

ART IN PLACE:
UTILIZING PUBLIC ART AS A MEANS TO PLACEKEEP PUBLIC SPACE
IN KANSAS CITY'S WEST BOTTOMS

by

TAYLOR ALLEN

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

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2017

Copyright

Taylor Allen

2017

ART

IN PLACE

**UTILIZING PUBLIC ART AS A MEANS TO PLACEKEEP
PUBLIC SPACE IN KANSAS CITY'S WEST BOTTOMS**

Taylor Allen

Art in Place:
Utilizing Public Art as a Means to Placekeep Public Space in Kansas City's West Bottoms

Taylor Allen
Copyright 2017

Masters Report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:
Masters of Landscape Architecture (MLA)

Major Professor: Jason Brody, Ph.D.
Advisory Committee: Vladimir Krstic and Jon Hunt

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



ABSTRACT

Public art is used to accomplish and communicate a wide range of functions within the public realm. This report is about how public art can commemorate place—or 'placekeep'. Placekeeping is about more than the physical space; it is about commemorating the character, memories, and inherent qualities of a place. Public art is a means to display and communicate this to the public in an aesthetic and physical sense. My individual research on public art explores the topic through the context and work done in collaboration with the Kansas City Design Center (KCDC) on the West Bottoms Reborn studio project which is being done through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

This paper explores the meaning, importance, and ability of public art to commemorate and how it can be utilized to preserve the memory of a place and its people, that in this case, could be lost through rapid development and gentrification in the West Bottoms, Kansas City's legacy industrial district. Collaboration with the studio, local artists, stakeholders, and community engagement meeting input has provided the means for creating a system of interrelated public spaces that address critical elements to be activated through public art in order to placekeep in the West Bottoms.

Placekeeping is KCDC's proposal for evolving the intents and processes of placemaking to respond to a place that its community deems as a place that does not need to be 'made'—but rather commemorated or 'placekept' (KCDC 2017). Thus, design interventions and public art must identify and enhance these qualities, not try to present a new identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION 2

Project Introduction 3

02

BACKGROUND 6

KCDC 7

NEA Our Town Grant 8

West Bottoms 9

03

METHODOLOGY 12

Approach and Inquiry 13

Methods 13

04

PUBLIC ART 16

Intro to Public Art 17

Defining Public Art 17

Uses and Function 19

Placekeeping and Commemoration 29

05	
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	32
Background Summary	33
Inventory and Analysis	35
Site Selection Process & Strategies	43
Community Engagement	49
Summary	49
06	
CONCLUSION	54
Findings	55
Challenges	56
Suggestions for Further Research	56
07	
APPENDICES	58
Works Cited	59
Images Cited	61

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 West Bottoms Moments (KCDC 2017)	4
Figure 2.1 Kansas City Districts Near the West Bottoms (KCDC 2017)	10
Figure 4.1 Matrix of Public Art as a Function of Placement and Origin (Hunting 2005)	18
Figure 4.2 Public Art Function Diagram (Allen 2017)	20
Figure 4.3 Walk, Hands, Eyes (Lefkowitz)	21
Figure 4.4 Hurlyburly Installation (Fitzsimmons 2016)	22
Figure 4.5 Woven Pieces in Various Shades of Blue (Fitzsimmons 2016)	22
Figure 4.6 Pull! (Sobota 2016)	23
Figure 4.7 Pull! (Ischay 2013)	23
Figure 4.8 Sitting on Wave Field (Landscape Voice 2012)	24
Figure 4.9 Wave Field at University of Michigan (Unknown)	24
Figure 4.10 Wave Field (Unknown)	24
Figure 4.11 Glow at Night (Unknown)	25
Figure 4.12 Inside of the Structure (Ford 2014)	25
Figure 4.13 2-3 Strassen (Gerz 2008)	26
Figure 4.14 2-3 Street Balconies (Gerz 2008)	26
Figure 4.15 Study for Strings (Philipsz 2012)	27
Figure 4.16 Curbside (Rogers 2002)	28
Figure 4.17 School Hallway (Rogers 2002)	28
Figure 5.1 Figure Ground (KCDC et al. 2017)	36
Figure 5.2 Street Grid and Districts (KCDC et al. 2017)	37

Figure 5.3 Design Interventions (KCDC et al. 2017)	38
Figure 5.4 Hobbs Courtyard Moments (KCDC et al. 2017)	39
Figure 5.5 I-670 Viaduct Moments (KCDC et al. 2017)	40
Figure 5.6 12th Street Alley Moments (KCDC et al. 2017)	40
Figure 5.7 Urban Connections (KCDC et al. 2017)	42
Figure 5.8 Goals and Objectives (KCDC et al. 2017)	44
Figure 5.9 Site Typologies (KCDC et al. 2017)	45
Figure 5.10 Accept/Reject Flowchart (KCDC et al. 2017)	46
Figure 5.11 String Theory: Site Connections (KCDC et al. 2017)	48
Figure 5.12 2/23/27 Community Meeting Feedback (KCDC et al. 2017)	50
Figure 5.13 3/16/17 Community Meeting Feedback (KCDC et al. 2017)	51
Figure 5.14 3/16/17 Community Favorite Sites (KCDC et al. 2017)	52

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank the Kansas City Design Center and National Endowment for the Arts for providing the funding for the studio portion of this project to take place.

Thank you to my Major Professor Dr. Jason Brody and committee members Vladimir Krstic and Jon Hunt for support, guidance, and feedback during the process of this report.

A huge thanks to my parents for instilling in me the importance of education and for setting an honest example of what hard work and accomplishment is. Thank you for your relentless encouragement and support.

Finally, to my KCDC studio for making the last year of architecture school a memorable and amusing one.

01

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

With a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Kansas City Design Center (KCDC) will lead the planning, design, and execution of a placekeeping project addressing art within public spaces in the West Bottoms, Kansas City's legacy industrial district. The NEA describes creative placemaking as a practice when "artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work - placing arts at the table with land-use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies" (NEA Our Town Grant). Because the West Bottoms is a legacy industrial district with a strong history and existing identity, the term placemaking derives to placekeeping. Instead of creating the character of a place, we use placekeeping to refer to the "combined effort to retain and celebrate the particular character of a place. [The West Bottoms legacy industrial district] asks for the assertion of its existing identity" (KCDC 2017).

"Different spaces have different histories—some spanning a few weeks, others decades. Keeping a sense of place requires a thorough analysis of the people, activities, and architecture over time to determine if repurposing a space would negatively affect its history and trajectory. Similar to the civil infrastructure that allows for the transportation of goods and people, public art as cultural infrastructure moves people and ideas through a place with creative design strategies" (KCDC 2017). This report will utilize parts of the Kansas City Design Center Spring 2017 semester studio work on West Bottoms Reborn. Combining my investigation and research on public art with our studio work and collaboration with artists, stakeholders, and the West Bottoms community, this report reveals that in order for public art to be able to commemorate and placekeep in the West Bottoms, community engagement is crucial. The people of the West Bottoms play a major role in determining what it is about the district that is worth keeping, as ultimately this will result in the most effective way to celebrate, commemorate, and enhance the connection between the West Bottoms and its passionate community.



Figure 1.1 West Bottoms Moments (KCDC et al. 2017)

02

BACKGROUND

KCDC

Located in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, the Kansas City Design Center is a nationally recognized, nonprofit educational program and urban design studio for graduate students of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. The mission statement is accomplished through education and public service as KCDC seeks to “partner and collaborate with community organizations, stakeholders and residents, local governments, and design professionals to promote excellence in urban design and the built environment” (KCDC 2015). Each academic semester, students work to develop design concepts and proposals that respond specifically to issues throughout metropolitan Kansas City. The Spring 2017 studio has been assigned a project through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

NEA OUR TOWN GRANT

Through Our Town, the National Endowment for the Arts provides a limited number of grants for creative placemaking projects (NEA 2017). The Our Town grant program supports and funds creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into resilient places with the arts at their core (NEA 2017). KCDC received the NEA Our Town Grant and will take place over the course of three academic semesters spanning from Spring 2017 to Spring 2018. During the Spring 2017 semester, the KCDC studio responsibilities include the selection of sites in the West Bottoms where they are selected “on the basis of the contextual importance of the location, the expressive potential of the physical configuration of the found space, and the practicality of the regulatory covenants and the land ownership associated with it” (KCDC 2017). Using this criteria, the design team will produce further studies for all potential sites. These findings and documentation, in addition to site visits, will be used to make final site selections with input from stakeholders and artist team members. Two additional phases in the following semesters will be carried out by future KCDC studios.

The NEA Grant calls for five main goals:

1. Continue to develop policies first identified in KCMO’s Arts Convergence Plan² which supports artists and artistic productions in the West Bottoms
2. Increase social and civic engagements through the integration of art and cultural production into urban planning
3. Invest in the critical infrastructure and public space needs in the WB
4. Increase art and cultural production through the development of urban infrastructure and public space
5. Increase both population and jobs connected to the arts and culture in the West Bottoms

WEST BOTTOMS

Kansas City's West Bottoms district is located at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas River and sits in the lowlands directly west of downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Flat topography gave way to the construction of railroads and river access for the transportation of goods, establishing Kansas City as an important link across the country. Following this, deterioration occurred for several decades as the area experienced abandonment, fires, floods, and disinvestment. Some of this neglect was healed by the construction of elevated highways that connect downtown KCMO to KCK, but in turn divide the West Bottoms itself. At the ground level, viaducts tear through the urban fabric and result in "hollow, dead space in its underbelly" (KCDC 2017).

Even though the West Bottoms has "fluctuated in density and affluence through the years, it has remained a historical marker in the Kansas City area with several [local and regional] destination venues such as antique shops, restaurants, and haunted houses" (KCDC 2017). Local artist, Jim Woodfill, has described the district as a 'fairground' due to the constant ebb and flow of activities that occur seasonally and sporadically throughout the West Bottoms. Remnants from buildings and means of transportation from different time periods create a patchwork of materials and public infrastructure that contribute to

the physical character of the West Bottoms that so many locals express their appreciation of. Artists are especially drawn to the area due to its possession of unique buildings, low property values, and close vicinity to downtown. However, these attributes also appeal to developers as they realize the value and potential for development and the emerging arts scene as a marketable neighborhood. "With Kansas City in the midst of a growth-spurt, the West Bottoms is poised to develop rapidly" (KCDC 2017).

Fear is a driving emotion that was gathered from public responses as people expressed concern about new development driving out the character and people that make up the place. The West Bottoms is made up of a strong and passionate community that love their place. By considering what the area was and what it is currently, the West Bottoms community can play an engaging role in determining and enhancing the physical and social character of the district (KCDC 2017). In addition, the West Bottoms was chosen not only for its unique character of buildings and public infrastructure, but also for the leftover spaces that are created by them. Ultimately, the West Bottoms will serve as an example of creative placekeeping by utilizing the community's involvement to respond to the inherent qualities that exist and what it is about the character that should be 'placekept.'

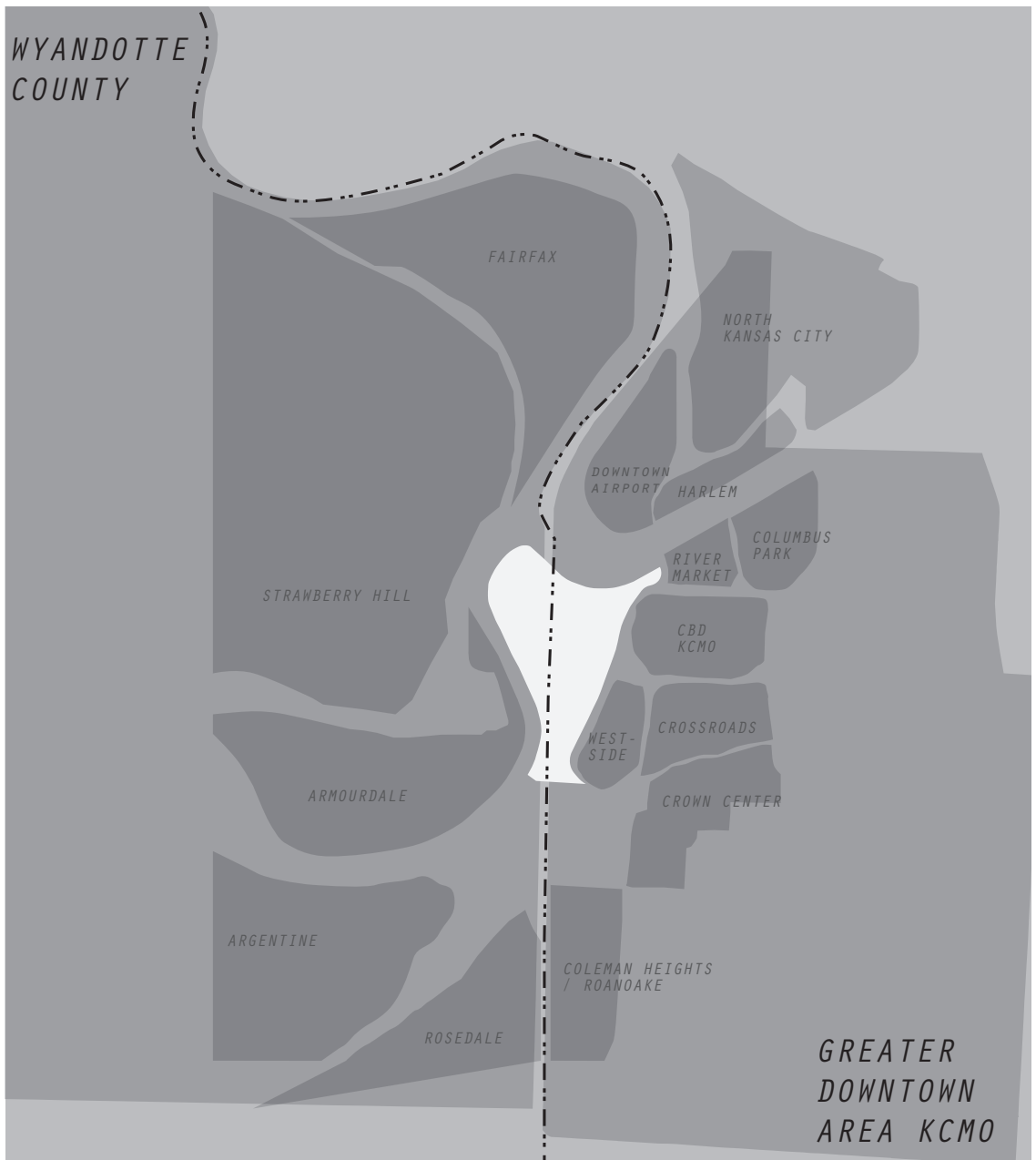


Figure 2.1 Kansas City Districts Near the West Bottoms (KCDC et al. 2017)

03

METHODOLOGY

APPROACH AND INQUIRY

With a personal interest for art in general, an exploration on the topic of public art infused with the studio project was fitting. To many times, public art is an object put in a plaza. It seems like the art piece is an afterthought and it may contribute, respond, and mean very little to its context and community. Placemaking, or specifically placekeeping for this project, is the theme for the studio project. The NEA supports these practices and has tasked the studio with integrating art and culture into the West Bottoms community revitalization and design work. In order to do this successfully and ultimately provide meaning to the community, we must understand how public art can be utilized as a means to placekeep in the West Bottoms.

Research Question: How can public art be utilized as a means to placekeep in Kansas City's West Bottoms?

METHODS

In order to investigate the topic of public art and its impact and role within the community as it contributes to placekeeping and commemoration, I explored the topic through the context of the West Bottoms Reborn studio project. I worked through activities and strategies both on my own and in collaboration with the studio to learn from and apply my research. As a studio member working with the Kansas City Design Center, the collaborative studio activities occurred from January 2017 to mid-April 2017 as per the predetermined schedule laid out in the NEA Grant.

Beginning in January, the studio began research, inventory and analysis mapping, and site visits in order to gain information on the physical and historic characteristics of the West Bottoms. This laid groundwork and experiential understanding about the district where we would be selecting sites for the creation of public space and ultimately the implementation of public art.

Both before the studio research and throughout the span of the semester, I explored literature and other forms of media centered on the topic of public art. This was done to gain an understanding on how public art is defined and what it is used to do. This ultimately led to the formation

of my own definition and determining the functions of public art; specifically, in relation to commemorating a place, as the studio project is centered on placekeeping. Design precedents were also studied and chosen as examples for each 'function' of public art laid out. This was a way to test and prove how public art is understood within site context and how it provides meaning to its community. The results from this research laid my framework for how public art is utilized as a means to placekeep.

Another method used during investigation was artist engagement. Three Kansas City artists worked with the studio as a whole, in groups, and as individuals to lead and provide alternative ways to approach site selection. "The involvement of the artists into the design studio is a direct response to the purpose of creative placemaking: including artists and arts organizations in the creation of place" (KCDC 2017). They provided continuous input throughout the process not only on their views on art as it relates to place, but how to explore mapping in a less traditional way. Some examples of this included urban exploring, sensory mapping, and the string theory. This gave insight to ways in which artists analyze sites and gave a new outlook on things to be considered.

In addition to artist engagement, community engagement (in the form of two public meetings) was another method that was used. This proved itself important after discovering in my research that in order to make art meaningful to its place and community, the people have to provide their input. Community meetings were held to present studio work to the community and then to insert community feedback directly into the project. In order to receive more specific information, questionnaires were also created to receive feedback on things like public activity, use of space, and specific feedback on potential sites.

04.

PUBLIC ART

INTRO TO PUBLIC ART

Public art not only has a wide range of uses—but it “is a multifaceted field of inquiry; it encompasses a wide variety of creative expressions in the public realm” (Becker 2004). Common examples of public art range from memorials to temporary installations to performances to graffiti—and so on. Because it is a vast field, definitions of public art are not commonly held. Some see public art “as a way of enhancing or personalizing otherwise impersonal spaces. Others view it as a means to activate civic dialogue or provide a vehicle for the community to express its identity” (Becker 2004).

DEFINING PUBLIC ART

Artists and writers on public art all have different ideas and outlooks on what public art is, what makes it public, and what it should be able to do. For most public agencies, public art may be defined as “work created by artists for places accessible to and used by the public,” but the variety of public art encompasses a much broader spectrum of activities and approaches (Becker 2004).

It is important to realize the difference between “public art, which takes into account its site and other contextual issues, and art in public places. Simply placing a sculpture on a street corner is not the same as designing a sculpture specifically for that site by considering its audience, environmental conditions, the history of the site, etc. Regardless, art placed in public can still be quality art and offer the general public an art experience outside a museum or gallery setting” (Becker 2004). Hilde Hein explains that just because art is located in a public place, does not automatically make it public art. Instead, she says it is about the combination of aspects like location, history, and social purpose (Hein 1996).

Daniel Hunting derives part of his Matrix of public art as a function of placement and origin from Hein’s definition. The matrix is used to categorize a piece of work based on how public its placement is and how publicly based its origin is. He notes that ‘true public

art’ is typically found in the lower right corner of the matrix, defining it as “art that is fully funded by the government and in highly visible locations” (Hunting 2005).

When we think of public accessibility, it is typically thought of only in the physical sense—but extending emotional and intellectual public access must be considered as well (Knight 2008). Hunting also argues that “for art to truly be public, it must be somehow embraced by that public” (Hunting 2005). Public art should respect its community in the way that it is fully accessible but also “cares about/challenges/involves and consults the audience for whom it is made” (Hayden

1997). Similarly, Patricia Phillips states that art is made public in the way in which it engages “the crossroads of aesthetics, public life, cultural ideas, and political issues” while also fostering the private and public connection (Cole et al. 2010).

When art engages the aforementioned aspects, in addition to its public placement, then it is public art as opposed to ‘art placed in the public’. Combining the major themes of these definitions, public art is that which is publicly accessible and brings meaning to the public by addressing or engaging one or more of the physical, historical, cultural, and/or social qualities of its place or community.

	Private Placement	Partial Public Placement	Public Placement
Private Origin	A-1 Art purchased by individuals or corporations and placed inside office buildings, etc.	A-2 'Corporate art' displayed outside or in common areas such as shopping malls.	A-3 Privately funded art that has been donated to the city and displayed in a park.
Partial Public Origin	B-1 Works sponsored by non-profit and charitable organizations on private property.	B-2 Small memorials in street medians and low-traffic areas.	B-3 Public/private partnerships at athletic venues, etc.
Fully Public Origin	C-1 Government funded artwork placed in government offices not generally accessible to the public.	C-2 Government funded artwork placed inside libraries or neighborhood parks.	C-3 Full government funding and prominent, highly visible locations.

Figure 4.1 Matrix of Public Art as a Function of Placement and Origin (Hunting 2005)

USES AND FUNCTION

Public art is all around us and takes on many forms. Today, the field “encompasses placemaking, environmental activism, cause-related art, sound installations, interdisciplinary performance events, community-based initiatives, and much more. Indeed, public art is a multifaceted field, open to artists of all stripes, without predetermined rules or a mutually agreed upon critical language” (Becker 2004). Just as public art comes in many different forms, it also has a wide range of uses and functions within the public realm.

Through collective research on the functions and uses of public art in consideration of placekeeping as an evolution of placemaking, I have concluded the four most important and relevant functions of public art as they pertain to placekeeping:

- Enhances or brings attention to the physical structure or environment
- Engages or enhances the meaning of a place to its community
- Teaches and tells stories
- Commemorates and celebrates

These functions of public art are further expanded upon in the remainder of this chapter with relevant precedent studies included.

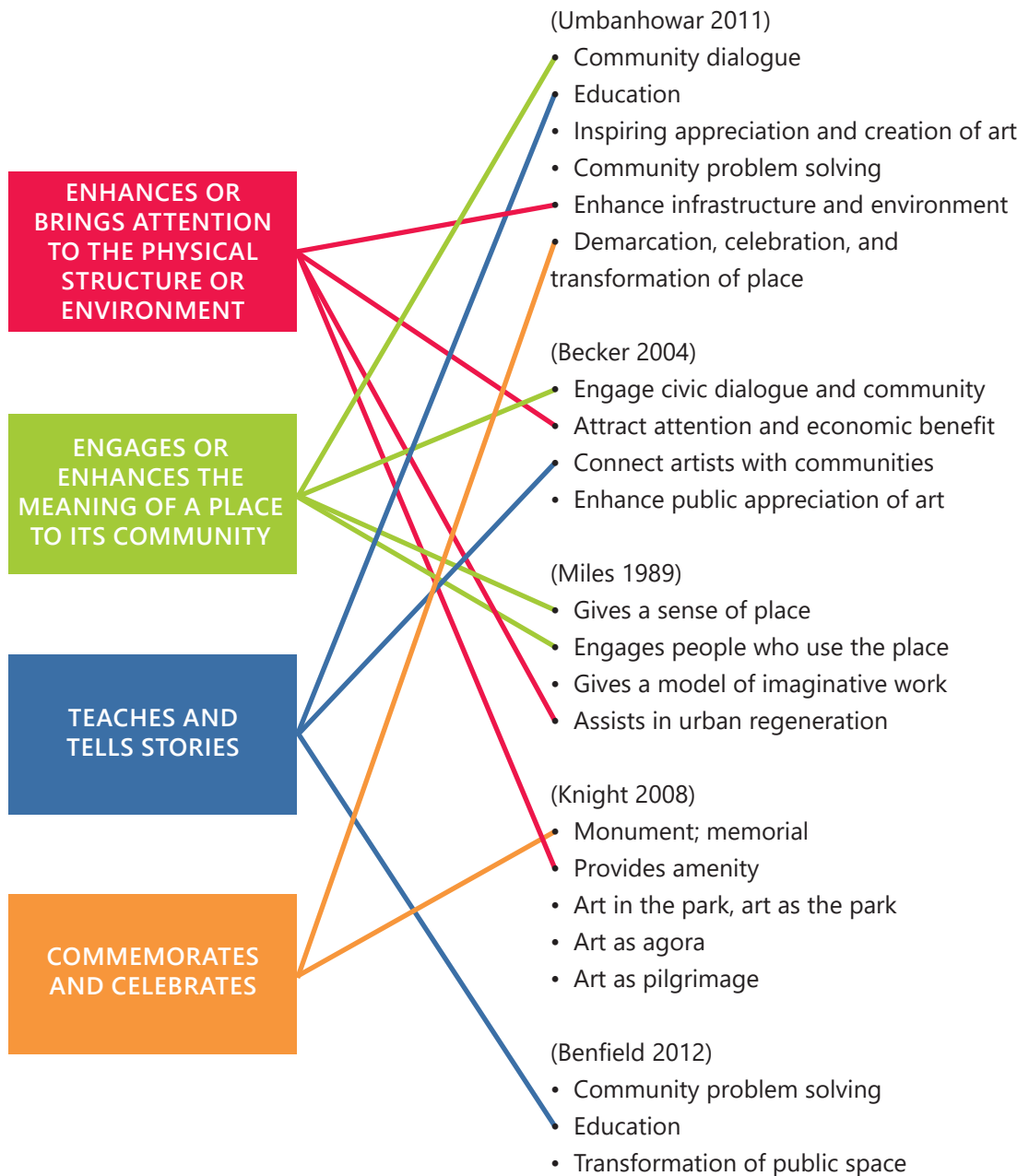


Figure 4.2 Public Art Function Diagram (Allen 2017)

Enhances or brings attention to the physical structure or environment

Public art can help reveal the physical makeup of a place and bring new attention to the surrounding context. This can be done through a multitude of methods such as temporary installations, performance based art, urban play, and so on.

Walk, Hands, Eyes (A City)

This is a performance based art that was first enacted by Choreographer, Myriam Lefkowitz throughout various cities in Europe. A spectator is instructed to close their eyes while the performer serves as a guide and instructs the spectator to briefly open and close their eyes at precise moments and locations along the walk through any given city. Lefkowitz explains that “with eyes open for only the briefest moments, the spectator encounters the city as a fleeting sequence of snapshots, allowing a once well-known environment to become unfamiliar and extraordinary” (Doherty 2015). Through this, not only are physical structures enhanced and brought new life through brief glimpses, but other senses become heightened as they notice the context of their place through outside conversations, accents, temperature, and material of surfaces (Doherty 2015).



Figure 4.3 Walk, Hands, Eyes (Lefkowitz)

Hurlyburly

Orly Genger's public art installation, Hurlyburly, responds to and evokes the "nuances of its context, inviting the public into its midst and bringing renewed attention to the environment around Waller Creek" (Contemporary Austin 2016). Upon visiting this installation, I immediately saw how the art work was able to guide people to and along Waller Creek while also using colorful materials and organic undulating forms to actively engage people to move about. The temporality of the piece is unique in how the attention can be called to certain characteristics of spaces seasonally and then moved to bring the public attention elsewhere.



Figure 4.4 Hurlyburly Installation (Fitzsimmons 2016)



Figure 4.5 Woven Pieces in Various Shades of Blue (Fitzsimmons 2016)

Engages or enhances the meaning of a place to its community

Just as site and context inform art, public art can bring meaning and strengthen the bond between a place and its community (Becker 2004). Penny Bach believes that public art should bring meaning to places while also revealing the makeup and strengthening the connectedness of a community to their place (Cole et al. 2010). There is direct correlation as “the experience of viewing public art is dynamic. The relationship between the work and its site, its audience, and other contextual factors all contribute to its impact. Successful public art evokes meaning in [its community] while retaining a high artistic quality” (Becker 2004).

Pull!

Hundreds of Cleveland, Ohio community members worked with one another to complete the community performance piece, Pull! This community engagement work was the idea of performance artist William Pope, who aimed to open a citywide conversation about the power of work, a prominent aspect that is found in nearly everyone’s life. The action of community members coming together to pull an 8 ton truck 25 miles, “brought to mind the communal effort it took to build [their city of] Cleveland—and the teamwork it will take now and in the future to keep it thriving” (Pope 2016). The action of people physically engaging in a performative piece to prove their determination and work ethic can serve to not only strengthen the bond between a community and their place, but also create a bond for individuals to their community.



Figure 4.6 Pull! (Sobota 2016)



Figure 4.7 Pull! (Ischay 2013)



Figure 4.8 Sitting on Wave Field (Landscape Voice 2012)



Figure 4.9 Wave Field at University of Michigan (Unknown)



Figure 4.10 Wave Field (Unknown)

Wave Field

Wave Field is an earthwork sculpture piece done by artist and architect, Maya Lin. It is located on University of Michigan's campus next to the Aerospace Engineering building. As Lin studied the site, she embraced the educational setting and learned about flight, aerodynamics, and fluid dynamics which led her to numerous images of mathematical wave diagrams. While the landforms are interactive and can be occupied, they also enhance the meaning between its setting and the community of aerospace engineering students due to the physical replica of wave diagrams and concepts studied in their field. Lin also reveals that it allows her to learn about the site and how to better integrate and bring connectedness between art and site (University of Michigan 2010).

Teaches and tells stories

With every site comes an audience. Public art can tell stories and teach us about the past and present cultures and values within a community (Becker 2004). In this, a community can form a bond and begin to develop or strengthen a collective identity amongst themselves (Boyte 2016). The Fairmount Park Art Association's program, New Land Marks, works to pair artists with community organizations in order to implement public art pieces that celebrate and share the untold histories of communities and places (Melkisetian 2004).

I Have a Story to Tell You...

Artist Pep'on Osorio's public art piece, *I have a story to tell you...* takes the shape of a house that is paneled with everyday pictures of Latino families that once lived or currently live in the neighborhood. The art piece can be viewed inside and outside at day or night, when the images become illuminated. According to Osorio, in this project the activities in the photographs become short stories as the piece "acts as a giant mirror, and the neighbors are faced with remembering and acknowledging the past and tying [said activities] to the present and future" (Melkisetian 2004).



Figure 4.11 Glow at Night (Unknown)



Figure 4.12 Inside of the Structure (Ford 2014)

2-3 Streets: An Exhibition in Cities of the Ruhr

The Ruhr is an industrial region in Germany that has seen population decline in recent decades. Artist Jochen Gerz was invited to come up with a project for the region's cultural program. His proposal, 2-3 Streets, was to turn three vacant residential streets into a year-long living exhibition that would house creative people free for one year.

Once occupied, the housing consisted of artists, musicians, and designers from nineteen to sixty-eight years of age. The way in which the inhabitants adjusted, communicated, and got along with one another was all part of the exhibition piece (Doherty 2015). The arrival of new residents is described as a "communal authorship and social experiment" (Doherty 2015). The most important outcome of the project was the written portion as everyone in the exhibit had to contribute written entries that fed into an ongoing network through the computers.

The end result was a 3,000 page book consisting of sixteen languages and 887 contributing authors. Writings were arranged chronologically and were about personal accounts of what it was like to live daily life in an exhibit that was ultimately their new 'place.'

Due to the constant change of author voice, the piece is read in a continuous stream of consciousness (Doherty 2015). In this project, stories were openly shared and told through and about one another, as if the art (the people) were both creating and receiving their own dialogue and stories.



Figure 4.13 2-3 Strassen (Gerz 2008)



Figure 4.14 2-3 Street Balconies (Gerz 2008)

Commemorates and celebrates

Public art has the ability “to add beauty to our shared environment; to commemorate, memorialize, and celebrate; and to transport us out of our daily routine” (Becker 2004). Commemoration, however, should not assume the same meaning as monumentalize, which is the specific act of commemorating or recording something by creating a monument (Merriam-Webster 2017). Commemoration is to honor the memory of someone or something, that “regardless of the scale, style, or medium, expresses meaning” (Stephens 2010). In addition to commemorating people and things, places can be commemorated as well.



Figure 4.15 Study for Strings (Philipsz 2012)

Study for Strings

Study for Strings is a sound installation by Susan Philipsz that utilizes more than twenty-four speakers throughout the Kassel Hauptbahnhof train station in Germany. During World War II, the station was a major deportation point for Jews to concentration camps. Haas, who composed *Study for Strings*, only performed the piece once with the full twenty-four piece orchestra for a film for the German camp, as “an attempt to demonstrate to the Red Cross the healthy lives that the Jews who were interned there were enjoying” (Doherty 2015). The composer and most of the musicians who appeared in the film were sent to Auschwitz and killed in gas chambers shortly after. The surviving conductor from the original performance later reconstructed the orchestral score.

The site-specific piece draws on the history and sensory experience of the performance of two intentionally isolated, out-of-sync, instruments (Doherty 2015). The piece is played only by the cello and viola spanning thirteen minutes which is filled primarily with silence due to the absence of the other instruments as well as the composer. Philipsz lets the “gaps and fragments of sound stand in for the weight of its past” as a short lasting commemorative piece and unfinished eulogy (Doherty 2015).

Threshold Project

Beverly Penn and Steve Wiman are the artists of Threshold Project, a commemoration piece in Austin, Texas. Numerous bas-relief marble planks are engraved with addresses which designate the front door location of several homes and churches that were relocated in order to accommodate a new school facility and grounds. The marble thresholds are located throughout the area—some in hallways, parking lots, classrooms, and sidewalks to commemorate the history, place, and people that once lived there (Americans for the Arts 2002).



Figure 4.16 Curbside (Rogers 2002)



Figure 4.17 School Hallway (Rogers 2002)

PLACEKEEPING AND COMMEMORATION

As seen in the precedents, the works draw from the existing histories, stories, cultures, qualities, and communities of a place to further connect people to their place. This can also be seen as the collective memory of the place. A major takeaway from the precedents is that the ways in which public art is used to placekeep not only involves the art itself and the location or context, but more importantly the social makeup and relationship of how these things tie in, relate, and enhance the meaning of a place to its community.

As previously discussed, the major theme of the West Bottoms project is placemaking. “In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around art and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired” (Gadwa and Markusen 2010). It is important to create a sense of community or ‘place’ because this is how connections and memories form between the community and location in which that community occupies.

After initial research and experience in the West Bottoms, it was quickly realized that there was no necessity for a place to be ‘made’—instead it was realized from the West Bottoms community that this was a place to be ‘kept,’ a place worth commemorating. Therefore, placekeeping is a term that derives from placemaking. Placekeeping calls for more action and response from the existing community in order for designers and artists to respond to the existing qualities, characteristics, and memories that form the bond between people and the relationship with their place.

One of the ways in which public art can placekeep is through commemoration. Commemoration is a part of placekeeping in the sense that placekeeping is about more than the physical space; it is about commemorating and retaining character and quality of the space. A writer on the practice of placekeeping describes it as “not just preserving the facade of the building but also keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive[...]It is a call to hold on to the stories told on the streets by the locals” (Bedoya 2014). In order to keep these cultural memories and draw upon stories, the involvement of the West Bottoms community

is crucial in determining what exactly it is to be kept or commemorated. Ultimately, public art must draw upon said characteristics and memories as determined by the community in order to most effectively placekeep in the West Bottoms.

05

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT SCOPE

As mentioned previously, the spring 2017 semester students at the Kansas City Design Center are leading the first part of a three-part project in the West Bottoms that is being funded through the Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Ultimately, the project is based around placemaking through the implementation of art in public space. KCDC has instead adopted the term placekeeping due to the nature of the place and character existing in the West Bottoms. With an individual focus and research on public art and its ability to placekeep, I explored this topic through the context of the West Bottoms studio project. As laid out in the grant, the project follows an established timeline consisting of three phases:

Part One (Spring 2017):

Selection of three project sites to be studied and developed into public spaces

Part Two (Fall 2017):

Exploration of conceptual and programmatic scenarios for the deployment of arts for each individual site across all media

Part Three (Spring 2018):

Design development and implementation of support infrastructure for the eventual art installation on one of the three sites

This chapter summarizes the studio and individual work and findings spanning January 2017 through mid-April 2017. Mid-April designates the point in which selections were narrowed down to five sites.

Numerous stakeholders and organizations were involved in helping KCDC gain information and feedback.

A list of the stakeholders include:

- Historic West Bottoms Association
- Residents of the West Bottoms
- Jim Woodfill, Artist
- Carmen Moreno, Consultant Artist
- Miranda Clark, Consultant Artist
- Mid-America Arts Alliance
- Rob Richardson, Director of Planning and Urban Land Use; Kansas City, KS

City of Kansas City, MO represented by:

- Megan Crigger, Director of Creative Services
- Gerald F. Williams, Lead Planner
- Jeff Williams, Director of City of KCMO Planning and Development
- Lisa Treese, Senior Landscape Architect of Kansas City Water Services
- Kate Bender, Deputy Performance Offices
- Office of Performance Management

WEST BOTTOMS INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Background research was done on “Reframing the City,” a past KCDC West Bottoms urban vision study that looked into creating a framework for design in critical areas. Research was also done on professional design firms and their conceptual plans and framework for the district which included a wayfinding plan and green infrastructure plan. Researching this enabled us to take note of the more large-scale issues present in the West Bottoms that carry out to inform some of our overall goals and objectives. Inventory mapping was done in collaboration with the studio in order to gain an understanding of the district and conditions. Some of these maps included zoning and land use, ownership, history and morphology, and physical conditions.

After inventory mapping, analysis maps were done to document things like density, highways and street grids, events, and future development projects. In addition to mapping, numerous visits were made to the West Bottoms to explore and get a feel for the activities, character, and community existing in the area.



Figure 5.1 Figure Ground (KCDC 2017)

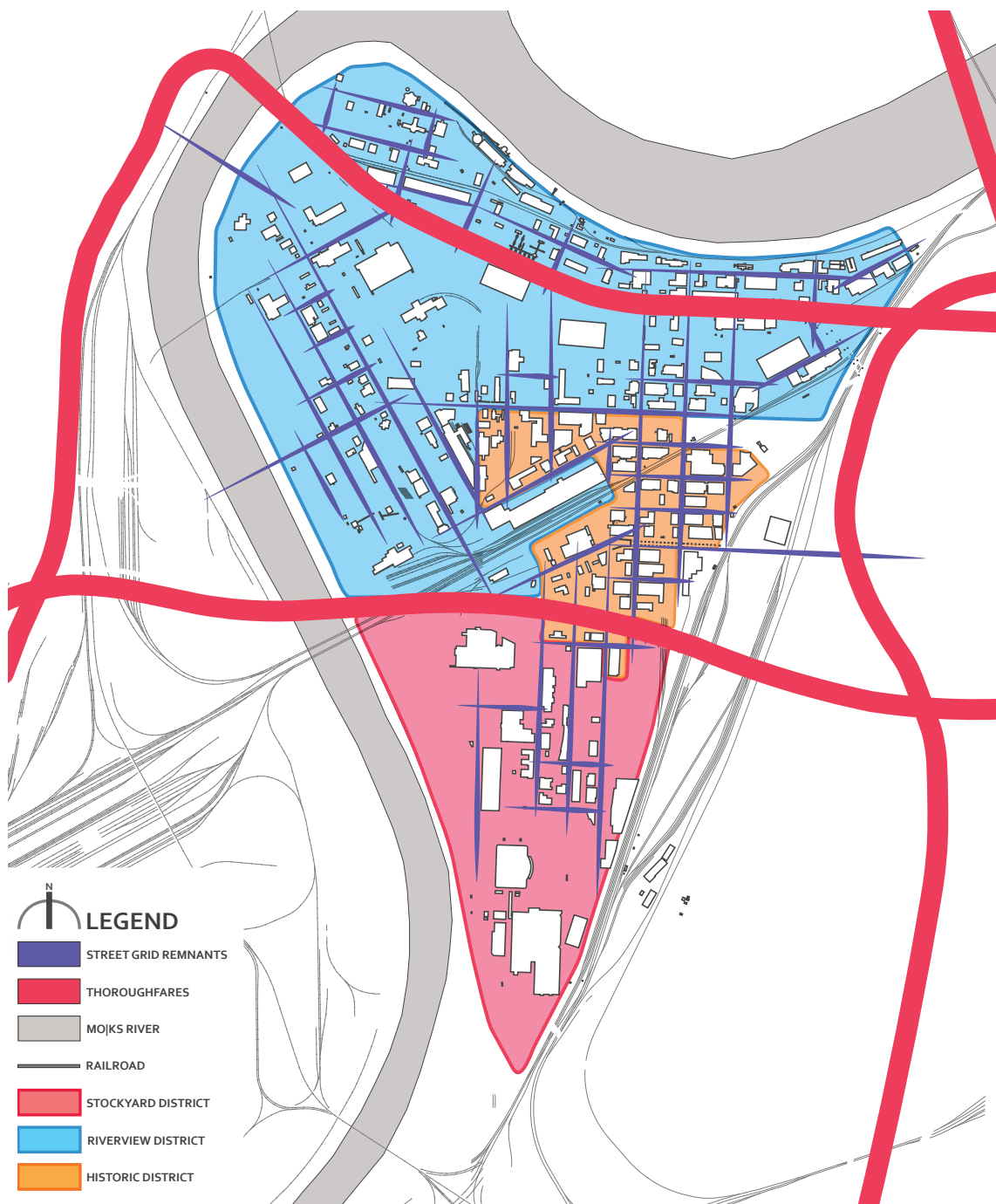


Figure 5.2 Street Grid and Districts (KCDC 2017)

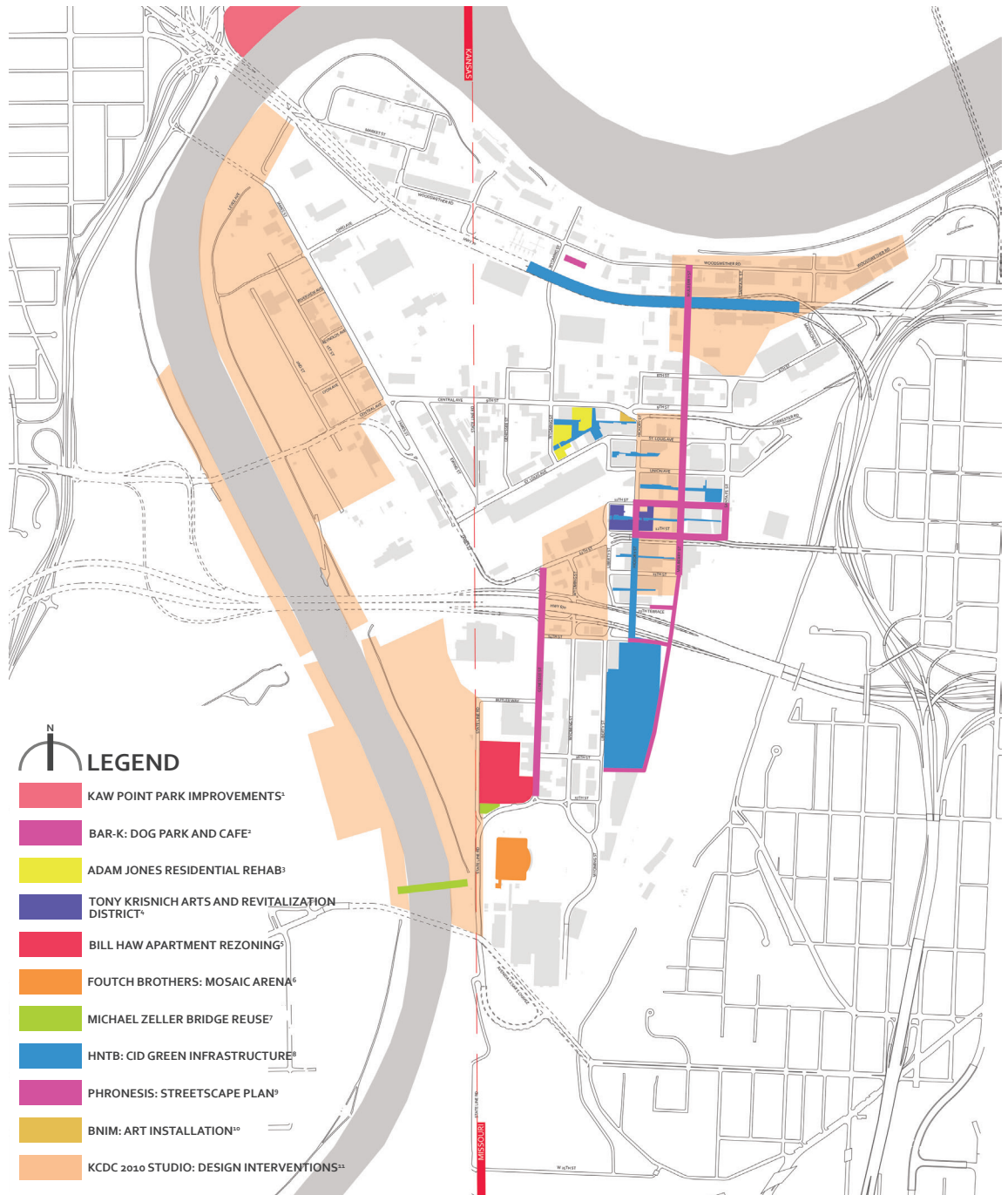


Figure 5.3 Design Interventions (KCDC 2017)

Views and Moments

Photography was also used to capture moments on site in order to reveal spatial quality and other inherent qualities of public spaces that cannot be mapped in plan view. Photography studies of views and moments in collaboration with studio further reinforced one of the previously mentioned functions of public art in regards to placekeeping—its ability to enhance or bring attention to the physical structure or environment.



Figure 5.4 Hobbs Courtyard Moments (KCDC 2017)



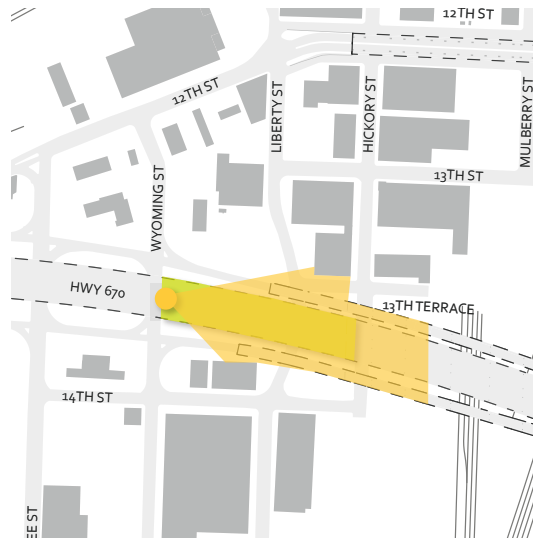


Figure 5.5 I-670 Viaduct Moments (KCDC 2017)



Figure 5.6 12th Street Alley Moments (KCDC 2017)

Analysis Conclusions

Inventory and analysis maps were overlaid and further analyzed for correlation. Conclusions were drawn about the urban connections that currently exist in the West Bottoms. These are corridors, gateways, and nodes.

- **Gateways** provide entrance to the districts, which is limited to highway viaducts and a few local roads
- **Corridors** are the main paths through the West Bottoms
- **Nodes** exist where there is a concentration of either pedestrian or industrial activity

Selection of potential sites will consider how the sites relate to the larger system of urban connections. By thinking about accessibility and connections early on, we ensure that sites are well connected to the system as a whole as we move forward.

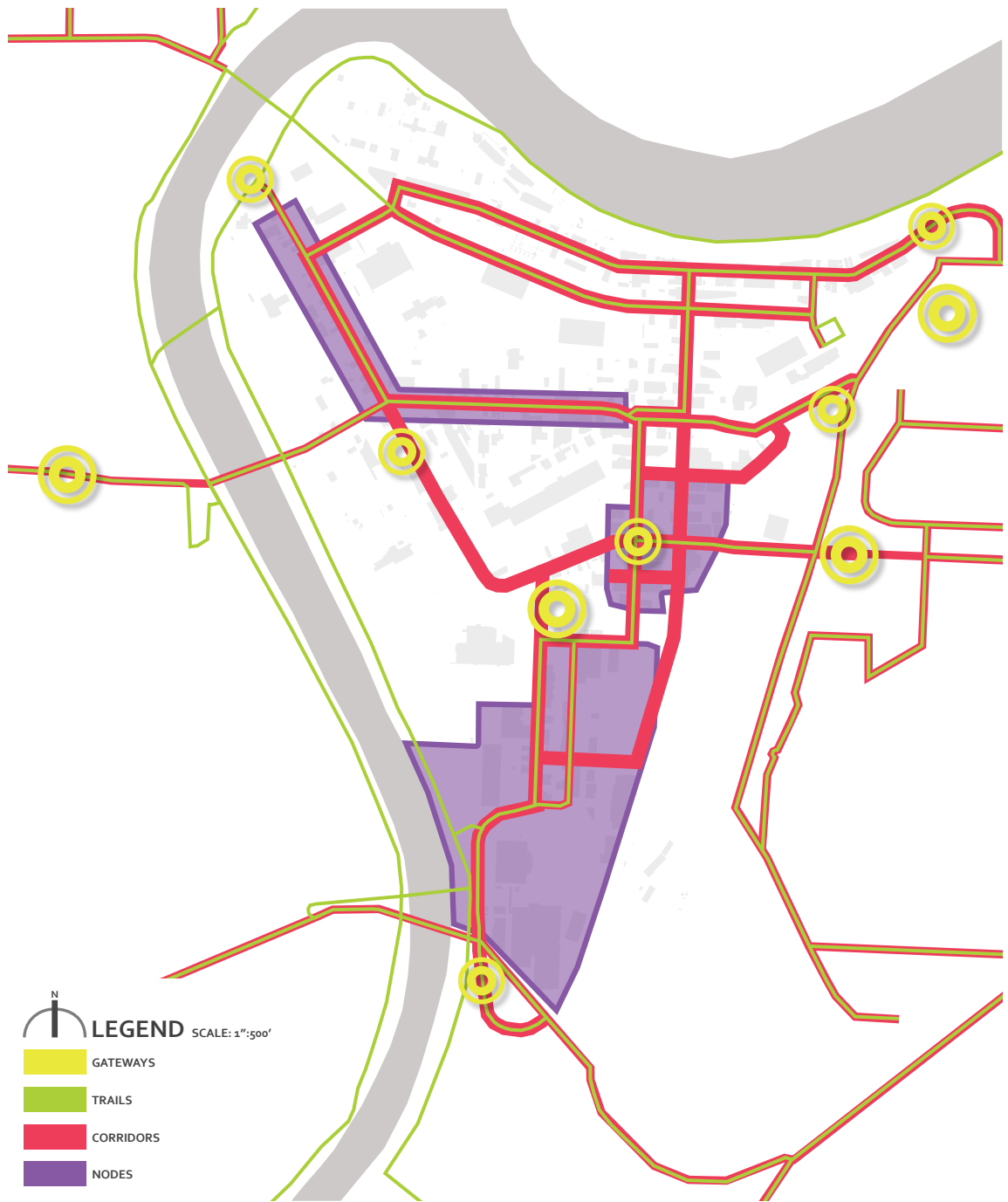


Figure 5.7 Urban Connections (KCDC 2017)

SITE SELECTION PROCESS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and objectives were used to guide and inform the site selection process. The urban connections map was developed to ground all site selections within nodes of activity. Individual locations were then analyzed based on spatial, functional, and accessibility typologies. As a result, a network of sites were identified as the most promising for strategic design interventions. These sites were primarily located around development and at least some density. This also ensured that the sites chosen to move ahead with were sites that the public occupied somewhat frequently or could be easily accessed.

Concept

The purpose of this project is to create new experiences in the West Bottoms by defining public spaces and their connections. Enhancing the unique spatial and morphological qualities of specific sites will allow for the integration of various art mediums to transform the public spaces. The implementation of public art as a means of enhancing the public realm will encourage advocacy for sustaining the inherent qualities of the West Bottoms (KCDC 2017).

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the project is placekeeping—to maintain the character of the West Bottoms.

The studio has defined placekeeping as “the intentional implementation of public art as a means of enhancing the public realm, with an emphasis on active care and maintenance by the community of the inherent physical qualities of a place, and commemoration

of the existing culture” (KCDC 2017). My individual research on public art’s ability to commemorate and celebrate was pulled into the collective placekeeping definition. Commemoration is a part of placekeeping in the way that a commemorative work of art draws upon the collective memory of a place.

Three additional goals and objectives are shown below in figure x.x

CONNECTIVITY	Create an understandable system of interrelated public spaces	Improve way-finding between sites, and the overall West Bottoms	Connect the riverfront district, historic core, and stockyards district	Create functioning public space
ART-CENTERED DESIGN	Create public space that is activated through art	Public Space that is not media specific and can facilitate a variety of art installations	Public Space that can be appropriated by a variety of users	Create a sense-of-place by accentuating inherent qualities of specific locations in WB as a whole
PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY	Intersecting green infrastructure with public space development and capitalizing on ongoing improvement efforts	Infrastructure preservation/ reuse/ repair	Provide amenities for recycling where fit	Integrate green strategies in public space

Figure 5.8 Goals and Objectives (KCDC et al. 2017)

Spatial Typologies

Spatial typologies were created to classify the array of spaces found in the West Bottoms. Six typologies were used in the site analysis process. These consist of alleys, missing teeth, courtyards, under/over passes, islands, and open areas. This system was developed to ensure a set of criteria allowed for each typology to be studied according to its classification (KCDC 2017).

The sites within each spatial typology were taken through the flowchart (see fig. 5.7) in order to find the most suitable sites in each classification. Again, maps were produced for each of these.

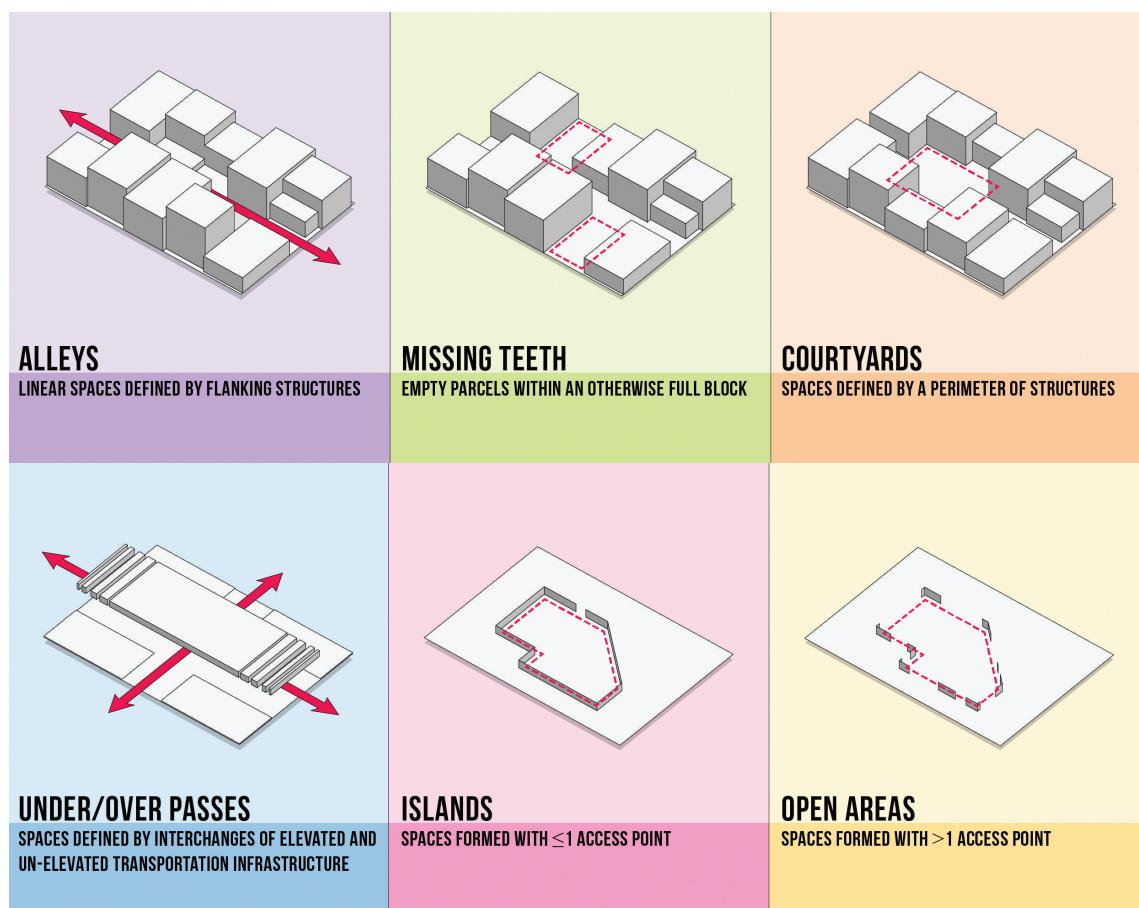


Figure 5.9 Site Typologies (KCDC et al. 2017)

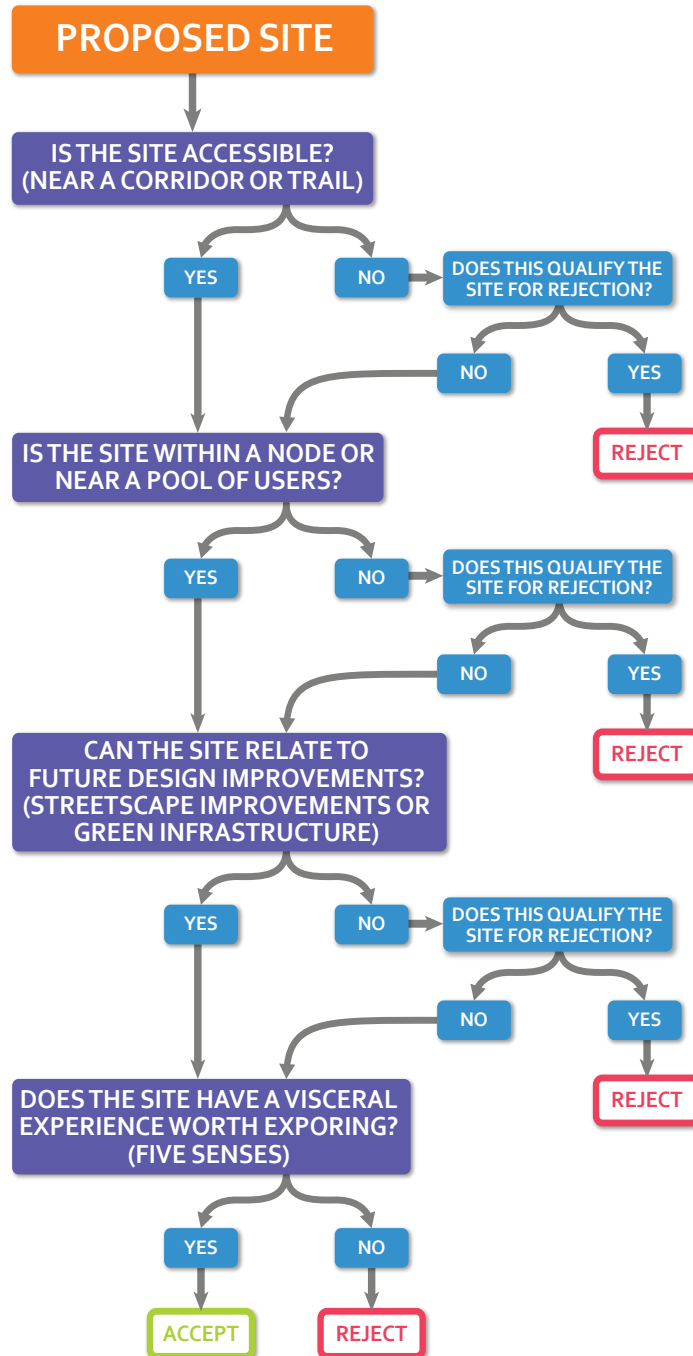


Figure 5.10 Accept/Reject Flowchart (KCDC et al. 2017)

Creative Approaches

With my background research on public art, I laid out four functions of public art in regards to placekeeping. Public art can enhance and bring attention to the physical structure or environment, engage or enhance the meaning of a place to its community, teach and tell stories, and commemorate and celebrate. When analyzing the potential of sites that can best host art as a means to placekeep, I realized these were things that were not best mapped analytically, but through experiential and non-traditional methods.

Artist engagement and feedback served beneficial to see how they view and analyze spaces. Local artist, Miranda Clark, states that her process of space analyzation aligns very similarly to architecture students. She sees the main difference she can think of is the spaces she chooses to install in or create work for speak to her in some way to the reasons she is an artist to begin with. Another local artist, Carmen Moreno, and some of her colleagues led us on an urban explorers walk and shared stories about places in the West Bottoms that they connect with, such as places to sit and watch the train go by, or empty buildings to explore. Other stories, relating to the environmental side, such as water movement and invasive species were introduced as well to bring to light that these processes and

movements add an additional layer to the grungy, unharnessed character of the West Bottoms. This type of feedback was what was needed from the general public at public engagement meetings. It began to give us insight to the things that people of the place noticed and celebrated.

The artists also led us through a process called the string theory. This used different colored string to connect across site qualities with categories such as sound, moments, flora, loading docks, and railroad presence—all attributes of inherent, sometimes, temporary qualities that reside on sites that have the potential to be enhanced and yield a newfound attention to through public art. Results from the string theory process were compiled in a digital format. The compilation of the data does not prove beneficial when viewing it as a whole, but rather when searching for a certain connection from one site to another.

Artists were present for several studio design and public meetings to give input as well. Clark adds that she sees it extremely important (especially when working on a placekeeping project) to involve the community and hold community/stakeholder meetings to judge feasibility and opinions.

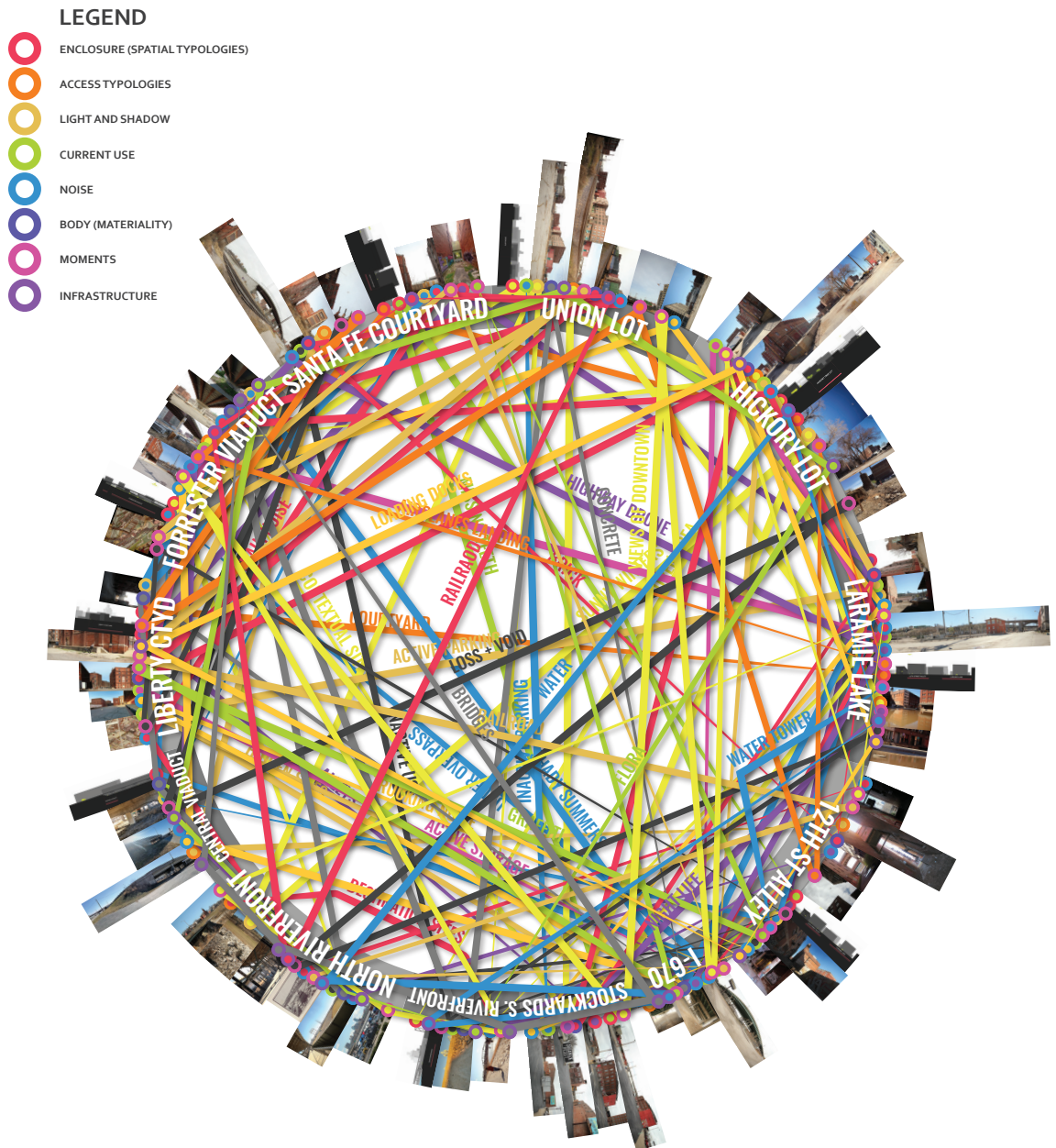


Figure 5.11 String Theory: Site Connections (KCDC et al. 2017)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Two public meetings were held in order to communicate studio findings and receive feedback from stakeholders and community members. Business owners, residents, and visitors offered input on a range of different topics and questions provided. Feedback was collected from the public meetings held at Rockstar Burgers on February 23, 2017 and at the Mulberry Room on March 16, 2017 and documented on maps and questionnaire sheets (KCDC 2017). From this feedback, we were able to see areas that were liked and not liked by the public. We also gained insight on property ownership, acquisition, and potential development projects. At the last public meeting, the community was asked to place dots on their favorite sites.

SUMMARY

The analysis of the West Bottoms to mid-April 2017 is intended to aid in the selection process of three sites that have the highest potential to be placekept through the creation of public space and implementation of public art. The systematic approach to classifying and the non-traditional means of analyzing spaces in junction with artist involvement is developed to build a case for the selection of these sites. From the information and results gathered

by the community feedback, we are given general feedback on 'good' and 'bad' sites, but what is needed for the next phase and next KCDC studio to carry out the project is for the community to pinpoint specifically what it is about the character of the selected sites and that is worth commemorating. In order to stay true to the definition of placekeeping, it is the public that must determine what it is about their place that they love, not us telling them.

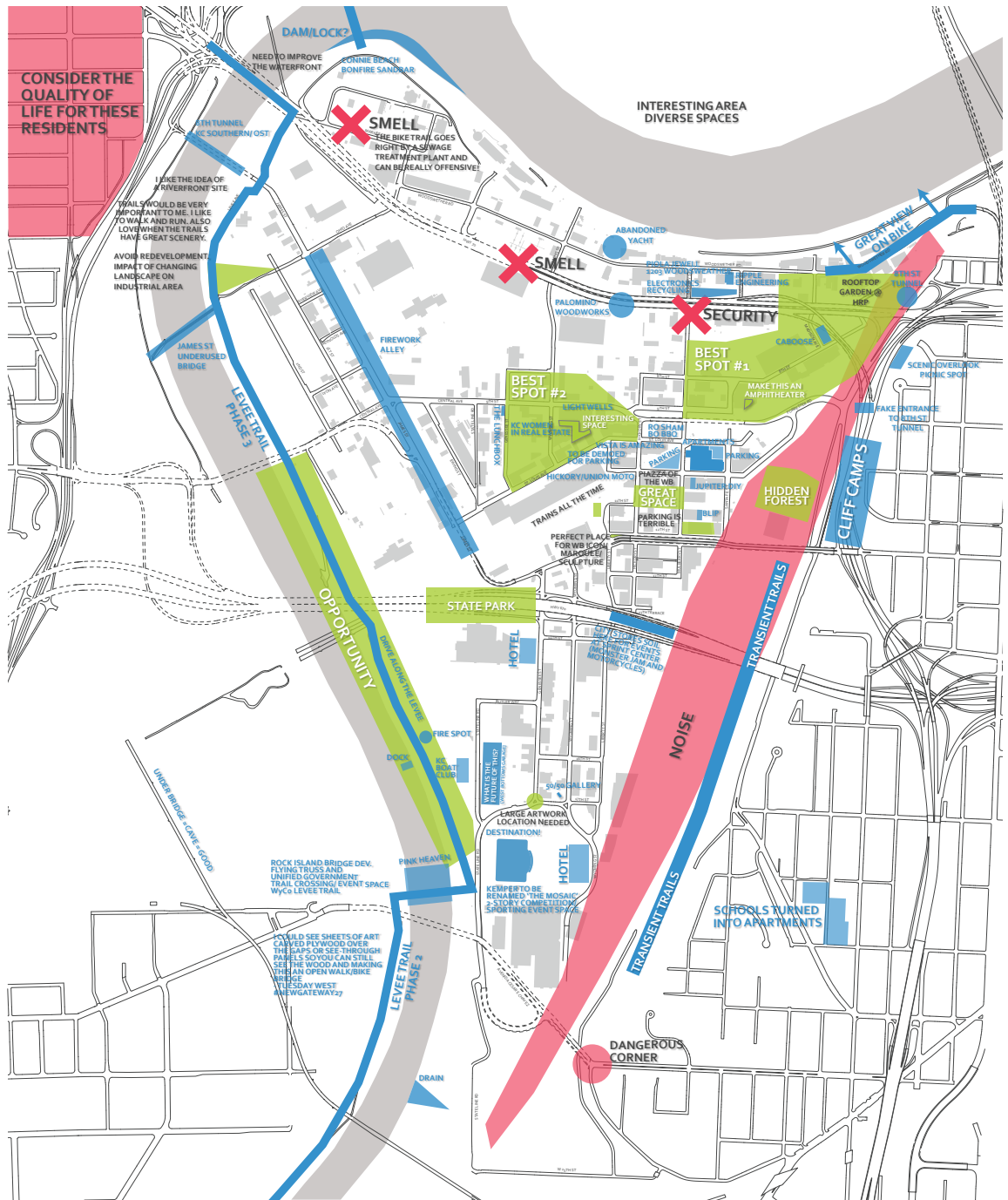


Figure 5.12 2/23/17 Community Meeting Feedback (KCDC et al. 2017)

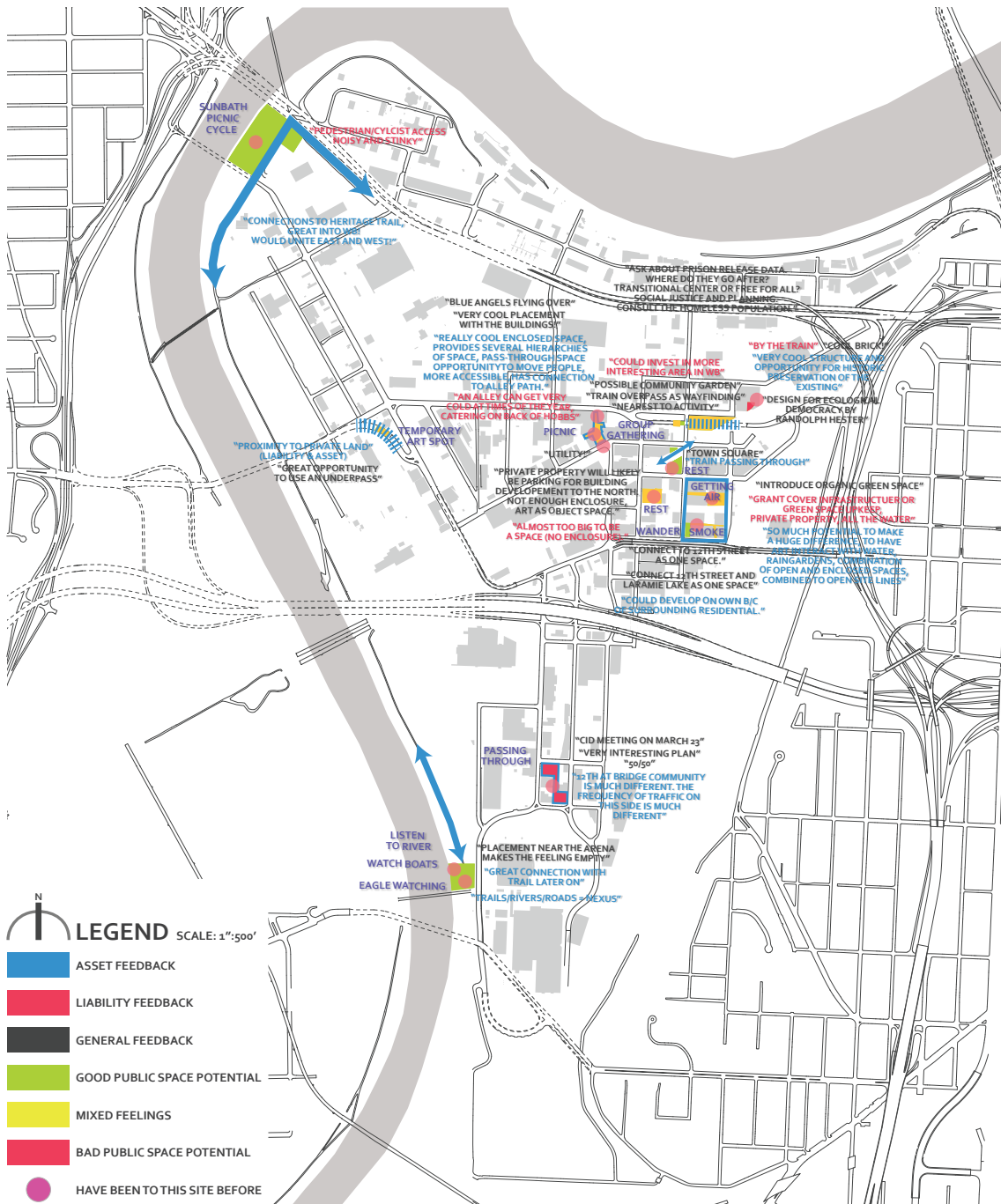


Figure 5.13 3/16/17 Community Meeting Feedback (KCDC et al. 2017)

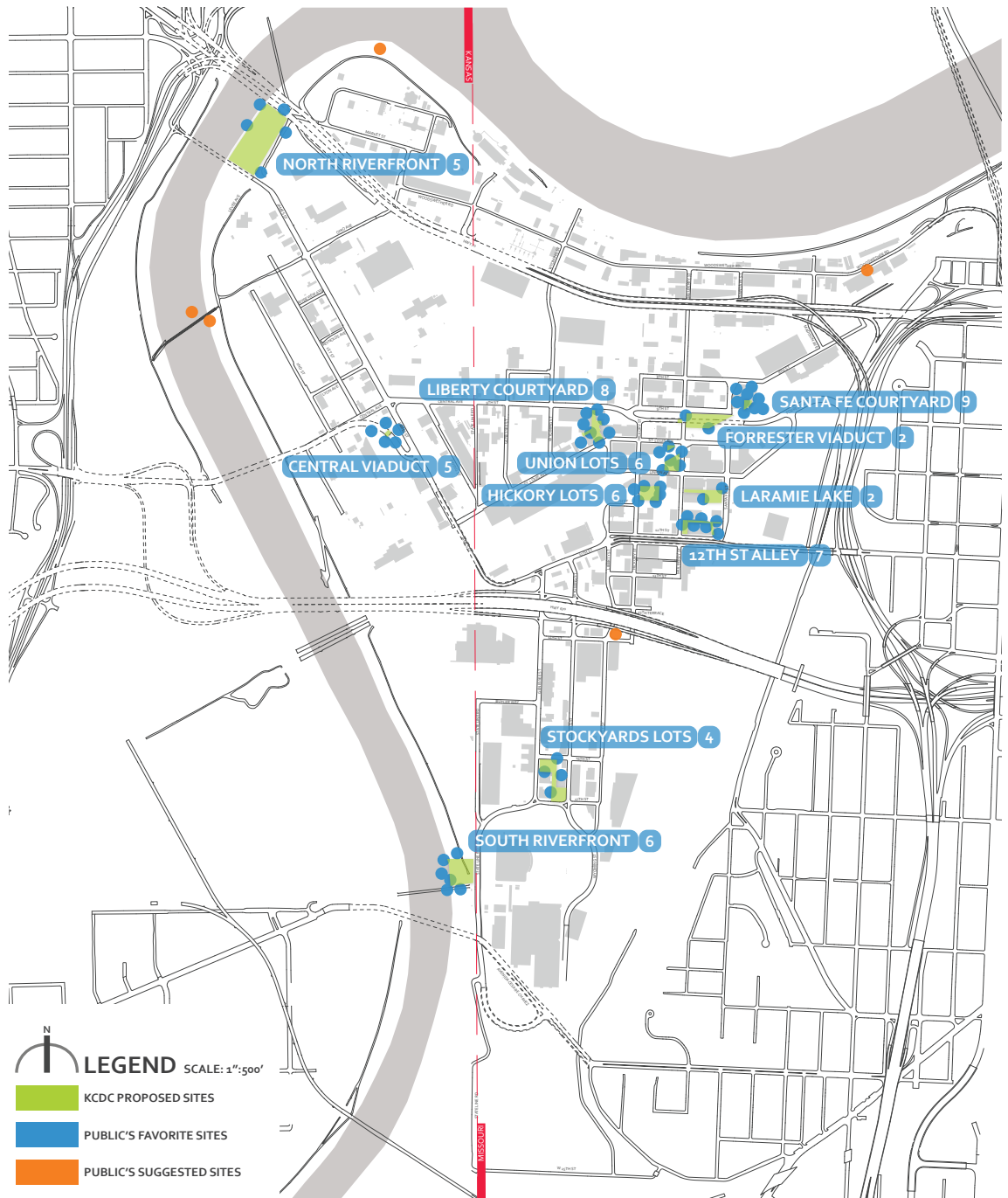


Figure 5.14 3/16/17 Community Favorite Sites (KCDC et al. 2017)

06

CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

- The ultimate finding is that commemoration is a part of placekeeping. From the other three functions of public art laid out, commemoration is most applicable in the West Bottoms due to the public's collective fear of losing the character, people, and ultimately the collective memory of the place due to the threat of rapid development or gentrification. Commemorating place or aspects of a place through public art is a means to placekeep in the West Bottoms.
- The West Bottoms has a passionate community who have expressed that they love the grungy character and people of the place. Anticipating the next phase of the project for next semester, the public input must become more specific in order to carry out a specific connection or meaning to the community through the implementation of public art.
- Community engagement and input from the people of the West Bottoms is crucial in determining what specifically about the character of the place should be kept. I, as an outsider, cannot tell an artist or community member what they should commemorate about their place due to the fact that I am not a member neither physically nor culturally of the place.
- Personal accounts of place and storytelling are part of an individual's collective memory. Once brought to the surface, these specific stories and personal accounts have the potential to bring the most meaning to the community in the West Bottoms.

CHALLENGES

- Public art is difficult to define as it is subjective and is a part of a vast field
- The West Bottoms has a strong community that loves the character of the district. However, getting the public to pinpoint what exactly they mean by 'character' proved itself to be a challenge based on the vague feedback received during public meetings. As a designer who now understands the necessity of public input in placekeeping, I cannot tell them what they want to 'keep' about a place.
- Although I worked all semester on a project in the West Bottoms, I am still seen as an outsider to the locals. Through experiences on site and in public meetings, some locals shared very limited information with KCDC students and I in fear that we were developers or had alternative motives.
- Placekeeping is a relatively new term that stems from placemaking. Although there are some definitions of placekeeping, it is a fairly new concept with limited research.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could look into aspects of community involvement –as far as getting the community, especially the many artists who live and work in the area, involved in the creation of the physical piece of public art goes. There is opportunity here to further strengthen the bond between community and their place and make them more invested and proud of their place if the creation is participatory during construction or creation. There is also opportunity for further research into types of memory (ie. haptic memory) and how social interactions occur when a person's senses are further studied and considered during interaction at an individual basis.

07

APPENDICES

WORKS CITED

- Americans for the Arts. 2002. "Threshold Project." Public Art Network Year in Review. <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/public-art-network/public-art-year-in-review-database/threshold-project>
- Benfield, Kaid. 2012. "How Public Art Improves the Economic and Social Environment." Smart Cities Dive. <http://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/how-tough-neighborhood-building-stronger-future-vivid-public-art/91756/>
- Boyte, Harry. 2016. "Two Concepts of Public Art." The Huffington Post. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/harry-boyte/two-concepts-of-public-art_b_7293130.html
- Cole, Barbara, Lorna Brown, and Karen Henry. 2010. Public Art Toolkit. Vancouver, BC: Creative City Network of Canada. http://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/Public_Art_Toolkit.pdf, accessed September 15, 2016.
- Doherty, Claire. 2015. Out of Time Out of Place: Public Art (Now). United Kingdom: Art Books Publishing Ltd.
- Hayden, Dolores. 1997. "Place Memory and Urban Preservation." In *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, 44-71. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Hein, Hilde. 1996. "What Is Public Art? Time, Place, and Meaning." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1): 1-7. JSTOR, accessed October 10, 2016.
- Hunting, Daniel. 2005. "Public Art Policy: Examining an Emerging Discipline." *Perspectives in Public Affairs* 2: 1-7.
- Kansas City Design Center. 2015. "About KCDC." Kansas City Design Center. <http://www.kcdesigncenter.org/aboutkcdc/>.
- Kansas City Design Center. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn." Kansas City Design Center.
- Knight, Krause Cher. 2008. *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Melkisetian, Angela. 2004. "Pepon Osorio." http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/osorio/general%20press/2004_ossorio_sculpture_melkisetian.pdf

Merriam-Webster. 2017. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Incorporated.

Miles, Malcolm. 1989. *Art for Public Places*. United Kingdom: Winchester School of Art Press.

National Endowment for the Arts. 2017. "Our Town: Introduction." National Endowment for the Arts. <https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction>

Stephens, Pam. 2010. "Commemoration: Art and Remembrance." SchoolArts. https://www.davisart.com/Promotions/SchoolArts/PDF/10_10-art-teacher-round-table-commemoration-art-and-remembrance.pdf

Umbanhowar, Elizabeth. 2011. "Public Art: Linking Form, Function and Meaning." http://depts.washington.edu/open2100/pdf/2_OpenSpaceTypes/Open_Space_Types/public_art.pdf

University of Michigan. 2010. "Wave Field." President's Advisory Committee on Public Art. http://public-art.umich.edu/the_collection/campus/north/38

IMAGE CITATIONS

Figure 1.1 West Bottoms Moments

KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 2.1 Kansas City Districts Near the West Bottoms

KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 4.1 Matrix of Public Art as a Function of Placement and Origin

Hunting, Daniel. 2005.

Figure 4.2 Public Art Function Diagram

Allen, Taylor. 2017.

Figure 4.3 Walk, Hands, Eyes

Lefkowitz.

Figure 4.4 Hurlyburly Installation

Fitzsimmons. 2016.

Figure 4.5 Woven Pieces in Various Shades of Blue

Fitzsimmons. 2016.

Figure 4.6 Pull!

Sobota. 2016.

Figure 4.7 Pull!

Ischay. 2013.

Figure 4.8 Sitting on Wave Field

Landscape Voice. 2012.

Figure 4.9 Wave Field at University of Michigan

Unknown.

Figure 4.10 Wave Field

Unknown.

Figure 4.11 Glow at Night

Unknown.

Figure 4.12 Inside of the Structure

Ford. 2014.

Figure 4.13 2-3 Strassen
Gerz. 2008.

Figure 4.14 2-3 Street Balconies
Gerz. 2008.

Figure 4.15 Study for Strings
Philipsz. 2012.

Figure 4.16 Curbside
Rogers. 2002.

Figure 4.17 School Hallway
Rogers. 2002.

Figure 5.1 Figure Ground
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.2 Street Grid and Districts
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.3 Design Interventions
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.4 Hobbs Courtyard Moments
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.5 I-670 Viaduct Moments
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.6 12th Street Alley Moments
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.7 Urban Connections
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.8 Goals and Objectives
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.9 Site Typologies
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.10 Accept/Reject Flowchart
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.11 String Theory: Site Connections
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.12 2/23/27 Community Meeting Feedback
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.13 3/16/17 Community Meeting Feedback
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

Figure 5.14 3/16/17 Community Favorite Sites
KCDC et al. 2017. "West Bottoms Reborn."

