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# Community Connection

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## **Community Connection**

By

Meghan Conley & Lonnie Petersheim

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for  
the Degree Master of Industrial Design  
in the School of The University of the Arts

The University of the Arts  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May, 2013

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# Abstract

The citizens of the Kensington area of Philadelphia are fragmented and feel disenfranchised when faced with taking responsibility and ownership of their neighborhoods in order to become catalysts for change. By restructuring the way community meetings were conducted, our goal was to empower a local civic association to create a platform where meaningful discussion could take place in order to create a sense of connectedness and inspire action. We designed an engagement where residents could both begin a conversation and co-create solutions around the topic of safety within their neighborhood.



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# Introduction

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## Introduction

Community Connection is a project that explored how fostering communication and collaboration between fragmented community members can help to develop a sense of responsibility and co-ownership of their neighborhood. We wanted to explore the designer's role in the context of community building and challenge the traditional role of design. By utilizing a human-centered and transformative design approach we will demonstrate how design can engage residents in meaningful conversation where individual assets are leveraged. The project aim was to enable citizens to discover the strengths of the community in order to take steps toward change.

The area of focus was the Kensington community located in North Philadelphia. This particular community is faced with issues that challenge the residents' quality of life and safety. Kensington has the number one drug corner in all of Philadelphia and is an area of high crime. Citizens of this area live in isolation where they are disconnected from the greater whole and do not feel empowered to take action in order to become catalysts for change.

A new association was recently developed in order to change that. This civic consists of committed and dedicated residents who have come together to initiate this shift. We

partnered with this new civic association Somerset Neighbors for Better Living which encompasses the Lehigh-Somerset neighborhood of Kensington and New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing the Kensington, Fishtown, and Port Richmond neighborhoods in Philadelphia. This partnership was an entry point to test our design frameworks.

Immersing ourselves in this community we were able to gain a greater understanding of the people and their needs. Becoming regular attendees at the monthly community meetings and the steering committee planning meetings allowed us to develop trust with this new civic organization but also allowed for design opportunities to be realized. By understanding the needs of the residents we felt, as designers, we could work with our partner organizations to co-create a platform where residents could openly discuss the issues within their neighborhood and begin to take steps to create the change they desire. Seeing opportunity within the monthly community meetings, we designed a workshop to create that platform, an interaction that would allow for this meaningful conversation and capture ideas generated by the residents with the goal of creating action steps toward change.

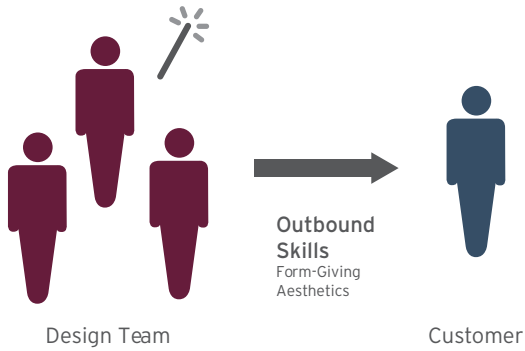
## What kind of design are engaged in?

Design is pushing its boundaries and expanding beyond form and function. Richard Buchanan's theory of the Four Orders of Design are a lens to better understand the several levels of design and where we as designers are working. Each order is held accountable for each that comes before it. *The first order*, are signs and symbols. This is traditional 2D graphic design. Graphic design is often the base to the second, third, and fourth orders of design. The first order process is internal and seems magical from an outside perspective. *The second order*, is object. This is traditional industrial design and 3D product. The first and second orders represent the beginning of the design profession. *The third order*, is process and purpose. This can be anything from interaction design (a dialogue between a user and design), service design, and motion. The third order design is concerned with process and the meaning of their designs. *The fourth order*, is systems and meaning. Urban planning, organizational design, systems design all are a part of a design effort. Something of a greater cause. The designer here understands wicked problems and the complexity of these problems. The solutions may not solve the problem but often affect or change the current system in hope to create a alternate better future (Buchanan 14). This is where our design thesis exists. Within complex community problems where no one solution can solve them.



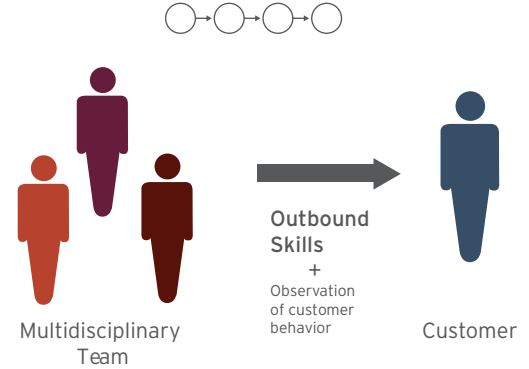
DESIGN  
1.0  
Traditional  
Design

### Hidden Magical Process



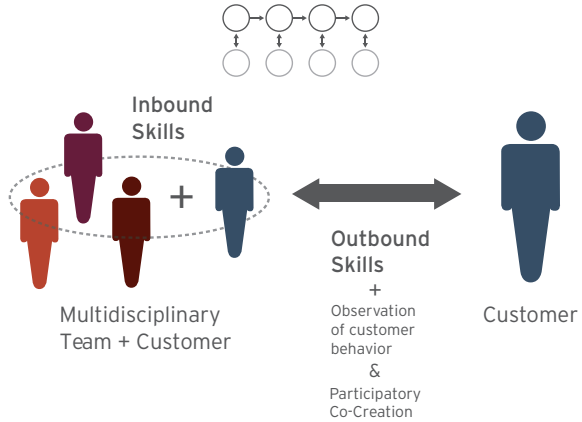
DESIGN  
2.0  
Product Design  
Innovation

### Externalized Process



DESIGN  
3.0  
Service & Interaction  
Design

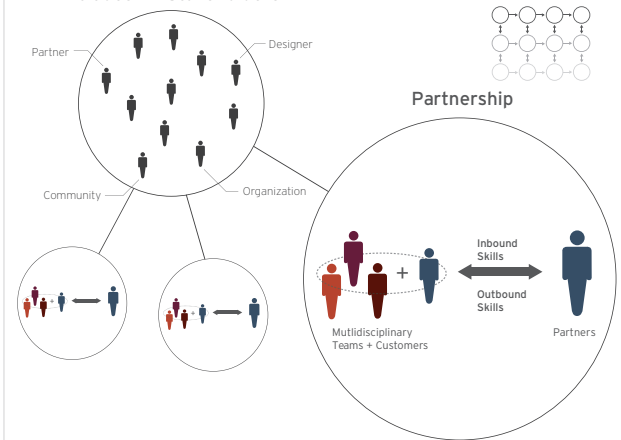
### Externalized Process



DESIGN  
4.0  
System & Design  
Thinking

### Includes All Stakeholders

### Externalized Process



## Transformation Design

Transformation design is a type of user-centered design process that seeks to create sustainable change in behavior of individuals and systems. It first emerged in 2004 when The Design Council formed RED, a design thinking “do-tank” created to transform public services. It uses basic design principles, like visualization and prototyping, and puts them in the hands of a non-designer. Through interdisciplinary design methodology, non-designers can become a part of the design process. Because of the complexity of the problem, it requires a diverse group of stakeholders who each understand a piece of the problem and as a whole understand it all (Burns, Cottam, Vanstone, and Winhall 9). Our approach is similar, because community problems are complex too and require residents who understand the each of the many pieces.

## Human-Centered Design

Human-centered design is a process in which the needs, wants, and limitations of the end user are given extensive attention at each phase. The process originates from IDEO and was developed by Richard Buchanan and David Kelly. By moving through this process quickly and with little resources we are able to fail fast to succeed sooner and reach optimal solutions informed by the perspective of those who would be affected by them. To put it simply, a human centered design process is one that starts with people and ends with people. While this process is cyclical rather than linear, it typically involves four phases: Research, Synthesis, Prototyping, and Iteration. Through observation and interviewing we are able to gain a first hand understanding of various stakeholder

needs. Then make complex information visual and accessible. Through visualization and scenario building we draw connections between the various pieces of both quantitative and qualitative data that is collected through the research. This synthesis of information allows for raw insights to be discovered, emphasized, and brought together to inform initial design concepts. These concepts are then made tangible to be tested. They can take on many forms including physical objects, visual narratives, etc. By making these representations tangible we are able to test them with potential users and other stakeholders to gain further insights that aid in the refinement of the designs.

## Co-Design and the Participatory Approach

While the human-centered design process is often carried out by a team that includes designers and other disciplines with the user as a “subject of study”, we often use co-design and a participatory approach to directly involve the user in most aspects of the design process where decisions are made. This moves the user from the role of subject of study to a collaborator. In this approach, the designer acts as a facilitator and designs the supporting materials and frameworks necessary to move participants through a process that empowers them to develop a collective understanding of a given problem/opportunity and co-create their own solutions or prototypes. This approach can happen over a long period of time where user groups can continuously engage in this process to refine potential solutions or over a shorter period of time in the form of a co-design workshop (Ehn and Kyng *A Tool Perspective on Design of Interactive Computer Support for Skilled Workers*).

## What is our role as designers?

By understanding the needs of the residents within this community we feel, as designers, we can work with New Kensington Community Development Corporation, Somerset Neighbors for Better Living and the greater community to co-create a platform where residents, in a safe space, are inspired to discuss issues in order to take ownership and action for the betterment of their neighbors.

Currently NKCDC is coordinating efforts and building a relationship with the local police district, government organizations and SNBL. However, there is no feedback from the greater community and little interest is generated for the existing initiatives. We feel there is opportunity at monthly meetings to begin to engage and inspire these residents to feel connected and invested by allowing them to discover the gifts that they have as a community.

We believe that by creating visual tools and methods that **aid communication** and **foster collaboration**, designers can engage people in activities that **generate meaningful conversation** by creating a common platform for discussion and a shared understanding.

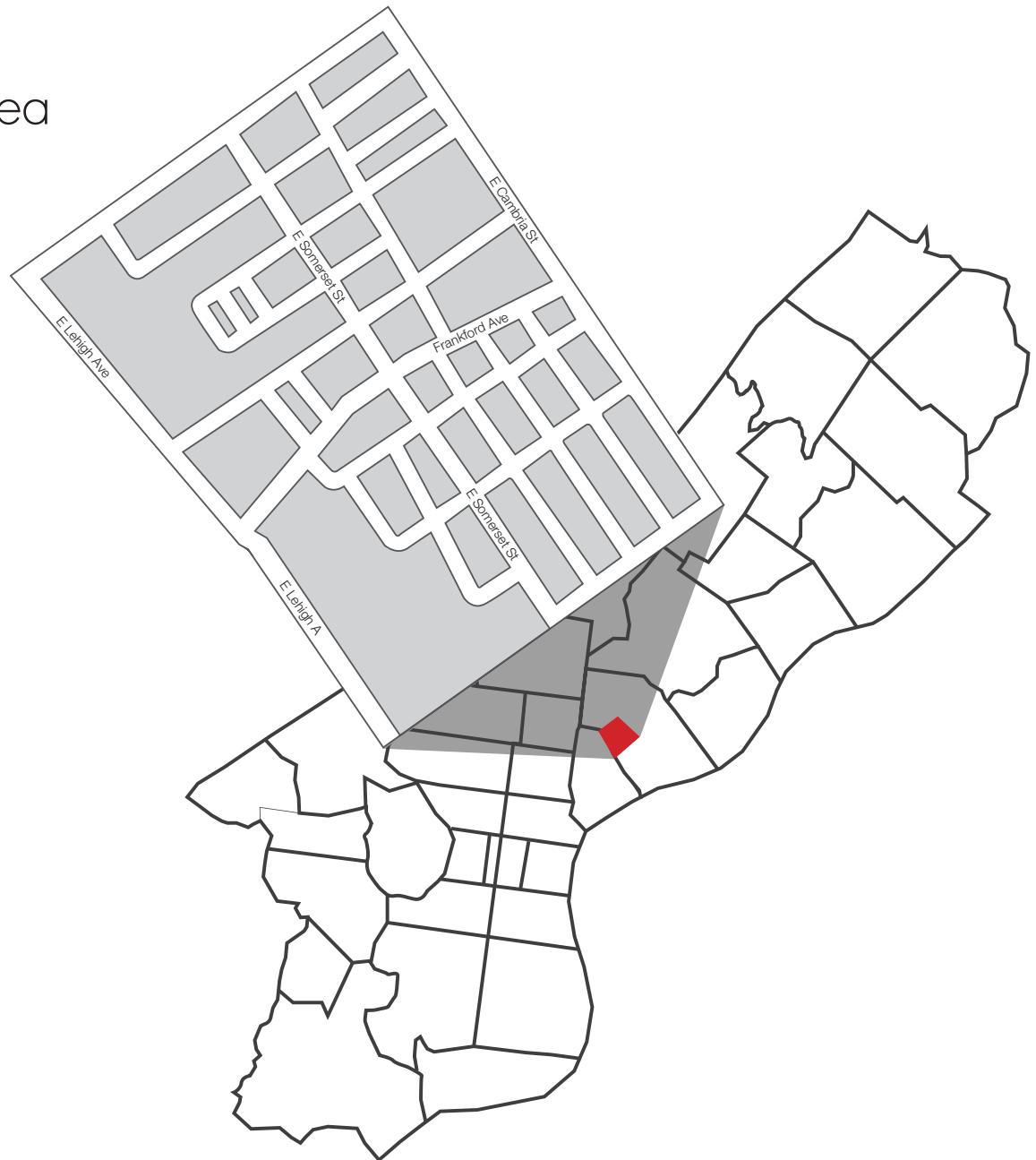


# Design Research

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## Project Area

*The Lehigh-Somerset area is the specific area within Kensington that we concentrated on. The area west of Lehigh Avenue has lower crime rates and is less impoverished.*





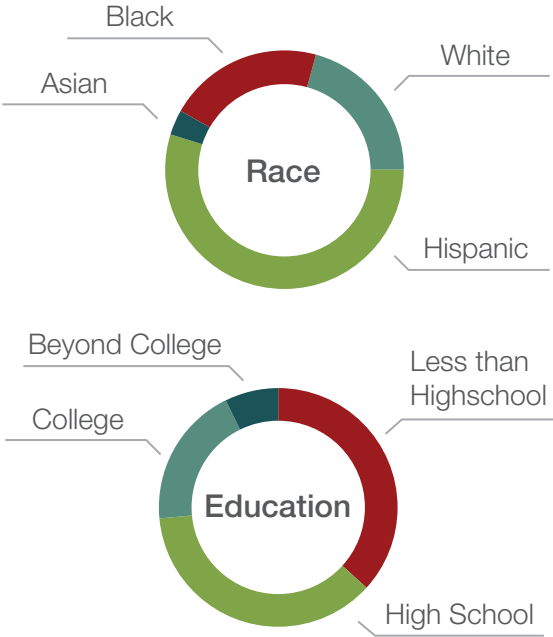
Demographics

Population

6,704

Age Average

Male - 21  
Female - 24



Housing

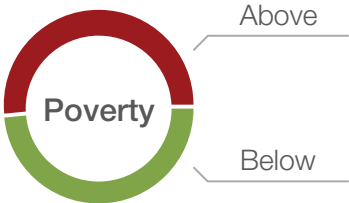
Vacant Homes



Avg. Housing Value

**Somerset** \$39, 651/TownHouse  
**Philadelphia** \$65, 271/TownHouse

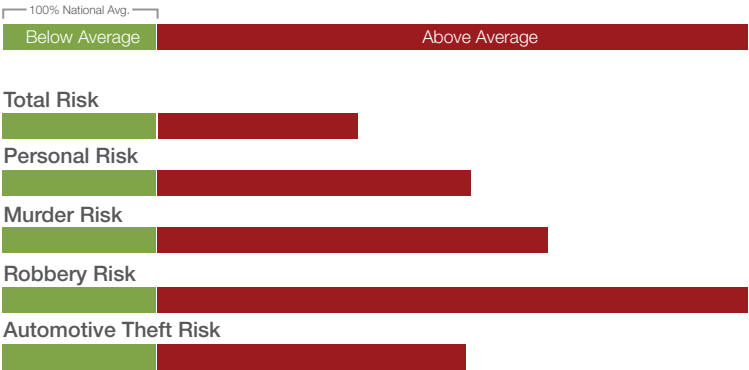
Economy



Median Family Income

\$22,096 / Year

Crime



## Pre-thesis Interventions

The summer of 2012, we started our collaboration with NKCDC. One initiative, the “Big Green Block,” is a project bringing sustainable green infrastructure and education to an area that borders Fishtown and East Kensington. This is part of a 25-year citywide initiative to bring green storm water management projects to areas of Philadelphia. Multiple stakeholders are involved in this project including, NKCDC, Philadelphia Water Department, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Mural Arts and Philadelphia Parks and Rec.

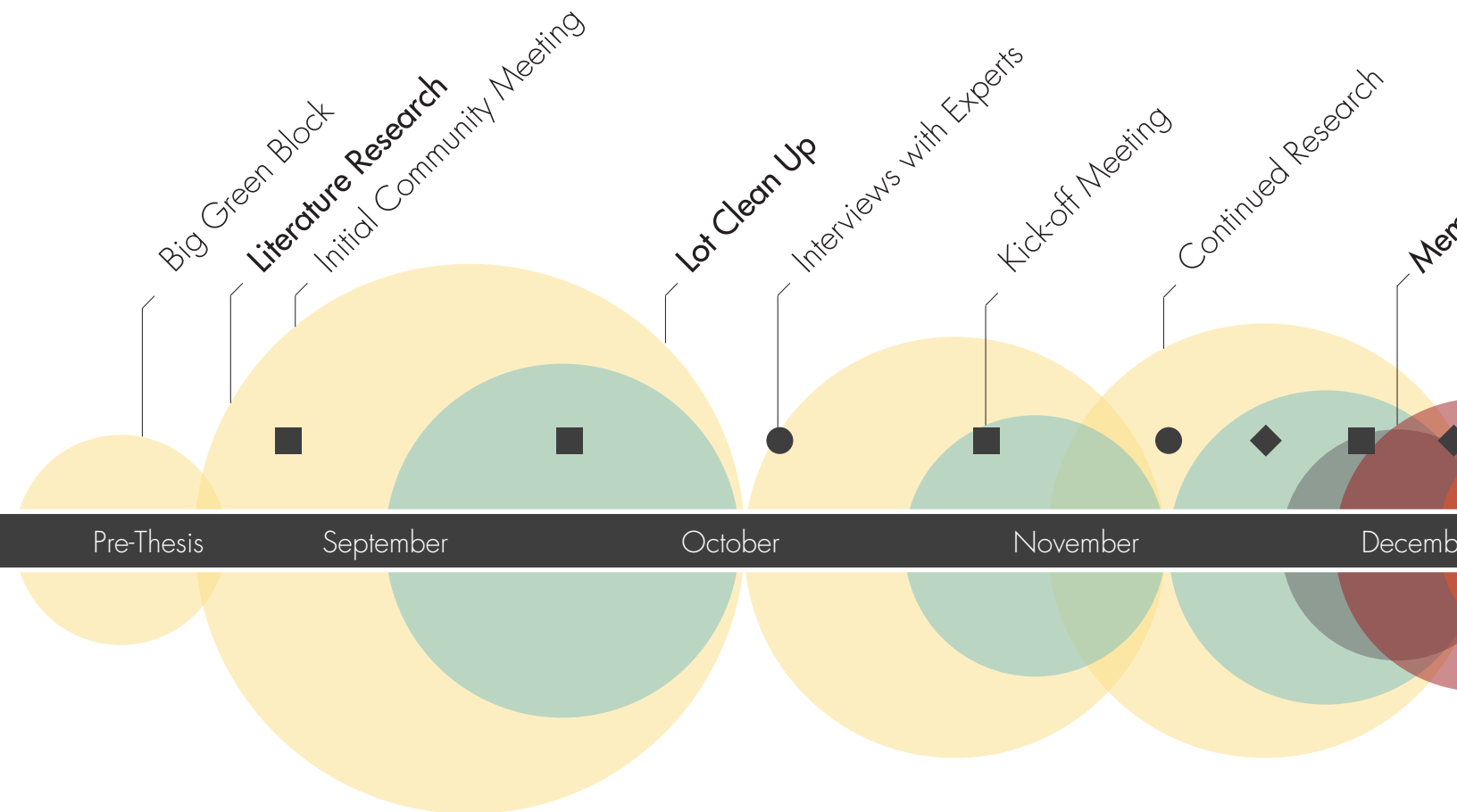
A team of Master of Industrial Design students from the University of The Arts facilitated a workshop organized by NKCDC (New Kensington Community Development Corp.). NKCDC believes strongly that the community should be involved in the decision making. The goal of the workshop was to engage multiple stakeholders within the community in a collaborative exercise to inform the design of phase two of their Big Green Block. Participants of the workshop were divided into four groups and asked to brainstorm descriptive words they would use to describe the ideal future of the space. Each group had a UArts designer as a facilitator who directed the group members to externalize their thoughts. This sparked some interesting conversation within the groups as the participants discussed what the space and the neighborhood meant to them.

What we learned from this experience was the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders early in the design process to gain multiple perspectives. It would have been beneficial to meet more residents, especially in Kensington, to generate more interest and involve a more diverse selection of residents.

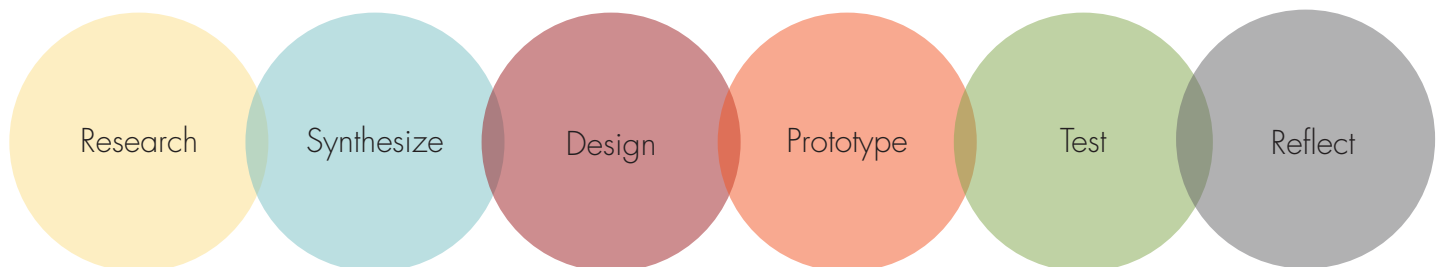
## Previous Thesis Work

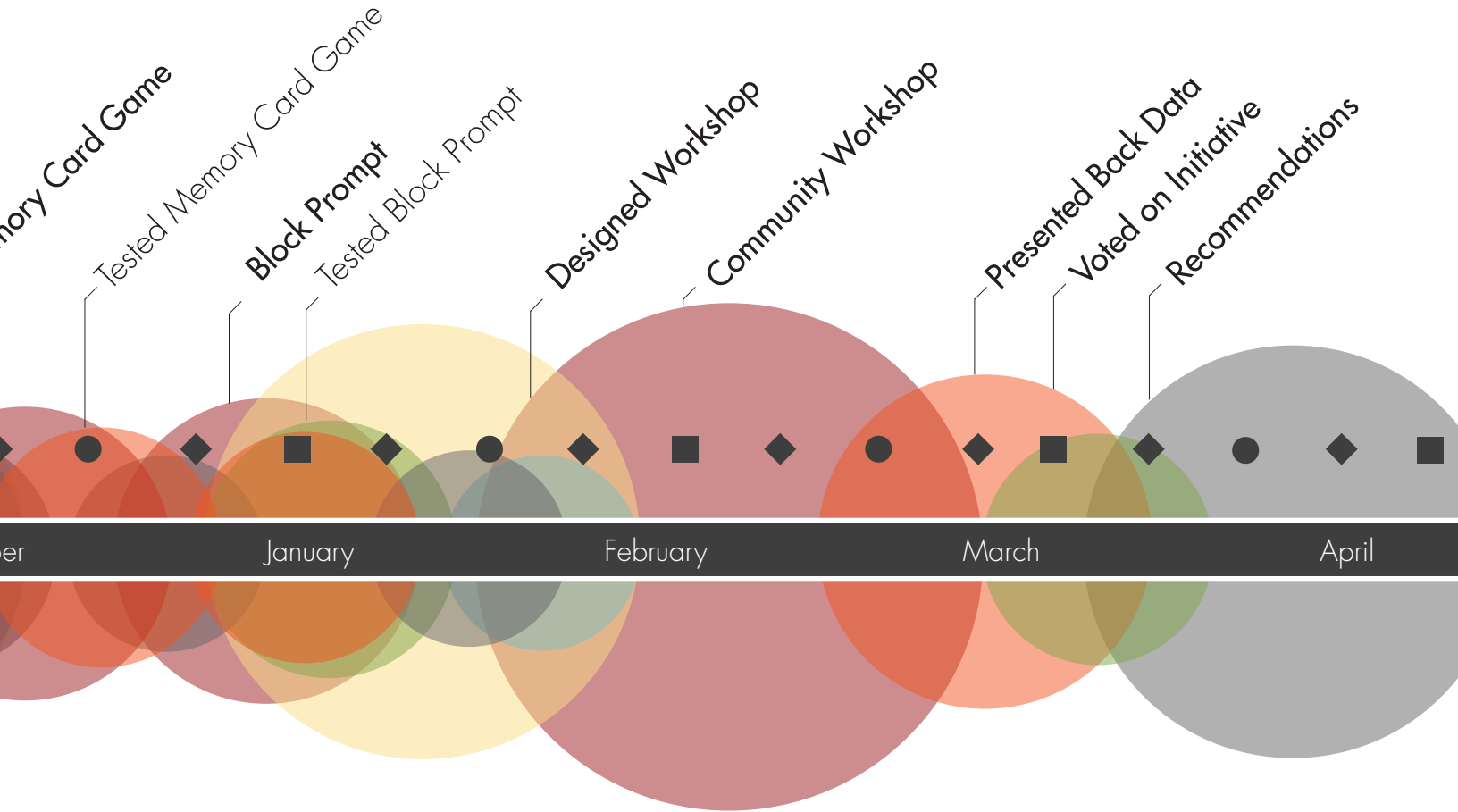
Matt Van Der Tuyn, a graduate from the Master of Industrial Design program at The University of the Arts produced a thesis titled *Designing Conversations: Frameworks for Collaboration & Empowerment*. His project examined how design frameworks can lay the foundation for collaboration and empowerment within organizations and communities. He used a transformation design approach and supplied participants of a workshop with tools to alleviate any anxieties associated with visualizing concepts. The designer acts as a facilitator and walks the group through a process allowing the participants (non-designers) to manipulate the tools to help formulate their thinking. NKCDC was one of the organizations Matt used to pilot his design frameworks. Through this project and the work done with the Big Green Block, our partner organization (NKCDC) was already aware of the potential for design within a community building context.

## Project Timeline

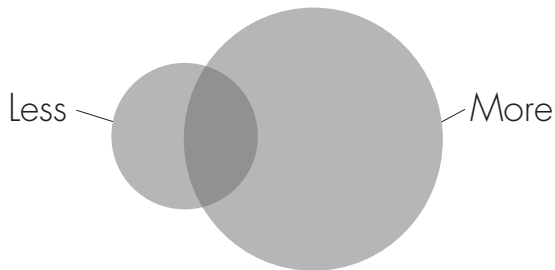


## Design Phase





## Significance



## Monthly Meetings

- ◆ Standing Meetings with NKCDC
- Steering Committee Meetings
- Community Meetings

## 2.1 What is the current structure between all the stakeholders?

NKCDC (New Kensington Community Development Corporation), is a local community organization whose mission is to strengthen the physical, social, and economic fabric of the community by being a catalyst for sustainable development and community building. To gain a better understanding of New Kensington Community Development Corp and the neighborhoods they work with we conducted interviews with several members of the organization. These interviews allowed us to not only gain an understanding of the neighborhoods but also the organizational structure within NKCDC, the various programs they offer and the staff members themselves. This knowledge was important as we progressed through the project and helped us to manage the relationship with NKCDC.

The neighborhoods that NKCDC serves include East Kensington, Kensington, Fishtown, and Port Richmond. Several of these diverse neighborhoods in East North Philadelphia already have well established civic organizations. They have strong partnerships with police, local government and churches in the area. We learned that these resources are lacking for the Kensington community. The area where SNBL was created had the least amount of resources, no strong community leaders and no ties to government organizations.



### NKCDC Staff Interviewed:

Carla Castillo - Director of Community Engagement

Laura Semmelroth - Coral Street Coordinator

Angela Taurino - Resident Services Coordinator

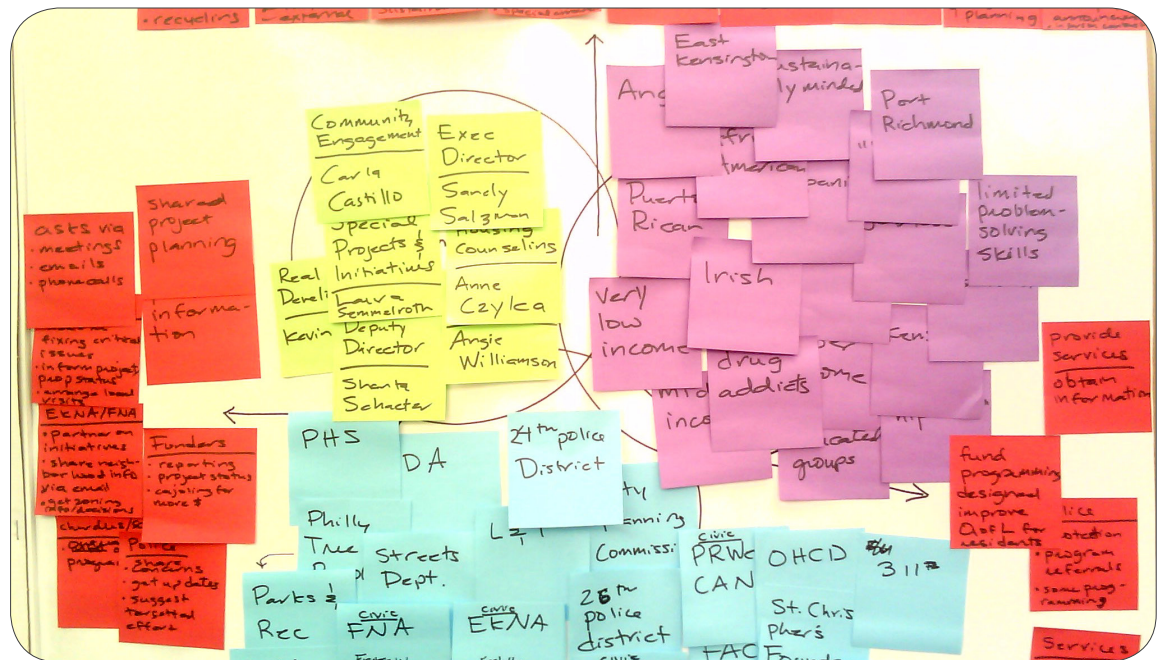
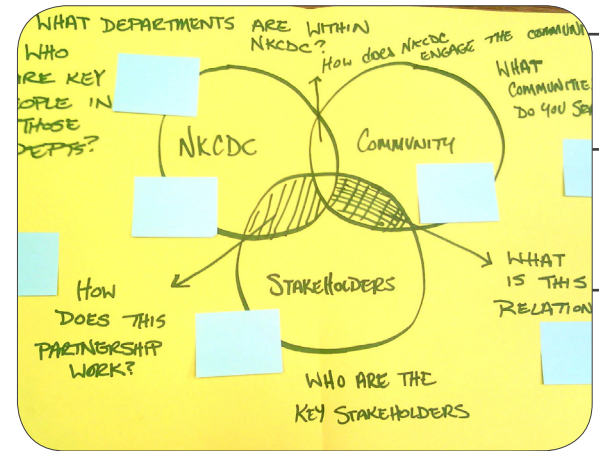
Shanta Schachter - Deputy Director



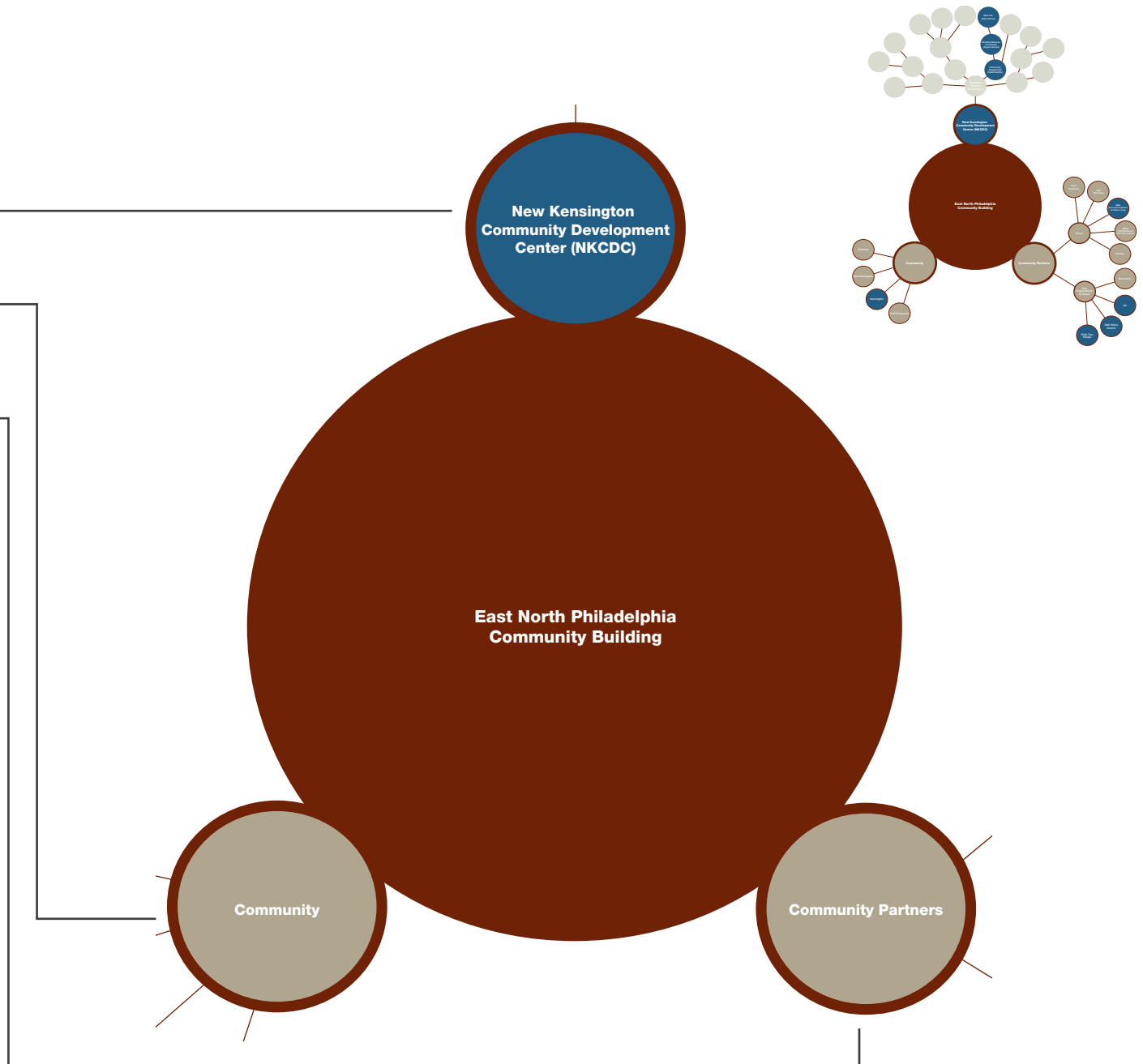
## Building a Stakeholder Map

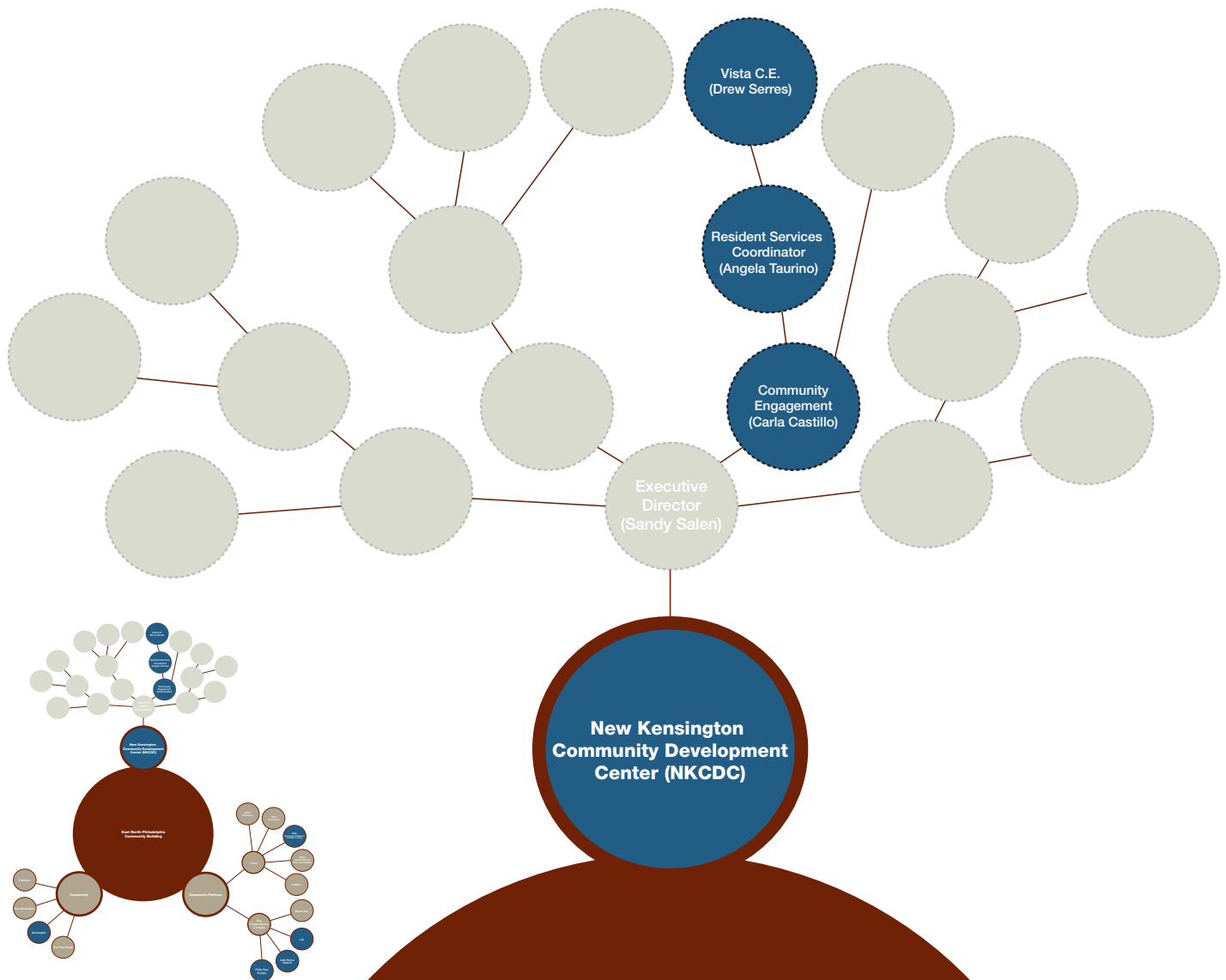


From our interviews with NKCDC we were able to better visualize the current system of stakeholders involved in our project. These visuals, to the right, represent the process work that helped build our key stakeholder map

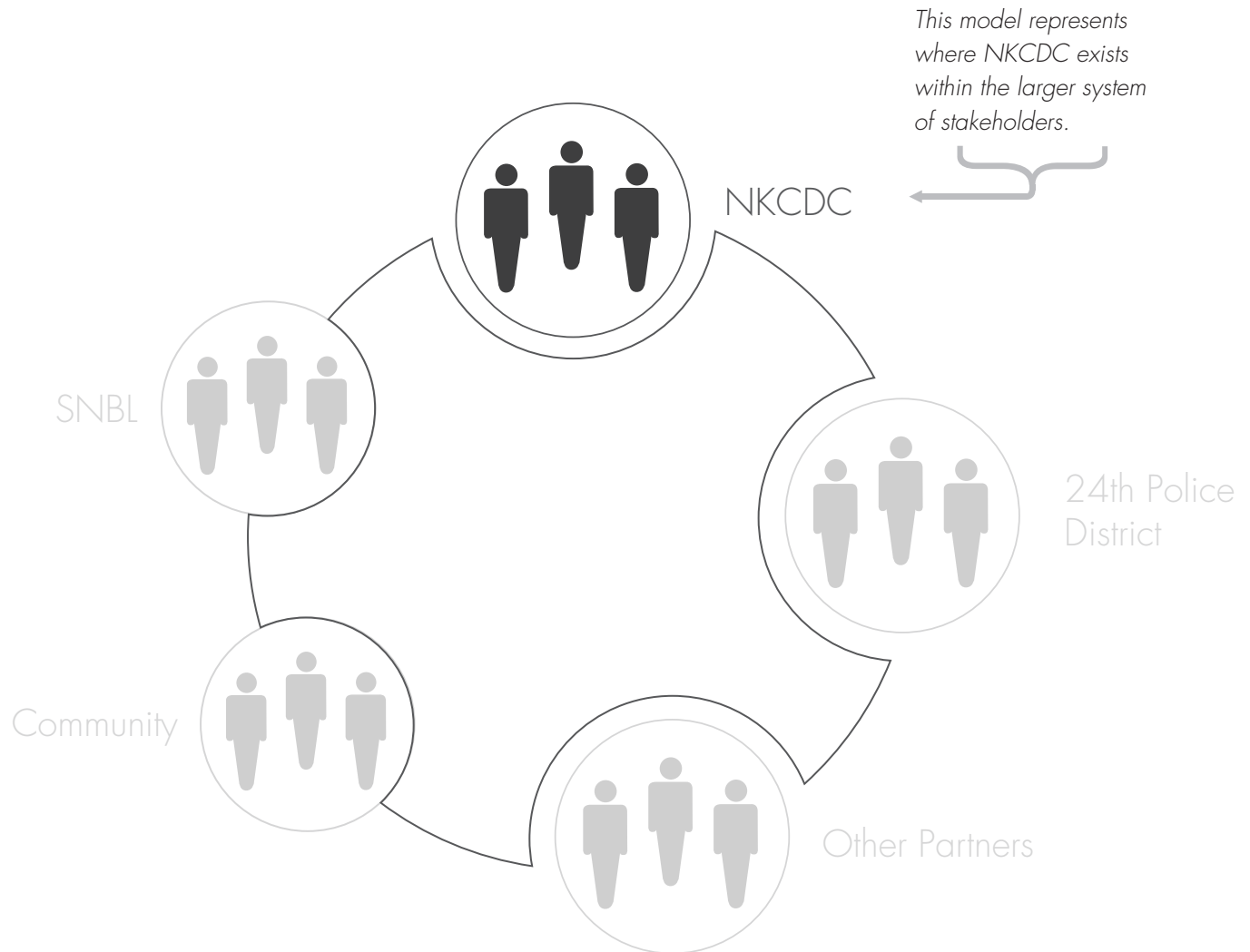


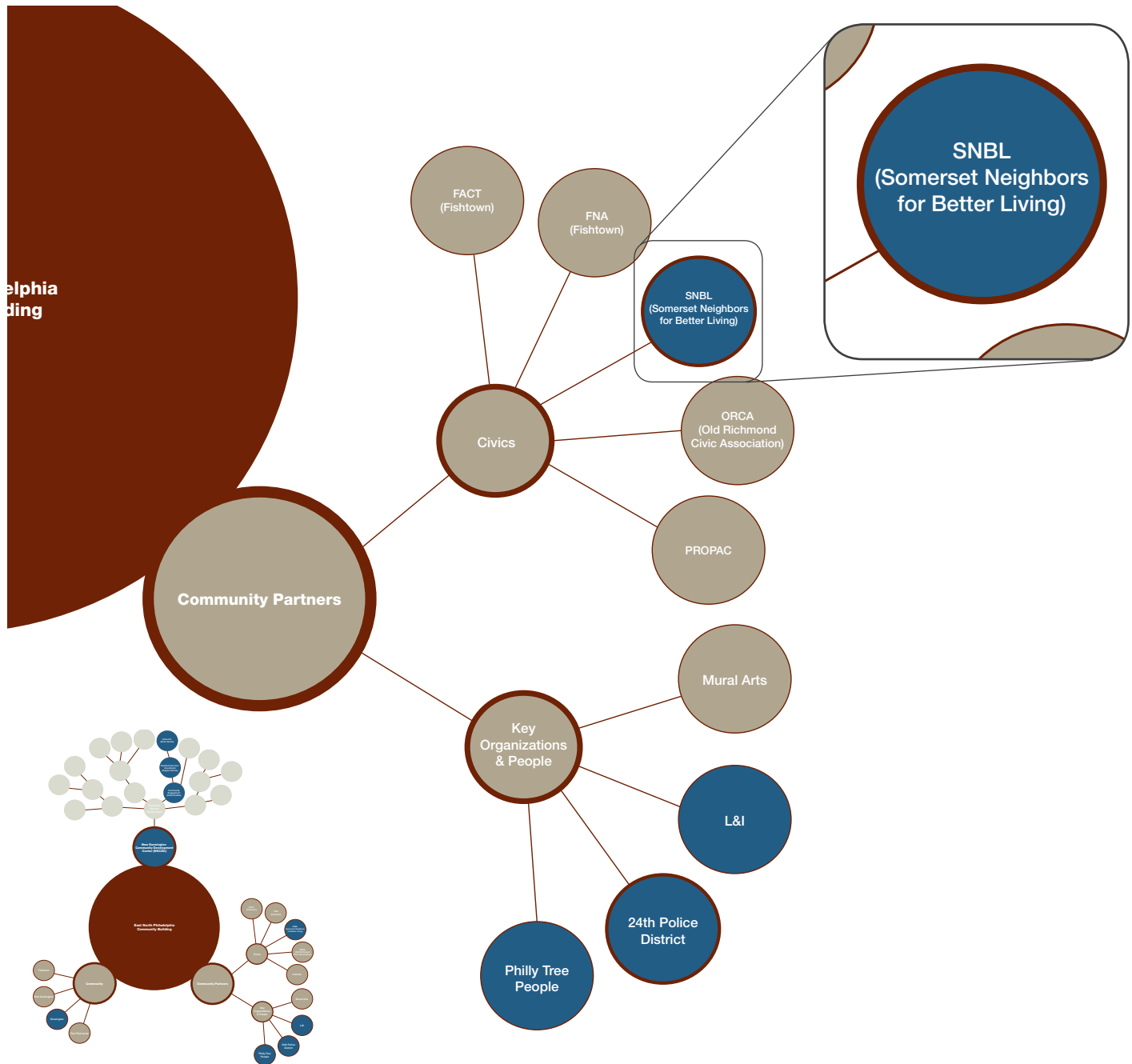


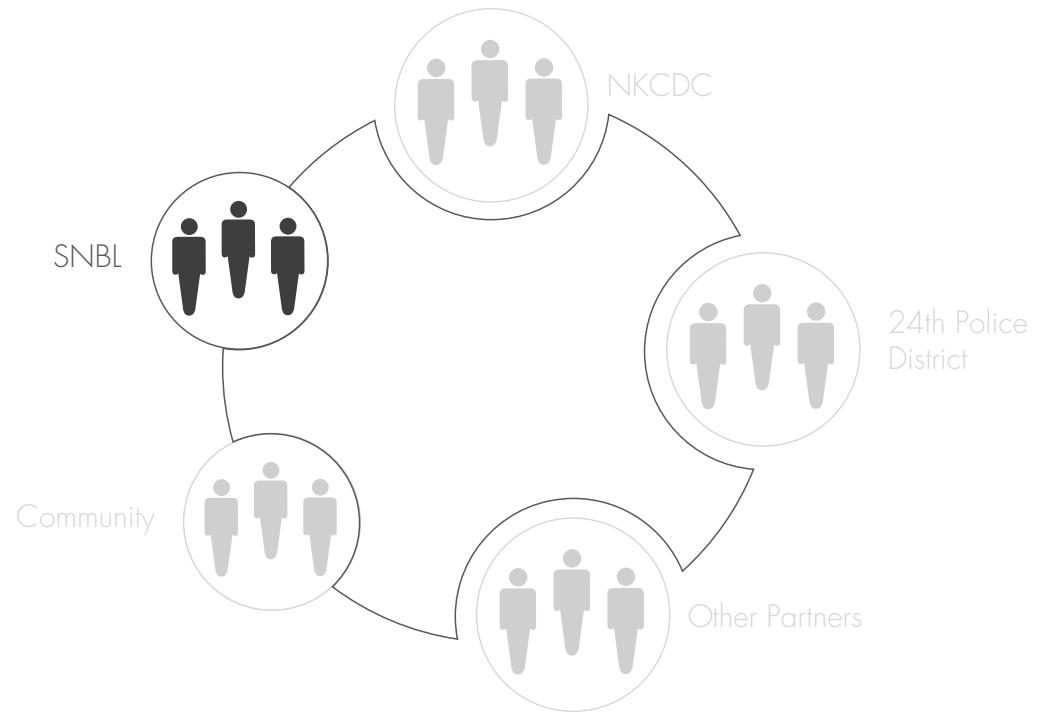




# New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC)

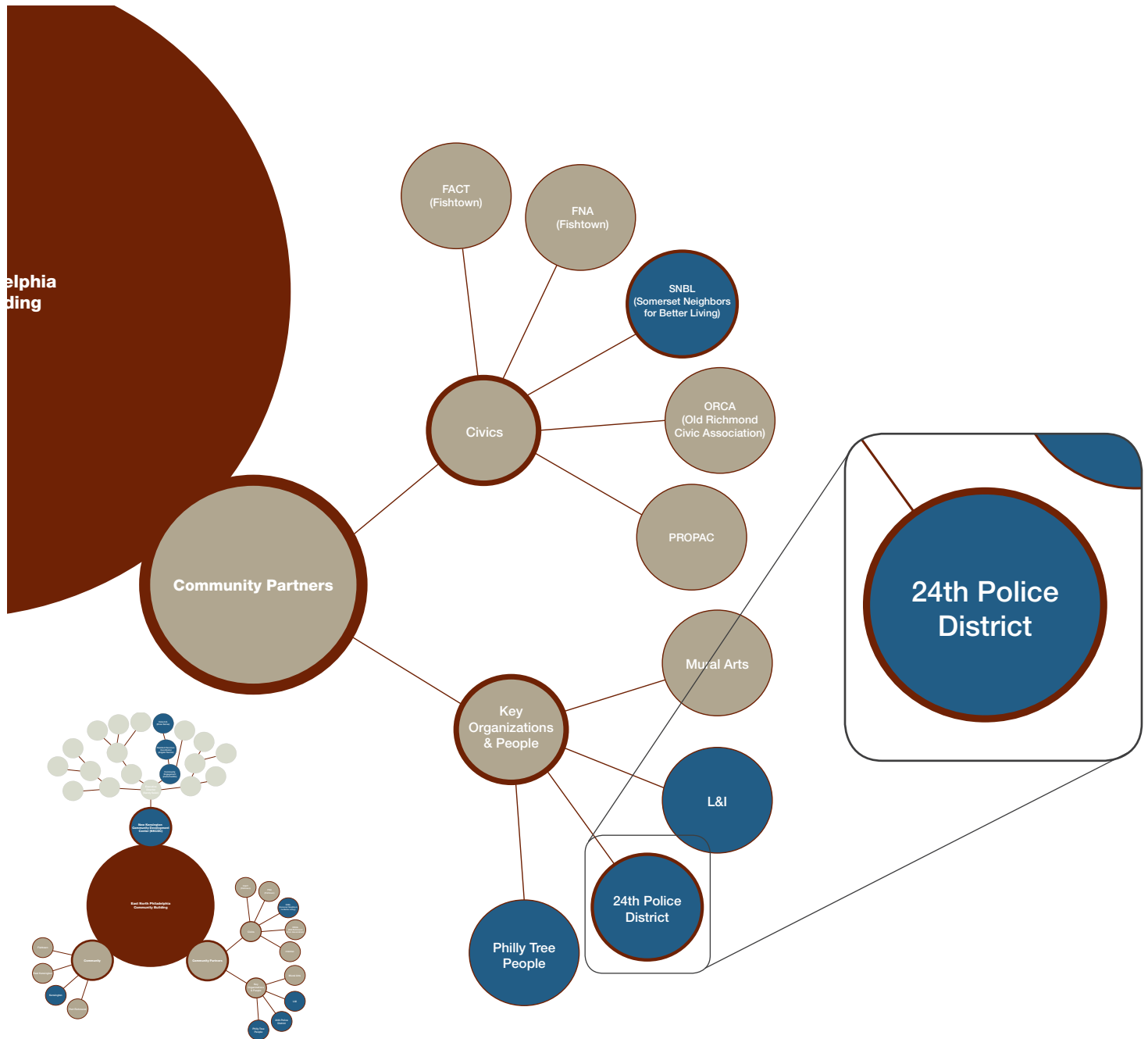




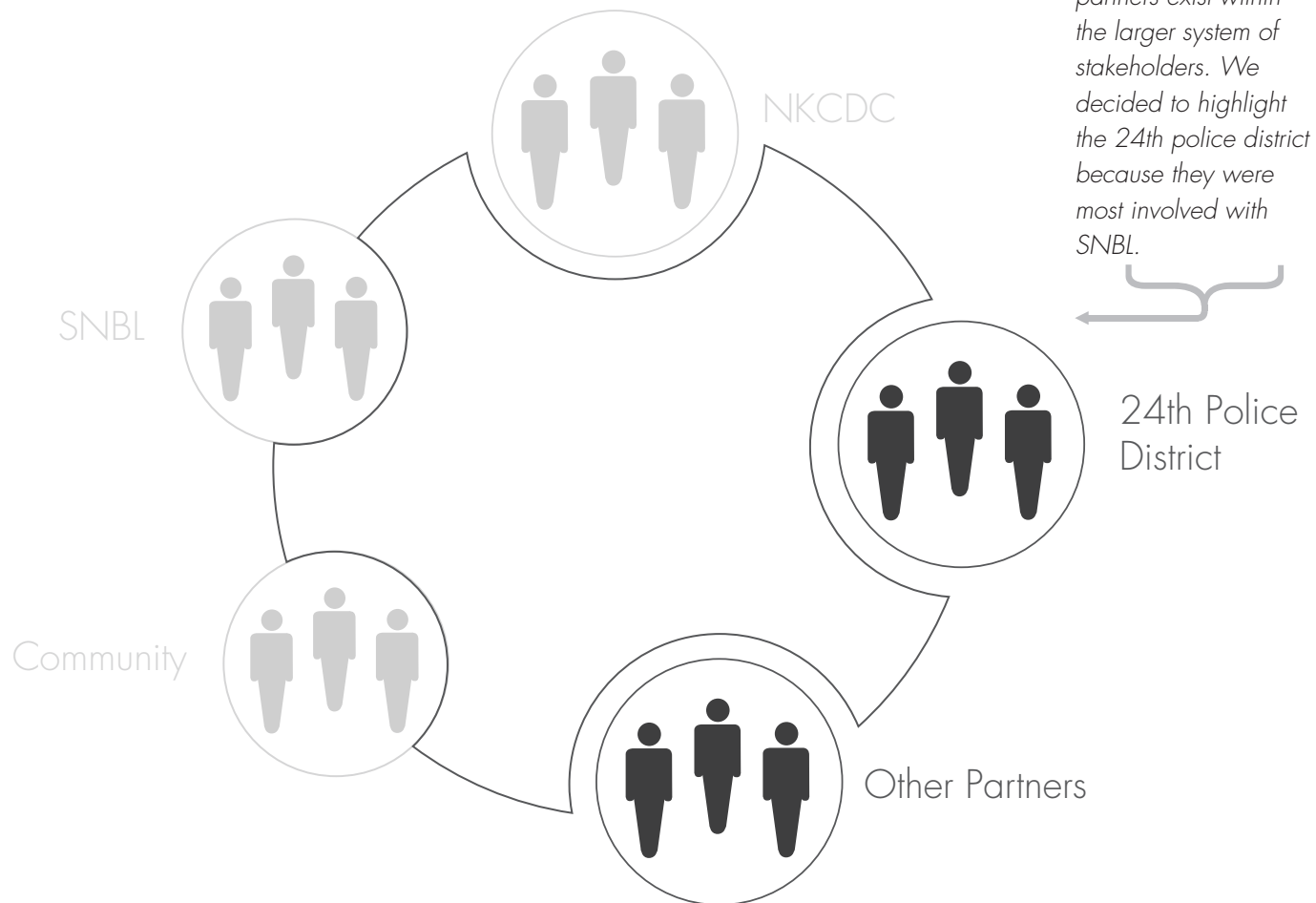


## Somerset Neighbors for Better Living (SNBL)

Somerset Neighbors for Better Living is a group of residents who live in the neighborhood of Somerset and Lehigh Avenues of Kensington who, with the help of NKCDC, created an organization geared toward making this area a better place to live. The Somerset Neighbors are made up of an active group of resident volunteers or community champions as they are known, whose goal is to create opportunities to engage fellow community members in initiatives to better this area. Somerset Neighbors is led by a steering committee which currently consists of 9 volunteers.



## Community Partners



## Community Partners

### *24th Police District*

The area of Kensington that we have focused on is supported by Philadelphia's 24th Police District. This district recently assigned a new captain, Capt. Vogt. Unlike his predecessors, Capt. Vogt has been a major force in this community. Through his efforts and a collaboration with SEPTA, the number 1 drug corner off the Somerset El stop now has 24 hour police surveillance. This presence has made a huge impact on this particular El stop and residents are hopeful that it will lead to an overall reduction of crime in their neighborhood.

NKCDC has been working hard to develop a relationship with the 24th district and has arranged for an officer, Officer Willis to attend all of the monthly civic association meetings. She reports on the current crime statistics from the area and different safety initiatives, while also answering concerns or questions from residents. This relationship between the police and community has been a very important piece of the meetings. Officer Willis has yet to miss a meeting.

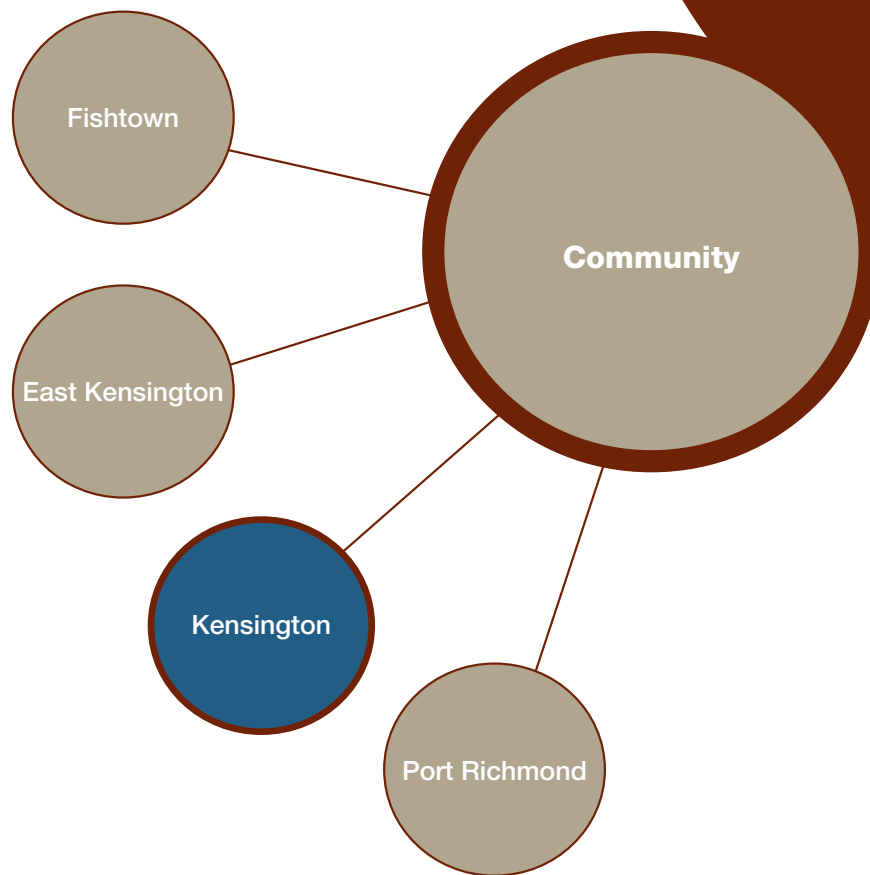


### *Licensing and Inspection*

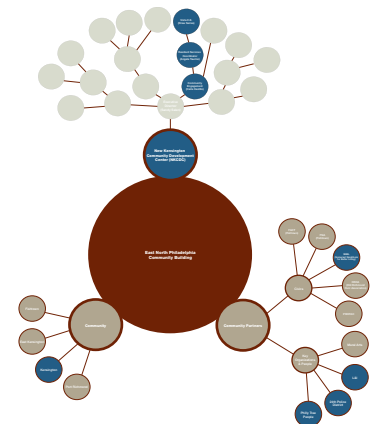
Licensing and Inspection or L&I, is also an important partner. They answer reports concerning vacant buildings and lots within the area. Their focus is to track down the legal owners of the property and when that fails they take steps to board up buildings that can become a safety hazard.

### *Philly Tree People*

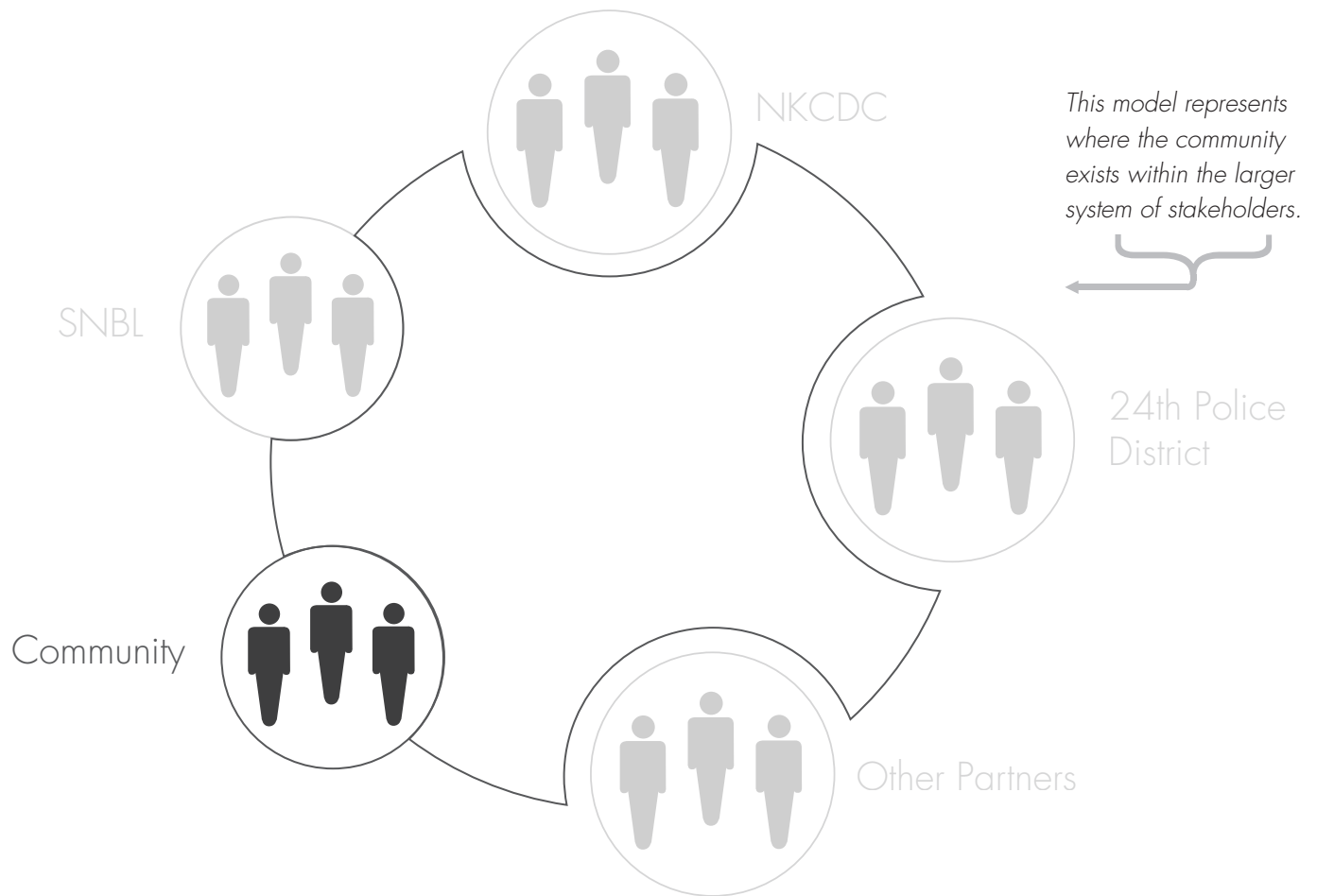
This is a non-profit organization that partners with the Philadelphia Horticultural Society to plant trees in low income urban areas. They are currently serving the Kensington, East Kensington and Fishtown neighborhoods. It is an organization which consists of community volunteers who have become “Tree Tenders” through training. One of the more recent steering committee members is a volunteer with PTP and she advocates for trees at several meetings. NKCDC and PTP supply information about their program and opportunities to sign up. The service is completely free.



## East North Philadelphia Community Bu



## The Community



## 2.2 Who are the important people?

### SNBL Profiles



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Name

**Carlos Miti**

---

Location

**Coral Street**

Carlos is extremely passionate about Kensington and the work being done by the steering committee. He is a middle aged, Hispanic resident who is currently Acting President of the Steering Committee for SNBL. He is confident about his views and is an uplifting figure for the group. Often times, he raises the energy in the room and leads the discussion. He believes the community needs new or better businesses and the area needs to be safer for the residents. At the community meetings he and his partner provide food - evidence of their care and commitment to this fledgling organization. Though his enthusiasm is evident, he lacks some basic leadership skills. If he were to receive training, we believe he would be an excellent steering committee leader. His acts of kindness allow him to fall into a role of being a community champion, empowering residents through conversation and kindness.



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Name

**Renee Feliciano**

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Location

**Helen Street**

Renee is a passionate member of the steering committee and is a strong public speaker. She has a confident personality and is currently the acting Vice President of the steering committee for the Somerset Neighbors for Better Living (SNBL). She is a dog breeder and owns a dog grooming business. Renee is very thoughtful and kind about her presence. She enjoys listening and coming up with ideas to solve problems. She has a positive outlook on the community but also can be cynical when it comes to her neighbors. She often times transfers her knowledge of dog training into ideas for the steering committee to use. She believes that the community needs to be safer. She insists on getting more lighting up on the streets and having more police patrolling the area.



---

Name

**Debbie Keller**

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Location

**East Somerset Street**

Debbie is a friendly and positive member of the steering committee. She is currently the acting Treasurer of the steering committee of the Somersert Neighbors for Better Living (SNBL). At the community meetings, she is often seen interacting with her young daughter. She enjoys being around youth and feels comfortable around children. Debbie is a bit shy and prefers not to speak in public. She is currently unemployed and collects disability, but this allows her to be connected with the neighbors in Kensington. She seems to have a relationship with every child in her neighborhood. Debbie wants the area to be safer for her child and wants the streets to be clean for child to play.



---

Name

**Vidal Rodriguez (Jr)**

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Location

**Coral Street**

Jr is shy but always is willing to help when needed. He currently does not act in any position in the steering committee but plans to in the future. He prefers not to speak in public but is a hard worker. He could be considered the group's handyman who enjoys having conversations with residents. He isn't afraid to do the group's grunt work and get his hands dirty. He is often seen at his garden on a week day growing local produce. He wants the abandoned lots in the area to be cleaned up and re-purposed for better use.



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Name

**Raul Dones**

---

Location

**East Ann Street**

Raul is a friendly face and a passionate member of this community. He is currently an honorary steering committee member because he lives outside the official boundaries of SNBL. He prefers not to speak in public, often not saying a single word at the committee meetings. He would much rather be working on something than having a conversation. Raul is a very hard worker and was a big part of the recent clean up efforts. He and Jr. both manage a local community garden.





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Name

**Tim Wiesniewski**

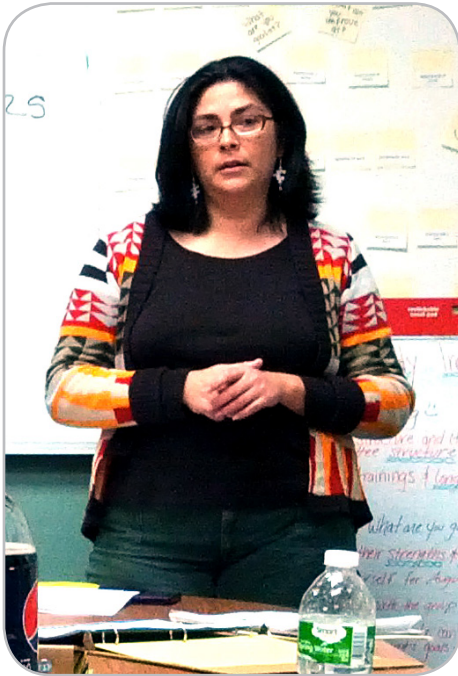
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Location

**Out of Boundaries**

Tim is a young, single professional. He is currently an honorary member of the steering committee because he also lives outside the SNBL boundaries. A bit outspoken at times, he can have a strong opinion about the direction of the civic. He believes it is important to be involved in community service work and wants to see Kensington change. He is a willing partner, who attends all meetings and clean up initiatives. His genuine concern for the area is apparent in all of his work. He understands the issues of drugs and crime in the area and knows what steps it will take to tame it. Tim is a natural leader who uses his experience from previous civics to help guide this new governing body. He is the director of civic technology for the City of Philadelphia and brings his experience of programming and technology to the steering committee.

## NKCDC Profiles



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Name

**Carla Castillo**

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Location

**NKCDC**

Carla has a background in finance and community organizing. She is the NKCDC's - Community Development Director. Goal oriented and driven, Carla's goal is to train the governing body members to be able to operate independently from NKCDC. Carla fully understands the challenges of this community and is actively trying her best to lead the SNBL to success. Although she does not live in Kensington, she has heard the stories and sees first hand the daily hurdles that these residents face. She is the author of the civics bi-laws and leads the NKCDC team. Carla a wife and mother often works overtime, but is passionate about the work she does. She is always a friendly face to see and enjoys making the room feel comfortable and productive.



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Name

**Angela Taurino**

---

Location

**NKCDC**

Angela's background in education transfers over to her skills as a facilitator and trainer for the governing body. She is the NKCDC's - Resident Services Coordinator. Outgoing and bubbly, Angela is in charge of the day to day operation of the steering committee. She creates all of the meeting agendas and direction for the Clean and Green initiatives. Angela also does a lion's share of the speaking at the larger community meetings. Currently working under Carla, Angela hopes one day to build a truly independent civic association. She is very engaged in her work and is always willing to go above and beyond. Angela has a personal relationship with each steering committee member. Using the NKCDC's network, she continues to build relations for the SNBL.



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Name

**Drew Serres**

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Location

**NKCDC**

Originally from Oregon, Drew is working as a volunteer with NKCDC as their Community Building Vista. He is very friendly but also very shy and new to community building. He enjoys doing research regarding new initiatives and is passionate about his work. Drew works under Angela currently and acts as the scribe for the group at the steering committee meetings as well as greeting the community members at every meeting. He is building his confidence as a community builder and wants to grow as a professional.

## Partner Profiles



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Name

**Tina Willis**

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Location

**24th Police District**

Tina, a highly involved police officer, has a background in criminology. She is a local police officer from the 24th police district. Positive and uplifting, her goal is to inform the local community about crime statistics and current initiatives from her district. Tina understands the challenges of this community and wants them to feel safe and confident in their neighborhood.

## 2.3 What is the distribution of power?

### Steering Committee Meetings

NKCDC organizes a monthly meeting for all Steering Committee members. We have been attending these meetings for the past 6 months as observers and facilitators. This was an opportunity to learn how these meetings were structured but also a chance to build trust with both NKCDC and SNBL. Angela Taurino, Resident Services Coordinator at NKCDC, runs the Steering Committee meetings. She creates the agendas and facilitates all conversation. The goal is to have each member attend leadership training so that they can operate independently from NKCDC.

By attending these meetings we observed how passive the steering committee members were within this structure. In the early meetings people did not open up unless prompted by either Angela or Carla. They allowed NKCDC to make the important decisions and take care of the details for both the community meetings and the other initiatives. As the members gained more confidence they would begin to voice their opinions. We also noticed that as facilitators, NKCDC began to include the members in more of the decision-making, seeking approval before moving forward with an idea.

Under this structure, NKCDC would present an agenda and discuss key points. They would request feedback from the steering committee members and then move on to





the next agenda item. During the meetings, a member of the NKCDC recorded the minutes and subsequently emailed them to each member. This was the only way to capture the discussion being produced.

## Monthly Community Meetings

Along with the monthly steering committee meetings at NKCDC, we also began to attend the monthly community meetings for Somerset Neighbors. These meetings are a way to update residents on upcoming initiatives and the current progress of the neighborhood. We observed that the meetings were structured in a lecture type setup where residents sat in rows facing the front. The meetings are only discussion based with no goals, plans, or visions being created for the community. Additionally, themes from these discussions are not being captured or pursued further. There was no opportunity to engage the residents in conversation. A few would raise their hands to comment or ask questions but neither the seating nor the speakers invited free exchanges between residents. The opportunity was clear. We, as designers, needed to shift how these meetings could run and engage the community more directly.





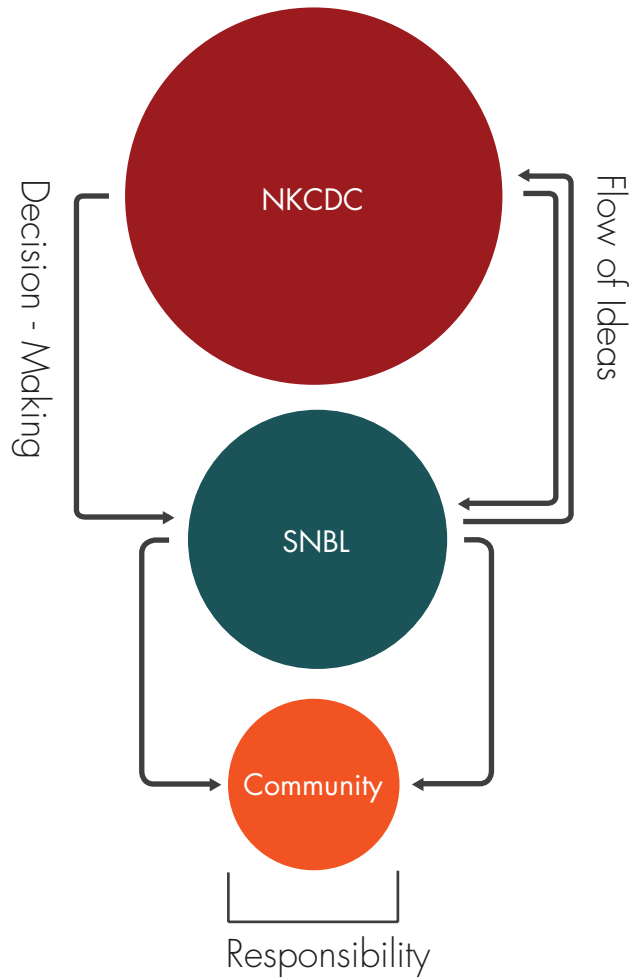
## Responsibility, Decision-Making, and Flow of Ideas

This model represents our interpretation of the responsibility and decision making power of the three main stakeholder groups. The first represents what exists today and the second model represents a future state. Currently NKCDC makes most, if not all, of the decisions for SNBL and the community they represent. NKCDC currently takes on all responsibility involved with organizing and facilitating meetings. However, the flow of ideas often comes from SNBL.

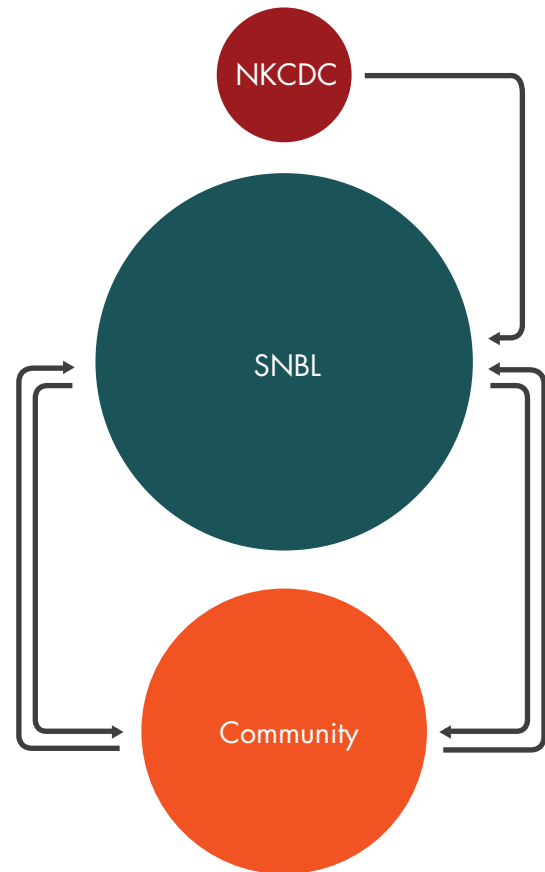
NKCDC's goal is to build leadership capacity within the SNBL steering committee so that they are able to take full control of the meetings. They would like the steering committee to start planning and facilitating all meetings. Also, they want the conversation and flow of ideas to loop between the SNBL and the greater community with NKCDC acting as a supporting partner.

We believe that it is important that the community has a voice and a platform to make decisions regarding their neighborhood. Our design work aimed to create that platform and open up a channel of communication between the steering committee and community residents, a step toward a future state.

## Current State



## Future State



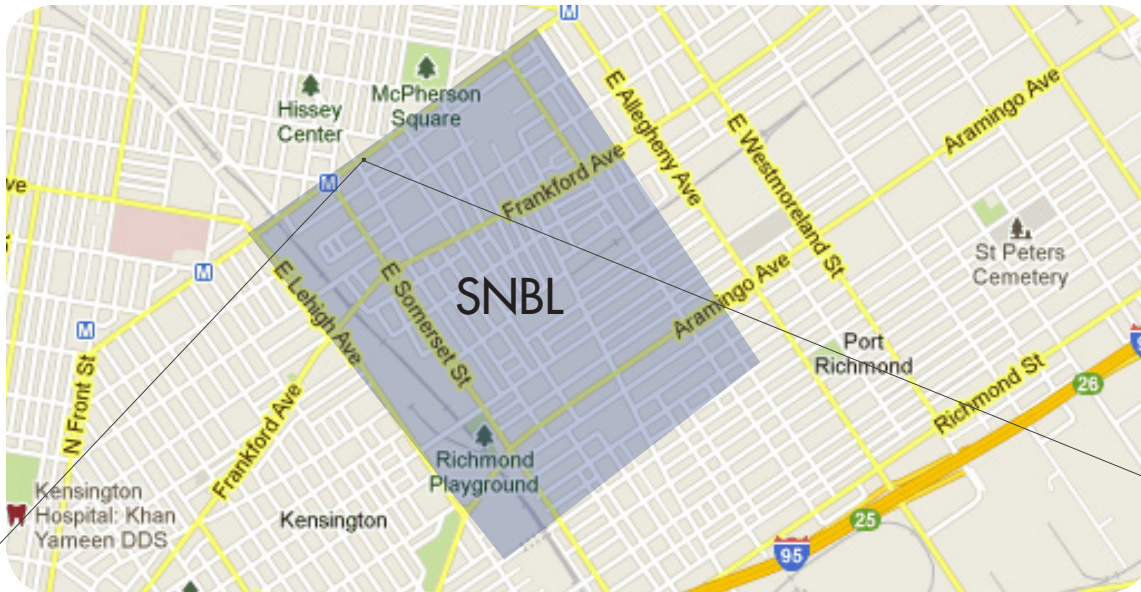
## 2.4 How can we better understand the community?

### Tour of the Area

In the early stages of our project we decided to spend a day walking around the Kensington neighborhood observing the space. In this tour we walked up and down Kensington Avenue, under the Septa train line. The weather was nice, meaning many people were outside. From an outside perspective it looked like an active community. We were excited and thought it was a great opportunity to speak with individuals. However, we soon realized that many of the people were not friendly. The area is active with illegal activity and at times we felt very uncomfortable being there.

Many of the people we approached were not willing to speak with us. We ventured away from Kensington Avenue and observed that most people were still inside their homes. As we passed a townhouse, a young lady peaked out of her front door. She smiled at us and then stepped back inside, hesitant to come outside. Near the end of the walk we saw a man outside cleaning his car. We explained who we were and asked him several questions like - how long he had lived there and what he likes most about living in Kensington. He explained that he's lived in the area for 6 years because housing is so affordable and that there is nothing he likes about the neighborhood. He also mentioned that he never walks on Kensington Avenue and will only go in that direction in his car.







## Contextual Inquiry



We had the opportunity to have lunch with Raul with his wife at their home and discussed their frustrations with the neighborhood. They have lived in the Kensington area since the mid 90's. His wife seemed very disappointed and was shaking her head saying "no one cares." She went on to say how residents all want to see immediate results but they don't want to do any work or waste their time going to meetings. "Everyone complains and won't do anything about it." Raul mentioned that he refuses to flyer on their block because they don't want to deal with the attitude of their neighbors.

“Everyone complains and won’t do anything about it... I won’t flyer on my block because I don’t want to deal with the attitude of my neighbors.”

~ Raul Dones, Somerset Neighbors for Better Living

## Port Richmond Town Watch

We had a chance to shadow the Port Richmond Town Watch with several members of the NKCDC. The watches are held every Friday night in the Port Richmond area, which borders Kensington. The town watch group patrols the area in pairs by car and then report any disturbing activity to the police. Our goal was to gain a better understanding of the process of a watch and interpret whether a watch could be done in Kensington.

We were escorted by Pat Healey and Amy Frey, two local community members who feel it is their duty to report crime and suspicious activity in the neighborhood. The night we followed along was fairly calm. The only thing we spotted was a group of young girls drinking in a park who were suspected of being under age.

During the ride along we had a chance to question Pat and Amy about why the town watch is important. Many of their answers led to stories about past experiences. They find that most of what is reported tends to be teenagers who are on the tipping point of getting into drugs and crime. Over time, Pat and Amy have built relationships with the local community and know who to keep an eye on.



Being watched means that the teenagers feel pressure from the community. However, Pat expressed a concern about the community recognizing his car as the town watch car. He is known as the “town watch guy.” In the past, he was asked to testify for a murder case. He later realized that the man he was testifying against lives a block away from him. The family of the man in the case know who Pat is. Ultimately the man was found guilty and wound up in jail. Pat felt uneasy about the case, concerned that the man may come back to try and find him. That is a risk that Pat is willing to take.



## Lot Clean Ups

A subcommittee of the Somerset Neighbors is the clean and green. With the help of NKCDC they organize initiatives to clean up vacant lots in their area. At the first clean up in October volunteers from the New Kensington CDC and the United Way helped by providing additional labor and worked alongside local residents to rake, collect trash, build a fence and plant flowers. Children helped by painting pumpkins and signs with statements that the steering committee felt were meaningful to the community. The second clean up was held on MLK day where we tackled the issue of illegal dumping by collecting household trash that had been dropped on the side of a street. We learned from the residents that this is a huge issue in the area.

The lot clean ups were a great chance to continue working with the Somerset Neighbors and get our hands dirty. By participating in these events we continued to build trust with SNBL while also gaining firsthand knowledge of the community and their desire to make a better living. These initiatives are a stepping stone toward empowering the community and inspiring them to take steps in this direction. The hope is for residents to see the work and recognize that something is being done in Kensington. Then take action and become more involved with the community.













Carlos and Debbie at the MLK day lot clean.

## Design Research Takeaways

- NKCDC has an important role in the community. They currently assume responsibility and is the key decision maker.
- SNBL is a group of community champions who have partnered with the NKCDC to better the area of Kensington.
- The 24th Police District are a strong partner and want to continue to strengthen their relationship with SNBL.
- The residents involved are very passionate about the area and want to create a better future.
- It was important for us to build trust with both organizations in order to have access and be recognized by the community.
- The neighborhood is fragmented and more neighbors need to be connected to sustain this change.







# Literature Research

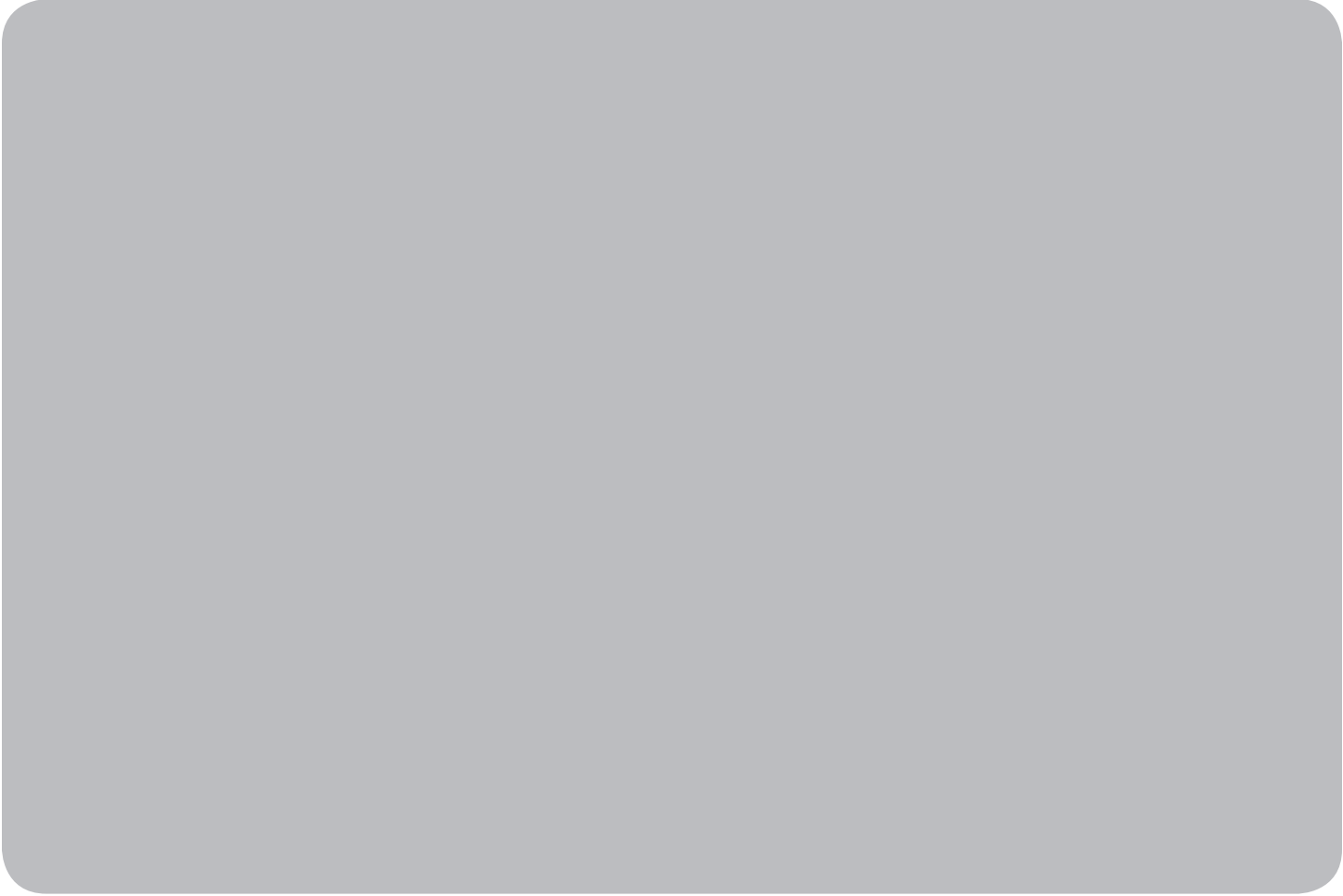
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## 3.1 What is the history of Kensington?

### Workshop of the World

In *Workshop of the World* Carmen A. Weber, Irving , and Muriel Kirkpatrick describe Kensington as an upside down L shaped area near the neighborhood of Fishtown in Philadelphia, PA (Weber and Kirkpatrick “Workshop of the World”). Kensington developed in the 19th century as a hub for factories and residences of the people who worked in them. These factories produced glass, pottery, wagons and machined works but then became dominated by textiles. There were several popular carpet mills along with textile trades like yarn factories, woolen and cotton mills. These factories included James Gay’s Park Carpet Mill, Dornan Brothers’ Monitor Carpet Mill, and the Stinson Brothers’ Columbia Carpet Mill. The neighborhood was built around these factories that employed native workers and immigrants such as Irish, German, English and Scottish workers. Descendants of these 4,000 plus workers make up much of the community that is Kensington today. By the 1860’s, Kensington was filled with two story brick row-houses and steam powered factories. In a matter of ten years the area changed from open fields to a densely built city. Lorin Blodget describes it as well built, with broad and well paved streets, and many of the mills were fine specimens of architecture.

In addition to the textiles, Kensington had a high percentage of tanneries and leather-working industries. Blodget, in 1883, listed these factories with a product value at \$4 million. However, the carpet textile industry dominated the area valued by the city at



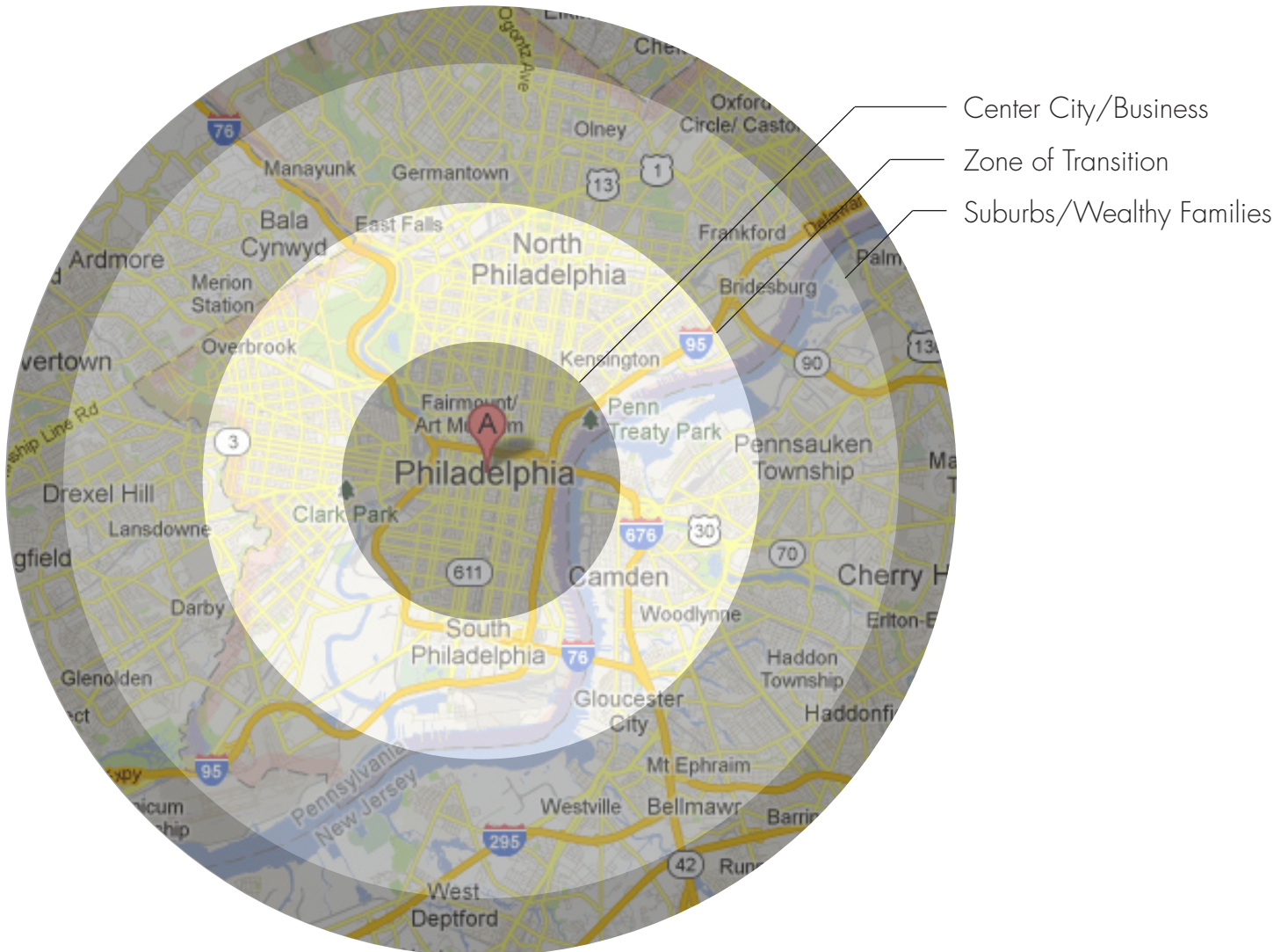
over \$12 million. By the 1920's, one third of Kensington's work force had shifted from the carpet industry to employment in hosiery mills. In 1928, 250 of the city's 850 textile firms still operated in Kensington, employing over 35,000 workers. 265 mills survived during the depression but by the 1960's the industry shrunk to 75 mills. It continued shrinking into what it has become today, an area with abandoned factories and low income residents.

## 3.2 Are all fragmented communities the same?

### Layers of a City

We wanted to better understand Kensington and why it is fragmented. In this research we found Robert Ezra Park's work on Chicago's high crime areas. Park was interested in social problems that existed in cities and argued why these problems existed. His research was based on plant ecology. His theory is that cities are developed from the inside out. At the core stands the business district in the center city, the funnel of money and wealth. Next is the zone of transition, which is characterized by high rates of crime and social problems. Finally, the several zones that contain the suburbs and wealthy families. He argues that the individuals who lived closer to the center would suffer from the highest levels of social disorganization. He believes that much like environments found in nature, densely populated cities are much the same. The most significant force is competition, where groups fight for urban resources like land which lead to a division of urban space. As competition rises and residents become more affluent they move outward from the city center to the more valued zones. Kensington lies within the zone of transition, which is valued least by the city (Park 37).

Building onto Park's theory, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay sought to study the processes responsible for creating higher rates of juvenile delinquency. They found that three primary dynamics existed in socially disorganized neighborhoods. These include high rates of residential turnover, a heterogeneous population, and high levels of poverty.



The turnover rate and diverse population affect how a community can grow and sustain.

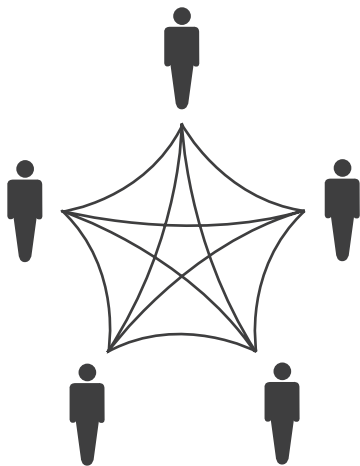
The dynamic continues to change and effects the long term goal of a community (Shaw and McKay 18).

## Group Dynamics in Communities

Research on group and team dynamics and diverse groups deepened our understanding of why high turnover communities are socially disorganized. Power may be defined as the capacity to guide other individual actions toward a common goal in a meaningful way. For leaders to emerge, time must be allowed. Mary B. McRae argues that, “In many groups that the race and culture of individuals affect perceptions about their capacity to take up the role of leadership. Race and culture identities also affects the way in which individuals are authorized in the role and the power available to them to fully take up leadership (McRae 32).” If this occurs in groups we can argue that it also can occur in communities, since communities are made up of networks of small groups.

In McRae’s writing, she states that those who take up the leader’s role experience an internalized message about the acceptance to lead from the group. The values and attitudes are usually unconscious as we interact with each other. In a culturally diverse group it is often times harder to designate a leader. Subgroups are created and anxieties toward power disrupt the path to accomplishing the work task, thus further dividing the subgroups. This becomes problematic when thinking about the success of the group and pursuing a common goal.

Kensington is a culturally diverse area in which much of the population is either white, African American, or Hispanic. Judging from our interviews and observations, we believe that Kensington itself is in a fragmented state. Due to multiple barriers, more time is needed, in a community like Kensington, for leaders to emerge.



### Non-Diverse Communities

Pairing  
Dependencies  
Power  
Authority  
Roles  
Direction

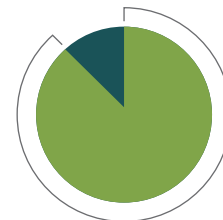
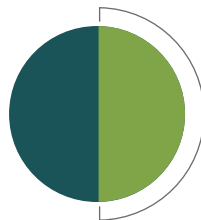
### Diverse Communities

Pairing  
Dependencies  
Power  
Authority  
Roles  
Direction

**Cultural Barriers**

**Language Barriers**

Time until group can successfully progress toward a work task:



### 3.3 What causes communities to lose their sense of ownership?

#### Peter Block: The Structure of Belonging

We wanted to understand more deeply, what causes communities to lose their sense of ownership. Peter Block author of *Community: The Structure of Belonging* believes that most of our communities are currently fragmented with a focus on individuals and not the betterment of the whole. He feels this is the dominant narrative that is fueled by the consumer economy and that the consumer economy is designed for dissatisfaction (Block 20).

He encourages people to initiate a counter narrative that focuses on the individual gifts each person brings to their neighborhood/community and encourages a economy of generosity. He asks that citizens reclaim their space and take ownership and responsibility for where they live. This sense of accountability is in the power of asking provoking questions, that questions bring us together and answers drive us apart. Block believes that powerful questions evoke anxiety but create possibility and ownership. Once you state an answer, you own that. He argues that transformation can only occur when you shift context and value possibility. What Block doesn't explain is why do some communities flourish when others fail. He mentions in the introduction that if you believe that our communities are doing well and thriving then his book will not make sense to you. His aim is at changing the conversation which will ultimately change the course of the future of our neighborhoods.



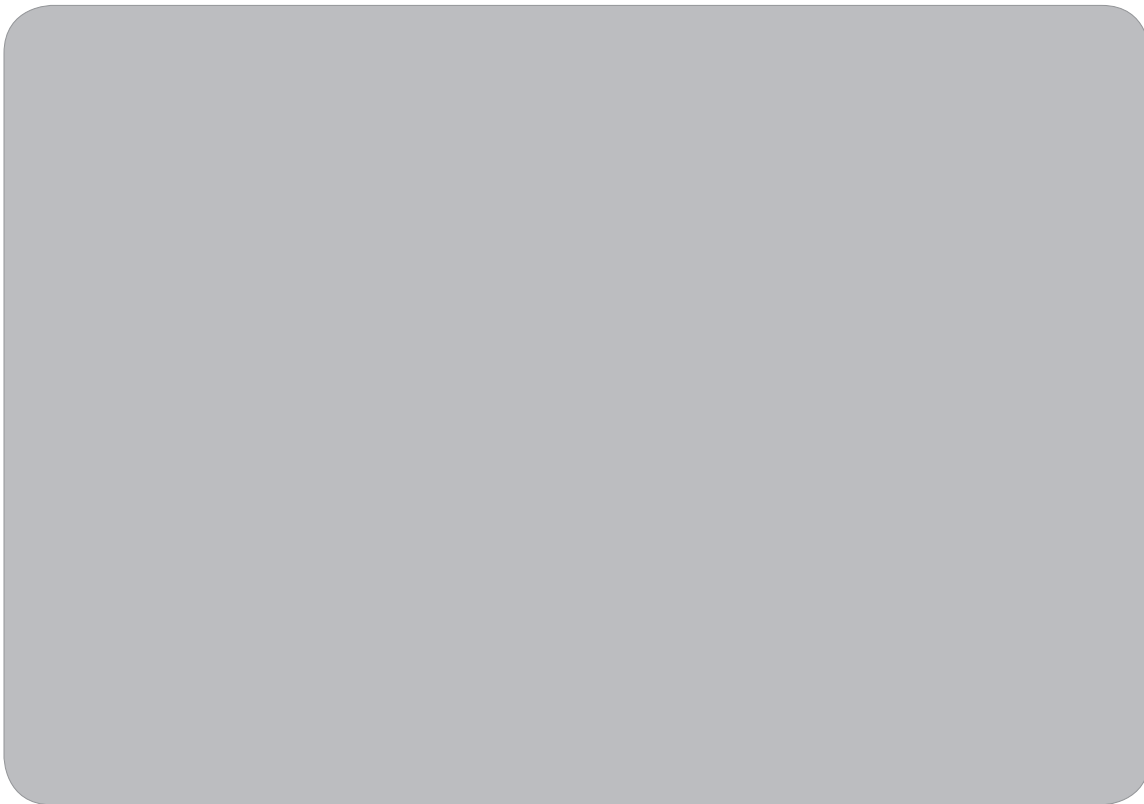
## The Abundant Community

Block continues the argument in his book *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods* which he wrote with John McKnight. They state that our institutions and professional services have reached their limit to care for communities. The consumer economy makes us feel like we are not capable of taking care of ourselves and we need the help of these specialists. We have become consumers and not citizens. We need to “reweave” our social fabric in a way that welcomes strangers/neighbors to create a future that works for all. “It is when citizens stop waiting for professionals or elected leadership to do something and decide they can reclaim what they have delegated to others, this is when citizens discover their power to act (Block 35).” Looking back at Kensington, our observations are evidence that the residents in this neighborhood think the same way as what Block and McKnight explain. The residents rely on outside resources such as the local police and government to manage their problem of safety. It is important for the citizens of Kensington to feel a sense of ownership and investment in their neighborhood in order to take personal responsibility for creating change.

## 3.4 How have others empowered people in a community context?

### Designing Communities

We looked at ways in which design has been used previously to empower people particularly in a community context. SEA Communications, a design firm in the UK did a project titled “Designing Communities” in which they looked at the challenges of a low income area and asked, “How can we provide revolutionary entries to employment and transform the opportunities of people living in deprived communities?” Their solution was to enable the community to become increasingly self-sufficient “We involved ourselves in the community to gain trust and capture views. We organized a whole host of activities including filming various social groups, community allotments and sports clubs.” The community involved lacked confidence and certain skills to enter the job market. They did not access the available services due to mistrust. There were several negative perceptions regarding this community and the design team aimed to challenge those perceptions. Working with the community they were able to co-develop a “community job creation” scheme that encourages residents to become more active in their communities, gain confidence and develop skills needed to get back into employment. The plan would enlist residents on community projects that were designed to improve the living environment in the community. The key takeaway from this project was the co-creation of this solution. The design team leveraged the resources of the residents to design the best solution for their needs (Designing Communities).



## Future Workshop

Further community work was done in the 1970's which brought large groups of diverse people together to solve a complex community issue. These workshops are called the Future Workshop. They are suitable for participants who have little experience with creative decision-making. The workshop is an approach proposed to involve all stakeholders who are affected by the project, policy, product, process, or system (Jungk 8). This workshop format became a platform for our design work, by informing many of our design decisions.

The goal of the future workshop is to envision a new future state by critiquing the current state. Understanding your audience is useful. Visualizing is not a common tool for most people. This means that individuals should be supplied with scaffolding, like cards or outlines, to support visual thinking. Also, anxiety is high in this environment. Some kind of team building exercise is useful to build confidence and connection. Another challenge is keeping the group on task. Expert facilitation is necessary for the workshop to be successful. From our experience in Kensington, we found that individuals complain about the area instead of having a productive conversation. We understand that the planning and preparation phase is probably the most important stage to a workshop.

### Preparation Phase



Planning



Agenda



Ground Rules

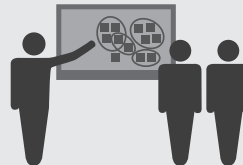
### Critique Phase



Organize Groups and critique the current system



"Blue sky" brainstorm

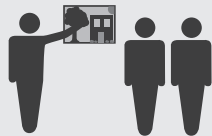


Reformulate ideas to make sense

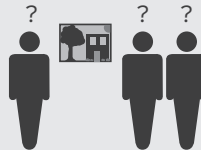
### Future Phase



Verbalize desire/dreams



Draw future scenario



Discuss feasibility



Outline strategy & plan

## Designing for Social Issues

Another case study we found was through the RED Design Council out of the UK and their project titled “The Diabetes Agenda.” This project focused on the lack of self-responsibility for patients with diabetes. Many people living with Diabetes know what they need to do to manage their condition but are not acting on this knowledge. This project explored ways for people to discover for themselves new approaches to making the changes they needed to live a better life.

Several workshops were held with all stakeholders: professional staff, nurses, consultants and general practitioners to allow caregivers to be in the shoes of their patients. After interviewing several people with diabetes and creating personas, the design team identified some of the barriers to new approaches to treatment. Once they had identified these barriers they were able to create approaches that were customized to each individual seeking the treatment. The key takeaway from this project was the importance of the design team’s research. Through ethnographic studies and the contextual interviews, the team could fully immerse themselves in each person’s life to gain a better understanding of their daily routine. This was an important step towards understanding the barriers for treatment. Another key takeaway was the concept of co-creation by allowing participants the opportunity to discover for themselves



the appropriate solutions, participant were able to take ownership of their ideas and therefore responsibility.

## 3.5 What other projects are comparable to ours?

### Project Overviews

In this section we cover comparable projects in order to learn from and avoid repetition in our steps. We will consider the demographics, challenges, and methodologies employed by other community organizations and outline key insights and recommendations for our thesis. These projects lasted longer, had a larger budget, and involved more people from the community. However, these projects are comparable to ours if scaled down .

The Delaware Riverfront Project is a community master plan to transform the Delaware River's edge. Their goal is to make the embankment an accessible resource for the community to its west. Kensington is a part of this community. The riverfront has a history of being monopolized by industry and commerce. Today it is isolated from the city's population. The piece of the plan that we analyzed is the citizen-engagement process, which has been funded by the William Penn Foundation and led by Penn Praxis.

Queens Community House is an organization committed to the personal growth of the diverse people it serves and to the creation of self-reliant, open, responsible communities. Its core belief is that all persons can and want to grow and that all can contribute. They are a non-profit community development corporation that provides



services and programs to improve quality of life. The specific case study we researched is a study about years of work and results by the organization to examine its value and reconfigure staff roles so that staff identify as both service providers and community builders.

Somos Mayfair is a non-profit organization located in San Jose, California. Their goal is to empower the people of Mayfair through cultural activism, social services and community organizing. The community is diverse and consist of generations of immigrants. Their concentration is on family support and civic action. The specific study we researched is a social change initiative that changed the many communities perspectives to one single voice.

## Comparison of Project Demographics

### Delaware Riverfront Project

**Population:** 51,109

**Project Budget:**

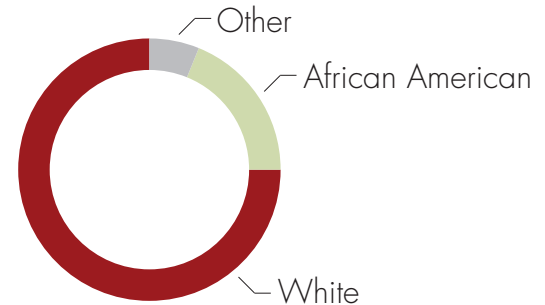
\$1,000,000 from the  
William Penn Foundation

**Average Household Income:**



\$39,320

**Race:**



### Queens Community House

**Population:** 10,000

**Project Budget:**

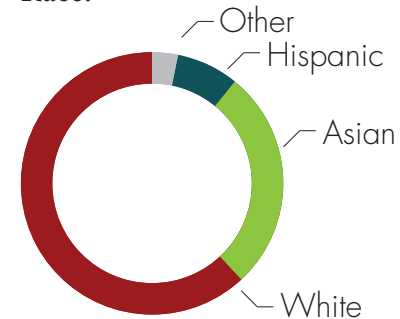
\$13,000,000  
80% Public, 10% Private, 10% Individual

**Average Household Income:**



\$63,320

**Race:**



## Somos Mayfair

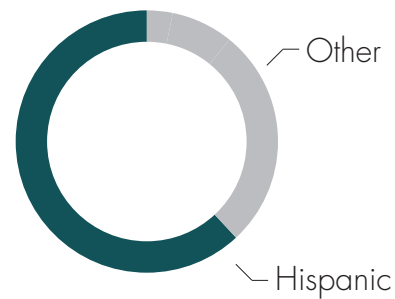
**Population:** 51,109**Project Budget:**

\$1,300,000

55% Private, 38% other, 18% Public,

**Average Household Income:**

\$33,227

**Race:**

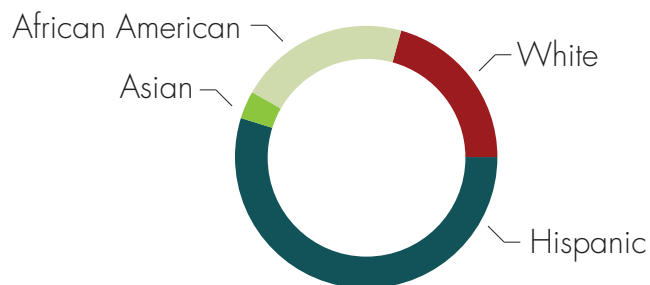
## NKCDC &amp; SNBL

**Population:** 51,688**Project Budget:**

N/A

**Average Household Income:**

\$22,096


**Race:**

## Delaware Riverfront Project

We interviewed Bridget Keegan and Sarah Thorp, who were both involved in the planning phase of this project, to get a better understanding of how they engaged the community. Bridget, the Senior Project Planner for Penn Praxis has a lot of experience working on large city planning projects. Sarah who is currently the Senior Planner at Philadelphia Water Department, has much experience working on landscape architecture and environmental sustainability projects.

The goal of Penn Praxis was to create a vision and recommend a set of core principles to guide the development of the project. The planning process created a considerable amount of momentum. Working with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Penn Praxis organized a planning process that would work with citizens, civic leaders, elected officials, and a team of designers to produce a civic vision. The groups met monthly and open the discussion to the public. A steering committee was then selected to keep the meetings on task.

This project engaged residents in various ways and started with basic surveys on the area in focus. It began with the Penn Praxis team knocking on doors to get neighbors to the community and planning meetings. It was important that the local community understand the plan and had a chance to voice their opinion.



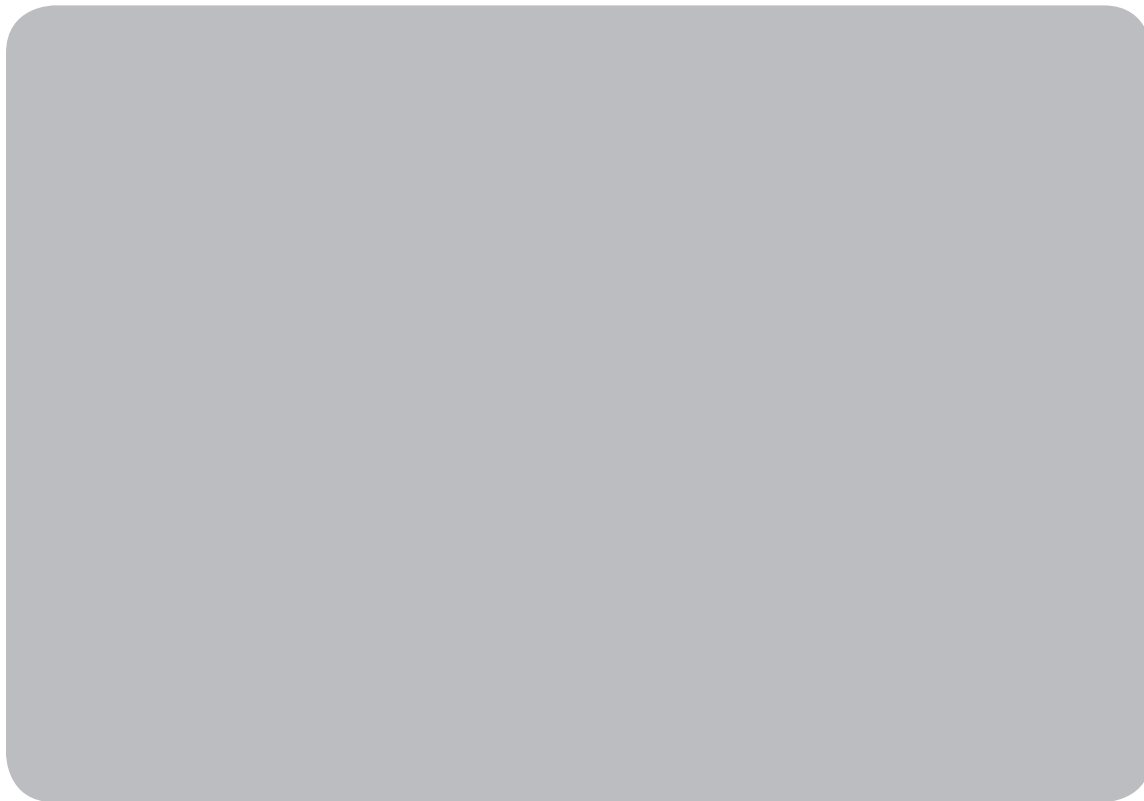
The first meetings were value sessions. These meetings included focus groups and different community gatherings that acted as forums to discuss issues surrounding the development of this area. From these meetings surface level values emerged. They were heavily facilitated by a team of moderators to keep the community members on task. In order to establish principles for development, Penn Praxis coordinated design workshops. These workshops were organized as a way to allow residents to give feedback and be part of the planning process. The product of these workshops were principles to share a vision of their hopes and dreams for the riverfront. The importance of this stage was to involve the audience of the project to get buy-in and share ownership of the space. After all, these are the people who will be using the waterfront.

## Queens Community House

The organization's executive director, Irma Rodriguez, began to understand that change needed to happen in 1995. The organization is known for its strong reputation in quality of service for children, youth, families, and older adults, which allowed them to win many contracts and grants. However, because they expanded so much they began to foster a sense of community within the organization, which caused a problem to emerge. The internal community was fragmented because of the many services they provided. The goal then became - building community within the organization to better meet the needs of the actual community.

Irma was faced with hiring an organizer or a new fundraising position. After attending a community building presentation, she found and thought it would be more beneficial to hire an organizer and direct the conversation internally to community building and social action and turn current staff into organizers.

The new hires challenge was to move from traditional work and concentrate on moving staff members who identified with individual programs to identify with the organization as a whole. The new hire began by looking at how clients and participants could be viewed differently by employing a concept of reciprocity. He created a concept through



a computer training program in which participants were asked if they would give back by becoming volunteers after completing their own classes. There was an 80-percent give back and residents created a support network between them.

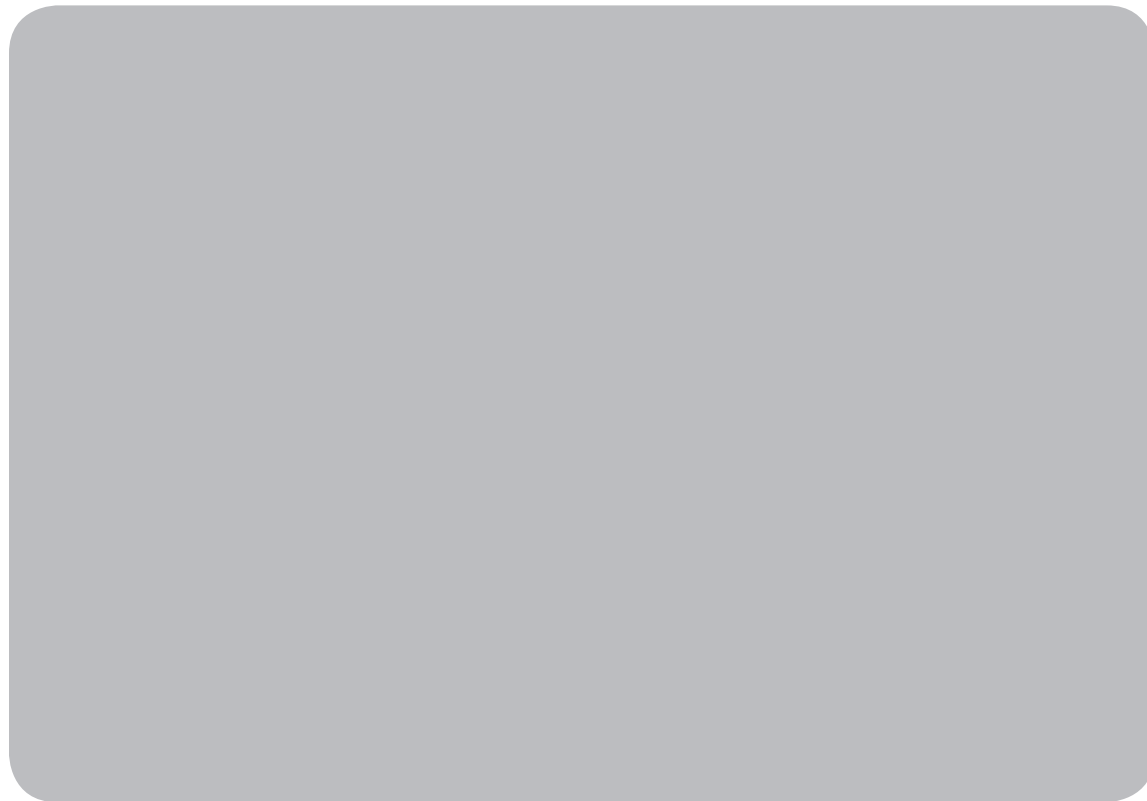
## Somos Mayfair

The organization originally identified community needs that were from homeowners and other more established residents, leaving out a vast majority of the neighborhood people. Though the neighborhood was overall poor, these different groups had different needs. Somos Mayfair did some community organizing and campaign work, but it was not a direct intention of the overall initiative.

The organization then decided to engage women with young children. They identified a need of creating social change for the next generation. From this need, they directly targeted immigrant women with young children. There are also young men but Somos felt that women are more receptive to participatory methods. The three-core competencies cultural activism, social service, and community organizing each include attention to stability and wellness on individual participants through activities that emphasize one-on-one or small group dialogue.

In a series of popular education workshops, the staff and board created a social movement timeline incorporating the stories of the area's native people, bracero farm workers, railroad workers, the efforts of the Mayfair initiatives, and other popular movements. Staff named the challenges of their current work and their desires for how





their work would affect future Mayfair generations. Power-analysis exercises enabled participants to identify modes of inequality and root causes of oppression.

## Literature Research Takeaways

- Kensington once flourished as an industrial mecca with factories, wealth, and community.
- Poor areas like Kensington are layered and molded between the cities wealth because of competition.
- Because Kensington is a diverse area, it takes more time for leaders to emerge.
- Communities need to change their perspective from relying on services to taking ownership of their community.
- Exposing the skills and gifts of residents allows them to contribute to their community.
- Involve the community in the entire process and allow for discussion and feedback in order to create a shared vision.





Design Opportunity



Issue:

**We now understand that there is a need to connect more neighbors, while also addressing the issue of safety in the area.**

"No one wants to be the snitch. If someone holding anything illegal found out a person on this block told on the authorities, it would be pure hell"

~ Beverly Sidorski - East Cumberland Resident

Point of Entry:

Currently NKCDC is coordinating efforts and building relationships with the local police, L&I and SNBL. However, there is **no feedback** from the greater community and little interest is generated for the existing initiatives. We feel that the monthly meetings would be a good venue to **co-create solutions with this community** around the issue of safety.

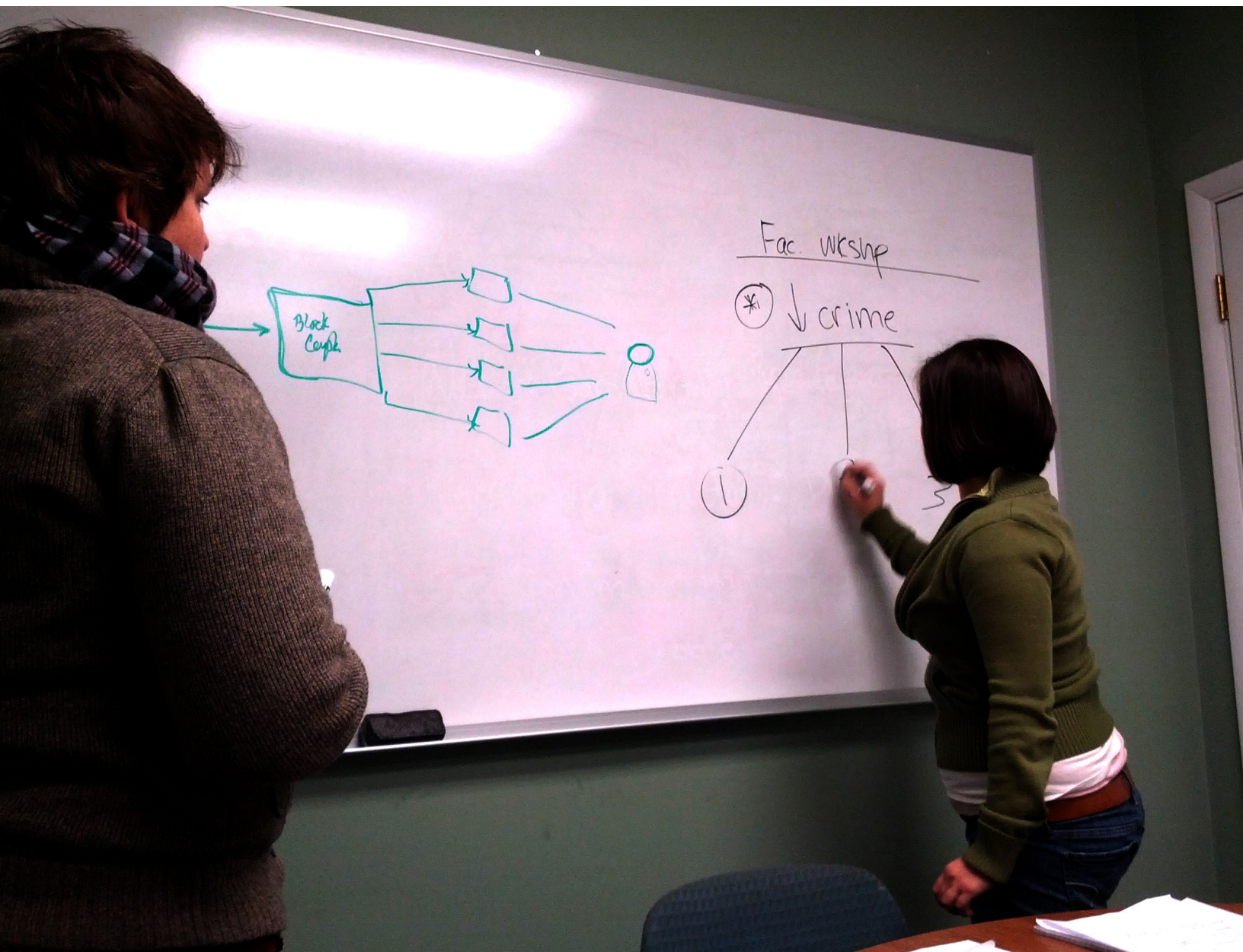
## 4.1 What were the design opportunities?

### New Ways to Engage the Community

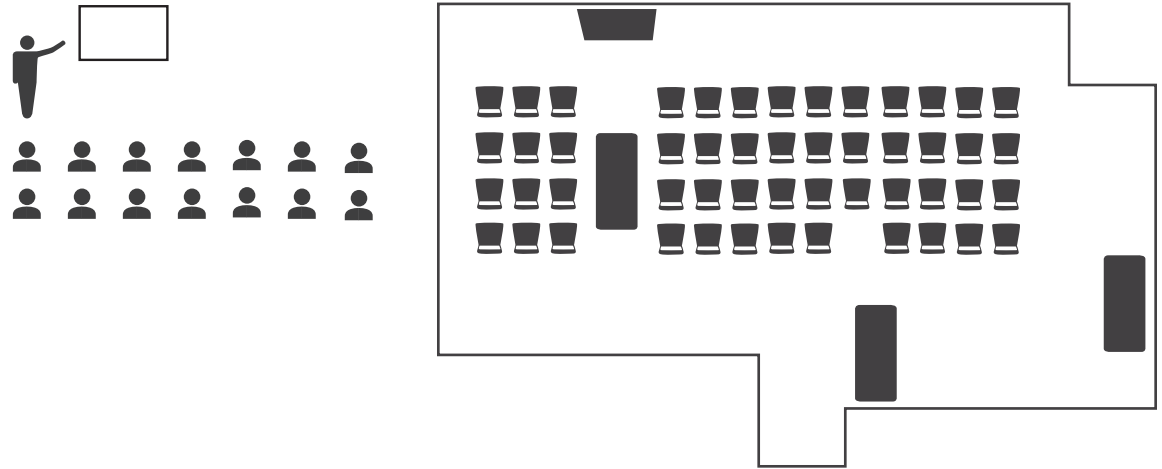
In order to keep our goals aligned, we felt it was important to schedule bi-weekly meetings at NKCDC with the Community Engagement Office. Our core contacts in these meetings were Angela Taurino and Drew Serres. The meetings were a good opportunity to discuss the progress of the steering committee, upcoming agendas for the community meetings and opportunities to create a new system to report crime. This was where we first learned about the barriers that currently exist with reporting illegal activity.

We originally proposed the idea of a “brainstorming” workshop to NKCDC when they were looking for feedback on a town watch and phone tree system to report crime. Crime is a huge problem in this area and it is important to create a sense of anonymity so that neighbors can feel comfortable reporting incidents. Many are scared that they will be targeted for snitching. There is already concern that the town watch system would not be the ideal solution. NKCDC needed input from the greater community on ways in which we could either improve on these existing models or create new ones all together.





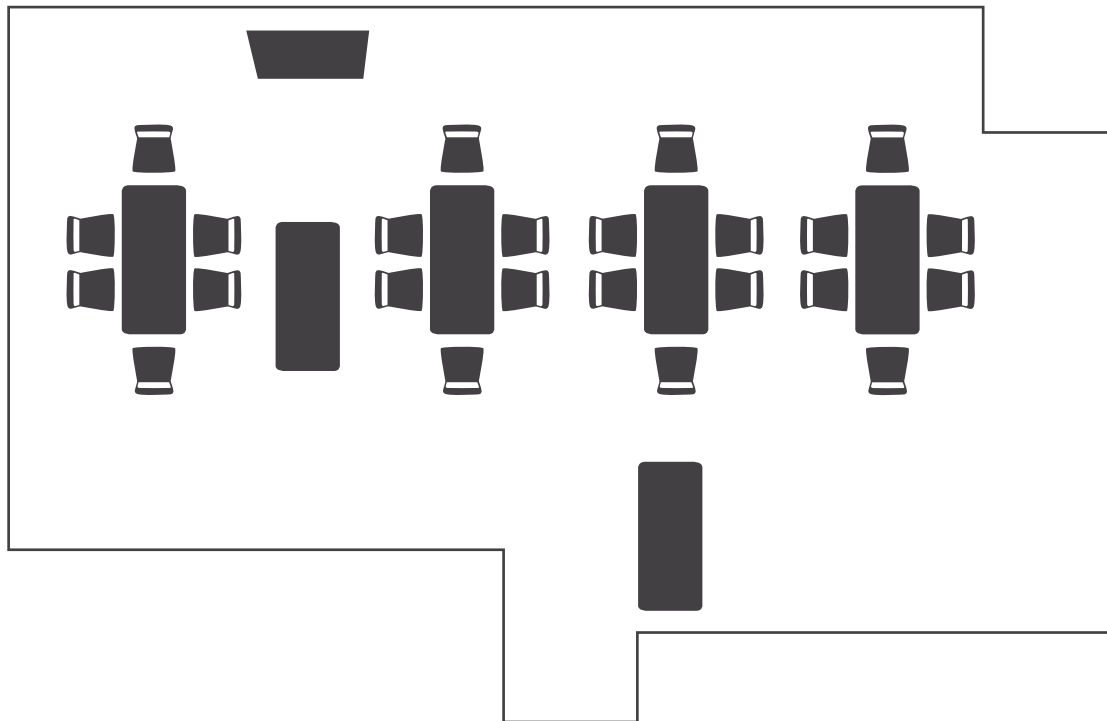
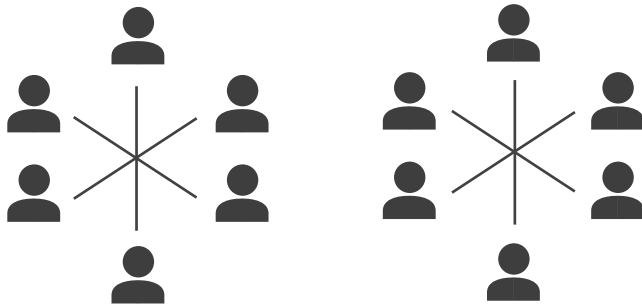
## Present State



## Creating a Space for Conversation

We started researching ways to engage the community in a conversation where they could explore opportunities to make their neighborhood safer. We examined the current layout of the space used to conduct the monthly meetings and saw an opportunity to start there. In order to engage people in conversation we needed to shift the layout from a lecture setting to either a small group setup or create a large circle so the residents could face each other. We decided that the large circle would not allow everyone to have an equal voice and decided on four small groups that would each surround a table.

## Future State







## Creating a Sense of Connectedness

The workshop that we attended with Peter Block informed our concept approach to engaging community members in a meaningful conversation. We knew that in order for this community to begin to feel united and less fragmented, they would need to understand the commonalities among themselves. Once that is established the residents can begin to concentrate on the “gifts” that they, as individuals, bring to their neighborhood.

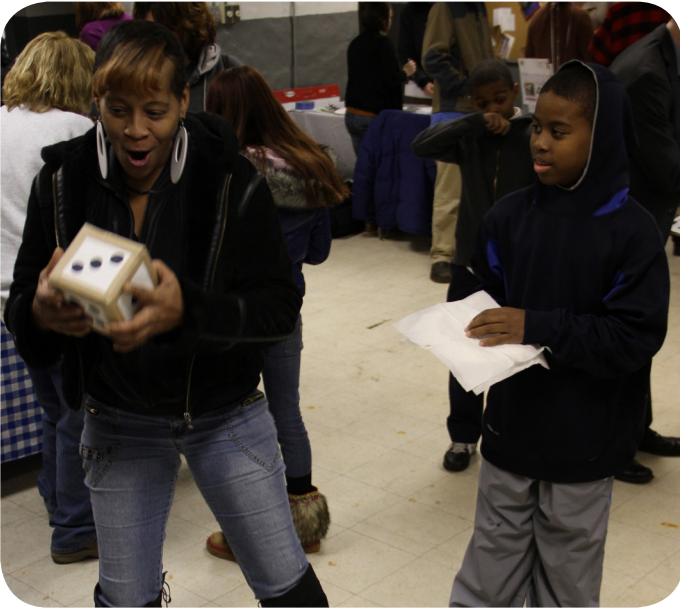
In the Peter Block workshop we were asked to sit in a group of three people with the only rule being you could not know that person. Our goal as participants was to listen to the other members within our small group. Block cautioned us to avoid giving advice but to ask more probing questions like “why is that important to you?” The workshop also emphasized gratitude as we each expressed one thing that touched us about our partners responses. The conversations generated in our small groups were very powerful and this was an element we wanted to incorporate in our work with the Kensington community.

## 4.2 What did we learn from our previous design interactions?

### Demonstrating New Ways to Engage with the Community

We wanted to create something that would attract an audience and engage them in a fun, game-like activity while also being a useful tool to gather information. Through a brainstorm session we decided to create a dice game. It consisted of a large box with questions on each side and a small die that could be rolled to pick a question. Rolling a die is a familiar activity that directly relates to playing a game. We asked participants to roll the die, the number they rolled corresponded with the question they would answer. We found that people were hesitant to approach us at first until as we approached them and asked if they'd like to play a game. Once we built momentum, more participants joined and wanted to roll more than once, answering several questions. We believe this activity lowered personal barriers and allowed participants to feel comfortable giving honest responses to the questions. We learned that the residents enjoyed having their concerns and opinions heard.





### What do I wish other people knew about Kensington?

- We are a community that's surviving. It's a great neighborhood to be a part of

### How am I connected to Kensington?

- I live in the community here
- I live in the same police district

### My favorite thing about Kensington is...

- The dedication of those involved in SNBL and the positive spirit of everyone

### If I could change one thing about my neighborhood it would be?

- Remove the junkies from the area
- Create safer cross-walks and less car traffic
- Have less illegal dumping on the streets and in lots

### What does it mean to be a part of the SNBL community?

- I can try to help bring more activities for the youth in the neighborhood
- I can help my mother clean our block
- We have constant improvement





## Demonstrating New Ways to Engage with the Steering Committee

After surveying a toy store for ideas, we decided to build off the popular card game “Memory” by making our own cards that used images from SNBL’s clean and green outing. We decided to use those images in order to relate to the participants. The cards were created in the “average” playing card dimensions to give them a familiar feel. We changed the rules slightly to encourage communication and teamwork. The participants were divided into two teams and each given a set of cards. The person on the left turned one card over. The person to their right would turn a second card. As a group, they needed to decide which card to keep exposed and which to turn back. We added a level of complexity by eliminating pointing. This was to encourage descriptive communication. The first team to find all the matches won. This was a playful way for the members to engage and work as a unit. We observed that several individuals who are typically reserved were very active and enjoyed the playful experience. Jr., who was very quiet before the experience, participated in the conversations that followed. He seemed like a completely different person.





# The Workshop

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## 4.3 What were our design decisions?

### The Workshop

We chose a workshop format because we wanted to create a sense of connectedness, co-ownership and responsibility with the residents of the community. A workshop is a good platform to begin this conversation because it brings residents together into the same space and allows them to accomplish a common goal together.

*Goal presented to the community:*

To start a conversation around how,  
you as residents, can create a safer  
environment

Thinking critically about the actual interaction:

- Would it be heavily facilitated?
- What scaffolding did this particular community need?
- What were other obstacles that may keep them from opening up?

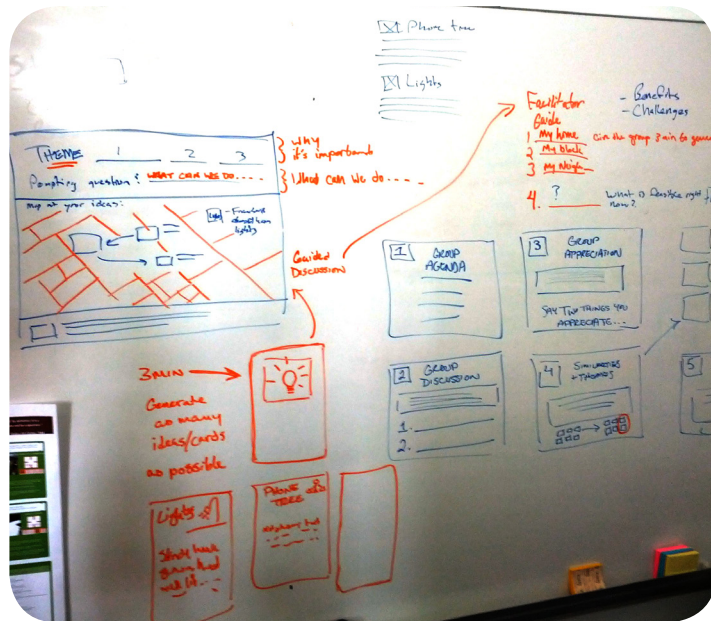
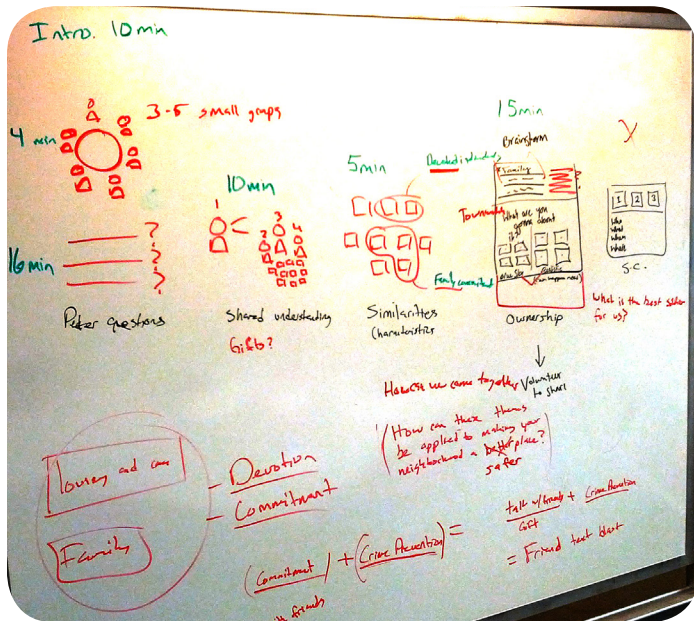
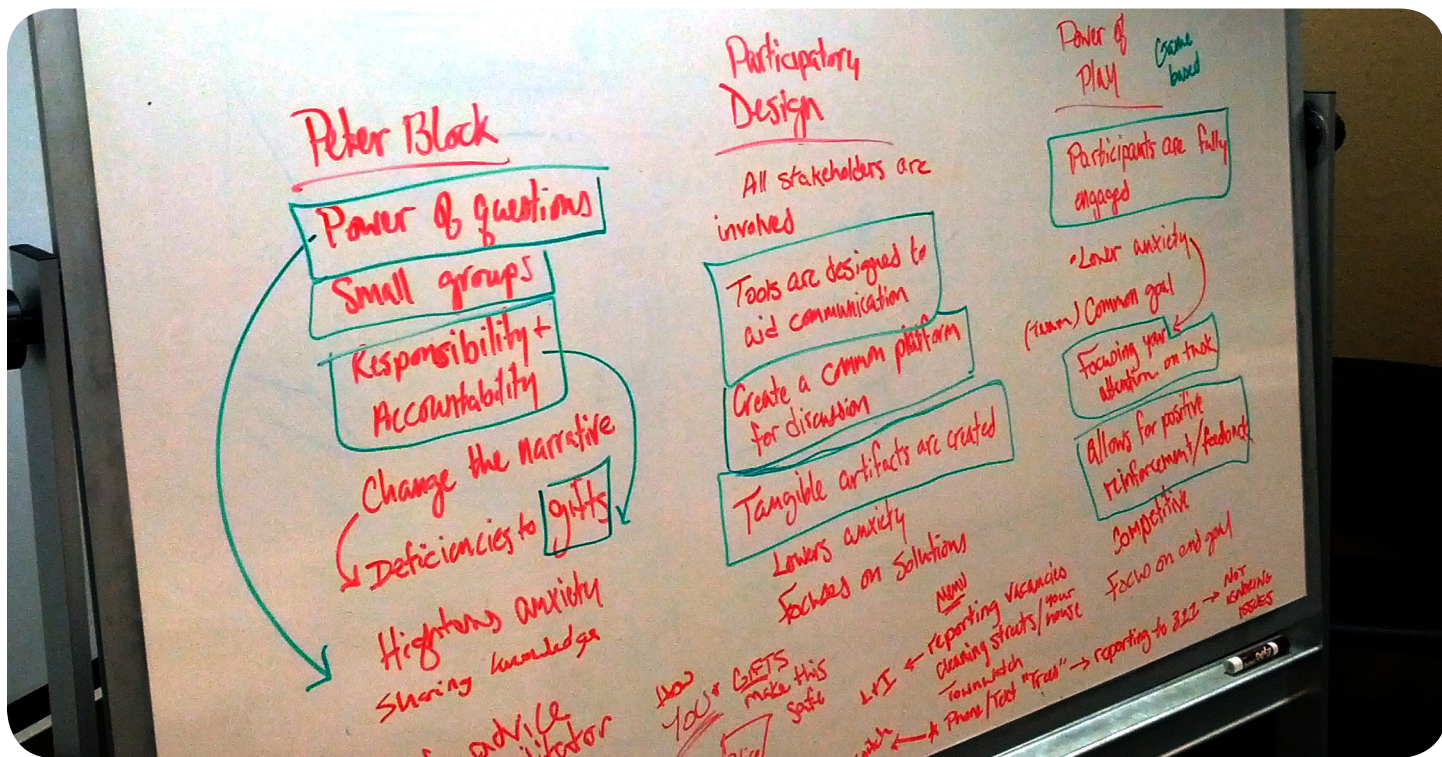
These were all questions that needed to be considered as we examined this engagement. We took some time to examine the Peter Block's workshop more and how design can be applied in this context. We observed that there was no way to capture what was being said in our small groups and no way to continue the momentum generated in that workshop. This is something that differentiates the work we are doing as designers from Block's work. Not only do we want to create situations where meaningful conversations can take place but we will provide tangible materials that act as boundary objects (aids to support individual learning and bridge the gap between two social domains) to create a shared understanding and will also capture what is being produced in these conversations in order to generate some type of follow up action.



## Planning

In planning the workshop we took a close look at our experience with Peter Block, our knowledge of participatory design and idea of adding an element of play. We compared different elements from each and highlighted the ones that we felt would be the most important for this workshop. Key points we took from our experience from the Peter Block workshop were the power of asking tough questions, the use of small groups, the idea of creating a sense of responsibility and accountability within the community, connectedness, and finally the focus on gifts. The Peter Block model heightens anxiety which we felt would be important to be aware of. We wanted to explore ways to lower anxiety without losing the power of the conversation generated by thought provoking questions. Incorporating participatory design methods helps to lower a participants' anxiety. These methods include creating a common platform for discussion, generating tangible artifacts, developing tools to aid in communication, incorporating all stakeholders in the collaboration and co-creation. Keeping participants fully engaged and having fun is important for the success of a positive outcome.

During the planning process, we collaborated with Angela from NKCDC who has experience running the community meetings and knows the residents on a more personal level. We introduced our concept during our standing meeting and included her via email as the plans progressed. Her input was vital to the success of our workshop as she worked with us to clarify our language and offered suggestions based on previous engagements.







# Facilitation Packet



# Workshop Packet



# Taller de Paquetes

## Workshop Agenda

- 1

Introduction
- 2

Group Discussion
- 3

Capturing Responses
- 4

Finding Similarities
- 5

Group Brainstorm
- 6

Reflection/Feedback



## What can I do now?

Write down ideas from the workshop that you want to do or continue working on.

### My Home

1

2

### My Block

1

2

The action plan from this workshop will be presented at the next community meeting in April. At that meeting, please let us know what you did to make a difference in your home and on your block.



## ¿Qué puedo hacer ahora?

Anote las ideas en el taller que usted quiere hacer o seguir trabajando.

### Mi Casa

1

2

### Mi Cuadra

1

2

El plan de acción de este taller será presentado en la próxima reunión de la comunidad en abril. En esa reunión, por favor, háganos saber lo que hizo para hacer una diferencia en su hogar y en su cuadra.



## Group Brainstorm

How can these themes we just identified, as a group, be applied to make our neighborhood safer?

Themes Identified:

What can you do, as an individual, to make your home safer?



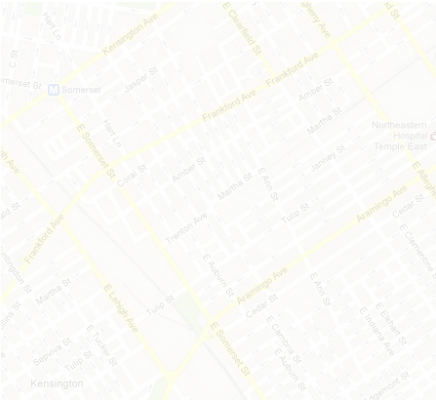
Choose an idea and explain why it will make your home safer.

What can you and your neighbors do together to make your block safer?



Choose an idea and explain why it will make your block safer.

How can we work with the SNBL to make our neighborhood safer?



Choose an idea and explain why it will make our neighborhood safer.

## Materials

It was also important to think about what supporting materials we should produce for the safety workshop to act as scaffolding for participants. We wanted to alleviate their cognitive load while also reducing their level of anxiety by creating a workshop packet to guide the participants through each phase of the process. This packet was produced in both English and Spanish and included the agenda along with a detailed description of each step. We also felt it was important to have a facilitator to work with each group. The facilitators, all designers, received a separate packet that included all of the material that was in the participant packet but had additional information regarding time and possible obstacles to be aware of.

We decided to use post-its in the beginning phase to keep it simple and allow participants the freedom to group answers easily into themes. For the later phases, we thought it best to have more structured materials. We created large boards with three areas of focus (your home, your block, your neighborhood) and idea cards to help guide participants through the brainstorming stages. Another key feature was a take home piece titled “What Can I Do Now” that would allow residents an opportunity to list ideas from the brainstorm that resonated with them.



## Discussion Phase

We decided that the initial step would involve questions similar to the ones that Mr. Block asked in his workshop. The facilitator supplied each group with two questions that would get the participants thinking about their personal goals and contributions. The idea behind this was to start a conversation around why it is important to take a personal interest in the community. We felt it was important to look introspectively and not just rely on outside systems to solve problems. This phase was pure discussion and a way to get residents talking and thinking of the things they value. It was important for the facilitators to moderate this conversation in order to keep the answers positive and call on those less likely to speak up.

1) Why is it important for you to be here today?

2) What does it mean to you to be part of this community?

*Follow up questions:*

*Why does that matter to you? What's at stake?*

## Appreciation/Clustering

The next phase would focus on appreciation. The facilitator asked each person to say at least 5 things (one per group member) that they appreciated about what was just said. We asked the facilitators to record key phrases from these responses on post-it notes. This was an opportunity for the residents to speak directly to their neighbors while also acknowledging their appreciation for attending the meeting.

After each participant had an opportunity to answer, the facilitator guided them through a clustering exercise looking to identify themes and similarities. This was heavily dependent on the facilitator to initiate but encouraged group participation. The goal of this activity was threefold, first to engage the participants in an activity, second, hopefully show them that they value similar things and third, offer an opportunity to continue the conversation.





## Brainstorm Phase

Each of the previous stages were designed to lead participants into the brainstorming section. After themes were identified and agreed upon, the facilitator labeled the large poster board provided with 3 of the identified themes. This helped to guide the next step where participants were asked to brainstorm ideas based on three guiding questions.

1. What can you do, as an individual, to make your home safer?
2. What can you and your neighbors do together to make your block safer?
3. How can you work with SNBL to make our neighborhood safer?







# Your Home

# Your Block

## Your Neighborhood

## Group Brainstorm

How can these themes we just identified, as a group, be applied to make our neighborhood safer?

Themes Identified:

## UNITE

## PROGRESS/LEARNING

## CONNECTION

How can we work with you to make our new safety



2nd

10/10/2020

18 you see






al

1

10

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We designed large boards to act as a boundary object during this phase. Each board was separated into three sections: one per question and had an accompanying image to help clarify the scope of that section. The facilitator read aloud one question at a time starting with number one. After each question was read, the facilitator asked the participants to generate at least 5 ideas in 3 minutes using the idea cards provided. If any group member was hesitant to write their answers the facilitator could record the ideas as the participants said them aloud. Points to emphasize: Quantity over quality, avoid critique, no bad ideas, and one idea per card.

<b>Group Brainstorm</b> <small>How can these themes we just identified, as a group, be applied to make our neighborhood safer?</small>		
<b>Themes Identified:</b> _____		
<p>What can you do, as an individual, to make your home safer?</p> 	<p>What can you and your neighbors do together to make your block safer?</p> 	<p>How can we work with the SNBL to make our neighborhood safer?</p> 
<p>Choose an idea and explain why it will make your home safer.</p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>Choose an idea and explain why it will make your block safer.</p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>Choose an idea and explain why it will make our neighborhood safer.</p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>

After the completion of the 3 minutes, we asked facilitators to move directly into the next question. We wanted to keep the momentum on idea generation. When participants were finished with the third and final question we asked each person to share their answers by placing them on the board in the appropriate spot. This would allow the participants to engage in a discussion around the ideas. Probing questions for the facilitators to keep in mind were: What doubts do you have? What is stopping us from doing these things now?

The final phase of the workshop allowed for reflection, feedback, and action. We asked for volunteers to share something they learned during the evening. We felt it was important to allow for an opportunity to share group learnings. Unfortunately, we did not have a lot of time to devote to this piece. Before residents left, we handed out “What can i do now?” cards where residents could write down the actions they planned to do before the next community meeting. This was an opportunity for residents to take action based on the ideas generated from the workshop.



## Group Brainstorm

How can these themes we just identified, as a group, be applied to make our neighborhood safer?

Themes Identified:

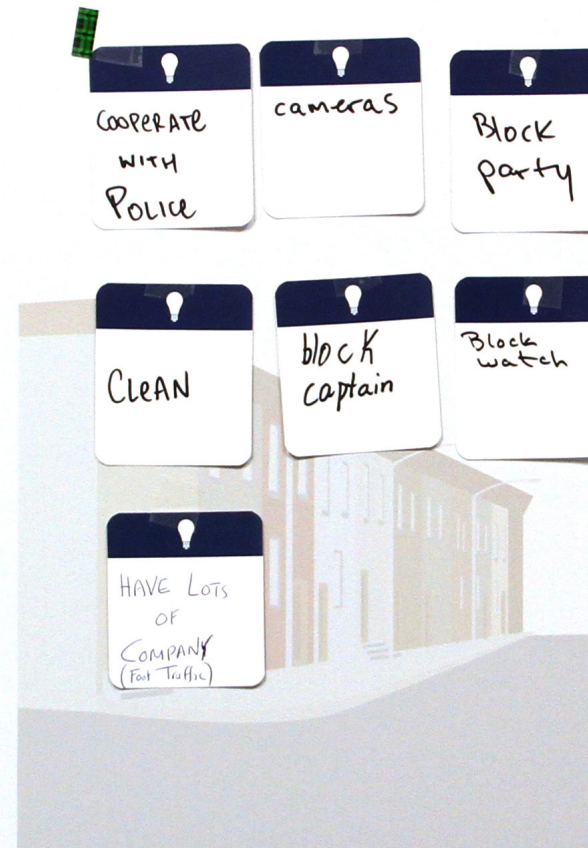
UNITY

GEOGRAPHY

What can you do, as an individual, to make your home safer?



What can you and your neighbors do together to make your neighborhood safer?



Choose an idea and explain why it will make your home safer.

AFFORDABLE INDIVIDUAL IMPROVEMENTS

Home Improvement

Fence & locks

Choose an idea and explain why it will make your neighborhood safer.

COMMUNICATION PROJECTS

BLOCK/ NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Neighbors Watch

to crime on block.

## After Action Report

### What did we expect?

- About 10 - 15 people to show up
- Several members to be out spoken and others to be very quiet
- Residents to complain
- To have trouble keeping the conversation positive
- Steering Committee to lead the groups
- To follow time constraints and keep the momentum going

### What happened?

- 31 people showed up
- Individuals were engaged and all participated
- Open discussion occurred
- Residents started by complaining but it was quickly steered toward a positive direction
- Had to stay on certain steps longer than expected
- An overwhelming amount of ideas were created

### What went well?

- Almost 100% participation
- Neighbors had meaningful discussion
- Neighbors were introduced to new neighbors
- Many residents had their voice heard
- Idea generation exceeded expectation

### What can be improved?

- Not enough support for the Spanish speaking residents
- Time was an issue
- Having a fifth facilitator to track steps and monitor time would be useful
- Not enough time for the discussion piece
- Incorporate a large group discussion
- Some groups had to skip and rush through steps



## Workshop Feedback

"I felt like if I didn't go, I am not doing the community justice. I was glad that my voice was heard and that we were brought together to discuss how to improve the neighborhood...Instead of complaining, we can do something and take action."

~ Khristine Deck - Local Resident

"I did like hearing from my neighbors. It was good to meet them. Some of the questions were too vague, so we had a hard time answering them."

~ Dina Richman - SNBL Steering Committee Member

"Everyone got to talk and contribute. It was a nice change of space and way of running the community meetings. Next time we should run through quicker and use something other than post-its. The Process was on ideas and we lost sight of the goal."

~ Tim Wieseniewski - Unofficial SNBL Steering Committee Member

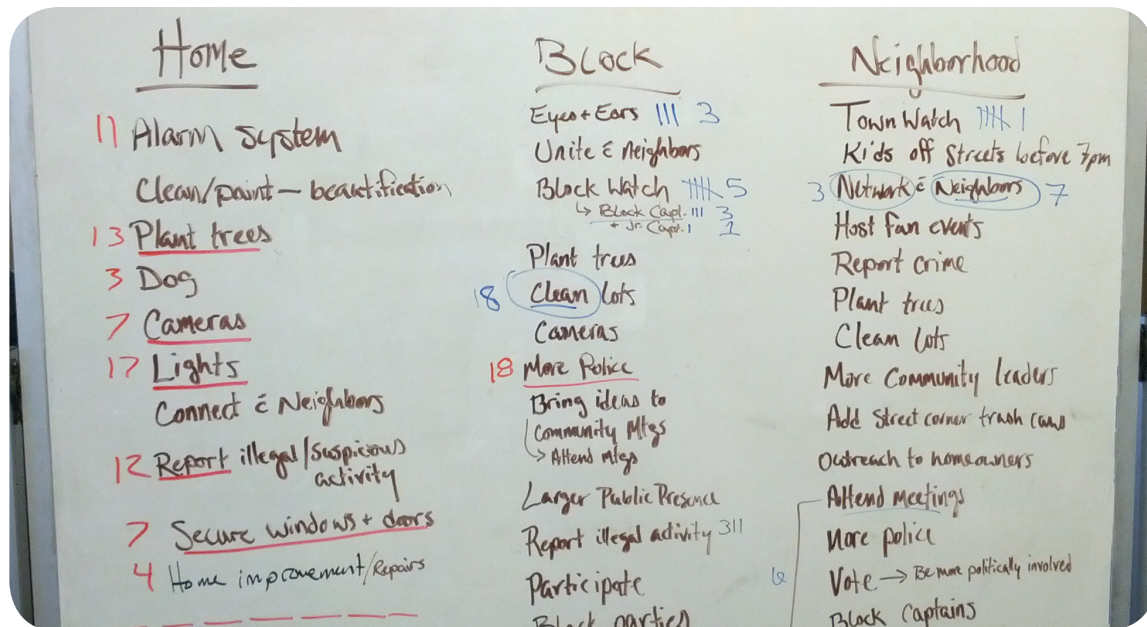
"I never knew my neighbors before. It was nice to let each other know who we are. It was good to see from personal experience."

~ Craig - SNBL Steering Committee Member

## 4.4 How did we present the outcome?

### Presenting the Data Back to the Steering Committee

After synthesizing the information generated from the workshop, we presented the findings back to the steering committee in categories or themes. We felt it would be easier for them to digest this data if we grouped the individual responses into themes. We asked that they review the document and decide as a group on three themes that they felt could be put into action now and asked them what they felt their neighbors were willing to take action on.



## Community Workshop Data

<b>Beautification</b> <b>32</b> 10 - Lot clean ups 5 - Block clean up 5 - Plant Trees 2 - Keep street clean 2 - Clean/Paint graffiti 2 - Beautify home - Reward block clean up - Add trash cans on corners - Community gardens - Landscaping - Good looking porches - Maintain property - Exterior decoration	<b>Connecting Neighbors</b> <b>21</b> 9 - Community events 5 - Talk with neighbors 4 - Networking - Community get-togethers - Have company over	<b>Reporting</b> <b>19</b> 9 - To 311 9 - To police - Speak up
<b>More Police</b> <b>18</b>	<b>Lights</b> <b>17</b> 11 - At your home 3 - On streets - Install electric for lights - Festive lighting	<b>Community Watch</b> <b>15</b> 8 - Town 5 - Eyes and ears 2 - Block
<b>Alarms</b> <b>11</b> 9 - Home alarm - Alarm systems - Fire alarm	<b>Participation</b> <b>08</b> 3 - Attend meetings - Bring a friend - Bring ideas to your com. - Participate more - Follow through with efforts - Facilitate com. Involvement	<b>Community Leaders</b> <b>07</b> 4 - Block Captains - Jr. block captain - Neighborhood Liaison - More leaders
<b>Cameras</b> <b>07</b> 6 - Home/Block - Neighborhood	<b>Public Presence</b> <b>06</b> 3 - Relationships with gov't - Leverage voices - Public presence - Cooperate with police	





### Share Your Favorite Food With Your Neighbors

**What:** Connect with neighbors to benefit your block and share your favorite food.

**How:** Choose a lot or block and then use that space to gather neighbors for a cookout.

**Why:** Many residents represent a diverse mix of cultures and traditions and it's great to connect with new neighbors. Why not join the fun and share your own traditions?

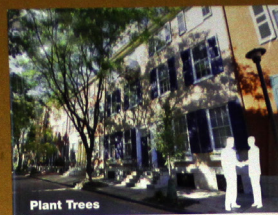


### Partner With Neighbors To Brighten Your Block

**What:** Connect with neighbors to light up your block.

**How:** Organize your block by adding outdoor lighting or connect with neighbors to brighten your whole block.

**Why:** Many people expressed the need for more light. Adding outdoor lighting to your neighborhood helps to both increase safety and encourage unwanted activity. Why not brighten up the neighborhood?



### Connect with Neighbors to Green Your Block

**What:** Connect with neighbors to plant trees on your block.

**How:** Hand out pamphlets to your neighbors and have a conversation with them about why your block planting trees is important.

**Why:** Residents expressed a desire to beautify the neighborhood by planting trees. Talk to your neighbors to ensure that you are planting trees in a smart way or backyard trees.

### March Safety Workshop Results



**Top Responses**



Accent Lights

Plant Trees

## Presenting the Data Back to the Community

Working with the steering committee and NKCDC we narrowed down the ideas from the workshop into three initiatives that would be presented back to the greater community at the next monthly meeting. We created large posters that displayed each initiative and included images with a description of what the idea was, how it would work and why it was important. After explaining each project in detail, the residents would be allowed to vote on their first and second choices. Once the votes were tallied the steering committee would then determine the details for the winning initiative.

Presenting the workshop findings and the initiatives generated from it back to the community is important in closing the feedback loop. It allows participants of the workshop to know that their suggestions were heard and that action steps had been developed.





## Community BBQ/Potluck

Following a lot clean-up

# Share Your Favorite Food With Your Neighbors

**What:** Connect with neighbors to beautify your block and share your favorite food.

**How:** Clean a lot or block and then use that space to gather neighbors for a cookout

**Why:** Many residents expressed a desire to clean lots and blocks and a need to connect with their neighbors. Why not join the two ideas into one initiative?



## Accent Lighting

# Partner With Neighbors To Brighten Your Block

**What:** Connect with neighbors to light up your block.

**How:** Brighten your home by adding outdoor lighting or connect with neighbors to brighten your whole block.

**Why:** Many people expressed the need for more lights. Adding outdoor lighting to your neighborhood helps to both beautify it while also deterring unwanted activity. Why not brighten up the neighborhood?





Plant Trees

## Connect with Neighbors to Green Your Block

**What:** Connect with neighbors to plant free trees on your block.

**How:** Hand out pamphlets to your neighbors and have a conversation with them about why you think planting trees is important.

**Why:** Residents expressed a desire to beautify the neighborhood by planting trees. Talk to your neighbors to inform them of the benefits of either a street tree or backyard tree.



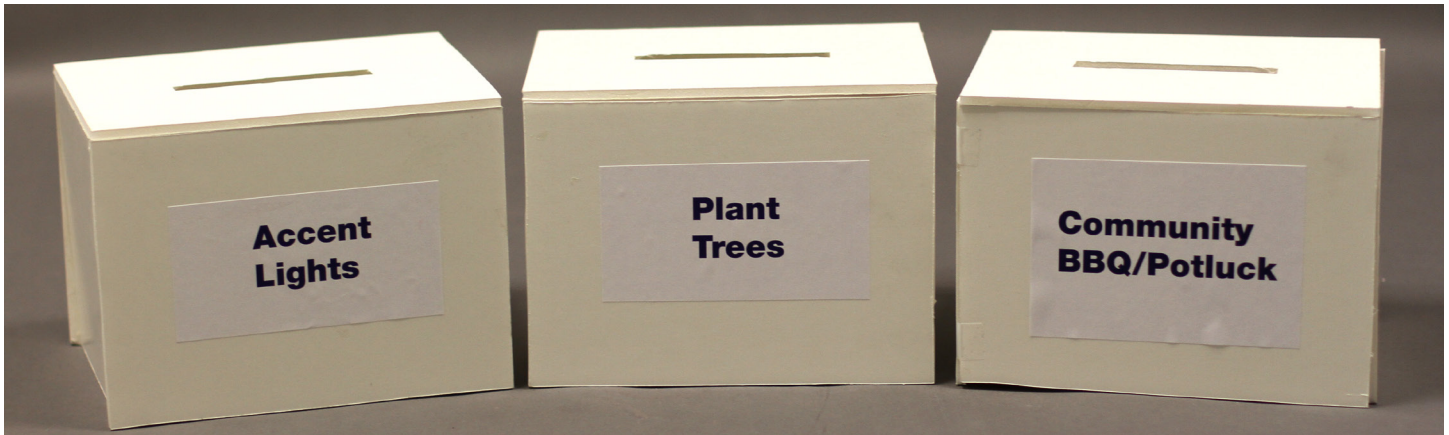
## Posters of the Ideas

Each initiative had some element around connecting neighbors. This was a common theme that was generated from the workshop. Residents felt that in order to make their area safer, they needed to work together with their fellow neighbors. The first idea incorporated a clean up with a community BBQ or cookout. The second idea involved adding more light to homes in order to brighten up the neighborhood. Adding more trees to streets was the third and final initiative. This would involve residents going door to door to explain the benefits of street trees in order to get their neighbors on board.



## Poster of the Data

To make the results visual and easily understood, we created a large poster with two sets of graphics. The first displayed the common themes that emerged from the workshop and the second showed the top responses.



## Voting for the Best Idea

We discussed several ways to conduct the voting with NKCDC including using stickers, having residents fill out a form with their top choices and then settled on the idea of creating cards that would say “1st Choice: Choose the initiative that you are most excited to do to make your neighborhood a safer place” and “2nd Choice: Choose the initiative that you feel is second most important to make your neighborhood a safer place” in both English and Spanish. By creating these cards we would alleviate the burden of having the residents write their choices. Using boxes to place the cards in, we created a level of autonomy that would prevent residents from being swayed by the votes of their neighbors.



## 4.5 What were our recommendations?

### Initial Recommendations

- Although the workshop was only one small step toward creating a sense of connectedness, it is important to continue to keep the lines of communication open for the greater community by allowing them a platform for discussion.
- An important aspect of these discussions will be to leverage individual assets within the community. Asking question like “what are you good at?” and “What are you willing to do?” will allow for residents to contribute in ways they feel most comfortable.
- Co-creating initiatives and solutions to problems within the neighborhood will also be important in order to keep residents engaged.
- Having small group discussion and tools that allow for multiple perspectives to be heard is important.
- A platform where all participants understand the project goal and can then have an open conversation around that goal will also be important.
- The simplicity of using visual tools that will alleviate the burden of creating polished graphics and will allow for ideas to be quickly generated.

# Guidelines for Future Workshops

## **Introduction**

It is important to understand that it is not necessary to replicate the workshop that we facilitated. The goal should be to initiate a discussion with neighbors who do not normally communicate in order to create a sense of connectedness and to create a sense of co-ownership and responsibility. The resident's perspective is most important. Once we understand how residents see the community, we can work toward getting everyone on the same page. What follows is a set of guidelines for facilitating conversations among community members and giving them a voice within the community meetings.

## **Discussion Phase**

We feel this is an important initial step and would involve questions that spark conversation. A facilitator would supply each group with a few questions in order to get the participants thinking about their personal goals and contributions. The idea behind this is to start a conversation around why it is important to take a personal interest in the community. It is important to look introspectively and not just rely on outside systems to solve problems.



This phase is pure discussion and a way to get residents talking and thinking of the things they value. It was important for the facilitators to moderate this conversation in order to keep the answers positive and call on those less likely to speak up. Possible questions to ask would be.

**1) Why is it important for you to be here today?**

**2) What does it mean to you to be part of this community?**

**Follow up questions: Why does that matter to you? What's at stake?**

We suggest that after each participant had an opportunity to answer, the facilitator will guide the group through a clustering exercise looking to identify themes and commonalities. The goal of this activity is to highlight the similarities of the group. Simply use a white board or large wall post-it with a marker to organize post-its and create groups and identify these groups.

### **Direction**

From this point, the outcomes and decisions may vary based on the current need. Ask yourself, what are the goals of this workshop or what do we want the outcome to be? You may choose to guide the residents through a brainstorming session to create future initiatives, you can have each group create a goal statement that will give the community

a new direction, or you can have each group visualize the future of the community.

## Brainstorm Stage

In this stage the previously identified themes will help to guide the next steps where participants will be asked to brainstorm ideas based on guiding questions or a common goal.

We designed large boards to act as a visual aid during this phase, but feel free to use large wall post-its for each section. Each blank sheet should represent one of the sections, questions or goals. Focusing on one at a time, the facilitator should ask the participants to generate at least 5 ideas in 3 minutes using regular post-its. If any group member is hesitant to write their answers the facilitator can record the ideas as the participants read them aloud. **Points to emphasize: Quantity over quality, avoid critique, no bad ideas, and one idea per card.**

After the time is up, move directly into the next section with the goal to keep the momentum on idea generation. When participants are finished with the final section ask each person to share their answers. This, with the help of the facilitator, will hopefully engage the participants in a discussion around the ideas.

Probing questions for the facilitators to keep in mind are:

What doubts do you have? What are the benefits/challenges of this idea? What is stopping us from doing these things now? Any barriers brought up in conversation can be captured on post-it notes and attached to the ideas.

### **Presenting to the Larger Group**

Once the small groups have finished generating ideas it is a good idea to allow the participants a chance to report back to the larger whole. This is an opportunity for residents to give feedback to ideas and continue the conversation.

### **Reflection**

The final piece is about reflection and a chance for the participants to give feedback. Ask for volunteers to share something they have learned during the workshop. It is important to allow for an opportunity to share learnings.





Reflection

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## Understanding Our Role

Our thesis explored how fostering communication between fragmented community members can help to develop a sense of responsibility and co-ownership of their neighborhood. We wanted to explore the designer's role in the context of community building and challenge the traditional role of design. Our goal was to demonstrate how design could empower a young civic association to engage their fellow residents in meaningful conversation where individual assets are leveraged. The project aim was to enable citizens to discover the strengths of the community in order to take small steps toward change. During our time with this community we were able to accomplish, on a small scale, an engagement where this conversation could be started. Where residents could begin to feel connected. Keeping an open line of communication and allowing for a platform for discussion will be key to sustaining any momentum generated at the safety workshop. This will be important in developing that sense of co-ownership. Future conversation should also leverage individual assets, which will allow for community members to focus on positive contributions that they can make as individual residents.

Over the course of the project our focus changed as we became more immersed in the community and within these two organizations. Our original area of interest was in assisting NKCDC to build the leadership capacity within the Steering Committee. We soon realized this was not the area of most need. Having a better understanding of our

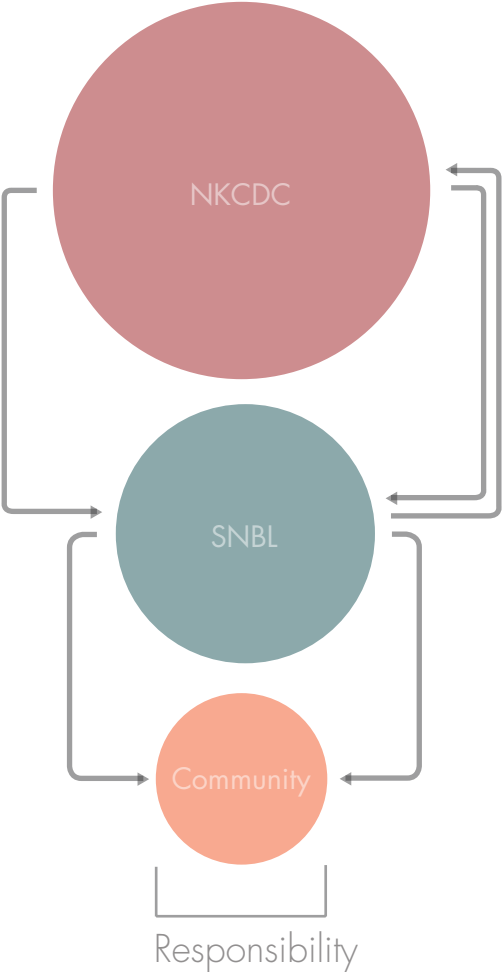
direction from the beginning would have allowed us to better articulate the project objective to our partner organizations. At times, there was a level of misunderstanding that needed to be addressed.

## Designing with a Community

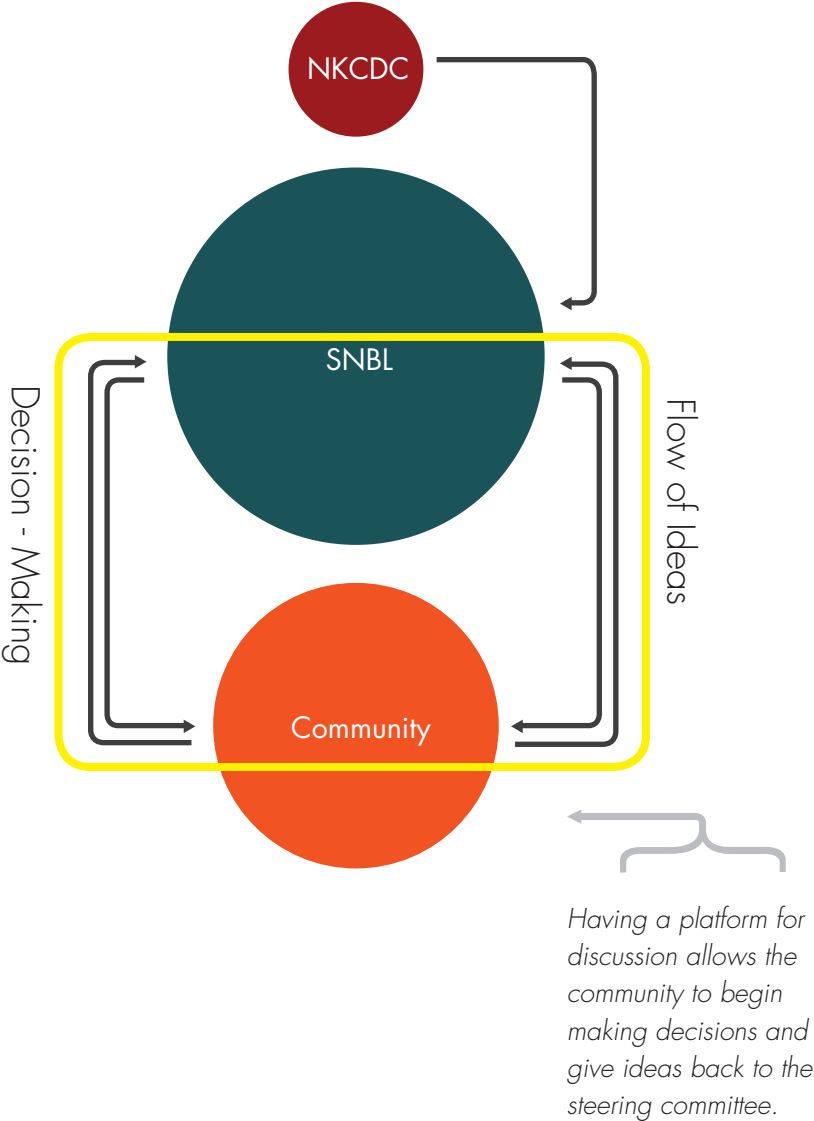
Working within a community-building context posed some constraints. The steering committee and greater community only met once a month, which limited our access to these groups. The Steering Committee members have assumed a lot of responsibility to begin the change within their neighborhood while also balancing real life obligations, which led to issues with inconsistent meeting attendance. We learned that the design ideas that we implemented had to be flexible to accommodate these uncertainties and that in order for this change to be sustainable they will need to recruit more community members to assist in championing this change.

Dealing with the constraints of a partner or client can also be challenging. It's a delicate balance between our goal as designers, the client objective, and what is best for the people we are designing for or with. Our project partnered with New Kensington Community Development Corporation and Somerset Neighbors for Better Living. Originally we felt that the greater community was the group we were designing for, and in a way, they still were but we needed to identify the group that would implement our

Current State



Future State



designs going forward. We were empowering the Steering Committee in a new way of engaging with their neighbors. Although the community would benefit from this work, the real impact would lie within SNBL. Our aim was to co-create with the Steering Committee and NKCDC, a structured platform where residents could voice their opinions and ideas under the current framework of their monthly community meetings.

## Creating a Platform for Discussion

As the design of the workshop developed we realized that our biggest obstacle was time. Due to other items already on the agenda, and a limited amount of time for the meeting itself, we were only allowed sixty minutes to plan an interaction where residents could brainstorm ideas around the safety of their neighborhood while also allowing them to engage in a meaningful conversation. We believed the conversation piece was the most valuable in order to begin to connect these residents. Many do not know who their neighbors are and generally do not have an opportunity to reach out to them. By meeting and connecting with neighbors, residents could feel they are part of a greater whole, a larger network of people who have similar ideas and face similar challenges.

The participation at the workshop exceeded our expectations. The average number of attendees had been hovering around 20-25, but on the night of the workshop we were pleasantly surprised with 31. Some neighbors met for the first time in this interaction,

had a discussion and brainstormed ideas to better their area. We soon realized though, that there was not enough support for the Spanish-speaking participants. Having a translator at each table would help to eliminate the barrier of language. Also, keeping track of time was another obstacle. Each group moved at their own pace and it was up to each facilitator to determine when to move on to the next phase. Several groups did not make it through the entire workshop while others had to skip or rush through certain steps. The overall feedback from the participants has been positive.

## Generating Interest

In presenting the information back to the Steering Committee following the workshop, we agreed to facilitate a meeting with the steering committee members and NKCDC. The goal of this meeting was to present the findings from the workshop and then guide the steering committee members through an exercise where they would choose three initiatives from the findings to present back to the community at the following monthly meeting. We carefully planned the breakdown of time between presenting data, discussing potential options and then voting. What we did not do however was create any materials that would aid in this discussion and act as a boundary object for shared understanding. Members were a bit confused by the structure and our goal. Several members started to go off topic and talk about larger issues within the

community that slowly turned into members complaining about issues that could not easily be solved. As facilitators, we struggled to keep the conversation focused. Our goal was to create an initiative where residents could start to address safety issues, in a small and personal way.

## Key Learnings

In looking back at this project one area that we could have examined in more depth is that of agency. This is something that is generally referred to in organizational or corporate culture but holds some weight in a community context as well. Charles Duhigg talks about agency in his book *The Power of Habit* and references the importance of allowing people to feel as though they are in control. The feeling of control can increase how much energy people are willing to put forth at work. He examines Starbucks as a case study and quotes the Vice President Kris Engskov as saying “people want to be in control of their lives (p. 151).” How can we understand this further in a community-building context? How can we continue to design interactions where residents feel they have a voice and the power to make change? By using a transformative design approach, putting the design tools in the hands of non-designers, and allowing the residents to create their own solutions will enable them to feel this power to make change.



We learned a lot from this project. The underlying problems within a community like Kensington are complex and wicked, and cannot be solved in one design intervention or thesis. At times we felt a little overwhelmed by this complexity and by the ambiguity and organic nature of the project. It was important to understand the capacity of the people we were engaged with and allow for flexibility in order to accommodate the resident's busy schedules. It was also important to clearly identify who the decision makers were in order to navigate group dynamics and gain approval for our ideas. We also learned that having a certain level of transparency early allowed us to build trust and gain buy in from our partner organizations. We accomplished this by including NKCDC and SNBL in all of the design decisions. Everything that was produced was presented for their approval before implementation. A reality understood now is that we probably affected the Steering Committee and NKCDC more than the community.

Identifying our correct client and then scaling that back to understand what was feasible given the timeline of the project would have allowed for easier actionable steps to be realized. The longer we immersed ourselves within this community, the more apparent the complexity of designing for a community became. By understanding the structure of SNBL earlier on and steering away from the community, we would have been able to understand the immediate need of SNBL and how we might, as designers, help them improve their neighborhood.





# Postscript

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## Response to Thesis Defense

Many of the comments from the presentation of our thesis posed the question: who exactly is your client? We struggled with this question throughout the project. We felt that the greater community of Kensington was the focus of our design interventions but the actual focus was in helping to empower Somerset Neighbors for Better Living. We did this by supplying them with design tools and a method of interacting with their neighbors in a collaborative way. This engagement would allow for feedback and ownership of ideas generated, open the lines of communication between the two groups while also promoting action and interest for initiatives.

Identifying the group that would be impacted most was in understanding the power structure of these three groups. NKCDC holds the most authority followed by SNBL and then the greater community. Finding the center of authority or the middle ground would allow us to focus our design in an area that would be most influential.

By having a better understanding of our focus and who our design would impact most would have helped to identify the true client and saved us valuable time. In our reflection we realized just how important time was to this project: the amount of time it took to gain trust with the community and fully understand their needs, the limited access we

had with the different groups we collaborated with, and the schedule limitations faced in the workshop. Project goals and objectives could have been more clearly outlined had we fully understood this constraint of time.





Appendix



## Glossary

- Agency - The state in which an individual feels responsibility and takes ownership of his/her action.
- Autonomy - Independence or freedom of an individual to take action based on the will of the individual.
- Boundary Object - A visual aid that allows a group to be re-framed toward the same context to act in a collective activity.
- Co-Design - The collaboration of a designer and stakeholders involved in a project, to design together. The stakeholder acts as the expert, while the designer facilitates the interaction.
- Cognitive Artifact - Materials designed to aid or enhance an individuals ability to collaborate.
- Collaboration - An interdisciplinary group of individuals working together to accomplish the same task.
- Contextual Inquiry - A user-centered design approach of ethnographic research where the designer interacts one-on-one with a user to inquire about the users daily activity.
- Cultural Barriers - Beliefs from an individuals past experience, based on culture, that interrupt a groups ability to proceed.

- Dependencies - The tendency of an individual to rely on or count on a group's direction or decisions.
- Gifts - The positive expertise that every individual can bring to a community.
- Language Barriers - Differences in a group's individual languages, that interrupt a group's ability to proceed.
- Leadership Capacity - The expertise and ability of an individual to lead a group.
- Pairing - The common phenomenon of group dynamics in which two individuals relate and unite within the group.
- Participatory Design - A design approach which attempts to actively involve all stakeholders in a process.
- Scaffolding - A support system used to guide an individual through the learning process to build an individuals expertise and eventually become independent.
- Stakeholder - An individual who can affect or can be affected by a project's outcome.

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~Meghan

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~Lonnie

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Meghan received her undergraduate degree in Fine Art from Saint Michael's College in Colchester, VT. Following many years in the footwear industry and an illustrious rugby career, Meghan was drawn to the ever changing and challenging landscapes of design at the Masters of Industrial Design program at The University of The Arts.



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Following an undergraduate degree from Shippensburg University in Interdisciplinary Arts, Lonnie was a lead designer for Knovex, LLC, a training solutions company. Intrigued by the opportunity of furthering his design career, he left his lead design position to acquire a Masters of Industrial Design in Philadelphia.