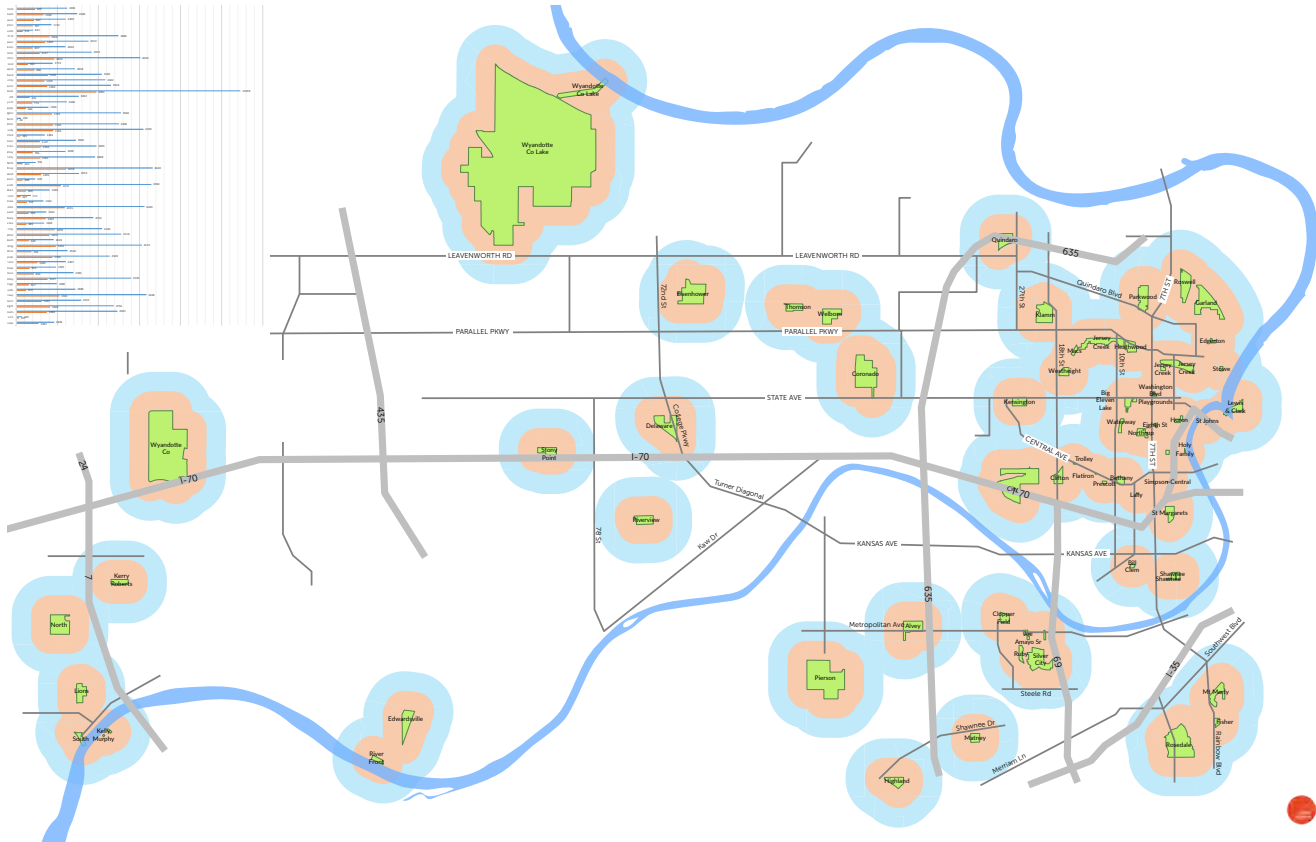
“Acting for and on behalf of others, spatial agency necessarily provides a planning process that is equal and open to anyone. But to achieve this we need a twofold shift, not just on the side of the architectural profession but also in those who commission architecture: on the one hand an explicit call for architects to face up to their political and ethical responsibility, on the other hand a call for all those involved in the production of the built environment to engage with the precepts of spatial agency.” - Jeremy Till ⁶

We strive to make decisions about the what, how and where of our work based on rigorous analysis of demographics and geospatial relationships. By making data visual we allow analysis to speak for itself in conversations with students, citizens and policy-makers.

Upper left: Population distribution map showing where people live.

Below: Map demonstrating the relationship between parks and the numbers of residents within walking distance to the parks. The pink buffer is .25 miles, the blue buffer .5 miles. Some of the smaller parks in the urban core have a greater impact than the largest parks, making a case for investment in them.

Opposite page: Map demonstrating focus area of our work. Half the county population lives within the blue zone. They also happen to be the most socio-economically disadvantaged.



Healthy Community Corridor
Focus Area : Population 84,765*

Map provided by
CHC Community Health Council
of Wyandotte County

¡VAMOS A CAMINAR JUNTOS!

Únase al grupo de caminata de Bethany Park

¡MANTENGASE SALUDABLE!

DISTANCIA:
1 Milla= 3 Vueltas

**Nos encontramos en
Las Canchas de Futbolito
los
Martes y Jueves
a las
8 a.m.**

¡CONOZCA VECINOS!

MANDE UN TEXTO A BETHANY PARK AL 41411 PARA EMPEZAR

Para más información, llame a Susana de CABA al (913) 708-5046.

Para recibir recordatorios, mande un texto a **BETHANY PARK** al **41411**.

Recibimos Apoyo de Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, Dotte Agency-University of Kansas, Healthy Communities Wyandotte, Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and Wyandotte Health Foundation.

LET'S WALK TOGETHER!

everyone can help make our communities more walkable & the benefits of walking are great!

HURON PARK
Meet at the gazebo on Wednesdays & Fridays at 8:15

Find out more by contacting Maria Carrillo at Downtown Shareholders
www.downtownkck.org (816) 810.9449, maria123rosalva@yahoo.com

Partners: Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, Dotte Agency - University of Kansas, Healthy Communities Wyandotte, Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, Wyandotte Health Foundation

It's beautiful outside today! Come walk with us!

Meet us at the park this weekend at 10am to walk!

Walking has been proven a great way to lose weight!

Come join us at the Jersey Creek 5k!

Meet your neighbors over a 30 minute walk.

Walk with us on the Levee Trail on June 4th!

Developed by the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County

TEXT WALKWYCO TO 41411 TO JOIN A WALKING CLUB IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARK!

My Walking Club (41411)
To: 41411
MSG: WALKWYCO
Welcome to WALK WYCO! Which park would you like to walk in?

Current Neighborhood Park Keywords: BETHANY PARK / BETHANY PARK / BETHANY PARK / BETHANY PARK / BETHANY PARK

There is NO COST to sign up, though standard text messaging rates from your carrier do apply. You can sign up (text WALKWYCO to 41411) or stop (text STOP to 41411) at any time. No personal information other than your number will be collected. Your privacy is important to us. Any type of cellular phone can be used. You may receive up to one text message a week, communicating relevant walking club times, locations, and events. To learn more about Wyandotte County community health efforts that encourage walking, visit: www.wycohealth.com www.2020movement.com

LET'S WALK TOGETHER!

Join the Parkwood Park Walking Group

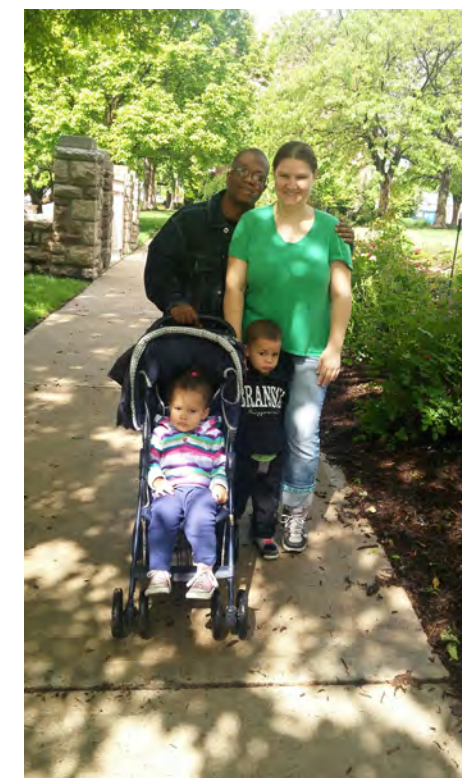
GET HEALTHY!

Parkwood Park
Meet at the gazebo on Wednesdays & Fridays at 8:15

MEET NEIGHBORS!

TEXT WALKWYCO TO 41411

For more information, contact HNMA at aimrecruit@yahoo.com. To sign up for phone reminders, text **PARKWOOD** to **41411**.



This family resides by Huron Park. They really enjoy walking at the park. They mentioned that they have family members buried at the Native American Cemetery. They would like to see the stairs repaired.

28 June 2016; Story-Catcher: Maria Carrillo, Downtown Shareholders

(Pages 10 & 11) The Healthy Parks Initiative is a joint project of Healthy Communities Wyandotte, the Parks and Recreation Department and Dotte Agency, and is funded by a set of non-profits interested in promoting healthy living. In this project, we employ local community mobilizers to organize walking clubs in five parks. We have been pleasantly surprised at how popular and meaningful these walking clubs are to many of the walkers. In the clubs they not only get exercise, but also forge new social relationships, become eyes on the parks, and turn into advocates for better parks and more engaged citizens. We have developed a text messaging reminder system—Walk WyCo—that walkers can subscribe to. We are currently working on development of a Bike WyCo system through a biking community mobilizer to engage the biking community.

Frontera Super Market

“Corner stores have the potential to be important access points in low-income neighborhoods for needed supplies and food items. It would be ideal if these stores could sell a wide selection of healthy foods.”

*-O'Malley, Gustat, Rice, Johnson
(Feasibility of Increasing Access to Healthy Foods in Neighborhood Corner Stores)*

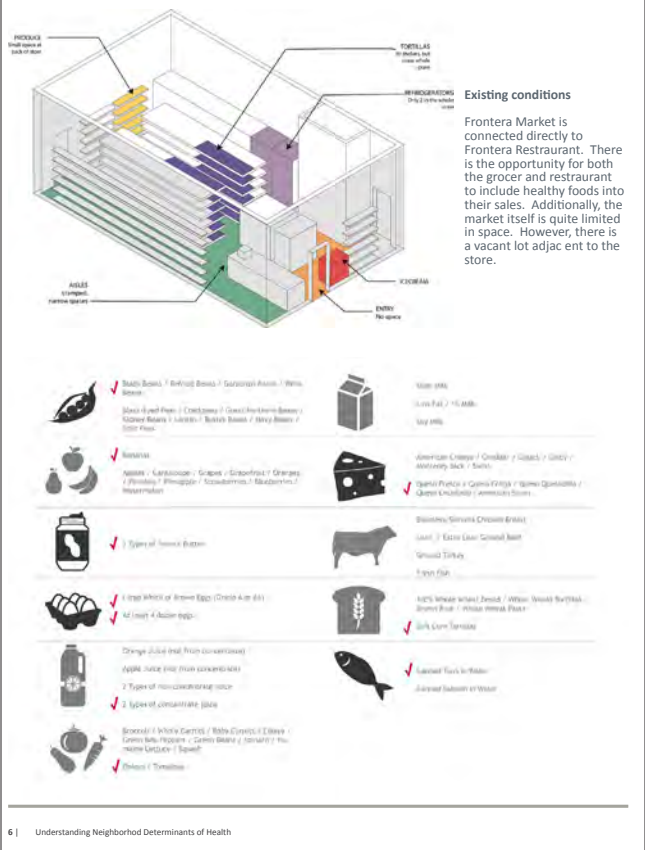
Located at the corner of Central and Coy in Kansas City, Kansas, Frontera Super Market is a small neighborhood grocery store. It is connected to Frontera Restaurant, which boasts \$0.99 tacos and authentic Mexican cuisine. With two large shelves designated for various types of tortillas and several types of hispanic cheese options, Frontera Super Market caters to the hispanic population which comprises almost a third of the KCK residents.

The store is small, no more than 900 square feet and the only windows are in the front and mostly covered by signs and posters. The dark interior is crowded and the produce is at the rear of the store. There are only a couple of refrigerators, which contain mostly soda and juice drinks from concentrate. Any available floor space is filled by a rack of chips or a candy display, yet

there are empty shelves in the back of the store.

After speaking with residents during the Photovoice project, it was clear that the majority of residents do not use Frontera Super Market but instead they

are willing to travel further to Sun Fresh. Although Sun Fresh is less convenient, it has more healthy options, fresher produce, and more variety of brands and products.



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Clifton Park - Existing

“Not a lot of people go to Clifton park, if I spend the day out I usually drive the extra mile to go to city park.”

-Photo voice Participant

When reviewing Clifton Park it is easy to identify some significant changes that are needed. City Park, which is nearby, is a very nice park with many amenities that gets a lot of use, especially during the weekends. Clifton Park should be equal to City Park as they have similar, basic amenities. Clifton's shelter pavilion has graffiti all over it including gang tags on the floor. There are offensive drawings on the benches and floors.

crumbling asphalt. There are overflowing trashcans throughout the park and they appear to not be maintained. The main park sign at the corner of Park Drive and 23rd Street is small and poorly maintained with chipped paint and decaying wood.

baseball fields and/or be left open to other designated uses. The playground is in good shape and just recently received mulch to make it safer than what it used to be when we first started to study this park. The shelter is in good structural shape, but needs to be repainted and maintained.

Positively, Clinton Park has a large, grassy area that is flat and could easily be turned into soccer or

As previously mentioned, there is an abandoned house in the park. It has a sign that says that the Parks and Recreation Department owns it but it is obviously vacant and appears to be a place for illegal activities. It is in terrible condition and does not look structurally sound.

Throughout the park are unusable asphalt paths. The parking lot is also in very poor condition with



City Park on a Sunday



Clifton Park on a Sunday

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Case Studies

Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson Community Garden

“I am just so happy to have this garden. I know when the kids are in school, we come in the afternoon and invite other kids in the neighborhood who come in and do their homework in the shade. And for those of us who are asthmatic it's just wonderful to have a garden to come to.”

- Deborah Sampson

Previously known as Baisley Park Community Garden, Curtis Jackson (otherwise known as “50 Cent”) decided to give back to his childhood neighborhood in Queens, New York. By pairing up with the New York Restoration Project (NYRP), the rap sensation added to NYRP's 52 community gardens make strides to help reconstruct the space and give back to the city's need for open green space.

the weather and do homework in the fresh air.

“50 Cent,” through the G-Unit Foundation, donated amenities to support the park: an interactive learning garden, communal planting beds for vegetables and fruits, and a neighborhood multi-functioning hub to support

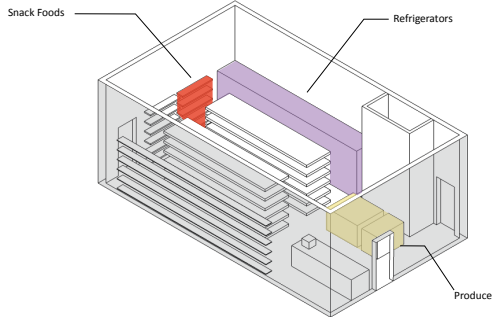
community activities. By integrating sustainable design and innovative ideas, the “50 Cent” Jackson Community Garden is a welcoming service that provides the residents a place for rest and relaxation.



Cite: <https://www.nyrp.org/green-spaces/garden-details/curtis-50-cent-community-garden>

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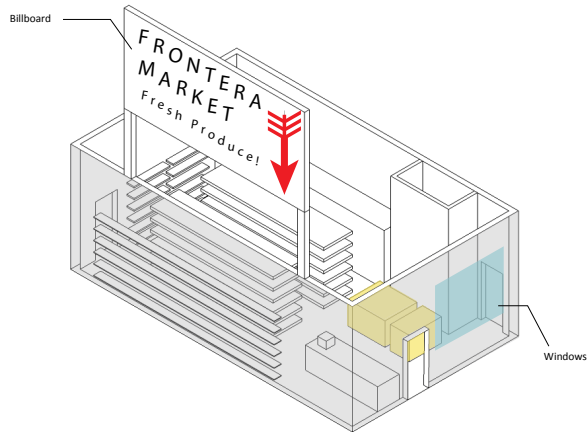
Immediate Step



At the most basic level the grocery store needs a programmatic overhaul that places healthy food options in optimal locations. In addition to decluttering the shelves we propose that the front of the store is cleared of the unhealthy snack options that are there now. Reducing the number of shelves and creating a zone dedicated to produce would mean that shoppers

no longer have to walk to the back for their produce options. This should help avoid over-crowding in the store as well because shoppers would be able to come in, quickly select their goods and check out right there.

Long-Term Step



When speaking to local residents, they didn't know that Frontera Market existed. Currently the interior is quite removed from any interaction with the outdoors. We propose adding windows/skylights or simply a new coat of paint to make the market more inviting. By introducing a branding and facade intervention, focused on utilizing the on-site billboard, the store

would be able to promote healthy, delicious food options. Also, renovating the building envelope would make it more inviting and open to daylight.

Immediate Change

Despite the poor state that Clifton Park is currently in, there are many small changes that could be acted upon that wouldn't require a large budget and be done in a short time frame. These changes include: repaving the paths, updating the signage and repainting the pavilion structure. The paths, in some locations could be repainted with a new asphalt coating, while in other locations will require completely new construction. Getting around

the park with a stroller or in a wheelchair would be impossible at this point. Refinishing the paths would allow access to the shelter pavilion and to the edges of the park, connecting with street sidewalks. Signage is also a recognizable need for improvement. Developing new signage and updating the existing ones would make entrances and the park itself more easily recognizable to people driving or

walking by. This would make the park more inviting. And finally, repainting the shelter pavilion, the surrounding benches and other vandalized equipment is needed. Getting rid of gang tags and other inappropriate markings would help make the park more inviting and feel safer—this may need an ongoing strategy for maintenance as painting over the markings may not immediately solve the problem.

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Substantial Change

If substantial changes could be made to Clifton Park, we recommend razing the abandoned recreational facility. Removing it would make the park feel safer as well as make it more family friendly.

Repairing the parking lot near the shelter pavilion would help provide a better, initial impression of the park and also make the park more accessible to those in a wheelchair.

Providing lighting throughout the park would make the park safer and more accessible for those wishing to use it at night. This is not a park people would feel safe using at night as is. The park is at the bottom of a hill and is hidden from Park Drive. Lighting would assist the playground and shelter pavilion to be visible from the street.

And finally, an addition of a soccer field on the north side of the park

in the large, flat, grassy area would bring activity to the park. As illustrated in other parks through KCK, the futbol courts have brought families and children to the parks with lots of activity. The same could happen in this park. Clifton could become a great family park with a few improvements.

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A joint course was taught by a professor of Public Health and a professor of Architecture to students of both disciplines, to investigate ways to improve health outcomes and equity. Some student teams studied small convenience stores in a food desert to determine if it was possible to bring them up to WIC (Women, Infants and Children program) standards. Students analyzed existing conditions, current food offerings and made recommendations for immediate and long-term improvements.



PROTOTYPING

Our M.Arch curriculum has a required “materials and tectonics” studio built into it. This requires some level of investigation in a project with real materials at actual size. And this leads to design-build projects in some of those studios. At Dotte Agency we use the materials and tectonics studio to develop physical prototypes that can be tested in community and sometimes installed for longer term evaluation in the environment.

Below and left: Signage prototype that started as a student project and then developed further after the student's graduation. Five of these are in current production for installation in five parks.



Signage system made of powder-coated perforated metal for new levee trail. Done as a project in a Materials and Tectonics studio



Exploring letter size and perforation patterns in laser-cut chipboard.

Prototypical mock-up of a single letter for proof of concept and client approval.



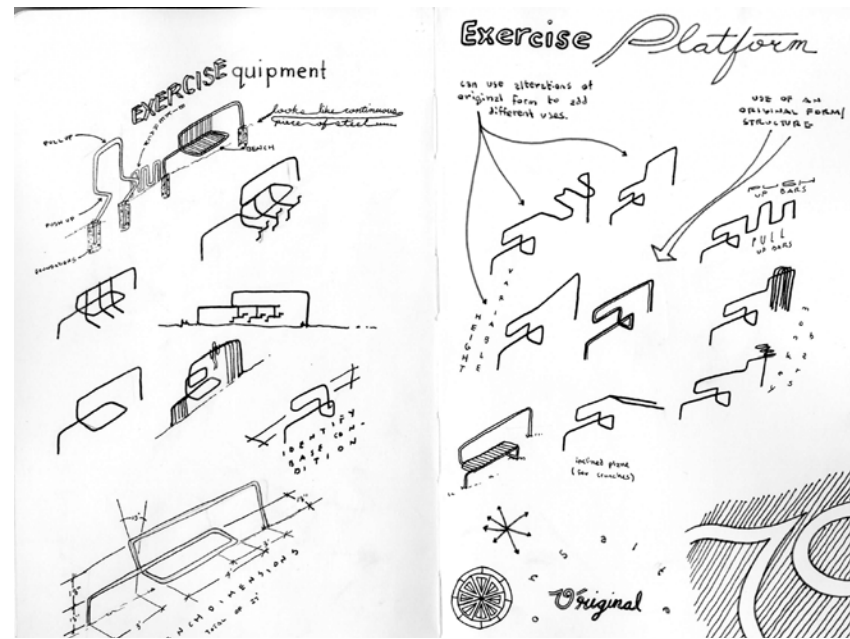
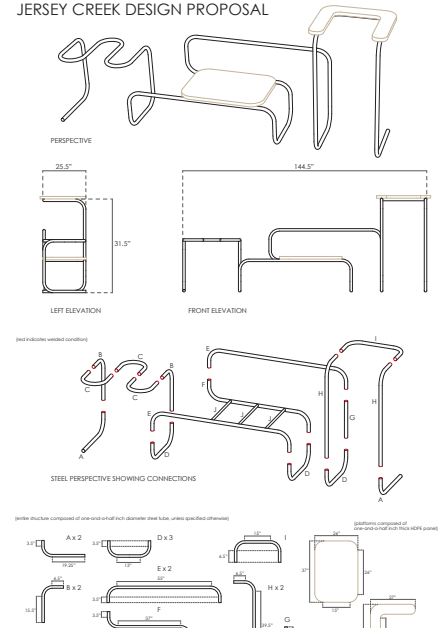
Developing detailing and adjustable attachment system on a prototypical letter.



Fabrication of final signage system. Letters were plasma cut from solid and perforated metal sheets. CNC-cut MDF templates were produced to guide plasma cutting.



JERSEY CREEK DESIGN PROPOSAL



These images represent the development of a set of hybrid fitness station/bench/bike rack units. From initial sketch, to digital modeling, to technical drawing, to physical prototype. Following approval of the initial prototype produced during the semester, the students were hired after the semester concluded to produce five different units for installation in Jersey Creek Park. They were installed in Summer 2016.



