Community-engaged greening: understanding the role of community engagement in vacant lot greening initiatives

by

Stephanie Campbell

B.S., Delaware Valley University, 2006

A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional & Community Planning College of Architecture, Planning and Design

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Sara Hadavi

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Abstract

Due to a history of decentralization, urban vacancy is an issue plaguing many cities today (G. Kim et al., 2020). Recently, communities have started to investigate urban greening as a management technique to lessen the detrimental effects of vacancy (Heckert and Mennis, 2012). In order to address the issue of urban vacant land and promote long-term regeneration through urban greening initiatives, community engagement is a critical component (G. Kim et al., 2020). Research indicates that community engagement can help diverse resident populations better articulate their needs and formulate a vision, thus helping to reduce the risk of the negative consequences of urban greening, such as gentrification (Campbell and Lindquist, 2021). However, it is unclear how the components and dimensions of the community engagement process and its results support urban greening efforts, especially in high vacancy areas. There is also a need for strategies, guidance, and policies to govern how we design spaces, such as vacant lots. This study aims to explore the role community engagement has in the implementation of greening vacant lots initiatives. Through exploring precedent studies, this study examines greening vacant lot initiatives in several cities to understand the greening programs and community engagement processes. Semi structured interviews with project coordinators were conducted to gain insight into the community engagement process. The study focuses on the greening of vacant lots as informal spaces, to help understand the role of community engagement in repurposing such spaces. Vacant lots in Kansas City, Missouri have served as an example of how these strategies and principles can be applied. The outcome of this research is a set of strategies and principles to help guide the community-engaged greening of vacant land. Findings highlight the importance of community engagement and community led approaches in the success of greening vacant lot initiatives. Findings also indicate the importance of communication, tailoring the process to the community, and practicing active engagements. Core values such as building trust, being understanding and empathetic, being transparent, and being flexible were also determined. The strategies and principles developed from this research can help guide future greening initiatives and help foster meaningful and effective community engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED GREENING

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN VACANT LOT GREENING INITIATIVES

STEPHANIE CAMPBELL

2023

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Abstract

Due to a history of decentralization, urban vacancy is an issue plaguing many cities today (G. Kim et al., 2020). Recently, communities have started to investigate urban greening as a management technique to lessen the detrimental effects of vacancy (Heckert and Mennis, 2012). In order to address the issue of urban vacant land and promote long-term regeneration through urban greening initiatives, community engagement is a critical component (G. Kim et al., 2020). Research indicates that community engagement can help diverse resident populations better articulate their needs and formulate a vision, thus helping to reduce the risk of the negative consequences of urban greening, such as gentrification (Campbell and Lindquist, 2021). However, it is unclear how the components and dimensions of the community engagement process and its results support urban greening efforts, especially in high vacancy areas. There is also a need for strategies, guidance, and policies to govern how we design spaces, such as vacant lots.

This study explored the role community engagement has in the implementation of greening vacant lots initiatives. The study focused on the greening of vacant lots as informal spaces, to help understand the role of community engagement in repurposing such spaces. Through exploring thirteen precedent studies, this study examined greening vacant lot initiatives in twelve cities to understand the greening programs and community engagement processes. Semi structured interviews with nine project coordinators were conducted to gain insight into the community engagement process. Comparisons based on scale, program type, and age of initiative were conducted to determine whether these aspects influenced community engagement. Results from the comparisons indicated that scale of the initiative influenced community engagement whereas program type and age of initiative did not.

Furthermore, findings highlight the importance of community engagement and community led approaches in the success of greening vacant lot initiatives. Findings also indicate the importance of communication, tailoring the process to the community, and practicing active engagements. Seventeen strategies and principles were derived from the data collected and subsequent analysis. These include core values such as building trust, being understanding and empathetic, being transparent, and being flexible. Additionally, strive to build collaborative relationships, work with community organizations already embedded in the community, share resources, and provide opportunities for feedback. Based on the data collected from the precedent studies and semi structured interviews, a recommendation for an interim land use program that could lead to permanent green space was made for Kansas City, MO. The strategies and principles developed from this research can help guide future greening initiatives and help foster meaningful and effective community engagement.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

Accounting for almost one-sixth of territory in cities with a population of over one hundred thousand, vacant land is a troubling concern for many cities. Vacant land can include not only unused land but also green space and undeveloped land. While concerns of vacant land continue to grow, many cities are looking for strategies to repurpose and/or redevelop vacant land. One strategy cities are using to address the issues associated with vacant land is through greening. While the greening of vacant lots provides numerous benefits, it is not without risks of exacerbating existing social issues such as gentrification. (Lee and Newman, 2021; Bernstein and Isaac, 2021). Research indicates that community engagement can play a vital role in the implementation of urban greening initiatives. Community engagement can also aid in the reduction of risks associated with urban greening initiatives (Campbell and Lindquist, 2021). However, it is unclear how the components and dimensions of the community engagement process and its results support greening efforts, especially in high vacancy areas. There is also a need for strategies, guidance, and policies to govern how we design and repurpose vacant lots. Through precedent studies and semi structured interviews, this study explores the role community engagement has in urban vacant lot greening programs and initiatives. The goal of this study is to develop a set of strategies and community engagement approaches to help guide the greening of vacant lots. To achieve this, this study uses Kansas City, Missouri as a high-vacancy case to examine the possibilities of adapting best practices of community engagement learned from other cases.

The study process is exhibited in Figure 1.

Research Question

What role does community engagement play in the implementation of greening vacant lot initiatives in high vacancy urban areas?
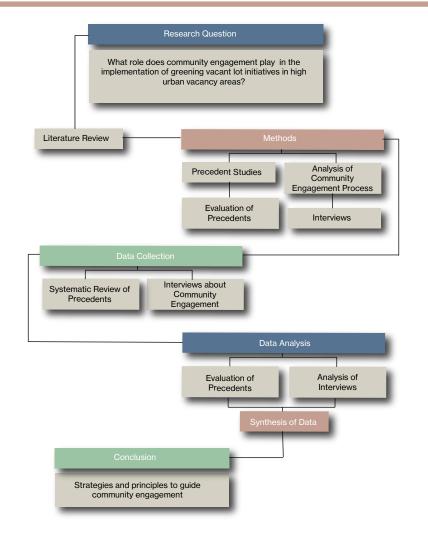
Figure 1: Study Map.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Community Engagement and Gentrification

Gentrification is defined as the displacement of low-income residents caused by an influx of wealthier, affluent residents (López-Morales, 2019). It is about holistic neighborhood change and implies significant demographic change (Eckerd, 2011; Hochstenbach and Van Gent, 2015). Gentrification results in increases to rent, housing prices, and property values. In areas where gentrification occurs the entire cultural urban fabric of a neighborhood can be transformed as the resident population changes and businesses adapt to serve the new population. This often leads to feelings of displacement and a lack of connection to the neighborhood in residents that are financially able to stay (Maantay and Maroko, 2018; Rigolon and Nemeth, 2018). Gentrification is a complex issue challenging many cities as they attempt to combat urban vacancy and reinvest in neighborhoods (Bernstein and Isaac, 2021).

Even though it is generally agreed upon that communities in the throes of gentrification require a dialogic approach that is equitable and fair in terms of who participates and how it engages competent participants, there is disagreement about how to achieve it. Community engagement is a participatory approach that gives voice to constructive disagreements that result in the creative problem solving of related social issues such as gentrification and other urban development processes (Bernstein and Isaac, 2021; Mullenbach et al., 2019). Research has shown how crucial community involvement is for giving residents the sense that their voices are heard and that they can have an impact on the neighborhood's future. When an investment is being made in a low-income, predominately minority community, it is extremely crucial to engage the community to help reduce the risk of gentrification (Mullenbach et al., 2019).

Urban Greening and Green Gentrification

Green gentrification refers to the process initiated by the implementation of environmental planning agendas related to green spaces, leading to the marginalization and displacement of politically disenfranchised residents (Auguelovski et al., 2019). It has been demonstrated that many green interventions result in communities of environmental privilege where low income and minority residents are excluded from the neighborhood where the new green space has been implemented (Anguelovski et al., 2019; Stuhlmacher et al., 2022). It can be argued that green gentrification is not just an 'unintended consequence' of poor planning, but a situation created when public agencies, with the support of the development community, exploit rent gaps and depressed property values to attract a wealthier population (Rigolon and Nemeth, 2018). The dilemma now facing cities, is how to increase green equity and access to green space without displacing the very residents it was intended to benefit (Stuhlmacher et al., 2022).

Despite the recognition of the value of community engagement, many green infrastructure programs continue to follow a top-down and expert-driven site selection and design process. In terms of long-term sustainability of these projects, the creation of multifunctional and inclusive spaces, and missed opportunities to increase civic capacity to participate in and drive urban planning initiatives, this mismatch between process and engagement ideals can result in less-than-ideal outcomes. Green gentrification is often a result as diverse perspectives were not included in its conception, design, or implementation (Anguelovski et al., 2020; Campbell-Arvai and Lindquist, 2021; Dhakal and Chevalier, 2017). Furthermore, in order to address the discriminatory nature of green gentrification and guarantee that low-income and minority inhabitants have a role in establishing just, equitable, and sustainable urban greenspaces, meaningful community engagement is crucial (Anguelovski et al., 2020; Vian et al., 2018).

Environmental Justice

The Environmental Protection Agency defines environmental justices as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental

laws, regulations, and policies" (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2019). Fair treatment refers to the fact that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of environmental burdens or benefits. There should be equitable distribution of access to clean air, water, and land. Meaningful involvement refers to the fact that everyone affected by decisions impacting their neighborhood and quality of life should be given the opportunity to influence those decisions (Krings and Schuster 2020).

Scholars argue that three waves of environmental justice organization have occurred (Anguelovski, 2016; Cole and Foster, 2001; Holifield, 2012). The first wave focused on identifying and dismantling systematic environmental racism in which racial and ethnic minorities were excluded in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws. The second wave focused on issues of socioeconomic wellness and improvements to park accessibility, public parks, food sovereignty, and safe affordable housing. The third and most current wave, focuses on issues related to self-determination, the defense of place and culture, and resistance to environmental gentrification (Anguelovski, 2016; Cole and Foster, 2001; Holifield, 2012;).

The first and second wave of environmental justice were grounded in the belief that poor residents and residents of color could not move away from contaminated and disinvested neighborhoods, therefore, community organizations worked to improve the quality of those places. The third wave is about fighting displacement that results from a combination of free market forces, institutional and cultural racism, the rollback of social housing programs, and urban environmental policy where 'greening' becomes code for the 'whitening' of urban neighborhoods (Anguelovski, 2016; Cole and Foster, 2001; Holifield, 2012;).

Environmental justice should entail four qualities: distributional justice, procedural justice, recognitional justice, and interactional justice (Holifield, 2001). Distributional justice is defined as the fair distribution of environmental 'goods' and 'bads'. Procedural justice is defined as the fair and inclusive process to achieve the aforementioned outcomes. Environmental justice should account for not only the experiences of oppression but the cultures of disadvantaged groups as well when crafting policies and plans, known as recognitional justice. These processes should result in places where residents of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations feel safe and welcome, also referred to as interactional justice (Rigolon and Collins, 2022; Rigolon and Nemeth, 2018; Schlosberg, 2004;).

Labelled as an environmental and social injustice, access to quality green spaces is an issue facing many urban neighborhoods. Minority and/or low-income groups have consistently and disproportionately low access to public park spaces (Mullenbach and Baker 2020; Sister et al., 2010; Weiss et al., 2011). Furthermore, the public park spaces in these minority or low-income neighborhoods are often smaller and of lower quality. The lack of park access has negative health consequences on these vulnerable populations (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2006; Mowen and Rung, 2016). The environmental and social injustices are further perpetuated by the exclusion from parks and green space and the associated denial of access to health amenities (Kephart, 2022; Mowen and Rung, 2016; Mullenbach and Baker 2020).

Environmental justice has a history of bringing together a variety of stakeholders to develop plans to enhance health outcomes because it is rooted in community advocacy. Many scholars have addressed the importance of fostering community partnerships and the need to increase community capacity to address regional environmental issues and disparities (Cohen et al., 2016; Minkler et al., 2008; Williamson, 2022). By enhancing the quality of information, the interpretation of data, and the capability of research to highlight strategies to lessen the burden of impact on vulnerable populations, community engagement has been emphasized as a crucial aspect of the efforts to support environmental justice objectives (Cunningham-Erves et al., 2020; Yen et al., 2015).

Urban Greening

The term 'urban greening' often refers to a wide variety of projects including minor and temporary landscaping improvement using plants to larger-scale projects, such as permanent parks and recreation areas. Although most often connected to environmental sustainability initiatives, it can include the production, preservation, and development of natural habitats and

greenways. Urban greening can provide environmental benefits by encompassing a network of natural and engineered elements to create ecosystem services. Within the context of a city, urban greening often refers to the diverse treatments and interventions utilized for reclaiming vacant and abandoned properties. Several strategies commonly used to activate underutilized vacant lots include conversion of neglected urban parcels and public rights-of-ways into parks, trails and open space, community gardens, vacant lot greening as a neighborhood stabilization strategy, temporary tactical urbanism, urban agriculture or urban farming, and green infrastructure (Heckert et al., 2015).

The benefits of greening in general are numerous. Research indicates that views of green space can drastically improve worker productivity (Kaplan, 1993), reduce domestic violence (Kuo and Sullivan, 1996), and shorten healing times (Ulrich, 1984; Westphal, 2003). Furthermore, views of vegetation and water can reduce stress (Ulrich, 1984), improve healing (Ulrich, 1984), and reduce driving frustration and aggression (Pearson et al., 1998; Westphal, 2003). A greater sense of well-being and neighborhood satisfaction can be linked to views of green space (Cleary et al., 2019; Hadavi, 2017; Kaplan, 2001; Westphal, 2003) When children have the opportunity to play in places with trees and vegetation it can support their development of skills and cognitive abilities. It has also been shown to reduce the symptoms of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (Taylor et al., 2001; Westphal, 2003). Well-maintained landscapes, including trees and grass, result in residents feeling safer and studies show that it can also reduce incivilities and crime (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001; Westphal 2003; Wolfe and Mennis, 2012). Green space has also been linked to lower mortality and fewer health complaints. The availability of green space promotes physical health thus helping to reduce the risk of obesity and improving cardiovascular and respiratory health (Branas et al., 2011; Wolch et al., 2014).

Informal Green Space

Informal green spaces are spaces that have not been intentionally or formally designed, such as vacant lots, street or railway verges, brownfields, and powerline corridors (Kim, Rupprecht, and Furuya, 2020; Rupprecht and Byrne, 2014). Although these spaces often differ in their management, land use, site history, scale and shape, soil characteristics, and local urban context, they are defined by their non-traditional uses (Rupprecht and Byrne, 2014). These spaces differ from formal green spaces in how they are recognized, managed, and developed. Informal green spaces are often a result of landowner's neglect and the subsequent exploitation by nonhuman agents, such as the spontaneous colonization of vegetation that attracts both animals and people (Kim, Rupprecht, and Furuya, 2020; Rupprecht and Byrne, 2014). These spaces are not acknowledged as green space for agriculture, forestry, gardening, recreation, or environmental protection by governing bodies or landowners (Rupprecht et al., 2015).

Like other forms of urban greening, informal green spaces offer a variety of benefits. Research indicates that informal green spaces play an important role for urban residents by providing potential social and ecological benefits. These spaces can provide habitat for urban flora and fauna, supporting a high diversity of species (Rupprecht et al., 2015; Stanford et al., 2022). Informal green spaces can increase interactions between urban residents and nature. This interaction, often unpredictable in nature, can be important in the social, emotional, and physical development of children and teenagers (Bell et al., 2003; Rupprecht et al., 2016). Informal green spaces also allow for creative uses outside of governmental control and economic forces (Stanford et al., 2022).

Conversely, informal green space can prove to be a disamenity depending on the context, quality, and perceptions of residents. In vacant lots and other unmanaged green space, tree canopy cover and other vegetation has been linked to both fear of crime and greater crime rates (Deng, 2015; Foster et al., 2010, Hadavi et al., 2021; Schwarz et al., 2018;). Unmanaged vegetation can also detract from neighborhood housing values. Furthermore, access, safety, and quality of green space can exacerbate existing racial, class, and/or gender disparities (Heynen et al., 2006; Sthulmacher et al., 2022)

Vacant Land

Waste products, in the form of urban vacant land, are often the result of urban development and economic and industrial processes. The urban processes of decentralization

resulting from demographic change, urban sprawl, de-industrialization, people's preference for new types of residential choices, and housing foreclosure all result in 'urban voids' or vacant land (Kim et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2014; Kremer et al., 2013). The American Planning Association offers two definitions of vacant land: 'lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose' or 'a lot or parcel of land on which no improvements have been constructed' (American Planning Association, 2006; Kremer et al., 2013). The National Vacant Properties Campaign defines vacant land as a site that poses a threat to the public or a site in which the owners or managers neglect the fundamental duties of property ownership. According to this definition, vacant land can include brownfields and greyfields (Bass et al., 2005; Lee and Newman, 2017). Interestingly, definitions of vacant land are often determined by each city and varies among jurisdictions. Classification of vacant land may be influenced by a city's tax structure and development plan (Kremer et al., 2013).

Although there is no single, broadly recognized definition of vacant land, it typically includes bare soil, agriculture at the edge of an urbanized area or uncultivated land, recently razed land, derelict land, land with abandoned buildings and structures, brownfields, and greenfields. Vacant land is often typologized to include remnant parcels, having small size or irregular shape, land having physical limitations to development such as steep slopes or flood hazards, land in cooperate reserve such as ownership by utility companies for future expansion, land held for speculation, and land in institutional reserve (Kim et al., 2018 and Kremer et al., 2013). Despite the lack of a formal definition, vacant lands tend to have three things in common: they combine occupied structures, abandoned structures, and formerly occupied land to create a dynamic patchy pattern; they are affected by previous human uses including contamination, altered hydrologies and soil profiles, and introduced species; and they have limited potential to attract financial investment (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014).

Vacant land can create significant problems for the surrounding neighborhoods, including reduced property value and increased crime (Branas et al., 2011; Heckert and Mennis, 2012). These negative factors may further increase vacancy by pushing responsible homeowners to leave declining neighborhoods. As a result, cities have a vested interest in redeveloping this vacant land. Formal greening initiatives have become an increasingly popular approach to combating urban vacancy, improving neighborhoods, and encouraging redevelopment. Although greening initiatives can take many different forms, they are primarily focused on remediating land by removing debris, establishing plants, and regularly maintaining cleanliness and plant health (Heckert and Mennis, 2012; Schilling and Logan, 2008).

The redevelopment of vacant lots can also provide cities with the opportunity to introduce new ecosystem services to neighborhoods lacking such amenities (Haase et al., 2014; Mullenbach et al., 2021). This redevelopment of vacant lots can also provide neighborhoods with much needed natural amenities and provide new recreation opportunities, aesthetic value, contribute to a sense of community, and improve neighborhood safety. In addition to providing fresh food, community gardens built on vacant lots provide space for community social development (Anderson and Minor, 2017; Mullenbach et al., 2021)

Of note, there is some argument supporting the keeping of vacant lots, as it often serves neighborhoods as a place to recreate, garden, and socialize. Keeping these lots vacant can sustain a neighborhood's culture and identity (Langegger, 2013; Mullenbach et al., 2021). This informal use of space is often undervalued by cities and can be problematic for long term activity of such spaces. Some argue that these temporary uses of space should become permanent solutions to the issue of vacant lots (Mullenbach et al., 2021; Nemeth and Langhorst, 2014). Cities can avoid building an unused structure or erasing a valued community asset by allowing residents to determine the use of the vacant and underutilized lots (Garvin et al., 2013, Mullenbach et al., 2021).

Community Engagement

The foundation of community engagement is the democratic principle that everyone should have a say in the decision-making process surrounding an issue that affects their community (International Association of Public Participation, n.d.). Public involvement can have an impact on choices that affect the delivery of services, long-term goals, and the sustainability of communities. Community engagement captures its meaning in shared decision-making.

For governments and organizations, it means collaborating with and listening to communities to forge lasting bonds and create effective answers to challenging problems (Stave, 2002; Bergstrom et al., 2014). In other words, the goal of community engagement is to better involve the community in shaping public policy. Thus, it is a perspective on how crucial it is for community members' lived experiences to shape relationships between governmental entities and communities, as well as a methodology that directs those interactions (Bergstrom et al., 2014).

According to the International Association for Public Participation, community engagement occurs across a spectrum. This spectrum states that there are five main types of process: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering citizens. These processes work on a sliding scale and are associated with clear objectives and undertakings to the public helping to reduce uncertainty about the purpose and nature of participation (Head, 2007; International Association of Public Participation, n.d.). Tools associated with each form for participation are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1:International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation. (International Association for Public Participation, 2005). Copyright IAP2, all rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Community engagement is guided by several key principles including: to honor the wisdom, voice, and experience of residents, to treat participants with integrity and respect, to be transparent about motives and power dynamics, to share decision making and initiative leadership, and to engage in continuous reflection and willingness to change course (Bergstrom et al., 2014; Heath, 2007; Schlake, 2015;). The benefits of community engagement are numerous. The engagement of affected communities will result in developed plans that reflect community support and incorporate equitable outcomes, helping to build trust and ownership. Community engagement can build trust among diverse stakeholders and aid in difficult decision making. It will provide a deeper understanding of the issues at hand and build stronger networks across racial, ethnic, generational, gender, and socioeconomic divides (Head, 2007; Huggins, 2012; Swain, 2001). Furthermore, the community engagement process creates an environment of positive communication where innovative and inclusive solutions can be found in order to resolve conflict (Bergstrom et al., 2014; Bernstein and Isaac, 2021).

Scholars have developed several guidelines to encourage meaningful community engagement. Engagement activities should be proactive and targeted, reflecting the diversity of the community. They should build clear opportunities for decision making and partnerships among the community and community organizations. Engagement activities should prioritize both community knowledge and concerns (Head, 2007; Huggins 2012; Ohmer et al., 2022). They should support capacity building and include room to be iterative and reflective. They should target resources, such as funding, for ongoing engagement and provide clear opportunities to influence more equitable policies and allocation of resources (Bergstrom et al., 2014; Head, 2007; Ohmer et al., 2022).

In some cases, organizations play a role in building community wealth, alternative development, and training for vulnerable residents allowing them to continue living and affording the cost of living in a neighborhood. One tactic is 'sustainable community development without displacement', where local long-term residents take control over community resources developing small industrial development projects in their neighborhoods (Pearsall and Eller, 2020). In an effort to put pressure on government agencies and corporations, activists and coalitions of residents use direct tactics, such as protests, to bring attention to potential environmental injustices. Furthermore, activists and residents often rally together to participate in the official city planning process to voice their opinions and challenge redevelopment initiatives that are contradictory with community needs (Anguelovski, 2016; Pearsall and Eller, 2020).

There is increasing interest in more fully involving residents in green infrastructure initiatives. Resident involvement in green infrastructure initiatives can lead to greater public support, community support, and sustained success of these projects over the long term (Campbell-Arvai and Lindquist, 2021; G. Kim, 2020). Providing residents and stakeholders with opportunities for input and collaboration in design and planning is important. This allows for the democratization of design, management, and governance of urban spaces. Community engagement is a vital part of efforts to address the exclusionary process of green gentrification and to ensure that minority and low-income residents' voices are heard in the creation of just, equitable, and sustainable urban green space (G. Kim, 2020). In order to be successful, community engagement must be a dynamic process in which ideas and opinions are exchanged over time through a process of informational feedback loops. It is important to note that it is a process that varies from community to community (G. Kim, 2020; Head, 2007; Watson, 2014;). Many green infrastructure initiatives however, still adhere to a top-down and expert driven approach to site selection and design (Campbell-Arvai and Lindquist, 2021; Dhakal and Chevalier, 2017).

Through a process of community engagement that determines how to manage or reclaim declining urban vacant lots, local governments and communities can better understand the importance of transforming vacant land into community assets (G. Kim, 2020). One greening strategy well suited to repurposing vacant lots and the revitalization of blocks and neighborhoods is resident led beautification. Beautification efforts typically involve the removal or screening of objects seen as ugly and harsh, such as trash and debris, and the addition or enhancement of objects seen as attractive, such as trees and plants (Draus et al., 2020; G.

Kim, 2020). Community engagement is vital in these efforts as it leads to shared personal and community goals (Stewart et al., 2019). Additionally, community engagement in greening initiatives enhances feelings of ownership, connection with the neighborhood social fabric, and leads to feelings of stewardship (Mullenbach et al., 2019; Stewart et al., 2019).

A visualization of the literature review and its sources is exhibited in Figure 2.
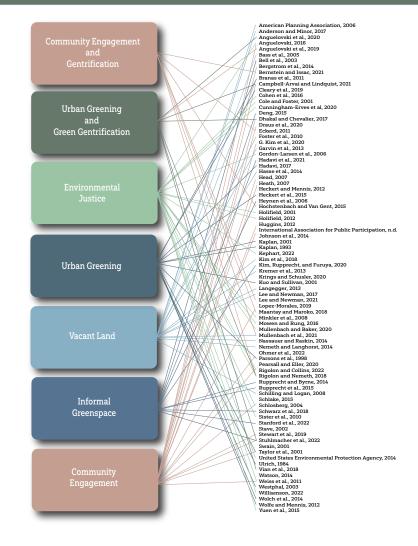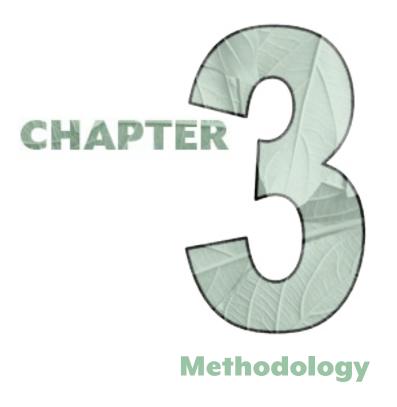

Figure 2: Literature Map.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Chapter 3: Methodology

Data Collection

This study collects and analyzes data from selected precedents of greening programs and initiatives through online search as well as semi structured interviews. Both precedent studies and the semi structured interviews helped inform the strategies and principles that are the outcome of this research. The developed strategies and principles are intended to be adapted to the case of Kansas City.

Precedent Studies Selection

After a literature review to better understand community engagement, a search for precedents was performed. Using Google, a keyphrase search was conducted to find greening vacant lot initiatives in various cities. Key phrases included "vacant lot initiatives" and "greening vacant lot initiatives". A list of cities with vacant lots initiatives was generated as a result of the Google search. Each initiative was then further investigated using a Google keyphrase search to determine which vacant lot initiative had a greening component to it. Upon selection, each city and subsequent greening initiative was further investigated through project websites, other related websites, and newspaper articles to better understand each greening initiative. A Google Scholar keyphrase search was also conducted to determine if any scholarly works were published on the specific greening initiatives. Keyphrases included "vacant lot and the selected city", "greening vacant lots and the selected city" and the "name of the project".

Semi Structured Interviews

Social data collection consisted of semi structured interviews with project coordinators involved in the selected projects. The semi structured interviews helped to further understand the techniques and strategies of community engagement that were used in the greening vacant lot initiative. Information obtained from the analysis of the precedents was used to guide the development of the interview questions with project coordinators or managers. Selected project coordinators were contacted via email and interviews arranged. Interviews occurred via the video conferencing platforms of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Notes were taken, and interviews were recorded for later transcription.

The interview consisted of questions related to the initiative itself and community engagement. Questions about the initiative included the number of parcels greened, the sources of funding, the goals of the initiative, the entities involved, the struggles faced by the initiative, and the success of the initiative. Other questions included what improvements could be made to the initiative, how the residents have benefited, and whether it resulted in neighborhood stabilization. Project coordinators were also asked about the role community engagement played in the initiative. Questions included what type of community engagement was used, how the initiative got people involved, whether the initiative actively involved marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people, and what were some of the approaches used to actively engage the community. Additionally, project coordinators were asked if the initiative had the flexibility to make changes to the program based on community input and how community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative. Project coordinators were given the opportunity to provide additional insight about community engagement not covered by the interview questions.

Analysis of Precedent Studies and Semi Structured Interviews

Upon completion of the systematic search and selection of precedents, the precedents were then analyzed based on a framework and matrix. Upon completion of the semi structured interviews, the data collected was transcribed into a word document and organized in excel sheets. The data was then analyzed and compared to determine common themes, ideas, and concepts to guide the community engagement processes. Comparisons based on the influence of the age of the initiative, the scale of the initiative, and the program type on community engagement were also conducted using the data collected.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis and Findings
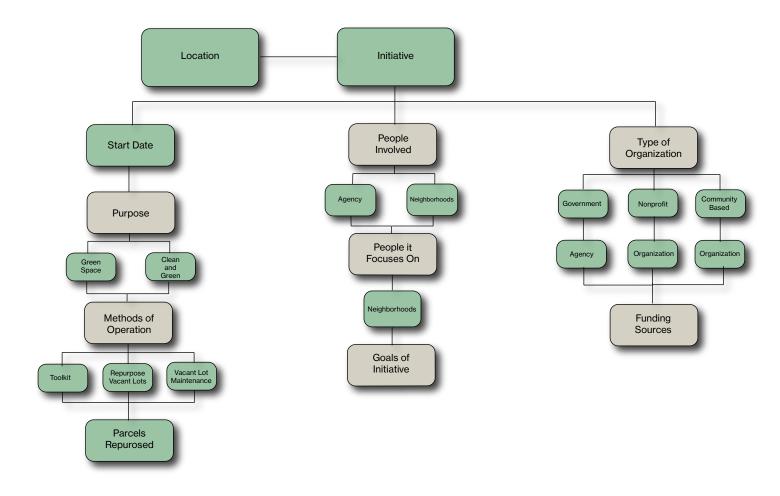
Figure 3: Framework for Analysis.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

Analysis of Precedent Studies

After the completion of the systematic searches, the greening initiatives were studied and analyzed. The precedents were evaluated to better understand the project, the successes of each project, and the role community engagement had in project. A framework was applied to each of the precedent studies, as seen in Figure 3. The framework consisted of basic information obtained from the systematic searches, including the initial start date of the program, the type of program, the number of parcels repurposed, the agencies and people involved, goals of the initiative, and the funding sources.

Table 2: Precedent Selection Matrix.

Initiative	Type		Age		Scale			Program Type	
	Nonprofit	City Led	Older than 10 years	Less than 10 years	Small	Medium	Large	Clean and Green	Repurpose Lots
Philadelphia LandCare Program Philadelphia, PA	X		X				X	X	
Chicago Large Lots Program Chicago, IL		X		X			X		X
Detroit Future City Working with Lots Detroit, MI	X			X		X		X	
Adopt-a-Lot Program Baltimore, MD		X	X				X		X
Raincheck Buffalo, NY		X		X		X		X	
Vacant to Vibrant Cleveland, OH	X			X	X				X
AFS Indiana Project Greenspace Indianapolis, IN	X		X			X			X
Growing Green New Orleans, LA		X		X		X			X
Clean and Green Flint, MI	X		X				X	X	
Adopt-a-Lot Program Pittsburgh, PA		X		X		X			X
Adopt-a-Lot Program Los Angeles, CA	X			X	X				X
Vacant Lot to Greenways Kansas City, MO	X			X	X				X
Vacant to Vibrant Kansas City, MO	X			X		X			X

A matrix (see Table 2) was also developed to better understand the selected precedents. The matrix categorized the precedents based the type of initiative (nonprofit or city led initiative), the age of the initiative (older than 10 years or less than 10 years), the scale of the initiative (large or small), and the program type (clean and green or repurpose of vacant lots).

Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Along with the New Kensington Community Development Corporation, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society launched a vacant lot reuse pilot program in 1996. The initiative was designed to convert vacant lots into green spaces in the Kensington neighborhood. Upon successful application, the pilot program was expanded, and the Philadelphia LandCare Program was launched in 2004 (Lin et al., 2022). The program, which targets neighborhoods lacking greenspace, partners with a network of contractors and community groups and is supported by the City of Philadelphia. The LandCare Program follows a standard protocol in which a vacant lot is selected, the brush and trash are removed, grass and a few trees are planted, and a low picket fence is installed. The site is then maintained through seasonal mowing, twice per month from April to October. The LandCare Program currently manages 12,000 parcels, with development of 400 to 500 parcels each year (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 2022). Details of the initiative can be found in Figure 4.
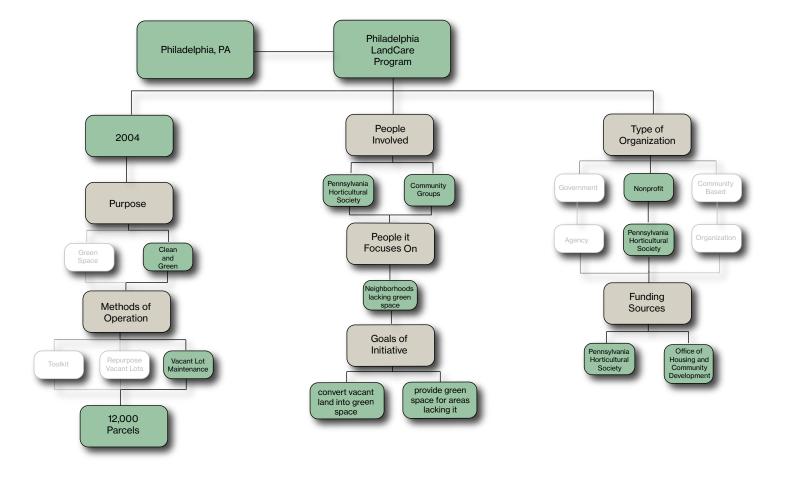
Figure 4: Philadelphia Landcare Program - Philadelphia, PA.

Chicago Large Lots Program – Chicago, Illinois

Launched in 2014 and part of the "Five Year Housing Plan", the Chicago Large Lots Program began as a pilot program in the Englewood and East Garfield Park neighborhoods of the city (City of Chicago, 2020). These were communities in which the city owned large amounts of vacant land. Upon successful application, the program was expanded to include thirty-three neighborhoods on the West and South sides of the city. Acting as a neighborhood stabilization initiative, the program helps property owners, block clubs, and nonprofit organizations purchase vacant properties at an extremely discounted rate, one dollar per vacant residential lot. Approximately 1,430 vacant parcels of the 4,000 for sale, have been purchased and repurposed through the program. Those interested in purchasing a vacant parcel must own property on the same block, be current on property taxes, and have no financial obligations to the city. The purchaser must also maintain ownership of the property for at least five years. Although, the program allows for the addition of a structure, it encourages residents to beautify the area by expanding the yards of existing homes and/or creating gardens or play areas (Large Lots, 2020). The framework, as it applies to the Chicago Large Lots Program, can be seen in Figure 5.
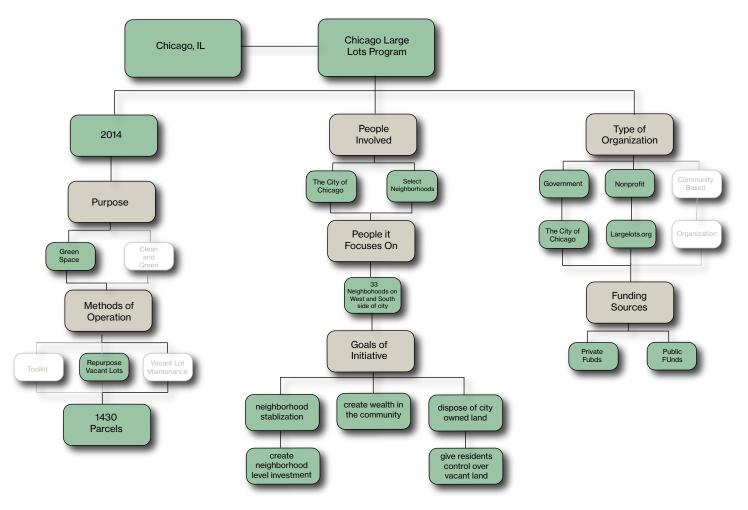
Figure 5: Chicago Large Lots Program - Chicago, IL

Detroit Future City Working with Lots Program – Detroit, Michigan

Launched in 2015, to catalyze the implementation of the Detroit Strategic Framework, the Detroit Future City Working with Lots Program is a nonprofit aimed at accelerating the revitalization of vacant land. It has three components, an annual grant program, a workshop series, and a maintenance program aimed at transforming vacant land into well-maintained landscapes. In order to activate community spaces, beautify neighborhoods and address increased rainfall through green stormwater infrastructure practices, the program encourages residents to install one of thirty-eight lot designs. The Detroit Future City Working with Lots Program guides residents through the publication of the "Field Guide to Working with Lots." The program is funded by the Kresge Foundation, the Erb Family Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the Americana Foundation, and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (Detroit City Future, 2020). Details of the Detroit Future City Working with Lots Program can be found in Figure 6.
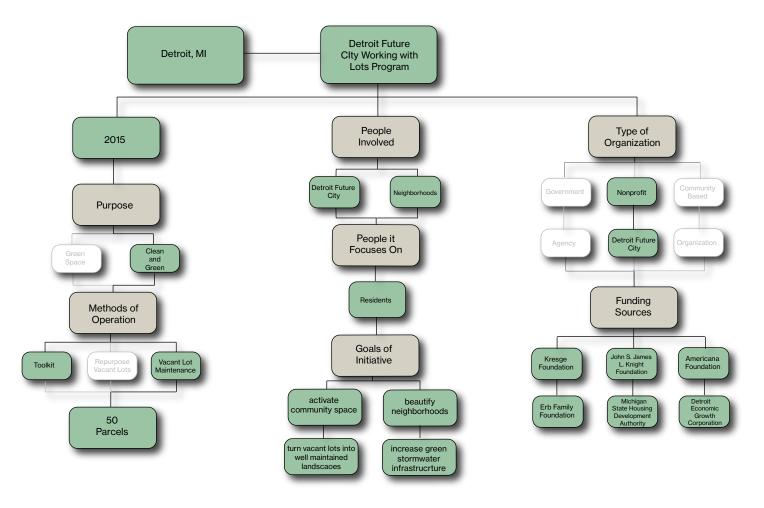
Figure 6: Detroit Future City Working with Vacant Lots Program - Detroit, MI.

Adopt-a-Lot Program – Baltimore, Maryland

The Adopt-A-Lot Program is an initiative encouraging residents to adopt a city owned parcel of vacant land within their neighborhood and transform it into a community green space. The program, part of the Department of Housing and Community Development, gives residents the opportunity to use city owned land for green space without the burden of taxes or other financial obligations that accompany ownership. The program is open to any resident, civic or nonprofit organization, school group, business group, or neighborhood group willing to maintain and care for the parcel (City of Baltimore, 2020). The framework, as it applies to the Adopt a Lot Program – Baltimore, MD, can be seen in Figure 7.
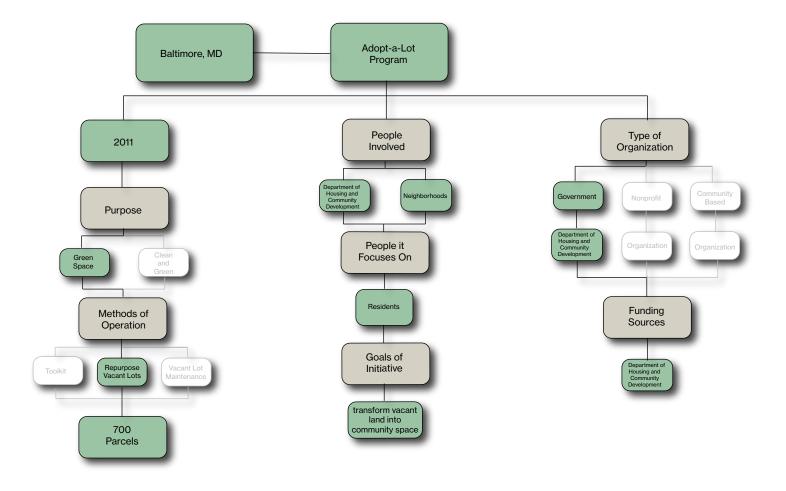
Figure 7: Adopt a Lot Porgram - Baltimore, MD.

Raincheck – Buffalo, New York

Launched in 2015, Raincheck is part of the Green Infrastructure Master Plan by the Buffalo Sewer Authority promoting green streets, green parking lots, use of rain barrels, and the greening of vacant lots after demolition. After demolition, the site is regraded to minimize water flow off the lot, a topsoil that promotes infiltration and plant growth is utilized, and a deep-rooted turf grass is planted. Lots are mowed once per growing season through the use of a low-growing grass seed mix. Funded through a combination of state and federal grants, and the city's capital fund and general operating fund commitments with the aid of the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, the program has greened 224 post demolition sites. Key partners of the program include the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning, Office of Permits and Inspections, Department of Public Works, Community Foundation of Buffalo, and Niagara Riverkeeper (Buffalo Sewer Authority, 2018). Details of the Raincheck Program – Buffalo, NY can be seen in Figure 8.
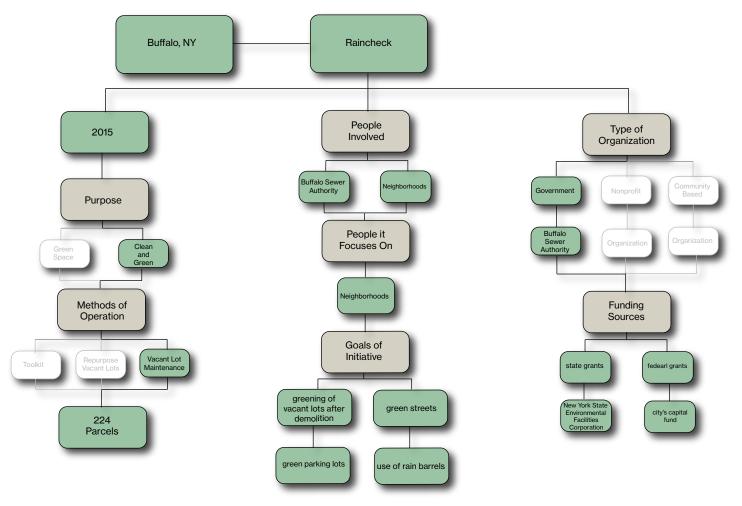
Figure 8: Raincheck Program - Buffalo, NY.

Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, Ohio

Launched in 2013 and part of a larger initiative initiated by the Cleveland Botanical Garden, the Vacant to Vibrant program is aimed at repurposing vacant land through green infrastructure for stormwater management. Funded through a grant from the Great Lakes Protection Fund and drawing inspiration from Re-imagining Cleveland, the program repurposes vacant lots for the benefit of the community (Hyman, 2020). The framework, as it applies to Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, can be seen in Figure 9.
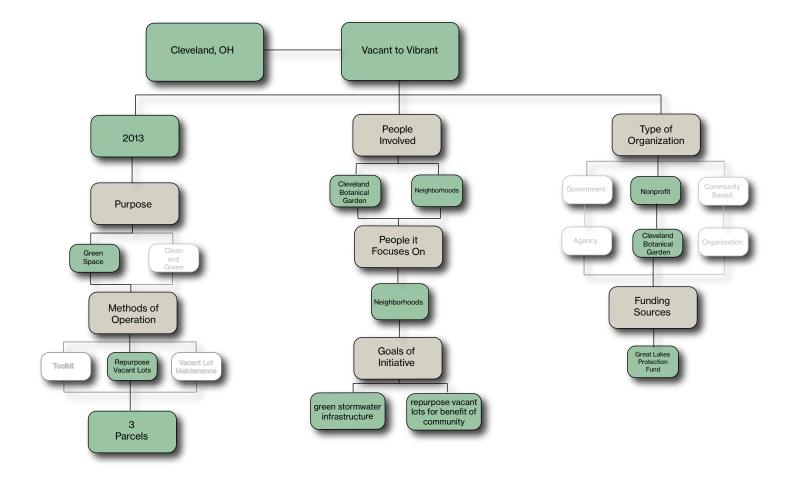
Figure 9: Vacant to VIbrant - Cleveland, OH

AES Indiana Project Greenspace – Indianapolis, Indiana

Launched in 2006 as part of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, the AES Indiana Project Greenspace project is aimed at eliminating blight by transforming vacant lots into natural, beautiful, and functional neighborhood green spaces and pocket parks. As a community based placemaking program dedicated to grassroots community led projects, it has initiated and completed 82 projects. Each project is tailored to the selected site and the vision of the local community group. Working with the community through a three-year design and implementation process, the program leads community members through a visioning process for the site and a landscape architect helps transform the ideas into a design. AES Indiana Project Greenspace also provides maintenance training and a site-specific handbook to the community members (Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, 2020). Details of the AES Project Greenspace – Indianapolis, IN can be found in Figure 10.
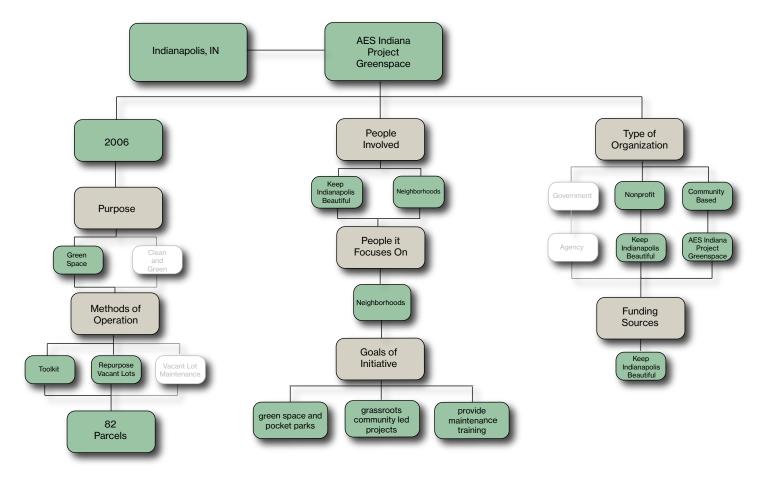
Figure 10: AES Indiana Project Greenspace Program - Indianapolis, IN.

Growing Green – New Orleans, Louisiana

Launched in 2014 by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, Growing Green allows residents to lease a vacant lot and transform it into a community garden or green space. Vacant lots can be leased for $250 per year for a period of three years, after which they are available for purchase. This lease-to-purchase project operates at a neighborhood scale and is only available to residents of the neighborhood and neighborhood organizations (The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, 2020). The framework, as it applies to Growing Green – New Orleans, LA, can be seen in Figure 11.
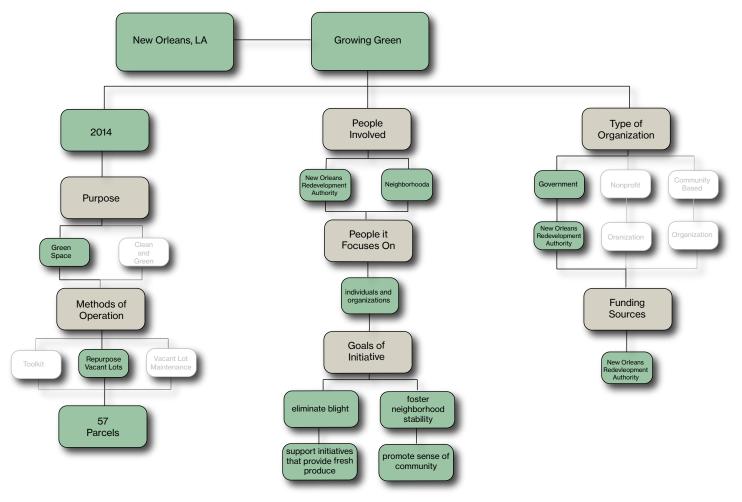
Figure 11: Growing Green Porgram - New Orleans, LA.

Clean and Green – Flint, Michigan

Launched in 2004 by the Genesee County Land Bank, the Clean and Green Program supports community groups and organizations in the cleaning, maintaining, and beautifying of otherwise vacant properties. Participating community-based groups receive stipends for their maintenance work, with much of the stipend being used to employ local youth. Approximately 3,700 vacant properties are seasonally maintained each year. The Genesee County Land Bank seeks to partner with community-based organization to advance community-based capacity, neighborhood health, youth engagement, and the reuse of vacant land (Genesee County Land Bank, n.d.). Details of Clean and Green – Flint, MI, can be found in Figure 12.
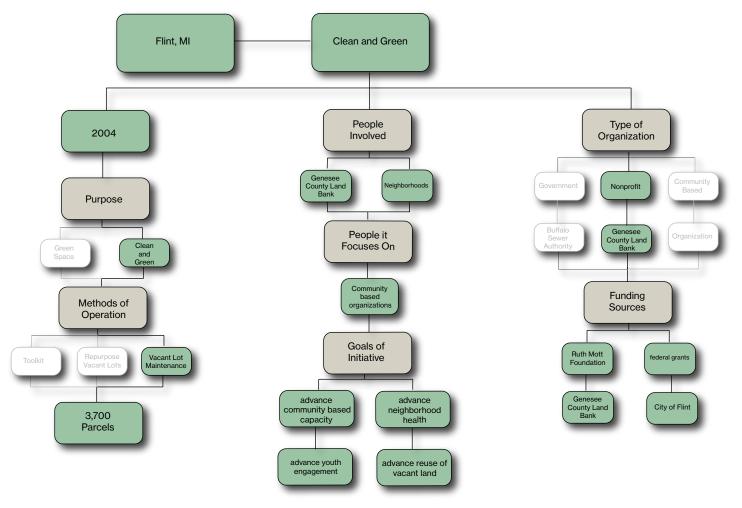
Figure 12: Clean and Green Program - Flint, MI.

Adopt-a-Lot Program – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Developed as part of the Vacant Lot Toolkit and the City's Open Space Plan, the Adopt-a-Lot Program aims to beautify city owned vacant land and streamline the process by which to access city owned vacant lots. To combat the problems associated with city owned vacant land, the goals of the initiative are to foster neighborhood interaction, re-imagine the potential of vacant lots, and encourage environmental awareness. The strategy of the program is to temporarily or permanently reuse vacant lots to achieve financial, social, and ecological benefits for communities. As part of 40 community led projects, 114 vacant lots have been transformed into community assets across the city (The City of Pittsburgh, n.d.). The framework, as it applies to Adopt a Lot Program – Pittsburgh, PA, can be seen in Figure 13.
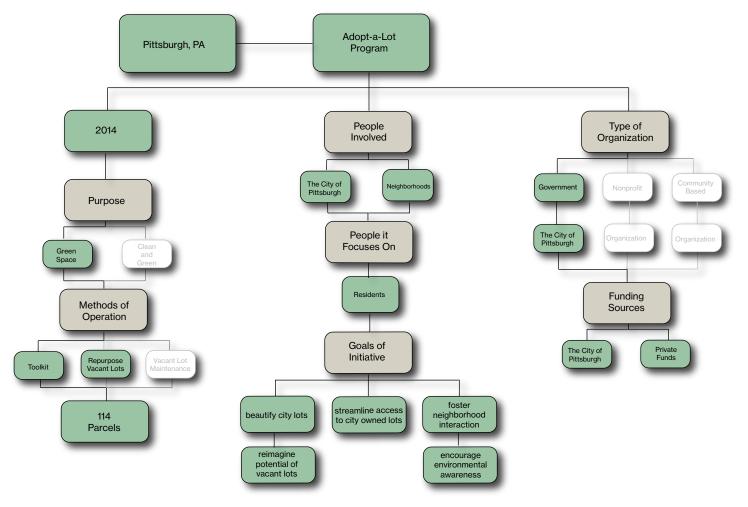
Figure 13: Adopt a Lot Program - Pittsburgh, PA.

Adopt-a-Lot Program – Los Angeles, California

Launched in 2013 as a collaboration between the City of Los Angeles and the Free Lots Angeles collective, the Adopt-a-Lot Program is a pilot program that enables community groups in park-poor neighborhoods to "adopt" city owned vacant land and transform them into community spaces. Led by Kounkuey Design Initiative and Inclusive Action for the City, the program gives community groups access to city owned vacant lots for 3, 6, or 12 months. The goal of the pilot program is to lay the groundwork for a long-term shift in the management and availability of public resources like vacant lands. A vacant lot activation toolkit was also developed as part of the program to aid community groups in the transformation of vacant lots (Adopt a Lot Los Angeles, n.d.). Details of Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles, CA can be found in Figure 14.
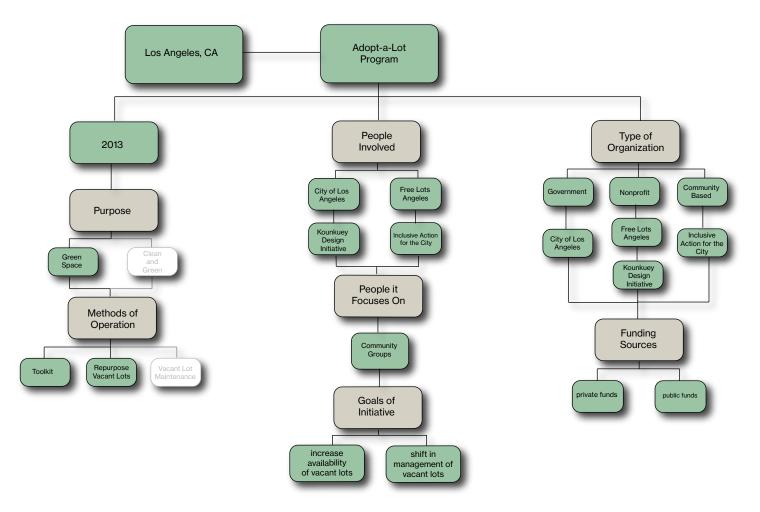
Figure 14: Adopt a Lot Program - Los Angeles, CA.

Vacant Lots to Greenways – Kansas City, Missouri

Launched in 2015, by the Heartland Conservation Alliance, the Vacant Lots to Greenways project's goal is to find and connect vacant lots to create a greenway along the Blue River. The aim of the project is to create an accessible amenity for the community and to showcase green infrastructure that addresses stormwater pollution. The process involves both active community engagement and site visits to identify vacant lots best suited for re-use and preservation as open space (Urban Waters Learning Network, 2022). The framework, as it applies to Vacant Lots to Greenways – Kansas City, MO, can be seen in Figure 15.
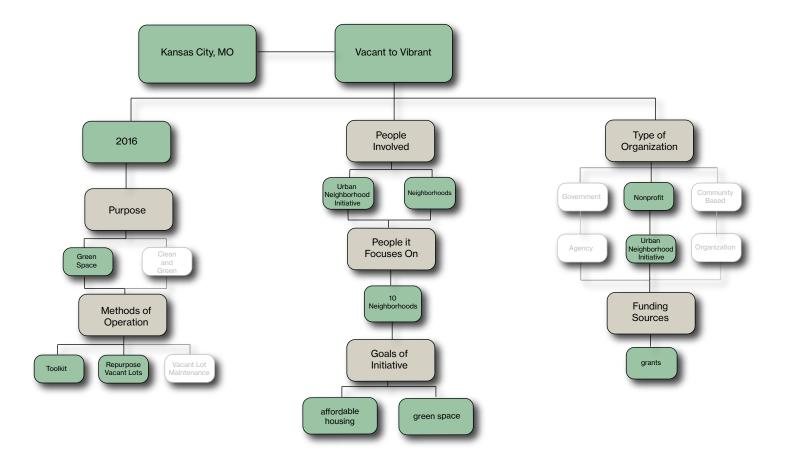
Figure 16: Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City, MO.

Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, Missouri

Serving the neighborhoods of Beacon Hills, Blue Hills, Boston Heights/Mt. Hope, Center City, Ivanhoe, Key Coalition, Manheim Park, Squier Park, Troostwood, Wendell Phillips, Vacant to Vibrant works to transform vacant lots into revitalized, affordable housing or green space. Part of the Urban Neighborhood Initiative, the Vacant to Vibrant program guides communities through its publication of "A Guide to Working with Lots." The guide helps residents assess vacant lots and transform them using eight templates that provide detailed planning and installation instructions (Urban Neighborhood Initiative, n.d.). Details of Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, MO can be found in Figure 16.
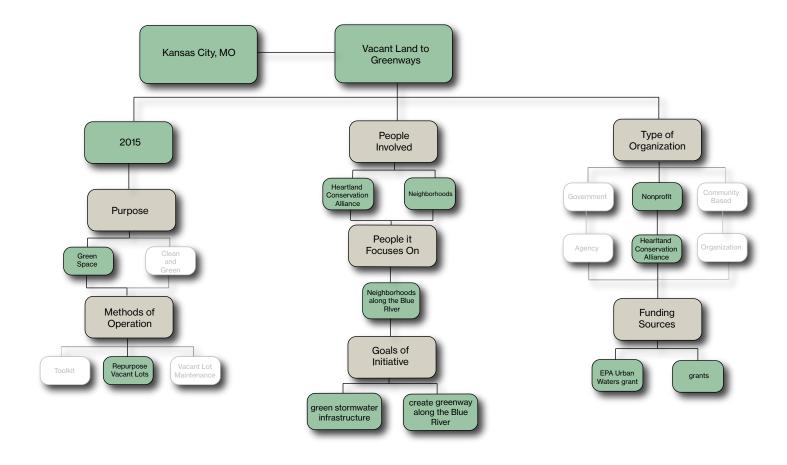
Figure 15: Vacant Lots to Greenways - Kansas City, MO.

Data Analysis of Semi Structured Interviews

All thirteen greening initiatives were contacted via email or project website, with nine responding, see Figure 17. Interviews were organized and conducted with Vacant Land to Greenways – Kansas City, MO, Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, Adopt a Lot – Los Angeles, CA, Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, MO, AES Indiana Project Greenspace – Indianapolis, IN, Adopt a Lot – Pittsburgh, PA, Chicago Large Lots Program – Chicago, IL, Clean and Green – Flint, MI, and Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, PA. Unresponsive initiatives included Raincheck - Buffalo, NY, Detroit Future Working with Vacant Lots - Detroit, MI, Growing Green – New Orleans, LA, and Adopt a Lot – Baltimore, MD. The data collected as a result of the semi structured interviews was comparatively analyzed and a set of strategies and principles was developed.
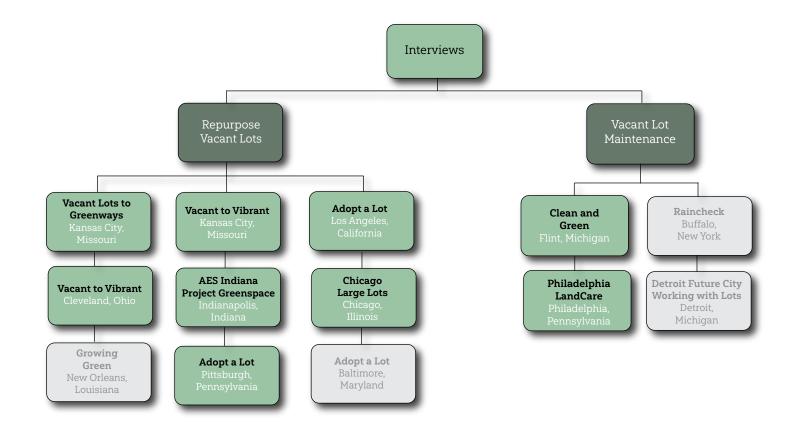
Figure 17: Interview Responses. Initiatives highlighted in gray were unresponsive.

Upon completion, semi structured interviews were transcribed into a word document and reviewed several times to determine common themes, ideas, and/or concepts. Data was transferred into excel sheets for organization and comparison purposes. The commonalities determined through the review process led to a set of guiding themes. Combined with the evaluation of the precedents, the guiding themes helped to inform the development of strategies and principles of community engagement that will help guide greening vacant lot initiatives in Kansas City, MO. In addition, the data collected from the semi structured interviews was compared based on age of initiative, scale of initiative, and type of program. These comparisons helped to develop a recommendation for a greening vacant lot initiative for Kansas City, MO.

A word cloud was generated highlighting the key words and their prevalence from the semi structured interviews, as seen in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Word Cloud of Key Words.

Comparison of Initiatives Based on Scale

The nine greening initiatives were categorized based on scale to explore their difference, as seen in Figure 19. Scale of initiative often influences the level of impact the initiative has on communities and neighborhoods. The size of the initiative frequently has an impact on how it alters the appearance of a neighborhood. Furthermore, it often impacts the level of awareness about the program, the degree of participation in the program, and funding sources and allocation. Although the scale is not proportionate, categorization was based on the vacant lots greened by the initiatives and grouped accordingly into the three categories.

Small-scale initiatives greened no more than three vacant lots and included Vacant Land to Greenways – Kansas City, MO, Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, and Adopt a Lot – Los Angeles, CA. The medium-scale initiatives greened between 40 and 166 vacant lots and included Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, MO, AES Indiana Project Greenspace - Indianapolis, IN, and Adopt a Lot – Pittsburgh, PA. The large-scale initiatives greened between 1,830 and 12,000 vacant lots and included Chicago Large Lots Program - Chicago, IL, Clean and Green - Flint, MI, and Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, PA.
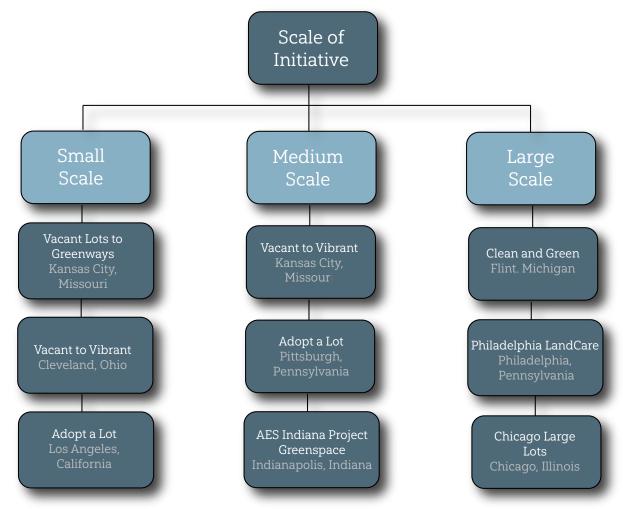
Figure 19: Scale of Initiative. Initiatives were grouped based on scale of initiative: small scale, medium scale, and large scale.

Both the medium-scale and large-scale initiatives cited providing access to greenspace, creating greenspace, and eliminating blight as the major goals of the initiative. The small-scale initiatives had varying goals such as the conservation of the area surrounding the Blue River, repurposing vacant lots for stormwater parks, and transforming unused vacant lots into community assets. While both the medium-scale and large-scale initiatives tended to target low to moderate income communities experiencing high rates of vacancy, the small-scale initiatives targeted communities based on particular requirements, such as communities near the Blue River, communities wanting stormwater infrastructure, and park poor communities, which are defined as areas lacking adequate or any outdoor green space. One participant described the situation facing many communities, stating:

And then a bunch of other local community groups sort of noticed that the communities that lacked either parks entirely or lacked quality access to quality parks, also were the neighborhoods that had, we are saturated with vacant land. So they were like this very weird mismatch, where it was they didn't have parks, but they also had all this like open space.

Across all scales, communities and residents have benefitted by receiving much needed access to greenspace. Both the medium-scale and large-scale initiatives state that the initiatives have resulted in greater neighborhood pride and ownership. Initiatives "demonstrate that resident groups can take ownership of vacant land and provide community serving programs and amenities.", as stated by one participant. Across all scales, success of the initiative was measured by the fact that the spaces are being utilized by the community and its residents. The medium-scale and large-scale initiatives have resulted in neighborhood stabilization by transforming and revitalizing neighborhoods and providing a catalyst for further improvements, as exhibited by the following statement:

"They've joined in neighborhood planning, and they've created their own neighborhood plans, and it's it seems that it's clean and green, was kind of a stem for those initiatives to grow off. You know a lot of our groups. They'll start as a smaller community group, you know. It may just be a couple of neighbors on the block getting together and cleaning it up, and then it expands outward, and a lot of

groups become involved in additional programs."

Another participant stated:

"People really appreciate the efforts of our of our clean and green groups. There's a safety issue. People feel more secure in their neighborhood. The beautification piece: neighborhoods look a lot better, they are cleaner and they are again safer."

Analysis of the data suggests that the scale of the initiative does not play a role in certain aspects of the initiative. Although, the goals of the small-scale initiatives were tailored to fulfilling specific requirements, all the initiatives provided or will provide the community with some sort of green space. In all instances, residents benefited from the addition of green space within the community. Success of the initiative was measured across all scales by the utilization of the space by the community and its residents.

While both the medium-scale and large-scale initiatives resulted in neighborhood stabilization through transforming and revitalizing neighborhoods, it is unknown as to whether the small-scale initiatives will have the same result at a smaller scale. This is due to the fact that two of the initiatives are still in the planning phase or early in implementation and it is too soon to tell if they resulted in neighborhood stabilization. It is important to note that the three vacant lots repurposed in Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland have since been sold and developed.

Does scale of the initiative play a role in community engagement?

Community engagement varied among the grouped initiatives. The small-scale initiatives focused on door-to-door engagement, surveys, neighborhood meetings, and one day site activations. The medium-scale initiatives focused on social media outreach, community meetings, and utilizing existing connections within the community. The large-scale initiatives focused on door-to-door engagement, community outreach, community meetings, word of mouth, and working with organizations already embedded in the community.

The stage in which community members were involved varied based on the initiative.

The small-scale initiatives involved the community during the development of the initiative, the planning phase, or development of the design concept. The medium-scale initiatives involved the community during the application process or the final stages of development of the initiative. The large-scale initiatives involved the community during the planning of the initiative or in site selection. Both the small-scale and medium-scale initiatives emphasized the importance of leaving the design of the space up to the community.

Both the small-scale and medium-scale initiatives got people involved in the initiative through conversations with the community. The large-scale initiatives utilized working with community and community organizations. The medium-scale and large-scale initiatives relied on word of mouth to get people involved.

In addition, both the small-scale and large-scale initiatives utilized door-to-door engagement. The medium-scale and large-scale initiatives utilized social media as a way to engage the community. The small-scale initiatives cited that door-to-door engagement was the most successful. The medium-scale initiatives cited the use of trusted liaisons, or a committee comprised of community members as the most successful. The large-scale initiatives cited working with community organizations already embedded in the community as the most successful approach to community engagement.

The small-scale and large-scale initiatives emphasized the importance of proper community engagement in helping to achieve the goals of the initiative, with one participant stating:

> "I think we know that if you don't talk to someone, they won't use the site, the wrong people or the people that you know you don't want using the site might monopolize it. So, [community engagement] was key. Its understanding that people won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged around it."

Both the medium-scale and large-scale initiatives cited the importance of building trust as central to helping achieve the goals of the initiative.

Analysis of the data suggests that scale of the initiative does play a role in community engagement. This is best demonstrated by the fact that each scale utilized different approaches to community engagement. Additionally, the stage in which community members were involved also differed based on scale, varying from the development and planning of the initiative to the application process to site selection. Successful approaches to community engagement also differed among the scales, with the small-scale initiatives citing door-to-door engagement as most successful whereas the use of trusted liaisons or committee comprised of community members was most successful in the medium-scale initiatives and working with organizations already embedded in the community was most successful in the large-scale initiatives. How initiatives got people involved also differed across the scales.

Although the data suggests the scale of the initiative does matter in community engagement, there are some important takeaways. Community engagement and building trust are central to helping achieve the goals of the initiatives. Door-to-door engagement is often successful, with it providing the most honest feedback. With one participant stating, "Honestly, door to door was a really great way to engage with residents. We probably got the most feedback and the most honest feedback that way."

The use of trusted liaisons, the use of committees comprised of community members, and working with community organizations already embedded in the community seem to be valuable approaches to effective community engagement as mentioned by some participants. One participant stated, "We also got a lot of honest, good feedback through our community liaisons. [Community members] were much more likely to be direct with people they trusted." Another participant stated "[Trusted liaisons] already had deep engagement in the areas where we were working. They were essentially our project partners. They started hearing feedback about the project in different ways." Conversations with community members seem to play a vital role in getting people involved in an initiative. A visualization of the key takeaways can be seen in Figure 20.

Community engagement is a dynamic and evolving process. It is also iterative and

reflective, as demonstrated in Figure 20. Figure 20 and the subsequent Figures 22, 24, 25 exhibit only a part of the community engagement process. Community engagement is a continual process that evolves as the needs and wants of the community change. For example, as demonstrated in Figure 20, door to door engagement may not need to be repeated as community engagement continues with the vacant lot greening initiative. Ongoing conversations with the community and working with community organizations should continue. As the community engagement evolves so do the practices and strategies. New and additional practice and strategies can and should be added to aid in the success, sustainability, and longevity of the greening initiative.
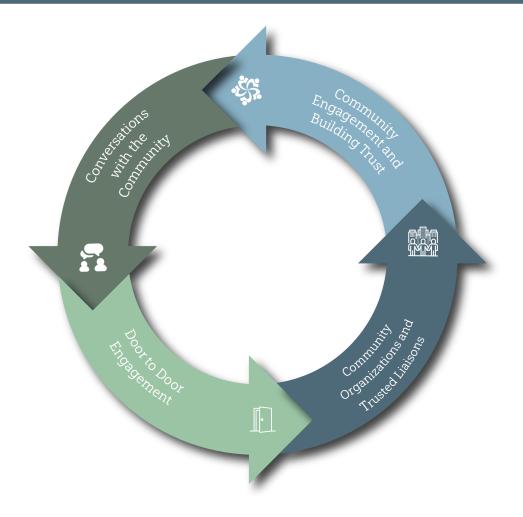
Figure 20: Key Takeaways from Scale Synthesis. Highlighting the important aspects of community engagement as it relates to scale.

Comparison of Program Type

The nine greening initiatives, see Figure 21, were categorized based on program type: vacant lot maintenance and the repurposing of vacant lots. Vacant lot maintenance was defined as those initiatives that cleaned and maintained vacant lots. Repurposing vacant lots was defined as those initiatives that developed vacant lots into green space, such as parks or community gardens. The two program types selected vary in implementation. The vacant lot maintenance program is a low-cost solution to the greening of vacant lots, whereas the repurposing of vacant lots can be more costly, often affecting funding utilization and allocation. This often also affects the number of vacant lots that are maintained or repurposed. The purpose of both program type often differs, with the vacant lot maintenance often focusing on reducing blight and neglect, whereas the repurposing of vacant lots focuses on providing a green amenity. The two different program types were explored to better understand the similarities and differences in community engagement.

The vacant lot maintenance or "clean and green" initiatives included Clean and Green – Flint, MI and the Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia. The repurposing of vacant lots initiatives included Vacant Land to Greenways – Kansas City, MO, Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, Adopt a Lot – Los Angeles, CA, Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, MO, AES Indiana Project Greenspace - Indianapolis, IN, Adopt a Lot – Pittsburgh, PA, and the Chicago Large Lots Program – Chicago, IL.

Does program type play a role in community engagement?

For the "clean and green" initiatives community involvement began at site selection or the application process. For the repurposing of vacant lot initiatives community involvement began at the development or planning of the initiative, development of design concept, or application
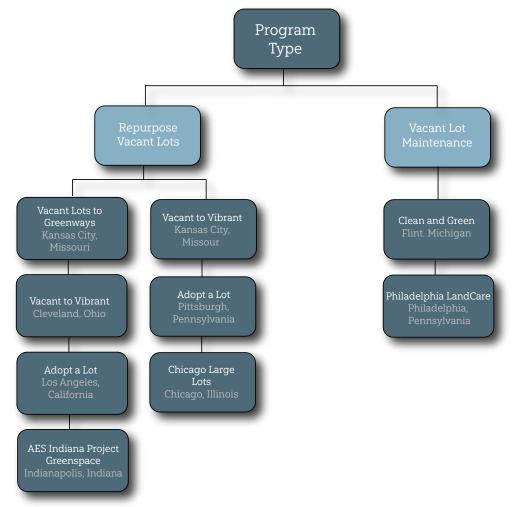
Figure 21: Program Type. Initiatives were grouped based on porgram type: vacant lot maintenance and repurposing of vacant lots.

process. Although both program types were influenced by conversations with the community in the development of the initiative, the repurposing vacant lots initiatives also utilized input from community meetings, community organizations, and meetings with stakeholders.

In order to get people involved, one "clean and green" initiative relied on word of mouth and interactions between residents and participants in the program. The approach taken by the repurposing of vacant lot initiatives was more varied and included outreach to the community, conversations with the community, attendance of community meetings, word of mouth, community build days, and volunteer days. One participant stated:

> "But during the process, it's really one on one communication, making sure that they're aware of the meetings that they have input during the meetings, that they're aware of volunteer days, implementation days, every aspect of the design, from what pavers we use to the types of plants and trees that we'll be going in their space, nothing is left up to the implementer or the designer, it is all up to the community."

In addition to both initiative types utilizing community meetings, door-to-door interactions, and social media as ways to engage the community. The "clean and green" initiatives also focused on working with community organizations already embedded in the community and participation in community events. Whereas the focus of the community engagement for the repurposing of vacant lots was in the three approaches stated above.

The repurposing of vacant lots initiatives cited door-to-door engagement, community meetings, partnering with existing community organizations, active engagement, the use of trusted liaisons or committees with community members, and conversations with community members as successful community engagement approaches. The "clean and green" initiatives cited word of mouth, participation in community events, conversations with community organizations, and the utilization of connections within the community as successful community engagement approaches. While community engagement is important, the "clean and green" initiatives note that the work being done to the vacant lots often speaks for itself and is an important way in which the program grows. One participant explained:

> "A lot of folks will be like: Why are you mowing that? But what is clean and green? And they'll inform the residents about what they're doing, and a lot of times, you know, may recruit them, and others may want to create their own community group based on those conversations."

Although some differences occur between the "clean and green" initiatives and the repurposing of vacant lots initiatives, there are similarities. Both program types emphasize the importance of building trust with the community. In addition, both program types understand the need for proper community engagement and being flexible. One participant noted, "What makes good community engagement is the ability for the person to be flexible and tailor their engagement style to the project or the person." Being open to feedback and implementing feedback when possible were qualities shared by both program types.

With the exception of Vacant Lots to Greenways, the initiatives focused on low to moderate income areas, subsequently communities of color. Conversations with community members influenced the development and sustainability of the initiative in both program types. Word of mouth was a popular way to get people involved for both program types. Engaging communities via community meetings, door-to-door interactions, and social media were other similarities shared by both program types.

Analysis of the data suggests that community engagement program type. This is demonstrated by the differences and similarities exhibited between the program types. For example, both initiatives utilized the same approaches to community engagement. Although, the "clean and green" initiatives focused on working with community organizations already embedded in the community, the initiatives also relied on community meetings, door-to-door interactions, and social media as ways to engage the community similar to that of the repurposing vacant lot initiatives. Other similarities included recognizing the importance of both community engagement and building trust, being flexible, being open to feedback, and focusing on low to moderate income areas. The development of both program types was influenced by conversations with community members. Differences included at what stage people were involved in the initiative, how the initiative got people involved, and what community engagement approaches were successful.

Of note, is how funding is utilized between the program types. While funding constraints and issues afflict almost every initiative, research indicates that the vacant lot maintenance programs are capable of utilizing their funding more effectively. This is largely because these programs are focused on maintenance of parcels through continued mowing and not on the design of a space. This focus on cleaning and mowing and not design is less costly, thus allowing for these initiatives to green more parcels of land.

Several key takeaways were noted in the comparison. Proper and effective community engagement is both vital and important, as explained by a participant:

"And so really, keeping that in the forefront of our minds whenever we're working on these projects, is: What does the community actually want? What is the community interested in learning about. You know what's their perspective? What's their take on the situation?"

Building trust is central to effective community engagement and success of the initiative. It is important to be flexible and open to feedback. Conversations with community members play a vital role in development and sustainability of the initiative. Figure 22 is a visualization of the key takeaways.

Figure 22: Key Takeaways from Program Type Synthesis. Highlighting the important aspects of community engagement as it relates to program type.

Comparison Based on Age of Initiative

The nine greening initiatives were categorized into two groups: initiatives less than 10 years old and initiatives older than 10 years, as seen in Figure 23. The 10-year mark was selected based on the overall average age of the initiatives. Age of program can influence community engagement as approaches and methods have evolved and improved over time. The realization of the importance of community engagement to the success of an initiative has also increased over time. The differences and similarities between the two age groups were explored to further understand the role age has in an initiative as it relates to community engagement.

The initiatives less than 10 years included Vacant Lots to Greenways – Kansas City, MO, Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, Adopt a Lot – Los Angeles, CA, Vacant to Vibrant – Kansas City, MO, Adopt a Lot – Pittsburgh, PA, and the Chicago Large Lots Program – Chicago, IL. The initiatives older than 10 years included AES Indiana Project Greenspace - Indianapolis, IN, Clean and Green – Flint, MI, and the Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, PA.
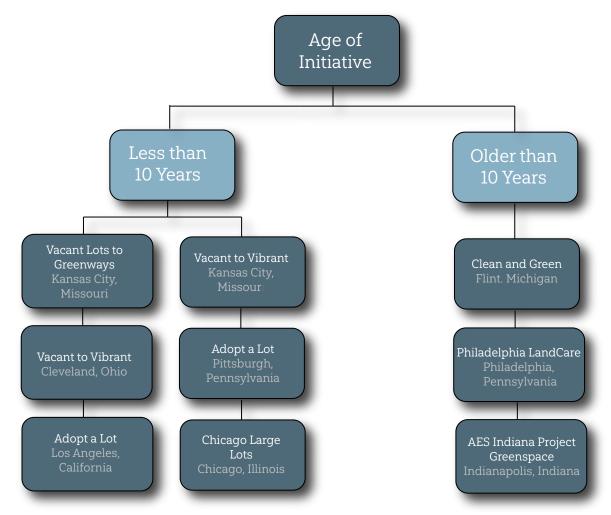
Figure 23: Age of Initiative. Initiatives were grouped based on age: less than 10 years and older than 10 years.

Does age of the program play a role in community engagement?

The initiatives older than 10 years involved the community during the application process or site selection. The initiatives less than 10 years in age involved the community during the development or planning of the initiative or the development of the design concept. In order to get people involved, the initiatives older than 10 years relied on word of mouth, volunteer and implementation days, community outreach, and interactions between participants of the program and the residents. Speaking to the importance of these interactions, one participant stated, "Last year we had I want to say it was close to 1,500 interactions with neighbors as groups were out working. So, they're talking to residents as they're out, answering questions." The initiatives less than 10 years relied on conversations both with community members and community organizations, community meetings, and interactions with residents.

Different approaches to community engagement were utilized between the two age groups. The initiatives less than 10 years in age relied on door-to-door engagement, surveys, community meetings, and a committee of community members to engage the community. The initiatives older than 10 years relied on social media outreach, utilizing connections within the communities, door-to-door interactions, and word of mouth. In addition, working with community organizations already embedded within the community played an important role in the initiatives. With one participant explaining:

"So, what we do typically is part of our engagement is working with community, the community organizations that we work with who are embedded in the neighborhood that we work in, and they do know these neighbors and these neighborhoods. So, we work with them to identify which lots we should focus on and add into our inventory."

These initiatives noted the importance of gathering and implementing feedback when possible and helping to find solutions for difficulties the communities are facing. For example, one participant noted, "We try to listen and hear what groups are having difficulties with, and then try to find solutions from there."

Connections made through interactions with the community and its residents,

conversations with community members and community organizations, participation in community events, and having a committee of community members were cited as successful approaches to community engagement for the initiatives older than 10 years. Door-to-door interactions, conversations with communities and residents, community meetings, and partnerships with local community organizations were cited as successful approaches to community engagement for initiatives less than 10 years.

Although there are differences between the older than 10 years and younger than 10 years initiatives, there are some similarities. Both age groups utilized community meetings, conversations with community members, and meetings with stakeholders in the development of the initiative. Also, both age groups relied on door-to-door engagement as a successful community engagement approach. Except for Vacant Lots to Greenways, the initiatives focused on low to moderate income areas, subsequently communities of color. Additionally, both age groups cited the importance of building trust with the community. The importance of community engagement to the success of the initiative was noted in both age groups, stating that communities and residents will not use a site unless they are properly engaged. Further, both age groups noted that there is some flexibility in either the program or design of the space in response to community input.

Analysis of the data suggests that community engagement does not play a role in the age of the initiative. This is demonstrated by the differences and similarities exhibited between the age groups. Each program type relied on different community engagement approaches.

Other differences included at what stage the community was involved in the initiative, how the initiative got people involved, and what community engagement approaches were successful. Similarities included the utilization of community meetings, conversations with community members, and meetings with stakeholders in the development of the initiative, the use of door-to-door engagement, a focus on low to moderate income areas, and having some flexibility in either the program of design of the space in response to community input.

Several key takeaways were noted in the comparison. Both age groups recognized

the importance of both community engagement and building trust to the success of the initiatives. Community meetings, conversations with community members, and meetings with stakeholders play a vital role in the development of a successful and sustainable initiative. Door-to-door engagement is often the most reliable and successful community engagement approach. Gathering and implementing feedback are important to the sustainability of the initiatives. One initiative found gathering and implementing feedback helpful, stating:

> "And we were able to take that feedback from going out and door knocking and sending out surveys, and really started to the clear picture of how residents viewed that area. And so that was that was definitely helpful."

Utilizing connections within the communities and working with community organizations already embedded within the community are important approaches to building trust within a community. A visualization of the key takeaways can be seen in Figure 24.
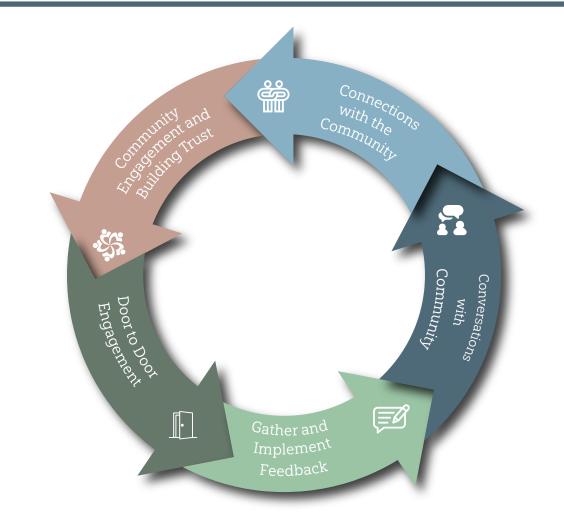
Figure 24: Key Takeaways from Age of Initiative Synthesis. Highlighting the important aspects of community engagement as it relates to age of initiative.

Overall Comparison

In addition to the comparisons discussed above, an overall comparison of the nine initiatives helped to define the strategies and principles developed in the course of this research.

Of the nine initiatives, seven of them developed the initiative with input from the community, mostly stemming from conversations with community members and community meetings. Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH only involved the community in the design aspect, the initiative itself was developed without input from the community. It is important to note that, although the Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, PA can technically function without involving residents, the initiative still values working collaboratively with neighborhoods.

Conversations with community members influenced the development of the initiative in three of the nine initiatives. Community meetings were utilized in the development of the initiative in three of the nine initiatives. Furthermore, three of the nine initiatives utilized door-to-door interactions as a community engagement approach, whereas four of the nine initiatives utilized community meetings. One initiative also noted the importance of working with community organizations already embedded in the neighborhood.

Four of the nine initiatives involved the community during the development or planning of the initiative. In addition, two of the nine initiatives noted the importance of building trust among the community. With one participant stating, "We need to build trust in this slower, more deliberate way; with a steering committee, and with talking to the residents." Four of the nine initiatives cited community engagement as being the key to the success of the initiative. A participant stated:

"We believe community engagement is the most important thing to any successful initiative, and not just informing the community or the public about what's happening but making them an active participant and giving them power in the decision making."

Another participant stated:

"And I would say an example of a program that doesn't have community engagement may not have a community that is as satisfied with the end product, after you've done implementing it, putting in dollars, what's the point if it's not going to be used or cherished by the community. And so it's our intention, that by bringing the community with us every step of the way, that by the end, they have a space that they feel that they have honestly contributed to, and can take ownership of."

Moreover, four of the nine initiatives emphasized the importance of being flexible and accommodating, when possible. Three of the nine initiatives cited the importance of listening to feedback and implementing the feedback when possible. Four of the nine initiatives cited the importance of utilizing conversations with the community and connections within the community as successful community engagement approaches.

All nine initiatives cited success of initiative based on the fact that the space is being utilized by the community, demonstrating that the community and its residents have the capacity to take ownership of vacant land. According to all nine initiatives, the communities and their residents have benefited by receiving much needed access to green space.

Five of the nine initiatives utilized community meetings, whether it was a community meeting specific to the initiative or attendance of an already planned community meeting depended on the initiative. Some initiatives, such as Adopt a Lot – Pittsburgh, PA and the Chicago Large Lots Program – Chicago, IL saw the value in meetings specific to the initiative. While the Philadelphia LandCare Program – Philadelphia, PA saw the value in attending already planned community meeting, stating that planned community meetings were a more natural and organic way to engage the community.

Three of the seven repurposing vacant lot initiatives cited staffing issues, such as staff burnout and the need for more staff, as a struggle facing the initiative. Funding issues and constraints were also cited as a struggle facing the initiatives. It is important to note that despite the funding issues and constraints, one of the initiatives realizes the importance of funding community engagement, stating "That you have to do you have to fund the engagement just like you would fund the initial engineering or anything, because if you don't have the engagement, you won't have the project."

Only one initiative, AES Indiana Project Greenspace – Indianapolis, IN, used a matrix to determine the target population, subsequently focusing on communities of color and areas of high vacancy. The matrix considered poverty rate, income of neighborhood, the social vulnerability index, and access to greenspace. Although, the remaining initiatives focused on communities of color and areas of high vacancy, a matrix was not used to determine the target population.

Additionally, one initiative, Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH, utilized professionals, also known as trusted liaisons, in their interactions with community members. These professionals were associated with partnered organizations and already embedded in the community. The use of these trusted liaisons allowed for deeper engagement as trust was already established.

Several key takeaways can be noted in the comparison. Community engagement is often cited as being the key to the success of the initiative. Building trust is also vital to the success of both the community engagement and the initiative. Be flexible and accommodating when possible. When speaking of the need for a flexible and accommodating approach, one participant explained that, "The community engagement continues to evolve. Because the issue of redeveloping the neighborhoods continues to evolve."

When possible, involve the community in the development and planning of the initiative. Listen to and implement feedback, when possible. Conversations with the community and community meetings are important approaches to community engagement. Work with trusted liaisons and/or community organizations already embedded in the community for deeper engagement. Create a space where community members feel comfortable, with one participant stating:

"And it's kind of our job as community engagement to make them feel comfortable giving that feedback because most times when you work with underserved communities, they don't often feel like they have the agency to speak up for their needs. And so it's my job to make them feel comfortable doing that."

Be both empowering and empathetic, as explained by one participant:

"I would say that generally for the green space program, outreach that is understanding, empathetic and comes from a place of wanting to share resources, which is mainly more mentality based, kind of a softer approach. A more interpersonal approach really helps with I would say having the community feel comfortable in this place. So, the approach that is empowering and empathetic, really helps it at least I've seen to make them feel comfortable in utilizing their voice in our space."

Figure 25 is a visualization of the key takeaways from the overall comparison.
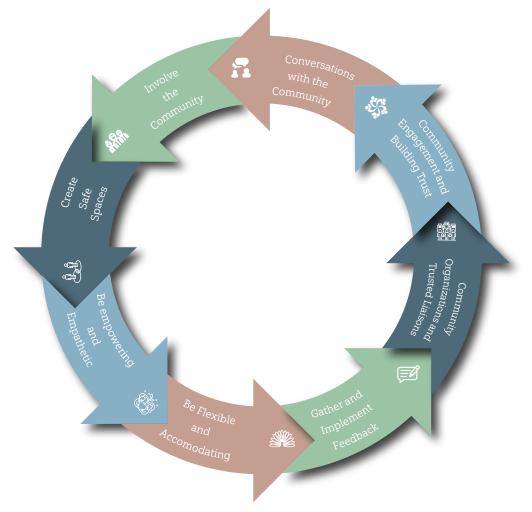
Figure 25: Key Takeaways from Overall Comparison. Highlighting the important aspects of community engagement gathered from the overall comparison.

Figure 26 highlights the findings from the overall comparison and how they relate and connect to one another.
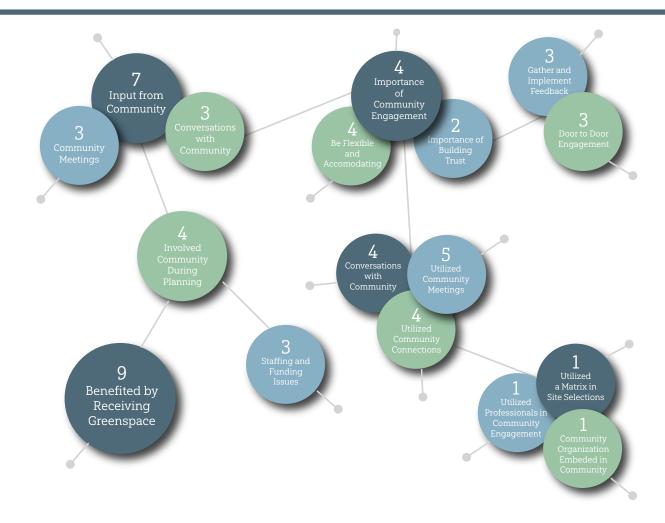
Figure 26: Overall Findings from Overall Comparison. Numbers are representative of the number of initiatives that stated the finding.

Strategies and Principles

The data gathered from the analysis of both the precedent studies and the semi structured interviews led to the development of a set of strategies and principles to help guide community-engaged greening efforts. The seventeen strategies and principles developed from the research have been categorized into seven themes: core values, outreach, involve, collaborate, consult, shared leadership, and community-led solutions. These themes are discussed in the following sections.

Core Values

Be empowering

Strive to empower community members by making their input a valuable part of the process. Provide community members a sense of worth and respect. Encourage individuals of the community to speak up so that their voices are heard, and their opinions are taken seriously.

Be understanding and empathetic

Understanding and empathy are important characteristics of any interaction with community members. Be understanding and empathetic to the concerns and issues faced by the community.

Be flexible

Be flexible, if and when possible. Communities are shifting, dynamic environments. To ensure the project's longevity, be prepared and willing to deal with these problems. The initiative should develop and change along with the communities and projects. The initiative should be representative of the community it is meant to serve.

Build trust

Acknowledge that community members have valuable information and can make contributions to a project. Being accountable to the community is one way to build trust, among other strategies. Establish trust by being accessible to the community, not only to respond to their complaints and concerns but also to recognize and celebrate their successes.

Be transparent

Be open and honest. Make sure expectations are made clear and updates to the initiative are published and accessible. Share resource and information. Communicate clearly and effectively with community members.

Figure 27 is a visualization of the core values of community engagement.
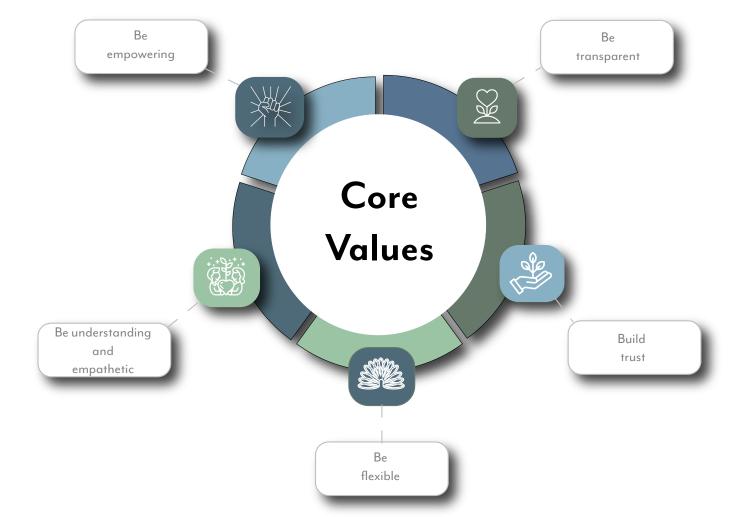
Figure 27: Core. Values. The core values of community engagement as gathered from the research.

Outreach

Have conversations with the community

Use every chance to talk to people in the neighborhood. Engaging the community in conversation will help them feel heard and valued. Discussions with community members will identify possible issues and issues that require resolution. These discussions can bring to light the initiative's accomplishments and shortcomings, and crucial elements required to strengthen the program. Conversations that are continual and constant will assist in maintaining community engagement and create enduring relationships. Additionally, regular conversations will guarantee that the community does not feel forgotten or abandoned after the project is finished.

A visualization of the theme outreach can be seen in Figure 28.
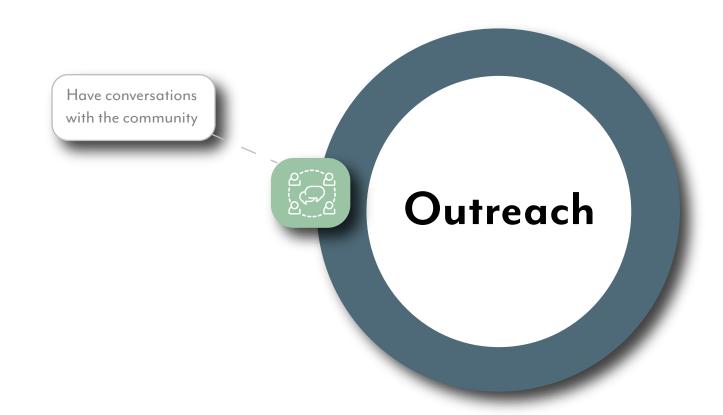
Figure 28: Outreach. Illustrating the principle from the theme outreach.

Practice "active" engagement

Actively and continually engage community members. Engagement should continue after implementation to ensure longevity and sustainability of the efforts. Practicing active engagement keeps community members involved and active. Giveaways of plants or seeds are one example of active engagement, as are gatherings where community members can exchange knowledge.

Engage with whomever the community is and whomever the community represents

Engaging and interacting with those who will be most directly impacted by the program is crucial. Understanding the identity and dynamics of the community depends on knowing who they are and what they stand for. This knowledge can help mitigate any potential negative effects a project might have on the community. It can also aid in addressing issues and concerns particular to the community.

Figure 29 is a visualization of the theme involve.
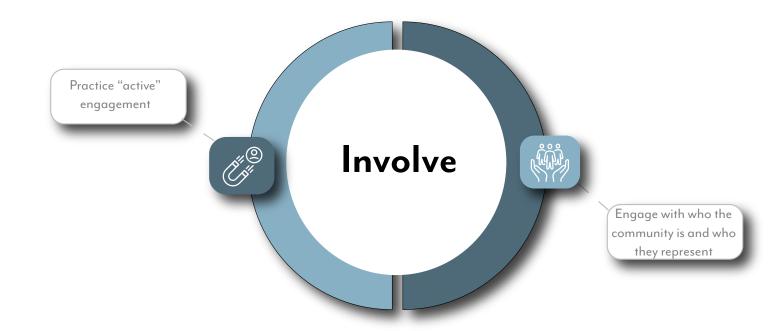
Figure 29: Involve. Highlighting the key strategies and principles from the theme involve.

Collaborate

Build collaborative relationships

      To achieve attainable goals, communities and officials must collaborate. One-sided, top-down approaches to planning and implementation are invalidated by collaboration. Program success is ensured by collaborating with and for a community.

Build connections with the community

      Create a network of people that includes members of the community, government officials, and the community. Information and resources will be shared through this network. Communities may experience comparable difficulties yet being unique. By fostering relationships among community members, a peer-to-peer network can be created where information can be exchanged, and issues can be jointly resolved. Developing relationships with the authorities will help to humanize the procedures and processes. Community members will feel as though they are dealing with a person rather than a system.

A visualization of the theme collaborate can be seen in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Collaborate. Illustrating the key strategies and principles from the theme collaborate.

Consult

Make people feel comfortable utilizing their voice

Strive to create an environment in which people feel comfortable utilizing their voice. Every effort should be made to encourage people to voice their opinions, questions, and concerns.

Provide opportunities for feedback

To ensure that community members feel heard and acknowledged, be open to listening to their criticism. With the use of feedback, an existing effort can be strengthened by highlighting both its triumphs and shortcomings. In order to address issues and concerns and ensure the durability and viability of a project, feedback is crucial.

Figure 31 is a visualization of the theme consult.
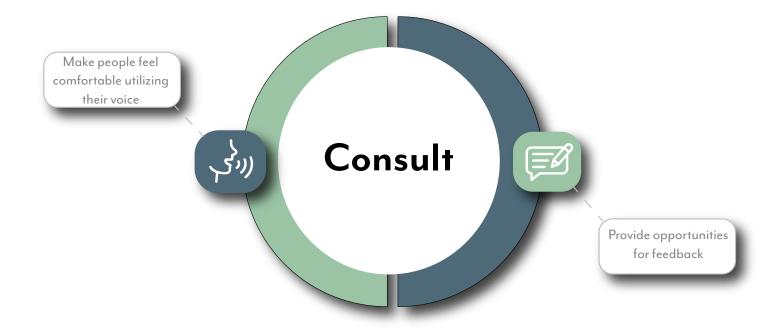
Figure 31: Consult. Highlighting the key strategies and principles from the theme consult.

Shared leadership

Allow participants to create the plan and solutions

The design of the space should reflect the community. Give participants the freedom to develop the strategy and answer. This will make it possible to create a space that the community both wants and needs, lowering the possibility that the area will be ignored or will draw the wrong group(s) of people. Community members are empowered when the plan and solution are developed with their input. It acknowledges their strength, knowledge, and experiences.

Come from a place of wanting to share resources

Communities, especially those who have been historically disadvantaged, often lack the knowledge, skills, and resources to accomplish their goals. The sharing of resources will empower residents and aid in the achievement of their goals. A project's completion, sustainability, and longevity will all be improved by making resources available to the community.

A visualization of the theme shared leadership can be seen in Figure 32.

Figure 32: Shared Leadership. Illustrating the key strategies and principles from the theme shared leadership.

Work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood

Community organizations are in a unique position to help. They are already well-known in the area, and the community values the wonderful work they do. They are acquainted with the community's traits and dynamics. They are essential for building relationships inside the neighborhood. The community they serve already has faith in community organizations. Building trust between the public and officials might be aided by the previously existing trust. Community organizations may make sure that residents feel included and represented.

Develop a committee of community members

Members of the community are in a unique position to provide guidance specific to their area. They are aware of the distinctive characteristics and dynamics of their community, which makes the information they offer crucial to the project's success. Additionally, having a committee made up of community members gives others a sense of inclusion and representation.

Tailor the process to the community

Each community is unique, each community will face different challenges. Respond to the situation by considering the neighborhood and community. Utilize the suggestions made by the community and include them not only in the design of the space but also the design of the procedure.

Figure 33 is a visualization of the theme community – led solutions.

Figure 33: Community-Led Solutions. Highlighting the key strategies and principles from the the theme community-led solutions.

Application to Kansas City, Missouri

With an estimated 5,000 vacant lots located throughout Kansas City, Missouri, urban vacancy is a troubling concern for the city. These vacant lots contribute to blight, concerns for health and physical safety, and diminished quality of life for residents. According to estimates, $33.6 million is lost in revenue each year as a result of unoccupied properties, a number that rises as police attempt to address the rising crime that surrounds them. A majority of the vacant lots are located in the low-income urban areas of Kansas City (Heartland Conservation Alliance, 2013).

Many communities in the Kansas City area are raising concerns about housing challenges. While affordable housing may be the ultimate goal for the city, there is a need to address the abundant number of vacant lots in the short term and over the next five to ten years. In addition to vacant lots, many neighborhoods also lack greenspace. Greening vacant lot initiatives offer an immediate solution to the ongoing issue of urban vacancy while also providing neighborhoods and residents with much needed greenspace.

Although two greening vacant lot initiatives can be found within the city, they are restricted to geographical areas. Vacant Lots to Greenway focuses on areas surrounding the Blue River, while Vacant to Vibrant, both a greening vacant lot and affordable housing initiative, is focused on a selected ten neighborhoods within the city. Therefore, there is a need for a greening initiative that addresses vacant lots across the city. As research has indicated, effective community engagement will be vital to the success of the initiative.

Based on the size of Kansas City and the estimated number of vacant lots, the city would benefit from a medium-scale approach to managing vacant land. A hybrid of a "clean and green" program and repurposing of vacant lots would be an ideal strategy for Kansas City. The program would focus on the cleaning and maintenance of vacant lots with an option to repurpose the lot for greenspace, such as a pocket park or community garden. While the majority of the funding would be utilized for the cleaning and maintenance of the vacant lots, the initiative could apply for smaller grants, both private and public funds, to allow for a select number of parcels to be repurposed each year. The hybrid program would act as an interim land use program with ownership of the vacant parcels remaining with the city or Land Bank. Utilizing the Chicago Large Lots Program, vacant lots could be than sold to residents at a reduced cost for the more permanent repurposing of the lot(s). The initiative would be open to all residents and communities of Kansas City.

Using the Clean and Green Program as a model for the "clean and green" aspect of the initiative, the program could utilize community members and organizations to clean, maintain, and mow the vacant parcels. Community members and organizations could then apply each year for funding to purchase and repurpose the vacant lot(s) they have agreed to maintain. Another approach would be to model it after the Philadelphia LandCare Program, in which community members and organizations are permitted to take ownership of the vacant lot and repurpose it according to the needs and wants of the community with funding the community members or organizations secure themselves.

A hybrid approach was selected for suggested implementation in Kansas City, based on the data collected and analyzed. "Clean and green" programs are able to more effectively utilize the funding available, as maintenance of vacant lots via mowing is less costly than repurposing vacant lots. The utilization of an interim land use program would allow for the benefits of maintained vacant lots while allowing for future development of affordable housing, a need expressed by both the communities and the city. With the option to purchase and repurpose the vacant lot(s), communities would also have the option for permanent greenspace. Communities are unique and dynamic, this hybrid approach to addressing urban vacancy would reflect those characteristics.
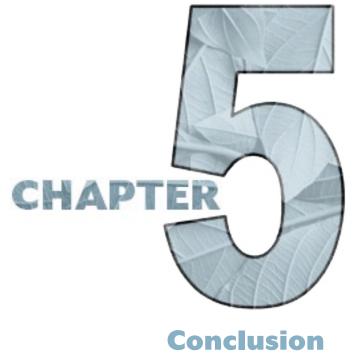
The success of any greening program depends on effective community engagement, which will also play a significant role in the hybrid strategy recommended by this study. Since the suggested hybrid approach is based on existing models, there is not a need for community engagement in the development of the initiative. Community engagement would begin at the site selection phase of implementation. Through community outreach, conversations with

community members and organizations, and community meetings sites would be selected for cleaning and maintenance. In addition to these approaches, door-to-door engagement will also help to make residents and communities aware of the initiative. The initiative will work with community organizations already embedded in the community. Feedback will be gathered and implemented when possible.

The initiative will utilize the strategies and principles developed from this research to foster meaningful and effective community engagement. It will strive to be empowering, understanding, empathetic, flexible, and transparent. Building trust is an important aspect of community engagement and will be accomplished by utilizing the other core values, strategies, and principles. Every effort will be made to share information and resources with the community. Connections and a collaborative relationship with the community will be built. Ongoing dialogue with the community and active engagement will occur, helping to foster the longevity and sustainability of the initiative. With the design of the greenspace(s), the community will be allowed and encouraged to create the plan and the solutions.

While the recommendation of an interim land use program reflects the current needs of Kansas City, there must be allowances made for the future. The benefits of greenspace to a community and its residents are numerous. The value of an average home increases with proximity to greenspace. Therefore, it is safe to assume that some residents may want to keep and maintain a greened vacant lot. Residents should be afforded the opportunity to preserve the greened vacant lot.

As the community changes and vacant lots become greened, whether short term or long term, community engagement must adapt. Future community engagement efforts should reflect the needs and wants of the community. Community engagement should be continuous and ongoing. The community engagement strategy will change over the next five to ten years according to how the community changes. New and additional strategies should be added accordingly with each iteration of community engagement.

CHAPTER **5**

Conclusion

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Discussion

At the individual, organizational, and neighborhood levels, today's community organizers and practitioners purposefully engage residents in ways that support capacity development and empowerment. Current community engagement strategies emphasize residents' and community members' active participation in ways that promote empowerment and capacity development (Ohmer et al., 2022). Since the mid-1980s, when governments began to deregulate the power market, researchers have noticed a noticeable growth in community organizing. In general, formal, state-based initiatives to promote public participation in decision-making, where communities are asked to participate beyond voting, have rapidly expanded since the 1990s (Hussy, 2021). Furthermore, there has been an increase in community-led initiatives over the last few years (Attygalle, n.d.).

This increase in community-led initiatives and a broader understanding of the importance of community engagement has highlighted the need for strategies and principles to help guide effective community engagement. It has also highlighted the need for and importance of funding the cost of community engagement. Initiatives should strive to include the cost of community engagement in the initial funding of an initiative. Community engagement is as equally important as other aspects of an initiative, such as the cost of design or maintenance of the lot. Funds should be allocated accordingly. Community engagement should also begin in the development phase of the initiative, when possible.

As the literature and this research illustrates, community engagement is a vital part of any successful greening initiative. The question then becomes, how do we, as designers and planners, maximize community engagement awareness and knowledge. Principles of community engagement should be taught at the university level. Offering community engagement as a major or minor in universities could help increase knowledge and awareness. Community engagement should be part of continuing education at the professional level.

A certificate program could also be introduced at the university and professional level. Stakeholders involved in greening initiatives should be encouraged to partake in training related to community engagement. Webinars offer a unique opportunity to provide information to all those involved in a greening initiative.

Another question that arises is, how do we, as designers and planners, maximize community engagement efforts. The strategies and principles from the existing literature and this research provide a solid foundation on which effective community engagement can be built. There are numerous ways in which we, as designers and planners, can include the community in a greening initiative. Interactions with the community, ranging from simple conversations with community members to community volunteer or build days, can vastly improve community engagement efforts. Surveys and community meetings offer other avenues of engagement. Finding creative ways to continually interact with the community will help to improve community engagement efforts.

Conclusion

Addressing urban vacancy is a challenge for these cities as they attempt to find ways to utilize this space. Informal green spaces, occurring on vacant land, offer a solution to the crisis of urban vacancy. Such initiatives are not without risks and unintended consequences. Research indicates that community engagement plays a vital role in the implementation of such greening initiatives and in the reduction of the negative consequences of urban greening.

The findings from this study support the existing research on the relationship between community engagement and urban greening initiatives. The results indicate that community engagement plays a vital role in the implementation of greening vacant lot initiatives. This is supported by the responses of the participants in the semi structured interviews. The findings led to the development of a set of strategies and principles for community engagement. The use of effective community engagement strategies, such as the ones developed from this research, ensures the success, longevity, and sustainability of an initiative.

Based on the findings, a recommendation for a greening vacant lot initiative was made for Kansas City, Missouri. The recommendation was an interim land use program that could lead to permanent green space. In this initiative, vacant lots would be cleaned and maintained with an option for development into permanent green space. It is also recommended that the strategies and principles of community engagement developed from this research be utilized in this initiative to help ensure the success, longevity, and sustainability of the program.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, scholarly articles were limited to English only. Secondly, interviews are limited to the response of project coordinators and their willingness to be interviewed. Finally, another limiting factor was time, as this research was conducted as part of a Master's Report. The research, semi structured interviews, and data analysis had to be conducted in a short time frame to allow for adequate time for completion of the report, which impacts the scope and depth of analyses.

Study Contribution

This study contributes to the limited but growing literature on the relationship between community engagement and urban greening initiatives. The strategies and policies to be developed from this research will help foster meaningful and effective community engagement among community members, community organizations, and stakeholders. The strategies and principles will aid in the implementation of greening vacant lot initiatives.

Broader Implications

Urban vacancy is an ongoing issue, and many cities are trying to combat it by introducing greening vacant lot initiatives. The strategies and principles developed from this research will guide landscape architects, urban planners, policymakers, nonprofits, and community groups in the implementation of future greening vacant lot initiatives. The strategies and principles can also serve as a guide for other types of community engagement projects. This approach can then

be applied to other greening initiatives to aid in the designing of equitable places that reflect the needs of the residents.

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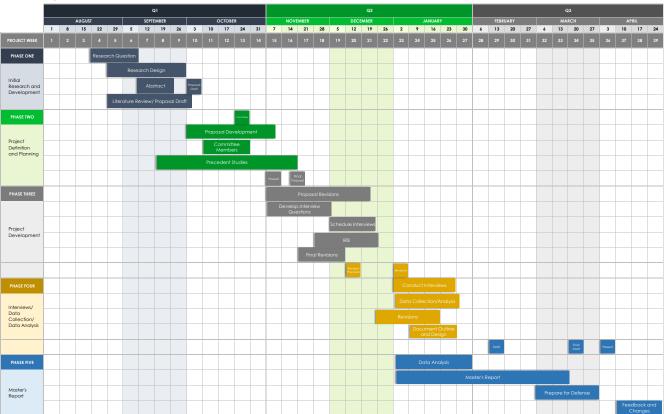
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CHAPTER **6**

Appendices

Appendix A

Master's Report Timeline

		Q1			Q2			Q3		
		AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL

PROJECT WEEK: 1–39

PHASE ONE — Initial Research and Development
- Research Question
- Research Design
- Abstract
- Proposal Draft
- Literature Review/ Proposal Draft

PHASE TWO — Project Definition and Planning
- Committee
- Proposal Development
- Committee Members
- Precedent Studies

PHASE THREE — Project Development
- Proposal / First Proposal
- Proposal Revisions
- Develop Interview Questions
- Schedule Interviews
- IRB
- Final Revisions

PHASE FOUR — Interviews/ Data Collection/ Data Analysis
- Research Proposal
- Revisions
- Conduct Interviews
- Data Collection/Analysis
- Revisions
- Document Outline and Design

PHASE FIVE — Master's Report
- Draft
- Final Draft
- Present
- Data Analysis
- Master's Report
- Prepare for Defense
- Feedback and Changes

Appendix B

TO: Sara Hadavi   Proposal Number: IRB-11451
        Landscape Archit & Comm Plan

FROM: Lisa Rubin, Chair
        Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 12/19/2022

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Community Engaged Greening: Understanding the role of community engagement in vacant lot greening initiatives.."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written – and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, **45 CFR §104(d), category:Exempt Category 2 Subsection ii.**

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

Electronically signed by Phill Vardiman on 12/19/2022 4:47 PM ET
On Behalf of IRB Chair

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Initiative

1. How many parcels of vacant lots have been greened since the beginning of this initiative?
2. What are the sources of funding for the initiative?
3. Who is involved in the initiative (which entities)?
4. What group of people does the initiative target?
5. What are the goals of the initiative?
6. Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?
7. What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?
8. What improvements can be made to the initiative to further the success of it?
9. How have residents benefited from the initiative?
10. Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization? Please explain the observed outcomes.

Community Engagement

1. What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?
   α. What type of community engagement was used?
2. At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?
3. How are you getting people involved in the initiative?
4. Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
5. What were some of the approaches used to successfully encourage engagement within the community?
6. Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?
7. How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?
8. Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?

Appendix D

Figures

Figure 1: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Study Design. [Diagram]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 2: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Literature Map. [Diagram]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 3: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Framework for Precedent Study and Analysis. [Diagram]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 4: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Philadelphia LandCare – Philadelphia, PA. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 5: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Chicago Large Lots – Chicago, IL. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 6: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Detroit Future City Working with Lots – Detroit, MI. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 7: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Adopt a Lot – Baltimore, MD. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 8: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Raincheck – Buffalo, NY. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 9: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Vacant to Vibrant – Cleveland, OH. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 10: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). AES Indiana Project Greenspace – Indianapolis, IN. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Figure 11: Campbell, Stephanie. (2022). Growing Green – New Orleans, LA. [Flowchart]. Manhattan, KS.

Tables

Appendix E

Interview Answers

	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Vacant Lot to Greenways	0	Urban Water Grant; EPA Environmental Justice Grant	KC Center for Neighborhoods; Open Table; Missouri Department of Conservation	residents near the Blue River	conservation of the area surrounding the Blue River
Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland	3	Great Lakes Protection Fund	city of Cleveland; Cleveland Botanical Garden; Western Reserve Land Conservancy	target those wanting stormwater infrastructure	repurposing vacant lots as stormwater parks
Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles	3	foundation grants	Kounkuey Design Initiative; Inclusive Action for the City; Free Lots Angeles	low income communities; communities with neglected infrastructure, park poor areas	transform unused vacant lots into community design; public land for public benefit; public spaces maximize public management

Interview Answers Continued

	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City	40	foundation funding	Heartland Conservation Alliance, Mid American Regional Council	open to anyone; action groups, neighborhood organizations	eliminate vacant lots and preserve greenspace; implement one of the repurpose vacant lot templates; temporarily implement template to deter illegal dumping
AES Indiana Project Greenspace	82	AES and the community	KIB and sub contractors	underserved and low income neighborhoods lacking green space	take underutilized and vacant spaces within underprivileged, underserved neighborhoods and give them access to green space
Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh	166	general fund; open space plan	Department of Public Works; Real Estate Division in the Finance Office; Grow Pittsburgh; Allegheny County Conservation District	English speaking residents	focusing on food apartheid areas

Interview Answers Continued

	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Chicago Large Lots Program	1830	no funding in the beginning, reorganized staff in department	city of Chicago; Department of Planning and Development	property owners, non profits, block clubs	allow residents to purchase city owned vacant land for $1 to expand yards of existing homes, for beautification, for gardens, for houses
Clean and Green	3,700	Ruth Mott Foundation; Hardest Hit Fund	non profit organizations (church groups, block clubs etc.)	local residents	engage community members that are innovative at addressing problems and creating solutions; building relationships between residents, the community, and the land bank
Philadelphia LandCare Program	12,000	Community Development Block Grant; city general fund; Philadelphia Land Bank; Philadelphia Housing Authority	Department of Housing and Community Development; City Council; community organizations	low, moderate income communities that are experiencing high rates of vacancy (stop adding lots once area begins to experience rapid development)	interim land use program; clear blight (overgrown lots impact health and safety); creating jobs and support local businesses (Work Force Program and local landscape contractors)
				open to anyone; low to moderate income residents	targeting vacancy; cleaning blight; preserve greenspace; build relationships

Interview Answers Continued

	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Vacant Lot to Greenways		staffing; outreach takes a lot of resources			
Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland	some goals needed to be redefined	aligning ownership and management of the lots; elements of the design;		some residents didn't feel like they benefited at all (controversial - no investment for decades, a lot of pressure and expectations)	working in partnership with trusted liaisons
Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles	demonstrated residents have the capacity to take ownership of vacant land	staffing issues with partnered non profit; funding	researching what a permanent program would look like; creating a city department; have a reserve fund	gives residents space to create a place that meets their needs and wants	too soon to tell

	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City	pretty successful; residents still thank UNI for providing templates; a way to promote greenspace in the urban core until residents are ready to sell;	funding; illegal dumping; squatting	program length 9 years - time for a revamp; no new information to provide is leading to low attendance at meetings, if there are any (action groups no longer meeting); restructuring to focus on whole neighborhood including housing; groups may meet if there is policy change	neighborhoods still use templates; personally benefited by learning about urban farming (what to grow and how to grow)	
AES Indiana Project Greenspace	space is being utilized; space becomes part of the community	keep community involved over time; older generations; keeping consistent communication as parcel changes hands		feeling empowered in their neighborhood; opportunity to complete goals set for their neighborhood	depends on the neighborhood and how they feel about the space
Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh	transformed neighborhoods; growing measurable amounts of food	staff burnout; demolition debris; partners not having confidence in the program	looking at food systems not just urban agriculture (larger network connecting smaller parcels of land)	giving residents access to land	transformed neighborhoods and communities

	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Chicago Large Lots Program		some people unhappy with the land being sold for $1 (thought it devalued the neighborhood - the land and the neighborhood are worth more) people purchased land and just held on to it (did not do anything with it)	program developed into the ChiBlockBuilder	giving residents opportunity to buy land to beautify it or develop it	
Clean and Green	yes, more applications than there is funding	fallen trees; illegal dumping; funding constraint issues		people feel more secure/ safer; beautification	residents have joined in neighborhood planning; revitalizes neighborhoods; smaller community groups expand outwards
Philadelphia LandCare Program	special requests from Anti Violence Commission to help with greening efforts (greening has been proven to help reduce gun violence); neighborhoods look better, residents feel better, feel more connected;	illegal dumping; private owners of land denying land cleanup	model of Clean and Green becomes norm for dealing with vacant lots; added benefit to lots (addition of community gardens, benches; flowers, etc.)	builds neighborhood pride and ownership; increased property values; encourages residents to clean up block; provides a place for community events	builds pride and ownership that could lead to neighborhood stabilization

Community Engagement Answers

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
Vacant Lot to Greenways	community meetings; research; seeing what residents wanted; seeing what they were interested in learning about	door to door; surveys; public meeting; community advisory board; technical advisory group	development of concept (design of concept put together through input from the community advisory board)	outreach to see what residents want; conversations with residents	target areas along the Blue River
Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland	only in design and recreational aspect	deepening engagement with local partners; neighborhood meetings; door to door	planning part; identified neighborhoods and began engagement	conversations with community members (neighborhood meetings; backyard meeting; meetings with community leaders)	areas of high vacancy; areas with marginalized and disadvantaged residents; neighborhoods lacking redevelopment pressure
Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles	grew out of conversations with communities and guerilla campaign; Free Lots Angeles (coalition of different organizations created to address vacant lots)	one day site activations (demonstration of what a site could be); collect information from residents; translate community ideas, needs, and wants into a design	development of program; reach out to communities to gauge interest	one day site activations; conversations with residents (neighbors in the vicinity of the vacant lot - majority of residents have to approve the site); community build days; workshops; ballot voting; steering committee (help oversee what is happening); build trust in slow and deliberate way	mostly communities of color; low income

Community Engagement Answers Continued

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City					
AES Indiana Project Greenspace	conversations with different communities; general community meetings; meetings with stakeholders to design the process and flow of program	social media outreach; community connections	application process all the way to implementation; reaching out to connections already made	volunteer days; implementation days; make sure people are aware of meetings; make sure people have input during the meetings; community determines design (materials, plants, etc.)	matrix (poverty rate; average income of neighborhood; access to greenspace; social vulnerability index)
Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh	initial meetings with stakeholders; community meetings; meet with organizations individually to obtain a consensus of what a program would look like	community meetings	towards the final stages of development of the program	word of mouth; website; interviews; go out and meet with people	mostly communities of color; significant amount of people adopting land to grow food are people of color living in food apartheid (racist and oppressive systems that create inequitable food environments) areas

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
Chicago Large Lots Program	worked with community organizations to host meetings; looking at the criteria that we're already in the past programs we had and figuring out what they wanted to change - made those our criteria as a policy	community meetings; door to door surveys	planning of the initiative; community developed the Large Lots website (would not have been successful without the website)	work with community organizations to host meetings; worked with non profits focused on community development: it's always important to work with the local community organization that is aligned with this kind of issue	engagement needs to engage whomever the community is and whoever represents the community; disinvested, disadvantaged communities of color
Clean and Green	communication and involvement with communities; providing consistent and continuing support	participation in community events; press releases; news articles; social media outreach; word of mouth	site selection done with community organizations; communicate with neighbors after selection (make themselves available to handle concerns and questions); when we see neighbors we have quick conversations with them	word of mouth; interactions between residents and participants	target areas with higher vacancy
Philadelphia LandCare Program	land care program can technically function without talking to neighbors but they like to work collaboratively with neighbors	work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; flyer; knock on doors to inform residents; attend community meetings	application process to handle	not a volunteer program (need for high quality work requires payment); neighbors are not asked to volunteer (they do not deserve or ask to live in messy neighborhood); providing jobs for Work Force Program	works with low to moderate income, disinvested neighborhoods; who lives in the population and how to hit everybody
	conversations with community; involvement in community; community meetings; work collaboratively with neighbors/ neighborhoods	**door to door;** surveys; community meetings; advisory boards; flyers; conversations with community; community connections; work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; social media	application process to implementation; site selection; design phase; development of program	**conversations with community;** word of mouth; interactions between participants and residents; go out and meet people; implementation days; volunteer days; **committees;** workshops	matrix; work with mostly disadvantaged, disinvested, low income communities of color experiencing high vacancy; **engagement needs to engage whomever the community is and whoever represents the community**

	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Vacant Lot to Greenways	not the project itself but residents influence the design of the project		What does the community really want?
Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland	changes made during/after construction in response to feedback	central to the project; sometimes it let us know we didn't achieve our goals	value in having trusted liaison (allows for deeper engagement) door to door is a great way to engage residents
Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles	trying to be as flexible as possible; respond to location (tailor process to specific community - try to translate exactly what they are saying into a design);	people won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged; we know that if you don't talk to someone they won't use the site, the wrong people or the people that you know you don't want using the site might monopolize it	make it look like the community had a hand in building it; conduct onsite outreach; figure out how to deploy things in the right way not just like informing the community or the public about what's happening, but making them an active participant and giving them power;

	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City		our job to create those connections and make sure that their voices being heard and implemented in the process; What makes good community engagement is the ability for the person to be flexible and tailor their engagement style to the project or the person; outreach that is understanding, empathetic and comes from a place of wanting to share resources, which is mainly more mentality based, kind of a softer approach;	A more interpersonal approach really helps with I would say having the community feel comfortable in this place. says, because I've noticed that we're bringing neighborhoods into our space; So the approach that is empowering and empathetic, really helps it at least I've seen to make them feel comfortable in utilizing their voice in our space.
AES Indiana Project Greenspace	long implementation process with a lot of opportunities for feedback	finding a voice for people who don't know how to advocate for themselves	every aspect of design is up to the community; when you work with underserved communities, they don't often feel like they have the agency to speak up for their needs
Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh	changes to operational policy (use best judgement to adapt to needs and wants of the community); pretty flexible and evolving program	being there for the participants when needed; building trust; building and maintaining a strong program	entire job is being there for the community and continuing to be there

	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Chicago Large Lots Program	certain amount of flexibility whenever you develop a program from a policy that you can make changes to without having to change the regulations; it needs to make sense - you need to justify changes	you will not get far without community engagement; will not get far if community engagement is not good	have to fund the engagement like you fund everything else not dictating what needs to be done, allowing the participants to create the plan and solution; our groups are really the best organizers, and they are the ones that are best equipped to make decisions within their own neighborhoods; flexible maintenance plans (groups have flexibility to maintain different properties within their neighborhoods based on the dynamics of their neighborhood)
Clean and Green	communication with participants about changes they would like to see; implement changes the participants want; feedback survey; try to be flexible and accommodating; listen and hear what groups have to say; find solutions for difficulties groups are facing	community engagement is the key to the success of the program; community engaged lots had stronger neighborhood indicators (safety, feelings of ownership);	
Philadelphia LandCare Program	it is a collaborative relationship; if community requests a lot to be removed from program, it is done without question; do not remove a lot if community takes ownership (i.e. plants a garden, adds flowers, adds benches)	builds trust and transparency; need community to keep an eye on the lots; history of city coming in without positive results	figure out how to do more with the community in identifying uses for lots and sites
	active engagement; door to door; **conversations with communities;** community meetings; building connections; committees	**be flexible**; provide opportunities for feedback; address concerns and help find solutions; implement changes participants want; collaborate	**build trust and transparency;** people won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged; **provides a voice for those who do not know how to advocate for themselves;** groups are really the best organizers, and they are the ones that are best equipped to make decisions within their own neighborhoods; not dictating what needs to be done, allowing the participants to create the plan and solution;

	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Vacant Lots to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles (1)	0; 3; 3	Urban Water Grant; EPA Environmental Justice Grant; Great Lakes Protection Fund; foundation grants	(KC Center for Neighborhoods; Open Table; Missouri Department of Conservation); (city of Cleveland; Cleveland Botanical Garden; Western Reserve Land Conservancy); Kounkuey Design Initiative; Inclusive Action for the City; Free Lots Angeles)	residents near the Blue River; target those wanting stormwater infrastructure; low income communities; communities with neglected infrastructure, park poor areas	conservation of the area surrounding the Blue River; repurposing vacant lots as stormwater parks; transform unused vacant lots into community design; public land for public benefit; public spaces maximize public management
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh (2)	40; 82; 166	foundation funding; AES and the community; general fund; open space plan	Heartland Conservation Alliance, Mid American Regional Council; KIB and sub contractors; (Department of Public Works; Real Estate Division in the Finance Office; Grow Pittsburgh; Allegheny County Conservation District)	open to anyone, action groups, neighborhood organizations; underserved and low income neighborhoods lacking green space; English speaking residents	(eliminate vacant lots and preserve greenspace; implement one of the repurpose vacant lot templates; temporarily implement template to deter illegal dumping); take underutilized and vacant spaces within underprivileged, underserved neighborhoods and give them access to green space; focusing on food apartheid areas
Chicago Large Lots; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare (3)	1,830; 3,700; 12,000	no funding in the beginning, reorganized staff in department; Ruth Mott Foundation, Hardest Hit Fund; Community Development Block Grant, city general fund, Philadelphia Land Bank, Philadelphia Housing Authority	city of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development; non profit organizations (church groups, block clubs etc.); Department of Housing and Community Development, City Council, community organizations	property owners, non profits, block clubs; local residents; low, moderate income communities that are experiencing high rates of vacancy (stop adding lots once area begins to experience rapid development)	allow residents to purchase city owned vacant land for $1 to expand yards of existing homes, for beautification, for gardens, for houses; engage community members that are innovative at addressing problems and creating solutions, building relationships between residents, the community, and the land bank; interim land use program; clear blight (overgrown lots impact health and safety); creating jobs and support local businesses (Work Force Program and local landscape contractors)
				(1) - different groups (2) and (3) - low income	(1) - different goals (2) and (3) - access/create to greenspace (2) and (3) - eliminate blight

	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Vacant Lots to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles (1)	staffing; outreach takes a lot of resources; aligning ownership and management of the lots; elements of the design; staffing issues with partnered non profit; funding	researching what a permanent program would look like; creating a city department; have a reserve fund	some residents didn't feel like they benefited at all (controversial - no investment for decades, a lot of pressure and expectations); gives residents space to create a place that meets their needs and wants	too soon to tell	working in partnership with trusted liaisons
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh (2)	funding, illegal dumping, squatting; (keep community involved over time; older generations; keeping consistent communication as parcel changes hands); (staff burnout; demolition debris; partners not having confidence in the program)	[program length 9 years - time for a revamp; no new information to provide is leading to low attendance at meetings, if there are any (action groups no longer meeting); restructuring to focus on whole neighborhood including housing; groups may meet if there is policy change]; looking at food systems not just urban agriculture (larger network connecting smaller parcels of land)	neighborhoods still use templates, personally benefited by learning about urban farming (what to grow and how to grow); feeling empowered in their neighborhood, opportunity to complete goals set for their neighborhood; giving residents access to land	depends on the neighborhood and how they feel about the space; transformed neighborhoods and communities	ongoing dialogue with the community; work with community for life of the space

	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Chicago Large Lots; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare (3)	some people unhappy with the land being sold for $1 (thought it devalued the neighborhood - the land and the neighborhood are worth more) people purchased land and just held on to it (did not do anything with it); fallen trees, illegal dumping, funding constraint issues; illegal dumping, private owners of land denying land cleanup	program developed into the ChiBlockBuilder; model of Clean and Green becomes norm for dealing with vacant lots, added benefit to lots (addition of community gardens, benches; flowers, etc.)	giving residents opportunity to buy land to beautify it or develop it; people feel more secure/ safer; beautification; (builds neighborhood pride and ownership; increased property values; encourages residents to clean up block; provides a place for community events)	residents have joined in neighborhood planning; revitalizes neighborhoods; smaller community groups expand outwards; builds pride and ownership that could lead to neighborhood stabilization
	(1), (2), (3) - space is being utilized/neighborhoods have benefited	(1), (2), (3).- funding (2) and (3) - illegal dumping	(1) - permanent program/ department; reserve funding (2) - restructure/revamp - look at larger system (3) - program developed into another program; become model for dealing with lots	(1), (2), (3), - give residents space (2) and (3) - neighborhood pride and ownership	(1) - too soon to tell (2) and (3) - transformed/ revitalized neighborhoods

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
Vacant Lots to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles (1)	(community meetings; research; seeing what residents wanted; seeing what they were interested in learning about); (only in design and recreational aspect); (grew out of conversations with communities and guerilla campaign; Free Lots Angeles)	(door to door; surveys; public meeting; community advisory board; technical advisory group); (deepening engagement with local partners; neighborhood meetings; door to door); {one day site activations (demonstration of what a site could be); collect information from residents; translate community ideas, needs, and wants into a design}	development of concept (design of concept put together through input from the community advisory board); planning part - identified neighborhoods and began engagement; development of program - reach out to communities to gauge interest	(outreach to see what residents want; conversations with residents); {conversations with community members (neighborhood meetings; backyard meeting; meetings with community leaders)}; [one day site activations; conversations with residents (neighbors in the vicinity of the vacant lot - majority of residents have to approve the site); community build days; workshops; ballot voting; steering committee (help oversee what is happening); build trust in slow and deliberate way]	target areas along the Blue River; (areas of high vacancy; disadvantaged residents; neighborhoods lacking redevelopment pressure); (mostly communities of color; low income)
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh (2)	conversations with different communities, general community meetings; meetings with stakeholders to design the process and flow of program; (initial meetings with stakeholders; community meetings; meet with organizations individually to obtain a consensus of what a program would look like)	social media outreach, community connections; community meetings	(application process all the way to implementation; reaching out to connections already made); towards the final stages of development of the program	[volunteer days; implementation days; make sure people are aware of meetings; make sure people have input during the meetings; community determines design (materials, plants, etc.)]; (word of mouth; website; interviews; go out and meet with people)	[matrix (poverty rate; average income of neighborhood; access to greenspace; social vulnerability index)]; mostly communities of color; significant amount of people adopting land to grow food are people of color living in food apartheid

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?
Chicago Large Lots; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare (3)	worked with community organizations to host meetings, looking at the criteria that we're already in the past programs we had and figuring out what they wanted to change - made those our criteria as a policy; communication and involvement with communities, providing consistent and continuing support; land care program can technically function without talking to neighbors but they like to work collaboratively with neighbors	community meetings; door to door surveys (participation in community events; press releases; news articles; social media outreach; word of mouth); (work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; flyer; knock on doors to inform residents; attend community meetings)	planning of the initiative, community developed the Large Lots website (would not have been successful without the website); application process; site selection done with community organizations; communicate with neighbors after selection (make themselves available to handle concerns and questions); when we see neighbors we have quick conversations with them	(work with community organizations to host meetings; worked with non profits focused on community development: it's always important to work with the local community organization that is aligned with this kind of issue); word of mouth, interactions between residents and participants; not a volunteer program (need for high quality work requires payment), neighbors are not asked to volunteer (they do not deserve or ask to live in messy neighborhood), providing jobs for Work Force Program	engagement needs to engage whomever the community is and whoever represents the community, disinvested, disadvantaged communities of color; target areas with higher vacancy; works with low to moderate income, disinvested neighborhoods, who lives in the population and how to hit everybody	**Chicago Large Lots; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare (3)**
	(1), (2), (3) - conversations with community; community meetings; (3) - work collaboratively with community	(1) and (3) - used door to door; all - used community meetings (2) and (3) - used social media (1) - community advisory board; technical advisory group (3) - community organizations already embedded in neighborhood	(1) - development of concept; program (2) - application; final stages of development (3) - planning of initiative; application; site selection	(1) and (2) - conversations with community (2) - application; final stages (3) - work with community/organization (2) and (3) - word of mouth	(2) - used matrix (1) and (3) - areas of high vacancy (1), (2), (3) - communities of color	(1) - door to door (1) and (2) - trusted liaisons; Green Space committee (3) - community organizations (1), (2), (3) - conversations/connections

	What were some of the approaches used to successfully encourage engagement within the community?	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Vacant Lots to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles (1)	(door to door; speaking with residents about what they want); {door to door (most feedback/honest feedback); trusted liaisons (more likely to be direct with people they already trusted)}; [one day site activations; community meetings (meeting on site before activation to let neighbors know space can be utilized); get to know as many people as possible]	not the project itself but residents influence the design of the project; changes made during/after construction in response to feedback; [trying to be as flexible as possible; respond to location (tailor process to specific community - try to translate exactly what they are saying into a design)]	central to the project; sometimes it let us know we didn't achieve our goals; people won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged; we know that if you don't talk to someone they won't use the site, the wrong people or the people that you know you don't want using the site might monopolize it	value in having trusted liaison (allows for deeper engagement); make it look like the community had a hand in building it; conduct onsite outreach; figure out how to deploy things in the right way What does the community really want?; door to door is a great way to engage residents; not just like informing the community or the public about what's happening, but making them an active participant and giving them power; A more interpersonal approach really helps with I would say having the community feel comfortable in this place. says, because I've noticed that we're bringing neighborhoods into our space; So the approach that is empowering and empathetic, really helps it at least I've seen to make them feel comfortable in utilizing their voice in our space.
Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh (2)	one on one communication, Green Space Committee; (active engagement (seed giveaways, plant giveaways); harvest festival; do more events that bring people together in person to share information and connect)	long implementation process with a lot of opportunities for feedback; changes to operational policy (use best judgement to adapt to needs and wants of the community); pretty flexible and evolving program	finding a voice for people who don't know how to advocate for themselves; being there for the participants when needed, building trust, building and maintaining a strong program	every aspect of design is up to the community; when you work with underserved communities, they don't often feel like they have the agency to speak up for their needs our job to create those connections and make sure that their voices being heard and implemented in the process; What makes good community engagement is the ability for the person to be flexible and tailor their engagement style to the project or the person; outreach that is understanding, empathetic and comes from a place of wanting to share resources, which is mainly more mentality based, kind of a softer approach; (entire job is being there for the community and continuing to be there)

	What were some of the approaches used to successfully encourage engagement within the community?	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Chicago Large Lots; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare (3)	partner with community organizations to take ownership of land, organizations have taken on physical projects in the neighborhoods (evolving to be more by raising money for development projects); (word of mouth; participation in community events; participation in personal social events; work speaks for itself); (flyers; emails; conversations with community organizations; connections made through talking with people; be present and exists in the spaces that naturally exist)	certain amount of flexibility whenever you develop a program from a policy that you can make changes to without having to change the regulations; it needs to make sense - you need to justify changes; (communication with participants about changes they would like to see; implement changes the participants want; feedback survey; try to be flexible and accommodating; listen and hear what groups have to say; find solutions for difficulties groups are facing); it is a collaborative relationship; if community requests a lot to be removed from program, it is done without question; do not remove a lot if community takes ownership (i.e. plants a garden, adds flowers, adds benches)	you will not get far without community engagement, will not get far if community engagement is not good; community engagement is the key to the success of the program; community engaged lots had stronger neighborhood indicators (safety, feelings of ownership); builds trust and transparency; need community to keep an eye on the lots, history of city coming in without positive results	have to fund the engagement like you fund everything else; not dictating what needs to be done, allowing the participants to create the plan and solution; our groups are really the best organizers, and they are the ones that are best equipped to make decisions within their own neighborhoods; flexible maintenance plans (groups have flexibility to maintain different properties within their neighborhoods based on the dynamics of their neighborhood); figure out how to do more with the community in identifying uses for lots and sites
	(1) - door to door (1) and (2) - trusted liaisons; Green Space committee (3) - community organizations (1), (2), (3) - conversations/connections	(1) - design of space (1), (2), (3) - feedback (1), (2), (3) - flexibility	(2) and (3) - build trust (1) and (3) - proper engagement important (2) - provide a voice for those who can't advocate for themselves	(1) and (2) - leave design up to community

Program	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Clean and Green; Philadelphia LandCare Program (1)	3,700; 12,00	(Ruth Mott Foundation; Hardest Hit Fund); (Community Development Block Grant; city general fund; Philadelphia Land Bank; Philadelphia Housing Authority)	non profit organizations (church groups, block clubs etc.); (Department of Housing and Community Development; City Council; community organizations)	local residents; [low, moderate income communities that are experiencing high rates of vacancy (stop adding lots once area begins to experience rapid development)]	(engage community members that are innovative at addressing problems and creating solutions; building relationships between residents, the community, and the land bank); [interim land use program; clear blight (overgrown lots impact health and safety); creating jobs and support local businesses (Work Force Program and local landscape contractors)]
Vacant Lot to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots Program (2)	0, 3, 3, 40, 82, 166, 1,830	(Urban Water Grant; EPA Environmental Justice Grant)(Great Lakes Protection Fund); (foundation grants); (foundation funding); (AES and the community); (general fund; open space plan); (no funding in the beginning, reorganized staff in department)	(KC Center for Neighborhoods; Open Table; Missouri Department of Conservation); (city of Cleveland; Cleveland Botanical Garden; Western Reserve Land Conservancy); (Kounkuey Design Initiative; Inclusive Action for the City; Free Lots Angeles); (Heartland Conservation Alliance, Mid American Regional Council); (KIB and sub contractors); (Department of Public Works; Real Estate Division in the Finance Office; Grow Pittsburgh; Allegheny County Conservation District); (city of Chicago; Department of Planning and Development)	(residents near the Blue River); (target those wanting stormwater infrastructure); (low income communities; communities with neglected infrastructure, park poor areas); (open to anyone; action groups, neighborhood organizations); (underserved and low income neighborhoods lacking green spaceEnglish speaking residents); (property owners, non profits, block clubs)	(conservation of the area surrounding the Blue River); (repurposing vacant lots as stormwater parks); (transform unused vacant lots into community design; public land for public benefit; public spaces maximize public management); (eliminate vacant lots and preserve greenspace; implement one of the repurpose vacant lot templates; temporarily implement template to deter illegal dumping); (take underutilized and vacant spaces within underprivileged, underserved neighborhoods and give them access to green space); (focusing on food apartheid city owned vacant land for $1 to expand yards of existing homes, for beautification, for gardens, for houses)

Program	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Clean and Green; Philadelphia LandCare Program (1)	yes, more applications than there is funding; [special requests from Anti Violence Commission to help with greening efforts (greening has been proven to help reduce gun violence); neighborhoods look better, residents feel better, feel more connected]	(fallen trees; illegal dumping; funding constraint issues); (illegal dumping; private owners of land denying land clean up)	model of Clean and Green becomes norm for dealing with vacant lots; added benefit to lots (addition of community gardens, benches; flowers, etc.)	(people feel more secure/ safer; beautification); (builds neighborhood pride and ownership; increased property values; encourages residents to clean up block; provides a place for community events)	(residents have joined in neighborhood planning; revitalizes neighborhoods; smaller community groups expand outwards) (builds pride and ownership that could lead to neighborhood stabilization)
Vacant Lot to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots Program (2)	(some goals needed to be redefined); (demonstrated residents have the capacity to take ownership of vacant land); (pretty successful; residents still thank UNI for providing templates; a way to promote greenspace in the urban core until residents are ready to purchase the community); (transformed neighborhoods, growing measurable amounts of food)	(staffing; outreach takes a lot of resources); (aligning ownership and management of the lots; staffing issues with partnered non profit; funding; illegal dumping; squatting); (keep community involved over time; older generations; keeping consistent communication as parcel changes hands); (staff burnout; demolition debris; partners not having confidence in the program); [some people unhappy with the land being sold for $1 (thought it devalued the neighborhood - the land and the neighborhood are worth more) people purchased land and just held on to it (did not do anything with it)]	(researching what a permanent program would look like; creating a city department; have a reserve fund);]program length 9 years - for a revamp; no new information to provide is leading to low attendance at meetings, if there are any (action groups no longer meeting); restructuring to focus on whole neighborhood including housing; groups may meet if there is policy change]; [looking at food systems not just urban agriculture (larger network connecting smaller parcels of land0]; (program developed into the ChiBlockBuilder)	[some residents didn't feel like they benefited at all (controversial - no investment for decades, a lot of pressure and expectations)]; (gives residents space to create a place that meets their needs and wants); [neighborhoods still use templates; personally benefited by learning about urban farming (what to grow and how to grow)]; (feeling empowered in their neighborhood; opportunity to complete goals set for their neighborhood); (giving residents access to land); (giving residents opportunity to buy land to beautify it or develop it)	(too soon to tell); (depends on the neighborhood and how they feel about the space); (transformed neighborhoods and communities); working in partnership with trusted liaisons ongoing dialogue with the community; work with community for life of the space

Program	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?
Clean and Green; Philadelphia LandCare Program (1)	(communication and involvement with communities; providing consistent and continuing support); (land care program can technically function without talking to neighbors but they like to work collaboratively with neighbors)	(participation in community events; press release; news articles; social media outreach; word of mouth); (work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; flyer; knock on doors to inform when we see neighbors we have saved conversations with them)	(application process); [site selection done with community organizations; communicate with neighbors after selection (make themselves available to handle concerns and questions);]	(word of mouth; interactions between residents and participants); [not a volunteer program (need for high quality work requires payment); neighbors are not asked to volunteer (they do not deserve or ask to live in messy neighborhood); providing jobs for Work Force Program]
Vacant Lot to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots Program (2)	(community meetings; research; seeing what residents wanted; seeing what they were interested in learning about); (only in design and recreational aspect); [grew out of conversations with communities and guerrilla campaign; Free Lots Angeles (coalition of different organizations created to address vacant lots)conversations with different communities; general community meetings; meetings with stakeholders to design the process and flow of program]; (initial meetings with stakeholders; community meetings; meet with organizations individually to obtain a consensus of what a program would look like); (worked with community organizations to host meetings; looking at the criteria that we're already in the past programs we had and figuring	(door to door; surveys; public meeting; community advisory board; technical advisory group); (deepening engagement with local partners; neighborhood meetings; door to door); [one day site activations (demonstration of what a site could be); collect information from residents; translate community ideas, needs, and wants into a design]; (social media outreach; community connections); (community meetings); (community meetings; door to door surveys)	[development of concept (design of concept put together through input from the community advisory board)]; (planning part; identified neighborhoods and began engagement); (development of program; reach out to communities to gauge interest); (application process all the way to implementation; reaching out to connections already made); (towards the final stages of development of the program); [planning of the initiative; community developed the Large Lots website (would not have been successful without the website)]	(conduct to see what residents want; conversations with residents); [conversations with community members (neighborhood meetings; backyard meeting; meetings with community leaders]; [one day site activations; conversations with residents (neighbors in the vicinity of the vacant lot - majority of residents have to approve the site); community build days; workshops; ballot voting; steering committee (help oversee what is happening); build trust in slow and deliberate way]; [volunteer days; implementation days; make sure people are aware of meetings; make sure people have input during the harvest festival; do more events that bring people together in person to share ideas and connect]; [partner with community organizations to take ownership of land; organizations have taken on physical projects in the neighborhoods (evolving to be more by raising money for development projects)]
	(1) - conversations with community; (2) - community meetings; conversations with community; community organizations; meetings with stakeholders	(1) - participation in community events; press releases; news articles; social media outreach; word of mouth; work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; flyer; knock on doors to inform residents; attend community meetings; (2) - community meetings; door to door; surveys; social media outreach; community advisory board; technical advisory group; one day site activation	(1) - site selection; application process; (2) - application process; development of program; development of concept	(1) - word of mouth; interactions between residents and participants; (2) - outreach; conversations with community organizations; meetings; word of mouth; workshops; community build days; volunteer days;

Program	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?	What were some of the approaches used to successfully encourage engagement within the community?	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Clean and Green; Philadelphia LandCare Program (1)	(target areas with higher vacancy); (works with low to moderate income, disinvested neighborhoods; who lives in the population and how to let everybody)	(word of mouth; participation in community events; participation in personal social media (flyers; emails; conversations with community organizations; connections made through talking with people; be present talking about)	(communication with participants about changes they would like to see; implement changes the participants want; feedback survey; try to be flexible and accommodating; listen and hear what groups have to say; find solutions for difficulties groups are facing); [it is a collaborative relationship; if community requests a lot to be removed from program, it is done without question; do not remove a lot if community takes ownership (i.e. plants a garden, adds benches)]	[community engagement is the key to the success of the program; community engaged lots had stronger neighborhood indicators (safety, feelings of ownership)]; (builds trust and transparency; need community to keep an eye on the lots; history of city coming in without positive results)	[not dictating what needs to be done, allowing the participants to create the plan and solution; our groups are really the best organizers, and they are the ones that are best equipped to make decisions within their own neighborhoods; flexible maintenance plans (groups have flexibility to maintain different properties within their neighborhoods based on the dynamics of their neighborhood)]; (figure out how to do more with the community in identifying uses for lots and sites) (What does the community really want?); (door to door is a great way to engage residents); (not just like informing the community or the public about what's happening, but making them an active participant and giving them power); (our job to create those connections and make sure that their voices being heard and implemented in the process); (What makes good community engagement is the ability for the person to be flexible and tailor their engagement style to the project or the person); (outreach that is understanding, empathetic and comes from a place of wanting to share resources, which is mainly more of a softer approach); (entire job is being there for the community and continuing to be there)
Vacant Lot to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; AES Indiana Project Greenspace; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots Program (2)	(target areas along the Blue River); (areas of high vacancy; areas with marginalized and disadvantaged residents; neighborhoods lacking redevelopment pressure mostly communities of color; low income; [matrix (poverty rate; average income of neighborhood; access to greenspace; social vulnerability index)]; [mostly communities of color; significant amount of people adopting land to grow food are people of color living in food apartheid (racist and oppressive systems that create inequitable food environments) areas]; (engagement needs to engage whomever the community and whoever represents the community; disinvested, disadvantaged communities of color)	(door to door; speaking with residents about what they want); [door to door (most feedback/honest feedback); trusted liaisons (more likely to be direct with people they already trusted); [one day site activations; community meetings (meeting on site before activation to let neighbors know space can be utilized); get to know as many community organizations as possible); (one on one communication; Green Space Committee); [active engagement (need giveaways, plant giveaways); harvest festival; do more events that bring people together in person to share information and connect]; [partner with community organizations to take ownership of land; organizations have taken on physical projects in the neighborhoods]	[let the project take the residents influence the design of the project); (changes made during/after construction in response to feedback); [trying to be as possible; respond to specific flexible as location activities; (tailor process to specific community - try to translate exactly what they are saying into a design)]; (long implementation process with a lot of opportunities for feedback); [changes to operational policy (use best judgement to adapt to needs and wants of the community)); (pretty flexible and evolving program); (certain amount of flexibility whenever you develop a program from a policy that you can make changes to without having to change the regulations; it needs to make sense - you need a lot of justify changes)	(central to the project; sometimes it let us know we didn't achieve our goals); (people won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged; we know that if you don't talk to someone they won't use the site, the wrong people or the people that you know you don't want using the site might monopolize it); (finding a voice for people who don't know how to advocate for themselves); (being there for the participants when needed; building trust; building and maintaining a strong program); (you will not get far without community engagement; will not get far if community engagement is not good)	[value in having trusted liaison (allows for deeper engagement)]; (make it look like the community had a hand in building it; conduct onsite outreach; figure out how to deploy things in the right way); (every aspect of design is up to the community; when you work with underserved communities, they don't often feel like they have the agency to speak up for their needs); (have to fund the engagement like you fund everything else)
	(1) - high vacancy areas; low income (2) - areas around Blue River; low income; communities of color	(1) - word of mouth; participation in community events; participation in personal social events; work speaks for itself; flyers; emails; conversations with community organizations; connections made through talking with people (2) - door to door; community meetings; one on one conversations; Green Space Committe; partner with community organizations; active engagement; trusted liaisons;	(1) - feedback; try to be flexible (2) - residents influence design; tailor process to community; feedback; try to be flexible		(1) - build trust and transparency; need community to keep eye on lots; need community engagement

	How many parcels of vacant land have been greened since the beginning of the initiative?	What are the sources of funding for the initiative?	Who is involved in the initiative? (what entities)	What group of people does the initiative target?	What are the goals of the initiative?
Vacant Land to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots (1)	0; 3; 3; 40; 166; 1,830	Urban Water Grant; EPA Environmental Justice GrantGreat Lakes Protection Fund; foundation grants; foundation finding; general fund; open space plan; no funding in the beginning, reorganized staff in department	KC Center for Neighborhoods; Open Table; Missouri Department of Conservation; city of Cleveland; Cleveland Botanical Garden; Western Reserve Land Conservancy; Kounkuey Design Initiative; Inclusive Action for the City; Free Lots Angeles; Heartland Conservation Alliance, Mid American Regional Council; Department of Public Works; Real Estate Division in the Finance Office; Grow Pittsburgh; Allegheny County Conservation District; city of Chicago; Department of Planning and Development	residents near the Blue River; target those wanting stormwater infrastructure; low income communities; communities with neglected infrastructure, park poor area; sopen to anyone; action groups, neighborhood organizations; English speaking residents; property owners, non profits, block clubs	
AES Indiana Project Greenscape; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare Program (2)	82; 3,700; 12,000	AES and the community; Ruth Mott Foundation; Hardest Hit Fund; Community Development Block Grant; city general fund; Philadelphia Land Bank; Philadelphia Housing Authority	KIB and sub contractors, non profit organizations (church groups, block clubs etc.)Department of Housing and Community Development; City Council; community organizations	underserved and low income neighborhoods lacking green space; local residents; low, moderate income communities that are experiencing high rates of vacancy (stop adding lots once area begins to experience rapid development)	take underutilized and vacant spaces within underprivileged, underserved neighborhoods and give them access to green space; engage community members that are innovative at addressing problems and creating solutions; building relationships betwee n residents, the community, and the land bankinterim land use program; clear blight (overgrown lots impact health and safety); creating jobs and support local businesses (Work Force Program and local landscape contractors)

	Has the initiative been successful in achieving the goals?	What are some of the struggles faced by the initiative?	What improvements can be made to further the success of the initiative?	How have the residents benefited from the initiative?	Has the initiative resulted in neighborhood stabilization?
Vacant Land to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots (1)	some goals needed to be redefined; demonstrated residents have the capacity to take ownership of vacant landpretty successful; residents still thank UNI for providing templates; a way to promote greenspace in the urban core until residents are ready to sell; transformed neighborhoods; growing measurable amounts of food	staffing; outreach takes a lot of resources; aligning ownership and management of the lots; elements of the design; staffing issues with partnered non profit; funding; funding; squatting staff burnout; demolition debris; partners not having confidence in the programsome people unhappy with the land being sold for $1 (thought it devalued the neighborhood - the land and the neighborhood are worth more) people purchased land and just held on to it (did not do anything with it)	researching what a permanent program would look like; creating a city department; have a reserve fund; program length 9 years - time for a revamp; no new information to provide is leading to low attendance at meetings, if there are any (action groups no longer meeting); restructuring to focus on whole neighborhood including housing; groups may meet if there is policy change; looking at food systems not just urban agriculture (larger network connecting smaller parcels of land); program developed into the ChiBlockBuilder	some residents didn't feel like they benefited at all (controversial - no investment for decades, a lot of pressure and expectations); gives residents space to create a place that meets their needs and wantsneighborhoods still use templates; personally benefited by learning about urban farming (what to grow and how to grow); giving residents access to land; giving residents opportunity to buy land to beautify it or develop it	too soon to telltransformed neighborhoods and communities
AES Indiana Project Greenscape; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare Program (2)	space is being utilized; space becomes part of the communityyes, more applications than there is fundingspecial requests from Anti Violence Commission to help with greening efforts (greening has been proven to help reduce gun violence); neighborhoods look better, residents feel better, feel more connected;	keep community involved over time; older generations; keeping consistent communication as parcel changes hands; fallen trees; illegal dumping; funding constraint issues; illegal dumping; private owners of land denying land cleanup	model of Clean and Green becomes norm for dealing with vacant lots; added benefit to lots (addition of community gardens, benches, flowers, etc.)	feeling empowered in their neighborhood; opportunity to complete goals set for their neighborhoodpeople feel more secure/ safer; beautificationbuilds neighborhood pride and ownership; increased property values; encourages residents to clean up block; provides a place for community events	depends on the neighborhood and how they feel about the spaceresidents have joined in neighborhood planning; revitalizes neighborhoods; smaller community groups expand outwards; builds pride and ownership that could lead to neighborhood stabilization

	What role did community engagement play in the development of the initiative?	What type of community engagement was used?	At what stage in the initiative were community members involved?	How are you getting people involved in the initiative?	Does the initiative actively involve marginalized or disadvantaged groups of people?	What were some of the approaches used to successfully encourage engagement within the community?
Vacant Land to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots (1)	community meetings; research; seeing what residents wanted; seeing what they were interested in learning about; only in design and recreational aspect; grew out of conversations with communities and guerilla campaign; Free Lots Angeles (coalition of different organizations created to address vacant lots)initial meetings with stakeholders; community meetings; meet with organizations individually to obtain a consensus of what a program would look like; worked with community support and care program can technically function without talking to neighbors but they like to work collaboratively with neighbors	door to door; surveys; public meeting; community advisory board; technical advisory group; deepening engagement with local partners; neighborhood meetings; door to doorone day site activations (demonstration of what a site could be); collect information from residents; translate community ideas, needs, and wants into a design; community meetings; community meetings; door to door surveys	development of concept (design of concept put together through input from the community advisory board); planning part; identified neighborhoods and began engagement; development of program; reach out to community organizations to host meetings; planning of the initiative; community developed the Large Lots website (would not have been successful without the website)	outreach to see what residents want; conversations with residents; conversations with community members (neighborhood meetings; backyard meeting; meetings with community leaders); one day site activations; conversations with residents (neighbors in the vicinity of the vacant lot - majority of residents have to approve the site); community build days; workshops; ballot voting; steering committee (help oversee what is happening; build trust in slow and deliberate wayword of mouth; website; interviews; go out and meet with peoplework with community organizations to host meetings; worked with non profits focused on community development: it's always important to work with the local community	target areas along the Blue River; areas of high vacancy; areas with marginalized and disadvantaged residents; neighborhoods lacking redevelopment pressuremostly communities of color; low incomemostly communities of color; significant amount of people adopting land to grow food are people of color living in food apartheid (racist and oppressive systems that create inequitable food environments) areasengagement needs to engage whomever the community is and whoever represents the community; disinvested, disadvantaged communities of color	door to door; speaking with residents about what they want; door to door (most feedback/honest feedback); trusted liaisons (more likely to be direct with people they already trusted); one day site activations; community meetings (meeting on site before activation to let neighbors know space can be utilized); get to know as many people as possibleactive engagement (seed giveaways, plant giveaways); harvest festival; do more events that bring people together in person to share information and connect; partner with community organizations to take ownership of land; organizations have taken on physical projects in the neighborhoods (evolving to be more by raising money for development projects)
AES Indiana Project Greenscape; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare Program (2)	conversations with different communities; general community meetings; meetings with stakeholders to design the process and flow of program; communication and involvement with communities; providing consistent and continuing	social media outreach; community connections; participation in community events; press releases; news articles; social media outreach; word of mouth; work with community organizations already embedded in neighborhood; flyer; knock on doors to inform residents; attend community meetings	application process all the way to implementation; reaching out to connections already madeapplication process site selection done with community organizations; communicate with neighbors after selection (make themselves available to handle concerns and questions); when we see neighbors we have quick conversations with them	volunteer days; implementation days; make sure people are aware of meetings; make sure people have input during the meetings; community determines design (materials, plants, etc.) word of mouth; interactions between residents and participants; not a volunteer program (need for high quality work requires payment); neighbors are not asked to volunteer (they do not deserve or ask to live in messy neighborhood); providing jobs for Work Force Program	matrix (poverty rate; average income of neighborhood; access to greenspace; social vulnerability index) target areas with higher vacancy; works with low to moderate income, disinvested neighborhoods; who lives in the population and how to hit everybody	one on one communication; Green Space Committee, word of mouth; participation in community events; participation in personal social events; work speaks for itselfflyers; emails; conversations with community organizations; connections made through talking with people; be present and exists in the spaces that naturally exist

	Does the initiative have the flexibility to make changes to the program in response to community input?	How do you think community engagement contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative?	Is there anything about the initiative and community engagement you would like to add?
Vacant Land to Greenways; Vacant to Vibrant - Cleveland; Adopt a Lot - Los Angeles; Vacant to Vibrant - Kansas City; Adopt a Lot - Pittsburgh; Chicago Large Lots (1)	not the project itself but residents influence the design of the project; changes made during/after construction in response to feedback; trying to be as flexible as possible; respond to location (tailor process to specific community - try to translate exactly what they are saying into a design); changes to operational policy (use best judgement to adapt to needs and wants of the community); pretty flexible and evolving programcertain amount of flexibility; whenever you develop a program from a policy that you can make changes to without having to change the regulations; it needs to make sense - you need to justify changes	central to the project; sometimes it let us know we didn't achieve our goalspeople won't feel a sense of ownership over space unless they are properly engaged; we know that if you don't talk to someone they won't use the site, the wrong people or the people that you know you don't want using the site might monopolize it; being there for the participants when needed; building trust; building and maintaining a strong program you will not get far without community engagement; will not get far if community engagement is not good value in having trusted liaison (allows for deeper engagement) make it look like the community had a hand in it; conduct onsite outreach; figure out how to deploy things in the right wayhave to find the engagement like you find everything else	What does the community really want? door to door is a great way to engage residentsnot just like informing the community or the public about what's happening, but making them an active participant and giving them power; entire job is being there for the community and continuing to be there
AES Indiana Project Greenscape; Clean and Green; Philadelphia Landcare Program (2)	long implementation process with a lot of opportunities for feedback; communication with participants about changes they would like to see; implement changes the participants want; feedback survey; try to be flexible and accommodating; listen and hear what groups have to say; find solutions for difficulties groups are facing it is a collaborative relationship; if community requests a lot to be removed from program, it is done without question; do not remove a lot if community takes ownership (i.e. plants a garden, adds flowers, adds benches)	every aspect of design is up to the community; when you work with underserved communities, they don't often feel like they have the agency to speak up for their needsnot dictating what needs to be done, allowing the participants to create the plan and solution; our groups are really the best organizers, and they are the ones that are best equipped to make decisions within their own neighborhoods; flexible maintenance plans (groups have flexibility to maintain different properties within their neighborhoods based on the dynamics of their neighborhood) figure out how to do more with the community in identifying uses for lots and sites finding a voice for people who don't know how to advocate for themselves; community engagement is the key to the success of the program; community engaged lots had stronger neighborhood indicators (safety, feelings of ownership); builds trust and transparency; need community to keep an eye on the lots; history of city coming in without positive results	our job to create those connections and make sure that their voices being heard and implemented in the process; What makes good community engagement is the ability for the person to be flexible and tailor their engagement style to the project or the person; outreach that is understanding, empathetic and comes from a place of wanting to share resources, which is mainly more mentality based, kind of a softer approach; A more interpersonal approach really helps with I would say having the community feel comfortable in this place. says, because I've noticed that we're bringing neighborhoods into our space; So the approach that is empowering and empathetic, really helps at least I've seen to make them feel comfortable in utilizing their voice in our space.