Participatory parks planning: exploring democratic design as a tool to mediate cultural conflict over neighborhood green space

by

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ABSTRACT

America's park history has largely been a story of the commodification and representation of nature, from the idyllic naturescapes of the mid-nineteenth century to the reform parks and playgrounds of the City Beautiful era. Not until this century, however, has it become clear that this interpretation of nature is often an Anglo-centric vision, influenced by Western notions of landscape and the frontier. Rarely do American urban parks consider or reflect the non-Western ideals of nature; consequently, these parks are often culturally inaccessible to new immigrants and communities of color. As the United States becomes an increasingly pluralistic society, the need grows for open space that can foster interaction between different ethnic and racial groups and that can serve multiple user groups simultaneously.

Parks—and particularly, American parks—are largely products of political will and reflections of power structures, at least with respect to their locations and designs. Design decisions dictate who feels welcome in a space and who feels excluded; similarly, programming choices—often informed by design—can define a park's audience. Thus, a discussion of power in the context of planning provides a critical link in considering reflections of culture in park design, as well. To that end, this thesis will examine the intersection of the discourses on urban parks, citizen participation, and nature, beginning with an exploration of how the historical narrative of parks planning in the United States can be reframed to reflect the contemporaneous histories of America's communities of color.

Through this new lens, the thesis will examine strategies for understanding and planning multicultural open space in urban environments, focusing specifically on democratic design processes as a tool for effecting change. Democratic design, a participatory planning strategy that empowers the community very directly as an actor in the design process, has rarely been applied to parks planning. However, recent experiments with democratic design processes for small community parks in the Eastlake neighborhood of Oakland, California and the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota provide unique opportunities to explore the potential of this nascent planning strategy as a mechanism for creating multicultural neighborhood parks in the center city and mitigating the problem of park underuse.

Thesis Supervisor: Sam Bass Warner, Jr.
Title: Visiting Professor of Urban History

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1 introduction

This is, first and foremost, a story of two neighborhoods: Eastlake, which flanks the Oakland Estuary in the Lower San Antonio section of Oakland, California, and Phillips, a neighborhood in south Minneapolis, Minnesota long defined by the two Interstates it abuts. Separated by more than two thousand miles, the two communities nonetheless share a history, a deep knowledge of the storied decline of the American city. Both know the devastation of white flight and of urban renewal land clearance; both exist today in the shadow of freeways, with the green space deficits common to so many other center-city neighborhoods that lost land to highway and urban renewal projects in the mid-twentieth century. Over the decades, both communities have wrestled with concentrations of poverty, high crime rates, plummeting property values, and the disinvestment and destruction symptomatic of urban decay.

However, in recent years, the two neighborhoods have also become symbolic of the resurgence of the city. While both Phillips and Eastlake remain deeply distressed from a demographic perspective, the two communities are beginning to embrace and build upon their progressively more diverse populations to create new civic identities and to revitalize their urban fabrics, initiatives that the cities of Oakland and Minneapolis are increasingly recognizing and supporting. The process of building a cohesive community of differences is a complex—and often protracted—endeavor. In both Phillips and Eastlake, though, the neighborhoods have had an unusual resource: a participatory community design process to re-imagine the small urban park at the heart of each community.

This is also a story of two parks, then, and of the people who set out to change them. In the center city, the neighborhood park has had an unsteady and fractured existence over the years, drifting from node of civic activity and interaction to site of contestation and fear. More and more, communities are recognizing the vitality of these spaces and the integral role they can play in the neighborhood when they are assets: well-designed, well-maintained, and well-used. All too often, however, small neighborhood parks in low-income communities of color are liabilities, instead: neglected by cities and underused by the populations they are intended to serve.

Current conversations on social equity and green space center on park deficits, typically calling for park initiatives and funding to target low-income areas of the city that are devoid of open space. But while the creation of new parks and green spaces in these neighborhoods meets a critical need, this focus neglects to consider how effectively existing neighborhood parks are serving low-income communities of color. This is a key concern: a growing body of evidence suggests that, in the United States, people of color visit urban parks far less frequently than do their white counterparts. In a political climate in which cities increasingly direct energy and funding towards the creation of new parks rather than the restoration of existing parks, this news is especially troubling. A neighborhood whose community green space is not viable is effectively a neighborhood with a park deficit, but current policy and planning trends fail to address the dilemma of use. At some level, park use is an issue of access; parks (and especially well-maintained parks) are more likely to be in wealthier neighborhoods, and wealthier neighborhoods are, statistically speaking, likely to be predominantly white. There is a degree of danger in this simplistic analysis of the problem, however. Specifically, ascribing the discrepancy to geography and access alone closes the door on further conversations that may reveal additional causes of park underuse.

Many American park systems are relics of a bygone era of landscape design. Consequently, elements of these designs communicate distinct messages with respect to who is welcome in the space. Formal European garden designs may feel foreign and uncomfortable to new immigrants from Southeast Asia; parks without space for social interaction or for sporting activities do little to meet the needs of many Latino families. How can this mismatch be resolved? If a clear definition of culturally appropriate design existed, planners and designers might be equipped with this information and sent out into practice, and this thesis would be wholly unnecessary. However, such design principles are difficult to characterize for monocultural communities with shared values, and virtually impossible to describe for the complex multicultural, transnational communities that comprise many center city neighborhoods in the United States today.

The solutions to these design and use challenges lie, in part, in a better understanding of the complex history of power and ideology in the parks planning process. Over the past thirty years, the predominant patterns of power in American urban planning have shifted away from the top-down philosophies of the 1950s towards a more holistic community-based approach that empowers residents themselves in the decision-making process, paving the way for urban spaces that engage a multitude of groups. However, park planners and designers have been slow

to embrace citizen participation in the design process, and by and large, community involvement is not yet an integral part of parks planning. Consequently, American urban parks continue to reflect the singular visions of designers, rather than the more collective visions of today's urban residents.

The notion of employing community design practices in parks projects as a means of creating cross-cultural space and empowering neighborhoods to overcome conflict is not wholly new—a number of communities have effectively used these strategies to design public plazas and other community spaces, and a park, after all, is just a special form of public space. The success of such projects indicates that there is great potential in participatory design as a tool to create multicultural space in the public realm. Indeed, as one planner put it, "public space in the urban realm has the power to become the very center and enduring symbol of multicultural discourse and the vehicle by which we can actively work to maintain ourselves as a society" (Kalil 1998).

This exploration of democratic park design processes grew out of the discovery of several planning efforts to design multicultural public spaces with active community engagement, and particularly the Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia, the Dudley Town Common in Boston, and the 16th Street BART Plaza in San Francisco. (See *Appendix C* for detailed overviews of these projects.) That community design techniques can produce successful public spaces in so many different planning contexts suggests that such a process might be similarly successful in designing multiethnic park space, as well. However, few examples of such projects exist.

Why are so few cities adopting participatory open space planning strategies to resolve park inequities and to improve park use in communities of color? Surprisingly, very few cities are actively addressing park underuse concerns at all. This is a missed opportunity to enhance access to usable open space in underserved neighborhoods, especially as designated park space already exists in these communities, so remedying the functional green space deficiency is significantly simpler than in an area where new land must be purchased and rehabilitated to provide open space.

This thesis will explore the implications of active community engagement in the park design process as a means of overcoming park underuse in urban neighborhoods, examining specific cases and probing several key questions:

1) What design and programming elements constitute a culturally appropriate neighborhood park in a racially- and ethnically-diverse community?

2) Are democratic design techniques effective in mediating design conversations and conflicts between traditionally disempowered groups to create multiethnic park space?

3) What is impeding the successful implementation of such plans, and how might communities surmount these obstacles?

Specifically, this thesis will explore the historical and theoretical contexts of parks planning and the American environmental movement, the connection between democratic design and the creation of multicultural space, and the challenges to community involvement inherent in the existing parks infrastructure in most American cities. This thesis hopes to provide a compelling justification for the integration of participatory community processes into the design and programming of urban parks in the decades to come.

Case studies

Paradigmatic shifts in thinking in these areas are of little value if they have no broader implications for practice. To that end, this thesis will consider two cases in which communities actively participated in creating new visions of small neighborhood parks: the redesign of Peavey Park in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the redesign of Clinton Park in the Eastlake neighborhood of Oakland, California. Neighborhood parks such as these serve a very specific purpose: to provide green space for the community immediately surrounding them, regardless of whether that community opts to use the space for gatherings, for recreation, for interaction with nature, or for some other use. Thus, participatory processes for small neighborhood parks engage a specific group of local stakeholders who share living and working spaces and form a comprehensive place-based community.

In the cases of Peavey Park and Clinton Park, both design processes employed the principles of community design as laid out by Randolph Hester and others in the 1970s, and in both cases community organizations—one a nonprofit planning and technical assistance firm, the other a community-based neighborhood development agency—managed the process with the support of the municipal government. The notion of a broad participatory effort to redesign a local park is unusual—more often, neighborhood residents are simply given the opportunity to react to proposals laid out by the local park board or recreation department, if there is any involvement at all—but the planning initiatives for Clinton Park in Eastlake and Peavey Park in Phillips proved exceptional in that they specifically sought to create multiethnic public green spaces. The democratic design strategies the two projects employed served as means to an end: participatory processes intended to bridge cultural differences

and conflicts within a multiethnic community to envision a park that would serve the recreational needs of the neighborhood while also creating space for multiple racial and ethnic groups to coexist and interact peacefully.

To better understand these park projects—including where and how each succeeded and failed, and why this matters—requires a comprehensive grasp of the geographic, demographic, and historical contexts in which each park and its surrounding community exists. Also essential is an understanding of the motives that have traditionally guided American parks planning and the resultant patterns of design and programming in urban settings. A mismatch persists between traditional American park design and the open space needs of the increasingly diverse center city in the United States.

The Clinton Park and Peavey Park redesign projects demonstrate some potential ways in which multiethnic participatory design processes can push parks planning into new territory, and the implications for green space design and programming when racial and ethnic preferences and frames of reference are taken into consideration. By exploring both the successes and the shortcomings of these participatory processes as tools for negotiating community disputes over the use of a park when open space is severely limited, this thesis will examine the potential of the community design philosophy as a strategy for reshaping parks to create cross-cultural spaces.

Chapter summary

The first chapter of this thesis provides an introduction to the topic; the methodologies employed over the course of this research are outlined in *Appendix B*.

The second chapter examines the relationship between the histories of parks planning and American environmentalism, and defines five major eras in these fields in relation to contemporaneous social and political events impacting people of color in the United States. This provides a framework for exploring park design and programming as they have changed over time and as they affect park use today. The chapter also outlines the primary theories and causes of the underuse of green space by people of color, discusses the potential intergroup conflicts over the use of open space, and proposes a series of potential remedies, including the direct engagement of the community in the park design process through participatory planning techniques.

In the third chapter, the characteristics of multicultural design are considered in light of the demonstrated use preferences across cultures, and strategies for engaging designers and planners in multiethnic design are discussed.

The fourth and fifth chapters consider the cases of Clinton Park in Oakland, California, and Peavey Park in Minneapolis, Minnesota, two park redesign processes that tested specific community engagement strategies. The chapters present an overview of the histories, demographics, and sociopolitical contexts of the cities of Minneapolis and Oakland, with special attention to the development of communities of color and past episodes of racial and ethnic conflict within the two cities. The chapters also profile the Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis and the Lower San Antonio neighborhood in Oakland, providing the reader with maps, census data, and other critical information about these communities to contextualize future discussion of the two neighborhoods.

In the sixth chapter of this thesis, current and historic frameworks for multicultural planning are presented and analyzed in relation to the Clinton and Peavey case studies. This chapter also identifies the major obstacles to effective participatory planning in communities of color, and especially in new immigrant communities, that arose from the literature and from the two case studies. An alternate process framework is also proposed that can potentially replace the dominant consensus-building model to better engage all residents of diverse communities.

The final chapter presents a series of conclusions based on the research in Minneapolis and Oakland and suggests new directions in practice and research that can continue to probe the interconnectedness of culture, nature, and planning in diverse urban neighborhoods.

2 parks, people, and power: the politics of green space in american cities

The cultural politics of parks: power and parks planning

Over the past century, theorists in architecture, landscape studies, and related disciplines have looked at representations and reflections of power in the built environment, from building form and function to places and spaces. Rarely, however, has the dialogue on power and place been extended to the natural environment, except in the broader discussions of frontier and landscape in cultural and environmental studies. But parks—and particularly American parks—are largely products of political will and reflections of ideology and power structures, at least with respect to their locations and designs. Landscapes represent a "physical articulation of values" (Kalil 1998, 16); thus, design decisions dictate who feels welcome in a space and who feels excluded. Similarly, programming choices—often guided by design—define a park's audience, selectively (if often inadvertently) choosing which community members to include.

America's park history has largely been a story of the commodification and representation of nature, from the idyllic naturescapes of the mid-nineteenth century to the reform parks and playgrounds of the City Beautiful era to the heavily programmed recreation spots and victory gardens of the 1930s and 1940s. Not until this century, however, has it become clear that this interpretation of nature is often an Anglo-centric vision, influenced by Western notions of landscape and the frontier and dictated by those making decisions on the design and use of open space. Consequently, American parks are often uncomfortable for and unwelcoming to the new immigrants and people of color who increasingly make up urban populations. Cultural perceptions of open space—and the use needs of specific subgroups of the population, which include ethnic and racial subgroups as well as socioeconomic, gender, and age-based subgroups—dramatically impact how often and how well communities use parks.

Environmental ethics and values have long been considered common to all humans, but there is a growing body of evidence that indicates that ideals of nature and landscape are, in fact, cultural constructs, specific to each society. For example, the dominant narratives around the development of the environmental movement and parks planning in the United States inevitably center on the

experiences of mainstream America (Cranz 1982; Cronon 1983; Dowie 1995; MacLeish 1994; Novak 1980; Sale 1993; Lawson 2005). These histories discuss change in reference to historical moments of primary relevance to white, middle-class Americans and often rely on a pre-Columbian/post-Columbian dichotomy to frame the stories. Missing from these narratives, however, are the stories of Americans of color and of the often-antagonistic relationships they have had with the land and with the dominant social and environmental movements over the years. Integrating these alternate narratives and tracing the related patterns of power in the context of parks planning elucidates how and why many urban parks targeted specific racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic populations historically—and why many of these parks now fail to serve the new communities around them.

A new history of city parks planning

At some level, the story of American parks planning reflects a dominant narrative based on white middle-class experiences in the city (Taylor 2002). This is in part an expression of who shaped this history. Traditional American environmentalists, for instance, tended to be white middle-class men in the case of wilderness advocacy and preservation issues and white middle-class men and women in the case of the broader urban environmental movement, which encompassed public health; open space, parks, and playground reform; safety and housing reform; sanitation; and other urban issues (Taylor 2002). The secondary urban environmental agenda—focused on workers' rights, occupational health and labor issues, and parks equity/access issues—has historically been white as well, involving the white working class and progressive white middle-class women (Taylor 2002).

As the national ecological ethic and the environmental movement grew during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans of color remained largely absent from the public discourse on the environment. Inasmuch as these movements engaged working-class and middle-class people of color, it was in the context of environmental equity, self-determination, environmental hazards, human rights, land reclamation, and other social justice issues, areas outside of the mainstream environmental movement until very recently (Taylor 2002). In retelling these stories, then, a new thread must introduce the relationships of people of color to the land, to city parks, and to the broader social and cultural history of the United States.

Superimposing the histories of city parks planning and environmentalism yields five distinct ages of parks planning, each of which fostered specific forms and functions as the guiding principles of park design changed. Although the rise of environmentalism is rarely juxtaposed directly with the progression of parks planning and design, the two are clearly interconnected.

For instance, the four major eras in parks planning defined by Galen Cranz (1982) in *The Politics of Park Design*, still the definitive work in parks history, correlate very closely to the primary periods in the history of American environmentalism identified by Dorceta Taylor (2002). Cranz (1982) identifies four major periods in park design: the "pleasure ground" era, from 1850 to 1900; the "reform park" era, from 1900 to 1930; the "recreation facility" era, from 1930 to 1965; and the "open-space system" era, from 1965 to the present. Although Cranz rarely references the direct links between park design and the American environmental movement, the development of open space planning has been closely informed and influenced by contemporaneous movements in American environmentalism, defined by Taylor (2002) as the premovement era (1820s to 1913), the post-Hetch Hetchy era (1914 to 1959); the post-Carson era (1960 to 1979), and the post-Love Canal/ Three Mile Island era (1980 to the present).

Throughout each of these eras, the underlying tenets of open space programming and design have shifted in response to external societal and cultural influences. So, too, have the power relationships within the parks planning process itself. While some of these trends followed similar changes in city planning at large, open space design processes as a whole lagged behind—and sometimes failed to embrace altogether—broader developments in urban planning that might have facilitated the design of parks capable of serving a more diverse user base. Redefining the major eras of parks planning to better reflect the social and political contexts of urban parks elucidates these power trends and provides direction for the future.

1830 to 1890: The Romantic era of park design

Early American park design drew heavily from the dominant environmental narrative of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, reacting aesthetically to European Americans' passion for the frontier and the challenges of settling the country. As development stretched westward and encroached on wilderness, landscape designers began to re-envision wilderness and nature as elements of the divine whose aesthetics and beauty could contribute to the integrity of the city. The first urban parks, typically the visions of a single landscape designer or a small group of associates granted free rein by the city, featured large landscaped spaces (or "pleasure grounds") for daylong outings, picnicking, walks, gardens, or other passive activities (Cranz 1982). Although some landscape designers envisioned parks as potential areas for interclass interactions, these natural spaces primarily served the needs of upper-class urban dwellers, providing a pastoral respite from the grime of the industrial city. The messages conveyed by park design targeted the education and cultural references of the elite: carpet bedding, the shaping of low-growing annual plants into designs and patterns, told allegorical tales of religion and politics told through their parks; walls and elaborate fences

established boundaries. Museums and other cultural institutions defined parks as spaces for "high levels of cultural achievement" (Cranz 1982, 48).

During this era, working-class Americans and Americans of color rarely had roles in the development of parks, except as laborers in the construction phase. Although urban centers grew rapidly throughout the nineteenth century with hundreds of thousands of immigrants arriving in the country annually, they were typically overcrowded and ridden with contagious diseases, with epidemics of cholera, typhoid, and smallpox sweeping most major cities at least once if not multiple times between 1830 and 1890. Designers clustered the large "pleasure ground" parks at the edges of cities or in central areas, ringed by business districts or upper-class homes and far from the tenements and working-class neighborhoods that housed many urban dwellers of color.

1890-1930: The park as a playground for the emerging middle class

By 1890, when the U.S. Census Bureau declared that the West had been fully settled and the frontier was closed, the first power shift in parks planning had begun. Nationally, attention began to focus on the creation of national and regional park systems. At the local level, social reform movements were growing across the country. As a new generation of parks designers found allies in progressive politics, access and programming became critical components of park designs. The playgrounds movement began with the 1890 dedication of the first city playground in Boston, marking a shift from passive uses of green space to more active recreational uses, and in many cities, white working-class neighborhoods began to mobilize to advocate for equity in park siting.

By 1901, New York City had established its Small Parks Commission; many other cities followed suit. The spaces managed by these commissions catered less to the upper-class picnickers of the pleasure ground era. With new active uses and sporting activities, the play parks served city children as well as working-class men, who had more leisure time than in generations past with the advent of the eight-hour workday (Cranz 1982). The establishment of formal municipal boards to oversee park development and management also shifted design and programming decisions from the landscape designer to the city.

Many of these changes transpired as cities themselves began to change. With the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, African Americans started to organize nationally; increasingly, former slaves and sharecroppers moved north to the East and Midwest, where they often found factory jobs as strike breakers during labor actions. However, because the American class stratification remained three-tiered with foreign-born Southern and Eastern

Europeans forming the middle caste (Taylor 2002; Jacobson 1999), a deep rift remained between the white and black working classes. While Reform Era designers sought to use parks as a tool for the self-betterment of working-class urbanites, they focused their efforts primarily on low-income white Americans.

1930 to 1960: The rise of the automobile, the suburb, and the regional park

The start of the Great Depression in 1929 marked the beginning of a new age in city and parks planning. Park administrators focused less on the salvation of the working class, declaring that they were not "their brothers' keepers" (Cranz 1982, 101). Instead, municipalities increasingly integrated parks into comprehensive city plans as one of several physical elements shaping the city. The automobile also emerged during this era as a major force on urban and suburban development, prompting the growth of urban edges and the first rings of suburbs around metropolitan centers.

As parks lost their social missions, decision-making powers shifted from the social reform boards to the city itself. Formal city planning gained prominence as a guiding force for urban development in the interwar years, and in many areas, cities established planning boards to work in tandem with park and recreation boards towards more comprehensive development strategies. In New York City, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia appointed Robert Moses as the city's first commissioner of parks in 1934, opening a quarter century of building—first dozens of new parks and playgrounds, and later parkways, tunnels, bridges, and public housing—that would fundamentally reshape notions of what a parks commission encompassed (New Yorkers for Parks 2002). The notion of the regional park, rather than the city or neighborhood park, took root as a theme in parks planning. Particularly in the postwar years, such projects targeted the new predominantly white middle class in the growing suburbs.

During these years, cities grew more and more diverse racially and ethnically. Although immigration had come to a virtual standstill with the Immigration Act of 1924, the Great Depression had driven rural Americans to the Eastern and Midwestern cities en masse. In addition, because Congress had exempted Mexicans from the 1924 act, many employers recruited Mexican men and brought them north to work in agriculture, as well as in an assortment of nonagricultural unskilled positions (Taylor 2002). With World War II came an influx of jobs that were open to men—and even women—of color for the first time, as most white middle- and working-class men were overseas. For the first time, Native Americans also began following war jobs to the cities in large numbers, and other urban ethnic communities grew significantly.

Following the end of the war, however, many people of color suddenly found themselves unemployed as jobs either defaulted

Figure 2.1: Towards a new history of city parks planning in America

Era	Major political and environmental events	Trends in parks planning	Intended users
1830 to 1890 Age of pleasure grounds	• Indian Removal Act, 1830; Manifest Destiny, 1840s • War of Texas Independence, 1836; Mexican War, 1846–1848 • U.S. Civil War, 1861–1865; Homestead Act, 1862 • Emancipation Proclamation, 1863; 14th Amendment, 1868 • First national park, 1872; Appalachian Mountain Club, 1876 • Haymarket riots, 1886; Dawes Act, 1887	Romantic depictions of pastoral nature in the landscape, few recreational functions	White upper class
1890 to 1930: Era of reform parks	• Progressive movement, 1890s; Sierra Club founded, 1892 • 1898–1904: Spanish-American and Phillippine-American Wars • Congress authorizes Hetch Hetchy Dam in Yosemite, 1913 • KKK re-emerges, 1915; National Park Service founded, 1916 • World War I: 1917–1918; women's suffrage, 1920 • Indian Citizenship Act, 1924; Immigration Act of 1924	Shift from passive to active recreation; parks are a means of self-betterment for the working class and leisure space for the emerging middle class	White middle and working classes
1930 to 1960 Rise of recreation & the automobile	• Great Depression, 1929–1941; Indian Reorganization Act, 1934 • Social Security Act, WPA, NLRA, CIO formed, 1935; WPA provides public funding for parks jobs during the Depression. • World War II, 1941–1945; Korean War, 1950–1953 • Indian Termination Act, 1953; Relocation Act, 1956	Focus on systems and the park's role in the urban fabric; move towards comprehensive regional parks planning	Middle class
1960 to 1990: Growth of open space and event parks	• Carson's *Silent Spring* published, 1962; Civil Rights Act, 1964 • Bay of Pigs invasion, 1961; Kennedy assassination, 1963 • Vietnam War, 1965–1975; free speech, AIM, and Black Power movements, mid-1960s; King and Kennedy asassinations, 1968 • 1970: Clean Air Act passed, EPA established, Kent State massacre • Love Canal, 1978; Three Mile Island, 1979; Grenada, 1983	Rise of parks as event locales to bring back visitors (urbanites and suburbanites): rallies, concerts, festivals, protests; "permissiveness" in activities	Upper, middle, and working classes; residents from outside the community
1990 to today Re-emergence of the neighborhood park	• Panama, 1989; Gulf War, 1991; Somalian conflict, 1992–1994 • Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1995–1996; Kosovo, 1999 • 9/11 attacks, 2001; Afghanistan, 2001; Iraq, 2003– • Kyoto protocol takes effect, 2005	Resurgence of waterfront park development; reclamation of "urban wild"; post-industrial landscapew and highway removal projects; re-emergence of the neighborhood park	Upper, middle and working classes; increasingly, urban underclass

Upper class: Class of the very wealthy or powerful elites in society.

Middle class: Moderate-income managerial and white collar professional class.

Working class: Class of low-to-moderate income blue collar or low-wage workers.

Urban underclass: Includes the destitute, the homeless, and increasingly, the working poor living at or below the poverty level.

New developments in park design and programming	Examples	Primary powerbroker	Era
Design elements: Naturescapes; meandering paths; gardenesque landscaping; separate transportation systems for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists; artificial lakes; native shrubs and trees; walls to establish boundaries; elaborate gates *Programming:* Few activities offered; playgrounds and parks buildings sited at edges of park if present at all	New York's Central Park San Francisco's Golden Gate Park Chicago's South Park Boston's Public Garden	Landscape designers, with power vested by cities	*1830 to 1890* *Age of pleasure grounds*
Design elements: "play streets" closed off to traffic; playgrounds and parks near transit; large 10–40 acre spaces *Programming:* Recreation centers to instill citizenship, ethics; scheduled spaces; active (physical), passive (aesthetic), and social (civic) recreation; sports facilities; distinctively for white residents, but multi-class, with some activities targeted at the working class; concerts, arts, other cultural activities	San Francisco's Funston Park Chicago's Pulaski Park Ithaca's Stewart Park New Haven's Lighthouse Pt. Park	Reform boards and bodies within civic infrastructure, influenced by white working class	*1890 to 1930:* *Era of reform parks*
Design elements: Bright colors; specialized spaces for children; stadiums with surface parking; parkways and other regional initiatives *Programming:* Parks no longer provided services; liaisons with housing authorities; emergence of school parks; during war, accommodated military	New York's Prospect Park Zoo and Henry Hudson Parkway Boston's MDC projects	Top levels of municipal governments; parks commissioners; city planners	*1930 to 1960* *Rise of recreation & the automobile*
Design elements: "Design revolution" in parks: adventure parks, spray pools, climbing equipment; movement against underground garages, monuments, and school-park projects; removal of asphalt paths, fences; rise of vest pocket parks; reuse of vacant lots, other abandoned land in the center city *Programming:* Concerts, alcohol, dancing; counter-culture influence; dogs welcomed; event-focused: fireworks, festivals; rise of urban cultural parks	Berkeley's People's Park Boston's Southwest Corridor Park New York's Greenacre Park	Proactive mayors and parks departments; communities	*1960 to 1990:* *Growth of open space and event parks*
Design elements: Resurgence of waterfront park development; reclamation of "urban wild" and urban nature in city parks; reuse of closed military bases as parks; conversion of abandoned railroad rights-of-way to create linear parks *Programming:* Reclamation of post-industrial city centers through open space; highway removal projects; parks as a tool for revitalization	Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway Oakland's Union Point Park Providence's India Point Park Chicago's Millennium Park	?	*1990 to today* *Reemergence of the neighborhood park*

back to the white servicemen returning from overseas or, in many cases, disappeared altogether. The unemployment crisis precipitated the decline of center cities across the country and was further complicated by policy decisions like the Bureau of Indian Affairs' urban relocation program, which transferred Native American families and individuals who had been moved to reservations only a generation or two earlier to cities in an attempt to combat plummeting city populations (Taylor 2002). Ultimately, the federal government attempted to intervene to resolve the urban crisis through large-scale land clearance, tearing down deteriorating housing stock in low-income center city neighborhoods and building in its place high-rise buildings intended to modernize cities and jumpstart failing central business districts. In many cases, the top-down urban renewal planning process further shifted power away from local parks boards and designers, especially as parks rarely played a part in the new vision of revitalization.

For middle-class white Americans, the mass migration to the suburbs that highway construction precipitated during the 1950s and 1960s also diminished perceived needs for public parks and open space. As more Americans owned homes with private yards, the importance of the public realm—and residents' preferred recreational uses for it—shifted away from neighborhood-scale everyday uses to regional recreational uses like sports. However, because homeowners (and suburbanites in general) tended to be white, the shift in attention and funds from the city park to the regional park carried with it implicit racial implications, most notably substantial disinvestment in the neighborhood parks serving urban communities of color. Responding, in part, to this municipal abandonment, neighbors together for the first time to fend off urban renewal forces, and the networks that would form the national Civil Rights Movement began to form on both the local and national levels, connecting distressed cities to one another. Native American communities also began to organize at the national level as deep concerns over the state of indigenous people's rights grew. By the end of the era, with social, cultural, and political tensions high across the nation, the urban park represented one of the few remaining democratic spaces open to all—a position that would prove critical in the tumultuous decades to come.

1960 to 1990: The park as a pulpit for the people

The 1960s and 1970s brought a resurgence of public interest in mainstream environmental issues, including parks, following the publication of Rachel Carson's landmark work, *Silent Spring*, which began a national dialogue on the devastating effects of pesticide use. The fervor led to immense changes in parks planning at every level as the urban park found a new role as the focal point of community activity. In New York City, John Lindsay centered his mayoral campaign on the issue of city parks and playgrounds, advocating for more community involvement in park design and for the creation of small "vest pocket" parks throughout the city

(New York City Parks 1999) as a means of capitalizing on small plots of undeveloped or vacant land. Throughout the 1970s, community garden movements also grew in New York and other cities across the country, creating new neighborhood alliances and jumpstarting local community development initiatives.

In Berkeley, California, community residents built People's Park on a vacant lot owned by the University of California, sparking a decades-long battle over the people's right to use the small plot. The emergent environmental justice movement underscored the significance of park equity in the enter city, and many cities permitted protests, concerts, rallies, and other public gatherings in parks in response to the need for large congregating spaces, much to the chagrin of landscape architects and social conservatives who saw such events as a loss of control in center cities. However, many park commissioners saw these draws as the only way to bring people back to the city and to the parks—the best way, they believed, to make urban parks safe again in the wake of white flight (Cranz 1982). While grassroots parks planning countered the municipal abandonment of city parks, however, few cities institutionalized this community involvement, in spite of contemporary efforts to formalize citizen participation in other city planning processes.

On a broader level, the national social and political landscape changed dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s, with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, the emergence of the counter-culture, and widespread civil unrest over American involvement in the war in Vietnam. The Chicano movement, which promoted a militant ideology focused on civil rights, the Chicano self-image, and the war against racism, started to coalesce in the mid-1960s, as did the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement (AIM), militant movements that began in the Oakland African American and Minneapolis Native American communities, respectively. As people of color began to organize at the national level, culture, race, and ethnicity became powerful identity markers and entered American day-to-day discourse. Within parks planning, however, conversations continued to focus primarily on socioeconomics as planners strove to create space to serve the needs of the working poor and the growing urban underclass. Rarely were racial and ethnic differences considered in design, despite the strong correlations between income and color.

1992 to the present: The park as a revitalization tool

The last fifteen years have ushered in a fifth wave of parks planning, one that continues to develop as urban landscapes rebound across the country. In 2000, many cautiously declared the return of urbanism after census data revealed that the long-standing population declines in many cities had finally reversed, and a decade of prosperity following the 1990–1991 recession gave many communities a window of opportunity to commit public

funds to the restoration and reclamation of urban open space at a scale that had not been possible in decades.

From Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway to Washington's Anacostia Waterfront Initiative to Atlanta's Belt Line project to Chicago's Millennium Park, large city parks have re-emerged as prominent elements of the urban landscape for the first time since before World War II. Providence, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle, Baltimore, Austin, Miami, Madison, New Haven, Louisville, and Minneapolis are all in the midst of adding new green space to their center cities, as are dozens of smaller communities across the country.

At the neighborhood level, a growing recognition of the importance of green space and urban recreation in residents' quality of life in urban America has prompted more extensive investment in such spaces. These projects involve a host of players: mayors, city planning boards, parks and recreation boards, transit authorities, community-based nonprofit organizations, citizen coalitions, resident groups. No dominant trend has emerged as yet with respect to the distribution of decision-making power in these processes; this remains a local choice, in part because many municipalities are in intense competition for federal and state funding resources. This leaves open the possibility of more proactive engagement of community residents themselves in the planning process to ensure that these new parks provide green space that can truly serve the needs of urban neighborhoods. Moreover, an assessment of successful naturalization and parks projects found that to achieve many broader goals—crime reduction, increased social capital—greening projects must be community-driven, with an active public process that engages residents, further supporting participation initiatives (Hudson 2000).

The underuse of neighborhood parks by people of color

Decades of park design and programming decisions ultimately created cultural disparities in the use of American parks. In virtually all studies of underserved populations and their use of parks in the United States, use patterns divide sharply along racial and ethnic lines. This is not to imply that race and ethnicity are the only—or even the primary—identity markers affecting the underuse of green space. Socioeconomic status factors heavily into the equation as well, for instance, as does age. However, the role of color has been consistently overlooked in recent research agendas that have focused increasingly on class and age; there is a clear need for a better understanding of the ways in which cultural norms may be shaping park use patterns. More significantly, class, race, and ethnicity are often conflated identities in the United States, and even age appears to operate differently within majority and minority ethnic communities.

Initially, the American parks literature addressed ethnic and racial perceptions and use of open space primarily in the context of the national parks system. Studies in the mid-1990s first established that racial and ethnic minority visitors were almost universally absent from the country's national parks; people of color and other ethnic minorities represented less than 10 percent of visitors (Goldsmith 1994, Floyd 1999). A number of studies throughout the 1990s found that these patterns persisted at the city and neighborhood levels as well, particularly when park spaces bordered neighborhoods with dramatic demographic differences (Solecki and Welch 1995). In the case of border parks, green space functioned more typically as a barrier than as a connection; parks created sharp edges (or "green walls") that buffered one community from the next, and were often underused and neglected as a result. While this research primarily addressed the physical condition of the park spaces and the parks' ability to provide amenities to the neighboring residents, the results have implications for the social life of park spaces, as well: in the cases studied, the "buffer" parks almost always separated white middle- or upper-income areas from low-income communities of color.

Although later studies questioned the notion of boundary parks as green walls, suggesting that the populations along the immediate edges of the parks might actually be more similar to one another socio-economically and racially than the macro-level census tract data indicated, all affirmed the underuse of these spaces. Paul Gobster, a social scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, hypothesized that perhaps similar "barrier" trends might hold true in neighborhoods abutting any large single land use or physical feature, not only parks (Gobster 1998). Gobster also offered a caveat to relying on park condition and use patterns as indicators, noting situations in which these factors do not reflect a space's value to the surrounding community. In the late 1980s, for instance, Chicago's Lincoln Park was plagued with dying trees, typically considered a sign of neglect and disinvestment. In Lincoln Park's case, however, researchers determined that this was, instead, a sign that the park was "being loved to death" (Gobster 1998, 46; Gobster cites Williams 1990), with the damage coming primarily from hot charcoal or lawnmowers and weed whackers. Similarly, many well-loved parks have strong community support, but are nonetheless neglected by city park services due to funding or political constraints. Finally, there are instances of parks that are heavily used, but only by members of a single ethnic or socioeconomic group; thus, the spaces may not be serving the community at large.

Finally, in examining park use patterns, it is important to consider instances in which non-participation results from exclusion (explicit, as defined by policy, or implicit, as communicated by design and programming) and instances in which underuse

Figure 2.2: Theories of park underuse

Few theorists agree on the origins of park use patterns; over the years, premise after premise has been proposed. Myron Floyd (2001) outlines the dominant hypotheses in understanding the underuse of parks by minority groups:

Marginality hypothesis	• Contends that the long history of racial discrimination and inequality in the United States has led to a lower socioeconomic status, on average, for African Americans; these financial constraints, in turn, have prevented black Americans from taking full advantage of recreational opportunities in regional and national park spaces (as well as in other income-dependent cultural and social activities). • Implicit in this theory is a presumption that, all else being equal, all Americans would participate equally in outdoor recreational and nature-oriented activities (Washburne 1978 as summarized in Floyd 2001). • Subsequent research indicates that social mobility of minority groups has had little impact on national park visits over the past three decades, discrediting, in part, the notion that socioeconomic status is the primary factor in recreational choices (Manning 1999).
Sub-cultural hypothesis	• Argues that socioeconomic limitations are secondary to racial and ethnic preferences and value systems in influencing participation . • European ideals of nature and American notions of the frontier are immortalized in the country's national parks, but for many minority groups—and for Native Americans and African Americans in particular—these images of nature—and the physical creation of the parks themselves—are inextricably linked to collective memories of forced relocation, genocide, and slavery. • Group norms for appropriate recreational activities may dictate leisure choices to some degree, but planning and programming of national parks do little to reflect group identities of racial and ethnic minority groups as they struggle to preserve these identities in an increasingly diverse society (Floyd 2001; Floyd cites Washburne and Wall 1980; Meeker 1991; Floyd and Gramann 1993; Taylor 2000).
Assimilation hypothesis	• Posits that as minority group becomes more assimilated to majority culture, recreational choices become more like those of majority group; degrees of assimilation measured on two levels: *cultural*, or extent to which minority group has adopted characteristics of majority group, and *structural*, or extent to which minority group interacts with majority group in social contexts (Floyd 2001; Floyd cites Gordon 1964). • Distinction between assimilation of those ethnic groups that have been established in the United States for some time and no longer have an influx of new immigrants and those that have been in the country for only a short time and have been continually joined by newcomers; in the latter case, ethnic identities likely to be maintained for longer periods of time (Floyd 2001).
Discrimination hypothesis	• Argues that discriminatory actions against individuals or small groups can be significant deterrent to park use (Floyd 2001; Gobster 1998); regardless of whether actions are verbal or physical, discrimination creates sense of fear among members of minority ethnic groups and distrust of spaces that are predominantly "white," such as national parks or campgrounds. • Studies have found that both fear of intimidation (Wallace and Witter 1992 as cited in Floyd 2001) and actual experiences with interracial conflicts with white park visitors (West 1989) factor into decisions to visit regional open spaces. • Finally, the leisure choices of Americans of color can be influenced by actions of organizations, governments, and other institutions; although few studies have been conducted on institutional discrimination in the context of parks, there is some evidence that factors like hiring practices, advertising campaigns, programming, and pricing can inadvertently serve to exclude minority groups (Floyd 2001).

results from proactive choices on the part of the individual user. Normative assumptions on values and visions of parks may assign desire or intent to groups where none actually exists. The term "underuse" itself is laden with value statements: it indicates not only nonuse, but also "not enough" use. Where it appears in this thesis, it signifies use that is less than what residents themselves would like to see.

Grasping the problems inherent in park design that may be preventing the development of true multiethnic spaces and affecting park use by Americans of color is a difficult task. To date, there has been no comprehensive study of the primary causes of urban park underuse by racial and ethnic minority groups (Morris 2003; Rishbeth, 2002). Where such research exists, it primarily addresses the underuse of national and regional parks and open space by people of color, as noted above. To better understand the challenges in existing designs and programs of neighborhood parks, however, it is essential to consider both the theories underlying general park use patterns and the concrete causes of underuse. A comprehensive analysis of these elements can yield a set of strategies for improving the accessibility and relevancy of urban parks to communities of color.

None of the theories behind park use (presented in Figure 2.2) has been wholly proved or disproved, but logic suggests that there may be some truth to each hypothesis. While the marginality hypothesis has been partially dismissed as a primary factor influencing national park use patterns, for instance, strong evidence still exists to suggest that race and ethnicity are highly correlated to income, and that income in turn affects individuals' locational choices, and consequently, their access to neighborhood green spaces or their use of the automobile to seek open space outside of the city.

The sub-cultural theory makes sense in the context of the historical design framework proposed earlier in this section, while institutional and interpersonal discrimination in public space have been well documented in practice. Moreover, researchers have demonstrated that assimilation patterns—discussed at length in the next section—affect individuals' social, political, economic, and lifestyle choices, so it follows that assimilation—or lack thereof—can influence recreational preferences and decisions, as well. In assessing potential causes of park underuse, then, the operating assumption will be that each of these hypotheses may contribute to the ways in which people of color use parks in the United States.

Causes of underuse

The identifiable causes of park underutilization vary as widely as the overarching theories underlying those causes do. While the literature acknowledges that some needs are common to all humans—the desire to feel safe and secure, for instance, or to have space to play (Beer 2003)—other needs may be linked to cultural norms and

backgrounds. Patterns of socializing, for instance, are dramatically different from culture to culture, as are recreational interests. Reflecting on some of the specific factors affecting residents' decisions to visit parks can provide a broader understanding of the elements at play in planning and creating parks that serve all people.

Lack of awareness: Lack of awareness can affect the use of open space (particularly among newcomers) at the neighborhood, regional, and national levels. Recent immigrants may feel overwhelmed by their new surroundings, and may not have the necessary information to find and visit parks. Even among urbanites who have lived in cities all their lives, residents may also feel that city and regional park spaces are "'not for the likes of us'" (Wong 2001, 1).

Stewardship issues: Cronon (1996) and others also note that traditional American notions of environmental stewardship rely on the distinction between humans as part of nature and humans as keepers of nature; stewardship activities in national and regional parks are designed to reduce human impact on the land, a concept that may not make sense to ethnic groups that do not consider humans and nature to be separate entities[6] (Floyd 2001). This is equally true on the neighborhood scale. In Latino culture, for instance, no clear distinction between nature and society exists; instead, public spaces are an integral component of human life, and parks and other open spaces serve as primary sites of social interaction (Mendez 2004). Other cultures may have similarly divergent views of the public realm.

In addition, past experiences with nature and parks may be quite negative for lower-income individuals who have few opportunities to visit well-maintained and well-programmed parks, or who are recent immigrants from countries in which "nature" is strongly associated with the hardships of rural life. Mostyn (1979, as cited in Beer 2003) also found that urban residents were often reluctant to improve local green spaces themselves. They worried that vandalism of the site might cause trauma, or that, when the site appeared unkempt, neighbors would presume it to be uncared for. Mostyn also found that residents generally felt a lack of control of the future of the open space. Parks planners must overcome these obstacles in order to foster a sense of community stewardship.

Financial and time costs: The strong link between race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in the United States cannot be overlooked in assessing park use patterns. Poverty has emerged as one of the critical factors affecting park use; low-income individuals may be working multiple jobs or jobs at odd hours, leaving them with little, if any, leisure time during daylight hours (Morris 2003).

Lack of appropriate interpretive information and activities: Some park spaces may be inadvertently inaccessible to ethnic and racial

[6] Native Americans, Latinos, and some African subgroups all fall into this category (Floyd 2001; Floyd cites Burnett and Conover 1989, Lynch 1993, McDonald and McAvoy 1997).

minority groups because they lack culturally relevant interpretive information—the facts and stories of a place that are typically found on park signs or reflected in art or other symbols within the space. Morris (2003) discusses the cultural politics of place and identity, and the ways in which these two notions have become conflated over time (Duncan and Ley 1993; Morris 2003; Morris cites Agyeman and Spooner 1997, Anderson 1988, Sibley 1995).

While this is particularly problematic for national and regional park systems grappling with varying cultural concepts of nature and the longstanding conservation-preservation debate, the strong racial and ethnic associations with urban and rural spaces (essentially, a black-white/city-suburb dichotomy) also affect perceptions of city park spaces. In Somerville, Massachusetts, for instance, parks planners created a "storytelling" neighborhood park dotted with public art fixtures presenting the histories of area residents and the community. Which stories the art tells—and how—dramatically impacts how comfortable each group feels in the space.

Safety: Safety is a significant concern in urban parks in most cities, including Minneapolis and Oakland. While residents of all ethnic and racial groups cited safety as among their concerns in a 1998 study in Northern California (Kalil 1998), African American, Asian, and Native American park visitors reported lack of safety as one of the primary reasons they rarely used neighborhood parks. Other studies found that women also feel ill at ease in park spaces much of the time; in cities where park staff are available, women are more apt to visit neighborhood parks, especially at night (Burgess and Harrison 1987; Burgess, Harrison, and Limb 1988). Among women of color, there are additional safety worries, as women may fear both sexual and racial assaults (Morris 2003; Morris cites Kilmurray 1995, Agyeman and Spooner 1997, Agyeman 1990).

Discrimination: Incidents of discrimination—or fear of such incidents—can often keep racial and ethnic minority groups away from public open spaces. A 1993 survey of 500 African American, Hispanic, and Asian American park users in Chicago, for instance, found that roughly ten percent of these visitors had been the targets of discriminatory verbal harassment, physical assaults, or other non-verbal actions in the past, usually the result of encounters with members of other racial or ethnic groups in the park (Gobster and Delgado 1993). In most American cities, there is also a deep distrust of authority figures among residents of color, and many members of minority groups doubt the ability or willingness of law enforcement officials or parks officers to intervene in racially-motivated assaults (Morris 2003; Morris cites Netto et al 2001).

One of the earliest—and most comprehensive—studies of minority use of green space was the Chicago Park District's landmark research on Chicagoans' perceptions and use of Lincoln

Park (Chicago Park District 1995; Gobster and Delgado 1993; Gobster 1998; Gobster cites Delgado 1994). Researchers surveyed over 500 Latino, Asian American, and African American park users and conducted follow-up focus groups with specific ethnic subgroups. A number of trends emerged:

- At least ten percent of park visitors of color had experienced racially-motivated discrimination or verbal or physical harassment in the park in the past (Gobster 1998).
- Older Chinese American adults feared being verbally assaulted by African American youth in the park, and consequently avoided some areas and some times of day (Gobster 1998).
- African American and Latino teens were acutely aware of "territory" within the park, and feared venturing out of these spaces, which were typically defined by gangs.
- Cambodian American adults had occasionally been asked by white adults to leave specific areas of the park because "they didn't 'belong'" (Gobster 1998, 47), adding to unease and security concerns for park visitors of color.

Disconnect between designers and users: A study in the mid-1980s (Burgess, Harrison, and Limb 1988) found consistent disconnects between residents' perceptions of "open space" and planners' definitions of such space. Residents cited everyday pockets of green space—a roadside berm, a nearby cemetery, a stream bank, a corner of grass at a bus stop—as part of the public realm. Until that point, planners and designers had focused solely on formal open spaces in assessing access to green areas.

Millward and Mostyn (1989) also identified discrepancies between planners' perceptions of user needs and what users actually wanted in parks. One group of designers, for instance, believed that park visitors would benefit from a more formal, traditional park on a site. In fact, users desired a more natural space where they could reconnect to nature. The research also found that many user studies of parks failed to adequately identify the key qualities that brought visitors to the spaces they did use. Most users noted on their questionnaires that they visited neighborhood parks only with their children, but observations of the parks found that, in fact, nearly half of visitors were adults on their own. Similarly, many users identified water features as a favorite aspect of park space, but again, observations found that only a fraction of park visitors ever approached the water.

Finally, another Chicago study sought to understand the needs of the city's Chinatown community as part of a planning process intended to add open space to the park-poor neighborhood and connect the Chinatown neighborhood to an adjacent public housing development. Interviewers discovered that tensions between the Chinese and African American communities were so severe that most Chinatown residents opposed the creation of any common open space, fearing discrimination and safety issues (Zhang and Gobster, 1998).

3 designing for diversity: the creation of multicultural open space

If existing American parks do not meet the needs of ethnic and racial minority groups, what types of urban open spaces might better serve these communities? Many of the park use studies conducted over the last two decades suggest that white Americans and Americans of color have vastly different preferences for open space use. Considering these use preferences can enable municipalities to capitalize fully on the parks that already exist in the urban core to ensure that these spaces are truly amenities for diverse neighborhoods.

For instance, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans are much more likely to visit urban parks in large groups and engage in social activities and sports (Gobster and Delgado 1993). Research by Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) supports these findings, indicating that in Los Angeles metropolitan area, Latinos frequently visit parks in large groups or with extended families and make active use of the spaces—even when the parks are designed for more passive uses. And in the San Francisco Bay Area, a 2004 study of regional park use by the Bay Area Open Space Council found that both Latino and African American residents favored more extensive development of recreational areas in parks and typically avoided "wilderness" spaces (Bay Area Open Space Council 2004).[1]

The San Francisco study also explored the use preferences of Native Americans and found that they preferred to recreate in extremely large groups of as many as one hundred people. Native American communities also relied on parks as spaces for cultural education much more so than did visitors of other races or ethnicities. Finally, the study determined that there was little evidence to support the common perception that people of color are less likely to support preservation of the environment. In fact, Latino voters in the Bay Area proved more willing to support increased sales taxes for the conservation of parks than any other group.

How can the design of small neighborhood green spaces effectively accommodate the use preferences of multiple racial and ethnic

[1] The Bay Area Open Space Council's study does distinguish between U.S.-born Latinos and recent immigrants, however; U.S.-born Latinos were more likely to share the use preferences of mainstream white society (Bay Area Open Space Council 2004).

groups? Cultural use preferences strongly influence the types of park space sought by members of various racial or ethnic groups. Understanding what makes a park "multicultural" and how such a design might be manifested in practice provides a starting point for creating and assessing cross-cultural park plans.

Designing for cultural use preferences

Much of the recent discussion around the underuse of American national parks by people of color highlights the rising prevalence of "majority minority" cities in the United States. As Americans of European descent make up a smaller and smaller percentage of the country's population, for instance, the existence of the national parks system will depend increasingly on the National Park Services' ability to create spaces that are relevant and accessible to communities of color, rather than reflective only of traditional European ideals of nature (Morris 2003). This is doubly important in the neighborhood context, where communities are apt to be even more diverse.

What makes a space culturally relevant and appropriate? A 1998 study (Kalil 1998) asked community residents with various ethnic and racial backgrounds to identify their favorite types of urban open spaces and to note the features they liked best in these spaces. While almost all survey respondents cited city plazas as favorite spaces, they agreed on few other points. Many white residents reported liking regional open spaces and large landscaped parks because they were "natural, wild, and scenic" (Kalil 1998, 73), while Latinos preferred neighborhood parks because of the many opportunities for socialization and sports activities. African Americans identified both urban waterfront parks and neighborhood parks as places they especially liked, while Native Americans spoke of sacred lands and open tribal space. Americans of Arabic, South Asian, and Indian descent desired parks—large or small—with open green spaces. Both Asian and white immigrants reported missing botanical gardens in their home countries; Latino immigrants emphasized the importance of the public plaza in their native lands.

In some cases, residents may simply adapt parks and other landscapes that are not effectively serving the community. In Los Angeles, California and Somerville, Massachusetts, for instance, Latino youth often play soccer in the open lawns of parks. Both cities attempted to prevent this use of the space, altering the park layouts to make play more difficult and posting signs forbidding soccer games. However, the youth integrated the new elements of the park into the game itself, using new fences or boulders as goal posts (Huang, McNally, and Mozingo 2005). In other spaces these adaptations may be more subtle: a new path carved out between existing paths, for instance, or a tree limb pulled into a playground to provide a makeshift bench. These alterations are nonetheless strong indicators of need in these communities, and can help to define a starting point for park redesigns.

Defining multicultural space

Essential to the multicultural design process is a common understanding of what the desired outcome should be. What should a multiethnic space look or feel like, and how can this be achieved and evaluated? One of the primary challenges in defining what a successful park—or any other public space—designed to serve a diverse population looks like. Even among those advocating such spaces, discord exists: does a multicultural space facilitate intergroup interaction, or simply create parallel spaces for different racial and ethnic groups? How "multicultural" can a space be before it loses its identity altogether?

Kalil (1998, 18) attempts to describe such a space:

> It is easier to describe what something is not. It is not mute or sterile. It is not unquestioning. It can look like the Olmstedian park, but overlaid with a complex system of messages about cultural debates centered on space, ecology, and politics. It can look like the minimalist plaza, but inlaid with reflections on cultural encounter, delight, and fear. It can look much like everything we have ever created but imbued with recognition of the reality and value of difference, formed through a participatory process that does not seek false consensus, but thriving instead on balanced discord through explicative gestures.

The designer's interpretation of "multicultural" is key: for some, interaction and intermingling are requisites of a truly multicultural space, while for others, simple exposure to other groups can suffice. The latter solution may be appropriate for large parks like Boston's Franklin Park or Chicago's Lincoln Park, where very different populations live along park edges, parks are set off physically from adjacent neighborhoods, and the relative abundance of space allows for the a multitude of uses within the park limits. However, such an approach is ineffectual for a small neighborhood space, which serve both as a spaces for respite and recreation and as a critical components of the urban fabric and the local community.

At the neighborhood scale, multicultural design should strive to create space that welcomes all residents and avoids compartmentalizing activity spaces, lest this lead to group separation as well. This may necessarily entail design tradeoffs; in a small neighborhood open space, for instance, designers may not be able to include all of the recreational facilities or features that a community desires. However, a flexible design that integrates uses creatively can be combined with a well-conceived programming schedule to provide space for interaction as well as for the needs of specific groups. For instance, community garden space may be incorporated into picnic areas, playgrounds, or gathering areas; an adaptable playing field may be designed to accommodate a number of different sports depending on needs.

Elements of multiethnic design

A number of design decisions in parks planning can support the multitude of user preferences in diverse settings. Many of these interventions can be as simple as the placement of park furniture. A trio of picnic tables, for instance, provides space for a large extended family gathering, whereas a series of single tables spaced out across a lawn sends a signal that large groups are unwelcome. Similarly, benches or other sitting areas alongside a play area can create integenerational space for adults to sit and watch children plan, enhancing the sense of safety and security for parents. Community gathering spaces and adaptable spaces for play can also be welcoming cues for individuals who may not share the use preferences of the majority group. Permitting and encouraging such adaptability can also provide critical signals to park managers as to who is using a space and how.

Understanding cultural perceptions of landscape is also critical in creating multiethnic public spaces. For instance, theorists who distinguish between the models of nature as a resource to be controlled and managed by man and nature as an ecological entity that includes man have also observed that the worldviews of Judeo-Christian societies and Hindu and Buddhist societies correlate closely to this dichotomous framework (Rishbeth 2002; Rishbeth cites O'Riordan 1989). "The construct of nature within a given culture group is considered key to perceptions of landscape," Clare Rishbeth of the Department of Landscape at Sheffield University notes (Rishbeth 2002, 352). "Place attachment"—an emotional connection to a specific environment—can give places symbolic meanings that may connect to underlying visions of what nature should look like or how it should feel. For some immigrant groups, a place that looks or feels like a childhood landscape (or "home") can be especially significant, and may help to alleviate the "culture shock" associated with the new country (Rishbeth 2002). In the United Kingdom, for instance, immigrants from Eastern Europe, brought to the British countryside for the first time, observed that the place was just "like home" (Wong 1996), and felt at ease.

This underscores the importance of creating park spaces that reflect pluralistic, cross-cultural visions of nature, since many members of ethnic minority groups have little place attachment to landscapes that reflect a predominantly Anglo ideal of nature. As new immigrant populations in communities like Eastlake and Phillips grow precipitously and American cities approach "majority minority" conditions, the debate around equity in the creation and placement of new green spaces must also consider how adequately existing open spaces are meeting the needs of new urban communities.

One of the more common approaches to creating attachment to a public place entails including symbols in the landscape—cultural artwork, perhaps, or a Japanese garden or Chinese gate to demarcate cultural space (Rishbeth 2002). Rios, for instance, stresses the importance of including artistic collaborators in public space design processes; their unique perspectives on culture offer a medium through which diverse groups can voice their values and concerns. "They're a filter to express the conflicts of culture, or the core expressive nature...of what a community wants to be," he explained (M. Rios, personal interview, March 18, 2005). Others agree: "...programming active space is important to meeting the needs of diverse users," one designer observed when asked to reflect on common notions of multicultural design, "but art most of all has forged far ahead of either; it is one of the best ways to address identity, conflicts, beliefs, and similarities in a positive way" (Kalil 1998, 95). At the same time, however, there are lingering concerns that culture communicated through art may be inaccessible to the broader public. Here, the importance of involving the public in the actual creation of the art, rather than leaving this task to the designer, comes into play.

While art and other cultural symbols can serve as cues to welcome and engage visitors, they can be equally problematic, particularly if the symbolism or meaning is not fully understood by the designer and reflects a stereotypical understanding of a minority group rather than a genuine grasp of the culture itself. As a representation of cultural identity, symbols also run the risk of being co-opted by another group (often, the dominant cultural group), which can counteract the intended message (Rishbeth 2002).

In the case of many Chinatowns, for instance—Vancouver's (Anderson 1987, Rishbeth 2002) and Singapore's (Kennedy School of Government 1999) are discussed specifically in the literature, although the phenomenon is also evident in cities like San Francisco and Boston—symbols that initially represented visual signs of home to provide new immigrants with something familiar had been co-opted by the dominant society by the late twentieth century to signify cultural tourism spaces that had been "cleansed" of many of the aspects—overcrowded apartments, unsanitary conditions, chaotic streets—that sometimes kept tourists away. But the new Chinatowns were sometimes so sterile—or expensive—that they were no longer accessible to the Chinese immigrants themselves.

A related risk is the danger that symbols will be misinterpreted or will send messages of exclusion. Rishbeth (2002) found that one attempt to integrate cultural symbols into a garden design in Birmingham, England led to conflict over the adaptation of forms with strong cultural meanings. In that instance, a (presumably well-

intentioned) white resident suggested that the curved arch typical of many Islamic buildings might be integrated into the street furniture in and around the park; the area's Pakistani community objected vehemently, since in Muslim culture, those forms are reserved for religious buildings. Similarly, several older white residents of the neighborhood worried that an entirely multicultural design might send the symbol that the space was "for Pakistanis only" (Rishbeth 2002, 359).

Other elements of multicultural open space planning revolve around programming changes. For instance, a recent study in Boston, Massachusetts (Lanfer and Taylor 2005) found that many park rules and policies prevented Latinos and other immigrant families from playing soccer in area parks. City park policies presumed that soccer games would be affiliated with an organized league; parks required reservations well in advance, and many charged fees and required forms filled out in English. In contrast, recent immigrants from Central and South America typically preferred to play soccer as part of an all-day, impromptu outing with extended families—a use not accommodated by existing park spaces.

In both the United States and abroad, practitioners exploring potential solutions to the park use dilemma have also found success in multi-pronged strategies to address park participation alongside other connected social problems. Strategic public-private partnerships have been a critical tool; local nonprofit organization and other non-governmental players have also factored prominently into the success of coalitions to empower communities of color (and more broadly, disenfranchised low-income communities) in the planning process (Morris 2003; Lipman 2001; Morris cites Department for Culture, Media, and Sport 2002). These types of partnerships have been most common in regional or citywide planning projects, but there is a great deal of potential for coalition building at the neighborhood level, as well.

In addition to encouraging greater contact with nature and use of parks among ethnic minority groups, a number of researchers and practitioners also advocate programs specifically designed to foster stewardship of the land in low-income communities and neighborhoods of color. Longstanding programs like New York City's Fresh Air Fund and the national Outward Bound attempt to connect city children to nature and the environment, and in recent years, a number of organizations promoting urban agriculture and community gardens in the hearts of cities have found great success, bolstered by strong support from new immigrants whose roots are often in agricultural communities. At some level, this sense of ownership of and responsibility for the land creates a sense of belonging. Others advocate for better outreach to ethnic communities, better training to teach

park staff how to engage and interact with ethnic communities, and focused projects to give minority groups better access to information and resources that will allow them to participate fully in environmental activities.

There is also a growing acknowledgment among researchers that community consultation—long considered an integral component of planning other elements of the built urban environment in the United States—also plays a critical role in defining and creating public open space (Morris 2003; Morris cites Greenhalgh and Warpole, 1995). This entails not only engaging the community in the design process, but engaging the community in the design process in the right way. The United Kingdom's Commission for Racial Equity notes the importance of acknowledging that minority communities do not speak with one voice; a community leader may not be necessarily bring all views to the table (Commission for Racial Equality and Sport England n.d.). Nina Morris of OPENspace adds that "organizations must not assume that cultural values about the role of natural open spaces and their benefits are universal or treat 'different' communities as intrinsically alien" (Morris 2003, 15). There is also the added challenge of engaging communities not accustomed to being included or heard; this can be an enormous obstacle for parks planners to overcome, particularly in the context of working with new immigrant groups (Rishbeth 2002).

The role of practitioners in implementing multicultural design

Finally, successful multicultural design and planning require a strong commitment to the outcome on the part of professionals—a key element present in the Clinton and Peavey Park redesigns, but one that is often absent from such processes. In the years since the debate around multiculturalism began, the design professions have been ambivalent about the relevance of and strategies for cross-cultural design strategies.

In 1998, a student of landscape architecture and planning at the University of California at Berkeley attempted to catalog and dissect the perspectives of designers and landscape architects on multicultural design (Kalil 1998). While the focus of the work was the connection between landscape architecture and multiculturalism, many of her findings and conversations reveal deep conflicts underlying many designers' approaches to cultural contexts and controversies. The research identified an internal debate within the design profession around the ethical responsibility of the designer and the role of advocacy in architecture. Kalil notes that it "is becoming clear that for many professionals, an attitude is emerging that states: here, we have discussed this—we have fulfilled our social duty and so let's feel better, we'll just have to muddle through" (Kalil 1998, 92).

Research subjects included architects, planners, and landscape architects of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds and sexes; all had strong views on the relevance—and even existence—of multicultural design. "'Pardon me,'" one designer interjected in the midst of an interview, "'but I think this whole thing [multiculturalism] is just bullshit. Design is about providing for human needs, making consensus about trade-offs by individuals—I don't care if there are cultural symbols in a design; that's not what's important! It is making spaces for individuals, not cultures'" (Kalil 1998, 94).

Some distinguished between the political and professional contexts, noting that, as one interviewee put it, "multiculturalism is only a political phenomena and has nothing to do with design." Others chastised the movement around multicultural design: "'For a white guy, it's a minefield! Multiculturalism is about white power and white guilt, [but] under all of this stuff is fundamental human needs, okay?'" (Kalil 1998, 94). Still others expressed frustration that "'communities of color...think they have to have one of their own to do something good for them and that's not fair'" (Kalil 1998, 95).

What is the role of the planner or the designer in creating multicultural space, then? Is there a place for a community outsider in facilitating cultural design? The persistent dilemma of planner as technician versus planner as facilitator or mediator surfaces. Walter Hood, for example, writes of the planner as "surrogate advocate" in a public design process: the professional gives voice to underrepresented groups through action. Giving such a name to the position, Hood argues, gives the planner a better ability to understand the parameters and limitations of his or her role in the planning and design process (Hood 1999). When designers and planners facilitate, rather than dictate, the design of open space, power shifts from planner to community and creates a climate for productive conversations on the cross-cultural elements relevant to a given community.

The cases considered in the following chapters—Peavey Park in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Clinton Park in Oakland, California—present two instances in which designers and planners collaborated with communities to work towards multicultural design outcomes. Examining the techniques employed in these two projects and the results achieved provides a great deal of insight into the ways in which design professionals can influence and shape multiethnic open space in the future.

4 learning to listen: the peavey park project, minneapolis, mn

Peavey Park, a 7.6-acre neighborhood green space, sits near the geographic heart of the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, long typecast as a predominantly white Midwestern enclave. Today, the park features a picnic area, wading pool, basketball courts, and a sports field; the space primarily serves the Phillips community, the largest neighborhood in Minneapolis, both in population and in area.

Regional context: Minnesota and the Twin Cities

At the state level, Minnesota has long been a model for experimental initiatives in local governance; following the First World War, a number of cooperatives—from credit unions to creamery purchasing associations—were established in Minnesota and protected by state legislation requiring the state department of agriculture to foster and support them. Today, the financial, commercial, and residential cooperatives in the state number in the thousands ("Minnesota: History" 2005). Many attribute this phenomenon to the Scandinavian traditions of cooperatives. Whatever its origins, Minnesota's openness to innovation and new models of management and governance has made the state an especially receptive climate for new models of planning and local autonomy.

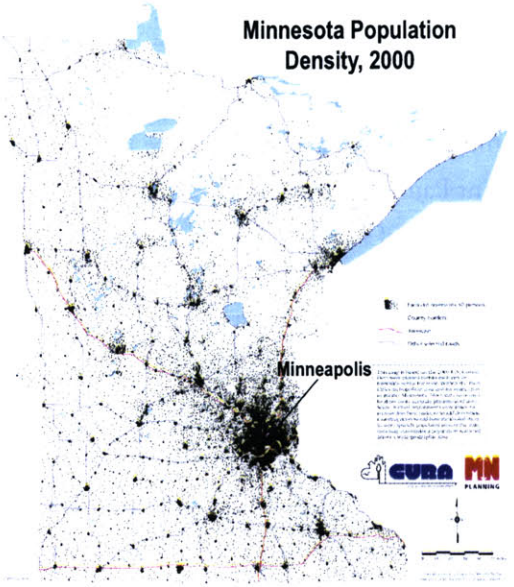


Figure 4.1: The cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis form the center of the Twin Cities metro area in southeast Minnesota. *(Source: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities <http://www.cura.umn.edu/>)*

Minnesota also operates outside of mainstream American politics, with strong progressive and populist traditions that have persisted for generations; party politics in the dominant Democratic-Farmer-

Labor Party often straddle the national left-right divide, for instance. Although the state has voted Democratic in all but one national election in the past half-century, the farm and labor lobbies are significantly more powerful than their national counterparts, and drive many local and state decision-making processes.

Finally, the Twin Cities region is one of only two American metropolitan areas with operational regional government. (The other is Portland, Oregon.) The cities of Minneapolis and nearby Saint Paul, the state capital, have an unusual relationship. They are the first and second largest cities in the state, respectively, and only ten miles separate them, but they fall under the jurisdiction of two separate counties. For decades, this made metropolitan planning a complex political undertaking, but in 1967, the Minnesota Legislature created the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council (the "Met Council") to oversee regional land use and transportation for the Twin Cities. Legislators worried that growing sprawl would cost the state in new roads and sewers. They tasked the Met Council, which also has limited revenue raising and tax-base sharing powers, with managing new growth to concentrate it in areas with existing infrastructure, a philosophy not unlike today's "smart growth" notion. Today, the Met Council is the primary decision-making body for regional planning in the Twin Cities, with Hennepin and Ramsey counties playing supportive roles.

The city of Minneapolis

History

Nestled at the northern tip of the Mississippi River, the city of Minneapolis once marked the end of the navigable portion of the river. The first large wave of settlers arrived in the area in the 1850s after the 1851 Treaty de Traverse de Sioux opened land west of the Mississippi for settlement, and the city grew quickly in the second half of the nineteenth century, reaching a population of 150,000 by 1890 (Haugo and Laakso 2001).

During the city's first fifty years, European immigrants figured prominently in development as settlers who had established homesteads in the territory in the 1850s migrated to the growing urban center. The first immigrants of color arrived in the state in the mid-1880s, when Chinese laborers who had been driven out of California by an intense anti-Chinese movement migrated to the Twin Cities and Duluth. Although the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act had dramatically reduced the flow of immigrants from China into the United States, the Minnesota Chinese community continued to grow in the 1880s and 1890s as xenophobic sentiments rose on the coasts (Haugo and Laakso 2001). European American Minnesotans further fueled the growth of the state's Chinese community by opening the region's religious and civic organizations to the new immigrants; in 1914, the first Chinese students enrolled at the University of Minnesota (Haugo and Laakso 2001). By the early

part of the twentieth century, the city's religious, racial and ethnic minority populations began to diversify, with new immigrants from Asia and Southeastern Europe[2] and African American migrants from the southern United States arriving to what was then a moderately integrated urban community.

As racial, ethnic, political, and religious minority populations grew in the Twin Cities, however, so, too, did discrimination. By 1923, the Minnesota Public Library estimates, there may have been as many as ten active chapters of the Ku Klux Klan in Minneapolis, all focused on attacking the city's Catholics, Jews, socialists, communists, and racial and ethnic minority groups. In 1946, sociologist Carey McWilliams designated Minneapolis the most anti-Semitic city in the country (Haugo and Laakso 2001). However, the city government—then headed by the progressive Hubert Humphrey, who would later serve Minnesota in the U.S. Senate and ultimately in the vice presidency—responded by creating the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights (later the city's civil rights commission). This organization worked to educate the public on discrimination issues, helped to coordinate training in race relations for the city's police force, and laid the groundwork for the nation's first municipal fair employment ordinance (Haugo and Laakso 2001). Settlement houses throughout the city also provided safe spaces for racial and ethnic populations, helping families to settle in the Twin Cities and to overcome job and housing discrimination (Haugo and Laakso 2001).

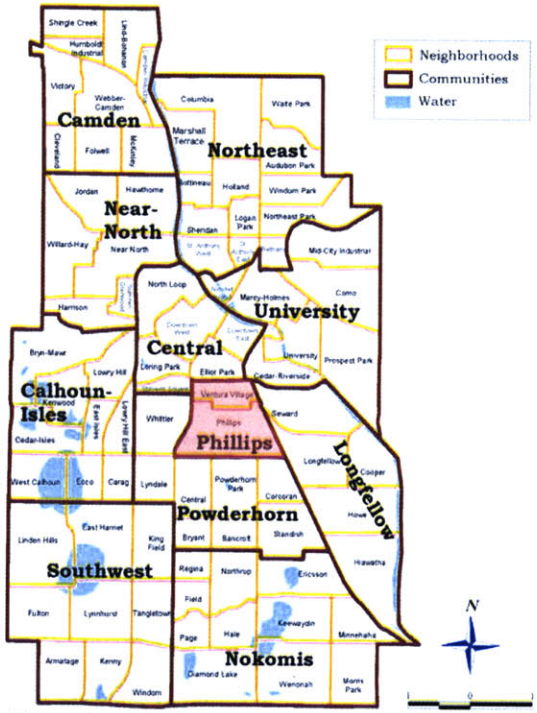
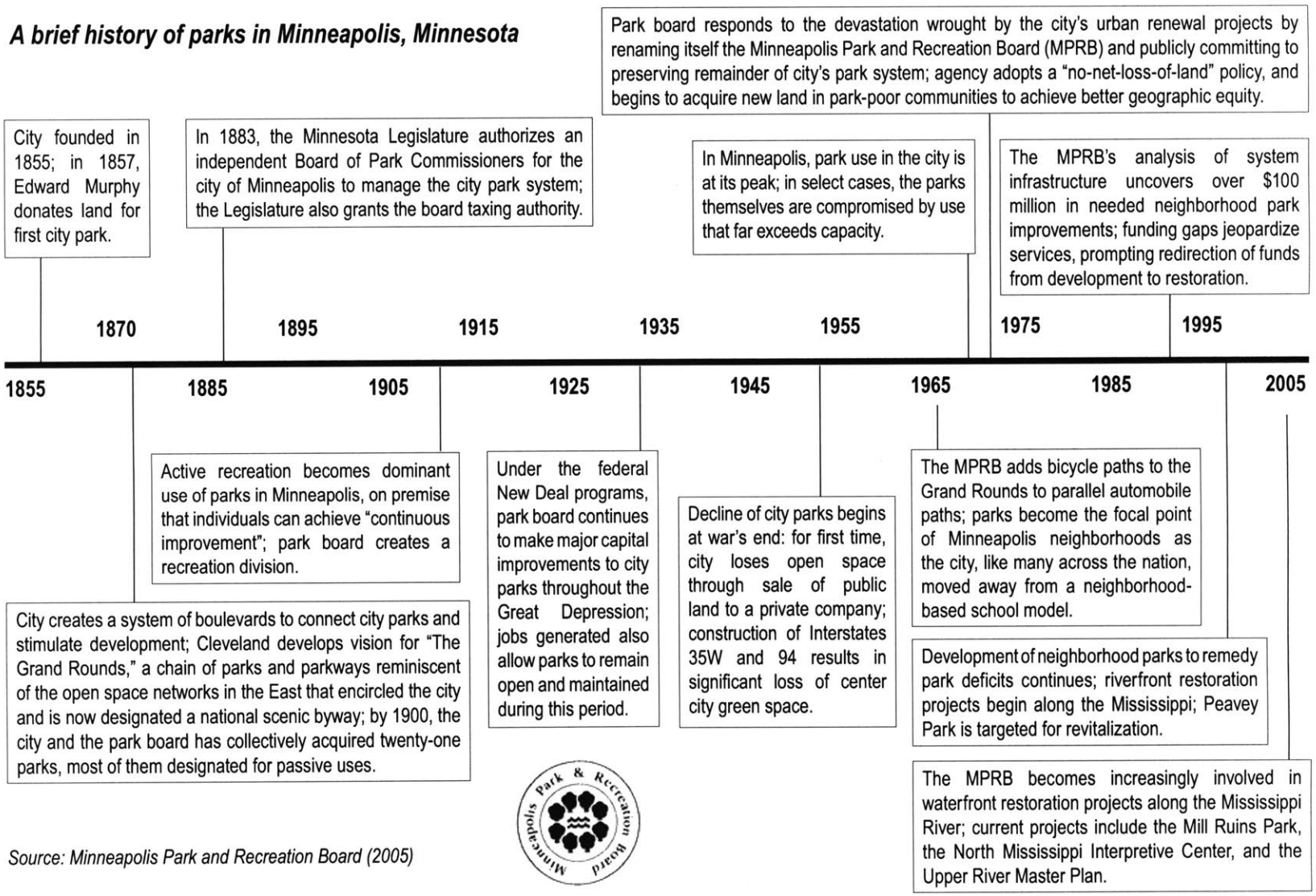


Figure 4.2: The Phillips neighborhood lies at the geographic center of the city of Minneapolis. *(Source: Crossroads Resource Center <http://www.crcworks.org/hennepin/censushome.htm>)*

Minnesota Native Americans—and particularly, the Sioux and Ojibwe tribes—have played critical roles in the development of the larger Minneapolis-Saint Paul region over the decades, but until the 1950s, Native Americans had been largely absent from the city centers themselves. The federal Relocation Act of 1956 saw the relocation of over half of the nation's Native Americans to urban centers, however, and as reservation land was

[2] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the established Northern European American white community rarely considered members of white ethnic groups—including individuals of Polish, Italian, Romanian, Russian, and other Southeastern European descent, as well as most European Jews—as "white" (Jacobson 1999).

A brief history of parks in Minneapolis, Minnesota



Source: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (2005)

reclaimed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Minneapolis Native American population ballooned. In 1990, the city had the nation's fourth highest percentage of native peoples, defined by the Census Bureau as Americans of American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut descent (Haugo and Laakso 2001).

By the mid-1990s, however, Minneapolis also had America's highest concentration of nonwhite people living at or below the federal poverty level, and in 1992, the highest unemployment rate for African Americans in any American city (Minneapolis Urban League 2005). Violence in the city climbed, and when the New York *Times* reported in 1995 that the Minneapolis per capita homicide rate had surpassed New York City's, the paper dubbed the city "Murderapolis" (Luger and Hoven 2000).

Throughout the decade, tensions grew between the black and white communities in Minneapolis. In 1995, the Minneapolis Urban League reported receiving over fifty complaints of police misconduct each month, primarily from black residents, and in 1996 almost two thirds of complaints to the Minneapolis Civilian Review Authority Board, the body tasked with hearing citizen reports of Minneapolis police misconduct, came from black residents, although they represented only a quarter of the city's population.

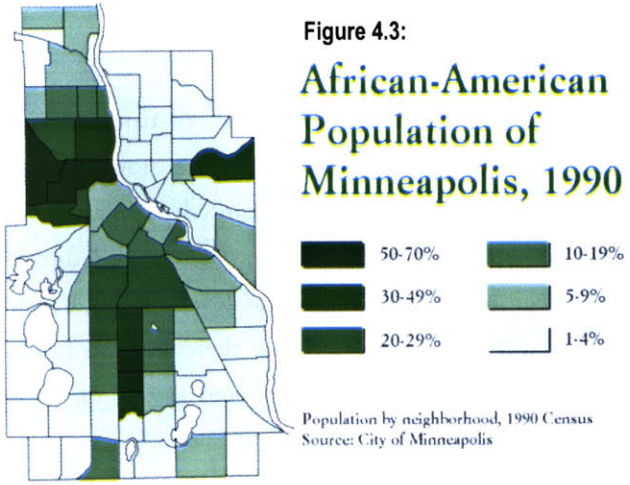
In response to the new urban crisis in Minneapolis, the city, the state, and the federal government invested a great deal in community and economic development to jumpstart the city. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program, described later in this chapter, has also played a critical role in this process over the years.

Minneapolis today

While the Twin Cities have had their share of troubles over the years, both Saint Paul and Minneapolis are now aggressively rebounding; the 2000 census revealed marked population booms in both cities. When the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* polled residents in the metro region to gauge happiness levels in 2000, seventy percent of Minneapolitans reported that their city was headed in the right direction, with the city parks cited as one of the area's greatest strengths (Civic Strategies 2000).

In recent years, the city has also seen a number of other triumphs: in the late 1990s, the Minnesota Twins, the region's only professional baseball team, agreed to stay in the city after a decade-long struggle, and today, an open-air stadium is planned as part of a comprehensive downtown revitalization project. In June 2004, nearly thirty years after Minneapolis planners began work on the project, a light rail line connecting the downtown district to the southern suburbs opened; the Hiawatha line runs along the eastern edge of Phillips, providing new connections to downtown jobs for residents. Additional lines are planned in the coming years, and in March 2005, the city embarked on a ten-

Figures 4.3 to 4.6: The city's communities of color have long been concentrated in the downtown area and in Phillips and the adjacent neighborhoods; the Latino and Native American populations in these areas grew significantly in the late twentieth century. Phillips, with its uniquely trapezoidal shape, is especially noticeable in these demographic patterns. *(Source: Minneapolis Public Library <http://mplib.org>)*



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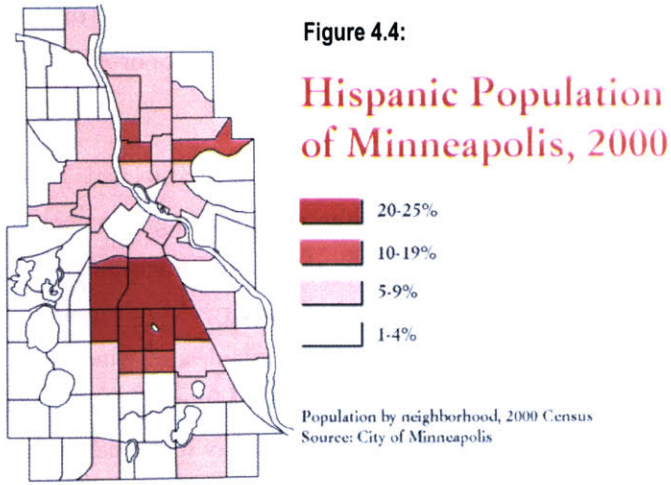

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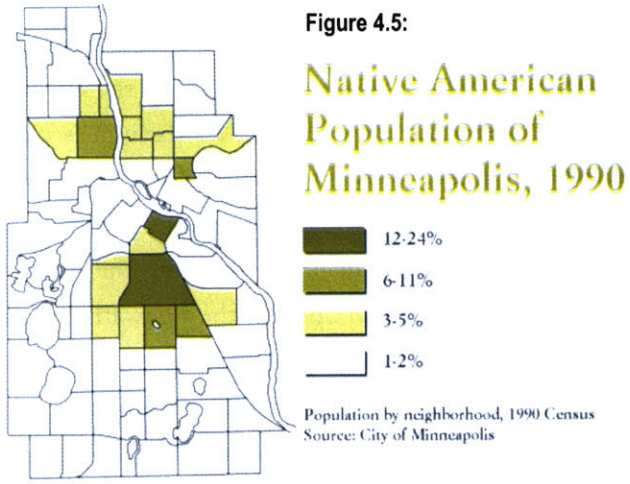

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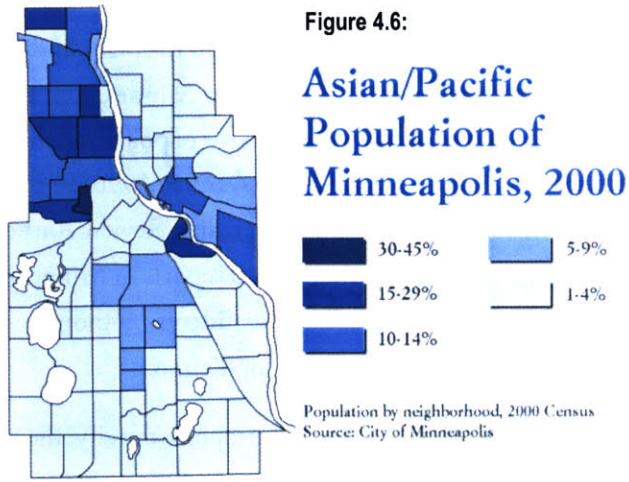


Figure 4.6:

year mobility plan to strengthen public transit, roads, pedestrian ways, and bikeways across Minneapolis, including several key projects that will run through the Phillips neighborhood. A month later, Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signed an $886 million bonding bill that included financing for a heavy rail commuter line to connect downtown Minneapolis to surrounding suburban communities (and, ultimately, to neighboring Saint Paul) in an effort to reestablish the city as the center of the metropolitan region and prevent the decentralization of employment.

The Phillips neighborhood

Bounded by Interstate 94 to the north and Interstate 35W along its western edge, the Phillips neighborhood—Minneapolis' largest community, and its poorest—is also the most diverse community in the state of Minnesota (Young, A. 1996). People of color comprise nearly seventy percent of the neighborhood, with dozens of ethnic and racial groups represented. Over a quarter of the city's Native Americans live in Phillips, where they make up twelve percent of the population, more than in any other city neighborhood. The community's Latino community is also growing rapidly: between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population increased 550 percent (Phillips Neighborhood Network [PNN] 2005). Many new immigrants also settle in Phillips when they first arrive in the city, leading to a strong Hmong, Somali, and Mexican presence in the

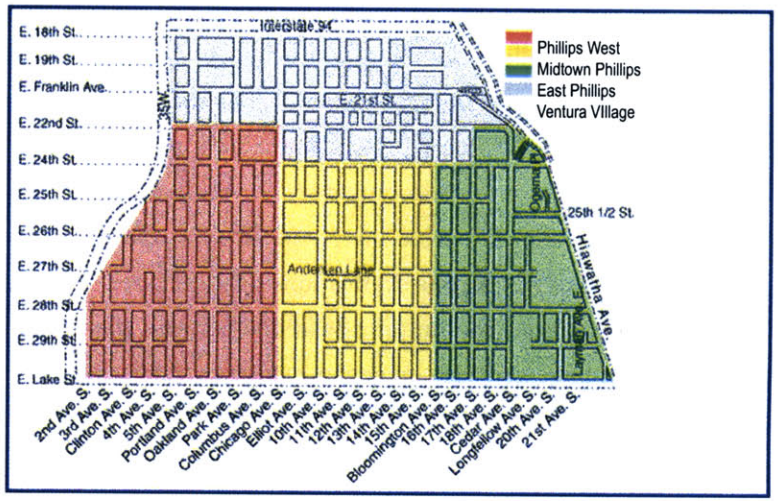


Figure 4.7: The Phillips neighborhood. *(Source: Phillips Neighborhood Network <www.pnn.org/>)*

community.

Although Phillips has historically been a neighborhood of color, the devastating poverty that characterizes the community today is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until the early 1960s, when I-35W was sited through Phillips, the neighborhood was a stable blue-collar working-class community. However, the construction of I-35W in the 1960s and I-94 in the 1970s required extensive home acquisition and land clearance in Phillips, and effectively cut the neighborhood off from downtown Minneapolis and isolated working class communities in the southeast corner of the city. "There was no more community," remembered Joe Steffel, a

neighborhood resident who grew up Phillips, in a 1990 interview with the *Alley*, a Phillips neighborhood newspaper (Marks 1990). "We were caught in the middle, weren't involved downtown or out in the suburbs. We became transient. You don't feel like you have any roots, you're stuck in purgatory. It was like a whole area blown away." Poverty rates rose sharply in the years that followed, and an increasingly antagonistic relationship developed between the black and white communities. Relations between the Phillips community at large and the city government also grew tense.[3] The Minneapolis crime wave of the 1990s also hit Phillips especially hard, triggering several controversial police shootings attributed to race. While crime rates have dropped since then, the neighborhood continues to struggle with conflict and tension between the various ethnic groups in the community.

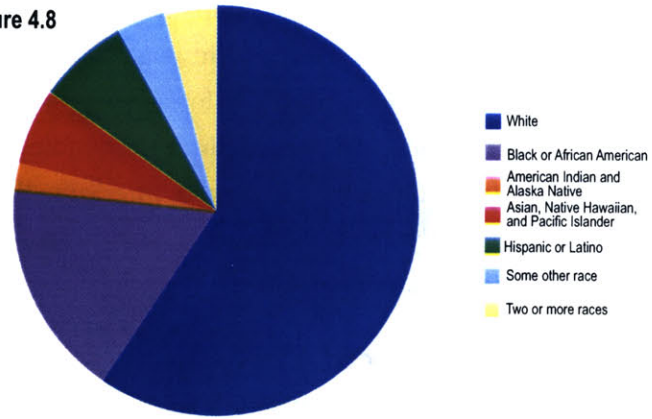
In spite of—or perhaps because of—its distressed circumstances, Phillips does have a number of community resources available to residents. Community centers in the neighborhood target the American Indian community, immigrants and refugees, and the Phillips Latino community. Neighborhood clinics and several local hospitals provide health services to residents, as do nonprofit centers for Native American women and for individuals living

[3] During construction of I-94, for instance, Phillips youth began a nightly habit of sabotaging the freeway project by reversing water pumps designed to empty the water table at the interchange of I-94 and I-35W; crews would arrive morning after morning to discover the site flooded (Marks 1990).

Neighborhood demographics

Minneapolis Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

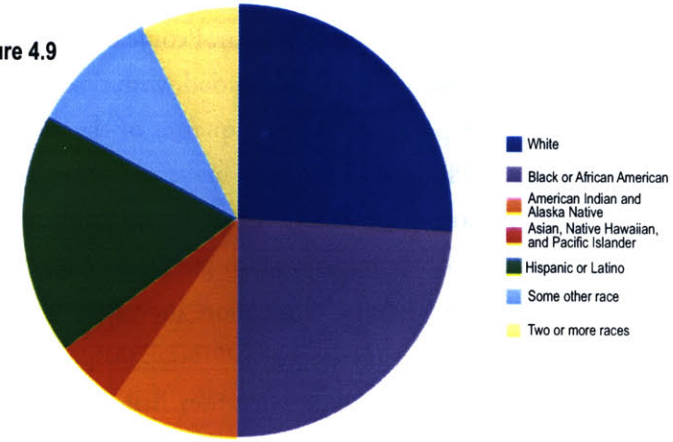
Figure 4.8



Source: City of Minneapolis

Phillips Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

Figure 4.9



Source: City of Minneapolis

(Chart source: National Center for Educational Statistics software)

with HIV/AIDS. Innovative public schools for neighborhood children include Minnesota Transitions, one of the nation's first charter schools; Nawayee Center School, a middle/high school and drop-in center for Native American youth; and the Hans Christian Andersen Open School, a K–8 school dedicated to "multicultural and gender-fair instructional practices and curriculum...[to ensure that] all students...have good cross-race, culture, and gender relationships and function well in a culturally diverse community, nation, and world" (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1995).

The players

Hope Community, Inc.

Hope Community, Inc. (Hope), a nonprofit community-based organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is dedicated to an "integrated mission of both real estate development and community engagement" in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Hope has been a community presence for almost thirty years; the organization began in 1977 as St. Joseph's House, a home and shelter for women and children modeled after Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker homes. Over the years, St. Joe's (which became first St. Joseph's Hope Community and ultimately Hope Community, Inc.) grew more and more invested in the community, expanding its mission to include affordable housing development and management in the blocks surrounding the St. Joe's shelter. The area—initially dubbed "Hope Block" and now called "Hope Campus" because it encompasses multiple blocks—provides 88 low-income rental units to Phillips residents, and strives to create a diverse, close-knit community by connecting buildings to one another with sidewalks and gardens, and by providing community space like playgrounds and picnic areas within the Hope Campus.

Over the years, Hope has undertaken a number of community-based projects outside of the housing arena. In the 1990s, for instance, the organization supported the development of the Franklin Avenue Business Association, a coalition of area merchants dedicated to rebuilding the community and its buying power. Business owners in Phillips have also taken a strong interest in reshaping the physical environment surrounding their stores.

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program

When the Minneapolis Mayor and City Council began to search for solutions to the urban decline that was spreading across the city in the mid-1980s, they looked for strategies outside the traditional realm, and ultimately turned to participatory planning. A Housing and Economic Development Task Force convened by the city in 1988 reported that the physical revitalization of the city would cost more than $3 billion, and advised the city to take a neighborhood-specific approach that would allow for the creative use of public

funds and engage residents directly in a citywide planning process (Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program [NRP] 2004). Implementation and technology advisory committees spent the next two years devising financing strategies and policy approaches to make a neighborhood-based planning program a reality.

Ultimately, the city settled on a strategy that would combine existing city, county, and state resources and direct them towards specific neighborhoods, where residents would design action plans to restore vitality to their neighborhoods. Dubbed the "most ambitious program since Model Cities in the 1960's" (Smith 1990, A1, as quoted in Martin and Pentel 2002, 1), the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) would require over $400 million in funding. In 1990, the Minnesota Legislature and the Minneapolis City Council funded the project with $20 million annually for the first twenty years, with city funds coming largely from tax increment financing on new downtown development. The NRP classified city neighborhoods according to three measures depending upon each neighborhood's existing condition. The NRP would:

- protect "fundamentally sound" neighborhoods;
- revitalize neighborhoods showing initial signs of decline; and
- redirect neighborhoods already in distress.

Residents of each neighborhood would oversee changes as part of a neighborhood association, but each neighborhood association would also have an NRP staff member and a planner from the city working directly with the group. The NRP, still one of the most comprehensive neighborhood-level planning projects ever undertaken by an American city, is now in Phase II—the second decade of the project—and has been subject to a number of budget cuts as a result of tax policy changes since 1990. However, the project continues to provide significant funds for neighborhood initiatives (in well-to-do neighborhoods as well as in distressed ones) and the community infrastructure remains in place.

"Before the NRP, residents fought their way to the table," Bob Cooper, Manager of the NRP/Citizen Participation Department of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. "Now they're built into the process. We've invigorated and involved tens of thousands of people, lots of whom had never been involved in their communities before, into a planning process for their neighborhood" (Pitcoff 1999). More importantly, say many who work in planning and community development in the Twin Cities, the NRP has changed the way the city thinks about planning processes.

While the NRP has been credited with initiating sweeping change across many of the city's most distressed neighborhoods (Martin and Pentel 2002; Mack 2001; Pitcoff 1999; Fainstein 1995), critics have condemned the program in recent years for its failure to adequately engage renters in the neighborhood planning process. As in many participatory processes, homeowners are disproportionately represented in spite of attempts to involve renter households; this is especially problematic because Minneapolis homeowners are predominantly white, whereas most of the city's new immigrants and residents of color are renters. (As a state, Minnesota is currently struggling to reconcile its minority homeownership rate—among the lowest in the nation at just over 50 percent—with its overall homeownership rate, the country's second highest at 74.6 percent (King 2005).)

An independent study conducted for the NRP found, for instance, that during the program's first seven years, 88 percent of Minneapolis residents receiving NRP grants and loans were white, despite the fact that only 65 percent of city was white. Moreover, while over 20 percent of Minneapolis residential properties had off-site landlords, less than one percent of NRP funds contributed to these units; instead, funds were disproportionately directed towards homeowners or rental units in owner-occupied properties. Critics have cited these inequities as one of many reasons so few renters are involved in NRP boards and planning processes (Robson 2002).

In fact, in Ventura Village, the Phillips neighborhood where Peavey Park is located, the neighborhood association has come under attack for consisting almost exclusively of homeowners—in August 2002 the fifteen-member board included only one renter—and has been criticized for not proactively recruiting neighborhood tenants to the board to increase its racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. The association has also had a contentious relationship with the city and surrounding communities. In 2002, for instance, the Ventura Village NRP group filed a class action lawsuit in federal court against the City of Minneapolis and Project for Pride in Living, a local nonprofit housing provider, to prevent the construction of affordable supportive housing units in the community, arguing that Ventura Village already had its "fair share" of affordable housing.[4]

The City of Minneapolis: Office of the Mayor

When the Peavey Park project began, Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton headed the city of Minneapolis. Born and raised in Minneapolis, Sayles Belton simultaneously became the city's first black and first female mayor when she was elected in 1993. She served the city as mayor for nearly a decade before retiring to become a senior fellow in neighborhood development and policy at the University

[4] The neighborhood association argued that building additional low-income housing in already-distressed communities further concentrated urban poverty; however, the court sided with the city and dismissed the suit (Allen 2004).

of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. During her tenure as mayor, Sayles Belton actively advocated for change in the Phillips community, and took a special interest in the work of Hope Community, including the Peavey Park project. Today, Sayles Belton continues to work on a number of urban issues, including anti-racism initiatives, public leadership, community and neighborhood development, public policy development, family and children's issues, police-community relations, women's issues, and youth development. She also serves on the board of Hope Community. Mayor R. T. Rybak, who succeeded Sayles Belton when she retired in 2002, continues to support neighborhood development initiatives in the Phillips neighborhood.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Created in 1883 by the Minnesota Legislature, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is an independently elected, semi-autonomous organization responsible for maintaining and developing almost 6,400 acres of lake and park properties within the city limits. The Minneapolis park system—described by the Trust for Public Land in 2000 as "the closest thing to park nirvana"—includes dozens of trails, neighborhood parks, lakes, rivers, city and regional parks, and other public spaces that stretch across the city, giving Minneapolis much of its identity as "the city of lakes and parks."

The MPRB has five separate divisions: administration, recreation, operations, development, and planning. Collectively, these divisions pursue three primary goals:

- Make the park and recreation system an outstanding example of balance, sound conservation, and ecological practice that leads the way for a healthy environment;
- Ensure recreational opportunities that contribute significantly to the quality of life for Minneapolis residents; and
- Foster a sense of community, which promotes respect for and participation in community life (Minnesota Park and Recreation Board [MPRB] 2001b).

Thus, the organization has a broad mission; its responsibilities include not only park maintenance and management, but park policing and development. The MPRB is also notable because it functions independently of the Minneapolis City Council, although the mayor can veto the board's actions if no two-thirds majority exists to override the veto. The MPRB also has the authority to enact ordinances, to set the parks budget, and to issue bonds and levy taxes to support parks maintenance and development (Garvin 1996). In the Peavey Park process, the MPRB, then headed by Superintendent Mary Merrill Anderson, partnered with Hope Community on the advice of (and with support from) the Office of the Mayor.

Other neighborhood players

Although the Ventura Village Neighborhood Association served as the official NRP association for the northern section of Phillips during the Peavey redesign process, the Phillips Neighborhood Network (PNN), a nonprofit organization serving the entire Phillips neighborhood, has also had an active role in the redesign of the park.

The process

Background

In the late 1980s, violence and the drug epidemic dominated life in Phillips, and the neighborhood was in rapid decline. "This area was maybe the hardest hit in South Minneapolis," remembered Mary Keefe, now associate director of Hope Community. "Peavey was just under siege...cops were driving through [the park] to go after people." Neighbors of the park, frustrated with the violence and in search of a place for neighborhood children to play, took the corner of Franklin Avenue on as a community project. Initially, a small group of residents came together to fight a local liquor store that abutted the park and drew outsiders to the corner. As the first funds from the NRP became available in the early 1990s, the Phillips community united to push the city to focus on the restoration of Peavey Park as a catalyst for revitalization.

Between 1992 and 1995, Peavey Park and the area immediately adjacent to it underwent a number of changes:

- In 1992, the city of Minneapolis purchased and closed the liquor store (Hope Community, Inc., and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board [Hope] 2001c). The community installed a public art project that created a gateway to Peavey Park on the site.
- Also that year, the Minneapolis Public Schools converted a former hospital abutting the site into an elementary school to serve 800 local children; the city closed a street separating the school from the park to create a physical and visual green space connection between the school and Peavey Park, where the playground would be sited (Hope 2001c).
- In 1993, a small park building opened on the site to provide recreational space. The building, shared by the neighborhood and the elementary school, connected directly to the school's gymnasium.
- By 1995, an abutting chemical dependency halfway house had been closed and the land converted to green space.
- During that time, the city also installed a tot lot, wading pool, and basketball hoops for children.

In spite of the improvements, however, the park remained a site of violence and a source of community tension. In the first attempt to revitalize Peavey Park, Hope Community had primarily been a participant or bystander, but never an organizer. As Keefe explained,

"We were so small—we were kind of under siege ourselves." But as Hope grew, the organization became increasingly involved in neighborhood politics and projects, and it became clear that Peavey still represented a huge concern for the Phillips neighborhood.

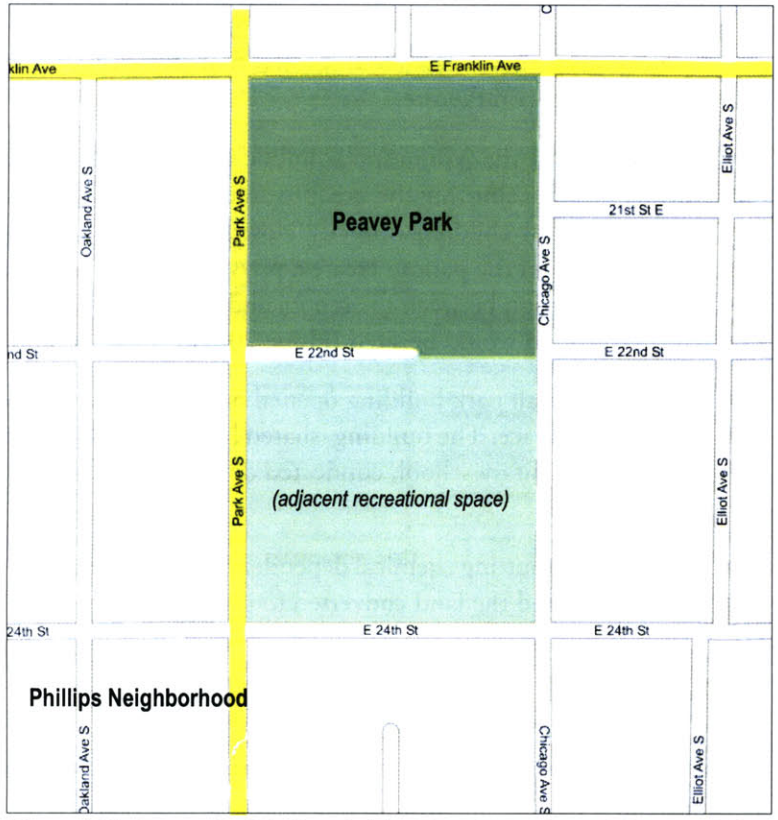


Figure 4.10: Peavey Park is bounded by East Twenty-Second Street and East Franklin, Chicago, and Park Avenues in Phillips. *(Source: Google Maps <http://maps.google.com/>)*

At Hope, several staff members had tenant organizing histories and saw potential in these strategies as tools for community revitalization, but Hope had so few tenants that it made little sense to organize them as a catalyst for effecting change in Phillips. The key, Hope felt, was to organize the neighborhood itself. "We just had to get out into the neighborhood and figure out how to connect to people," Keefe remembered. An NRP neighborhood association had been established by that point and represented a diverse cross-section of the neighborhood racially and ethnically, but they were nonetheless somewhat "narrow in their view," as Keefe recalls. With respect to Peavey, the NRP neighborhood group primarily concerned itself with ridding the area of drugs and crime to protect the neighborhood and address residents' largest concern, safety.

However, Hope staff believed that it would take more than simply reducing crime to truly revitalize the Peavey area. "We knew people had some dreams about something else besides getting rid of drug dealers....this was going to be about believing in people, not about saving them." The organization decided to explore community listening—a strategy Hope had been successfully experimenting with to engage residents in discussions about housing and other quality of life issues—as a tool for bringing the Phillips community into the Peavey conversation, and in 1998, the Peavey Park Listening and Visioning Project was born.

Goals and objectives

As described by Hope Community, the Peavey Park Listening and Visioning Process sought to:

1) broaden public input into process of redesigning a park;

2) create opportunities for diverse members of the community to engage with each other;

3) building on the rich history of the Phillips Community and the park, create the future of Peavey Park as a place that welcomes and reflects that diverse community; and

4) listen to specific ideas about the park (Hope 2001d, 1).

A number of Hope's beliefs about urban parks also guided the redesign process. The organization felt, for instance, that "a park shapes and reflects a community and community shapes and reflects a park" (Hope 2001d, 1). Hope also asserted that "Peavey Park is set within a vibrant urban community with enormous possibility and opportunity that comes out of the community's rich and growing diversity....Peavey Park needs to welcome and reflect that diversity" (Hope 2001d, 1). The process was designed to "cultivate an active connection between the park and the larger community...promote respect for all people who choose to use the park...honor what is already working [and] build on the work that's been done up to this point...promote leadership opportunities...[and] represent a public commitment that is as strong in this community as it is in any other community in the city" (Hope 2001b, 1).

More broadly, the redesign process set out to meet a number of goals for the community at large:

- In design and program, provide for the whole person, whole community, whole planet;
- Provide for diverse interests;
- Connect the park to the community;
- Maximize the real estate; and
- Replace current negative activities by investing in spaces that will invite positive activities (Hope 2001c, 1).

First steps

Early in the Peavey Park process, community engagement consisted primarily of active listening. Hope staff sought out community groups and held listening sessions with specific subgroups of the neighborhood to gauge people's sentiments about Peavey and the community at large. Initially, most focus groups talked about crime in the neighborhood; safety was a common concern, and brought a diverse group of residents to the table. Many of the early meetings focused on building trust: Hope worked through St. Joe's shelter, a local institution well-known to most of Phillips' low-income

Figure 4.11: Peavey Park and the surrounding area in a 1991 aerial photograph. *(Source: Microsoft Terraserver <http://terraserver.microsoft.com/>)*

residents, and through already established tenant and community organizations. In 1999, Hope hired an organizer to manage the process, as it had become clear that a number of community sessions would be needed before a community vision truly emerged. "I didn't want to assume that we were going to define community for people," Keefe explained. "I wanted them to do that."

With each session, the resident vision of the neighborhood became clearer. The first report to come out of the neighborhood meetings presented a visionary drawing of sixteen square blocks, and recommended rehabbing open spaces and debilitated buildings along the edges of Peavey Park. It was, as Keefe says, "an agitational vision. Nobody believed that anything would ever happen [there]. Even the city told us, just go build on Lake Street [a major street nearby]; nothing will ever happen on Portland." But Sharon Sayles Belton, then-mayor of Minneapolis, heard about the listening sessions that Hope was conducting, and asked Mary Merrill Anderson, then superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), to meet with the Hope staff.

The process excited Anderson as well—but she felt strongly that city parkland not be converted to housing uses as a means of resolving safety concerns. Instead, she suggested, perhaps Hope could run a community listening process to help guide renovations to Peavey Park. Nationally, listening was growing in prominence as a community design strategy, and the "listening with the community" sessions that Hope continued to run with Phillips residents on other topics employed many of the participatory techniques of formal listening processes. That winter, the American Planning Association, curious to explore connections between parks and the quality of urban life, funded the Peavey Park project with a $35,000 grant from the APA City Parks Forum (American Planning Association [APA] 2000).

The listening concept represented an innovative new approach to parks planning, but where the Peavey Park process truly broke new ground was when Anderson informed the MPRB that the Hope community listening sessions would be the official—and only—public process for the redesign of the park. It was an implicit acknowledgment that the existing city public process was ineffective, particularly in a neighborhood like Phillips where many residents felt they had no public voice. (Over 2,500 postcards routinely went out to Phillips residents for public meetings organized by the city, for instance; under a dozen people might actually show up for the meeting.)

A large part of the problem, Hope believed, was a fear of public participation among neighborhood residents. "We have got to figure out how to go to the people—not just [how to] sit around and set up meetings and wait for people to show up," Keefe argued. The goal, she explained, was to try to bring people together to focus on broad principles that could then inform the debate around and design of public space. More importantly, the people in the process needed to represent all community residents, not just homeowners, landlords, or city park officials. "We knew that it was about people in the neighborhood—only in the neighborhood...that's who lives here, and that's who needs to be making these decisions."

The road would not be an easy one. The MPRB, for instance, resisted facilitating a completely open community conversation that might unleash neighborhood tensions and negativity; parks planners were accustomed to being protective and sometimes defensive about design and programming elements. Hope insisted on this aspect, however, asking the board to "think about this community and this park...folks have a lot to say and you [must] give them a way to say it." Nonetheless, some degree of animosity did arise, especially between the NRP neighborhood association and Hope Community. The Hope staff also discovered the challenges of the consensus-building model early on. Tensions ran high, and a consensus often seemed elusive after a period of discord: "to then try to come down to a place where everybody's happy and agrees? I don't think so," Keefe acknowledged.

Keefe also noted that, while Hope did not actively exclude the NRP or the residents who traditionally participated in NRP-run public meetings, the organization focused its attentions on Phillips residents who were typically excluded from public processes. "We wouldn't let [the process] not be cross-cultural—but that doesn't necessarily mean it [was] across economic lines," she added. "We didn't eliminate the people who would have been at the public hearings anyway, but we went after the people who wouldn't have been." Hope also strove to move beyond some of

the initial suggestions—more police, a big fence—from the NRP association to get to the heart of what was missing from Peavey in its current state.

To find the area residents who had not actively participated in earlier public processes, Hope put together an organizing committee of local organizations, leaders, and residents from every corner of the neighborhood. Targeted groups included:

- The Phillips Latino community
- The Phillips Somali community, and especially, the Somali youth using Peavey for basketball and soccer games
- Golden Eagles, the local American Indian Center
- Centro Cultural Chicano, a social service agency serving the Latino community
- Parents in Community Action, the local Headstart program
- The Boys and Girls Club of the Twin Cities
- Artists from the Gateway Project
- Franklin Area Business Association (FABA), an association of nearby businesses
- Private nonprofit and social service agencies in Phillips
- Four Winds School, the new elementary school
- The local community of faith, and especially, the storefront churches in Phillips

In addition to the open community sessions, Hope held special listening sessions for subgroups within the neighborhood: local organizations, business owners, and others. "This could not just be about what the park was going to look like," Keefe added. The listening sessions—there would be eighteen in all—needed to build neighborhood trust and relationships, as well. As residents grew more comfortable with the process, conversations integrated not only people's fears and hopes for Peavey, but also their own histories, and especially, their experiences with parks as children.

Starting a community dialogue

The first large community listening session began with a neighborhood assessment of what constituted "community." Residents primarily identified commonalities as key to community: common interests, histories, values, concerns, ideas, memories, goals. A sense of belonging was also important; community, could not be defined solely by geography. Culture, for instance, might also serve as a powerful allying factor (Hope 2001d). In spite of the focus on shared values, however, a number of residents also noted that diversity and the existence of "common space welcoming all cultures and ages where people can connect" played significant roles in creating community.

Hope staff also asked residents to reflect on the park itself: what do other people see when they drive past this park? They think of the drug dealers, residents said. They think that we beat our kids. That we all have guns. For every positive thought the community could brainstorm, there were three more negative ideas. The second question, however—what do you see when you pass the park—elicited a very different set of responses, primarily positive ones. Residents saw great potential in one another, noting that they and their neighbors were "people who want change, who want to be involved, who desire community, who dream, who have compassion, respect, pride, creativity, sense of place, and are friendly" (Hope 2001d, 3). They also spoke of sports events and celebrations in the park: the positive aspects of Peavey that passersby often missed.

Parks should also be a place for community, residents felt, where people could meet, get to know each other, and hold festivals, celebrations, performances, or cultural events. While parks like Peavey also had important roles as oases of nature within the city, they were fundamentally places for relaxation, sanctuary, recreation, and education (Hope 2001d). An ideal park, the community believed, would also welcome people of all ages, with a diversity of programs and activities available; especially important to add were accessible public telephones, restrooms, and drinking fountains (Hope 2001d).

Participants generated a number of ideas, some as simple as asking park police to get out of their cars and interact with park visitors as they monitored Peavey. They also suggested that having a more diverse park staff to reflect the diversity of Phillips would make residents more comfortable, as might adding artwork that better reflected the different cultural groups within the neighborhood (Hope 2001d).

Safety, however, remained a concern. "[The park] needed to welcome diverse people, be a place where diverse people felt safe, where diverse people's kids could play," Keefe explained. The community spoke with one voice on that. Throughout the community conversations, there was also the unspoken threat of gentrification. While no one ever mentioned the word, Keefe noted that "there's an assumption all the time...if it gets good, it's not for us." Building resident investment in and stewardship of Peavey Park would take many months.

Creating a vision

Hope based the community visioning and design elements of the process on similar projects in which sociologists and architects had immersed themselves in small towns to initiate creative community dialogues and plans. As those towns had done, Hope brought in an architect at the very beginning of the process to put residents' ideas into pictures through a series of visioning sessions. Michael

Schroeder, a principal of Hoisington Koegler Group, worked with the project from beginning to end, creating design concepts, models, vignettes, and other renderings to facilitate the design process. A series of meetings also brought smaller groups of residents together to design specific aspects of the park.

Some animosity persisted within the neighborhood. By the time the Peavey visioning sessions had begun, for instance, the NRP neighborhood association had become significantly less diverse in every respect, and, as Keefe describes it, consisted primarily of homeowners and landlords, most of them white. The NRP vision of diverse public space centered on symbolic gestures and pieces of art like multicultural fountains. "One guy told me it was a fountain that would have 'African American people, Latino people, Native Americans, and regular folks,'" Keefe remembered. However, others within the community advocated a more comprehensive overhaul of the park and its programming that would move beyond the symbolism of already-existing public art interventions.

Ultimately the listening and visioning process produced a set of principles to guide redevelopment, and Schroeder helped shape these ideas into a master plan. Meanwhile, the Hope leadership team worked to form alliances with members of the MPRB and other city amd community organizations to ensure support for the plan on the board. When the final plan eventually came up for an MPRB vote, Hope brought a group of Phillips residents along to the meeting, where the proposal was approved as the city master plan for Peavey Park.

The plan

Proposed design elements

The final plan for Peavey Park, which appears on the opposite page, includes the following:

Recreation center: The recreation center, a center for community recreational activities, is sited on the edge of the existing park.

Multiuse hard surfaces: An adaptable hard-surface area can be used for volleyball, basketball, rollerblading, badminton, and, in winter, ice skating—all growing recreational areas for Peavey given the neighborhood's diverse population.

Park commons: A central commons area provides space for community events and gatherings like powwows or other celebrations.

Community center for arts and culture: A community center with classroom, kitchen, office, meeting, and greenhouse spaces expands much-needed neighborhood space.

Outdoor performance space: Just outside the recreation center, the outdoor performance space provides an area for summer theater, youth activities, and other events.

Figure 4.12: The Peavey Park Master Plan *(Source: Hope Community, Inc.)*

Picnic area and story ring: The proposed picnic area in Peavey provides space for grilling and large picnics; the story ring—a ring of benches and trees—is community space for outdoor storytelling or other small group activities.

Parking lot: The parking area is necessary to support the new community center, but also provides a space for neighborhood events like farmer's markets, held successfully in parking lots near other Minneapolis parks.

Gardens and labyrinth: As community-building and educational spaces, gardens for flowers, vegetables, or herbs would provide opportunities for both quiet reflection and environmental learning. In addition, a "rainwater garden" would make use of runoff from the nearby parking lot and other impervious surfaces in the park.

Entrances and edges: Plazas and gateways demarcate entrances to the park, while landscaping traces the space's edges to distinguish between park and street (Hope 2001c).

5 returning the park to the people: the clinton park initiative, oakland, ca

Clinton Park, a small neighborhood green space that spans just a city block, has a history as long—and as storied—as Oakland's itself. Initially designed as a "city green" in the 1854 master plan for Clinton Township, one of several townships that eventually merged to create modern-day Oakland, the park—originally called Clinton Square—has been an integral part of the Eastlake neighborhood for generations (Urban Ecology [UE] 1999). Over the years, however, the neighborhood around Clinton Park has changed dramatically.

Today, Eastlake is home to a diverse community of blacks, whites, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and countless new immigrants. The park periodically serves as a community gathering space for area events, but more often, it sits empty except for the homeless men and women who often spend their days on the picnic table and benches, the ESL students who cut through the park to reach classes at the community center on the other side, and the residents who travel to and from the neighborhood center along the edge of the park.

Regional context: California and the Bay Area

One of the country's largest states, California has grown precipitously over the past century, with an unparalleled expansion of its economy and population from the post-war years through the 1980s. The population, concentrated in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and San Diego, now tops thirty-three million. The rise of the dot-com industry in the 1990s created a momentary boom in population and the economy boom in the area, but the eventual collapse of the market precipitated a recession, with unemployment rates rising rapidly.

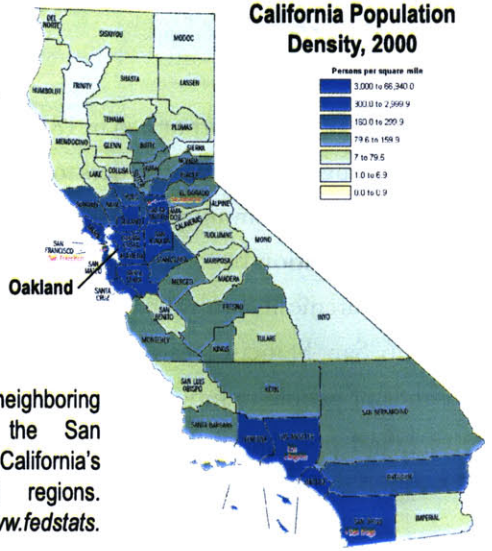


Figure 5.1: Oakland and neighboring San Francisco anchor the San Francisco Bay Area, one of California's most densely populated regions. *(Source: MapStats <http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/>)*

Nine counties and 101 cities make up the San Francisco Bay Area, home to over seven million residents. While some regional governing bodies do exist in the region—local governments formed the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), for instance, in 1961 to oversee regional planning issues like housing, transportation, economic development, and the environment—the major cities in the area operate largely autonomously. Demographically, the Bay Area itself is remarkably diverse racially and ethnically: in 1990, the greater San Francisco region had the second largest proportion of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the nation for a major metropolitan area, after Los Angeles; the region had the fifth largest proportion of Native Americans, with a community of over 400,000 (James 2000).

The city of Oakland

History

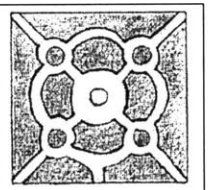
The city of Oakland, incorporated in 1852 after the 1849 California gold rush brought an influx of settlers to the San Francisco Bay Area, remained a small community until the turn of the twentieth century, when the population ballooned quickly with the 1909 annexation of nearby Claremont, Fruitvale, Melrose, Fitchburg, and Elmhurst. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake had also prompted tens of thousands of people to move across to the East Bay, and by 1910, the Oakland population topped 150,000 (Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency [CEDA] 2000).

The bulk of Oakland's growth came in the period between the Great Depression and World War II, however. The expansion of the Alameda shipyards and the city's navy and army bases meant that the city had a wealth of jobs, and people came from across the country to look for wartime work. The housing shortage created by the influx of newcomers sparked a wave of apartment conversions and the construction of additions and "back houses" throughout the city, forever altering Oakland's housing stock (UE 1999). The employment boom ended with the war itself, however; between 1945 and 1950, Oakland began a sharp decline that would persist for decades.

The closing of the last Oakland streetcar line and the opening of the Nimitz Freeway, part of the national interstate highway system, in 1949 opened up the East Bay suburbs to development, and few returning GIs came back to settle in Oakland itself. Instead, the city became predominantly African American as white flight took hold; by 1980, over 45,000 residents would leave the city. The city's communities of color shifted as well, with many black families moving into formerly "white" East Oakland neighborhoods and a Chinese American community became established in the San Antonio neighborhood. Like their counterparts across the country, however, many blacks, Latinos, and Asians found themselves unemployed when soldiers returned to work.

A brief history of parks in Oakland, California

Created in 1854, Clinton Square consists primarily of passive open space; Victorian landscape designers craft meandering paths in keeping with pleasure ground designs of the era; trees buffer the area from the street, and paths merge in the center of the square to create a "love knot," where a gazebo and bandstand in the center circle provide leisure space for early Oakland residents.



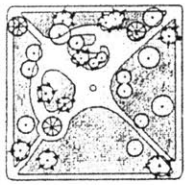
Recreation centers sprout across the city; Recreation Department also began to manage city pools, camps, and outdoor theaters.

The city begins exploring links between parks, recreation centers and housing projects; OPR works to actively engage youth in community action programs.

Children's Fairyland, a children's park with fairytale-themed attractions, opens.

OPR begins citywide community gardening program; renovation and construction of parks and recreation centers continues.

1855 1870 1885 1895 1905 1915 1925 1935 1945 1955 1965 1975 1985 1995 2005



Clinton Square undergoes its first redesign just after the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, which triggers a flood of immigrants from San Francisco into the East Bay; with a growing population, the Eastlake neighborhood needs lawn space, and Clinton Square is landscaped to create a large open lawn; meandering paths of the original design straightened, with select loops preserved around key park features.

Oakland convenes a playground and park commissions in 1909; a year later, the first municipal playgrounds open, and a $1 million bond is issued for purchase of land along Lake Merritt waterfront; in 1911, the Board of Playground Directors is granted the authority to run a city department, which will become the Recreation Department; within a decade, active uses abound in city parks.

In 1954, Clinton Square is again redesigned and renamed "Clinton Square Park"; The third design integrates a small parks building, play areas, and other recreational spaces.

New recreation centers are built across the city; the Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) begins to invest in large public venues like the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

Union Point Park project in Fruitvale reclaims the industrial waterfront; redesign of Clinton Park begins, updating programming and design that have been modified only slightly since 1954.

Partnership between city and Coca-Cola Company makes Coca-Cola Oakland's official soft drink, with OPR agreeing to sell only Coca-Cola products in the city's recreation centers in exchange for a $6 million contribution to parks and recreation centers.

Source: City of Oakland Parks and Recreation (2005) and Urban Ecology (1999)

During 1950s and 1960s, the city experienced the stark urban decline common to so many other American cities; racial animosities grew dramatically. A series of incidents between Oakland police and the local black community led came to a head in 1966, when Bobby Seale and Huey Newton organized the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense at Oakland City College. Racial tensions remained high throughout the 1970s even as the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system began operations, connecting Oakland to nearby San Francisco and Berkeley in an attempt to strengthen regional connections on both sides of the bay.

The late 1980s and 1990s brought a series of devastating events to the community, with the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake closely followed by the 1991 Berkeley-Oakland Hills wildfires. Nearly 5,000 homes were destroyed between the two disasters, and Oakland City Hall closed for six years due to earthquake damage. In other respects, however, the city began to regenerate: the city put millions of dollars into revitalizing City Hall Plaza and the building itself, and preserved and restored a number of Oakland's historic sites.

Oakland today

Today, the city of Oakland continues to grow, with hundreds of new immigrants arriving annually. The 2000 U.S. Census indicated that Oakland was among the most diverse communities in the country, with African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and whites all representing significant portions of the population. (See Figures 5.2 through 5.5 for more details on the ethnic and racial distribution within the city.) The Oakland population is a young one: a quarter of city residents were under age eighteen in 2000, and the median age within the city limits is thirty-three (U.S. Census 2000).

Unlike many of its peer cities, Oakland has also retained much of its industrial job base. The Port of Oakland remains one of the nation's largest container ports, and city leaders are trying to build Oakland's reputation as a pro-business climate to keep the skilled labor pool in the city. New public and private investments in the waterfront and the surrounding neighborhoods have also bolstered the city's image regionally, as have several downtown restoration projects. Mayor Jerry Brown has set a goal of attracting ten thousand new downtown residents in the coming years.

Eastlake and the Lower San Antonio neighborhood

Eastlake, a pocket within the Lower San Antonio neighborhood of Oakland, has been a diverse community almost since its inception: as early as the 1870s, the community housed a mix of Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Irish, Italian, German, and Portuguese residents (UE 1999). The area grew quickly in the years after the Civil War; the Twelfth Street Dam, constructed in 1868, created Lake Merritt, which would define the neighborhood in years to come.

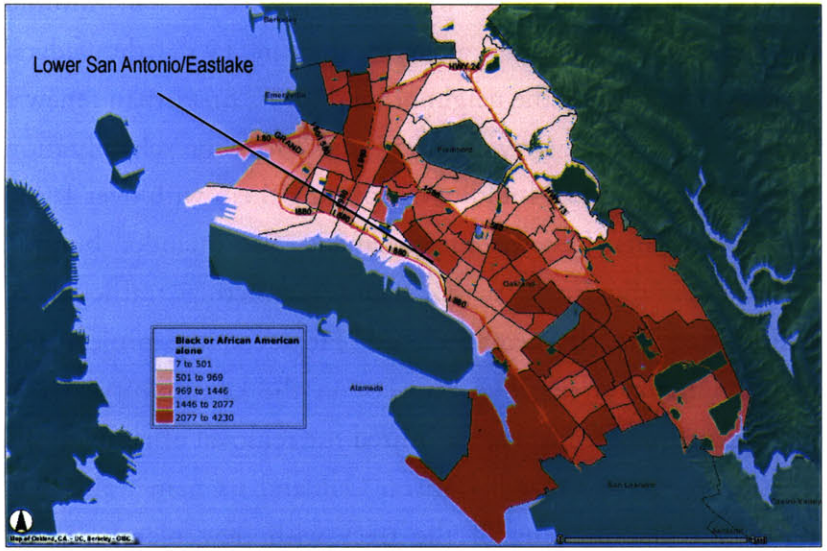


Figure 5.2: The African American population of Oakland, 2000

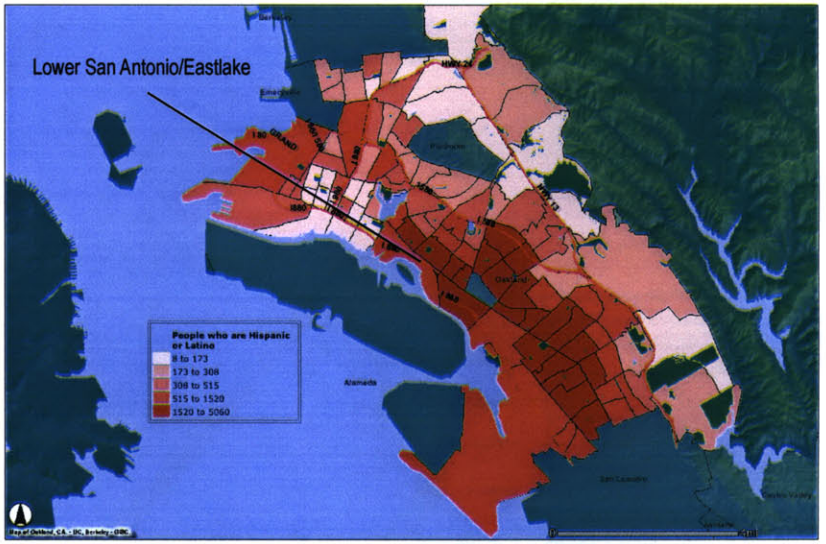


Figure 5.3: The Latino population of Oakland, 2000

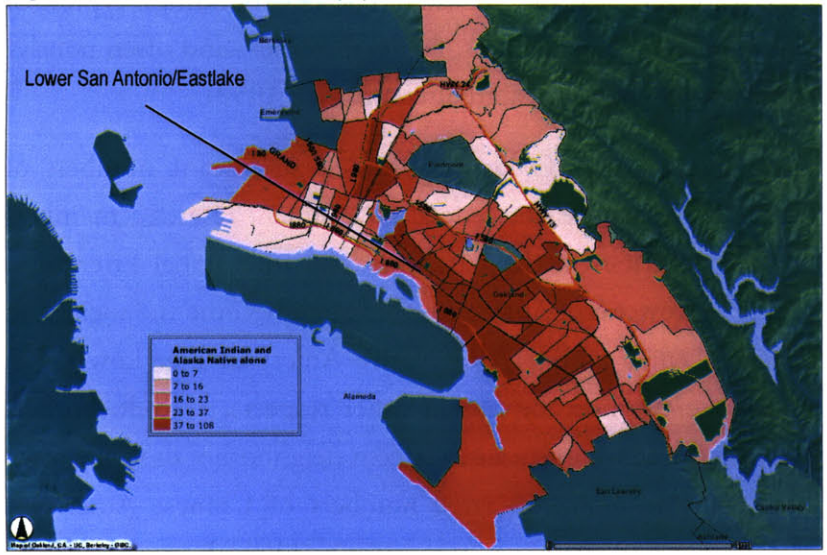


Figure 5.4: The Native American population of Oakland, 2000

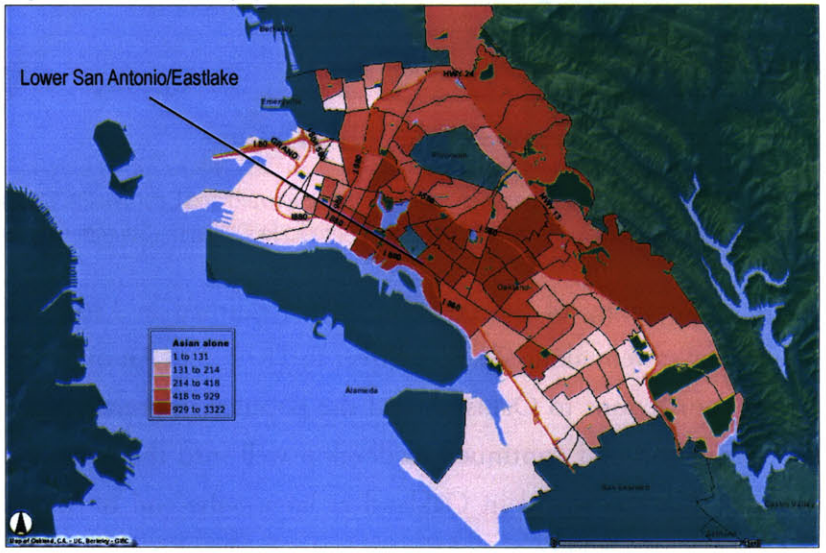


Figure 5.5: The Asian American population of Oakland, 2000

(Source: Created using InfoOakland Map Room <http://www.infooakland.org/>)

Figure 5.6: Clinton Park lies between International Boulevard and East Twelfth Street in Eastlake, a sub-neighborhood of Lower San Antonio in Oakland. *(Source: Google Maps <http://maps.google.com/>)*

With the opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the trolley system along Twelfth Street in 1872, San Antonio had direct connections to Oakland, and the population grew rapidly. The neighborhood continued to develop well into the twentieth century, but—as it did in Oakland at large—the end of World War II brought a sudden end to prosperity in the area.

As Oakland declined in the post-war years, Lower San Antonio deteriorated as well—so much so that in 1955, the federal government targeted the neighborhood for its first urban renewal project in the West. Between 1955 and 1962, the rehabilitation project destroyed 117 buildings, replacing them with over 1,000 new apartments. Renewal improvements also included burying utilities, building new schools, and redirecting traffic along major streets in the neighborhood. However, the project also had a number of negative impacts on the community. Street reconstruction, for instance, required the removal of many of the mature street trees that had given Oakland its name; although the city replaced many of the trees with new plantings, the streetscape changed dramatically. The new buildings, typical of many renewal-era structures, featured sterile—and often poorly-constructed—Modernist architecture (UE 1999).

During the 1960s, Oakland absorbed significant numbers of Native Americans as the federal government resettled members of Western tribes in the East Bay. The InterTribal Friendship House in Lower San Antonio would soon become the social and political center of Bay Area Native American life. Lower San Antonio grew more diverse in other respects, as well: borders between the community and adjacent neighborhoods Chinatown and Fruitvale, home to large numbers of Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans, respectively, blurred in the 1970s,

particularly as the Oakland Latino and Asian communities diversified to include large numbers of Central Americans and Southeast Asians. By the close of the 1980s, Lower San Antonio's population had grown by more than thirty percent—more than three times the overall population growth in Oakland during that period (UE 1999).

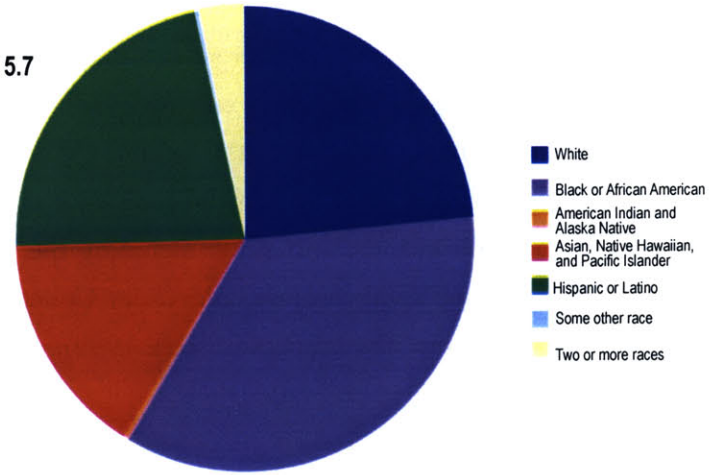
The growing population did not bring renewed prosperity to the community, however; incomes in Eastlake and Lower San Antonio remained low, and by the 1990s, the Lower San Antonio neighborhood suffered from disinvestment at the state, county, and city levels. Housing stock had fallen into disrepair and many of the neighborhood's families lived at or below the federal poverty level (UE 1999). Today, the neighborhood continues to be among Oakland's poorest, due in part to the many new immigrant households struggling to establish footing in the United States.

However, the Lower San Antonio neighborhood does have a number of community resources and assets that are fueling revitalization. The Eastlake Revitalization Initiative, a project of EBALDC, currently has a $2.2 million grant to improve International Boulevard and East Twelfth Street, which border Clinton Park. Plans call for new bus shelters and lighting, better pedestrian spaces, and new palm trees along the streets (Casey 2004). Neighborhood Centers, an adult education center located in Clinton Park, houses the English

City and neighborhood demographics

Oakland Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

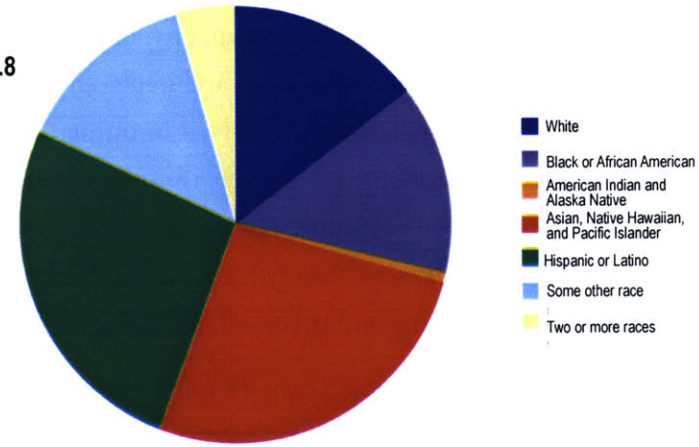
Figure 5.7



Source: Bay Area Census

Lower San Antonio Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

Figure 5.8



Source: Urban Strategies Council and InfoOakland

(Chart source: National Center for Educational Statistics software)

as a Second Language (ESL) School for the Oakland Unified School District in addition to technology classes, courses for job search skills, GED classes, and courses for women starting small businesses. (In February 2005, however, the Oakland Unified School District announced it would be cutting its adult education program altogether; the future of the classes at Clinton Park remains uncertain.) Neighborhood residents can also access city and county resources in and around the community, including the Oakland Museum, the Oakland Public Library, and Laney College, which also offers ESL courses to new immigrants (UE 1999).

The players

Urban Ecology

Urban Ecology, a nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California, is dedicated to "improving the San Francisco Bay Area's built and natural environments and quality of life" (UE 1999, 1). Founded in 1975 by a group of architects and community activists, Urban Ecology has been involved in numerous land use, transportation, and social justice projects throughout the Bay Area during its thirty years in existence. The organization also published *Urban Ecology: Environment, Equity, Community Design*, a journal on metropolitan planning and urban affairs, from 1990 to 2002.

The Clinton Park project represented Urban Ecology's first foray into community-based design projects following the 1994 creation of the "Community Design" program within the organization. The initiative encouraged grassroots neighborhood planning, providing technical planning and design services as well as support for outreach work. "Where residents and community-based organizations bring an awareness of a neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses [and] its people, places, and institutions," the organization wrote in 1999, "Urban Ecology staff and volunteers bring skills that help residents think concretely about land use and design and shape high-quality, environmentally, and culturally-sensitive neighborhood plans." (UE 1999, 1). Today, Urban Ecology's primary goals include community outreach and visioning, planning and design, implementation, and advocacy (UE 2005).

East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation

The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), founded by a group of college students and community leaders in 1975, is a nonprofit community economic development organization committed to building community assets: physical, human, and economic. While the agency initially targeted the Asian and Pacific Islander communities in Eastlake—the area was once called "New Chinatown"—EBALDC's mission has changed as the neighborhood has diversified. Today, EBALDC serves a diverse community of African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American, and white residents. Over the past thirty years, EBALDC has also developed over six hundred

units of affordable housing and 190,000 square feet of commercial space in the Eastlake community. Other services offered by the organization include homeownership programs, neighborhood economic development programs, an Individual Development Account savings program, and community advocacy initiatives (East Bay Local Development Corporation 2005).

Eastlake Merchants Association

The Eastlake Merchants Association (ELMA), a partnership of local business owners and merchants, was founded in 1996 with support from EBALDC. The multicultural organization focuses on building relationships between small businesses in Eastlake and maintaining a pedestrian-friendly, open atmosphere along the streets in the neighborhood to support economic development. Given Clinton Park's critical role in the Eastlake community, ELMA is strongly committed to revitalizing the space; in fact, the ELMA mission statement makes explicit mention of this goal. Today, ELMA continues to collaborate closely with EBALDC.

The City of Oakland: Office of Parks and Recreation, Community and Economic Development Agency, and Oakland Police Department

The Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) manages the city's parks and coordinates recreational programs across Oakland. Created in 1911 when the city of Oakland amended its charter to empower the Oakland Board of Playground Directors to manage a city department for parks, OPR has been an active force in the city's neighborhoods for almost a century. OPR also works closely with Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for, maintaining, and enhancing Oakland's established park system (Oakland Parks 2005).

The Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) promotes sustainable development throughout the city through programs to attract and retain businesses and jobs, develop affordable housing, assist homebuyers, revitalize neighborhood commercial corridors, and more. Oakland CEDA also serves as the city's agency for planning, redevelopment, zoning, and building. CEDA also manages the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, a branch of the agency that pursues relationships with small business owners and community organizations and participated actively in a number of revitalization projects in Lower San Antonio.

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) has also played a role in the revitalization of Eastlake and Lower San Antonio, participating actively in community meetings in an attempt to transcend the antagonistic history the OPD has had with Oakland's low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

Other neighborhood players

In addition to the city and the community-based organizations that helped to manage the Clinton redesign initiative, several smaller neighborhood agencies also supported the visioning and design process around the park, including the San Antonio Community Development Corporation (SACDC) the community development corporation that oversees development in the community, and the San Antonio Neighborhood Planning Council, established just as the Clinton process was beginning. Representatives from a number of community-based organizations serving the Lower San Antonio neighborhood, including La Clinica de la Raza, HuongViet Community Center, Anawim House of Hope, Lao Family Community Development, Good Samaritan Senior Center, East Bay Asian Youth Center, and Asian Neighborhood Design, also participated in design workshops.

The process

Background

The Clinton Park redesign process began in the fall of 1996, when the East Bay Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) and several community-based organizations in Eastlake and Lower San Antonio asked Urban Ecology to join the project to conduct community outreach and demographic analyses of the area, engage residents in the design of the neighborhood landscape, and assess the current and future uses of the park (UE 1999). Crime rates remained high in the community, and residents identified the park as a critical piece of the problem. The community tasked Urban Ecology with rethinking the space altogether to help to eradicate the safety concerns and reverse many years of neglect.

Throughout the spring of 1997, Urban Ecology staff and volunteers spent hours in and around the park, observing visitors and recording the use patterns in the park. Residents, they discovered, used the park for an array of activities: neighborhood children played on the play structures; adults socialized; occasionally, visitors took home plants and sand from the park to feed pets or to use for ceremonial or decorative purposes; prostitutes and drug dealers worked openly out of the park (UE 1999). Transportation concerns on nearby streets—and particularly, safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists—also affected park use. The Oakland Police Department provided Urban Ecology with crime statistics for the area, which confirmed the presence of illegal activities and also identified the park and the surrounding streets as targets for armed robberies, assaults, and ethnically-motivated arsons. Finally, the Urban Ecology team explored the physical condition of the park's vegetation and landscaping; while some original plantings remained from the 1910 and 1954 redesigns, the city had added a number of new trees in subsequent decades that had little relation to the park design itself (UE 1999).

Goals and objectives

In re-envisioning Clinton Park, Urban Ecology hoped to:

1) Enhance the environmental quality of the park and neighborhood;

2) Celebrate the community's special multicultural heritage and identity;

3) Create a setting for social interaction and park-based activities;

4) Bolster community participation and activism;

5) Provide more and better children's play facilities;

6) Help eliminate crime through safe-neighborhood design;

7) Increase quality of life by making streets more pedestrian friendly;

8) Increase safety by reducing the speed of traffic along streets bordering the park; and

9) Make the park and streets more attractive for business development (UE 1999, 6).

As an organization, Urban Ecology believed that the trilogy of ecology, urban planning, and citizen participation was the key to the revitalization of cities. The public process for Clinton Park sought to apply these principles directly to parks planning practice.

Figure 5.9: Clinton Park in a recent aerial photograph of Oakland. *(Source: Google Maps <http://maps.google.com>)*

First steps

In the early stages of the visioning and design process, Urban Ecology worked closely with ELMA to contact small business owners near Clinton Park and engage them in the community process. Area merchants echoed residents' safety concerns, and noted the trash that often piled up in the park; they felt that the park's condition detracted from business (UE 1999).

TIMELINE: CLINTON PARK INITIATIVE

Fall 1996:	EBALDC, Oakland's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, San Antonio Community Development Corporation, Neighborhood Planning Council, and ELMA invite Urban Ecology to redesign Clinton Park.
Winter 1997:	Urban Ecology, aided by students from UC Berkeley, administers a series of surveys to park users. Surveys are translated into English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
Spring 1997:	Use studies conducted of Clinton Park track park use by type of activity and by ethnic/racial background; staff members and volunteers observe use patterns, consult with OPD, and talk with area residents.
	Urban Ecology, ELMA, EBALDC, and Oakland CEDA host a community design workshop to solicit ideas and strategies for the plan itself.
Summer 1999:	Urban Ecology publishes "The Clinton Park Plan."
Spring 2004:	EBALDC reopens the Clinton Park design process.

Starting a community dialogue

Broadening the conversation beyond ELMA proved especially challenging for Urban Ecology: the diversity of the Eastlake neighborhood meant that residents spoke nearly two dozen different languages (UE 1999). The organization did translate public meeting notices, surveys, and other documents into Spanish, Cantonese, and Vietnamese—the three languages most widely spoken in the area near the park—and brought in translators for community meetings, but material could not feasibly be provided in all of the languages spoken within the neighborhood. Surveys conducted with park visitors did yield valuable information about residents' perceptions of and hopes for the park, however. Virtually all of the residents who participated in the process wanted to see the park improved; they saw it as dirty, neglected, and dangerous. "Our elders can remember when there were drumming sessions at night in Clinton Park," one member of the Intertribal Friendship House noted. "People are too afraid to be in there now" (UE 1999, 19). Many of the ESL students enrolled in classes at the community center within the park went out of their ways to avoid entering the main area of the park at all (UE 1999). Clearly, to revitalize the park, residents would have to take back ownership of the space; the park needed to be accessible to and safe for everyone in the diverse Eastlake community.

Creating a vision

The first group to help to imagine a new future for Clinton Park was comprised of Vietnamese children from Franklin Elementary School, a K–8 school located three blocks from the park. Although most of the children lived near the park, their parents forbade them from playing there because of the many dangers. Through words and images, the children represented the park as they hoped it might

one day be: a place to play freely, with gardens, a swimming pool, a basketball court, and a playground. Older white, Latino, Asian, and black youth from San Antonio and neighboring Fruitvale echoed the younger children's concerns about safety in Clinton Park and other neighborhood open spaces within the community, noting that gangs controlled the edges of and entrances to parks in many neighborhoods (UE 1999). Children and youth in the neighborhood participated actively throughout the redesign process, attending visioning and design workshops and helping with park clean-up days. Eastlake adults took note of the children's presence and passion, identifying youth facilities and activities as the most important need in the park redesign.

A large design workshop hosted by EBALDC, Urban Ecology, CEDA, and SACDC in March 1997 served as the pinnacle of the community design process, bringing business owners, residents, area organizations, and city staff together to share visions of what the park might become and to begin to think about design interventions. During the meeting, attendants broke out into four groups: traffic and parking, public safety, culture, and park activities. Each group generated a number of suggested improvements for the park; the "Cultural Arts, Education, and History" group, in particular, identified a number of strategies to recognize and celebrate cultural differences while bringing the neighborhood together.

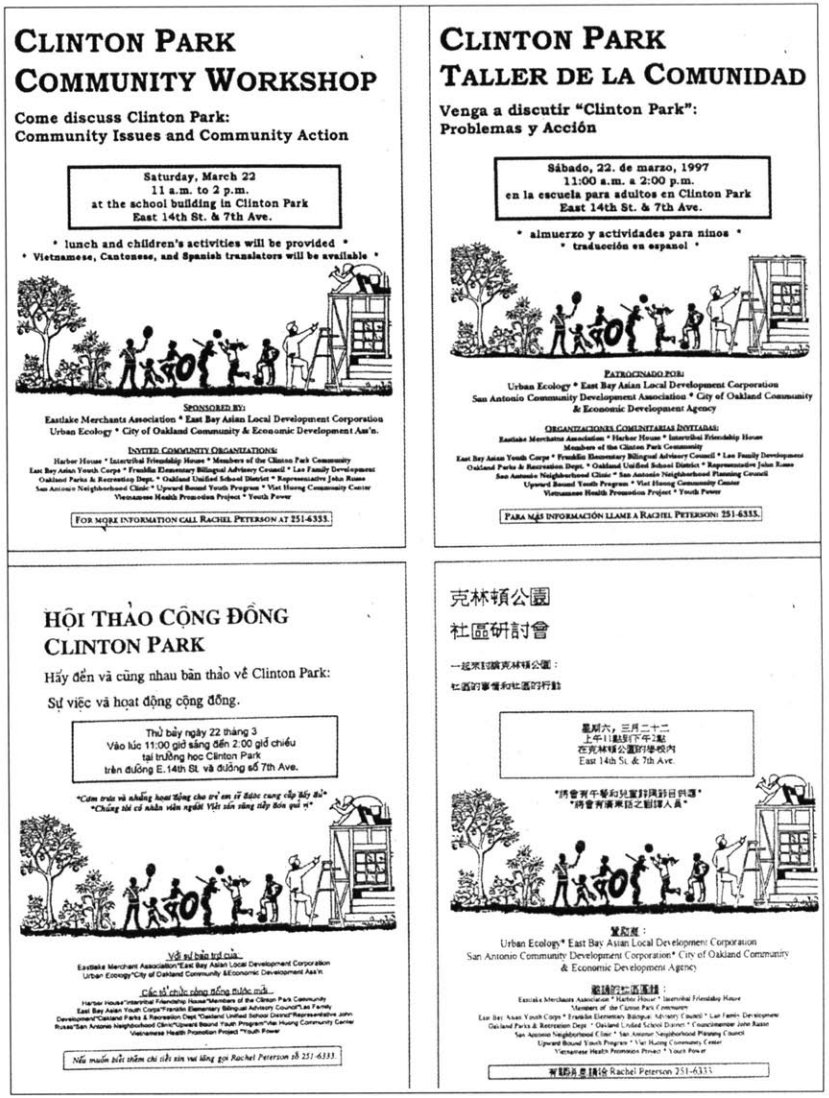


Figure 5.10: Community flyers distributed by Urban Ecology during the Clinton Park redesign process. *(Source: Urban Ecology 1999).*

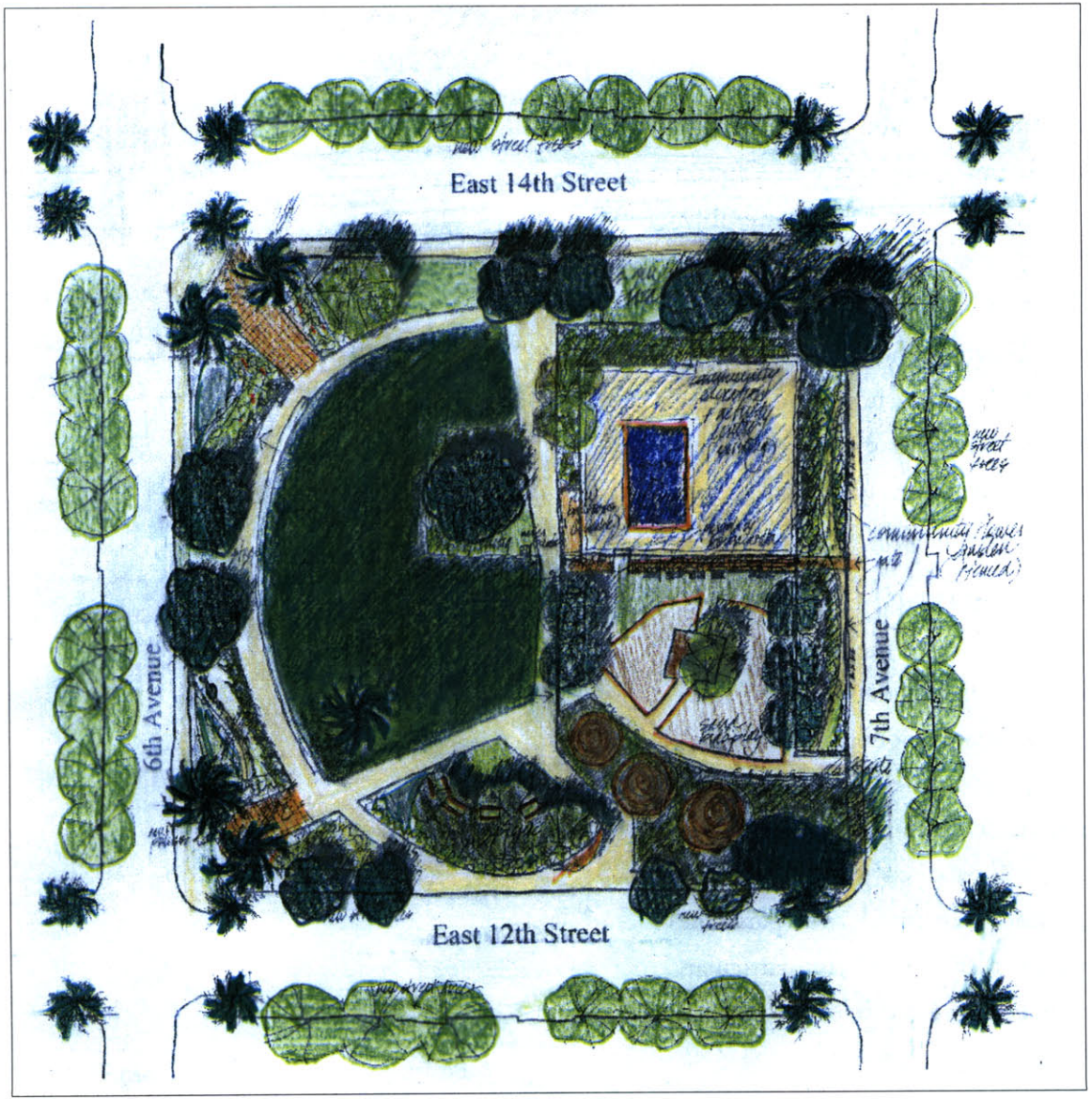


Figure 5.11: *The Clinton Park Master Plan*

The focus group suggested, among other things:

1) creating a community cultural arts committee;

2) developing permanent and traveling displays of cultural history;

3) organizing park events around the theme "Diversity Together";

4) redesigning the children's play area using culturally significant forms and historic themes;

5) designing park furniture as culturally expressive art;

6) creating multilingual community bulletin boards;

7) creating a community garden with plants and gardening techniques from the many countries represented by neighborhood residents; and

8) providing storytelling space (UE 1999, 22).

In spite of the extensive results generated, however, the process was not a smooth one; Urban Ecology staff encountered a number of complications beyond the expected language barrier as they attempted to engage many new immigrants in community conversations. For instance, many neighborhood residents came from countries in which citizen participation as a concept is entirely absent—or even punished. Many more worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, and simply had no time to attend community meetings or complete surveys. While staff successfully brought many of the ESL students at the neighborhood center in Clinton Park into the conversations through surveys and interviews, many of those students indicated that they could not commit any additional time to the project, in spite of their interest in its outcome.

The plan

Proposed design elements

Community plaza: The community plaza, sited in the northeast corner of the park, features improved lighting and plantings, new furniture, a renovated entry to the park and park building, and a multilingual neighborhood kiosk space.

Community garden: South of the plaza, the plan calls for a community garden, with a fence surrounding the space and connecting street to garden to playground.

Central grassy lawn: In the center of the park, much of the space remains open and grassy to allow for storm water runoff.

Children's play area: The existing children's area is adapted to include new lighting, picnic tables, benches, and protective surfacing to create a safer, more effective space. In addition, the plan calls for the creation of circular grassy mounds, a design intervention used

by other communities to create space for sitting that can also be used for gatherings (Metropolitan Design Center 2004).

Community stage: A community performance space sits on the side of the park that fronts Sixth Avenue. The stage, constructed of concrete with a steel pergola above, would provide space for events, gatherings, concerts, and theater.

Public art: Public art in the form of benches, bicycle racks, water fountains, and fences gives Clinton Park a distinct identity.

Storytelling tree: The park's Live Oak, a neighborhood landmark, is preserved and renamed "The Storytelling Tree." Pathways below the tree connect the story area to the rest of the site.

Entrances and edges: Small plazas at each corner of the park welcome park visitors as well and to link the park to the surrounding urban fabric.

6 multicultural frameworks for planning processes

The critical question, of course, is whether or not the Peavey and Clinton redesign projects succeeded in their goals of creating multiethnic processes and, ultimately, cross-cultural spaces. This is a complex issue; in both Minneapolis and Oakland, the park redesign processes broke down at the implementation stage, and to date neither neighborhood has seen full realization of the approved park plan. Consequently, it is impossible to determine whether or not implementing the designs proposed by the two communities would truly have laid the groundwork for a multiethnic open space. However, considering the two projects in the context of the American multicultural and participatory planning movements illuminates how elements of each process successfully met the mandates of true participatory planning, and where the processes failed.

Although the participatory processes in Oakland and Minneapolis went by different names—community design in the first case, community listening and visioning in the second—they shared underlying goals of shifting the power paradigm in the parks planning process to allow residents to proactively envision and create public green spaces that would reflect the diversity of the neighborhood at large. As tools to mediate ethnic tensions and conflict within the two neighborhoods, the park redesign projects in Eastlake and Phillips had dual effects: they served both to unite residents in a cross-cultural conversation and collective effort towards a mutually beneficial end, and to begin the work of creating a multicultural neighborhood green space that would support continued efforts to bring groups together physically.

Thus, the Peavey Park and Clinton Park processes provide unique opportunities to explore the potential impact of community design philosophies on parks planning. While neither planning process adhered entirely to a defined set of guiding principles, both embody an adapted model of democratic design as it is defined by many practitioners today.

Community design typically functions in one of two ways: either the community itself identifies a problem and initiates a process to resolve it, or an outside agency—nonprofit or public—identifies a problem and invites residents to engage in a dialogue

on potential solutions. In the case of Peavey, the residents themselves—given voice through Hope Community—called for the renovation of the park; in the Clinton Park Initiative, EBALDC opened the conversation on redesigning the space, inviting Eastlake residents to join the discussion through the community process facilitated by Urban Ecology. The lessons from these cases—from the design outcomes, outlined in the next chapter, to the concerns voiced by residents once they found themselves with an opportunity to speak to the neighborhood rifts and conflicts ignited by the planning processes—speak both to the potential democratic design holds for uncovering hidden needs and to the challenges that still lie ahead in realizing the potential of this model for parks planning.

As twenty-first century parks become tools to reclaim the center city landscape and restore vibrancy to urban neighborhoods, the question of how (and whether) parks should be adapted to reflect the diverse populations around them becomes increasingly important. If the primary role of a neighborhood park is to serve the adjacent community—and neighborhood parks have traditionally fulfilled this purpose—then a fundamental change in parks planning philosophy is necessary in order to enable planners and designers to make appropriate design decisions with respect to urban open space in diverse communities.

Multiculturalism in modern America

The debate over assimilation and Americanization continues to pervade discourse on culture in the United States. Today, post-Modernist sentiments on the pluralistic society dominate both academic and policy discourse. The notion that immigrants "ought to be able to retain almost all the accouterments of their original culture and still be fully American in the sense of enjoying the nation's wealth, its full range of educational opportunities and political privileges" (Kalil 1998, 3) is becoming more prevalent, but it remains unclear what the implications of such a multicultural society truly are for society as a whole and for parks planners in particular. As the parks equity movement grows and more public and philanthropic funds are funneled into park restoration and revitalization in center city communities, parks planners must come to a new understanding of what it means to design and program open space for multiethnic user groups—and what the power relationships look like in such a process.

For instance, how can diverse populations be empowered in the parks planning process to ensure that all voices are at least heard, if not heeded? Traditional participatory processes presume that an easily definable set of stakeholders exists, and that a mediated community dialogue can result in consensus. However, in today's cities, dozens of ethnic or racial groups may coexist in a given

neighborhood, making it difficult to readily identify each group, and nearly impossible to facilitate conversation and consensus between groups, particularly when language barriers interfere. Moreover, the demographics of some communities change rapidly. Is it possible to create a park that is simultaneously permanent enough to define the landscape and serve as a landmark, and yet also mutable enough to accommodate changing needs?

A number of tools are at the disposal of parks planners and designers, as Urban Ecology and Hope Community discovered. However, most municipal parks planners have yet to explore the innovative processes being tested in academia and the nonprofit field. To begin, parks planning must follow current trends in city planning and shift away from the comprehensive top-down model that still defines so many park agencies. A public process is necessary, but the traditional model for participatory planning is fundamentally flawed in its application to diverse communities. Instead, parks planners should explore the more recent developments in the field of citizen participation, and specifically, the philosophy of the Community Design movement as it exists today. Both the Peavey Park and Clinton Park processes, for instance, employed iterations of participatory design strategies in their pursuit of multicultural design; here, the two cases serve as test beds for the application of such techniques in diverse neighborhoods.

There is, of course, the danger that a protracted public process in search of consensus can ultimately result in the collapse of a project altogether—a challenge both Hope and Urban Ecology faced. To successfully employ participatory design techniques in the context of multiethnic parks planning, it is essential to recognize that a simple consensus is neither a realistic nor a desired outcome in an era in which communities are beginning to recognize differences as assets, rather than as liabilities. Planners must openly acknowledge the limitations of the process, and search instead for a design solution that maximizes benefit for as many groups as possible without precluding or contradicting the other desired uses and aesthetics of a community.

By reflecting on the history of citizen participation in the United States and the state of the field today, the possibilities and limitations of these theories become clearer. Reconsidering the ultimate goal—community cooperation, rather than consensus—also deflects many of the initial criticisms of participatory planning as an ineffectual tool. The process still requires parks planners to be self-reflective and acutely aware of the dynamics and politics of the communities in which they practice, but this new model of participatory planning recognizes that it is not always be possible to transcend differences—and, perhaps more importantly, that it is not always desirable to do so.

The roots of multicultural participatory planning processes

The emergence of multicultural planning as a thread of discourse and practice in American urban planning was closely tied to a growing emphasis on the role of the citizenry in the creation and implementation of city visions; as cities grew more and more diverse, the need for a pluralist approach to city design and management became evident. The two histories rendezvous at various points in time—and especially, during the era of advocacy planning in the United States in the 1960s—but stem from distinct theoretical and historic contexts. Neither are they one and the same in modern America; a planning effort can be participatory but be far from multicultural, and—in contrast—a design may be multicultural in its nature, but entail little to no community involvement to that end. To better understand the potential that participatory planning and design measures have to create more multicultural planning processes, it is essential to explore the point of intersection of these two trends in planning, both historically and in current practice.

Hegemonic assimilation and the American "melting pot"

Early attempts to understand multiculturalism in the context of the increasingly diverse American cities of the mid-to-late nineteenth century revolved primarily around hegemonic assimilation, the notion that "being American" had specific implications—cultural, linguistic, and otherwise—and that new immigrant groups would work towards that end. In an era of xenophobia, the Red Scare, and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, many believed that newcomers should strive to be indistinguishable from the mainstream American population—and thus, the nation could be a strong and unified entity. By the early twentieth century, the concept of assimilation—more commonly referred to as the "melting pot" theory—had wide support at all levels of government, with "Americanization" programs for children and adults alike designed to train new Americans in the normative values of mainstream society.

Planning efforts of the era supported this vision of society as a unitary whole, as well; monistic planning assumed that there was a single public interest that could be identified and pursued. The planner, as a technician, supported this process. The rational comprehensive model of planning, which dominated the field through much of the twentieth century, embraced the "melting pot" model for society; the values and preferences of the dominant culture could be easily identified and adjusted to accommodate minority groups. The presumption was that cultural and social norms and behaviors were—or would ultimately be—consistent across ethnic groups allowed municipalities to assess the consequences and outcomes of planning decisions with information they perceived to be relatively complete.

Modernist aesthetics and social design

The rational comprehensive model dominated American city planning for the first half of the twentieth century, but by the 1950s, factions within the design and planning fields began challenging the underlying tenets of rational theory. "When problems are tame, information available, and time of no consequence, rational problem-solving is the order of the day," Forester acknowledged (Forester 1989, 54). Rarely, however, did those conditions hold true in practice, particularly in the context of planning for disempowered urban residents. Information might be unavailable or simply wrong, and forces beyond the planner's control often dictated timelines. Most significantly, problems were likely to be complex, multi-faceted, and—more often than planners liked to admit—beyond resolution, at least by the idealistic measures of the rational-comprehensive model. The predominantly white, male planners also lacked local knowledge of many communities, and began to realize that without this information, plans for many would simply fail. Riots in cities across the nation would later underscore the growing discontent with these failures and with the status quo in American center cities.

The Modernist design movement was in full swing during this era, as was the U.S. Housing Act of 1949, more commonly known as the Urban Renewal program, a federal initiative to revitalize the nation's cities that ultimately wiped out many center city neighborhoods—and especially, ethnic enclaves and communities of color—as part of its comprehensive redevelopment programs. Sometimes dubbed "Negro removal" because it displaced disproportionate numbers of low-income residents of color, Urban Renewal also contributed to the Modernist aesthetic in a number of cities as architects attempted to construct new downtowns or business districts on clean slates. The homogeneity in built form soon gave rise to a backlash movement, however, that sought to bring culture and residents back into the architectural dialogue. Progressive architects began to probe the connections between form and function, and grew concerned over what they saw as a mismatch between the design of the built environment and its use by residents. Social design—design with people, rather than form, as the focal point—emerged as a new direction within the design professions, bridging the behavioral sciences and design (Sommer 1983).

Equity and pluralist planning

Postmodernist critiques of American culture confronted very directly the Modernist tendencies towards assimilation, citing Modernism's reliance on a universal truth and narrative as problematic trappings of a Western-centric society, given the prevalence these notions give to views of the dominant society. In the humanities and social sciences, the influence of the Postmodernists stemmed

largely from their injection of multiple narratives and perspectives into conversations around history, culture, politics, and beyond. In the realm of planning, the creation of new—and multiple—meta-narratives had particular significance, as the movement away from a single dominant perspective opened the door to pluralistic planning processes that recognized and preserved diverse identities and values (Stein and Harper 2000).

Advocacy planning, one of the earliest organized responses to the criticisms of Modernism and the rational comprehensive model of planning, set out directly address the needs of minority, low-income, and other groups on the margin (Davidoff 1965, Alinsky 1971, Friedmann 1973). The movement "embraced disorder to achieve justice" (Hester 1999, 27) and introduced the notion that the planner need not be neutral. Hester (1999) attributes a number of significant changes in the political climate around city design and development to the advocacy planning era.

On the positive side, the Civil Rights movement prompted the reestablishment of the rights of the people and the institutionalization of citizen participation through federal programs and funding guidelines. On the negative side, public trust in government as a voice of authority declined substantially. As city experts used scientific "spin" to fight with one another over the merits of projects like highway construction or large-scale clearance, citizens grew increasingly wary and skeptical of any expert voice. Instead, there was a growing recognition that residents themselves could guide the planning process. J.B. Jackson, writing in [year], observed that "the city dweller is still exhausted, to be sure, by city existence... [b]ut weariness is no longer his chief complaint, and participation rather than passive contemplation is what he is asking" (as quoted in Hester 1999, 54).

Citizen participation

Hester (1999) also notes that during the late 1960s, many movements reasserted the American traditions of participatory democracy, organizing, and grassroots movements, from the New England town meeting to emancipation struggles to modern-day civil disobedience. "The message," Hester notes, is that "radical participation in the broad public interest is an heroic national value" (Hester 1999, 24). Equally influential were the many examples of citizen participation shifting policy, legislation, or law. Equity planning—an iteration of advocacy planning that embraced the differences inherent in a pluralistic society and sought to engage individual groups directly to promote social justice—had also emerged as a force in the broader urban planning discourse (Burayidi 2000a) by mid-decade.

The spectrum of participatory philosophies was (and remains) wide: for some, citizen participation meant open community

meetings to elicit feedback; for others, it signified neighborhood representatives on planning committees. For still others, public involvement was characterized by community consensus building. In addition, the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 and the wave of grassroots organizing that followed its release had brought the issue of citizen participation in environmental decision making into the national spotlight, as well. While discourses around public involvement in natural resources management would not merge with those around citizen participation in planning the built environment for some decades to come, the local environmental movement reinforced the notion of resident influence on policy decisions.

Early advocates of participatory planning processes outlined four primary models for engaging the community: 1) obligatory participation, or the mandated involvement of specific citizens; 2) electoral participation, or the (optional and voluntary) participation of the public in planning decisions via the voting booth; 3) citizen involvement, or the passive participation of residents in providing feedback, and 4) citizen action, the active engagement of the citizenry in the planning itself (Langton 1978). In retrospect, there are clearly more gradations in the participatory landscape than this model acknowledges, but for the purposes of examining options, it provides a useful summary of trends. While each mode of engagement still has a place in planning, it is the last, citizen action, that informs community design. Most parks planning, however, still relies heavily on passive citizen involvement.

Sherry Arnstein, whose framework for participatory process has shaped modern discourse around public involvement, defined the various tiers of public participation in her 1969 article, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" (Arnstein 1969). The lowest tier of participation represented attempts on the part of powerbrokers to act in a paternalistic capacity to make planning choices that might "cure" the ills of the public. (See Figure 6.1 for an illustration of the ladder.) Urban renewal-era citizen engagement processes typified planning of this type, with their characteristic top-down strategies managed by citizen advisory committees.

Informing, consultation, and placation, each reflecting token levels of public participation, form the second tier of participation. Here, the process acknowledges the public's need to voice concerns and be heard, but the onus of listening to and acting on these concerns remains with the power holders (Arnstein 1969). Many of the models for public involvement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s—and persist, in many areas, today—fall under the umbrella of tokenism: citizens are presented with plans or options and given opportunities to express thoughts and concerns in public meetings or other forums, but there is little follow-

through, and few accountability measures are in place to ensure that these ideas are subsequently integrated into the final plan. (Hester and others note, however, that in some cities, consulting and informing procedures have been institutionalized in ways that do grant a great deal of power to residents themselves; they may be engaged earlier in the process, may be directly involved in crafting the plan, or may have a protected and monitored role in approving the plan (Hester 1999).)

The last tiers of Arnstein's ladder—partnership, delegated power, and citizen control—signify increasingly participatory methods. Here, citizens not only have a voice in reacting to the plan, but also have a role in creating it; they may also serve as decision-makers, and at highest level of participation, may have managerial control of the process (Arnstein 1969). These forms of participation are rare, and many initially develop within disempowered neighborhoods in direct opposition to more institutionalized models operating at the city or regional level. Inasmuch as this level of public involvement exists, it is typically at the delegated power level, which gives representatives of the citizenry formal voices and votes on public councils or boards making planning decisions. Arnstein noted in 1969 that only a small number of cities—including both Minneapolis and Oakland—had successfully created functional citizen-dominated decision-making authorities. (The other cities with collaborative processes at this scale in 1969 included Cambridge, Massachusetts; Dayton and Columbus, Ohio; Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut; and St. Louis, Missouri (Arnstein 1969).)

The Community Design movement

Out of concern for representativeness and truly collaborative processes, practitioners dedicated to the principles of equity planning but wary of the bureaucratic and technical tendencies of planners themselves came together in the mid-1970s to launch the Community Design movement. Randolph Hester, Jr., in his 1974 essay "Community Design," lays out some of the tenets of the movement:

> [We need] new policies to make the design profession more responsible for the social suitability of the neighborhood environments they create. Particularly, we need policies (1) to clarify to whom the designer is responsible, the owner or the user of neighborhood space, (2) to guarantee the input of users' values into the neighborhood design process, (3) to eliminate professional ethics as a justification for the high cost and questionable results of neighborhood space design, (4) to provide for socially suitable neighborhood environments in both old and new communities, and (5) to guarantee increased user involvement throughout the neighborhood design process (Hester in Swaffield 2002, 49).

By the late 1970s, Stuart Langton was writing of the "dual citizen-participation movements" that had emerged in the United States:

the first, driven by the people, was characterized by grassroots organizing, the establishment of public interest groups, and the growth of other community associations designed to leverage public power; the second, initiated by government at the federal and local levels, sought the involvement of the people as a means of building support for government programs and decision-making processes (Langton 1978, 2). This growing push towards the involvement of everyday citizens in decision-making emerged amidst the rapid disappearance of "mediating institutions"—churches, fraternal organizations, social clubs—that had long been traditional venues for consensus building (Langton 1978, Rae 2003, Putnam 2000).

Thus, the emergent models for citizen participation were "an experimental alternative" to the modes of public involvement that had characterized American society in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries (Langton 1978). Langton also cites the growth of government agencies—and their increasing discretionary power—as key to the push for citizen involvement. The growth of the American population and its increasing affluence brought new pressure for expanded public services and regulation. Finally, he argues, the new culture of mass media that was emerging in the 1970s and dominates American society today paved the way for the everyday American to gain immediate access to information and take on a "watchdog" role from the living room or the breakfast table, opening an "era of government by fishbowl" (Langton 1978, 7).

Holistic planning and active participation

While the rise of the grassroots movement had a lasting impact on neighborhood-level planning and many community-based organizations began to give voice to the concerns of traditionally disempowered residents, surprisingly little of this transferred to the field of parks planning and landscape design, and even in city planning, these emergent models remained on the periphery of the profession. Not until the 1990s did a new holistic planning movement arise to engage communities in the planning process. It acknowledged the value of diversity, and recognized the influence of planning measures on race, class, and gender relationships in the United States.

To serve its ends, holistic planning has recast the planner as a facilitator and citizen partner whose job is primarily to empower the community itself to engage in decision-making processes. The new philosophy also divorces itself from the notion of normative standards and outcomes for planning processes (Burayidi 2000b). More broadly, this model of planning represents a distinct departure from the European principles and spatial norms that underscored much of American urban theory in the early part of the twentieth century and are still embedded in many policies and practices today.

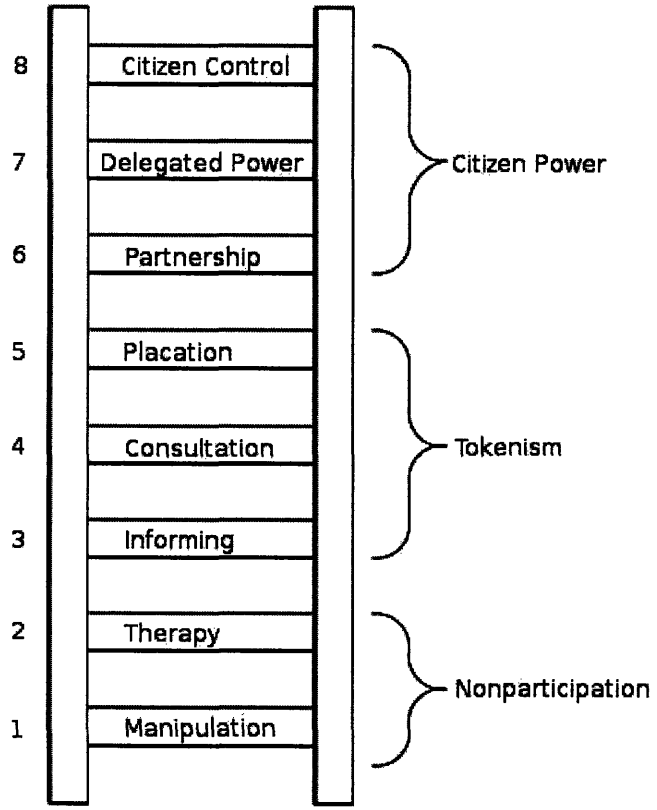


Figure 6.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation *(Source: Arnstein 1969, retrieved from* <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>)

The cultural sensitivity advocated by holistic planners has also given voice to design concerns arising out of conflicts between majority and minority groups that had previously gone unrecognized. Moreover, because earlier models of multiculturalism did more to distinguish majority culture from minority culture than to differentiate between multiple minority groups, planners had also failed to consider many of the intergroup conflicts between racial and ethnic groups, a lapse many planners are now beginning to recognize and attempt to remedy. The active engagement of minority communities has also helped to legitimate the planning process and the planner in those neighborhoods, extending the groundwork laid by advocacy and equity planners (Burayidi 2000b; Forester 2000). In holistic planning theory, multicultural planning and citizen participation finally met. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, this is the lens through which parks planners and their municipal counterparts must approach the diverse urban neighborhood.

Participatory design today: a new approach to community

As it exists today, participatory planning is largely a strategy that has grown out of the middle rungs of Arnstein's ladder. Most communities have public hearing processes in place; a number of federal programs, including Community Development Block Grants and virtually all of the programs under the Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD), require that a citizen participation process be outlined and implemented in order to receive funds. For many planning departments, however, these requirements may mean little more than mandated public meetings and public comment periods. No clear guidelines for outreach or community engagement exist; rarely do citizen participation plans make explicit mention of the challenges of overcoming cultural or class obstacles to participation. Instead, planners may simply wait to see who shows up, shrugging off poor participation as inevitable. As Xavier de Souza Briggs notes, "a new generation of planning theorists 'see planning as an interactive, communicative activity and depict planners as embedded in the fabric of community, politics, and public decision-making'...[b]ut as for the details of interaction, we mostly have 'how to' guides on public meetings and other media that are terse on points of power and culture" (Briggs 1998).

And, while citizen participation had—and still has—great potential as an agent of change, many planners have outlined concerns about its limitations over the years. Langton (1978), for instance, argued that the quality of participatory processes would be linked to a number of key factors:

- *Technological complexity:* Can technological factors be adequately understood by citizen laypeople?
- *Financing:* What procedures are in place to ensure that public processes are adequately funded?
- *Government agency behavior:* Are staff suitably qualified to manage and capitalize on a public process?
- *Representativeness:* Do representative voices adequately reflect all groups within a community?

While the first three concerns require the commitment of public resources to a project to monitor planning processes for efficacy and relevance, the fourth accentuates the continued need for strategies to directly engage the community in the planning and design process as a means of giving voice to all groups and subgroups within a neighborhood. This is particularly relevant in the context of parks planning, given that the area of practice has yet to realize—or, in many cases, even explore—the full potential of participatory strategies as a tool to strengthen and extend the efficacy of design and programming.

Most critical to the definition of "community design" is the issue of local knowledge. "Users have a particular expertise different than, but equally important to, that of the designer," Henry Sanoff observed (Sanoff 1978). A community design process also seeks to accomplish a number of non-design goals. To begin with, one must assume that a sound participatory process in a diverse community will ultimately yield a multicultural process. Understanding the

underlying theories of citizen participation, particularly as they relate to Community Design and related democratic design techniques, is critical for the parks planner attempting to integrate these methods into the existing framework of open space planning. This presumes a number of things, however: that the planners involved recognize, value, and practice effective participatory planning; that the power holders in the community acknowledge and understand the extent of the neighborhood's diversity; that those managing the planning process have the capacity to reach across linguistic and cultural barriers to draw in all members of the community. An understanding of what a participatory process should entail—and specifically, of what constitutes community design—provides the initial building blocks needed to develop a more nuanced vision for the future of participatory design.

Guy (2002) outlines the following objectives:

- Participatory design will result in more environmentally and culturally appropriate design of public projects (Guy 2002, 4).
- The process of engaging citizens in meaningful participation, i.e., input is respected and actually used, will create 'social capital,' increasing the capacity of citizens to participate and effect change in civic life over the long-term (Guy 2002, 4).
- The portions of a community that do not have access to professional design services and face difficulties in participating in decision-making about land development and building design, will be educated and empowered to become citizen planners on their own behalf (Guy 2002, 4).
- Community design is a mediation process between real and perceived conflicts of interest among stakeholders in a community and will result in greater tolerance, as well as opportunities for cultural or thematic expressions among diverse groups (Guy 2002, 4).

In addition to these broad goals, community designers have proposed a number of secondary benefits, including the development of a sense of community; community instruction in design media, tools, and software; construction of community capacity to prioritize and influence political decisions; new neighborhood-level coalitions; additional technical support for city planning departments; stronger civic infrastructure; and more (Guy 2002; Guy cites King 1984). Community design projects also result in specific amenities for neighborhoods: affordable housing, new neighborhood community space, local events, or other assets.

Challenges in the existing framework

Participation and the politics of power

The issue of political power—and more specifically, power imbalances and conflicts—is key to an understanding of the failures and successes of participatory processes in communities.

Planners must be very self-aware of their own places in the political structure, as well: who wields power in the community? Who is disempowered? How can the participatory process mitigate a power imbalance to produce a result that adequately reflects the needs and makeup of the neighborhood?

Equally critical is a consideration of whether people are truly comfortable participating openly in the process. The linguistic barrier can be a large obstacle if translators (and translated versions of any written material) are not available to put non-English speakers on equal footing with their neighbors. For new immigrants, public participation may also be a strange concept; there may be a distrust of (or an adulation for) authority figures. Issues of trust are particularly relevant in engaging immigrants who may not be in the United States legally, but who are nonetheless community members; for these individuals, fear of discovery and deportation can keep them out of the public process, if the language barrier does not.

Finally, given the persistence of the rational comprehensive planning model, community members may defer to the planner as an authority figure, rather than engage directly in the process themselves. This is often reinforced by the manner in which the process is framed and presented to the community; everything from task definitions to word choices can communicate power relationships. As a case in point, traditional planning processes typically seek to define problems, identify stakeholders and set goals, analyze data, seek consensus on proposed plans, implement a chosen plan, and evaluate and reflect on that plan (Hester 1999; Susskind 2002).

Implicit in each of these steps is an element of control on the part of the planner: community members may be consulted at specific points in the process, but there is little ongoing involvement, and tasks remain within the purview of the professional. Moreover, processes following these tenets still fundamentally seek community consensus, an increasingly elusive goal.

"Consensus building is not enough..."

One of the fundamental flaws of in early participatory design processes—and in the Community Design philosophy, in its first incarnation—was the overemphasis on the search for a common vision and common goals, a single community consensus. Community processes sought to bring neighborhood residents together to talk out their differences and, eventually, to come to agreement on major issues. However, the notion that a single consensus—one common good for the greater public—exists at all is somewhat problematic. Planning decisions, after all, require weighing interests and needs to make a choice that will benefit the community at-large—but not necessarily small subgroups

within that community. Specifically, small minority groups—be they racial, ethnic, economic, religious, or otherwise—may not be vocal (or heard) in a consensus-based planning process unless each group, regardless of size, is given a voice at the table and unanimous agreement is sought. This also presumes that planners or others managing such a process can identify subgroups to begin with—an assumption that has not always held true historically.

The long-standing challenge of defining modern publics becomes increasingly complex as society grows more and more multicultural. Here, the majority-minority paradigm that has dominated discourse in the United States for much of the nation's history becomes especially challenging. In a pluralistic society, there are multiple publics and many layers of identity; negotiating shared visions and collective public will requires choosing some viewpoints over others, and asking some—and occasionally all—parties to sacrifice values or beliefs at some point in the process. "One is hard pressed to find the stamp of Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainian, Italian, or Greek architecture and built forms in U.S. cities where many of these groups reside," Michael Burayidi writes in "Urban Planning as a Multicultural Canon" (Burayidi 2000b, 1). "This implies that either planners have done a good job in creating a consensus among the diverse ethno-cultural groups in the country or that through coercion, lack of representation, or the muzzling of the voices of non-dominant socio-cultural groups, the urban landscape failed to articulate their culture and needs" (Burayidi 2000b, 1).

Inherent in the democratic decision-making approach is also the great risk that a process may be dominated by the "already powerful," as Fainstein (1995) describes them: groups that have long had strong voices in the community, and who may have at their disposal the resources—social, financial, or otherwise—to draw large numbers of residents to meetings or other forums, thereby dominating discussion, debate, and ultimately decisions. Decision-making by the powerful typically results in the redirection of resources away from communities in need, impacting the social health of low-income neighborhoods and communities of color (Guy 2002; APA 2000).

Moreover, consensus-building processes that work to ally multiple constituencies may not effectively address multicultural constituencies (Meyer and Reaves 2000). Interest groups may cut across ethnic groups; minority groups that are largely assimilated into majority culture may not initially be distinguishable as populations with separate or additional needs—and conversely, subgroups that differ dramatically from the dominant society with respect to values may not immediately appear to differ from the majority group racially or ethnically (Meyer and Reaves 2000).

Potential solutions to the participation problem

The plethora of potential problems and the flaws in the consensus model for participation strongly suggest that a new participatory planning archetype, based upon but extending the thirty-year-old Community Design model, is essential if democratic design techniques are to be successfully implemented—in parks planning and in other contexts—in diverse communities. While the Community Design movement operationalized many of the values implicit in early advocacy and equity planning efforts, the principles must be further adapted to adequately meet the needs of twenty-first-century cities.

Creating a new process framework

First, there is a clear need for a new participatory framework to replace the traditional model of citizen participation. Hester (1999), for instance, suggests a twelve-step planning process as a reframed extension of traditional practice to better integrate community members as key participants. Focused on place knowing, place understanding, and place caring, Hester's model includes community listening and goal-setting, neighborhood mental mapping, and citizen evaluation of the outcome. He also stresses the importance of transferring responsibility and oversight of the process to the community members themselves.

While none of Hester's steps explicitly acknowledges process-related issues specific to diverse communities, the underlying premise—that the planner or designer is, at some level, a servant of the community—does shift power to residents in a manner that might be adapted to also consider diversity and difference.

Also integral to such a framework, many planners argue, is the recognition that planning processes are not at all linear: there is no set path, and a plan may shift direction at any moment in response to changing conditions or a reassessment of the original problem. Where feasible, broad-based citizen involvement from every identifiable group in the community is critical. Citizens should themselves be empowered to be community organizers, researchers, and citizen planners. Local knowledge is as critical to the outcome as technical expertise; there is no expert, and professionals and residents should be considered as equals (Guy 2002).

While the implementations of the park plans in Phillips and Eastlake stalled, the processes themselves did succeed in involving diverse groups of stakeholders in collaborative, but not necessarily consensus-based, conversations, indicating that successful community design projects are possible in the realm of parks planning. Challenges persist: in Phillips, for instance, it is not clear that the park design process adequately engaged the residents of the neighborhood who had formerly participated in

the NRP meetings. (More problematically, it is not clear that the facilitators of the Peavey Park process were especially interested in reaching these groups.) The design processes in both Eastlake and Phillips relied heavily on residents' deep fears and safety concerns to initiate community conversations; without these "carrots" to draw people to the early meetings, the resultant neighborhood collaborations might not have materialized. For communities without spaces in crisis, then, no clear starting point exists.

In spite of the obstacles that Hope and Urban Ecology faced in facilitating the Peavey and Clinton visioning processes and implementing the resultant plans, however, the positive response of the residents—and of the Oakland and Minneapolis city planning and community development agencies—suggests that, in time, democratic design processes may come of age as a new model for participatory planning and an effective park design strategy.

7 lessons from minneapolis and oakland: the future of participatory parks planning

The cases and research surveyed in this thesis clearly establish that race and culture matter in the context of neighborhood parks planning. Design and programming decisions in parks planning can significantly affect who uses neighborhood green spaces, as well as how these spaces are used. A comprehensive understanding of how culture informs spatial and programmatic elements of open space and how planners can integrate these concepts into park design helps to elucidate the changes that are needed in parks planning practice.

Based on the Peavey and Clinton cases, there is some evidence to indicate that participatory community design processes in diverse communities can yield plans for multiethnic spaces. However, while a number of communities are currently exploring democratic design as a strategy for engaging underrepresented communities in the planning process, few of the resultant plans have been implemented, leaving open a number of questions. It is difficult to ascertain how effective the plans themselves may be in creating culturally-relevant parks, for instance; similarly, distinguishing between process and product can be complex when assessing how effectively these projects mediate intercultural conflict over space.

The Peavey Park and Clinton Park case studies illustrate both the potential for leveraging design processes as larger tools of community development and the challenges inherent in design processes that are managed by nonprofit community-based organizations, rather than by city planning and parks agencies. At this juncture, the tensions within neighborhoods and between public and nonprofit agencies effectively thwart many participatory design efforts; these barriers must be addressed before democratic design can be fully integrated into parks planning.

A number of key elements of successful processes and products emerge from the Peavey and Clinton cases and from the research on best practices in multiethnic public space planning. Equally valuable are the failures and obstacles in these processes. The following conclusions summarize and reflect on the Minneapolis and Oakland experiences with participatory parks planning, and outline a path for future projects and research in this area.

Learning from Eastlake and Phillips: Participatory community design in diverse communities

Although democratic design projects remain relatively rare in practice—they generally require planners or architects well versed in community practices, in addition to a significant commitment of time and funding from municipalities—they are increasingly recognized as effective methods of engaging low-income populations and communities of color, where residents have often disengaged from traditional planning processes, frustrated by inaction. And, because a number of progressive schools of planning and architecture are beginning to teach urban planning, if not parks planning, with democratic design in mind, such projects are becoming more and more common in university communities.

In fact, in Minneapolis, where the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture have long histories of teaching and practicing community design, the Metropolitan Design Center (formerly the Design Center for the American Urban Landscape) has undertaken a number of local participatory design projects in housing, transportation, and other arenas. Oakland, too, has benefited very directly from its academic neighbor to the north; over the years, faculty and students from the College of Environmental Design at the University of California Berkeley have worked extensively in the city's neighborhoods, exploring new strategies for community development and participatory design. This makes it all the more surprising that in Minneapolis—the city of lakes and parks—the Design Center has not pursued neighborhood parks planning. And, although Oakland has now hosted several successful parks planning projects in some of its most distressed neighborhoods, the city does not appear to have institutionalized lessons from these successes into its broader parks planning doctrine.

What has prevented the Community Design movement from taking root in other American cities, and especially, in American parks planning? Dissecting the lessons in citizen participation from the Peavey and Clinton redesign processes yields valuable insights into the future of participatory planning in the United States, and the changes that will be necessary to make these methods truly effective in the new multiethnic American city.

Community organizing (Peavey)

Regardless of whether community organizing happens around the site design or around a related (or even an unrelated) neighborhood situation or conflict, the process of bringing residents together with a specific goal in mind can create valuable relationships within the community that can later support better resident involvement in the planning process. In especially distressed neighborhoods,

organizing may be a necessary first step to begin to identify the stakeholders within the community and to build relationships with these individuals. In Phillips, for instance, Hope Community hired a community organizer early in the Peavey Park redesign process to reach out to and mobilize residents, a step that proved essential to the project's success. This is even more critical in diverse areas in which there may be few cross-cultural networks to connect residents to one another.

Listening processes (Peavey and Clinton)

In the context of community design, "listening" means more than simply hearing; it means actively engaging with what the community has to say. Although many community groups and local governments use the term "listening session" loosely to refer to any public meeting at which residents can offer feedback, there is a distinction between a community meeting and a community listening session. Typically, community meetings provide space for residents to see and comment on planning or policy changes in a moderated dialogue with officials. A well-designed community listening session, on the other hand, should not be a dialogue per se. Rather, it should be a safe space for community members to talk openly about concerns, and to know that they are being heard. Good facilitation of the session is critical, but a facilitator's primary role is to prompt discussion or intervene to avert crises if necessary—not to present material or plans. In Phillips, Hope Community dubbed their model "community listening" to distinguish the listening sessions from traditional feedback sessions. Effective follow-up on listening sessions also demonstrates to residents that, in fact, their voices have been heard and duly noted.

Visioning processes (Peavey and Clinton)

Visioning sessions help to push a community process beyond the listening stage to a point at which a design charrette or an implementation plan can be introduced. Like listening sessions, visioning sessions are facilitated by a planner or community advocate who can initiate and support a conversation about the future of a space: what do residents want or need from the site? How do they envision it? In the Clinton project, facilitators also used the sessions to understand how residents perceive the current condition of the site, but more often, this type of information comes out of a listening session or community meeting that precedes the visioning session.

Community design charrettes (Peavey and Clinton)

Design charrettes or workshops follow (and are sometimes combined with) a visioning process. Here, an architect joins the facilitation team to help residents put thoughts and words into a visual format; often, a picture can clarify—or change—an idea. Together, the architect, facilitators, and residents come up with a design or a series of design options for a site. This component

must be collaborative for such a meeting to truly be a community design workshop; a designer who comes into a room with a set of prepared design options is not running a community charrette. (However, in both the Clinton and Peavey projects, architects prepared base diagrams for common options and ideas in order to produce or trace those suggestions when they arose at a meeting. Such a strategy can be a helpful time saver in a crowded meeting.)

Other community events (Peavey and Clinton)

An event need not be a project-oriented workshop to be valuable to the community design process. Both Hope and Urban Ecology used neighborhood activities to support the design process by fostering a sense of collective identity and belonging and stewardship for local space. Such events might include anything from a protest to a park clean-up day to a cultural event to a neighborhood fundraiser. Each activity serves to bring residents together to strengthen the area's social capital and connections, which in turn supports the design process (Huang, McNally, and Mozingo 2005).

Recommendations for multiethnic democratic design processes

Seek diverse sources of information; respect local knowledge

One mechanism for combating the inclination towards "top-down" planning is to integrate information and knowledge into the plan from a wide array of sources: factual data from maps and censuses; anecdotal information from residents; both expert and user opinions of space; theories from across the design and community development professions; and lessons from practice (Guy 2002). Giving equal weight to community knowledge and expert knowledge both legitimizes the process in the eyes of the community and contributes critical data and details that the professional planning team may not otherwise pick up on, given their brief history in the community.

Make information and process accessible

A particularly critical step in multiethnic neighborhoods where residents speak a number of languages and may not share common understandings of public participation, making a process accessible can be as simple as providing translations and translators or as complex as determining how to work around cultural norms that systematically subjugate particular community members. Neighborhoods residents should also help to guide any research or studies undertaken as part of the plan; the neighborhood must ultimately feel ownership of the process, and should build local capacity to participate actively in future planning initiatives. This proved especially important in the Peavey redesign process, as many within the Phillips community had grown accustomed to being powerless in the public process; residents needed to feel that they were central to the project.

Representatives of the community should also be privy to results and outcomes of studies, to maps, GIS data, and other quantitative tools, and to any other information repositories. Fortunately, organizations in both Oakland and Minneapolis are actively pursuing initiatives to use new technologies to provide residents with access to a wealth of data: in Minneapolis, and the Phillips Neighborhood Network (PNN) is developing similar Phillips-specific resources; in Oakland, the University of California Berkeley's InfoOakland project is providing digestible demographic data and mapping tools to residents.

Empower residents to feel ownership of a space

Giving residents the power to take ownership of a space—and, in turn, to invest time and energy into the stewardship of that space—is critical groundwork for community design. Community members should feel that the time and energy they spend improving and maintaining the space is not time spent in vain; short-term goals and small victories can convince a neighborhood that change is possible (Kaplan, Kaplan, and Ryan 1998). Discrete tasks may also help engage groups of residents who may not be comfortable (or have time to spend) participating in the larger community process. In one Oakland park, for instance, the design team held a community tree planting and asked a group of local drug dealers to care for the trees. "They did," observed Walter Hood, the coordinator of the project. "They looked after the trees. In four years, none of those trees died....they weren't really participating [in planning the park]...but then they became caretakers. That is a specialized way of getting involved" (Hood 1999). In Eastlake and Phillips, planners and designers engaged residents in a number of short-term projects like park clean-ups, festivals, community gatherings, and campaigns to build power and commitment to the parks. At a point, development around a park grows into development of a community at large, further enhancing the influence of the design process on the neighborhood.

Embrace conflict when necessary

Much of twentieth-century urban theory on public engagement focused on conflict resolution and avoidance, but there is also an intrinsic value in bringing conflict to the fore of a community conversation. In a safe space, conflict can serve as an information-gathering tool, opening dialogues and acknowledging tensions that had previously been hidden (Coser 1956). "I would say the best part of the project is when conflicting groups sit down together," Walter Hood said, discussing his experiences with participatory processes in Oakland with a 1998 conference panel. "Issues [come] out that need to be discussed. Differences in values, differences in attitudes, differences in class...without being face-to-face at the table, you only hear one side and you never get a balance. And you never get anywhere" (Hood 1999, 158). Such clashes force issues into the public discourse—a step that is frequently

missing in many planning contexts. Again, this is a difficult—and sometimes frightening—place to begin for planners accustomed to more traditional community engagement philosophies. But, as one design professional concluded, "you really have to start with where your differences lie" (community designer, personal interview, March 2005).

Recognize distinct identities; redefine community consensus

Adapting to the inherent chaos of the community design process is one of the greatest challenges for planners and designers trained in the participatory methodologies of a generation or two ago. The desire is to approach participatory design with "some normative sense of consensus," as Rios puts it, but this can inadvertently bias a process. Community design is, by its nature, a nonlinear process; unlike rational planning, goals are process-oriented, rather than outcome-oriented. Striving for community consensus around an amorphous endpoint can be frustrating and ultimately counterproductive. Instead, practitioners must revisit their notions of collective will. A participatory process may result not in a single voice, but in a multitude of voices, each pursuing a separate goal. However, the design process brings each of these objectives to light, and provides space for community conversations to ensure that one agenda does not preclude the next. Collectively, groups can ally to advocate for not one outcome, but many.

Foster collaborations and coalitions

Finally, collaborations—both within the community and beyond its borders—play a crucial role in supporting the continued success of democratic design processes. Cross-constituency coalitions that reach beyond the immediate neighborhood can also be especially important, as they may leverage community assets and resources. For instance, a number of recent park projects at the city and regional level have embraced open space design as an impetus for forging intergroup connections. New York City's Bronx River Greenway, Oakland's Union Point Park, and Minneapolis' Midtown Greenway are all excellent recent examples of collaborative planning and design processes that engaged multiple communities in cross-cultural dialogues; a study of these and similar projects would likely extend the theories this thesis explores from the neighborhood level to the regional level.

Take special action to engage disempowered groups

Planners, as mediators and facilitators, should also ensure that traditionally marginalized groups are engaged in the planning process as effectively as possible; this may entail pursuing innovative measures to overcome linguistic or cultural barriers. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, planners must recognize that—contrary to what many professionals were taught in the era of rational comprehensive planning—timeframes and deadlines sometimes

necessitate moving forward with plans even when a process is incomplete and some data are not yet available. Particularly in traditionally underserved neighborhoods, residents must truly believe that change is forthcoming, or they will quickly disengage from the process, viewing it as yet another dead-end attempt by outsiders to affect change in the community.

Multicultural park design in practice: the Peavey and Clinton experiences

What design outcomes ultimately came out of the Peavey Park and Clinton Park processes? Participatory design is, at its heart, simply a means to an end, and has little to offer parks planning practice if does not directly affect the design of the park itself. To truly grasp whether or not a participatory design process is an effective alternate strategy for designing public space for a diverse group of users, an examination of the design outcome of the process is also necessary. Did the resultant designs of Peavey Park and Clinton Park reflect the array of multiethnic values and concerns documented during the community process? What additional design or programming approaches might enhance the relevancy and appropriateness of a park? In Eastlake and Phillips, the public processes resulted in very concrete proposals for design interventions; assessing these outcomes can provide a preliminary gauge for the effectiveness of the democratic design strategy as a means of achieving multicultural design.

"Community members asked for a park that [reflected] the neighborhood's commonalities and its diversity," Urban Ecology wrote in the vision statement for Clinton Park, explaining the design rationale for the final design. "[We] responded with a plan that provides a safe, clean environment, venues for a range of events, and design elements reflecting the different racial and ethnic groups that give Eastlake its character" (Urban Ecology 1999, 6). Exploring the design elements proposed by the two neighborhoods as the end-product of the community design projects sheds a great deal of light on the significance of the participatory methods themselves for future parks planning.

Critical qualities in multiethnic designs

1) Enhance cultural relevancy through design and programming
2) Recognize and embrace adaptation
3) Build cross-cultural coalitions and partnerships
4) Foster community stewardship
5) Engage communities in design

In many respects, the designs that resulted from the Peavey and Clinton redesign processes are strikingly alike. An initial explanation, of course, might be that the two designs are similar because they reflect general park design trends common to new green spaces across the country. But, while a number of multicultural public

spaces like Roxbury's Dudley Town Common and Philadelphia's Village of Arts and Humanities feature similar public art projects and gathering spaces, few of the features of the Peavey and Clinton designs appeared in other master plans created in the late 1990s or early 2000s. (However, most plans for renovated parks did propose converting passive uses to more active uses.)

Instead, typical plans for most small neighborhood parks included tot lots, basketball courts, water park features, and playgrounds. Dog parks grew increasingly common during the 1990s, and larger parks sometimes featured interpretive centers. Community participation in the design process varied from city to city (and even from neighborhood to neighborhood). Generally, residents had an opportunity to comment on or review plans for larger regional parks, but rarely, it appears, for smaller neighborhood parks. (It should also be noted that few municipalities draft formal master plans for neighborhood parks, however, so there may be some public processes that are undocumented.) For the most part, neighborhood park plans were researched and written by planning or landscape architecture consulting firms; in some cases, in-house planners with city planning or parks departments created master plans.

Some proposed interventions in the Clinton and Peavey plans—additional parking areas, spaces for large gatherings, community recreational centers—would be expected of such a design process, given current trends in parks planning. Others—functioning water fountains and public toilets, benches, bicycle racks—are typical park features today; their absence in the existing designs of these parks likely reflects a combination of neglect, lapse in time since the last major renovation, and, perhaps, fear of creating a space that might be co-opted as a stand-in for home by people experiencing homelessness.

However, in the Peavey and Clinton redesign processes, several park features also emerged as extremely significant to the neighborhoods' multiethnic communities, despite being largely absent from the literature:

Neighborhood and park gateways: Peavey Park already features a "gateway" to the Phillips neighborhood; the public art plaza, designed by artist Rafaela Green in 1993, combines multiple cultural traditions in its mosaic design of pathways and benches. Eastlake residents proposed a similar symbolic entrance to Clinton Park in their plan, as well. As a marker, these entrances may help to give the parks strong identities and to mark borders and boundaries clearly for the surrounding community.

Community performance space: Residents in both Eastlake and Phillips placed community performance space among the important features their parks had been missing. This is particularly interesting

because it supplements the (expected) requests for gathering space; participants in the design process delineated between the two, however. Native American communities in both neighborhoods wanted such space for pow-wows, drumming sessions, and other cultural activities;

Storytelling space: Finally, both park designs integrate new circular storytelling spaces. Again, this is an element missing from most neighborhood parks in the United States. However, the import accorded this feature by the neighborhood ethnic groups in Phillips and Eastlake may speak to the importance of oral traditions in these cultures—an art that has largely been lost among European Americans.

What lessons can the Peavey Park and Clinton Park design processes offer to future park design projects? First, the listening processes in the two communities uncovered problems with the park design that the MPRB and OPR had not previously understood: the ramifications of the practices and ethnic makeup of park police in Minneapolis, for instance, or the importance of creating edges and entrances for Clinton Park. Moreover, in Peavey Park, the design and programming desires identified by community residents reflected somewhat different needs than did the design interventions the MPRB had implemented only a few years earlier, indicating that the MPRB's public process in the mid-1990s failed to reveal some of the challenges facing Peavey. This may also explain, in part, why the initial renovations in the mid-1990s did not succeed in remedying the park's social ills.

The residents of Phillips and Eastlake also suggested many design changes during the visioning processes that, while similar in concept to designs that the MPRB and OPR had implemented in other parks, reflected the unique needs of the two neighborhoods as new immigrant communities. For instance, the placement of picnic tables in the parks presented problems for large immigrant families as well as for Latinos accustomed to picnicking with extended families. The proposed change—creating larger picnic areas by clustering tables—was a straightforward, attainable solution that parks planners had simply not known to think of.

Barriers to design implementation

The Clinton Park and Peavey Park redesign processes share another aspect: both hit enormous obstacles in the implementation phase. This had a dramatic impact on the outcome of the process, as, to date, neither community has implemented most of the proposed changes to the parks. The two communities had strikingly similar experiences, suggesting that some of these obstacles and roadblocks may, in fact, be indicative of challenges inherent in participatory design itself, at least when community-based organizations and nonprofit groups mediate the process.

Institutional capacity and limitations

In Oakland, it might be argued that the institutional capacities of the OPR and CEDA, both subject to municipal budget shortfalls and committed to a multitude of other large-scale projects, limited the city's ability to move forward with the Urban Ecology plan, once it was complete. However, Minneapolis has one of the nation's most comprehensive autonomous park management bodies, and the redesign process had the active support of both the MPRB and the mayor. That this implementation also failed suggests that the problems may be deeper than simply a struggling municipal government. Specifically, cities may need to institutionalize both the participatory planning process and a clear implementation strategy before community design can truly be an effective model. Without the direct involvement of the city or relevant parks authority, nonprofit management of park design processes may be destined to fail.

Timing also played a role in stalling the Minneapolis process: shortly after the MPRB approved the Peavey Park master plan, the attacks on New York City and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001 brought the implementation of the plan to an abrupt standstill. In Minneapolis, as in cities across the United States, public spending was dramatically affected; as the national economy plunged into recession, foundation funds and other philanthropic grant sources also dried up. Since then, neither Hope Community nor the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has had the staffing to assign someone to the Peavey project full-time.

Organizational autonomy and interagency conflict

In both Eastlake and Phillips, the primary organizational actors—Urban Ecology and Hope Community, respectively—also came into conflict, directly or indirectly, with other neighborhood organizations. In Oakland, interagency conflict between Urban Ecology and EBALDC complicated the process; collaborating directly with a community-based organization was still a new experience for Urban Ecology, and EBALDC was accustomed to being the primary neighborhood organization. Similarly, Hope came into conflict with the NRP neighborhood association, a group that had long held the planning power in Phillips. The MPRB may have further complicated this tension by declaring the Hope sessions the official public process for the Peavey master plan, as the NRP associations in Minneapolis typically manage most neighborhood planning processes.

The problem is not unique to Minneapolis and Oakland: interagency conflict is a growing problem in neighborhood-level planning efforts across the country. One or more nonprofits

or community-based organizations may be collaborating with the community and the city to manage a design project; each organization has a very different relationship with the community, and a different (but often overlapping) set of objectives in undertaking the project. Consequently, a strong dynamic of contestation can arise in many collaborative planning efforts, particularly as partnerships between community-based organizations, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations grow more complex and widespread. Various community players may have conflicting agendas and values; at a very basic level, organizations may be vying for turf as they work to engage neighborhood residents.

Designer-community conflict

Design professionals themselves may also end up immersed in the thick of community conflict. While many planners are trained in negotiation and facilitation skills, architects may be new to the public process, and skeptical of the neighborhood's role. "As far as I am concerned, the public doesn't know good design until you give it to them," one designer asserted in Kalil's 1998 study. "That is my job, not really theirs...[though] I will try to hear from community leaders to tell me what their concerns are because if not, they are the most powerful roadblock to my getting the project built and getting paid" (Kalil 1998, 96). In architecture and landscape architecture, such sentiments may be institutionalized in process. Many design firms, for instance, currently use public workshops as a venue to display completed work and elicit public commentary on it—not to design projects with the community, and rarely to solicit new ideas (Kalil 1998).

Additional concerns: Time constraints, safety, frustration

First, participation in any community activity takes time; in the case of organizing around planning issues, it may entail many evening meetings, occasionally daytime commitments, and long weekend afternoons spent with the planners and designers on the project. For many lower-income Americans, this scale of involvement is impossible—a parent may have childcare commitments, or individuals may be working several jobs to meet monthly financial obligations.

Residents may also be skeptical of any positive outcome of such a process, particularly if past experiences have proven fruitless. In Phillips, there is great frustration inside and outside the community over the outcome—or lack thereof—of the listening processes and resultant plan, which is making further community involvement in such projects difficult. "My opinion is that the whole thing with Hope doing all that work with grant money from the City was a boondoggle so Hope could get $35,000 of admin funds out of Sharon Belton. They must have know it would come to nothing," one city administrator said. (Actually,

funding for the Peavey Park project came from the APA, not from the city.) Reengaging disillusioned neighborhood residents and stakeholders can be especially challenging; there must be many visible short-term goals and outcomes in order to convince the community that, in fact, their voices are being heard and their investment in the long-range plan will be worthwhile. Both Phillips and Eastlake find themselves faced with this struggle today; in both neighborhoods, park improvements are slowly being implemented, but the process has been a long one.

The future of democratic design in parks planning

In spite of the many obstacles and barriers that Urban Ecology and Hope Community encountered, participatory design processes are nonetheless yielding compelling results in some areas of parks planning. Future research exploring these successes may provide additional insight into the potential of such a process in the realm of parks planning.

Union Point Park, Oakland, CA

A similar community process to design a new park in Oakland along the waterfront ran concurrently with the Clinton Park planning. In the case of Union Point Park, a nine-acre waterfront site located in the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland immediately adjacent to Eastlake, the design process involved nearly fifty community organizations and nonprofits and more than 1,000 area residents. The Spanish Speaking Unity Council, a community development corporation actively engaged in the neighborhood, partnered with the Trust for Public Land and the University Oakland Metropolitan Forum to plan the park on a formerly industrial brownfield site along the Oakland Estuary waterfront. The neighborhood also involved planning and landscape architecture students from the University of California at Berkeley in the project through a series of design studios. The final design, which included public art and considered residents' requests for picnic areas, group gathering spaces, children's play areas, informal play areas, and bus shelters, reflected the results of intense community participation (Hou and Rios 2003).

Opportunities for future research

The observations and conclusions of this thesis leave open a number of pathways for future research to better understand the effect of culture on the use of American neighborhood parks. Specifically, there is a clear need for more comprehensive studies of neighborhood spaces, akin to the regional studies undertaken by the San Francisco Bay Area Open Space Council and the Barr Foundation in Boston. Such research could affirm the relevancy of the conclusions reached at the national and regional levels to the local parks context.

An opportunity also exists for municipal governments and parks agencies to proactively engage the principles of community

design in their existing participation frameworks. Many of the obstacles encountered in Oakland and Minneapolis related to the capacity of the nonprofit organizations facilitating the planning process; an empowered city agency with a strong mandate to include the public and a desire and ability to work cross-culturally might test the efficacy of these planning strategies more conclusively.

Finally, it should be noted that nowhere has this thesis attempted to address the issue of *how well* participatory design processes function in creating cross-cultural spaces. There are a number of reasons for this omission. First and foremost, such an assessment requires more time, resources, and access than are available for a yearlong master's project. Longitudinal use studies and more comprehensive analyses of community relations (and of any outside forces acting on the neighborhood) would be necessary to adequately measure the impact of design on cross-cultural connections; such research also presumes the full implementation of whatever plan the community process produced, an expectation that—as noted above—appears unrealistic in this political moment.

Also problematic, however, are the methods of measurement themselves. Definitional problems confound evaluations of "success" in a multitude of fields, and have been especially problematic in community development and planning in recent years (as evidenced, especially, in the Federal Office of Management and Budget's 2004 assessment of the Community Development Block Grant program, which failed to find any easily-measurable outcomes and consequently concluded that the program must be ineffective). There is a great danger, then, in embarking on an evaluative process without a predefined notion of what might (or should) be.

What constitutes a successful process? Must a community process create a product to be worthwhile, or is there also value in the conversation itself? In the latter case, how can such value be measured in a concrete manner? Similarly, what truly constitutes a "multicultural" space? Is cultural interaction sufficient to qualify a space as multicultural, or must it also foster broader community alliances? These are dilemmas that must be resolved within the research framework itself before any attempts to categorically assess and evaluate outcomes can be made.

New trends in park design: implications for multiethnic space

The future of cross-cultural parks planning is also closely tied to several new and growing trends in parks and recreation planning. As the field of parks planning develops and neighborhood spaces become increasingly important in American cities, these new patterns of park development may also inform how adequately neighborhood spaces meet the needs of racial and ethnic minority groups in the future.

The historic restoration of parks

In the past decade, there has been a push to restore larger urban parks and post-industrial landscapes to their "original" natural states—typically defined as the pre-Columbian moment in history. Prompted in part by the growing public ecological ethic and in part by changes in federal funding guidelines that have permitted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to engage in such work, many of these projects represent a fusion of environmentalism and historic preservation, two discourses that had for many years been markedly distinct from—and at times even antithetical to—one another. Across America, communities are reaching out to the land to revitalize and recreate it, unearthing rivers and streams that had been buried for years, replanting land that was once forested, and un-damming lakes to return them to their natural states.

In the context of the increasingly multicultural American city, however, such projects can be potentially problematic. The act of dubbing a single moment in history the "true" moment negates the centuries of human influence that came before and after the ideal point in history. In reality, changes in the land are part of a continuum, constantly reshaped by a multitude of forces. To choose a single past, then—even an ecological one—necessarily precludes the inclusion of the many other pasts and their accompanying narratives. Many of these projects are so new that their effect on the urban communities around them is as yet unclear, but the shift in thinking they have provoked in open space planning is already evident in communities across the country; even Los Angeles—infamous for its river of concrete—is in the early stages of planning a waterfront greenway and restored river system linked to neighborhood parks that will recreate the waterway that ran through the city in pre-modern times.

Active living by design

Conversations around active living issues are perhaps the most recent addition to the parks discourse; while the health and physical fitness campaign entered the national consciousness in the 1980s on the tail of the women's health movement, it was not until the late 1990s it crystallized into a comprehensive community design dialogue cutting across academia and practice. Over the past several years, planners across the country have begun to embrace principles of active living in their designs for communities; new federal and local grant monies fund exploration into the ties between health, physical activity, and design.

Increasingly, social scientists probing these links have made explicit note of the relevance of race, class, and age, as these three factors correlate highly to how active and how healthy Americans

are. Consequently, cities engaged in "active living by design" projects are becoming more cognizant of the role of racial and ethnic culture in influencing lifestyle and use of recreational space. Perhaps more importantly, an increase in federal funding for projects promoting active living has produced a spate of parks projects focused on exercise and healthy lifestyles. While the Peavey and Clinton projects predate this trend slightly—active living initiatives have gained much of their national prominence within the last five years—future participatory parks projects will likely focus more extensively on these issues.

Open space projects as capacity-building tools

Finally, many, if not most, parks projects—particularly in distressed center-city neighborhoods—have social aims in addition to ecological objectives. Parks planning can be an effective tool for organizing diverse communities to work towards a common goal, increasing social capital within the neighborhood as residents network and the area's organizational capacity grows; both the Oakland and Minneapolis projects evidence this. However, before such projects can be truly effective, communities—and planners—must better understand the sources of intergroup tensions over park design and use to prevent conflict from bringing the planning process to a standstill.

The road ahead for Peavey Park and Clinton Park

In light of the many conflicts that arose during the redesign processes in Eastlake and Phillips, the cities of Minneapolis and Oakland have been slow to act on the proposed plans. However, the parks remain in the forefront of residents' minds, and the plans may yet come to fruition.

In Minneapolis, for instance, the 2006 MPRB budget commits $400,000–$500,000 to the Peavey Park project, with the isolated north end of the park targeted for the first improvements. Plans call for a larger parks building on this end of the site that will provide space for arts, cultural, and community activities; additional minor changes to the space nearby will provide a nicer ambience and improved space for sports and other recreational activities. A number of new housing units have also gone up near the park in recent years, adding pressure for improvements to the space to move forward soon. "We can't let go of it," Mary Keefe, Associate Director of Hope Community, said. "There will be a time very soon now when we can really find some allies and won't have to be in this alone—the politics could be in place to get back [to the plan]."

Oakland, too, is slowly moving forward with plans for Clinton Park. EBALDC recently reopened the project, and Friends of Oakland

Parks and Recreation is supporting an assessment of Clinton Park through an anonymous donation (Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation 2005). The Eastlake Revitalization Initiative, part of the national Main Streets program, is currently working towards revitalization of the area's commercial district, and recently received a $250,000 grant to begin the proposed renovations on Clinton Park later this year.

Only time will tell whether or not these newly-redesigned parks can truly enhance cross-cultural connections in the Eastlake and Phillips neighborhoods. Both communities will need to continually re-assess these spaces and their places in the urban fabric to ensure that the parks become true assets to the neighborhoods: thoughtfully designed, lovingly maintained, and well used by the people they seek to serve.

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glossary

Alphabet Soup: A Guide to Acronyms, Abbreviations & Appellations

ABAG ..... Association of Bay Area Governments

APA ..... American Planning Association

BART ..... Bay Area Rapid Transit

CED ..... College of Environmental Design at the University of California Berkeley

CEDA ..... Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency

DFL ..... Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party

EBALDC ..... East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (CA)

ELMA ..... Eastlake Merchants Association (CA)

GIS ..... Geographic Information System

HUD ..... U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development

LSA ..... Lower San Antonio (CA)

MPRB ..... Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

NAACP ..... National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NPS ..... National Park Service

NRP ..... Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program

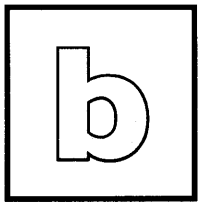
OPD ..... Oakland Police Department

OPR ..... Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation

PNN ..... Phillips Neighborhood Network (MN)

SACDC ..... San Antonio Community Development Corporation (CA)

UCB ..... University of California Berkeley



research methodology

An overview of the methods I used to choose case studies and to evaluate existing research within the field frames the premises and conclusions of my own work; outlining my assumptions and strategic decisions to exclude specific spaces or to control, as best I could, for some factors may also highlight areas for future research in related areas.

Research methods

Research for this thesis, undertaken between November 2004 and April 2005, employed a multi-method approach. The integrative methodological model combined a diverse set of methodologies:

Literature review: The literature review for this thesis explored the existing body of research on park use patterns at the local, regional, and national scale; race and ethnicity; urban green space; American environmentalism; parks history; community design; participatory planning history; and multiculturalism. While I placed an emphasis on the relevant American literature, I searched international journals as well, as many of the lessons learned are applicable to the American context as well.

Quantitative research: Quantitive research drew from U.S. Census data, from population and demographic data from the states of Minnesota and California, and from GIS maps of the two cases.

Formal interviews: I conducted formal interviews with the organizations involved in the two case studies, speaking with both past and present staff about the processes.

Informal dialogues: Informal conversations with a number of academics and practitioners yielded valuable data and insight into the community design process and into the broader field of park research as it relates to race and ethnicity.

Research context

In the early stages of my thesis work, I refined my research context by identifying the settings I hoped to study and the processes I felt had the most potential to solve the primary problem I saw in park design: a mismatch between the values and assumptions of designers and planners and the needs and desires of diverse communities at the neighborhood level. Given the scope of work—and the

Criteria for case selection: Elements of physical setting

PHYSICAL SETTING	*...is a small neighborhood parks in urban environment: at least one acre and not more than fifteen*	*Why?* Parks smaller than an acre often reflect the recent conversion of leftover land into park space, rather than the proactive creation of a park; parks larger than fifteen acres are usually city park spaces with regional user bases and better municipal funding and support.
	...is an existing park, not a new or proposed park	*Why?* New parks are more likely to reflect the reclamation of vacant lots, post-industrial landscapes, or other newly-rediscovered swathes of urban land that may have very different design limitations, sense of community ownership, or municipal investment.
	...is not a waterfront park, greenway, linear park, or rails-to-trails project	*Why?* Most linear parks or greenways stretch through multiple communities, and thus, their planning typically represents a cross-constituency coalition-building process, not a neighborhood-focused community-building process. Moreover, these parks are often catalyst projects for large-scale revitalization or redevelopment initiatives, and consequently have many stakeholders from outside the affected communities. Finally, waterfront projects are unique because urban waterfronts "belong" not only to the abutting neighborhoods, but also to the city at large; waterfront planning projects typically involve residents from across the city.
	...does not have unique resources, a storied history, or other features that draw outside visitors	*Why?* To adequately explore the intersection of neighborhood community processes and parks planning, cases should focus on parks without broader constituencies advocating for their preservation or restoration.
	...is not a park whose primary use is a playground, community garden, urban farm, or sports field	*Why?* The exclusion of single-use parks from the case study pool stems from several concerns: 1) A design or redesign process for a park with such a specific purpose seems far less likely to generate significant conflict or discussion unless the use of the space is itself in question. 2) Some green spaces are special cases: playgrounds, for instance, cater specifically to children, who may not have internalized many of the cultural barriers or norms that affect their parents' use of parks. (Research also indicates that many children share common visions of play areas, even across cultures.) 3) Similarly, community gardens often come into being as the result of long neighborhood processes; while such gardens have become well-known as spaces that can sustain multi-ethnic communities and effect positive change in diverse neighborhoods, it is impossible to discern whether these changes result from the presence of the garden or from social capital and neighborhood ties generated by the creation process.

timeframe—for this thesis, I had to limit case studies based on park type and process type; thus, this thesis explores the effect of very specific public process in a very particular environment. I believe that many of the lessons learned from these cases can be applied in other settings, but I leave this to other researchers to establish.

Choosing specific cases

As I initially hunted for case studies to explore the implications of park design for diverse communities, I cast a wide net, exploring park redesign efforts in cities across the country, from New York to Seattle to Houston to Los Angeles. I even considered including

Criteria for case selection: Aspects of planning process

PLANNING PROCESS	*...must actively engage community members through participatory design techniques*	*Why?* Because I was specifically interested in the potential application of community design principles to parks planning, I chose cases in which planners had actively employed these strategies in the public process.
	...seeks to redesign, not renovate	*Why?* Renovation plans generally lacked any substantive change in design (and rarely involved the community, since there were few design or programming decisions to be made). However, many city park restoration and renovation projects underway across the country are enhancing park access for center-city communities simply by compensating for years of neglect.
	...must focus on diversity and multiculturalism	*Why?* In order to explore the connections between multicultural planning and park design adequately, I needed cases in which the agencies or organizations facilitating the community design process understood and had explicitly planned for the challenges of working with a diverse community. Some advocates of citizen participation assert that a good participatory process by definition renders cultural differences irrelevant; I disagree. Occasionally, participatory planning processes that do not explicitly reflect upon and engage cultural contexts may transcend racial or ethnic barriers by chance, or because the sensibilities of the planners (or participants) involved compensate for the fact that the process itself does not overtly attempt to negotiate cultural discord, but a simple consensus-based participatory process that does not actively engage participants in a dialogue about difference rarely reflects community diversity in its outcome.

cases in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, where planners have undertaken a number of innovative multicultural parks projects during the past decade.

Ultimately, however, I came back to the beginning: the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I had first become interested in the notion of multicultural open space design. I knew of Hope Community, a community-based nonprofit organization in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, because a July 2004 exhibit by the McKnight Foundation in Minnesota had featured one of their participatory projects to create affordable housing in Phillips. When I discovered that Hope had also experimented with these "community listening" techniques in the redesign of a small neighborhood park in Phillips in the late 1990s, I knew that I had my first case study.

Choosing the second case study proved much more challenging, however. Initially, I planned to have three cases: the Minneapolis case and one case each on the east and west coasts. I quickly found not one, but four northern California case studies—not in San Francisco, as it turned out, but across the bay in Oakland, California, where students and faculty from the College of Environmental Design at the University of California Berkeley (and several local organizations and firms staffed or directed by

graduates or affiliates of the department) had been actively engaged in participatory park design projects for a number of years. The East Bay presented an especially useful backdrop, as past research (Godfrey 1988 as cited in Kalil 1998) suggests that the Bay Area in general is an indicator for social and demographic trends that will eventually spread across the nation. In the end, I settled on the Clinton Park Initiative because the neighborhood, process, and players seemed strikingly similar to those in Minneapolis, allowing me to effectively hold many variables constant in my analysis.On the East Coast, however, I failed to find an appropriate case: parks were too big or too small; projects involved too many constituencies, or none at all. While some Eastern cities—notably Philadelphia, New York, and Boston—are currently engaged in innovative community-based parks projects, none of the potential cases explicitly engaged community design principles. Ultimately, I decided that, rather than groom a New York or Boston case to fit the Oakland/Minneapolis model, I would forego the third case altogether.

I suspect there are a number of reasons that so few projects of this sort exist on the East Coast. Many of the cities along the Eastern seaboard have older park systems, most of them designed by Olmsted, his sons, or his protégés; these parks have broad constituencies that stretch beyond neighborhoods, and even beyond city limits, which can make defining the park "community" extraordinarily difficult and controversial. A space like Boston's Franklin Park may be serving local neighborhoods along its edges as the primary community green space, but such spaces also have historic legacies, and many passionate advocates of park preservation bristle at the notion that Olmstedian pleasure grounds might be adapted for modern community uses. In cities where planners have pushed ahead with such renovations, long and drawn-out political and legal battles have sometimes resulted. Parks planners might be forgiven for keeping the decision-making and design processes behind closed doors in these circumstances.

There are, of course, historic parks in many mid-Western and Western cities—Chicago and Minneapolis especially—but perhaps regional culture is at play, as well. In Minneapolis, for instance, residents have long been considered the stewards of the land; the city and independent parks board simply support and facilitate this. Both the Twin Cities and the San Francisco Bay Area are bastions of progressive politics, as well, which further supports citizen participation efforts. In contrast, many Eastern cities have park and recreation departments that function as arms of city government, and parkland may be owned by the city itself (and consequently subject to development or sale if the land is not protected legally). Conversations around the "highest and best use" of open space abound, and many city officials consider engaging

the community in land use decisions to be tantamount to losing the land altogether.

However, I firmly believe that culturally accessible neighborhood green spaces provide community benefits that extend far beyond picnic areas and soccer fields. A space that truly reflects community needs and desires can be a catalyst to support new social ties and interactions between neighbors; a park that encourages cross-cultural interaction within its boundaries may prompt these relationships to spill over into the neighborhood at large. Put simply, there is value added in these spaces that cannot be adequately quantified in economic terms; cities rarely consider these community benefits in assessing potential land uses. Until this changes, promoting community-based design processes for neighborhood parks will continue to be a daunting endeavor in less-progressive cities.

Assessing other methodologies

Finally, before researching this thesis, I familiarized myself with the methodologies used by researchers in the planning field as well as in the leisure studies field to measure the use and effectiveness of park spaces; understanding these measures of assessment and evaluation proved critical to interpreting the many user studies conducted in the various disciplines. Chris Walker (2003) of the Urban Institute frames the question as a measure of *who* uses a public space, *how* people use the space, and *why* they use (or do not use) it. This is a particularly helpful framework for exploring the use and underuse of parks and other public spaces. Walker (2003) proposes a methodology that incorporates some combination of the following strategies: counting of park visitors by trained observers at different times; observation of users by trained observers; closed-ended questionnaires conducted in person, by telephone, or by mail; open-ended questionnaires conducted in person or by telephone; focus groups of various park user subgroups; and data collection from other sources such as the U.S. Census.

Walker also notes the importance of recording—to the best of the observer's ability—key information like race, ethnicity, gender, and age. In the case of surveys or focus groups, it is also critical to have information available in multiple languages to ensure full participation of minority ethnic groups (Kalil 1998).

Defining diversity

Finally, a brief overview of how and why people and places are grouped and named throughout this thesis should clarify meanings and implications. One of the first obstacles to discussing diversity as it relates to design is arriving at common definitions of "race" and "ethnicity." The use and application of the two terms varies widely across the literature, a problem that is further complicated by the fact that race, in particular, is constructed very differently across national borders. This, in turn, affects self-identity; in

the United Kingdom, for instance, the term "ethnic minority group" often refers to first-generation immigrants, but rarely to those whose parents were born in the United Kingdom (Rishbeth 2002); in contrast, in the United States, this term tends to be all-encompassing, referring to both foreign-born and American-born individuals. In all of these contexts, there is a heavy reliance on self-identification, given the tenuous link between skin color and country of origin. (Members of the host society may also use other markers, like accent, to identify ethnic minority groups.)

Moreover, relying too heavily on the dominant black-white racial paradigm or attempting to adjust this framework by adding equally simplistic monikers like "immigrant" or "Latino" negates the fact that a great deal of diversity and difference exists within the broader cultural categories—and even within very specific sub-categories (Kalil 1998). Nonetheless, members of racial and ethnic subgroups share a number of commonalities with respect to their relationships to majority ethnic groups and to the larger American society, and for the purposes of this thesis as well as for future work in this area, it is helpful to focus on these shared challenges.

In the United States, the U.S. Census definitions of race and ethnicity have long defined the discourse, in part because available data tend to group individuals by their census identities. This is becoming increasingly problematic in America's center cities, however, as new immigrant populations and multiracial individuals are not easily categorized within this framework. Morris (2003) also distinguishes between "visible minorities" and minority groups not clearly identified by skin color—European or Central Asian asylum-seekers and refugees, Eastern European émigrés, and others who visually blend in among members of the host society, but who share little beyond physical appearance with the dominant culture.

Even within well-established minority groups, a more nuanced understanding of ethnicity and identity is necessary to fully understand the race relations at play. For instance, within the mainstream black-white-brown-yellow paradigm, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Brazilians, and Argentinians may all simply be "Hispanics," but in practice, members of these groups may self-identify very differently across the spectrum of race and may differ dramatically on cultural values and norms. Moreover, the groups have distinct histories with respect to their home countries' relationships with the United States and the resultant immigration policies over time. To the extent that the Latino community is organized and mobilized, it is primarily the result of extensive coalition building between subgroups, a means of capitalizing on commonalities and perceptions of the dominant culture to increase political weight within the system.

To further complicate attempts to explore group dynamics around ethnicity and race, these identities are often two of many—including age, class, gender, and sexuality—that may or may not correlate neatly for the purposes of analyzing issues of exclusion or group social ties (Samers 1998 as cited by Morris 2003). In many cases, use of public space included, it is virtually impossible to extricate one identity from another; thus, it is necessary to acknowledge that—particularly in the American context—racial or ethnic identity may be strongly linked to socioeconomic status or other markers, and the combination of these identities may be the more significant causal factor (Morris 2003; Morris cites Crouch and Tomlinson 1994; Rojek 1995; Hague, Thomas, and Williams 2000).

In the context of this thesis, then, any discussion of "racial and ethnic minority groups" will refer to immigrant and domestic individuals of color in the United States, while recognizing that there may also be white ethnic populations who are disconnected from mainstream white American society with respect to values around leisure, nature, and park use. Because ethnic and racial identities operate very differently in countries outside of the United States, this work examines research and practice through a specifically American lens, although literature and best practices from other nations and cultures are also surveyed, as there is much to be learned from these contexts as well.

A note on names for people...

People self-identify in a number of different manners. Because this thesis discusses race and ethnicity extensively, clarification of how, when, and why names and labels for groups are used is essential.

Black Americans and African Americans

For the most part, the term "black" is used in this thesis to encompass individuals who identify as African American as well as those black Americans with non-African origins. When this term also includes new immigrants from Africa, Haiti, the West Indies, Jamaica, or other parts of the world home to individuals with dark skin tones, this is specifically noted; otherwise, these groups are referred to as "new immigrants."

Latinos and Hispanics

This thesis uses the term "Latino" to indicate all individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American, or South American origins, regardless of place of birth. ("Hispanic" is not used except in quoted material, where it can be considered interchangeable with "Latino.") Where available, more specific ethnicities—"Mexican American" or "Puerto Rican," for instance—replace the more general term. See the introduction for further discussion of the complexity of Latino group identities.

Native Americans, American Indians, and Southeast Asian Indians

Indigenous Americans are generally referred to as "Native Americans" throughout this work, although "American Indian" appears periodically in discussions of historical periods in which it was the preferred term. The two terms can be considered transposable. When "Indian" refers not to indigenous Americans but to Southeast Asian Indians, this is explicitly noted to prevent confusion.

Whites, Caucasians, Anglos, and European Americans

In discussing Americans of European descent, this thesis uses the terms "white," "European American," and "Anglo" interchangeably; these terms refer to all white U.S.-born Americans. "Caucasian" does not appear except in reference to forms or surveys that used this terminology. In cases where distinctions are made between Northern Europeans and Southern Europeans, this is mentioned explicitly. Light-skinned immigrants from Europe, Western Asia, and parts of Central and South America are referred to as "new immigrants," regardless of color.

...and for places:

The naming of neighborhoods and public spaces is also closely linked to their identities; monikers come and go with the times. This thesis discusses several communities and green spaces that have new, changed, or multiple names; the following explanations should clarify how and why specific names will be used in the chapters to follow.

Eastlake and Lower San Antonio

The Eastlake neighborhood is a sub-community of the Lower San Antonio neighborhood in Oakland, California. For many years, those living near Clinton Park identified primarily as San Antonio residents. However, in recent decades, businesses and residents in the community have started to self-identify as "Eastlake" rather than as "Lower San Antonio." Newer organizations like the Eastlake Merchants Association reflect this shift, and projects like Bay Area LISC's Eastlake Revitalization Initiative distinguish between the Eastlake neighborhood and the greater San Antonio community. This thesis uses both names, but they are not interchangeable: "Eastlake" refers specifically to the small community bounded by International Boulevard, East Eleventh Street, Second Avenue, and Fourteenth Avenue, while "Lower San Antonio" indicates the neighborhood defined by Twenty-Eighth Avenue, Lake Merritt, the Oakland Estuary, and East Twenty-Second Street.

Ventura Village and Phillips

Like Eastlake, Ventura Village is a sub-neighborhood of larger community—the Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in this case. For the purposes of Minneapolis neighborhood classifications, Phillips is broken up into four

identically sized areas: Ventura Village, Midtown Phillips, East Phillips, and Phillips West. The NRP officially recognized Ventura Village as a separate neighborhood from Phillips in 2002. However, my observations while living and working near Phillips in the summer of 2004 indicated that self-identification within the Phillips community did not necessarily reflect these delineations; my suspicion is that they are largely artificial, the result of a need to break the city's largest (and most distressed) neighborhood into more manageably-sized communities. In practice, most community-based organizations in the area describe themselves as serving "Phillips," and not the sub-neighborhoods; city residents and planners also speak of the community as a single neighborhood, and the Phillips Neighborhood Network (PNN), a community-based organization serving the area, continues to include Ventura Village as one of the four Phillips neighborhoods.

More to the point, the delineation of "Ventura Village" is a recent phenomenon—the name honors former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, who retired in 2002—and the city only approved the area as a separate neighborhood three years ago. The identity of the community remains ambiguous. So, although Peavey Park technically falls within the boundaries of Ventura Village, I recognize the space as belonging to the larger Phillips community, and refer to the neighborhood as such throughout this thesis. Phillips, as defined by the city of Minneapolis, is bounded by Interstate 94 to the north, Interstate 35 to the west, Hiawatha Avenue (Minnesota Trunk Highway 55) to the east, and Lake Street (Thirtieth Street) to the south.

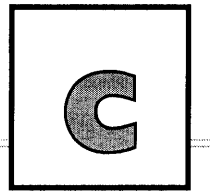
Clinton (Square) Park

"Clinton Square Park" is the official name of the park, according the Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation; the name dates back to an era in which the space was not a park, but a formal town square. However, area residents use "Clinton Square Park" and "Clinton Park" interchangeably, and Urban Ecology staff referred to the park exclusively as "Clinton Park" during the redesign process and named the project the "Clinton Park Initiative." Except when quoting individuals or referring to the formal park name, this thesis uses "Clinton Park" throughout for consistency's sake, as this was the name used by Urban Ecology during the redesign process; however, either would be correct.

Peavey Park

Peavey Park is widely recognized as the official name of the small park in Phillips. Residents informally refer to the space simply as "Peavey," and this thesis does the same, where relevant. However, Peavey Park—named for Minneapolitan Frank Peavey, inventor of the concrete grain elevator—is not the only Peavey in the city; downtown Minneapolis has Peavey Plaza, the "backyard of Orchestra Hall" and site of numerous summer concerts and

gatherings. Because Peavey Plaza is often called "Peavey Park" by residents, journalists, and even city officials, it must be noted that in this thesis, "Peavey" always refers to the neighborhood park in Phillips, and never to the plaza.



best practices in multiethnic design

Best practices in multiethnic public space design

The Calthorpe Project (Camden, London, UK)

The Calthorpe Project, a community garden in Camden, is essentially a piece of art: mosaics, murals, and sculptures reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the gardeners. Culture-specific symbols such as the tree of life are depicted in a number of different ways to illustrate commonalities and differences visually (Rishbeth 2002). Local residents protested and ultimately stopped the proposed development of the site in September 1984, informed the plan for the space, and now care for it (Kenworthy). A sign above the gate reads, "The project is funded by the London Borough of Camden. Local people fought and won against office development and created these community garden, play space, and under fives' area. Enjoy your green belt in Kings' Cross" (Kenworthy 2000).

Village of Arts and Humanities (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

The Village of Arts and Humanities, a community-based nonprofit organization founded in 1986 to serve the low-income, primarily black neighborhood of North Philadelphia, uses arts, cultural events and festivals, and other to bring the multicultural community together in accordance with their slogan, "Together we build." For almost a decade, the organization has leveraged the diversity of the neighborhood to create visual and performance arts that support the rehabilitation of abandoned land and the promotion of health, education, and economic development, among other initiatives (Bruner Foundation 2001; Village of Arts and Humanities 2005).

Dudley Town Common (Boston, Massachusetts)

As a gateway to the Dudley neighborhood of Roxbury in Boston, Dudley Town Common welcomes residents and visitors with multicultural public artwork; the common also provides gathering space for the Dudley community. The design, implemented as part of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's revitalization project for the area, emerged from over thirty community meetings, each facilitated by designers Lynn Wolff and John Copley with the support of three-dimensional models and presentation boards. The designers incorporated the concerns and needs expressed by community members into the design of the three-quarter-acre

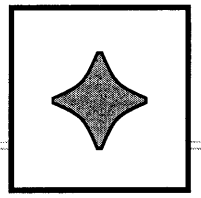
site, and then brought plans back to the community for further discussion and approval. The final site plan split the common into two areas: North Park, a green space with artwork, seating, a fountain, and space for children, and South Park, a plaza with a large gathering space for festivals and many pieces of art reflecting the history and diversity of the neighborhood (Copley Wolff 2005). Residents dedicated the $1.2 million Dudley Town Common in June 1996.

16th Street BART Plaza (San Francisco, California)

The 16th Street station for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) lines is located in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco, and for a number of years, created conflict in the community because several groups of users competed for the space; high crime rates in the area near the station also contributed to neighborhood disinvestment in the space. Urban Ecology, a nonprofit planning organization, created a community plan for the space that would allow commuters, residents, business owners, and individuals experiencing homelessness to co-exist in the space peacefully. As in Boston and Camden, the 16th Street project relied heavily on public art as a tool for celebrating diversity and welcoming visitors. The plaza is also designed to serve as a town center for the Mission Dolores neighborhood. The $1.4 million project opened in May 2003 (Urban Ecology 2005a).

Other examples:

- Burnt Street Park (Whitehorse, Victoria, Australia)
- La Placita Marketplace (Saint Paul, Minnesota)
- Burgess Park (South London, United Kingdom)
- Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park (Washington, DC)



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