The Added Value of Community Engagement in Public Design for Landscape Architecture Professionals

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Master
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This thesis examines three uniquely different community engagement methods that explore the relationship between community values and the physical landscape in two Appalachian communities; Austinville, VA and St. Paul, VA. Each community engagement method is 1) introduced via literature review/case study, 2) modified from the case study to suit local conditions, and 3) analyzed for effectiveness in connecting local values and the physical landscape. I then reflected on this academic research through the lens of a three-year employment as a community development and natural asset planner with a 501(c)3 non-profit in southwest Virginia. The professional experience revealed five “community systems” that impacted the overall effectiveness of community engagement processes and had the potential to position communities, and their public projects, for a higher level of success. The community systems included: Capacity and Readiness, Involvement, Leadership, Communication, Frame of Reference and Community Vision. Research and professional practice together suggested that an intentional effort to understand and incorporate community values via community engagement ultimately led to more meaningful designs in the public sector.
This thesis examines three uniquely different community engagement exercises that explore the connection between a community’s core set of principles and the physical landscape in two Appalachian communities; Austinville, VA and St. Paul, VA. Each community engagement exercise is 1) introduced by looking at previously completed projects, 2) modified from the previous project to be customized for each communities specific needs, and 3) analyzed for effectiveness in understanding how local values relate to the physical landscape. I reflected on this academic research after completing a three-year employment as a community development and natural asset planner with a 501(c)3 non-profit in southwest Virginia. The professional experience revealed five “community systems” that determined, in part, whether the community engagement exercise would be successful. The community systems included: Capacity and Readiness, Involvement, Leadership, Communication, Frame of Reference and Community Vision. Recognizing and enhancing these community systems early in the design process positioned communities, and their public projects, for a higher level of success. Research and professional experience together suggested that an intentional effort to understand and incorporate community members and their personal values into a design ultimately led to more meaningful designs in the public sector.
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INTRODUCTION

I come to the study of landscape architecture in southwest Virginia, situated within the Appalachian mountain range, with a particular interest in cultural landscapes. Often the vibrant, unique, or prideful elements of the physical landscape that stitches together Appalachian culture are masked by a veil of degradation, population scarcity, and sometimes new construction. Further, residents of various Appalachian communities subtly interlace values and memories with the physical landscape. Understanding the hidden connections between local value systems, patterns of daily living, and the physical landscape becomes a challenge for visiting design professionals. Professionals should pay special attention to the subtle clues in the community and landscape that are easily glossed over when a project’s budget or schedule does not provide the time necessary to see and understand these community complexities.

This thesis examines three uniquely different community engagement methods that explored the relationship between community values and the physical landscape in two Appalachian communities; Austinville, VA and St. Paul, VA. The methods tested during my research are herein referred to as “micro-studies”. Located in the a 19-county region considered southwest Virginia (Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2014), each participatory method is 1) introduced via literature review/case study, 2) modified from the case study to suit local conditions, and 3) analyzed for its effectiveness in connecting local values and the physical landscape. The three micro-studies I implemented in my research were:

Micro-Study #1  Method: Community Connectedness Survey
Community: Austinville, VA (population: 800)
Participants: 20
Frequency: Distributed on a single occasion and collected three weeks later

Micro-Study #2  Method: Heritage Mapping
Community: Austinville, VA (population: 800)
Participants: 5
Frequency: Conducted as a single event for two hours

Micro-Study #3  Method: Participatory Photography
Community: St. Paul (population: 950)
Participants: 10
Frequency: Distributed disposable cameras with instructions and reflection form on a single occasion and collected two weeks later

I then reflected on this research through the lens of a three-year employment as a community development and natural asset planner with a 501(c)3 non-profit in southwest Virginia. Research and professional practice together suggested that an intentional effort to understand community values throughout a project ultimately leads to more meaningful designs.

COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS

HOW DIFFERENCES IN VISIBLE HERITAGE ACROSS TWO APPALACHIAN COMMUNITIES, AUSTINVILLE AND ABINGDON, VA, INITIATED A DEEPER INQUIRY INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VALUES AND THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

Norms of Appalachian mountain culture such as traditional music, craft, and personality type point their origin to the surrounding natural landscape; streams, hill, hollers, and fields. “Small”, “rural”, “Appalachian”, “gentle mountains”, “historical”, “southern hospitality” or “neighborly” frequently are used to describe southwest Virginia. Beyond the transportation thoroughfares, quaint main streets, city limits, agriculture fields and second growth forests cover most of the rolling landscape. Here townships reflect varying levels of livelihood, some degraded to the point of physical decline. Austinville, VA of Wythe County in many regards is a community that does not possess traditional visible indicators of a lively, vibrant community. A brief background and visual assessment of Austinville juxtaposed to Abingdon, VA, my hometown, highlights differences in how community values relate to the physical environment. These apparent differences ultimately questioned how design professionals come to learn about local values and how those values are incorporated into design projects. I begin now with a description of my initial visit to Austinville, VA.
AUSTINVILLE, VA

Austinville is an unincorporated community located in the southern part of Wythe county in southwest Virginia (Fig. 1) with a population of approximately 800 people.

Fig. 1. Wythe County context map showing Austinville’s (F) proximity to others localities where some jobs and social activities relocated following the New Jersey Zinc Company’s mine closing in 1981 (Proctor 2012)
(A) I-81 corridor; (B) I-77 corridor; (C) Wytheville, VA; (D) Rural Retreat, VA; (E) Fort Chiswell, VA; (F) Austinville, VA, study community; (G) Ivanhoe, VA; (H) Jackson Ferry Shot Tower

Present-day Austinville was settled by Colonel John Chiswell after his discovery of substantial lead deposits in 1756 and he quickly opened a mine. By the start of the Revolutionary War twenty years later, Chiswell had died and the mine was turned over to the state of Virginia. In 1780, Virginia officials auctioned the mine off and it was purchased by two brothers of the Austin family, Moses and Stephen. The Austin family is most notably known today for Moses’
son, Stephen F. Austin who later settled Texas, and for whom Austinville, VA and Austin, Texas are named (Whisonant, 1996). Chiswell’s original lead mine operation changed ownership six times between 1756 and 1874. In 1874 the Wythe Lead and Zinc Company expanded mining operations to include zinc for the first time. The lead and zinc mine changed ownership twice more when the New Jersey Zinc Company (NJZC) purchased it in 1902 (New Jersey Zinc Corporation (Austinville, VA) Records II, 1925-1969). The NJZC remained open until 1981, making it the oldest continuously operated mine in the nation (Whisonant, 1996). It was at this time that the forces of globalization and mechanization became too great and the New Jersey Zinc Company closed. Today, the limestone overburden from over 200 year of mining is processed into fertilizer primarily for the agriculture industry by the Austinville Limestone Company.

Austinville suffered a substantial economic and social loss when the New Jersey Zinc Company and its mine closed. The town’s employment and social structures were severely challenged because of the community’s deep connection and dependency to the mine’s operations. Supply stores and the common workplace environment that the mine provided quickly migrated to nearby Wytheville or Pulaski, sometimes as far as seventy miles to Bristol, Salem, and Roanoke. Residents identified social outlets such as festivals, shopping, or restaurants that followed the out-migration of employment opportunities as well.

A local resident commented that over the next four decades Austinville became a ‘sleeper town’ for Pulaski and Wytheville (Austinville resident 2012). This resident explained that Austinville residents often traveled to jobs located in surrounding communities, then returned to home after work each day. Upon visual observation as a visitor, I observed the community remains in this quiet state today. Traffic is consistently low along Lead Mine Road’s four and one half-mile stretch from I-77 to the post office. Convenient gas stations concentrated near the Lead Mines Road/ I-77 intersection are the few businesses that are open. Pick-up sports games or social gatherings held outside now gravitate toward vacant lots, the grounds of the closed Austinville Elementary school, or open space near one of the New River access points because of the lack of public open space or formal parks in the immediate community.

Considering the social and economic migration over the last forty years, a local resident described two primary groups that are found in Austinville today. First are the now elderly
residents that did not follow the younger, mobile generation that left the area after the mine closed. These Austinville residents prefer to age in place surrounded by a familiar landscape. Participants spoke specifically to their ancestral connections, the mountains, and a four-season climate as attractive reasons to keep living in the area. One participant explained, “In little things, I mean just like climate. I love having the experience of all four seasons. We get mild winters. We get mild summers. We don’t have to run our air conditioning although I do run it periodically to keep the condenser and so on things running. We have a nice breeze. There’s not extremes in temperature” (Austinville participant #3, 2012).

The second group of Austinville residents are families who either stayed or moved back to Austinville because of ancestral ties to the community. Those individuals wished to raise their family where their children are close to other family members. In separate conversations, other community members cited family or community relationships as a primary motivation for continuing to live in the area. I asked these long-term residents what compelled them to continue to live in Austinville, whether it was their connection to Austinville or where they worked in nearby towns such as Wytheville (20 miles away).

One participant was a retired educator from the public K-12 school system. He spoke to the enjoyment he received getting to know families as he taught students, saying, “I think its friends and family, probably at the top of the list. Having worked in the school system and gotten to know literally thousands of individuals in the community. This is what I consider home. I still get back to northern Virginia quite often as my brother and his family live there. I travel a lot all over the state, so you know; I work in some statewide organizations on the board of directors or whatever. I have experiences going visiting other places. I have thought about it since I retired. This is where I choose to live” (Austinville participant #3, 2012).

Another life-long resident and participant described personal feelings of accomplishment, inclusion, and recognition for her contributions to the community as motivators to continue to live in the area, “The rural, small town community where you can feel like you are making a difference, that keeps me wanting to keep and stay in this size community in this area” (Austinville participants #1 and #2, 2012).

A third Austinville resident and community elder initially came to Austinville for work. After changing positions at a sewing factory, she had the option to move to other communities
but decided to stay. She described the importance of the people and family around her as well as the role of farming played in her life, “I just guess community ties and the people. I still own property. I have a farm in Carroll County and one in Galax but I just lease those and rent out. I know most of the people that I know are here now. I have a daughter and three grand children who live here. Because they were born and grew up here. So, I don’t really have anywhere else to go and this is...I like the area.” She goes on to say, “...the people. Most of my friends, the people I know, are here. The ones, yes I still own the land up at Galax but most of the people I knew (there) are dead now” (Austinville participants #1 and #2, 2012).

The stories from community members demonstrated the importance of the landscape for agriculture and recreational uses as well as the importance of social relationships between community members. After these initial conversations, I returned to Austinville by myself to see if I could locate the places they mentioned such as the school, working farms, or sewing factory. Without further guidance of community members I was unable to do so. The Austinville elementary school was shut down after consolidation and moved across I-77. The fields lay empty of both crop and equipment. No rumble of a distant tractor or site of livestock encouraged further exploration. As a visitor to Austinville there were few physical landmarks that stood out as apparent connections to Austinville’s past as a community of pioneers, explorers, and miners.

One such connection, however, was the landmark Jackson Ferry Shot Tower (Fig. 2), located high on the banks of the New River below the ridge of Big Lick Mountain. Interesting as a stand-alone feature, the Jackson Ferry Shot Tower is currently managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR) and one of ten remaining shot towers in the United States (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation 2013). A modest parking lot, bathrooms, and signage leads visitors around the tower to the New River Trail State Park. This “rails-to-trails” linear state park abuts the shot tower half way to the water’s edge. The trail follows the New River from Pulaski to the city of Galax, fifty seven miles in all.

The Jackson Ferry Shot Tower was built between 1807 and 1812 and stands three miles from the former Austinville mine today. The shot tower’s 150’ vertical shaft is comprised of a 75’ structure above ground, where workers cast hot lead through sieves before it fell 150’ below to an access tunnel connected to the New River (Fig. 3). The hot lead formed into spherical shot as it fell. The sieves regulated how big or small the shot was and could be changed based on the
shot’s end use. The shot cooled instantly once it hit the New River below where a kettle filled with water captured the shot, which was removed by canoe later. Early pioneers used most of the shot manufactured in the Jackson Ferry Shot Tower for hunting purposes. The shot tower closed in the mid-1800s but was briefly reopened for ammunition processing during the Civil War (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation 2013).

The story of Jackson Ferry Shot Tower is one of the last public stories available to visitors in the Austinville community. The VDCR has played a major role in making the tower’s story public when it created interpretive panels, published information about the tower online, and enhanced access to the tower via vehicle parking/pedestrian trails. The
historical significance and visual prominence of the Jackson Ferry Shot Tower opened a broader exploration of the relationship between the built environment, what surrounds it, and the value locals place within the physical landscape.

- What other historical structures, like the tower, connect the Austinville area to its heritage?
- Whose cultural values determined that certain structures are worth saving and to let others go?
- How do these or the region’s structures relate to the people of this area in both modern and historical contexts?

Many of these questions could only be answered by engaging the people that live in this area. I stopped to talk to a man at a small gas station near the shot tower. I opened the conversation with, “Do you know anything about the shot tower? Can you tell me anymore about it?” The man responded with “Where are you from?” and “What are you looking to know?” I quickly realized that as I did not know the context of the tower, this gentleman did not understand me or why I was interested in knowing more. More conversational than informative, the man recommended I visit a local historian a mile and a half up the road who could answer my questions. This particular elder woman compiled scrapbooks on the tower, the history of Austinville, and “the mines.” By pointing out landmarks that were beyond plain sight, it became clear that community members knew more than I could gather simply by driving through in my car or looking at aerial images.

Long-term residents knew what had come and gone and where events took place. They knew stories and had lived experiences that told a collective narrative about Austinville. They knew of the things that I could not see when driving through the community over a few short visits.

Studying the historical development of Austinville through the present landscape of the community shifted the focus beyond the traditional design process in landscape architecture to one that is based on community design. Where are the remnants of the once suspected booming mine town? What caused its decline? What efforts are there to share Austinville’s role in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars with a larger audience? What is the “binding agent” amongst the
existing residents even though the mine no longer economically supports the community?

ABINGDON, VA

The questions that Austinville raised forced me to look at a very familiar community but in a far different way. I returned to my hometown, Abingdon, VA, with a new perspective, looking for how Abingdon’s agrarian heritage is reflected in its physical environment. In contrast to Austinville I found more direct connections between the town’s historical tradition, present-day community values. The Barter Theatre and the Abingdon Farmer’s Market are two examples of how community values emerge in the physical environment.

As a locality, Abingdon’s population is approximately 8,000 residents living in eight and a half square miles. This population does not include those in surrounding counties that may associate socially or culturally with Abingdon. When social and cultural associations are considered, the community of Abingdon swells by thousands as neither association is restricted to the town limits as a political boundary. Socially, people live beyond the town limits in Washington County but come to Abingdon for church, shopping, education, or entertainment. Culturally, people learn about the town’s agrarian history and the farmers that continue to work the surrounding land when eating at a restaurant that serves local food, or by visiting the town’s farmer’s market. Local restaurants or the farmer’s market financially support those agriculture businesses. Wineries and breweries craft award-winning beverages and invite customers to enjoy them on the property where they were made. Local craft or music connects community members with the arts. The process of being involved in one’s community goes on to shape personal interests and values that guide decision-making.

Topographically and hydrologically, the town is framed by Whitetop Mountain, Iron Mountain, Clinch Mountain, and Mount Rogers. These ranges form a familiar backdrop to most views. Streams, ponds, and lakes drain into one of the three prominent branches of the Holston River, contributing to the Tennessee, Ohio, and eventually Mississippi River waterways. The town’s residents and visitors celebrate these natural assets through the countless outdoor recreation opportunities in the area.

Most days the pace of town is a moderate hum, not a slumber and not a zip. There is enough action to notice progress but not so much that sleep is lost over the commotion. On a nice day, visitors dot the streets to shop or visit a restaurant. This is especially true just before and
after show times at the Barter Theatre, the state theater of Virginia. At the close of the day, some retreat to one of the many historic buildings, the Wolf Hills microbrewery in Abingdon’s old ice house, one of the numerous restaurants, or a personal residence.

The visibly historic and community-centered nature of Abingdon are qualities that are held dear by community members and visitors alike. These traits are important to the town’s quality of life, similar to public safety or access to a strong education system. In Abingdon great lengths are taken to maintain its historical and rooted culture by exercising zoning and urban planning policies within the downtown core. The historic and corresponding overlay districts are one prominent product of these efforts. Maintenance requirements within this district help mitigate the degradation of signature structures. Yards are kept and substantial changes to the property must be approved by a historical society prior to alteration. Some might argue the historic district guidelines are concerned with superficial, outward appearances, not necessarily linked to larger efforts to understand the town’s heritage. How are these cosmetic measures linked to local culture? How do adopted planning principles reflect underlying values systems that cannot be seen by the untrained eye?

Two examples demonstrate how Abingdon goes beyond controlling building facade aesthetics or zoning policies to display the Town’s lore and heritage. First, Abingdon is home to the Barter Theatre, the state theater of Virginia (see Fig. 5 for location). With an abundance of both acting talent and hungry stomachs, the theater opened in 1933 under the direction of Robert Porterfield. An actor himself, his cast was under nourished both physically and economically as the nation entered the Great Depression. Living in an agrarian region Porterfield encouraged surrounding farmers to attend live theatrical performances. In place of a monetary exchange, audience members paid with fresh food, bartering their admission cost. From that day on, the name ‘Barter Theatre’ became a trademark identity of the town (Barter Theatre 2013).

Fast-forward eighty years, and today, the tradition of exchanging food for play carries on. Periodically through the theater’s performance season, patrons can barter their admission with a food donation (Feeding America: Southwest Virgina 2016). These donations are provided to a local food organization and distributed to those in the need. Replacing a monetary entrance fee with a modest food donation removed the financial barrier of attending live performances. Making performances more affordable, even on a temporary basis, extends the Barter’s
experience to nearly anyone who wishes to attend.

Abingdon’s Farmer’s Market is a second example of how Abingdon celebrates its agrarian heritage (see Fig. 5 for location). According to long-time vendor Charlie Foster, Abingdon farmer’s market began informally sometime in the 1970s in a parking lot adjacent to the Fields Penn House. Vendors brought tables, chairs, tents, often using truck beds as a temporary business counter. Over the next four decades the market grew into a social destination not only for Abingdon but also surrounding communities. In 2001, the market moved to a large municipal parking lot used by a nearby baseball and football field. A steady increase in pedestrian and vehicle traffic required the farmer’s market organization to consider a more structured and permanent layout beyond an informal parking lot (Abingdon Farmer’s Market 2016).

In 2007, the Town decided to construct its first market pavilion centrally located in the community (see Fig. 5 for location). The new market space has ~8,000 ft² of covered vendor stalls with water and electric service to each. Additionally, the market has ~4,500 ft² of maintained lawn for community gathering and summer concerts. The market not only brings farmers and adds performance space to the town but, also provides a space for the ‘theater’ of community to perform. It provides unscripted, face-to-face interaction while creating new memories nearly every day.
Fig. 4. Abingdon, VA. Context map showing size and central location of Abingdon’s historic district (yellow) relative to its town limits (red) (Proctor 2016)

Fig. 5. Abingdon, VA. Context map showing (A) Barter Theatre, (B) current Abingdon Farmer’s Market, (C) 1970s Abingdon Farmer’s Market at Field’s Penn House, (D) 2001 Abingdon Farmer’s Market (Proctor 2016)
Each of these examples are intentional efforts to translate the rich, agrarian heritage of Abingdon into the built environment. These efforts allow the residents and visitors to become more engaged with place specific, Abingdon specific, activities. The greater interaction with others in the community heightens a sense of belonging, self worth, and general higher quality of life. People fill the streets with social and audible vibrancy. Dry-laid brick sidewalks beneath tree lined streets bring an aesthetic warmth that other materials may not be able to provide. As elements of Abingdon’s heritage becomes visible through the built environment, the physical landscape assists residents in the journey to stay rooted and attached to their community.

Topography, hydrology, vegetative cover, transportation routes, regional circulation, and historical land use are a starting point to understand both Austinville and Abingdon’s cultural landscapes. To a non-resident, traditional ways for reading Austinville as a value-laden landscape prove incomplete. I have not seen this community through time like I have in Abingdon. I do not have the acute knowledge of Austinville like the residents do. The skill set as a visiting design practitioner to understand Austinville, Virginia must be adapted and expanded.

**TRADITIONAL VS. COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN**

The difficulty in studying values is that they are often connected to common, ordinary elements in the landscape. To people who live in a particularly place day in and day out, uniquely defining characteristics of their environment fade into the background (Pierce Lewis 1979) provided an example of what elements create an ordinary landscape, using motorists who prefer “driving bland highway-department roadsides, to driving on old-fashioned roads” as an example. Lewis identified ordinary elements that create a unique driving experience on old-fashioned roads, saying, “their (the country roads) (have) curves and crossroads and billboards and towns and irresponsible pedestrians and cyclists and straying livestock and roadside houses that spew forth children chasing balls-in short, all the things that make driving back-roads interesting and hazardous.”

It takes time and curious exploration to gain an appreciation for the ordinary qualities that make a place unique. It is through time, however, that the people that live in the ordinary
landscape become hardened to the unique combinations that contribute to a place’s singular construction. Ordinary details are easily dismissed as not special because “it’s always been there” (Lewis, P. 1979). Lewis confirms the difficulty in appreciating the ordinary landscape in his second axiom in “Axiom for Reading the Landscape (1979). He explains, “It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that we have perversely overlooked a huge body of evidence which-if approached carefully and studied without aesthetic or moral prejudice-can tell us a great deal about what kinds of people Americans are, were, and may become.” I would add that paying attention to the community values associated with the ordinary landscape is imperative as a community evolves through time.

Studying ordinary landscapes provide clues to what is valued and where that value is located or expressed. Understanding community nuances are especially difficult for those that do not necessarily participate on a daily basis in the community’s established cultural or social structure. Visiting designers, planners, and developers work every day creating projects in the public domain. These project’s should, but do not always, speak on the community’s behalf; a translation of a community’s voice through the built environment. Designers’ position of power via professional expertise throughout the design process raises delicate questions of representation and voice; Who is represented? What story or stories are told, individually and as a collective?

The complexities of the ordinary landscape and challenges of “reading” it as an “outsider” required a closer look at a traditional design process. Is a traditional design process with limited opportunities for community engagement the best process for design projects in the public sector? The following outline of a traditional design process taught in the design studio comes from personal, academic experiences over six years as a student in undergraduate and graduate programs within Virginia Tech’s landscape architecture department. A traditional design process contains four primary elements:

1. Identification of the problem or opportunity
2. Inventory: Identify root causes of the problem or opportunity, establish a baseline of existing conditions (e.g. topography, hydrology, vehicle and pedestrian circulation, or parcel boundaries). Designers use various methods within the process and might include site visits, drawing or photographing the site, or surveying/ mapping.
3. **Analysis**: Develop relationships, trends, and patterns of site conditions; an opportunity-constraint spectrum emerges from the analysis to determine what type of design solutions may be appropriate for problem or opportunity.

4. **Design**: Suggest a design or set of recommendations that resolve the identified problem or capitalize on the opportunity. Designers are challenged to develop a solution that responds to the opportunities and limitation of a site while being sensitive to existing conditions and project goals of the user.

A traditional design process, especially in community-based or public projects, does not necessarily involve proactive community engagement or participation beyond a head nod of approval or disapproval during a public hearing. Public hearings, required under Virginia law, are one of few opportunities community members have to voice concern or support for a project’s trajectory. Public comments often are made while standing behind a podium to address town council members that sit at the front of the room. Councilpersons, however, are not required to respond to remarks made by community members, limiting the opportunity to just voicing their opinions. Public hearings are not an appropriate platform to engage in dialogue between town leadership, community members, and design professionals. This common approach, which lacks community engagement, suggests design professionals would benefit from alternative approaches to the traditional design process, that provided designers with more information pertaining to a community’s place attachment or community values. Community values shift, move, and emerge in different ways as the community evolves through time.

Simply including community members in the design process does not guarantee participants are any more empowered. There are multiple gradations of community participation, and these lead to effective change or power redistribution in different ways (Arnstein, S. 1969). Sherry Arstein’s “Ladder of Citizen Participation” (1969) described eight “rungs” or categories of citizen participation:

1. **Manipulation**: Early grassroots support is achieved as a minor “check box” that conveys participation but community members are never involved in the process; a stakeholders early support of an idea is used as a silencing mechanism later when community members are taken advantage of or the power structure is never redistributed.
2. **Therapy**: Power holders aim to “educate” or “cure” community members; “Come here, let us tell you should be thinking in a different way”; power holders use this method to divert attention away from core issues.

3. **Informing**: Power holders inform citizens “of their rights, responsibilities, and options” but the communication one-sided. Community members are often told these rights late in the decision making process which limits a participant’s ability to have impact on the outcome.

4. **Consultation**: Power holders ask community members for their opinion but are quickly dismissed for a multitude of reasons. Consultation that lacks action is a formality with the purpose of satisfying a requirement, claiming the “people have been involved.”

5. **Placation**: A few hand-picked community members are placed on an advisory board among other elites. Opinions of the few community members involved can easily be stifled or out-numbered if further consideration are not made to ensure that a balanced representation at the discussion.

6. **Partnership**: Power holders and community members agree to share planning and decision making responsibilities. “After groundrules are established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subjected to unilateral change.” Partnership works best when the power holders or leaders are accountable to some community base (Arnstein, S. 1969).

7. **Delegated power**: Community members have a dominant role in decision making and can ensure accountability throughout the process.

8. **Citizen control**: Community members “can govern a program or institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which “outsiders may change them” (Arnstein, S. 1969).

Arnstein used the simplified ladder analogy to explain this principle, “There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and (community members) having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process.” If (8) is the most influence and power a citizen can have in the decision making process and (1) is the least, a traditional design process modified to incorporate community engagement should strive for categories
Partnership, Delegated power, and Citizen control. The top three categories of community participation give participants’ “enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their views, aspirations, and needs” (Arnstein, S. 1969).

The traditional design process has limited abilities to understand local value systems without community engagement. High quality community engagement (rungs 1-3 from Arnstien) redistributes power and exposes participants “views, aspirations, and needs”. These understandings about traditional design and community engagement identified the following research question:

What methods can design professionals use to help bridge the gap in understanding between their professional, but “outsider”, perspective, and a community’s value systems and deep knowledge of local conditions?

FOUNFDATION FOR MICRO-STUDIES

Communities of central Appalachia struggled to develop, grow, and prosper in a manner that is disentangled from the historical burden of environmental and societal degradation. Many struggle as a result of the decline in resource extraction, manufacturing, or agriculture industries. For example, even though the overall health of the coal industry is heavily debated, labor opportunities and overall economic success of the industry is on a proven decline in southwest Virginia. Between 1970 and 2010 mining and manufacturing employment has declined 43% and 49% respectively in Southwest Virginia (Morgan 2015). The decline stemmed from an overall increase in mechanization and automation during the early-mid twentieth century which undermined the gross number of jobs available and profitability of each industry (Rakes, 2012).

Developing a “creative economy”, also known as asset-based development, is one ongoing strategy in southwest Virginia to offset the documented decline in traditional regional economic strongholds (such as resource extraction or manufacturing) (Appalachian Regional Commission 2016). The creative economy is an economic model that is based on local assets. Local assets can include music, culture heritage, the arts, food and drink, or outdoor recreation opportunities. This economic model encourages small business growth and a diversified economy that is unique to the community or region where it is found (Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2014). The creative economy’s approach to economic development recognizes,
celebrates, and builds upon local traditions but is more than an economic restructuring strategy. The creative economy leverages what has always been there and makes it accessible to others with shared interests. The creative economy ensures that future interactions with a community or a landscape is not a contrived representation, but a genuine experience. Finally, an asset-based approach can help communities navigate change in a way such that ‘spaces’ become ‘places’, and remain meaningful through time.

Developing a creative economy in rural communities often requires a substantial shift in how community members think about the place in which they live. For example, Virginia communities along the Clinch River, such as Cleveland, Dungannon, or St. Paul, once knew the Clinch River as a floating transportation corridor to move harvested timber to commercial markets. Cleveland, Va. responded to this industrial use of the water way by orienting its downtown buildings and houses away from the river. They quite literally turned their backs and focused storefronts inward towards its streets. Today, the Clinch River is still a transportation corridor, but in a far different way.

In 2012 the Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) formed as a “collaborative effort in Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley—one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America.” “Working at a watershed scale with many local partners, this grassroots effort has developed significant momentum (in economic diversification and community revitalization) with applicability for communities in Appalachia and beyond” (Clinch River Valley Initiative 2016). Communities like Cleveland, which had previously cordoned off the Clinch River for its industrial purpose, now see the river as a renewed economic destination to be paddled on, swam in, and walked beside. Cleveland residents might have reaffirmed the importance of the Clinch River individually, but the collective value they placed on the river brought the town together under a common goal: economically revitalize its downtown using the town’s local assets (Town of Cleveland 2014).

Change of both the landscape and its people are inevitable in the dynamic environment of today’s world. People use their global view comprised of personal and collective values, memories, and experiences to manage this change. Personal foundations help bring order and stability, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and attachment to place. J.B. Jackson (1979), Dolores Hayden (1997), and Yi Fu Tuan (1977) all speak to place attachment in unique but
complimentary ways. ‘Place’ defines specific emotional quality of a landscape, a connection between a person with a physical space. Yi Fu Tuan in his *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* described ‘place’ as the product of people’s investment of values within a given volume of space. It is the moment when the physical context takes on cultural meaning, when experiences, stories, lessons, and memories become connected to the landscape.

In the same perspective, ‘place’ is described by Low and Altman in Dolores Hayden’s *Power of Place* (1997) as the product of a psychological phenomenon similar “to an infant’s attachment to parental figures.” Place attachment is created when a person bonds with the physical environment. The creation of place and place attachment is then enhanced through lived experiences. Place attachment also has a direct correlation to being in a space through time. Including lived experiences expands “place attachment” to include short-term engagement with a space. This wider definition includes experiences such as short-term service projects or annual family trips. The engagement might be temporary and brief, but the memories, conversations, interactions, and relationships are rich and unique, connecting the individual to that particular physical setting.

Scholars Pierce Lewis and Randolph Hester dedicated their life’s work to understanding where community members actually placed value within their physical environment. Their collective work shifted the focus from the idealistic locations where ‘place attachment’ might be found, to locations that are intertwined in everyday life of the community. The understanding of place shifted from the farmer’s market or river front park to a post office, the corner booth of a diner, or empty parking lot that is home to spontaneous community gathering (Hester, R. 1985; Lewis, P. 1979).

Without the benefit of time and lived experiences, seeing where place attachment and value systems occur become hidden to the ‘untrained’ eye. A designer’s process of discovery can greatly benefit from the ability to see and read hidden landscapes of value. Lewis (1979) emphasized the importance of the everyday, common, or typical characteristics in order to understand community value and place attachment. A sidewalk’s brick paving, the rusty truck that anchors a street corner, the worn wooden chairs in front of the general store, or children playing in the street all come together to define the ordinary landscape. The specific combination of such elements is truly unique to a place, and is full of hidden cultural meaning (Lewis, P. 1979).
PLACE-BASED DESIGN AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One leading technique to understand place-based landscapes is to incorporate community engagement as an integral part of the traditional design process. Community engagement is an iterative process in which a diverse collection of stakeholders are brought together in a collaborative manner to address issues, or capitalize on opportunities that improve the collective condition of the community. Thomas Dietz (chair of Environmental Science and Policy Program, Michigan State University) and Paul Stern (principal staff officer at the National Research Council and specialist on environmental decision making) advocated for community engagement because of its ability to increase quality, legitimacy, and community capacity in a way that utilized diverse perspectives and deep local knowledge (2008). Quality is achieved when participants work together to refine the problem or opportunity, and formulate multiple creative possibilities that consider their potentially contrasting interests. Legitimacy means that the process of engagement is fair, competent, aligned with social norms. Participants reach consensus. Finally, a well executed community engagement process can increase a community’s capacity by developing new abilities, understandings, trust, or collaboration among its participants (Dietz, T., Stern, P. 2008).

The community that participates in a community engagement process refers to a collection of people that have a self-defined shared interest, affiliation or identity with other community members. University researchers Graham Day and Jonathan Murdoch (1993) define “community”, and the role of social relationships in place making, as distinct from “locality”. Day and Murdoch explain, “Community” had been a concept which contained references to both the importance of place, and the wholeness of social life, often formulated in terms of discrete ‘ways of life’ (Day, G. and Murdoch, J. 1993) ‘Community’ differs from “locality” that is used to describe the same group of people but from a geographic or political perspective. Locality indicators include school districts, voting precincts, postal routes, or water/sewer/electrical utilities. My micro-studies use the former definition of ‘community’, where participants could belong to multiple communities at once. For example, a person could belong to the farming community as (s)he works the land, the business community when produce is
taken to market, a sportsman community during hunting season, and a skiing community when
the growing season slows down and allows time for personal leisure. These communities of
shared interest, affiliation, or identity have a unique ability to transcend political or geographic
boundaries.

A community engagement process is successful, in part, because of the stakeholders that
participate. As a sub-group within a community, stakeholders are people who are impacted or
influenced by the outcome of the design process. John Gastil (2008) is a professor at Penn State
University in communication arts, sciences, and political science. Gastil used his experience in
political deliberation and group decision making to define stakeholders as “...more specifically
persons who represent organizations, communities, or alliances that have a particular stake in a
decision.”

Community engagement has the ability to address a variety of social challenges, such
as dis-enfranchised or inequality, by intensively encouraging the participation of community
members in the decision-making process. The input of these individuals is the centerpiece in
developing findings. These findings reveal critical insights into community dynamics, such as
collective memory, history, and value systems. Depending on the method used, engagement
methods can bridge abstract concepts of ‘community’ and ‘values’ with the physical landscape.
A community’s physical context, geographic location, political climate, and historical ‘insider/
outsider’ relationships shape what type of information participants are willing to contribute to a
participatory design study.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

No single approach or attempt to understand community values can be expected to
capture a complete understanding of a community’s value system. To this end, three pilot
projects, internally referred to as “micro-studies”, executed methods that allowed me to
study and access information from community members in different ways. Focused on the
communities of Austinville and St. Paul, Virginia, each of these micro-studies explored the
relationship between community attachment, values, and the physical environment in a way that
professionals can utilize the discoveries in their own practice.

The three micro-studies I implemented in my own research were:

**Micro-Study #1**
Method: Community Connectedness Survey
Community: Austinville, VA (population-800)
Participants: 20
Frequency: Distributed on a single occasion and collected three weeks later

Micro-Study #2 Method: Heritage Mapping
Community: Austinville, VA (population-800)
Participants: 5
Frequency: Conducted on a single occasion for two hours

Micro-Study #3 Method: Participatory Photography
Community: St. Paul (population-950)
Participants: 10
Frequency: Distributed disposable cameras with instructions and reflection form on a single occasion and collected two weeks later

Each micro-study (later described in detail), was modeled after one of three previously completed projects by other practitioners or groups that I selected for their respective methods to encourage community participation:

2. Heritage Mapping: Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart (1985) by Randy Hester of the University of California at Berkeley;
3. Participatory Photography: PhotoVoice-Reframing the World

Collectively, the three signature projects offered research methods to understand the degree community members are attached to one another (survey), determine where individual and collective values were placed within a landscape (heritage mapping), and document community values in the landscape that was both time and cost effective (participatory photography).

The three signature projects included:

Project #1: The Development of an Instrument to Measure Neighborhood Cohesiveness
(1988) by John C. Buckner while at Johns Hopkins University.

John C. Buckner, PhD. was a leading academic in psychology and lectured widely on community cohesion, homelessness, and the concept of self-regulation in children. While he obtained his Ph.D. in Psychology, Buckner developed an “instrument to measure neighborhood cohesiveness.” The study developed a survey to measure a neighborhood’s “psychological sense of community, attraction-to-neighborhood, and social interaction” (Buckner 1988). Buckner’s survey acted as a litmus test that gauged a neighborhood’s cohesion and/or sense of community. For example, one question asked “I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency.” Participants used a 1-5 likert scale to respond to each question. A signature strength of Buckner’s survey was that it was easily adaptable and understood by the common, untrained community participant. The survey did so by using situation-based questions (i.e. presents a scenario) while avoiding technical language. These questions explored concepts of what ‘community’ means and what it looked like in a participant’s daily life.

My comparative observations between Abingdon and Austinville suggested to me that Austinville did not exhibit the same level of visible connectivity between its residents and the built environment as witnessed in Abingdon (presence of buildings in good repair, schools, sidewalks, public gathering places, sports fields, businesses). While these connections may not have been as apparent to me as an “outsider”, Austinville has a population that has lived there through time. People have left but people have also returned. This suggested that it is the connection people have with each other that bound the community, potentially more so than their connection to the landscape. Buckner’s survey focused on these inter-personal connections and allowed me to determine in rudimentary fashion if this is true in Austinville.

Project #2: Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart (1985) by Randy Hester of the University of California at Berkeley.

Hester’s research focused on the role of citizens in community design and ecological planning. He is one of the founders of the research movement to apply sociology to the design of neighborhoods, cities and landscapes” (U.C. Berkley 2016). I chose Hester’s work in Manteo, North Carolina specifically for his ability to develop an iterative understanding of
a community, engage community members in the discovery process, and map the values of contributing to a community’s uniqueness as his team discovered them.

During the mid 1980s the Town of Manteo, North Carolina found itself in a state of economic decline following the construction of 1950s era bridges. These bridges created direct access to the Outer Banks and bypassed Manteo’s community core. (Hester, 1985). After the highway’s completion, Manteo’s economy that once relied on the continuous stream of visitors heading to the Outer Banks suffered a severe economic blow. Over a two-year span Hester’s team deployed a variety of iterative research methods to reveal new understandings on what community members placed value. Hester’s iterative approach, developing understanding from one method to the next, was a key approach to community engagement. There was an deliberate acknowledgment that community conditions change daily and no one single method would reveal all that needed to be known.

**Project #3: PhotoVoice-Reframing the World** (2016) is a non-profit organization and leader in participatory photography and digital storytelling methods based in London, England. Their continuous work seeks to engage disenfranchised and marginalized populations, such as youth or women, through the art of participatory photography. PhotoVoice gives participants cameras and asks them to photograph their community. What and how participants photograph changes regularly based on the overall purpose of the project. Participants then reflect on their images by sharing stories about each photograph with PhotoVoice leaders. This reflection period helps fill in gaps and eliminates any uncertainty or guessing when interpreting the content of participants’ photographs (PhotoVoice 2016).

PhotoVoice is unique because the organization specifically engages participants that may not possess the necessary political or cultural position to participate in balanced community discussions. From their mission statement, “Photography is a highly flexible tool that crosses cultural and linguistic barriers, and can be adapted to all abilities. Its (photography) power lies in its dual role as both art form and way to record facts. It provides an accessible way to describe realities, communicate perspectives, and raise awareness of social and global issues. Its low cost and ease of dissemination encourages sharing and increases the potential
to generate dialogue and discussion.” For visiting research or professionals in public design, photography has the potential to articulate participants’ values relative to the landscape in a way that is both time and cost effective.

Over the next three sections I used each of these three projects to guide three of my own micro-studies in Austinville and St. Paul, VA. The discoveries and limitations of each micro-study allowed me to refine my approach iteratively which strengthened my overall understanding.

**MICRO-STUDY #1**

**AUSTINVILLE, VA**

**COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY**

Micro-Study #1 was a community cohesiveness survey adapted from “The Development of an Instrument to Measure Neighborhood Cohesion” (1988) developed by John Buckner. The adaptation was applied in Austinville, VA (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 6 for town location). Buckner’s survey was a tool to better understand a neighborhood’s cohesion and draws connections to sense of community. He developed the survey to be used as a decision making tool for community planning by establishing a baseline of community dynamics (Buckner 1988). A strength Buckner’s survey format is that the common, untrained community member could easily understood it. He did so by using situation-based, everyday questions that were then abstracted to describe societal connections within the community. For example, a participant might have been asked “How often do you borrow tools from your neighbor?” or “How often do your kids stay at your neighbor’s house?” Topics such as trust, belongingness, and involvement in one’s community were self-scored using a 1-5 likert scale, with one being the least agreement and five being the most agreement. Buckner’s neighborhood index survey ultimately determined how connected participants felt towards other individuals in the neighborhood. The community cohesion survey used in my micro-study used this “everyday” style with members of the Austinville community, spanning a three week survey response period.
Sub-communities community members referenced during casual conversation, such as giving direction or while telling a story. These sub-communities were also referenced as participants who worked through Micro-Study #1 mapping exercises.

Points of Orientation: (A) I-77 corridor; (B) New River; (C) Poplar Camp Mountain (D) Former zinc mine/ New Jersey Zinc Company

Sub-Communities: (E) Austinville; (F) North Austinville; (G) Flatwoods; (H) Bethany; (I) Poplar Camp
The first study adapted Buckner’s Neighborhood Cohesion Index to gauge community cohesion in Austinville, Virginia. Knowing the historical economic anchor to the community (New Jersey Zinc Company; see Fig. 6) migrated away over 35 years ago, what role did Austinville’s social fabric (i.e. inter-personal connections) have in continuing to bring together the community in the present day? Using Buckner’s work as a model, this adapted community cohesion survey used a situation-based framework. Twenty participants answered twenty five questions using a five-point likert scale. See Fig. 7 and Fig. 8.

Questions (Q) 1-3 collected personal information (1. name, 2. age category, 3. gender, 4. race) to make connections between age groups, gender, and/ or possible racial differences. Q5 allowed the person to self-assign which community s/he associates with, while Q6 determined how many years the participant lived in that community. One hypothesis was there would be a correlation between the number of years lived in a community and how attached a person became to that community. Q7- 24 asked participants about community cohesion by presenting various situations. Participants used a 1-5 likert scale to answer questions, with five being in most agreement. Q25 presented participants with seven community names. Some were localities, and others were communities defined by a niche, cultural association. The community names were described by the trusted community member who I had corresponded with. Participants were allowed to circle as many communities that they felt associated with. Asking broadly established a general understanding of how many communities the local population acknowledged in the immediate geographic area surrounding Austinville.

During an initial windshield inventory of Austinville, two local gas stations emerged as social and community centers in Austinville. Here, people gathered to share news, gossip, or meals on a daily basis. Chairs and small tables attracted men of the community to share news and grab lunch together on the porch. The store owners sold basic necessities of common groceries, house supplies, and routine convenience store goods. These stores were greatly important as the next closest commercial centers were twenty minutes away in Wytheville.

Knowing that I needed community members to participate in my survey, I gravitated
towards places where I could see people gathering in public spaces. The gas stations that I discovered during my initial visits to the Austinville area, one in Poplar Camp and one in Max Meadows, were the most suitable locations for survey distribution. I made two trips to meet with the owners of each store to explain the purpose of the survey and the overall scope of the project at that time. The owners of each store offered their counters as a distribution and collection point without hesitation. In order to maintain a consistent description of the project, I provided store clerks with an information sheet regarding the purpose of the survey (Appendix C). This sheet included the purpose of the study, a timeline to complete the survey (three weeks), and the survey itself (Fig. 7 and Fig 8). Participants were asked to return their completed surveys back to the gas station counter or to the residence of a volunteer in Bethany. The volunteer was an elder woman who appeared to be well known throughout the community. Her residence in Bethany was added as a central collection point between the two stores. Results of the Community Connectedness Survey study can be found in Table 1.
The purpose of this survey is to measure the level of connectedness that people feel between each other and their neighbors within the communities surrounding Austinville.

By completing this survey, you agree for the results of the survey to be used in a public presentation. Should at any point, you do not feel like completing the survey, you are not obligated to fill this survey out and return it.

Please circle your answers on a scale from 1-5, 1 being “I strongly disagree with this statement.” and 5 being “I strongly agree with this statement.”

1. What is your name?
(Optional—This is only in the event that a follow-up session is necessary. Your name will remain anonymous when summary of results is made public)

2. What is your age?
Under 18 18-24 25-44 45-64 65 and above

3. What is your gender?
Male Female

4. What race would you associate yourself with? (Ex. Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, etc.)

5. Which community would you associate yourself with?

6. How many years have you lived in your community?

7. Overall, I am very attracted to living in this community.

8. I feel like I belong to this community.

9. I visit with my neighbors in their homes.

10. The friendships and associations I have with other people in my community means a lot to me.

11. Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this community.

12. If the people in my community were planning something I’d think of it as something “we” were doing rather than “they” were doing.

13. If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my community.

14. I think I agree with most people in my community about what is important in life.

15. I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency.

16. I feel loyal to the people in my community.

17. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors.

18. I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my community.

19. I plan to remain a resident of this community for a number of years.

20. I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this community.

21. I rarely have neighbors over to my house to visit.

Questions? Contact: Nick Proctor
276-698-5681. nproctor@vt.edu
303 Webb Street, Apt. C
Blacksburg, VA 24060
22. A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in this community.
   1 2 3 4 5
23. I regularly stop and talk with people in my community.
   1 2 3 4 5
24. Living in this community gives me a sense of belonging.
   1 2 3 4 5
25. Do you feel that there is a community distinction between your community and:

   Bethany   yes no
   Flatwoods yes no
   Popular Camp yes no
   Austinville yes no
   Ivanhoe yes no
   Wytheville yes no
   Fort Chiswell yes no

   If answered yes to any, please explain what causes the distinction.

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Any additional thoughts you would like to share:
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I sincerely thank you for allowing me to work with your community. I hope this is just beginning or a rewarding process, both for me as a student and for you as a community member. Don’t hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.
The purpose of this survey was to discover new understandings of how the people of Austinville are or are not dependent on each other. Survey results indicated that participants were variably connected to the others in their community. This finding contrasted an initial hypothesis, based on early conversations with Austinville community members, that strong, underlying community networks, relationships, and family within the community bind the people of Austinville together today due to the loss of the community’s historical economic and social engine, the New Jersey Zinc Company.

In addition to the economic and employment opportunities directly connected to the mine’s operation, Austinville benefited from the mine in several social capacities. The company store could be found just down the road where community news was exchanged on a daily basis. The mine was also a common work environment which created relationships that extended beyond the workplace into daily life. Further, the aging demographics currently living in Austinville supported the expectation that community relationships would be important to the residents of Austinville.

Of particular interest was how participants responded to Questions 9, 13, 17, 21, 23 (shown in red in Table 1). The average response to each of these questions was generally neutral. These questions emphasized a person’s private residence as a location of interactions with other people. This suggested that community members are moderately to strongly connected to each other, but where social activities take place and where connections are formed may not occur entirely within private residences. The survey does not allow participants to identify these alternative locations but the responses clearly demonstrate they exist.
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| Question 7      |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 8      |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 9      |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 10     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 11     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 12     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 13     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 14     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

| Question 15     |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Agree  |             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |
| Strongly Disagree |            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |       |

Table 1. Results of Adapted Community Connectedness Survey (Proctor, 2012)
A second discovery to emerge from the survey was the number of communities with residents associated. Seven communities within Austinville as a locality were presented to participants in the survey: Austinville, North Austinville, Bethany, Flatwoods, Poplar Camp, Ivanhoe, Wytheville, and Fort Chiswell. Geographically, the first five communities are no more than a few tenths of a mile apart. The later two are larger population centers close to Interstate 81. It was surprising to see the number of participants that associated with multiple communities outside of ‘Austinville’, a true blending of a communities. The overlapping qualities of these seven communities sparked an exploration into different models of how communities interact with each other (Fig. 9-12). Those are provided here:

Fig. 9. Physical barriers that define Austinville valley communities between the New River and Poplar Camp Mountain (Proctor, 2012)

Fig. 10. Community member circulation between Austinville area communities throughout the year (Proctor, 2012)

Fig. 11. Spacial footprint of various sub-communities, these boundaries loosen as community members told stories (Proctor, 2012)

Fig. 12. Interaction between two communities where a single member belonged to both. (Proctor, 2012)
LIMITATIONS

As conducted, I identified several factors that limited the survey’s ability to understand the relationship between a community’s value system (intangible) and the physical landscape (tangible). First, the study did not give the opportunity to connect the aspects of community to the places where they took place in the landscape. For example, the format of the survey using a 1-5 likert scale does not directly allow for further explanation or participant feedback. Knowing how far away that trusted neighbor was from their primary residence, or a qualitative follow-up question asking the reason for choosing a particular neighbor over another, would give reason and provide a geographic sense of that individual’s community.

Who participated in the survey also limited the quality of the information obtained, specifically from a demographic perspective. All of the participants were 45 years of age or older, and all were Caucasian. There was, however, an equal gender distribution, of 50% male and 50% female. I did not feel that the twenty community members that participated were representative of Austinville’s population. The results would have likely been different with a statistical representation, to include community members of varying age and race.

As a whole, Micro-Study #1 revealed an alternative understanding of the community that was based on social or cultural characteristics. The Austinville community connectedness survey revealed unforeseen complexities that defined Austinville. The survey, however, did not link participants’ responses with the physical landscape. Knowing where social activities took place, or an expanded reflection on their responses, would create a more complete understanding. The survey, however, did not enable me as a “newcomer” or outsider to the community to “see” the relationship between community networks and the landscape that Austinville community members described. The second community engagement method built on the discoveries and addressed limitations of the adapted community connectedness survey I conducted in Austinville, VA. Micro-Study #2: Heritage Mapping sought to connect ideas of community with the landscape through a reflective mapping exercise in Austinville, VA.

MICRO-STUDY #2
AUSTINVILLE, VA
HERITAGE MAPPING

The community connectedness survey I conducted in Austinville, as adapted from
Buckner, revealed a partial understanding of the cultural landscape found in Austinville. Contrary
to expectations while developing the survey, the results demonstrated that participants were
variably connected to other members of their community. Where relationships formed beyond
private residences remained unknown.

Randy Hester, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture of U.C. Berkley, is known,
in part, for his studies on the role of citizens in community design and ecological planning.
He was one of the founders of the research movement to “apply sociology to the design of
neighborhoods, cities and landscapes” (U.C. Berkley 2016). I chose Hester’s *Subconscious
Landscapes of the Heart* project in Manteo, NC specifically for his ability to develop an iterative
understanding with engaged community members in the discovery process, and mapped the
values that contributed to a community’s uniqueness.

In 1980 Hester and a team of colleagues conducted a community participation study in
Manteo, North Carolina. Hester’s work emphasized understanding and revealing underlying
community value networks and facilitated the redevelopment of the Town into a prosperous
waterfront community deeply rooted in its maritime heritage (Hester 1985). In the years
leading to Hester’s work, the Town of Manteo, a traditional gateway community to the beaches
of the Outer Banks, experienced an unfavorable decline in the economic and social health of
its community. The rebuilding of the Wright Memorial Bridge in 1966 and construction of the
Herbert C. Bonner Bridge in 1962 drastically changed the way visitors accessed the Outer Banks’
beaches. No longer a gateway to the Atlantic for vacationers, Manteo’s boating and tourism
industries quickly deteriorated.

The Town asked Hester’s team initially to redesign the Town’s waterfront. Until this
project began the waterfront was the main attraction for visitors and a concentration of economic
activity. It did not take long, however, for the team to realize that addressing only the waterfront
would “be a cosmetic cover up” (Hester, 1985). Hester’s task could not be achieved by simple
observation or traditional mapping methods as an non-resident looking upon the community, and
he recommended to expand the study beyond the waterfront region.

Hester’s team utilized an iterative approach to draw out information and present findings
back to the community for confirmation, also known as a feedback loop. According to Hester’s
article, *Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart* (1990), that iterative process included:
• Meet with town leaders to identify areas of concern and opportunities for improvement
• Survey Manteo residents using in-home interviews about characteristics they appreciate about living in the Town; what do residents like about living there?
• Team conducts behavior mapping, that is, second person observations which uncover daily “rituals” that happen in the same place every day. It became suggested that changes to these places of daily ritual would significantly alter the landscape of “community” for Manteo.
• Develop list of important community locations based on their independent professional experiences and insight. The team revisited the list with town board members to confirm or alter their findings.
• Published the revised list #1 in the newspaper and ask residents to rank the places in order of significance. In addition, the residents were asked to mark which places could be changed for progressive development.
• Responses to the newspaper survey created a ranked and weighted list of valued places in the Town, now considered the Town’s “Sacred Structure”. This term was coined by a resident near the end of the project during one of the many community meetings, and later integrated into planning recommendations made by Hester.
• General: Informal discussions happened on a daily basis from the start of the project.

The iterative cycle above consisted of community input, mapping workshops, and storytelling that filled in the rest of the town’s story. The iterative nature of Hester’s work was critical as it allowed the community to be studied at different times and provided multiple input sessions to revisit previous observations. As places in the community were described, those locations throughout the community that had higher levels of public attachment became known as ‘sacred’ places (Hester 1985). It is important to note that the term “sacred” came from a community member first and not Hester’s team, which indicates that the value was created by the community members and not imposed by the design team. To further clarify, the term “sacred” was not used by community members in a spiritual sense, but rather that those special places were central to the way they experienced Manteo.

Sacred places were commonly overlooked as mundane and ordinary, part of the everyday
fabric of Manteo, before Hester’s work began. The sacred structure are “those places- buildings outdoor spaces, and landscapes- that exemplify, typify, reinforce, and perhaps extol the everyday life patterns, and special rituals of community life, places that have become so essential to the lives of the residents through use or symbolism that the community collectively identifies with the places.” After several participatory activities, the overlap in sacred places created intensities of collective value.

For example, an empty parking lot was once considered a suitable location for a new construction project because of its location and apparent vacancy. Hester’s team, however, confirmed by the community, that the parking lot was in fact a ‘sacred’ location. The town frequently used this parking lot as a “community stage”, hosting many festivals and gatherings. In a different location, the design team thought the home of Andy Griffith would be culturally valuable to Manteo due to the exposure it gave the town as a result of the actor’s fame. After presenting this idea to the Town for comment, the house was determined not as important as first thought (Hester 1985). This iterative cycle of observation, creation, review, and refinement allowed Hester and his team to adapt to what they discovered, and come to new understandings while working with community members.

A significant product of Hester’s work was that the Town of Manteo was equipped with tools necessary to articulate important daily cycles of the community, and aspects of the physical landscape that community members values. Many locations identified throughout Hester’s process were not legally protected through zoning or historic resources. Any future project, however, that challenged the sacred structure would surely face higher levels of scrutiny than before the sacred structure was developed. Micro-Study #2 adapted Hester’s iterative approach towards heritage mapping and applied it in Austinville, VA.

MICRO-STUDY FORMAT

Following Hester’s model, a community meeting was held in Austinville, VA to provide community members a platform to identify locations that were important to the local community value system. Just as in Micro-Study #1 residents answered situation-based questions, but did so by mapping their responses with stickers on a map. In many cases participants located personal memories and stories in the same physical location. This occurrence reinforces Hester’s
observations that landscapes have collective meaning to the community at large.

Like the community connectedness survey, I announced the community meeting by revisiting the gas stations previously mentioned, and placed a flyer with the date, time, and location of the community meeting (Appendix I). A local church hosted this meeting in its fellowship hall on February 4, 2012. A total of five residents met from 1:00 to 3:00pm. All participants were 65 years of age or older. In addition to these participants three other landscape architecture students assisted participants with each exercise during the meeting. These three students documented the meeting through photo, video, and audio recordings. This documentation would later be referenced as needed by the research team.

The meeting consisted of three sections; introduction, mapping, and closing. The introduction shared who was in attendance (both from the community and the project team) using a short “ice breaker” exercise (Appendix J). Mapping followed where participants shared
their experiences of living in the community. Situation-based questions gave participants the capacity to bridge intangible values of community to the physical landscape that surrounds them (Appendix K). Furthermore, overlaying individual mapping exercises into one common “community map” highlighted densities of collective value, memory, stories, and the building of new connections with one another (Fig. 14).

Participants were asked to map Austinville from two different perspectives. The first perspective focused on community values originating from natural elements. The second perspective mapped the same things, but through elements that have been directly created or changed by man. These included new construction, demolition, roads, meetings places, or manipulation of the landscape from mining or farming practices. The purpose of making this designation described how the landscape informed the community, and how much the community informed the landscape. Participants placed dots based on the following:

- **Burgundy:** nature-based places of personal value and memory
- **Yellow:** built places of value and memory
- **Green:** natural places of value and memory

**DISCOVERIES**

Storytelling amongst the participants played an important part in the mapping process. The sharing of stories sparked hidden or forgotten memories that were not remembered when initially given the prompt. Revisiting in this manner enhanced the participants’ understanding of their personal construction of memory and community values. As stories and memories were shared and participants placed more stickers on the maps, densities of community and personal memory emerged across the Austinville landscape. Fig. 14 shows where participants placed dots. When combined together on a common map, densities of value began to emerge. The black boxes highlight the areas that Austinville residents identified as important to their collective heritage.
Fig. 14. Austinville: Heritage Mapping Group Results (Proctor 2012)
Some participants’ memories were linked to common events or structures and shared amongst multiple participants. For example, some participants’ family assisted in the daily operation of the zinc and limestone mining in Austinville. Employees of the mine often were compensated with cash but also scripts to the company general store. As the conversation continued many positive memories were connected to this store. In another story, a pair of participants remembered running through the woods to buy ice cream from the company store with their fathers’ script account on hot, summer days.

Other memories invested in the landscape were more personal. For example, a cemetery behind the church where I conducted Micro-Study #2 was the resting place of several family members of one participant. This place is important to her because of its ancestral ties to the Austinville community. This same cemetery was important to other participants because their family members were buried in this cemetery as well. When looking at the whole, the overlapping individual investment of memory and value raised this cemetery higher as an important element in the physical landscape of Austinville.

Often times value of a particular memory took precedence over the physical landscape that supported or created that memory. In other words, many of the memories associated with the placement of a dot were created because of the landscape at the time, and not the how the landscape looks or functions today. A particular participant felt just as connected to a portion of the Austinville landscape, despite changes over the years. For example, even after a participant’s family farm had been sold and developed for other uses the personal connection still remained.

**LIMITATIONS**

During the course of the mapping session, participants were asked, after identifying places of value, and which elements they identified could be altered should there be a project need (even thought it benefited the entire community). Unexpectedly, the entire group agreed that no items could be changed. The limitation to this observation is that the micro-study did not allow the participants to prioritize their individual answers rather than a yes/ no result. A separate meeting should have been conducted to further refine their responses to determine the ultimate importance to each participant. This would allow for a period of reflection and stronger connections between values and the physical landscape.

Who participated in the heritage mapping exercise also limited the quality of the
information obtained, specifically from a demographic perspective. All of the participants were above 65 years old and again all Caucasian. There was, however, a near equal gender distribution, two male and three female participants. I do not feel that the five community members that participated were representative of Austinville’s population. The results would likely change with an more statistical representation, to include community members of varying age and race. Additional advertising in local newspapers, churches, or a more robust involvement by locals in planning could have improved the number of participants.

Procedurally, both micro-studies #1 and #2 required active community engagement. Unfortunately, I as an outsider was not known by community members beforehand. As a result, I was not necessarily fully supported by community members and struggled to attract future participants. Two important types of community members were needed to develop trust and support for the project’s external leadership. First, I needed to be “introduced” to the community by a respected and loyal community member. After earning the “stamp of approval” from this person, s/he could help build relationships and bring credibility to the work. This person would have had the ability to open doors for myself and the project that I was not able to achieve by myself. This person of deep trust and within a community later became known during my professional practice as a “gatekeeper”.

Second, my research needed a community member who was an advocate of the work, encouraged additional participation, and brought sustained enthusiasm over the project’s duration. I needed a local community member to assist me by reserving meeting space, organize refreshments, and encourage others to attend future meetings. Using a reference from the sporting industry, I needed a “project cheerleader” on the ground that belonged to and was trusted by the community. Together these two community members would have propelled the project and minimized any skepticism or low participation caused by untrusted external leadership.

The importance of community introductions and support during a project should not be underestimated. The work volume and community participation in Austinville plateaued because I, as the researcher, was only able to identify a gatekeeper who had the ability to introduce me to other community members properly. Unfortunately, that individual was not able to contribute the high level of involvement this research required as she was an elder woman with limited physical
mobility. This individual was able to open certain relationships with others in the community that would not have been otherwise possible. For example, the gatekeeper called each store owner in advance of my arrival to explain who I was and what I would be asking. Transforming these relationships into a working support group for both micro-studies stagnated due to the lack of a project advocate. Without these critical people, communication to future participants was not timely or consistent. Distribution of information and findings to the greater community was also insufficient without an internal support structure. The research team ultimately assumed the responsibility of these tasks which caused the overall ownership and meaningfulness of the project to the community quickly deteriorated.

COMMUNITY SHIFT
FROM AUSTINVILLE TO ST. PAUL, VA

Several important lessons were learned working in Austinville, Virginia. Micro-Study #1’s community connectedness survey discovered a complex network of sub-communities in the Austinville area. The survey determined that the ‘communities’ surrounding Austinville do not share the same boundary of Austinville as a ‘locality’. Austinville as a locality does not account for the role of social relationships, lived experiences, or day-to-day interactions (Day, G. and Murdoch, J. 1993). Second, within the sub-communities (Austinville, Bethany, Flatwoods, etc.) the survey established a baseline understanding of inter-personal relationships among the people that lived in the communities. The survey found that community members had variable levels of dependence on and interaction with other community members. Micro-Study #2’s format gave participants the opportunity to map personal memories and consider what parts of their landscape were important to their personal heritage. While participants mapped their personal memories, they also shared stories with other participants, triggering forgotten memories. Personal storytelling transformed into group storytelling as others shared similar experiences. Borrowing a term from Hester’s (1985) work in Manteo, North Carolina, the group’s collective mapping highlighted ‘sacred locations’ in the Austinville landscape that were significant to multiple people but for unique, personal reasons.

Along with these lessons came particular challenges. First, while I was able to meet a “gatekeeper” in Austinville, various health complications limited her desired level of
involvement. Without this person’s extensive introduction of me as a trusted outsider, I resorted to ‘cold’ community introductions. These cold introductions were done without the assistance of a familiar community member and lessened my creditability meeting new people. Second, the two micro-studies in Austinville did not have a local community advocate that encouraged participation and bolstered enthusiasm among potential participants. I am confident these two conditions contributed to low participation and increased external workload (for myself) to carry out the project. This caused a substantial challenge for a project that needed to be completed in a very specific, academic timeframe.

The research also revealed that timelines between the academic setting and real life community engagement unfortunately do not always align. It took longer than two semesters to bring together a beneficial combination of local people necessary to support the micro-studies. It became important that for community engagement projects, there needed to be continuous longterm engagement that allows relationship and trust to form with the community, in order overcome differences and limitations between academic and community timeframes.

The Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture department faculty has addressed the two contrasting timelines by using a “faculty-led” approach (Fig. 15) to community engagement design studios (Bohannon, C. 2016). Associate professor C.L. Bohannon, Ph.D. described three phases to the faculty-led approach that allowed the necessary time to establish a positive, working relationship with community members, while reaching specific learning objectives with university students in a short semester. This faculty-led approach was preferred because a relationship between the community and the faculty member could extend beyond a traditional four to five month semester. Faculty members also had an added benefit of potentially working with a community over several semesters, that continued to build rapport and trust with community members. A graduate or undergraduate student does not necessarily have the liberty of extended time when following a traditional plan of study.

The faculty-led approach also allowed professors to set pre-determined parameters for the students that mitigated potential scheduling obstacles. For example, the design review and/or feedback process in the real world might take several months. In an academic setting, the design studio’s schedule may only allow for two weeks. A professor can expedite the review process by shortening the amount of time community members have to provide feedback, so that it does not
delay other learning objectives associated with the assignment.

A faculty-led approach to community engagement design studio recognized the role that time plays in developing community relationships. The function of time is a central theme in Graham Paul Crow and Graham Allan’s 1995 article *Community Types, Community Typologies, and Community Time*. Crow and Allan suggested that time is an overlooked yet important factor in how a community functions, and how membership within the community is determined. Crow and Allan explain, “Numerous studies of migration into established communities and also of new settlements have amply demonstrated that community ties rarely emerged spontaneously. It was not overnight but rather over forty years...” They continue saying, “Community ties take time to foster, for both settlers in new communities and newcomers to established communities.”

As a short-term newcomer to the Austinville community, my academic time constraints as a student did not allow me to work in Austinville long enough to fully understand the experiences of community members. I did not have the benefit of being in the community month
to month or year to year. I could not see the community through the seasons.

Ultimately, I spent more time trying to find ways to insert myself into a community social structure that did not know me, and less time studying the research questions I initially set out to explore. Transitioning my research to an alternate community, one that already had the leadership in place to support my research, became a necessary shift to progress forward in the academic timeframe I had available.

St. Paul, VA emerged as an alternate community to study community values and the landscape for three reasons. First, Austinville and St. Paul have a similar sized population, 800 and 950 respectively. Second, St. Paul and Austinville share a similar economic origin of resource extraction and adjacency to transportation thoroughfares (See Fig. 16 and Fig. 17). St. Paul, additionally, had a list of completed projects that demonstrated its ability to complete similar projects in a timeframe that was congruent with my academic schedule. Examples of recently completed community-oriented projects in St. Paul include:

- New Clinch River Farmer’s Market pavilion in 2012 (Town of St. Paul 2016);
- Downtown Revitalization Master Plan and Physical Improvements (Town of St. Paul, 2016);
- Designated “Virginia Main Street” Community in 2011 (Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, 2016);
- Developed Mountain View Trail, part of the Spearhead ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) multi-use trail network. Trail network later opened in 2013 (Southwest Virginia Recreation Authority, 2016);
- Creation of St. Paul Tomorrow in 2005, “a group of town officials and volunteers calling themselves St. Paul Tomorrow to become a model of positive ecologically responsible economic development” (Town of St. Paul, 2016);
- Development master plan of Blue Bell Island Trail and connections to downtown. Trail was later opened in 2013 (Town of St. Paul, 2016)
Fig 16. Wise County/ St. Paul, VA Context Map (Wise County 2013)
Like Austinville, St. Paul went through a period of significant loss of the jobs and revenue associated with the decline in regional coal production. The town, however, rapidly restructured its local infrastructure to highlight its natural and cultural assets for economic development. Natural assets included the Clinch Mountain range and eco-tourism along the Clinch River.

Small businesses, local entrepreneurs, town planners, and regional outdoor enthusiasts recognized the community and economic benefits that come with capitalizing on the community’s natural and cultural assets. All of the efforts indicated that St. Paul already had the community individuals to support a participatory photography research exercise.

**MICRO-STUDY #3**

**ST. PAUL, VA**

**PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY**

St. Paul was an excellent community for participatory photography, considering its long standing participation in the resource extraction industry, as well as on-going downtown redevelopment efforts. Participatory photography complimented the mapping format used.
in Micro-Study #2. Mapping by default was a two-dimensional exercise. In contrast, the act of taking photos became both spatial and three-dimensional. Participants of participatory photography have the benefit of being 1) in the physical environment, 2) anonymous if they choose, and 3) open to share honest insight around confrontational issues. This method encouraged participants to provide commentary about their photographs. How participants frame a photograph and its corresponding reflective explanation created a unique understanding to how and where value was placed in the landscape.

A leader in participatory photography methods is PhotoVoice, a non-profit organization focused on community representation and storytelling through participatory photography. PhotoVoice uses photography to “build skills within disadvantaged and marginalized communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods so that the community has the opportunity to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change” (PhotoVoice, 2013).

Engaging community members in the construction and interpretation of images is a core principle of PhotoVoice’s approach to participatory research. Traditionally, the organization selects one of two group types to study. The first group type is a group that struggles to articulate abstract concepts such as place making (such as youth). Participatory photography can be a tool to reveal complex concepts such as place attachment, community values, or rootedness. This can be especially effective when such concepts are not consciously part of a community’s everyday conversation or vocabulary.

The second group type includes those community members who are politically or socially marginalized. In various cultures around the world, for example, it may be inappropriate for women to speak out openly against power figures or oppression (PhotoVoice, 2013). By asking a semi-structured set of questions about various conditions of a woman’s life, each woman has the opportunity to express herself through photography, without literal verbal communication. Often times, participatory photography gives participants an opportunity to convey more information than if more traditional information gathering methods are used, such as questionnaires or surveys.

PhotoVoice has a unique ability to engage participants in a way that allows participants to respond in a more genuine manner. For example, participants might structure a response
differently based on who is present during a more traditional exercise. PhotoVoice shows that photographs taken by the participants offer a more direct, unfiltered response if professionals or power figures are absent during the collection of sensitive or controversial material. The presence of other acquaintances, authority figures, or even the research team can bias a participant’s response in fear of potential retaliation or embarrassment.

Once participants returned their cameras to event organizers, staff uploaded or processed the pictures. Participants met with photographers and practitioners to review and analyze what the participants photographed compared to what information they intended to convey with their photograph. They worked together to combine the most compelling set of images that most directly describes the participant’s voice and their community.

A study that used this approach was on display in Virginia Tech’s Cowgill Hall May 6-10, 2013. In that study, a Japanese delegation of architects and professional photographers worked with community members who had suffered from a recent tsunami, using photography as a coping method. The exhibition title “Spring Will Come Soon” displayed a community-led photography project conducted a year after the March 11, 2011 tsunami on the northeastern coast of the main island (Dunay, D., personal communication, May 10, 2013).

During this project, twenty-five individuals received disposable cameras to document their life after flooding waters receded from their flattened homes and inundated property. People, both young and old, took photographs over a two month period. After that time, the study was repeated with the same participants. The group went through a total of three iterations spanning six months (Dunay, D., personal communication, May 10, 2013).

As in the PhotoVoice process, a professional photographer worked with the participants to select the three most compelling, intriguing, or enjoyable images by each participant to display at an exhibition. I was moved to see participants’ images that emphasized ‘community’, ‘friends’, and the celebration of cultural traditions, despite non-ideal living conditions. The takeaway from this project was the shift in understanding that took place when reality did not match expectations. While the tsunami destroyed the residents’ physical community, it did not destroy their ‘sense of community’. The images reflected a sincere perspective on healing and growth in the wake of disaster. Photography, a simple, mobile, and inexpensive communication platform, proved to be a very provocative method to cope with emotions and bring a community together
under unsettling circumstances.

**MICRO-STUDY FORMAT**

In the fall of 2012 I conducted an abbreviated micro-study #3 modeled after PhotoVoice’s participatory photography in St. Paul, VA. The study sought to understand how individuals invest values of community within the physical landscape, and reveal those values through participatory photography.

To initiate the participatory photography exercise in St. Paul, VA and build upon the lessons from Austinville, I first sought a respected and familiar member, also known as a gatekeeper, in the St. Paul community. I knew the importance of identifying this person early in the project, after my work in Austinville. After consulting with personal contacts in the area I was introduced to a local business owner. As a community member, born and raised in St. Paul, she was involved in many of St. Paul’s recent successful community-oriented projects. It was clear from meeting with her that I could rely on her leadership to guide the participatory photography micro-study.

I provided fifteen 27-exposure standard disposable cameras and a comment forms to this business owner. She issued one camera to ten participants of her choosing on my behalf, along with a prompt (Appendix N) for participants to consider as they took photographs. It was important that the cameras were distributed from her business to help mitigate biased pictures. I preferred she did not give participants their camera at locations, times, or events where a participant would feel compelled out of convenience to capture a photograph just because of the location where they received the camera. For example, a church service or the weekly Farmer’s Market are known places of social gathering. A community member’s presence at either of these locations indicated they already valued the social environment the structure provided, and might decide to take a photograph immediately after receiving the camera if given at that location. Rather, participants came to the gatekeeper’s business to receive the camera. Doing so encouraged the participant to capture each photograph as a reflective and deliberate act.

Participants were asked to photograph elements in their community that they considered “valuable or defining characteristics of life in St. Paul”. Participants were also encouraged to consider those elements that gave St. Paul a unique identity and way of life. For example, the Clinch River that runs through the town is one of the most biologically diverse rivers in
North America. It frequently hosts many community and educational events in and around the waterway. I anticipated that the river had a strong likelihood of acting as a vessel of positive and collective memory amongst the residents. The images created by the study participants would provide insight if this hypothesis was true.

For this particular micro-study, participants were given a reflection form (Appendix O) to write comments for each photograph taken. First, participants wrote the exposure number found on top of the camera on the sheet. They then were asked to write a brief narrative about the importance of the location or object being photographed. This two-step process continued for each photograph until all were captured. As participants finished they returned the camera to the business of this micro-study’s gatekeeper.

**DISCOVERIES**

Using participatory photography, the following sets of photographs demonstrated a shift in my understanding of what was valued by community members and why. The new understanding of how one participant viewed the Dominion Power Plant went beyond a traditional design process that lacked community engagement. When a designer conducts an inventory and begins to prioritize existing elements, visual and/or spatial dominance often dictates the level of importance.

Just over the first hill outside of St. Paul sits the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center. Through participatory photography and participant comments, the construction and operation of the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center (VCHEC) is a contributing factor in how local residents felt distrust towards their local elected leaders. The VCHEC, completed in 2012 and operated by Dominion, is a coal-fired power station with capabilities of using biomass for up to twenty percent of its fuel source (Dominion 2016). A resident who participated in the micro-study included the following description with their photograph of the power plant: “Very bitter towards construction process and continued operation, environmental damages, many lies told.”
The same resident also photographed a large, white sign across Highway 58 from the power station which was on personal property. A gas station roof in the bottom-left corner of the photograph provided a sense of how big the sign is relative to its surroundings. From this participant’s reflection form, the sign read “HELP!! POWER PLANT IS KILLING US!” Most travelers who passed through this area, including myself, may have never known about or paid any attention to this sign without community involvement. In the time since this picture was taken this sign’s text changed to “PLANT NOISE SHOULD BE ILLEGAL” before being removed.
This type of feedback is imperative when community leaders and designers have the ability to make decisions on behalf of the entire community. These perspectives have value with respect to regional planning and large scale land development. A sign such as this may go unnoticed to most visitors but was part of the cultural landscape of St. Paul. Private or handmade signs and photography became an opportunity to demonstrate passive resistance where other outlets may not have been as acceptable.

In addition to exposing underlying social conflict within a community, participants in St. Paul used photography to highlight a building’s uniqueness within the town’s historical district. Highlighted in red in Fig. 20 is the Stonebriar Apartment building. Its window detail shown in Fig. 21, is a contributing element to the town’s architectural significance.
The Stonebriar Apartment was added to the National Register of Historic Places when St. Paul formalized its historical district in 2011. At this time the town recognized the building’s architecture, saying “Along with its size, the hotel (now apartment building) is distinguished by formal masonry details such as the rough-faced ashlar block quoins and “Gibbs” door and window surrounds (which consist of altering large and small blocks), a decorative basketweave brickwork cornice, and a composite brickwork belt course between the second and third floors” (St. Paul Historic District Registration Form 2011). While the Stonebriar Apartment building used to be a prominent hotel in the region, it is now senior housing. Surprisingly, participants used the opportunity to photograph the building so that they could express their thoughts on how the building is used rather than its architecture. Responses provided by micro-study participants (2012) conveyed mixed reactions about the building and whether or not its current use as senior
housing reflects St. Paul’s community values. One particular participant expressed that the building should be used as a community facility rather than elderly housing. Other participants appreciated that the elderly were centrally located in town with easy access to the farmer’s market and social events throughout the year. Those individuals thought that such a close proximity to the community center was a healthier living solution than for their elderly to be physically and socially isolated elsewhere.

The Stonebriar Apartment also served as a landmark that gave residents a sense of orientation by anchoring the corner of Broad and Main Street. Traditionally, downtown buildings are collectively oriented or face the “main street”. One intriguing outcome of this micro-study was not a single participant took a picture of the Main Street side of the building. I mapped four participant photographs (Fig. 22) from two primary vantage points that created two critical viewsheds (Fig. 23). The viewsheds questioned how people saw this building contributing to the layout of St. Paul’s streets. If this pattern have occurred for other buildings along Broad Street, the residents could have began to redefine their own ‘Main Street’. Should revitalization efforts strengthen connections between Broad Street and Main Street? How is the town’s entrance from the south addressed with a complicated street hierarchy?
Fig. 22. Participant images highlighting important viewsed of the Stonebriar apartment building (Micro-Study Participants 2012)
Considering all photographs taken by participants, seven themes emerged that impact how participants’ formed their values. Quotes from participants’ reflection forms provided insight into the exact meaning of each photographed and provided me with enough information to organize the photographs into the following themes: Community gathering, traditions, and friendliness; Access to nature and awareness of ecological systems; Pride in local businesses; Churches; Connections to the Past; Residential architecture, streetscape, and walkability;
Speculation and Distrust. The following photographs are examples of each theme. All photographs below were taken by anonymous micro-study participants. A full collection of each theme’s photographs can be found in Appendices P-Z.

COMMUNITY GATHERING, TRADITIONS, AND FRIENDLINESS

Clinch River Farmer’s Market

St. Paul Town Swimming Pool

Annual Christmas parade
“Christmas tree lighting”

St. Paul Town Hall
“Symbol of community, friendliness.”

Annual Christmas parade
“Christmas tree lighting”

A.R. Matthews Park
“Little league field”
ACCESS TO NATURE AND AWARENESS OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS


Sugar Hill recreation area

Blue Bell Island
“Trail head under construction”

Wetlands and educational panel

Wetlands Estanoa classroom building

Oxbow Lake and fishing pier
PRIDE IN LOCAL BUSINESSES

Tiller and Tiller
“Proud that the town can support itself”

Giovanni’s Pizza
“Don’t judge a book by it’s cover.”

Big M Store
“If you can’t find it, you don’t need it.”

Ford car dealership
“One of oldest businesses.”

Big M Store

Oxbox Center
“Great building. Great potential.”
“GED classes. Girl scouts. Food bank. Churches are very important.”

“Old church in St. Paul. United Methodist Church. Place of friendship and gathering.”
CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST

Monument
“Connection to national pride.”

A. R. Matthews Park
“Tribute to coal mine.”

“A. R. Matthews Park
“Old business-train passing,”

“Cemetery on Gray Hill.”

“Brothel house- last remaining.”
“Nice home.”

“Personal residence.”

Path at Obox Lake
“Place for grandchildren.”

“Walking distance-GOOD!”

“Adjacent to Farmer’s Market. Residents can get fresh produce- GOOD!”

Russell Street
“Walking distance-GOOD!”

Stonebriar Apartments building
“Adjacent to Farmer’s Market. Residents can get fresh produce- GOOD!”
Old St. Paul High School  
“Closed because of county politics.”

Industrial Building  
“Empty industry building. Hard for things to open due to EPA regulations.”

Virginia City Hybrid Electric Center  
“Very bitter towards construction process and continued operation, environmental damages, many lies told.”

Sign across from power plant that reads, ”HELP. Power plant noise is killing us.”

Wetlands Estanoa classroom  
“Bitter start but turned out well.”

Willis building downtown  
“Symbol of opportunity but also understand there are many obstacles.”
LIMITATIONS

This participatory photography exercise was the final of three intensive micro-studies to explore how local values systems related to the physical landscape. This exercise was the most direct in achieving this connection. It did not, however, expose the most comprehensive understanding of each photographs reasoning, and location of each image. Many times participants either did not provide a comment for a picture or omitted the reflection portion all together. This could be improved with a more intensive follow-up with participants or community leaders. For example, the study would be more robust if each photograph was located with enough accuracy that the photograph could be mapped and spatially analyzed. Doing so would bring results similar to the heritage mapping exercise in Austinville. Densities of value within tangible objects would emerge to show ‘community centers’. Working in St. Paul for a longer period of time, with more study iterations, would refine the work I started.

Who participated in the heritage mapping exercise also limited the quality of the information obtained, specifically from a demographic perspective. All of the participants were 45 years of age or older and all Caucasian. I do not feel that the ten community members that participated were representative of St. Paul’s population. The results would likely change with a more statistical representation, to include community members of varying age and race.

Finally, while it worked for the low number of participants in this micro-study, the use of disposable cameras could easily become pragmatic if participation increased. Disposable cameras are becoming increasingly expensive to purchase as are the costs associated in developing the cameras once finished. Digital alternatives such as digital cameras and smart phones may prove to be a more cost-effective and most accessible solution in future studies.

LESSONS LEARNED: REFLECTIONS FROM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

After I completed 1) an undergraduate degree in landscape architecture at Virginia Tech and 2) the research presented, I accepted a professional position as a community development and natural asset planner. In this position I worked three years for a regional 501(c)3 non-profit
organization located in southwest Virginia. This position allowed me to work with several partnering organizations to oversee nearly a dozen major community revitalization projects. On average, each community eventually received planning and physical improvements grants from multiple funding sources that totaled in excess of $1 million per community despite their small populations that ranged from 250-2,500 people.

During these projects I noticed an unexpected and undocumented emphasis by my employer on what I have come to call “community systems” early in the design process. These “community systems” fall under five areas:

- Capacity and Readiness
- Involvement
- Leadership
- Communication
- Frame of Reference and Community Vision

Noticing these systems on a personal but professional level warranted a reflection on my own academic research, particularly if or how the presence of these community systems impacted my community engagement micro-studies. Collectively, the presence and strength of the community systems were determined by our office, or others providing technical assistance to the community (i.e. planning district commissions, university extension offices, etc.). Design professionals hired later for each project often benefited from these strong community systems, but assessing or developing them usually fell outside of the firm’s standard scope of services.

This reflection certainly exposed new understandings about the limitations experienced in Austinville and St. Paul, VA. Looking back on when I shifted my research from Austinville to St. Paul, St. Paul had many of these community systems already in place even though I did not initially know to be looking for them at the time. It was the presence of these community systems that allowed St. Paul to complete so many community-oriented projects and why the community was an attractive alternate for micro-study #3.

Each community system inevitably varies in strength from the others. Likewise, approaches to improve each system differ depending on each project and community. The community systems and the professionals assessing them must be intentionally flexible, with expectations to be responsive to local conditions in a fairly fluid manner. Take into consideration
that the approach on establishing community systems described in the following text is based on personal observations of what ultimately positioned a community for a higher level of success. Success was defined by the creation of sustained community interest, and support groups comprised of community members that continued beyond the original project. Success was also defined financially, in that the community organizing necessary to establish these community systems often resulted in the acquisition of implementation funding to complete individual projects. This can be measured by the number of grants or public funds raised in a given period of time. While direct observations from my professional work are located in the gray boxes below to illustrate the role of specific community systems, suggestions should not be interpreted as a formal position of any previous employer, non-profit, or funding agency.

• Capacity and Readiness

As one of the first steps, capacity and readiness looked specifically for internal acts that demonstrate, first and foremost, that a community had a positive mindset and motivation to improve their own condition, without necessarily being instructed to do so by “the outside”. The community must show a willingness to work with existing resources in a collaborative nature to develop creative strategies, rather than depend solely on outside assistance to initiate any transformation. These strategies certainly did not necessarily need to be revolutionary or monetarily intensive. Our office recognized a significant milestone when the community changed its mindset from, “What can you do for us?” to “What can we do to help you help us?”
• Involvement

Are the same players always involved? What efforts have been made to include new participants from previous but similar projects? Be cognizant of participant lists that appear to be “cherry picked” to bias the end product. Strive for diverse representation that encourages a balanced discussion. If the design team is not directly responsible for participant recruitment, ask how participants were invited and by who. Was it an outsider or a familiar community member? Convenience should never drive selection, and can come at the cost of lost time to kick start a project.

Depending on the type of project, it may not be necessary or appropriate to engage the entire community at large during every meeting. Every group has its own unique abilities to work together to reach specific outcomes. First and foremost, determine how the community’s existing process of deliberation operates and modify as necessary. The formation of a 10-20 person management team is one technique to navigate projects of high participation and public interest. This management team can function as a “microcosm” of the larger population and represent a diverse composition of perspectives. This group acts as a liaison between elected leaders and the general public. We have found this group often advocates for the design process by keeping

The Town of Cleveland is located in Russell County, VA on the banks of the Clinch River. After accepting an invitation to participating in several Clinch River Valley Initiative (www.ClinchRiverVA.org) meetings, Cleveland realized it was their turn to take control of their future. On their own, the community came together to clean up nearly a mile of river front that was previously riddled with tires, brush, and flood debris. Doing so not only provided new bank access to enjoy the Clinch River while improving the general aesthetics, it also demonstrated the town’s ability to mobilize and execute a project that impacted its community in a positive way. This community-led cleanup is often quoted as the single most pivotal moment, and initiated a nearly $3 million community revitalization effort, with over a dozen different local, regional, state, and federal funding partners.
people informed along the way. The importance of this group is recognized by Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD), which requires every community participating in their planning grant program to establish this management team to help guide the project, as well as distribute decision-making beyond elected leadership (Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development 2012).

Lastly, provide incentives to participate. Show honest appreciation for participants taking the time from their day to contribute to the discussion. Simple refreshments of coffee or water quietly says “thank you” in a way that doesn’t harm anyone’s budget. Ask, “Does the meeting span a common eating hour?” A simple pot luck meal tends to draw out the masses and builds in time for informal socialization before the meeting begins. A strong facilitator can use this time as an ice-breaker which helps participants become more comfortable contributing to exercises later in the meeting. There is no reason for such basic things like hunger to become a distraction later on.

Shortly after Cleveland, VA’s now infamous Clinch River town cleanup, the Clinch River Valley Initiative decided to host one of its quarterly meetings at Cleveland’s Community Center. During these meetings the host community was asked to organize a meal for attendees while “business” is conducted as usual. In true Cleveland fashion, community members chipped in their own favorite dish with the hopes of winning over the stomachs of guests that traveled far and wide to their community. Cleveland will forever be known for its Clinch River chicken and dumplings by Wilma Sutherland. To this day and (with no exaggeration), stories are shared on Capitol Hill in Richmond, VA of when a lucky patron first got to taste this delectable dish. Where can you buy them? You can’t. The only way to the Clinch River dumplings is if you come to Cleveland and get involved!

- **Leadership**

  Ultimately, every strong project had a coalition of community members that took hold of the project to see that it continued to move forward. While visiting design professionals or facilitators can function in this capacity during initial project conversations, leadership
should be quickly transitioned to the community. There are different types of leaders, some more unconventional than others, that rose to the top as contributing to successful community engagement in the public design process. Among the successful leaders identified in our work were:

-Elected leadership and town staff: Encouraged town employees to not just process the paperwork that accumulated throughout a complex project; encourage participation specifically by the Mayor and town council. These individuals are the legal decision making body of most town and cities. Their support of any project was obviously paramount. Early participation allowed for their concerns to be addressed early in the process rather than during a brief comment period after a motion was made during a town council meeting.

-Sparkplugs: Community members that brought a sustained level of enthusiasm and energy through the project’s life span. The sparkplug was not responsible for the completion of specific tasks but ensured that, on a local level, stakeholders are appropriately engaged and tasks remained on schedule. These individuals promoted self-help, thought creatively how to elevate the community beyond the limits of any specific project. The Rensselaerville Institute (TRI) cleverly referred to sparkplugs as they align with their own mission. They (sparkplugs) were “The think tank with muddy boots’ (2016).

-Gatekeepers: Participants that typically had deep connections within the community and were highly trusted from a reputation of service and loyalty to the community. Gatekeepers were typically long term members of the community, or possibly had ancestral ties that supported their position of power. They may or may not hold a formal leadership position, but through social connections do have significant influence on the outcome and acceptance of projects. While a powerful group, gatekeepers did not necessarily ‘get into the weeds’ of a community development project. Decision making and process work was left up to the larger group, while the ‘gatekeeper’ watched with a careful eye from the side. They had the ability to work behind the scenes to mobilize a community and generated excitement around new ideas they supported. Working with a gatekeeper opened up a critical partnership that may not have been
available through traditional avenues of introduction.

As noted, St. Paul, VA was in the midst of a wide-spread transformation into a destination known for its bio-diversity as a Hometown of the Clinch River. Only a handful of visionaries saw the day where vacant retail space would again be a rare commodity in its downtown. A lesser known hero was the person that was both a visionary and sparkplug. You would not find this person attending endless meetings or sitting for interviews at the local news station for personal gain. For St. Paul, this person was an attorney and owner of significant land holdings next to the prized Clinch River. Opening these to the public, the community had access to over 8 miles of hiking trails, river access, fishing, disc golf, foot golf (yes, that is a thing), and a network of environmental interpretation panels. He was also responsible for establishing hundreds of miles of trails in neighboring counties. His discounted or pro bono legal services have created hundreds of acres worth of conservation easements. Leaders continued to heed his advice and the southwest Virginia is far better off for his efforts.

-Social leaders: Leaders of community organizations where members collectively share a common interest or goal. Among possible organizations were: religious institutions, educational systems, rotary clubs, boy/girl scout troops, businesses/ chamber of commerce, special interest clubs (e.g. birding, cycling, book/ reading, hiking, fishing, etc.), community service (Habitat for Humanity, 4-H). Leaders of these groups could help spread information to the community in a short amount of time and on a regular basis. Members of these organizations tended to be community-minded and stood at the ready to volunteer where possible.

-Local experts: Participants who may or may not have had a formal leadership role in the community but the knowledge or skills they posses made them a leader. Such individuals might also be referred to as an ‘expert’ based upon their deep knowledge of a particular topic. The difference is that these participants lived and were a part of the community rather than from the outside. They had deep knowledge on specific local conditions that was available in potentially hard-to-find sources never formally documented. This experiential knowledge was often out of reach from design
professionals, simply because the ‘local experts’ experiences took time to learn and projects did not always allow for this time. Experiential knowledge and lived experiences, gained over time, were valued alongside professional training. Unfortunately, local experts could sometimes be difficult to get engaged with a project. The local experts obtained their deep knowledge by completely immersing themselves in a particular skill or trade. Convincing, for example, a local paddler to come off the water under peak conditions to attend a community meeting was often easier said than done.

In 2015 Narrows, VA initiated a public project, where leveraging surrounding natural assets for economic development was central to its downtown revitalization effort. Located on the New River in Giles County, the town’s design consultants began to identify strategies to increase river visitation. The design team created a network of access points that catered from beginner to intermediate floaters. Before presenting to the community at large, the design team first consulted with a local resident that had a very intimate knowledge of the New River, to ensure the local river conditions created their intended experience. As it turned out, the float contained a series of old bridge abutments and subsequent rapids that could not be seen in aerial imagery, suitable only for expert paddlers. With this information ahead of time, this local river expert increased the design firm’s credibility later in public meetings and allowed the river experience to change quickly into a more feasible option.

- **Communication**

  Change can easily encounter community and individual resistance. Strong communication skills from both the town and consultant teams helped overcome any assumptions, rumors, or hesitation that otherwise stagnate a productive process. Part of being a strong leader was strong communication.

  Communication was consistent, but employed a variety of techniques as not all community members relied on the same sources for information. While many traditional means of communication remained effective, such as word of mouth, flyers, and newspaper announcements, growing access to digital and online resources opened new techniques to share information in ways that were previously unattainable. Digital
communication, such as E-mail, was also more timely, accessible, and targeted compared to its printed counterpart. There were countless outlets for user-friendly templates that created near-ready websites, newsletters/ blogs, or digital archives within a few hours. There were often free options that were more than capable of keeping participants informed and engaged throughout the course of the project.

Information was shared frequently and prepared in a way that the common person could understand. Communities avoided using technical jargon that could easily create confusion or speculation. It was beneficial to establish feedback loops throughout the project. Feedback loops served as a mechanism where design professionals, elected leaders, and community members checked-in with one another. Clear, consistent communication mitigated opportunities for speculation or rumors.

• Frame of Reference and Community Vision

Resources for any project tended to be finite, but were especially so for public sector projects. This was true for both time and financial resources. Communities were ready to make the most the any opportunity when it presents itself. A frame of reference (understanding the past) as well guidance for the future through a community vision (looking forward 15-20 years) provided the critical direction needed to make investments worthwhile. Knowing the greater context of present circumstances provided a framework to move forward. Any project also fit within a community vision. Visions provided foresight and encouraged creative thinking to meet a goal. Further, the vision was often confirmed by the community on an annual basis or updated on a five-year cycle. By connecting new projects to the vision, a document previously vetted through the community helped to avoid projects that were unfounded on community principles. Projects suffered from stagnation or community rejection when disconnected from a community vision, wasting both time and financial resources.
**IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC DESIGN**

Community engagement in public design opened new understandings and ways of seeing local value systems, and made for more meaningful designs. Leveraging community engagement required professionals to modify the traditional design approach to work not only with the communities but also regional organizations that provided community outreach services. Non-profits, planning district commissions, community organizations, and non-traditional community leaders all played an important role in mobilizing a community. These alternative partners provided additional support when limited budgets became prohibitive.

The survey, heritage mapping, and participatory photography methods presented in this thesis (see Table 2) are but three engagement methods among countless others that design professionals can use to engage community members in the design process. Any single method, whether using ones presented in this thesis or otherwise, will likely not provide an all-inclusive way of seeing and understanding local value systems in a community.

If I were to conduct the same research in the same type of communities again, I would lead with participatory photography followed by heritage mapping. Discussing the photographs would allow the community members to assume control, or power, of the exercises from the beginning rather than imposing my research interests as my initial “introduction”. Heritage mapping could then be used for mapping the photographs that participants took. Feedback loops would ensure that I as a newcomer completely understood the intent of each photograph. Regardless, I would encourage students, academics, and design professionals to explore community values through different methods, and not just one.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRECEDENT FOR MICRO-STUDY DESIGN</strong></th>
<th><strong>STUDY COMMUNITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>PURPOSE</strong></th>
<th><strong>METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>DISCOVERIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>LIMITATIONS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckner, J. C., <em>The Development of an Instrument to Measure Neighborhood Cohesion</em>, American Journal of Community Psychology, 16:6 (1988:Dec.) p.771</td>
<td>Austinville, VA</td>
<td>Gauged the community’s cohesion as a baseline to understand inter-personal relationships and community dynamics</td>
<td>- 25-question take-home survey distributed and returned to two collection point in community • 20 participants</td>
<td>• Variable degree of inter-personal connections among study participants and their self-defined community • Confirmation of social sub-communities that co-exists with Austinville’s local definition - Austinville, North Austinville, Bethany, Flatwoods, Poplar Camp, Ivanhoe, Wytheville, and Fort Chishell</td>
<td>• Moderate participation (20 participants) • Did not connect the values of community connectedness and the physical landscape • Lacked feedback loops to gain further insight to participant responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hester, R. (1985). <em>Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart. Places</em>, 2(3), 13.</td>
<td>Austinville, VA</td>
<td>Mapped locations of individual value and meaning throughout self-defined communities; densities of individual memories form collective value as a “sacred structure” (term borrowed from Hester’s work)</td>
<td>- In-person individual + group mapping after given study background and prompt; exercise completed on one occasion • 5 participants</td>
<td>• Personal storytelling sparked forgotten memories • Collective storytelling creating “sacred locations” significant to multiple people but for unique, personal reasons • Memories are valued even when the landscape that created the memory has changed over time • Personal ancestry was a common consideration when considering values in the landscape and contributed to place attachment</td>
<td>• Low participation (5 participants; not necessarily representative) • Did not capture the visual qualities of valued places • Required strong committment by 1) community “gatekeeper” and community advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhotoVoice. (2013). <em>Participatory Photography for Social Change</em>, from <a href="http://www.photovoice.org">www.photovoice.org</a></td>
<td>St. Paul, VA</td>
<td>Identified elements participants considered influencial to their values where participants are in the landscape, captured images, and provided commentary on how each subject impacts their personal value system.</td>
<td>- Individual photography exercise using disposable camera + comment cards; conducted over a two week period • 10 participants</td>
<td>• Low participation (10 participants) • Reflection forms not always filled out; left guessing about meaning of photographs • Disposable camera technology outdated; potential to improve with smartphone app</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2. Summary of community engagement methods presented in thesis (Proctor 2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY SYSTEMS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHAT TO LOOK FOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPACITY AND READINESS</strong></td>
<td>The community has a positive mindset and motivation to improve their own condition without necessarily being instructed to do so by “the outside”. Internal acts that demonstrate that the community is thinking proactively, creatively, and independently. Strategies certainly do not necessarily need to be revolutionary or monetarily intensive.</td>
<td>“How can we help you to help us.” Examples include: trash cleanups, attending regional initiative meetings, fundraising dinner for renovation to a public facility, creation of committees to advance local initiatives such as tourism, recreation, historic preservation, business development, or marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN卷VOLVEMENT</strong></td>
<td>Encourage participation beyond “they typical players” Are all stakeholders accounted for? Ensure that any person or group that is impacted or influenced by the project's outcome has the opportunity to participate.</td>
<td>Creation of management team that is a diverse representation of the community and encourages a balanced discussion. Do attendance levels meet expectations based on why community members are coming together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEADERSHIP</strong></td>
<td>There are different types of leaders, some more unconventional than others, and include: elected leaders and town staff, sparkplugs, gatekeepers, social leaders, local “experts”</td>
<td>Sparkplugs tend to be forward and public with their enthusiasm. They can make initial introductions to gatekeepers, social and elected leaders, and convince “local experts” to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td>Communication should be consistent but employ a variety of techniques. Avoid using technical jargon that can easily create confusion or speculation. Feedback loops serve as a mechanism where design professionals, elected leaders, and community members check-in with one another. Clear, consistent communication mitigates opportunities for speculation or rumors.</td>
<td>- Websites - Email contact lists - “Community news” bulletin boards in common places of gathering (businesses, churches, post office, town hall, kiosks, etc.) - An abundance of rumors (good or bad) or attendance expectations not being met may indicate poor communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME OF REFERENCE AND COMMUNITY VISION</strong></td>
<td>A frame of reference (understanding the past) forms a greater context to understand present circumstances. A community vision provides a path to move forward and encourages creative thinking to meet community-oriented goals</td>
<td>- Formalize any community vision as a written statement that can be shared. - The retention and attraction of youth tended to be a common motivator in visioning sessions. Reach out to K-12 schools to encourage youth to participate, not just adults.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Summary of five community systems (Proctor 2016)
Community engagement methods initiated discussions with community members in Austinville and St. Paul, but the notion of ‘time’ emerged as a critical component of the community engagement process. People, personalities, relationships, trust, and experiences all take time to understand. Certain projects do not always allow the time necessary for ‘newcomer’ design professionals to become a member of the community, as I witnessed conducting research as a student. Further, the academic and real-world timelines do not always align with each other. The three years I worked professionally in southwest Virginia following my studies at Virginia Tech did, however, provide me with the time I needed to discover the importance of five “community systems” in a way I previously had not. As I worked with over fifteen different communities, process repetition exposed commonalities across a broad community spectrum, which enhanced my observations.

I observed five ‘community systems’ during my three year employment at a regional 501(c)3 non-profit organization (Table 3). The community systems were important throughout the course of every project, but especially in the early stages of the community mobilizing and inventory processes. Specific community systems I looked for included: Capacity and Readiness, Involvement, Leadership, Communication, Frame of Reference and Community Vision. I found that establishing or improving each community system positioned a community for a higher level of success. Success varied in each community, but could be measured by the creation of sustained community interest around common goals, the development of new skills to self-organize, or the acquisition of funding for planning and implementation.

Seeing and understanding local value systems, both the individual and collective, through community engagement methods enriched the design dialogue, and made for longer lasting projects. Doing so required going above and beyond legal minimums (i.e. public hearings) of community engagement. Moving forward, take time to discover the magical wonders of hidden, cultural landscapes in southwest Virginia and beyond. Above all else, community engagement in public design should be encouraged, respected, and considered an integral component of the traditional design process.
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http://www.swvatoday.com/news/article_3ffa844-1789-11e6-95c7-8b3ab49f262c.html

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U.C. Berkley (2016). Faculty and Staff, from
http://ced.berkeley.edu/ced/faculty-staff/randolph-hesto
MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 4, 2011

TO: Brian F. Katen, Nick Proctor

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Measuring Community Connectedness - Austinville, VA

IRB NUMBER: 11-837

Effective November 4, 2011, the Virginia Tech IRB Administrator, Carmen T. Green, approved the new protocol for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:
Approved as: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 7
Protocol Approval Date: 11/4/2011
Protocol Expiration Date: 11/3/2012
Continuing Review Due Date*: 10/20/2012

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:
Per federally regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.
<table>
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<th>OSP Number</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Grant Comparison Conducted*</th>
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</table>

*Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

cc: File
Voice your opinion about your community!

Nick Proctor, a student from the Landscape Architecture program at Virginia Tech wants to know how connected you feel to the community you live in.

This survey is a preliminary step as part of his masters degree project centered around community engagement in the design process within landscape architecture.

He will be coming through the area with surveys or you can take one here to fill out.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

If you have historical images or stories that make this place special to you, please contact to Nick to share these as well

Questions? Contact:
Nick Proctor
276-698-5681
ski4fd@vt.edu
The purpose of this survey is to measure the level of connectedness that people feel between each other and their neighbors within the communities surrounding Austinville.

By completing this survey, you agree for the results of the survey to be used in a public presentation. Should at any point, you do not feel like completing the survey, you are not obligated to fill this survey out and return it.

Please circle your answers on a scale from 1-5, 1 being “I strongly disagree with this statement.” and 5 being “I strongly agree with this statement.”

1. What is your name?  
   
   (Optional-This is only in the event that a follow-up session is necessary. Your name will remain anonymous when summary of results is made public)

2. What is your age?  
   Under 18  18-24  25-44  45-64  65 and above

3. What is your gender?  
   Male  Female

4. What race would you associate yourself with? (Ex. Caucasian, African- American, Hispanic, Native American, etc.)
   
   ___________________________

5. Which community would you associate yourself with?
   
   ___________________________

6. How many years have you lived in your community?
   
   ___________________________

7. Overall, I am very attracted to living in this community.  
   1  2  3  4  5

8. I feel like I belong to this community.  
   1  2  3  4  5

9. I visit with my neighbors in their homes.  
   1  2  3  4  5

10. The friendships and associations I have with other people in my community means a lot to me.  
    1  2  3  4  5

11. Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this community.  
    1  2  3  4  5

12. If the people in my community were planning something I’d think of it as something “we” were doing rather than “they” were doing.  
    1  2  3  4  5

13. If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my community.  
    1  2  3  4  5

14. I think I agree with most people in my community about what is important in life.  
    1  2  3  4  5

15. I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency.  
    1  2  3  4  5

16. I feel loyal to the people in my community.  
    1  2  3  4  5

17. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors.  
    1  2  3  4  5

18. I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my community.  
    1  2  3  4  5

19. I plan to remain a resident of this community for a number of years.  
    1  2  3  4  5

20. I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this community.  
    1  2  3  4  5

21. I rarely have neighbors over to my house to visit.  
    1  2  3  4  5
22. A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in this community.  
1 2 3 4 5

23. I regularly stop and talk with people in my community.  
1 2 3 4 5

24. Living in this community gives me a sense of belonging.  
1 2 3 4 5

25. Do you feel that there is a community distinction between your community and:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethany</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatwoods</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Camp</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austinville</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wytheville</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Chiswell</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If answered yes to any, please explain what causes the distinction:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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Any additional thoughts you would like to share:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I sincerely thank you for allowing me to work with your community. I hope this is just
beginning or a rewarding process, both for me as a student and for you as a community
member. Don’t hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 23, 2012

TO: Brian F. Katen, Nick Proctor

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Mapping a Community's Heritage

IRB NUMBER: 12-029

Effective January 23, 2012, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the new protocol for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any change regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:
Approved as: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 7
Protocol Approval Date: 1/23/2012
Protocol Expiration Date: 1/22/2013
Continuing Review Due Date*: 1/8/2013

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:
Per federally regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

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Protocol Approval Date: 1/23/2012
Protocol Expiration Date: 1/22/2013
Continuing Review Due Date*: 1/8/2013

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If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

cc: File
Come share the heritage about your community!

What places in the community are important to your heritage?
Where would you locate the community social centers?
What opportunities exist to increase community space?
What things in your surroundings support your heritage?

These topics and more will be the topic of discussion at the upcoming community meeting. Your thoughts and ideas matter. Please come to the community-wide meeting to participate in this mapping exercise. All ages are welcome and encouraged to attend. This activity is part of a Master’s thesis project of Nick Proctor, Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture.

**WHEN:** February 4, 2012 from 1:00-3:00 pm
**WHERE:** Bethany Methodist Fellowship Hall
Lead Mine Road, Austinville, VA 24312
**BRING:** Friends and Family
Any Historic Memorabilia example: pictures

If you have any questions, contact: Nick Proctor, 276-698-5681

*Light refreshment will be provided*
ICE BREAKER

1. Pair up with someone near you. Try to pair with someone you are not familiar with.
2. You will have 1.5 minutes to introduce your partner to the group.

Possible things to share:
1. Name
2. Where is your partner from?
3. How did your partner come to live there?
4. Where is your partner’s favorite spot in the area?
Questions of inquiry during community meeting

All answers should be given in a past and present sense

1. What are the boundaries of your community?
   a. Is there a reason for where the line is drawn?
      i. Social difference
      ii. Physical difference
   b. Each community identified is assigned a particular color to draw on their maps with

2. In an ideal situation and circumstances, what direction would the community like to go in the future
   a. Change in size
   b. Programming – heritage tourism?
   c. Available facilities within the community
   d. More community events? What type of events?

3. Should there be a “community event”, what would be the area you would expect people to attend from?

4. What are the built locations within the community that are very important to your heritage or culture?
   a. This could be a parking lot, a house, a church, mine remnants
   b. Use three dots of different colors to mark priority of these locations
   c. Use black dot to identify which ones can be sacrificed in the sake of progression

5. What are the natural elements within the community that are very important to your heritage or culture?
   a. This could be a view shed, a mountain range, a river
   b. Use three dots of different colors to mark priority of these locations

6. Where are the current locations important for civic gatherings?
   a. This could be a church, festival location, and parks.
      i. Are there any access limitations to these locations
   b. Is there a need for improved civic facilities and given the opportunity where should these be placed?
MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 8, 2012
TO: Brian F Katen, Nick Proctor
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Perception of Ordinary Landscapes Between Visitor and Resident Populations of St. Paul, Virginia

IRB NUMBER: 12-855

Effective November 8, 2012, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Administrator, Carmen T Green, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:
Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 7
Protocol Approval Date: November 8, 2012
Protocol Expiration Date: November 7, 2013
Continuing Review Due Date*: October 24, 2013

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

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* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.
APPENDIX N
Micro-study #3: Prompt given to participants before they began to take photographs

As you move around the community, please think about the following questions. These questions are only presented to give you direction and to spur reflective thinking. After thinking about them, take pictures that answer these questions.

1. What are the things in the community that stand for your personal values, beliefs, or traditions?
2. What things in the community do you feel best portray the every day way of life found in St. Paul?
3. What things in the community can be considered defining characteristics that help make St. Paul a unique and special community?

*Please use the provided sheet to write a detailed description about each picture including the approximate location of where you took the image*
APPENDIX O

Micro-study #3 Sample reflection used by participants photographs were taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camera Number:</th>
<th>Image Description</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Image Number</strong></td>
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*draw a line across the page under description when finished to continue to next image*
APPENDIX P
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

COMMUNITY GATHERING, TRADITIONS, AND FRIENDLINESS

Clinch River Farmer’s Market
St. Paul Town Hall
“Symbol of community, friendliness.”
St. Paul swimming pool (closed for the season)

Christmas parade
“Christmas tree lighting.”

“A. R. Matthews Park parking lot
Clinch River Farmer’s Market

A. R. Matthews playground
Christmas parade
“A. R. Matthews Park
“Little league field”
## APPENDIX Q

Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

### ACCESS TO NATURE AND AWARENESS OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site/Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Lake</td>
<td>Wetlands Estanoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive panel at Wetlands Estanoa</td>
<td>Trail head at Sugar Hill recreation area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail at Oxbbox Lake</td>
<td>Trail crossing dam at Oxbbox Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinch River boat launch at A.R. Matthews park</td>
<td>Oxbox Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands Estanoa environmental education classroom</td>
<td>Blue Bell Island trailhead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing pier at Oxbbox Lake</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX R

Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

ACCESS TO NATURE AND AWARENESS OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Sugar Hill trail  Oxbox Lake  Wetlands Estanoa

Rapids on Clinch River  Clinch River at Sugar Hill  Trail at Oxbox Lake

Wetlands Estanoa  Welcome sign on forest edge  Oxbox Lake

Oxbox Lake  Clinch River  Blue Bell Island trail
APPENDIX S
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

PRIDE IN LOCAL BUSINESSES

“Tiller and Tiller. Proud that the town can support itself”

Oxbox Center
“Great building. Great potential.”

Bailey Hardware

Big M Store

Big M Store
“If you can’t find it, you don’t need it.”

Bailey Hardware

Bailey Hardware

Texaco gas station

Ford car dealership
“One of oldest businesses.”

McDonald’s franchise

Giovanni’s Pizza
“Don’t judge a book by its cover.”
APPENDIX T
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

PRIDE IN LOCAL BUSINESSES

Carter Bank & Trust  Rite Aid Pharmacy  Roses

Riverside Medical Clinic  Food City  Big M Store

“If you can’t find it, you don’t need it.”

Food City and Gas-N-Go  TruPoint Bank  Sweet Peas Gifts and Decor

Tri County Tire Service  Phillips Building  Hardee’s Fast Food
APPENDIX U
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

PRIDE IN LOCAL BUSINESSES

Miner’s Exchange Bank  Giovanni’s Pizza  Clinch Home Medical and others

Big M Store
APPENDIX V
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

CHURCHES

“Old church in St. Paul. United Methodist Church. Place of friendship and gathering.”

“GED classes. Girl scouts. Food bank. Churches are very important (Baptist in picture).”
## Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

### CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.R. Matthews Park</th>
<th>Lyric Theatre (closed)</th>
<th>Memorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Tribute to coal mine.”</td>
<td>“Brothel house- last remaining.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taken in A.R. Matthews Park</td>
<td>Broad St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillman House</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Cemetery on Gray Hill.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial</td>
<td>“Connection to national pride.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX X
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE, STREETSCAPES, AND WALKABILITY

Russell Street
“Walking distance-GOOD!”

Stonebriad Apartments building
“Adjacent to Farmer’s Market.
Residents can get fresh produce- GOOD!”

Oxbow Lake
“Place for grandchildren.”
APPENDIX Y
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE, STREETSCAPES, AND WALKABILITY
**APPENDIX Z**
Micro-study #3: Participant photographs organized into seven themes

**SPECULATION AND DISTRUST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="HW 58 at the entrance of the Virginia City Hybrid Electric Center" /></td>
<td>HW 58 at the entrance of the Virginia City Hybrid Electric Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Virginia City Hybrid Electric Center" /></td>
<td>Virginia City Hybrid Electric Center “Very bitter towards construction process and continued operation, environmental damages, many lies told.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Sign across HW 58 from the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center that reads, ”HELP. Power plant noise is killing us.”" /></td>
<td>Sign across HW 58 from the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center that reads, ”HELP. Power plant noise is killing us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="“Closed because of county politics.”" /></td>
<td>“Closed because of county politics.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="“Bitter start but turned out well.”" /></td>
<td>“Bitter start but turned out well.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="“Symbol of opportunity but also understand there are many obstacles.”" /></td>
<td>“Symbol of opportunity but also understand there are many obstacles.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="“Empty industry building. Hard for things to open due to EPA regulations.”" /></td>
<td>“Empty industry building. Hard for things to open due to EPA regulations.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>