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**Neighborhood Networks and the Decision-Making Processes in a
Distressed Social-Built Environment: A Case Study in Lake City (Seattle),
Washington**

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Dedication

For the Lake City neighborhood connectors, you know who you are.

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University of Washington

Abstract

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The stresses caused by rapid urbanization in the Greater Seattle area have reignited the importance for neighborhood associations, citizens, health and human service providers, parks and recreation, and the local government to work together, through resource collaboration, to promote livable and thriving communities. In this case study, I describe the neighborhood ecology of the Lake City community utilizing four objectives to understand the urban planning and community building processes. This first objective was to understand the impact of the neighborhood urban design and planning process, led by the local government and private developers, in the urban core of Lake City. This was accomplished by analyzing the historical and operative dynamics of the urban

design and planning processes, to then understand the impacts of the neighborhood planning by various stakeholders in the urban core. The second objective was to understand how a community-oriented design and planning processes might affect the level of citizen engagement within the neighborhood, finding, surprisingly that it increased stress in residents and neighborhood leaders. The third objective was to assess if increased social engagement can promote increased social cohesion and decrease perceptions of fear and unsafe zones within the neighborhood. Examples of small events that promoted positive engagement included trash cleanups and father's day events, and although there were of positive impact, there was a limit as to how far these resident-led projects changed the internal and external urban planning process. The fourth and final objective was to assess if empowering the Lake City neighborhood associations would improve the decision-making process required for the neighborhood design of the urban core. Despite the historic distrust of the city, third generation Lake City residents still have the willingness to work with external stakeholders, but it is unclear if this decision to work with external stakeholders will be a long-term positive influence.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
List of Images	x
1. Introduction	1
Controlling Gentrification: It's the Lake City Way.....	5
2. Theory of distressed urban assemblages	10
Theoretical approach	11
Application	19
3. Methodology	23
Research Process	26
Research Methods.....	28
Validity	33
4. Case study: historical dynamics	35
Before Seattle	35
Little Ol' Lake City	42
1995-1999 Comprehensive Plan Discussions	47
HUB Urban Village.....	60
Modern Lake City.....	91
Focal Case Study- 33 rd Street	140
5. Analysis and Findings	161
Background.....	161
The Lake City package	164
Neighborhood Ecology	170
Contingency and Panarchy.....	173
Neighborhood Groups	177
Conclusion	179

Bibliography	184
Appendix A: Sight maps	189
Appendix B: Introduction letter.....	197
Appendix C: Interview guide	198
Appendix D: Letter from resident	200
Appendix E: Community give back brochure.....	201
Vita.....	203

List of Figures

Figure Number	Page
Figure 1. Summary timeline of Lake City historical dynamics	3
Figure 2. Summary timeline of Lake City historical dynamics	4
Figure 3. How socio-buit environment may influence urban stress due to isolation results in a frozen state of living.....	15
Figure 4. The structure of the neighborhood action team committees that report back to the Mayor's office.....	93
Figure 5. The internal of the neighborhood.....	120
Figure 6. Delayed spiral response.....	162
Figure 7. The external and internal force that place pressure on Lake City.....	164
Figure 8. Describing the package of Lake City.....	166
Figure 9. Aligned projects outputs to build moment for value shift.....	169
Figure 10. Example of Contingency.....	174
Figure 11 Panarchy model.....	175

List of Images

Image 1: Pioneer Days Parade in the Summer	37
Image 2: Mural on west side of Lake City Community Center	38
Image 3: Mural on west side of Lake City Community Center	39
Image 4: This is a map of the cluster of social service providers near 33 rd Street to address the needs of the community	52
Image 5: Port-a-potty in Lake City Mini.....	61
Image 6: Map of Little Brook Park	62
Image 7: View from playground outward	63
Image 8: A sleeping bag and personal belonging in park	64
Image 9: Lake City Farmers Market	66
Image 10: A parked camper near the urban core	67
Image 11: The day shelter located on 33 rd ,near the urban core	71
Image 12: Multiple locations within urban core with graffiti	76
Image 13: Map of sub-neighborhoods	77
Image 14: A dumped couch at Virgil Flaim Park	79
Image 15: Local strip business on Lake City Way	80
Image 16: Makeshift sitting area near day lighted creek	86
Image 17: Potential properties for development	94
Image 18: The pumpkin patch	103
Image 19: Focus group on Northgate Light Rail.	107
Image 20: The location of 33 rd Street micro-committee.	142
Image 21: Service road: Lake City House and Lake City Court.	144
Image 22: Street view of 33 rd Street from 125 th Street looking north.....	145

Image 23: View of informal sitting area near lamppost.....	146
Image 24: The area behind the vacated business (coffee shop).....	149

1. INTRODUCTION

The neighborhood of Seattle called Lake City has had many identities over the last century. Before joining the city of Seattle, Lake City residents considered their neighborhood the last frontier. When Lake City joined Seattle it was “little ol’ Lake City”, the neighborhood with a small town feel and blue-collar pride. Now, in the technological revolution and rapid urbanization of the Puget Sound, Lake City has found itself in search for its identity. The multiple identities of Lake City are linked to a sense of movement and transitory state. The goal of this case-study is not necessarily to unveil a new identity or point out bad and good groups; rather it is to describe the various urban planning and community building processes of Lake City in a way that will allow the ‘patterns of everyday’ to emerge and hopefully provide insight into the internal structure that makes Lake City work (De Certeau, 1984).

The objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the impacts of the neighborhood urban design and planning process that is led by the local government and private developers in the urban core of Lake City;
2. To understand how a community-oriented design and planning process may affect the level of citizen engagement within the neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods;

3. To assess if increased social engagement will promote increased social cohesion and decrease perceptions of fear and unsafe zones within the neighborhood; and
4. To assess if empowering the Lake City neighborhood associations will improve the decision-making process required for the neighborhood design process of the urban core.

The Lake City residents' neighborhood ecology, a derivative of an ecological approach, can be used to describe the dynamic relationships that have occurred over time in this community. For this case study, a series of points of engagement with the urban planning process will be used to describe the development of the Lake City neighborhood. The point of this description is to use the narrative of the community to understand the processes of urbanization and development that is occurring in the neighborhood. Thus, the events that are used represent different points of engagement between the Lake City neighborhood and the city of Seattle. In order from past to present, the events that will be described are: before annexation; little ol' Lake City; 1999 comprehensive plan; urban village development; and modern Lake City.

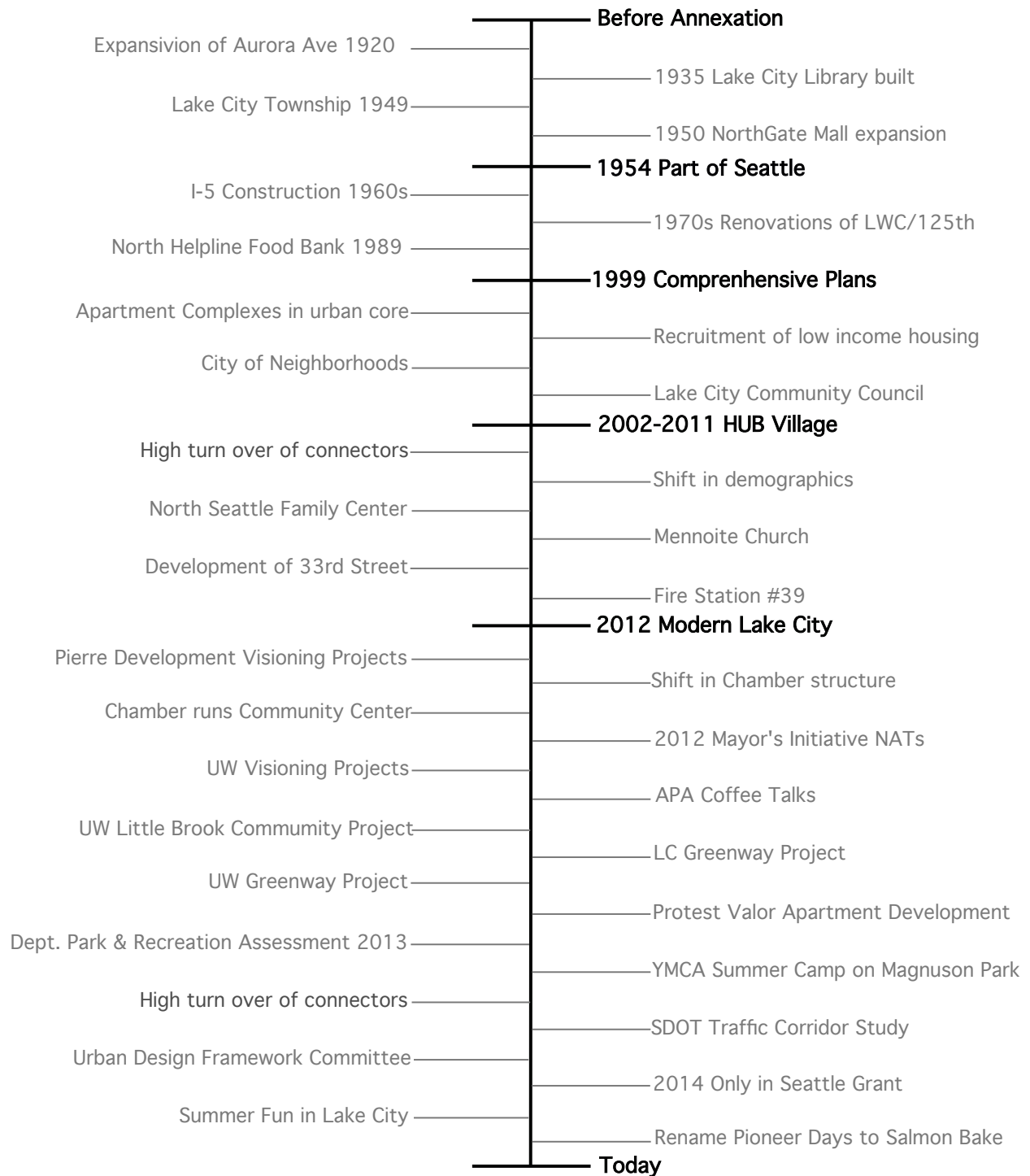


Figure 1: Summary timeline of Lake City historical dynamics

One of the common themes that consistently emerged at each point of engagement was the neighborhood's ability to absorb perturbations or 'hang on.' At each event a cluster of themes occurred: new businesses arrive, the physical composition of Lake City shifts, there are demographic changes in the population, and new rules or codes of conduct develop. From its beginnings, Lake City had multiple forces that drew attention outward. The external forces are mainly applied by the city of Seattle, in the form of implementations of general community planning, and from developers, by building a variety of housing types that reflect an outsider's perception of needs of the neighborhood. The two main internal forces have been the constant change in the demographics of the residents and local developers' influence on the physical environment of the neighborhood.

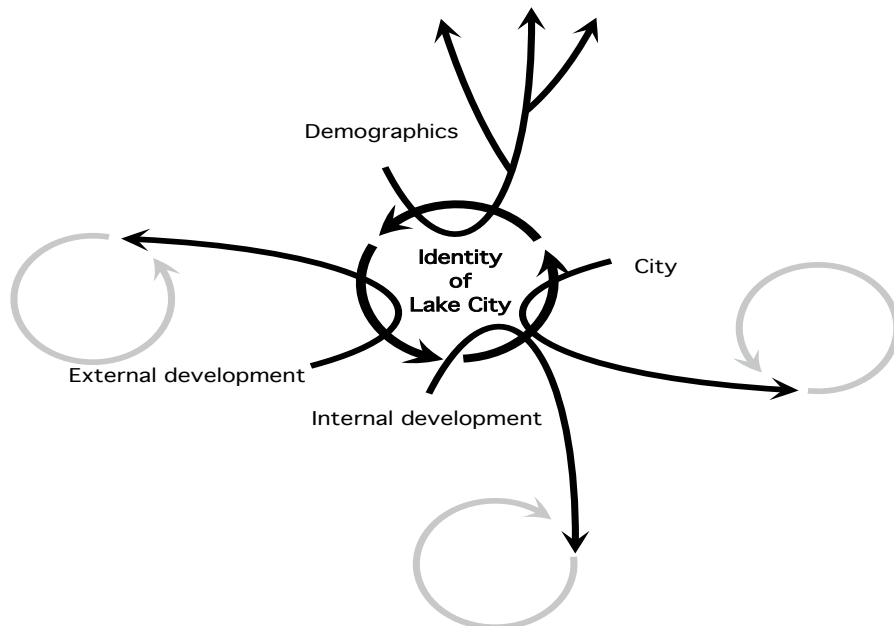


Figure 2: The operative dynamics of the neighborhood.

The figure above provides an overview of the different external and internal forces that detracted from Lake City pursuit of stability. The constant act of managing change has

occupied the efforts of the community, forcing it to remain continually reactionary. It is clear that the Lake City neighborhood has always been in a transitory state. What has remained constant through these historical events was a desire for stability. The community's focus on maintaining relationships is consistent and a unique unspoken language that Lake City takes pride in. It is this particular internal force that has helped them persist through the multiple rounds of perturbations.

Controlling Gentrification: Its' the Lake City Way!

The incorporation in neighborhood relationships has been a major asset in how Lake City communicates to make collective decisions. One theme that has remained consistent is that it's "the Lake City Way." Throughout the many different iterations of the neighborhood, this internal connection to being the 'dark of horse of Seattle' remains strong. This internalization of "It's the Lake City Way" can shed light on how the residents grapple with the consistent opportunistic gentrification that is occurring in their community. The residents take pride in being the outsiders, which is why they do not always follow the concepts of urban design that the city of Seattle promotes. Their critical eye and willingness to question 'why' certain urban elements are required to make a 'good' neighborhood has been a reassuring part for residents to feel a sense of control in the speed of gentrification in their neighborhood. The package of Lake City's identities and constant chaos has been a protecting factor to preserve the community.

Unifying neighborhood groups

Community building is usually a slow process that requires a lot of time, especially time-on-tasks, and Lake City is no exception to the rule. As a neighborhood

in constant transition, either in physical environment or demographic turnover, it can be difficult to find a common cause to unify around for the good of the neighborhood. One uniting theme most residents agree upon is to keep Lake City affordable and family focused as the neighborhood goes into its next phase of facade improvements.

How public space gets built in Lake City

Lake City is a neighborhood built upon relationships and elbow grease, which was used to build the public spaces that currently exist in Lake City, such as Virgil Flaim Park and the community center. Even now, community participation in the development of a parklet near 133rd and 35th street and the skate park, reiterates the importance of relationships. As a neighborhood leader describes it, 'actions speak louder than words.' These community projects define a social code of conduct of expectation in the morphology or type of public space that is acceptable for Lake City for future development. For modern Lake City, many residents have stated the importance of avoiding ghettoizing the neighborhood by getting to know each other through community events held in the urban core.

Maintaining the physical built environment

Having multiple perspectives of what a family-focused community looks like requires more time and community discussions to take place before a new physical attribute is added to the community. There are two, and usually contradictory, alternatives to the feedback 'process' that operates throughout Lake City: having a longer period of discussion and lag time before elements are added allows the community to emotionally connect and to occupy the public realm. On the other hand,

the delay in adding elements to the neighborhood that represent the identity of the residents permit for more opportunities for outside developers to build structures based on other communities, that may not fit into the specific character of Lake City and dilute the preservation of the character of Lake City.

Distrust can slow down neighborhood decision-making processes

Being a neighborhood in constant transition, including age, ethnicity, and income can make it difficult to maintain relationships; constantly meeting strangers with different values and expectations can be an obstacle and even a scary process. For one resident, the act of forming a neighborhood association in a diverse neighborhood can be fearful: “Some people have a mental health disorders or severe health concerns and it gets frustrating when trying to turn in a grant application,” she said. Trying to build community relationships through the block watch in her neighborhood is not always safe. “It’s hard to spread the word about block watch; what do you do if your neighbor is a drug dealer or known shooter?” she asked. The perceived lack of control of ‘who’ moves in and what is built in Lake City has created a history of resisting the different demands placed upon Lake City by developers, service providers, the city, and the demographic changes. A resident describes that “remnants of Lake City’s history of not being a part of Seattle is still present in planning, which will turn out to be a not well thought out community plan in the long term.” Pulled in multiple directions that draw attention outward impairs inward reflection on what Lake City is becoming. These examples stress why neighborhood leaders cannot “put their thumb on it, but [we] know that there is a there here.”

Although at times this code of conduct may be limiting on the community's capacity, it has also been a valuable resource that has kept hope and investment in Lake City. There is a lack of a focal point or cohesive action plan, which is a byproduct of a neighborhood consistently in a reactionary state. At each point of engagement with external stakeholders, not only do the rules change, but also there is an economic demand on the internal neighborhood by the stakeholders. The city is always asking for internal funds from the community, which can pull away from the accumulation of economic capacity because it is being outsourced. This limits the ability of local business owners to emerge because residents are always saving the day and donating money or time in order to: 'receive' a city grant, provide comments at a community meeting, or predict when the next developer will change the built environment of the neighborhood. What the community receives in return for 'collaborating with the external stakeholders' rarely matches the people hours of the residents. Over time the neighborhood has evolved to exist on minimal resources from external stakeholders at the cost of a decreased community capacity. There is still a missing link at the everyday level that is not present at the community meetings around the urban design and planning processes that leaves Lake City in a continued state of chaos.

The history of Lake City will be presented through the perspective of the main stakeholders currently involved with the re-visioning of the Lake City urban core. Each historical point of engagement will highlight the physical elements, social dynamics, and response. It is important to note that the response is a reaction to the past history and not the present. Within each response, a new version of the identity of Lake City as the

'last frontier' emerges. The multiple identities associated with the neighborhood will be referred to as the package of Lake City.

2. Theory of Distressed urban assemblages: the local manifestation of social isolation

Researchers are living in a time where science has outgrown the basic cause and effect approach to solving built environment and well-being issues. In 2003, the National Institutes for Health (NIH) announced its heightened focus on 'bench to patient and back to bench' research to address health concerns quicker. Even now, the new mega trans-disciplinary research teams focusing on 'cells to society' to address complex, yet singular, health outcomes have come to a junction with built environment attributes, factors, and influences. One can hold that built environments purposes are to provide social and economic interaction possibilities and resources, organization, and aesthetics to enhance certain behavior norms (Gehlert, 2011). Built environments can have effects from the biochemical to social cultural level. If there is a shift in balance in this bio-cultural environment, the built environment may be unable to support well-being, therefore preventing deviation from negatively imposed social norms. Thus, individuals may be led to believe their bio-cultural worlds are unchangeable and become isolated amongst the chaos of urban life.

Despite recent trends in 'healthy' policy and physical changes to the neighborhood, there are three built environment associated chronic diseases such as physical inactive, obesity, and social isolation still persist. These policies to promote walkability and to increase food access do not recognize that people are "entangled in social and natural relations" of objects that create urban assemblages (Loftus, 2012; Mugerauer, 2011). The Healthy Communities movement is an example of public health professionals trying to do the 'right thing' through the use of evidence-based design to

promote planned and organized healthy places and people. By not reading the urban assemblages through the lens of urban political ecology, the lived body experience is lost. Currently, the Healthy Communities movement is grounded in evidence-based research, which is very dependent on linear interpretation of how to modulate physical space as it relates to social and human experience. This can have limited impacts over ones' lifespan; we cannot just diagnosed communities as unhealthy. Neighborhoods are not reducible to the binary descriptions of good or bad.

The potential for discovering critical spatial practices to engage in powerful urban interventions is lost on the false boundaries between social and science (Loftus, 2012). We need to shift our attention from trying to diagnose the closed system as 'sick' towards a more open system perspective on how to create 'conditions of possibilities.' We then need to question '*who*' is benefiting from creating capacities in these distressed urban assemblages (Loftus, 2012). Is the intervention truly helping those who are 'everyday' and invisible to the political forces influencing the way in which objects are attracted and locally manifest as structures of oppression or opportunity (De Landa, 1997; Bryant, 2011; Loftus, 2012). In this section, I will discuss my theoretical methodology for researching distressed neighborhoods as community islands that have been isolated from their own city.

Theoretical approach

The overarching inquiry of this research is to wonder and liberate everyday behavior patterns while humbly guiding a drift evolution towards small changes that can lead to fostering alternative pathways, therefore growing empowerment from within distressed

neighborhoods (Maturana & Varela, 1987). As a way to examine the multitude of contributing variables in the flow of neighborhood dynamics, thinking how social isolation locally manifests in urban assemblages can provide a visual guide for points of communication. The focus is on trying to capture how an individual can 'read' or 'de-code' their given environment depending on their historical narrative and relationships. There is a critical bifurcation point when intensification of neighborhood chaos reaches its tipping point. It can drive a person towards critical awareness for strategically selecting positive trajectories.¹ Or, that same person can over read their environment with a hyper vigilant awareness for tactically selecting negative trajectories. One possibility is the use of understanding the neighborhood ecology to elevate awareness of individuals.

Elevated awareness can be seen as the ability to “act upon desire [and] to act tactically upon yourself to re-code, to some degree, culturally embodied tendencies [oppression and social isolation] to cultivate new senses” for seeking out positive life trajectories (Connolly, 2011). Connolly’s description of a ‘world of becoming’ further depicts the idea of recoding. As people move through the world they are constantly engaging with “multiple temporal systems” that are interacting in varying degrees of agency, thus, resulting in periodic changes in the system that “make difference to [ones’] efficacy and [the] direction of others” (Connolly, 2011). He continues to point out the devil is in the details in how to appreciate (or de-appreciate) the translation of how the different modes of action (agency) are expressed. This leads to the idea that units

¹ Term ‘Critical Awareness’ from Freire, P. (1968) Chapter 2, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Chapters 2 and 4. Freire, P. (2005) Education for Critical Consciousness, Society in Transition.

of change, in researching isolated community islands, should be at the neighborhood level.

Neighborhoods can be viewed as a flow of multiple assemblages of situations that present themselves at any given time through the re-assemblage of human interaction with their social (cultural/gene determinants) and physical environment. De Landa (1997) and Bryant (2011) have shown us how many objects of varying strength can influence how these assemblages are locally manifested in the neighborhood units over time. At any one point in time different objects possess influences in determining the neighborhood characteristics. This gives us many little windows of opportunity over the life-span of these assemblages for small alterations in the orientation of objects in the neighborhood. Conceivably this may result in a change in the flow of physical and social features that presented themselves to community members (De Landa, 1997; Latour, 2005; Bryant, 2011). Thus, using neighborhoods as units of change, we can begin to understand the different weights in which objects impact each other (Latour, 2005). These objects can create autocatalytic feedback loops (DeLanda; 1997; Bryne, 1998; Lewontin & Levins, 2007) that may or may not be deleterious to health of humans and non-humans. It is my hope that using neighborhoods as assemblages held together by forces from biochemical to institution influences will further uncover possible hidden variables that have not or not been able to be considered in traditional evidence-based research (Mugerauer, 2010).

There are multiple pathways in which the stress of social isolation can have a negative impact on people's modes of living. Research from rat models to psychology has shown since the 1970's that "the increase in morbidity with social isolation is equal

to that of cigarette smoking," as noted by a University of Chicago psychology professor who researches social isolation and stress (McClintock et. al, 2006; Berkman & Syme, 1979) The stream of weak forces of chronic stress (Lewontin & Levins, 2007) in the day-to-day tactical living can swell to an unbearable mental and physical stress load. Again, this returns to the idea that people have the capacity to be sensitive to the varying degrees that others affect their ability and others' ability to master the urban assemblage in which they are 'plugged-in' (Connolly, 2011; DeLanda, 1997.) The negotiation of ones different modes of action (De Certeau, 1984) in a neighborhood, such as having the capability "to work tactically on the self in response to the external pressures and [ones'] reflective response" (Connolly, 2011), guides ones life trajectories.

The figure below shows how I engaged with the theoretical principles from De Certeau (cells/individual) to DeLanda (neighborhood) to Lefebvre (society) to be woven together to understand the fluid dynamics of distressed neighborhoods.

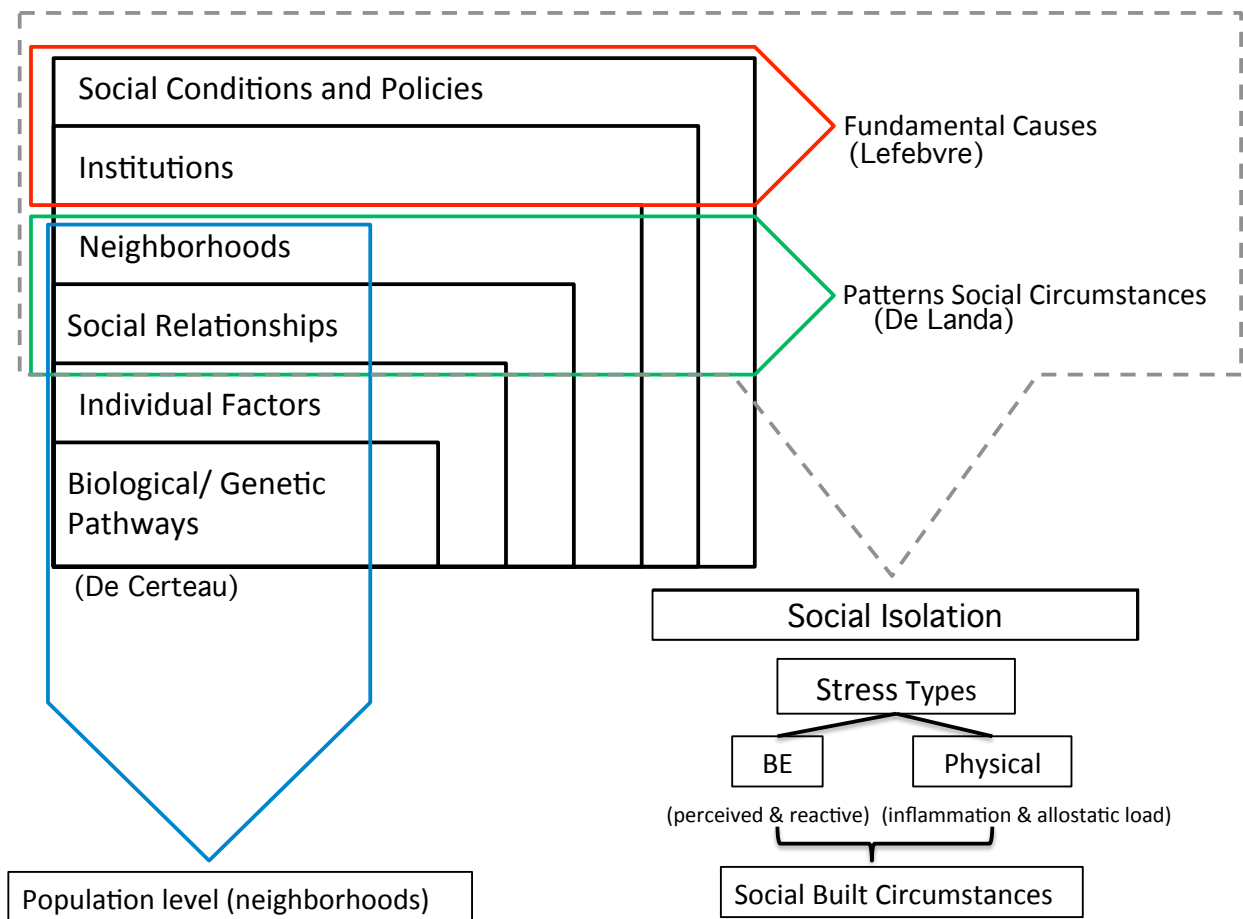


Figure 3- how socio-built environment may influence urban stress due to isolation results in a frozen state living style. From Warnecke, Oh, Gehlert et al., AJPH, 2008, adapted by author.

The blue arrow, population level, is based on De Certeau’s idea of ‘making do’ to expose the way people are operating in their world through modalities of action (1984:29). The population level variables obtain from the neighborhood assemblages reflect the individuals’ response to their life-world. In looking at the situational human experience, De Certeau’s use of tactical and strategic living provides a linkage to the types of operation of individuals living in stressed communities. Many of these individuals are relying on tactical modes of action that are beyond the laws of any given

place (1984:34); rather it is the “art maneuvering oneself for opportunities to be seized upon”(1984:35). The indeterminate trajectories are the everyday social pushback people are flexing as their “own power over certain [tacit] knowledge to overturn imposing power [official agency] ---resisting the social system” (1984:254). The difference between tactics and strategies is that one relies more on the calculation of power relationships were the other “is always on the watch for opportunities that one wins but does not get to keep” (De Certeau, 1984). The point of liberating the everyday life is not to count what is used, but the way in which things are used (1984:35) to find the small changes in the neighborhood assemblages to buffer negative modes of operation.

The grounding question is how long can people constantly be “manipulate[ing] events in order to achieve opportunities” (De Certeau, 1984), opportunities that probably have little return on improving ones’ quality of life. These isolated neighborhoods cannot be transformed by large overarching Healthy Community policies, but need a series of modulations as a function of objectives and social relationships to change the tactical mode of living. Sheppard (2006) notes in his Chapter ‘David Harvey and Dialectical Space-time’, nurturing the regrowth of capacities, as related to ‘making do,’ to “reread the production of historical-geographical differences is a crucial preliminary step towards emancipating the possibilities for future place construction” (Harvey 1996a: 326). Although this does not breakdown the institutional oppression and unevenly developed urban assemblages, it does allow for bottom-up drift evolution in cultural norms (De Landa 1997, Sheppard, 2006).

The red arrow represents the fundamental causes of social isolation due to the breakdown in resources, institutions, and organizations that “maintain the acceptable behavior as an informal means of monitoring behavior” (Gehlert, 2011). These socially and historically constructed institutions can be the source for perpetuating the unjust living standards while minimizing the social capacity to challenge the fundamental issues at the individual level. Lefebvre and many other thinkers have shown that structural features (i.e. official institutions) have law-like features and implications that can route trajectories of people existing in the structural system. In De Certeau’s “making do,” indeterminate life trajectories are being carved out of limited resources determined by official agencies. The anxiety of a constant stream of unpredictable interactions with the many possible versions of assemblages in one’s neighborhood can be interpreted at the individual level as negative physiological responses such as inflammation and increased allostatic load (Gehlert, 2011) and decreased awareness of positive life strategies to alleviate chronic everyday life stress.

As Lefebvre points out, multiple versions of space exist at the same time; the world does not exist in fragments. These concepts of space are experiences drawn from different geographies that transform and shape social processes, therefore changing the relation to one’s urban space (Sheppard, 2006). The perceptions and experience of the socially defined concept of the urban assemblage modulates the production of the body (Sheppard, 2006). The daily struggles within the urban assemblages are expressed into the body. Hence, it is through the unity of planning and the ability of agencies to be flexible in their allowance of the emergence of self-

organization patterns in these neighborhoods that will further generate their capacity to thrive.

The green arrow represents the social circumstances or the patterns that emerge in the socio-built environment that led to community islands (De Landa, 1997). It is within these social circumstances that communities navigate how to thrive, or not, and be resilient in their given social conditions, policies, and institutions. Resilience, as it relates to urban ecology, is the neighborhoods' capacity to respond to a perturbation or disturbance (fundamental issues) by resisting the damage and recovering quickly (neighborhood capacity) (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). When there is a breakdown in the fundamental causes or patterns of social circumstances negative effects such as social isolation that can lead to increased psych-social health morbidity. Please note that we have to continue to question if a neighborhood can be too resilient to its own detriment (i.e. urban decay). The 'R-word' is still relatively underdeveloped as it is applicable to urban assemblages beyond the traditional definition of resilient ecological systems. Hornborg (2009) plainly points out social systems cannot be compared to biological systems because without factoring in the influence of power, understanding the life trajectories of resilient individuals is incomplete.

The grey dotted-arrowed box represents when there is a breakdown in the fundamental and social circumstance levels. As a result, there are social-built environment variables and outcomes that may be determined by non-linear dynamics. The dynamics of cooperation and conflict of the multiple neighborhood assemblages (Levins and Lewontin, 1987) bring forth patterns of nodes or scattered isolated neighborhoods (DeLanda, 1997: 41). If the environment is composed of meshworks

(unofficial structures) and hierarchies (official/monumental structures) that are complex hybrids of interaction, then systems of power are generated (De Landa, 1997). For the city, there is a 'multiplicity in function' (1997:33) that streams energy through the neighborhoods in the form of resources. Yet, in distressed neighborhoods there is a lack of resources, therefore this deficit confounds, for the researcher, where energy flows through the neighborhood assemblage. An alternative way to think about the flow of energy in such neighborhoods is to consider the flow of respect. For a population distrusting official agencies, respect is the currency that official agencies cannot take away from them; and therefore they can (try) escape the control of the state (DeLanda, 1997:35-39) by creating their own network systems invisible to the outsider. Hence, the networks of isolated neighborhoods create a self-organized code of cultural and social norms.

Application

Building upon the theoretical foundation of the distressed urban assemblage, complexity theory can be used to breakdown the flow of resources in community islands into feedback loops that connect the psych-social and built-natural environments to community health and well-being. Again, this links to the theme of using the emergences of 'making do' shaped by the socially constructed urban assemblages and process of urbanization (or social isolation). As Harvey (1996) said, "the thing we call a city is the outcome of a process we call urbanization." This process of things is presented through the local manifestation of the urban assemblage (Bryant, 2011) that: "produces, sustains, and dissolves individual cities [community islands] in historical and

geographical ways (Loftus, 2012). A complexity matrix of the distribution of resources will allow the visualization of the bifurcation points of process (Lewontin & Levins, 2007; De Landa, 1997) which then can be applied to address the core issue of social isolation (See Appendix). The feedback loop approach can help create a language using terms like slow, fast, many-to-one (Levins and Lewontin, 1987) variables to begin to untangle the many assemblages that create the composition of neighborhoods and possibilities.

The complexity matrix of distressed neighborhood assemblages can highlight the balancing act of the world of contradiction [urban assemblage], where the ever-changing environment is constantly creating new vulnerabilities; forcing people to create new modes of adaptation (Levins & Lewontin, 1987). Each mode is associated with new outcomes, processes, and can even introduce more uncertainty. The complexity matrix can be used to translate how resources are distributed and at what scales the slow and fast variables cause individuals to internalize their interpretations of their neighborhood into an alienating world. The physiological and psychological responses of these community island members are a mirror reflection of the fundamental causes of social isolation. Hence, researchers may be able to create new objectives (variables) for points of intervention and advocacy for investing research resources to address the social conditions that are result in harmful physiological expressions.

More questions can be generated using dialectical thinking to transform self-evident data into a confusion of relations and flows that manifest things in neighborhood assemblages (Lewontin and Levins, 1987,2007; De Landa, 1997). One can consider how to promote the intensification of a bifurcation point towards the tipping point to transition from ad hoc living to an established home or place. Here the intention is to

increase a person's ability to safely engage with their urban assemblage and not over read their environment, thus allowing for the opportunity of awareness of their pathways. This clarity may give a sense of control over one's environment and the confidence that there is a support network to draw upon for pursuing a positive life trajectory that balances tactical and strategic modes of action. Researchers should be asked and then re-asked, what small changes can promote the long-term goal of guiding the modulation of an drift evolution through modes of action to decrease social isolation and increase positive trajectories (Maturana & Varela, 1987).

Last thoughts

There is a tension between the planned physical intervention and the social health management of healthy built and natural environments. This requires official agencies of these distressed neighborhoods to be flexible and responsive through adaptive systems modifications (Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2012). The next steps would be incorporating a human development approach that facilitates self-management of modes of action and one's relationships to the socio-built environments through creating capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011) as a possible mechanism to reduce social isolation. This may address my concern for people trying to re-establish their equilibrium that has shifted to only tactical living styles for extended periods, therefore over-developing their ability to mal-adapt (over resilient?). Explicitly, I want to know how to use the imperfect knowledge of the streets' use of 'the rule of thumb' decision making to increase positive adaptive behavior patterns (De Landa, p79-70). The research community can elevate their critical awareness of imperfect knowledge beyond the rational of the institutional

hierarchy networks, look into the meshwork power structure of decision-making. This is where the points of intervention should occur to address the structural injustice that hierarchical institutions perpetuate. Perhaps the unreading and rereading to generate new meanings of scientific logic will influence a new and creative practice (Mugerauer, 2004)—critical spatial practice.

3-METHODOLOGY

Theory

The goals of the millennium ecosystem assessment emphasize the essential components of human well-being and link them to the status of the environment by looking at health, minimum material needed for a good life, freedom and choice, social capital, and security. By unwinding the 'DNA of distressed neighborhoods' and understanding the social ecology of the built environment, opportunities for resilience and self-management of community affairs can emerge, by building a model to modulate distressed communities and identifying human and environment feedback loops. This requires nurturing development and engaging urban dwellers, normally in state of survival mode, to think beyond the everyday necessities--leading to increased civic engagement and participation, and bringing forth the 'best-practices' and policies.

The overarching inquiry of this research is to wonder and liberate everyday behavior patterns, while humbly guiding a drift evolution towards small changes that can lead to fostering alternative pathways (Maturana & Varela, 1987), and growing empowerment from within the soul of distressed neighborhoods. The scope of my research is not to counter healthy community or smart growth policies, but to work as a complement in providing an alternative method for re-engaging people with their social-built environments, to care and love each other. By being stewards of each other's well-being, the definition of a livable community can be pushed beyond individual action (i.e. calling the police) and move towards community action; this stewardship is then positioned at the interconnected level of neighborhood, city, region, and nature.

Defining my methodology

This case study based in Lake City investigated human well-being and the effects of the built environment on individuals living in a distressed neighborhood.² In stride with research focused on neighborhood and health, it is believed that the physical attributes of residency matter because they may determine the pattern of social position and the physical neighborhood characteristics one lives in (Lieberman, 2013; Diez Roux & Mair, 2010). How the physical and social environment impact health inequities is rapidly gaining support through research and policy; researchers are recognizing that the physical and social environment cannot be considered separately, but rather are two factors that affect each other (Mugerauer, 2011; Diez Roux & Mair, 2010). The resulting interface is able to impact the characteristics of neighborhoods including the quality of buildings, the availability of resources, the level of social interaction, and the quality of public space.

I used ethnomethodology to describe the process of urban design and planning, at the neighborhood scale, by analyzing the physical environment and the various social environments within the Lake City neighborhood. The purpose of using ethnomethodology is to understand the process in which knowledge is generated and negotiated when decisions are made at the individual and community level (Groat & Wang, 2013; Lieberman, 2013). In the book *Architectural Research Methods* (2013) the authors discuss the role of qualitative methods to describe and analyze the patterns of

² In Lieberman's *More Studies in Ethnomethodology*, he describes the method as "studies from ordinary life [in which] a society of people are collaborating in doing practical, everyday tasks."

everyday. The analysis of practice emerges from five areas of focus that guide the researcher's interpretation of the environment, interactions, and processes.

There is an emphasis on understanding the system or practice within its natural settings. The empirical data obtained through observation and interviews can reveal differences and similarities between stakeholders involved in a decision-making process. The researcher's engagement with the community is focused on the interpretation of meaning or "making sense of the data" (Groat & Wang, 2013). The data collection accentuates how individuals "makes sense of their own world" and can reveal the perceptions used to live in their circumstances. It is important to note that form of qualitative studies is not focused on the quantities; rather, it is focused on the experiential qualities. This is how multiple strategies are used to piece together the scenario of inquiry. Ethnomethodology uses an iterative process that allows the researcher to test for emerging insights or themes. To encompass the holistic exploration of the complex situations, the goal is not to identify the reductionist description by cause and effect of singular elements, but to use the iterative process to incorporate follow-up questions or to have the flexibility to select different locations for observation at multiple points in time of the case study.

In his book *More Studies in Ethnomethodology* (2013), Kenneth Lieberman discussion the importance of studying the ordinary life and everyday tasks in the natural setting of practice:

Ethnomethodology inquiries that retain the original radical qualities of investigation into how people assemble meaning and produce local orderliness in their ordinary lives. The "radical" refers to going to the root of people's mundane

apprehension of their world—how they put it together, how they maintain coherent understandings, how they concert their behavior and their understanding with others, all captured in their emergence. (p.1)

I believe this reaffirms the importance of collecting empirical data of everyday life to reveal insights on how the decision-making process of a collective of individuals is influenced by different experiences and perspectives.

Research Process

The purpose of this research is to conduct a case study on the Lake City neighborhood to understand the impact of a community-oriented urban design and planning processes of the urban core on the residents, agencies, and businesses. Specific theories of urban studies were unable to completely address the objectives of this case study, which resulted in the incorporation of theories stemming from community health, social work, and architecture and planning, to piece together phenomena. The scientific method was not incorporated due to its rigidity that disallows the used of the dynamic iterative process of data collection and analysis. The conversion of data into ideas and concepts is an iterative task performed by the researcher.

First, I observed the environmental and social context of the neighborhood by attending public meetings and events. I reviewed multiple community assessment reports conducted on Lake City to understand the changing population characteristics

such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and so forth.³

My goal was to provide a succinct narrative of the residents' perception of the historical points of engagement and community design and planning decisions that have shaped the physical environment, and the availability of social resources within the neighborhood. From this comprehensive narrative, the next step was to transform the data into themes and concepts. I reviewed how the data was related to each other and my research objectives below.

The objectives of this study were:

1. To understand the impacts of the neighborhood urban planning and design process that is led by the local government and private developers in the urban core of Lake City.
2. To understand how a community-oriented planning and design process may affect the level of citizen engagement within the neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods.
3. To assess if increased social engagement will promote increased social cohesion and decrease perceptions of fear and unsafe zones within the neighborhood.
4. To assess if empowering the Lake City neighborhood associations will improve the decision-making process required for the neighborhood design process of the urban core.

³ From 2008-2013 assessment reports conducted by the City of Seattle, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Finance and Administrative Service, Department of Planning, and Seattle Housing Authority. University assessments reports conducted by different departments that focused on urban planning, landscape, and public health. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Research Methods

Often qualitative research is content rich and large amounts of unstructured data accumulate. After constructing the comprehensive narrative, I used two steps to analyze the phenomena of the operative dynamics of modern Lake City. First, I described the internal system within itself and the external environment that surrounded the neighborhood as two separate phenomena. This helped translate my observations to explain causes for changes of state (Varela, 1994; Mugerauer, 2011). Then, I analyzed how the two phenomena exchanged knowledge and changed the state of both the internal and external environment. Maturana and Varela use the term autopoiesis to describe a living systems ability to reproduce and maintain itself. The focus of this study was to investigate the impact of feedback loops within and between the two living systems that may impact their steady state through the exchange of practice or knowledge. To understand how community-oriented urban design and planning influences the living system, I described the historical changes in state between the internal and external environments, by analyzing the patterns of changes of the organization of Lake City in the context of ordinary life.

I systematically organized, documented and analyzed the various studies, projects and decision-making processes involved in the neighborhood planning and design process of the Lake City urban core. Mapping the resources and gathering complex information of the multiple dynamics in Lake City provided the foundation to understand the historical dynamics and immediate operative dynamics between neighborhood leaders and agencies. The initial stage of PRECEDE-PROCEED Model, a well-established community health assessment model developed by Dr. Green, was used to

describe the numerous factors that influence the behavior of a system. This case study only focused on the social assessment phase of the PRECEDE-PROCEED model.

Below are the five assessment phases in the PRECEDE model. For the social assessment phase, I identified: 1) the dynamics and feedback loops of the neighborhood unit, 2) patterns of action and structures of response, 3) catalytic projects, and 4) the role of neighborhood leaders and agencies as social connectors and community-oriented urban design and planning.

- **Phase 1 Social Assessment** - quality of life of Lake City residents as it relates to safety, security, and resources.
- **Phase 2 Built Environment Assessment** - quality of the physical and social environments of Lake City (i.e. social problems, availability of resources).
- **Phase 3 Contributing factors** - behavioral and environmental cues.
- **Phase 4 Ecological and Educational Assessment** - identification of changeable factors at the individual, interpersonal, and community level.
- **Phase 5 Administration or Policy factors** - identification of potential catalysts to influence the quality of life of individuals living within a dynamic urban core.

I focused and adapted the first portion the PRECEDE-PROCEED as a guide to assess the feedback loops of action and response exchanged between built environments and social environments. When analyzing the data collected, there was a focus on the transition between the Phase 3 - Contributing Factors and Phase 4 - Ecology & Education. I analyzed how the triangulation of the behavior-cognitive-environment of an individual in their neighborhood as an augmentation of the

PRECEDE-PROCEED model. I called this focal point the patterns of action and structures of response (Loftus, 2012; Mugerauer, 2011; DeLanda, 1997; De Certeau, 1984).

Data collected

The specific focus of this research was on the Lake City urban core and its' physical elements, social dynamics, and community response. There were multiple sources of data collection: documentation, archival records, physical artifacts, observations, interviews and community meetings and events.

Interviews

I interviewed 30 local agencies and community leaders within Lake City using open-ended interview questions to determine: the changes in the physical and social environment; some of the multiple identities associated with Lake City; the top two or three pressing issues in the neighborhood; some of the affordability and livability elements; and, how did diversity impact Lake City urban core.

When considering the subject population, I identified key stakeholders, players, and residents that have an invested stake in the re-visioning of the Lake City urban core. Specifically, government employees in Urban Planning, Health and Human Services, Public Health, Department of Neighborhood, Parks and Recreation and the Mayor's office. Residents and neighborhood associations' as well as individuals from the private-public sector were considered. Only adult residents were interviewed for this study, excluding interviewing any youth or children.

Interviews were done on a relatively smaller portion of subjects that were identified as key stakeholders and neighborhood leaders. Subjects were asked about their response to the community-oriented urban design and planning concurrent projects in the Lake City neighborhood. The answers did not present a risk to subjects.

There were two levels of inclusion: subjects had to be residents of Lake City and subjects had to be related to the neighborhood urban planning and design process of the urban core. I used my personal networks to identify individuals who might be willing to be interviewed. Most, if not all the subjects, were familiar with my research interests and me, as I worked and volunteered in Lake City through some of the neighborhood organizations; information gathered at these neighborhood organizations was not used as material for this dissertation and I formally informed the subjects about my research by providing a verbal description and/or a brief summary paragraph. (See Appendix B-Cover Letter)

The interview of key-stake holders or individuals potentially impacted by the Lake City community-oriented planning and design process was completed in fifteen minutes to an hour (See Appendix C- Interview Guide). Approximately ten government employees and twenty current leaders of various neighborhood associations and organizations in Lake City were interviewed. Depending on the preference of the subject, interviews took place in-person at a public location or over the telephone.

No identifiers were obtained for the observation portion of the study. For confidentiality, subjects' names were not written on any interview notes. The data obtained from the interviews was transcribed and stored on the lead researchers computer (not a public computer) and stored in a private and secure location.

Environmental Data

I reviewed multiple documents available to the public related to the development of the urban core of Lake City, uncovering a wide variety of projects about the re-visioning of the Lake City urban core. I did direct observation of public spaces three to four times a week at pre-determined locations from June to September 2013 to determine how public spaces are occupied and used at different times of the day (See Appendix A-Sight Map). I did participant observations at public meetings and events regarding the neighborhood urban design and planning of Lake City, to observe how the local decision-making process was conducted around the neighborhood's urban core. I attended approximately five occasions per month.

Data was collected through public observations such as the number of individuals that use sidewalks in Lake City, without any direct interaction with the subjects and taking notes on occurrences of events, sex, race, age and so forth. The researcher did not participate in any of the observed activities of children at public event when documenting non-identified public behavior. The number of participants quantified for observations of the neighborhood environment was difficult to determine, as it was hard to anticipate the amount of residents using the urban form or attending public meetings at a given time. For example, observations of the use of sidewalks in Lake City, where the researcher noted occurrences, recorded sex, race, and described the event and so forth.

- List of sites of observation: 33rd Avenue , Farmer's market, Mini Park, Little Brook Park, Virgil Flaim Park, two large parking lots in the urban core at 125th and 127th.

Photographs were used to describe physical elements and social dynamics, not individual subjects. For example, there was use of a landscape cropped picture of a building to show how the sidewalk was activated with people. There were NO close-up shots of individual faces or persons.

Validity

Given the nature of qualitative studies, it is the responsibility of the researcher to clearly document research methods, theme analysis, neighborhood characteristics, structure and contextual background of the case study. Due to the uniqueness of the ethnomethodology research context and the personal process, it is important to note that this method cannot necessarily meet the requirements of experimental research where researchers use controls, sample size, and random selection to legitimize their observations into population level generalities (Kondo, 2008). Some of the obstacles ethnographic researchers encounter are related to their status in the neighborhood, the different levels of access to social groups, the limited repeat observations of a single social event, replicability, and the influence of the presence of the researcher's identity (LeCompe & Coetz, 1982:37-40; Kondo, 2008; Liberman, 2013) I cannot claim that my findings are translatable to other neighborhoods as the context and history is unique to this case-study.

The settings in which I collected data were: public meetings with no access issues, attendance of neighborhood association meetings (with permission or invitation), and public space. I always explained my presence at meetings, making it clear in my introductions that I was a graduate student researcher. My first introduction to some of

the Lake City neighborhood leaders was through a King County Public Environmental Health Department employee; I was invited as a guest on one of the walking tours that the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance was hosting to elevate the needs of Lake City to Seattle Council Members and the Mayor. In my initial introductions, I stated that I was a graduate student at the University of Washington, College Built Environment and working for North Seattle Family Center as a part-time community health educator. I also stated that I was interested in understanding the urban design and planning processes their neighborhood was currently going through.

To address validity, I used a number of processes to address potential threats. First, I existed in the community over a long period of time to conduct my field studies. This elongated period of time allowed for continual reevaluation of findings, interpretations, and assumptions. In Kondo (2008), she notes “researchers using these methods are also closer to participants and can use participants to corroborate or challenge their interpretations.” I also used a weekly status update meeting with my advisor and meetings, as needed, with my committee members, to reevaluate my interpretations and assumptions. In addition to spending years in the community, I spent a significant amount of time in different settings in the neighborhood. I triangulated multiple sources to verify collected information. For example, observations from a community meeting were compared to community blogs, newspapers, and public reports as well as in-person interviews. Due to my situational context in the neighborhood, I purposefully sought out opposing views — especially with tension topics like Fire Station #39.

4- CASE STUDY: HISTORICAL DYNAMICS

Before Seattle

Before the annexation to the city of Seattle, the north-end neighborhood Lake City had an image of being self-sufficient, for example, if there was a need for a park or building, it was built by the community. It was a self-contained town along the railway where people from different backgrounds lived together. In the colorful past being known as the speakeasy part of town during the prohibition years was critical in the development of the spirit of pioneer side of town. The getaway-routes under the local taverns represented not only the pioneer spirit, but also the acceptance of a level of uncertainty. One resident remembers the “tunnel on Lake City Way to the mobile park during prohibition days for runners to hide and stay in the tunnel”. The personal relationships were the foundation of the community, which allowed it to change its physical morphology to buffer the expected internal and external forces impeding on Lake City.

Physical Elements

During this time there were a lot of physical changes happening in the North End, 85th Street and above, that influenced the character of the different neighborhoods as development continued. There are a few key physical elements that impacted the future development of Lake City. In the community parallel to Lake City, the expansion of Aurora Street in the 1920s elongated the connection from downtown Seattle. Natural development along this city way pulled away from Lake City. Residents built the Lake City Library in 1935 in the core of the neighborhood. One resident remembers the “Jolly

Roger, where the Shell Station is now, served the blue collar neighborhood”. The residents were internally planning their community, adding physical attributes to serve their internal needs.

In the 1950s, the Northgate Mall was placed between Northwest Seattle and Northeast Seattle. The addition of the new commercial center adjacent to Lake City impacted the type of demands on the local business on Lake City Way. The composition of store fronts continued to evolve: one resident stated we “used to have department stores that sold clothes and not just restaurants, there were street fairs like Pioneer Days more often”. They continue to describe missing elements, Lake City “used to have a mushroom factory and Dairy cows over on 125th and 127th, now the Comcast building and just at the corner of 130th and 125th street used to be Poultry House”. There were “farmlands where the car dealers are on 127th and 125th and no apartments”. One resident pointed out that, “in the past Lake City was a vacation place for well-to-do”. That the “mom and pop business “goodies store” that cut across economic status, that is the “Lake City Way” to have something for everyone”, said a long term resident.

Social Dynamics

The current residents of Lake City did not comment on the social dynamics of the neighborhood before annexation. What is reflected is the pride in the history of the community through the multiple murals painted on the Lake City Community Center. Some of the memorable moments highlighted in the murals were that in 1949 Lake City became a township. A few of the notable social connectors were the community center,

the Lions Club, and the Lake City Vigilantes (see images below). It was clear that the internal forces focused on relationships that were based on activities such as parades and street fairs along the Lake City Way main street.



Image 1: Pioneer Days Parade in the summer. Top picture Lions Club and bottom picture Lake City Vigilantes.
Source: author, 2013

Before the creation of the HUB urban village, the community center was the social urban core of the neighborhood. A resident said, “little things like that have disappeared and the personality of Lake City is gone”. He goes on to say that “there was more community then and more separated now.”



Image 2: Mural on west side of Lake City community center.
Source: author, 2013

The murals also highlight that there was a level of diversity and an acceptance of different cultures that was important to the history of Lake City. One particular relationship depicted in multiple murals is the relationship with Native Americans (see image below).



Image 3: Mural on west side of Lake City community center.
Source: author, 2013

A few residents remember when Native Americans were a part of the daily interactions in the community. Some have commented at community meetings on the “need to return to their routes with their relationship with Native Americans and consider building log cabins within the urban core, like the one built on the University of Washington Campus”.

Response

The neighborhood was annexed to the city of Seattle in 1954 shortly after Lake City established itself as a township in 1949. The annexation occurred during a time that some of the older residents have referred to as the “golden years of Pioneer Days”. Therefore when Lake City joined the city of Seattle it was perceived as self-reliant with little prerequisites that needed to be addressed. This was a crucial change in the dynamic of the physical environment because the focus of the city was on the elongation of Interstate Highway 5 and the Northgate Mall development. This first point of engagement with the city was already focused on external forces and economic development. The physical additions to adjacent neighborhoods in the North End started to isolate Lake City. Later there were multiple small interventions by the city to increase the economic stability of the Lake City business district, already suffering from the neighborhood’s physical and social isolation from the city of Seattle. The first impact of the annexation on the neighborhood was the influx of changes in the social environments from adjacent neighborhoods and in the physical layout of the neighborhood as a result of economic instability.

Little Ol' Lake City

This period spanned from the annexation of Lake City to the city of Seattle to the 1995 comprehensive plan discussions led by the city. The neighborhood was a self-contained unit that did not demand a lot of attention from the city. A city worker described Lake City as they 'weren't demanding of attention, so [they] didn't get it from the city." With little influence from adjacent neighborhoods "Lake City kept trucking along with its identity" said a resident. There were dominant internal stakeholders that maintained the physical condition of the neighborhood and provided space for social environments. The Lake City Lions Club, for example, is still a service-based organization that fundraises for resources when there is a need to help stabilize residents and families. "We build the Community Center and Parks with our own hands," said an older resident and Lion Club's member. The Lions Club also maintained the holiday decorations and the Salmon Bake during Pioneer Days, promoting their role as maintaining orderliness through beautification projects (e.g. murals, trash pickups and graffiti washout). Gradually this developed an unspoken code of conduct that the residents followed. "The local business owners and Lake City Chamber of Commerce was more traditional," remembers a city worker. The Chamber was only concerned with the business district while the large car dealership owners were more aligned with the city. As the years passed, the original young families that first moved into Lake City aged, yet the original residents remained in charge through the 1999 comprehensive plan, leaving little room for new residents to find their connection to the neighborhood.

Physical Elements

The development patterns of neighborhoods near Lake City started to impact the physical layout of the community. The diversity in storefronts started to transition from department stores and utility stores to a row of restaurants and bars. The open farmlands near 127th and 125th street were transformed into car dealerships that lined Lake City Way. A local worker remembered, "I bought my first car in Lake City in 1976. I never considered it a desirable neighborhood even though the potential was there, but that was about it." An older resident remembers that when there were no apartments in Lake City, "we used to have parties at each others houses on the weekends, we used to have fun in Lake City." The further isolation of the neighborhood from the rest of the city continued with "the mushroom factory, poultry house and dairy cows at 125th and 17th street turned into the Comcast Building," said a resident. Resentment and distrust of the city manifested itself in Lake City as the business district continued to struggle and the city offered little help. The neighborhood was proud of being self-reliant, but that came at the cost of the city allocating money to the development of other neighborhoods.

There was a shift in the city's model for developing low-income housing throughout the neighborhoods. "In the 1980s the South End of Seattle was scattered with sites of low-income housing," said a community builder. "They started looking towards North End for housing duplex, triplex, 24 units to get South End folks to the North End," she continued. The goal of the migration from the South to the North End of Seattle was to provide stable environments for low-income residents to live and avoid the ghettoization of public housing complexes. "Unfortunately, no services were tied to them when placed in the neighborhoods in the North End," said a housing advocate.

The point of the “incentive program was if participants paid their rent, [they could relocate] and move to the North End,” described a community builder. She goes on to say, “in the late 1990s Hope VI projects were used to scatter sites through the city in order to have participants living in neighborhoods with a range of income levels as a stabilizing influence.”

Social Dynamics

With little financial capacity to change the physical features of Lake City, neighborhood leaders held onto their social traditions of holiday decorations and pioneer days parade. “There used to be more street activity more often, now the streets are empty on a Saturday afternoon because there is nothing to do but buy food on Lake City Way,” complained a resident. A shift of social priorities occurred when large apartment complexes were built in the urban core of the neighborhood. New residents moved in who did not have the financial stability to volunteer with the Lions Club or other community activities. In fact, the younger residents did not relate to the small town vibe the older residents worked so hard to maintain. The conflict of social expectations of a neighborhood resulted in apathy towards the development of Lake City. A resident said, “people learned to say nothing, because the city wasn’t going to help and it was easier to hope that the bad [neighbors will] move on.” The culture changed, “people don’t mix and mingle” said an older resident. “The business owners used to live in the neighborhood and be a part of the community,” noted a local business owner.

Since the annexation of the Lake City the core neighborhood leader did not change for approximately forty years. With little guidance externally from the city, residents kept “truckin’ along with the same identity, even though the demographics

were changing,” said a provider. This left an aging population with the sense of urgency to protect Lake City from external forces that may challenge their values of being a small town. A senior resident remembers, “years ago we got more done with the city, now there is more bureaucracy and too much politics to get anything done.” Functioning for an extended period of time as ‘the last frontier neighborhood’ that nobody paid attention to, made it difficult to accept formal processes involved in urban design and planning from the city. “It’s hard to tell if all this process is supposed to help, I just want to put in flowerpots [to beautify] Lake City Way,” said a resident. The gap in communication style between the original Lake City resident and the city created an opening for new residents to participate in the community planning decisions of Lake City. In the next point of engagement section, a description of the 1995 comprehensive plan discussions are in response to this latent period of Lake City History.

Response

Towards the end of the little ol’ Lake City era residents started to embody the phrase that Lake City is the stepchild of Seattle. Relationships were built upon this belief system, that Lake City is alone and can solve its own problems without the help of the city. There were different modes of connection during the transition years before the 1995 comprehensive plan discussions. Some neighborhood leaders embraced the saying “It’s Lake City Way, elbow grease is our currency,” said a resident. There were also others who remained unseen and did not participate in community projects that did not appear inclusionary. “Lake City has always been diverse, but [they] are just realizing it now,” said a social provider. The “lack of attention to the changing population did not prepare the neighborhood [for the predicted urban growth for the city of Seattle],” said a

city worker. For the original Lake City residents, the apartments removed friendships and took away their perceived sense of control when Lake City was an island. Mayor Norm Rice started the Urban Villages proposal for Seattle, so that it would be later known as the city of neighborhoods⁴. The goal was for each neighborhood to create its own comprehensive plan to be adopted between 1999-2004. In the next sections, the implications of the comprehensive plans being unevenly enacted and the impact it had on the urban core will be described.

⁴ Retrieved on 5/10/14 from <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/108/seattle.html>

1995-1999 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSIONS

Although the heyday of little ol' Lake City is over, the community adapted and learned from their previous experiences of community planning the importance of self-reliance and the value of the small-town vibe that has been established since being annexed. A decade passed with the community 'hanging on' and not asking for external assistance, but the neighborhood continued to evolve, with shifts in values and demographics. The business district was still struggling, residents aging out and moving out, and different faces moving in. It was also at this time, in the 1990s, that Mayor Norm Rice wanted Seattle to be the city of neighborhoods. A portion of the Lake City neighborhood plan was adopted into the city comprehensive plan. This meant that each neighborhood developed its own comprehensive plan to establish the desired built environment attributes that were to be addressed in the time span from 1999 to 2013. The city hired third party facilitators to assist the neighborhood to talk about their issues and concerns and what they would like to change.

Physical Elements

The description of Lake City at this time was that the urban core was a row of mom and pop businesses with a few underused mixed-use buildings, like the Senior Housing Association Group (SHAG) apartment complex. One community member said, "just the beginnings of gentrification started to appear." There were new buildings and construction focused on increasing the amount of apartment rentals available in the urban core, because of the potential future gentrification that would increase the demand and market rate value in property. An older resident of Lake City said that the

“apartments started to change the tone; [you] don’t see them” referring to the renters, “they just go to work and stay in. I think it is because the husband and wife both have to work.” It was at this time that residents were gathering to “just talk,” as one resident describes it, about the neighborhood plans for Lake City. They go on to say, “when we first worked on the neighborhood plan the population was older, not many families or ethnicities were living in the community.” Lake City was getting more organized than they have been in recent years in preparation for the community dialogue focus on ‘who are we?’

Environmental restoration was the focal point of the physical elements residents wanted to address in their comprehensive plan. One of the original residents “got involved with the creek restoration and advocacy and wanted to make sure an environmental voice was at the table.” Similar to the ‘little ol’ Lake City’ era, there are sentiments to preserve the rural, small town feel of the neighborhood. Many residents express that they love their big, old trees present in the residential areas. The focus of the physical environment was to address the need to maintain a sense of nature within the urban core of Lake City. One specific project identified was day lighting a creek (in two locations) that flows diagonally from the Northwest to Southeast side of the neighborhood. It was thought to represent the need to connect with residents through nature as nodes of exchange to develop relationships. The conservation perspective resulted in sidewalks not being a top priority in the comprehensive plan. “Maybe sidewalks are not always the answer, we don’t want run-off that will result in pollution”: the resident continues on, “we need to be more forward thinking on what elements we want in our community.”

Other physical elements that were added to Lake City were socially focused to address the need to help stabilize families and individuals. In 2000, the original Food Bank Location was at Fire Station #39. Fire Station #39 was the original the city hall and library built in 1949 by Lake City residents before annexation to the City of Seattle. It was determined more cost effective to build a new building due to the extreme amount of renovations required to update the building codes to be earthquake safe. The new Fire Station #39 built in 2010 adjacent to the original, which is now vacated. ⁵. In later sections, the reaction to of the vacant property was preliminary proposed by the city to be developed, as low-income housing will be described as a catalytic moment in modern Lake City history. The site proposed development is cited in the City of Seattle Preliminary Report,⁶ which is based on the Department of Finance and Administrative Service evaluation of the site in terms of the guidelines established by the Council Resolution #29799. The old Fire Station #39 was used to address different community needs such as a temporary winter homeless shelter in 2010-2011.

The approval for a temporary or permanent shelter was supported by the revised law [ESHB 1956](#), which allowed “religious bodies to house the homeless on congregational property in 2009.” The Seattle City Council passed and the Mayor signed in October the Council Bill 11728, which “permits transitional encampments as a used of accessory to religious facilities.” The ordinance states that “authorized churches [can] host encampments for extended periods of time as long as they meet basic public health and safety standards, promote good neighbor relations, prohibit banned substances and weapons, prohibit sex offenders and enforce rules related to the

⁵ Retrieved on May 10th, 2014 from <http://www.seattle.gov/fleetsfacilities/firelevy/facilities/fs39/39.htm>.

⁶ Retrieved on May 10th, 2014 from http://www.seattle.gov/realestate/pdfs/PMA_136-Preliminary_Report.pdf

proximity of children within or near the shelter and weapons, prohibit sex offenders and enforce rules related to the proximity of children within or near the shelter.” Due to the shelter being in the urban core it received a lot of attention from angry residents already concerned about the income level balance of the community and the increased visualize of homeless individuals in their community. Local media such as King 5, The Stranger, and multiple community blogs covered this issue. The fire station soon became a catalytic point of community action because of the lack of was a formal process for residents to provide feedback on the impacts of opening a winter shelter that was run by an external source. It was noted Mayor McGinn’s [blog](#)⁷ that he “apologized to the community for not providing the community with the appropriate notice.”

This resulted in three public meetings held at Nathan Hale High School in November 2011 were the future development of Fire Station #39 discussed. It was at these meetings that the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance was first recognized by the mayor’s office as the main neighborhood association. The information about the development of Fire Station #39 was posted on a public neighborhood blog called ‘Families for Lake City’ to inform and try to mobilize residents to fight back and reclaim control over the neighborhood from the City.

Eventually the Food Bank, now the North Helpline, moved to the other side of the Lake City Way on 33rd Avenue because there was a need for a larger space and better refrigerator accommodations. This is first known social service attributed added to Lake City that was internally created to address the need of their residents. Eventually the North Helpline Food Bank and the Rotary clinic co-located in the same building, with

⁷ Retrieved on May 10, 2014 from <http://mayormcginn.seattle.gov/providing-shelter-and-services-at-fire-station-39/>.

Leigh High housing above for homeless veterans, called McDermott Place in 2009. The chamber was in support of the veteran housing because the local businesses were tired of the homeless individuals that were visible in the urban core and there was a strong desire to get them off the streets. It is important to note that 33rd Avenue was a thought as a good location, due to the proximity to the Mennonite Church homeless services on the same street and the Veteran Administration Hospital (VA) adjacent to the church. The cluster of these attributes was supposed to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of service providers in their infancy, to then develop a full service support network (see image below). VA doctors used to visit the North Helpline and Rotary Clinic; even today VA case-managers work closely with the management of McDermott Place.



Image 4- This is a map of the cluster of social service providers near 33rd Avenue to address the needs of the community.

Source: Map of Lake City, Satellite, Google Maps, 2014.

In 1999-2000 low-income housing was built for Vietnam War veterans, and the food bank joined in and started the North Helpline with Seattle Sound Mental Health Partnerships, to address the needs of the homeless veterans. The chamber changed their position of support and told the Seattle Mental Health organizations that they had to take care of the homeless and it was not their problem or on their agenda to contribute to addressing the issue. This is why the Department of Neighborhoods representative brought churches together and eventually created the task force on the

homeless committee through the Mennonite Church. The chamber and residents did not understand that the homeless individuals were Lake City residents who lost their support. There was not a desire “to look at the reality of homelessness and why folks are coming to Lake City instead of downtown Seattle because it was not safe and worried about personal safety”, said a housing provider.

The main intention of recruiting housing services like Leigh High and Seattle Housing Authority to develop on 33rd was to prevent Lake City from becoming too fancy. In the past, Lake City was known as a vacation spot, particularly the housing overlooking Lake Washington. It was thought that luxury housing would influence the dynamic and character of the urban core and would no longer be affordable for the blue-collar residents living in Lake City at that time. This illustrates how the residents used the comprehensive plan as a tool to protect their identity as just hard working people doing the best they can. There was a basic level of understanding regarding the balance of physical attributes added to the neighborhood over a certain period of time and the social consequences that displaced many residents.

Social Dynamics

During the discussion of the 1999 comprehensive plan, the residents of Lake City were getting older and envisioning a neighborhood that would address the needs of an elderly population, without fully realizing that it would take ten years to build. The focus of family was not present in the facilitated dialogues because it was not a primary need for residents to feel secure and safe in their homes. A Cedar Park resident describes when she moved to Lake City in 1987 and was the youngest person on the block; her neighbors were mainly second phase homeowners or original Lake City residents and it

was a very safe neighborhood, with bus routes along 37th street. In fact, she used the very last bus stop from her community to University of Washington. Although this route has been moved to Lake City Way, mobility and self-reliance was made possible not only by the bus route, but by the level of safety she felt in her neighborhood when riding the bus.

The urban core of along Lake City Way (LCW) was known by its residents and external neighborhoods as a blue-collar, rough area where people go to get a drink at the end of the workday. Although there was the occasional fistfight at the bar, there was still a perception of no crime in the neighborhood. In fact, some residents were drawn to the blue-collar honesty that Lake City represented and still want to preserve that social dynamic as one of Lake City's many identities. When residents were asked about the homeless population, very few acknowledged that there was a homeless population present. Some stated that there were 'no street homeless in front of storefronts like today' and use this memory as a benchmark to strive for in the 2014 Urban Design Framework. This will be discussed further in modern Lake City history.

There was also a demographic shift from predominantly white families and individuals to Chinese and Korean sub-communities existing in Lake City in 1995. One of the social providers remembers in 1995 the North End was not just Lake City standing alone like it is today; Aurora and Shoreline were a part of the neighborhood. Once Shoreline became incorporated in 1995, the dynamics of the north end shifted. The network of relationships was broken and re-aligned to think in smaller terms of neighborhood boundaries. Lake City and Shoreline no longer overlap, with a clear division along 145th street and manifesting as a lack of support and attention between

the cities. A city worker said, “the intent of the comprehensive plans was to realize the richness and value of diversity in the population and how to have a supportive component without requiring residents to be friends with those receiving services.”

In addition to residents’ involvement with the 1999 comprehensive plan to address the physical attributes of the neighborhood, many got involved to have a voice at the table, to be able to advocate for the restoration and preservation of affordability in Lake City. There were sentiments that the chamber was too involved with the good ol’ boy network and the Pierre family, who had a direct connection with the city government. One resident said, “the good ol’ boys ruled Lake City and I wanted to change that.” The role of the city departments was to facilitate and scribe the community discussions. Most importantly, says a resident, was that the “Departments made real feedback and told residents when recommendations where off, but now there are too many teams in Lake City for the city to keep up with. [Back then] we had our own Lake City newspaper to communicate local information. [It was a useful way to] avoid exclusion of those from different social circles, or lack a computer or use of social media. [Now we] receive thousands of emails from the many neighborhood groups within Lake City and external groups and it is hard to keep track and not get confused about what is happening” in the community. It has been suggested to bring back the Lake City Newsletter, like the Maple Leaf neighborhood, which still delivers their newsletter door to door four times a year.

Back then there were no social services in Lake City except the food bank program and “most of us were aware of the underserved populations in our community.” The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) North End helped solidify the ad hoc social

services led by the community churches and city services that were beginning to emerge. The DON representative would personally visit each non-governmental organization (NGO) and church to learn of the services being offered and to make social service providers aware of each other. This created a small safety-net network in Lake City, primarily coordinated internally with some external support to build capacity. The coordination to address the needs of the community was not able to address all the issues. Homelessness was an issue, especially with “huge vacant lots in the urban core that were packed with homeless individuals”; one resident remembers, “the strip mall area near the grocery outlet had approximately 25 homeless living there who were in bad health.” The community knew there was a need for a homeless shelter, but neither the city nor the residents of Lake City created an official shelter service. The churches in Lake City remained the sole source of service for the homeless, with a rotating shelter.

In 1995, planning and then stewardships, turned into the Greater Lake City Community Council (which included Pinehurst and Victory heights), then the North District Council. The area of focus was from 28th street to 38th street and from 145th street to Meadowbrook. “Eventually everybody had different issues,” says one of the original Lake City Community Council members and, further, the population shifted within Lake City. The Eastside of Lake City Way was upper middle class and well-to-do families and the Westside was mainly immigrants, but now, the member said, “immigrants left homes on the west side and moved to the eastside of Lake City Way; I don’t know how it flipped flopped like that.” It was a time where many residents were coming forward to express action to make things happen in Lake City that were not

being addressed by the city such as the desire to know one's neighbor and build relationships as a form of social services.

Response

Given a platform the residents of Lake City were willing to get involved with the 1999 comprehensive plans around topics like water because of the long 'inactive' period. The community was aging and stagnant, there were few social opportunities to forge relationships internally and limited interactions with the city. It was a response to the segmentation of Seattle. A city worker describes, "Seattle continues to get smaller and smaller and the neighborhoods get bigger and bigger" so that it becomes nearly impossible for government workers to purposefully engage with communities. The comprehensive plan was an opportunity for Lake City residents to stand up about who they were not: 'we are not Ballard or Fremont' is a typical response. This was a response to the city clumping neighborhoods into districts or geohubs when addressing community planning issues, which resulted in some residents feeling again isolated from Seattle. They did not like that the identities of neighborhoods and neighbors were getting blurred into a singular identity.

The community worked hard to have multiple perspectives at the table for the talks about the Lake City comprehensive plan from 1995-1999, but by the time a few of the action items were implemented many of the leaders moved on. "What I learned from stewardship was that it takes time and you need time;" she goes on to say "people forgot they have to have time to go through the process for community and government feedback." Some residents, due to their interest in restoration, knew when coming into the comprehensive plan that it would take years until an action item would begin to get

addressed; others needed more immediate, short, medium, and long-term action items to maintain their engagement with community planning and developing the next Lake City. One resident remarks that the city departments' real feedback on residents recommendations were one of the reasons many residents remained involved in the comprehensive plan discussion and action plans, because it was perceived to be a honest relationship between the residents and the city. One social provider remembers when she "first got here [Lake City] that the city was directly working with the community and effectively sat down with people to work in their ideas [in the plan]. Now, there is a shift, only the residents are working on it, with the city sort of working with them"; she goes on to say "I'm not sure the city is totally happy with it" but changes have to come from the community.

The conversations were not focused on 'what if I could have anything I want' but rather they were grounded in the context of Lake City and its residents at that time. The city and residents knew there was a need for more homeless shelters for families. One resident said, "I know and have friends who live in cars." It was the experience and connection between residents from any economic status that generated internal development of social services in Lake City and external 'recruitment' of low-income housing development to maintain the affordability of the neighborhood. Residents involved in the comprehensive plan did not want to price themselves out of a home to then have to move to a 'cheaper' neighborhood and start again with new relationships. "We know there will always be hard core folks that [you] can't get into shelters, but that is a fact of urban life", said a long time local. Residents wanted to fix the view that Lake City was 'just bad and had no opportunities' but as the years passed so did the

demographics of the neighborhood. People that were a part of the comprehensive plan 15 years ago no longer are the newer residents that some of the neighborhood elders describe as younger and not maintaining their homes. The tensions between old residents and new residents were quietly about the lack of adhering to the code of conduct of 'Little ol' Lake City', a topic that remains unaddressed still in modern Lake City history.

HUB URBAN VILLAGE (1999-2010)

After portions of the 1999 Lake City comprehensive plan were adopted, there was a period of approximately 10 to 15 years when the community stagnated. Random development was added to the urban core by external developers, business came and went, and one to two social provider agencies were added to the neighborhood. For the Department of Neighborhoods, the critical decision impacted Lake City, as much as other neighborhoods, was “when Major Nickels got rid of community builders and didn’t support the implementation of the comprehensive plans that all the neighborhoods created.” This shifted the responsibility of plan implementation to the overworked staff or simply left on the shelf. A city worker said he “thinks not having a uniform way [of plan implementation] for all neighborhoods impacted how different areas developed. Some focused on transportation and others on parks or cars or real estate and so forth.” He goes on to say that Lake City is “just now feeling the impact of 10 years of planning done in 1999.” In addition, the constant condensing of DON staff created bigger ‘communities’ to serve, which impacted community engagement and directly impacted the implementation of adopted 1999 comprehensive plans.

Physical Elements

Two main local businesses that were added to the core of the neighborhood were a coffee shop and local brewery. Many of the homeowners viewed this as hopeful, maybe Lake City was at a turning point, attracting tourism and more businesses. As one resident puts it, “they are bringing in nice cars from other neighborhoods.” An opposing force that became and still is a physical focal point of the urban core is the port-a-potty

that resides in the mini park. There is not a common agreement among residents if it is a positive or negative attribute. Some residents are completely against it because it is considered to bring in a negative social environment and take away for potential businesses. Others feel the community needs to 'absorb it' and realize homeless also have human needs. Although there is not a common agreement if the port-a-potty serves a role in the urban core, there is agreement that the community is disorganized, which undoubtedly has negative consequences. It is the disorganization of the physical cues of Lake City that depicts the urban core, the focal point of the community, as anti-social. Across the port-a-potty, on the other side of Lake City Way, is the VA hospital (a tall building at the core of the community on 125th street and LCW) and the Mennonite Church (needs image here). The VA is privately run and has participated very little in the community; its primary focus is internal and works with McDermott Place by managing case in the housing-first site.



Image 5: Port-a-potty in Lake City Mini Park that residents are concerned it is used for drug users and prostitution and wanted it moved.

Source: KIRO 7, 2013

There are other residents that started to notice a difference in “my neighborhood in 2008: a new micro community developed called Little Brook.” This small community is unofficially referred to as ‘Little Brook’ because that is the name of the park the residential apartment complexes are surrounded. It is located near the border of Shoreline at 145th street and between 33rd and 125th Streets. This small area is also a ‘hot spot’ for new development of mega complexes, which directly contributes to the elevated density of residents. With little open space and parking and the increase of apartment housing, this community is being swallowed by opportunistic development from external stakeholders, with small regard and/or understanding on the impact of the development.

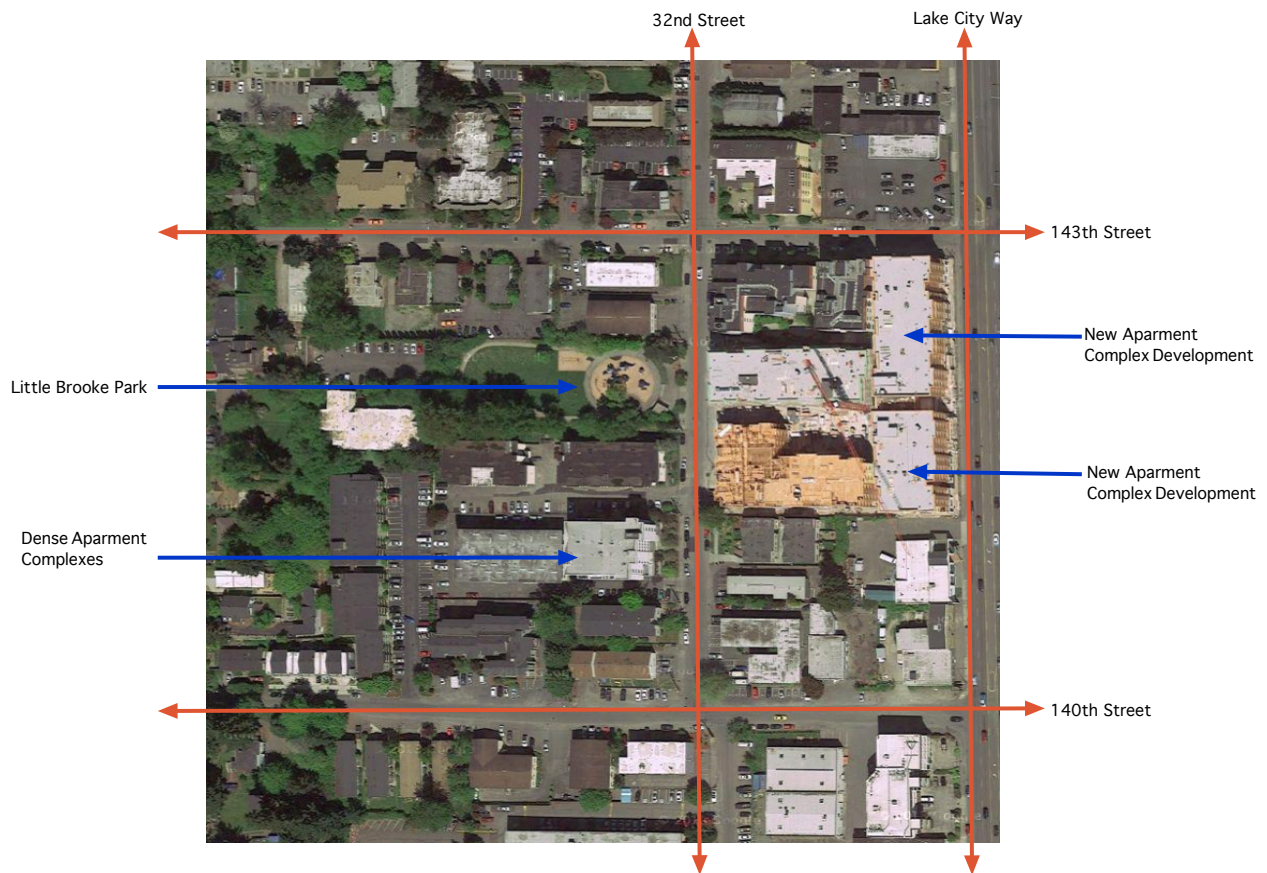


Image 6- This is a map Little Brook Park surrounded by dense apartment complexes.
Source: Map of Little Brook, Satellite, Google Maps, 2014.

Residents from adjacent communities within Lake City did not realize the need of the community until late August 2012 at a community meeting and BBQ at the Little Brook Park. Even though the Departments of Parks and Recreation have been trying to activate this space since 2009. It was the last park officially added to Lake City. Some of their efforts to build community capacity have been done through movies in the park or trash pick-ups.



Image 7- This is a view from playground outward towards the mega apartment complexes surrounding the small park.
Source: author, 2013

Those most concerned with the physical and social condition were members of the adjacent neighborhood associations who were trying to empower the residents of Little Brook residents to reclaim their neighborhood. To outsiders, even to Lake City residents, Little Brook is referred to as “Little Beirut or well it is safer than Detroit but, it is diverse, you know, it has a lot of those ethnic folks.” It was known as a ‘hang-out’ for lots of homeless people in the summer, but with the efforts of the parks department and other Lake City residents to activate the space the number of homeless decreased in 2012.



Image 8- A sleeping bag and personal belongings at the back of the park, near the day lighted creek.

Source: author, 2013

In 2000, Cedar Park, adjacent to Little Brook on the other side of Lake City Way, lost the majority of the bus routes serving the sub-neighborhood. This has impacted traffic patterns with more cars have been driving through the community to avoid the traffic on Lake City Way. The residents of Cedar Park added speed bumps to slow traffic down, as many of them have children that play outside near the park Cedar Park, which originally was a school playground. The school building was occupied by local artists that received 10,000 dollars donated from a local strip club, supplemented by the artist themselves, who raised the last 4,000 dollars to transform the school building into artist lofts. Recently, this building has again been reclaimed by the Seattle School District, responding to the growth of the young children population in the Lake City.

Many residents have reiterated at multiple urban planning community meetings that a point was reached when the 'urban core is not the core', pointing out that the best part of Lake City is the farmers market held at the midst of the library, community center and Albert Davis Park, just one block west of the core. "We know it is wonky, but it is not scary and you run into other families. I like the feeling of connectedness I get when I take my kids there," said a mother. The farmers market occurs seasonally and once a week. The lack of options of gathering spaces on the remaining days of the week and seasons is the reasons why residents continue to ask for open spaces to reconnect and build relationships, like residents once did in old days.



Image 9- The Lake City Farmer's Market is located between the Lake City Community Center and library. The adjacent park is filled with young families playing on the grass and eating their purchased food.

Source: author, 2013

The new businesses that have been added, a resident said, they “seem like a small drop in the bucket because we need so much more.” A parent in Lake City said, “we need full sections of gathering spaces like Spray Park in North Greenwood.” There is a feeling of anxiety in the residents to do something tangible in the community now; a mother said they do not “want another ten years to go by before we do something about the core because of fear.” She goes on to say, “I know it requires coping skills” to deal with the bad behaviors, “but we need to do something.” It is often suggested to “throw kids into the mix” because they are a good catalyst to build community trust among

residents through murals, an ice cream store, hobby shop, bookstore, geology playground, or a drop in art studio. The thought behind the resident's suggestion is to have gathering spaces, in which one can create things and not just eat.

Instead, large mixed-use buildings like the Ricki and Solar building already built in the core, still struggle to maintain consistent businesses below. As one resident puts it, "the owners don't live here, never lived here" so they do not understand the impact the buildings have on the core. The visual cues of multiple vacant lots on the main street in Lake City makes residents feel that the community and city are not invested, which often results in apathy and unwillingness to participate in relations outside the demands of their private lives.



Image 10- A parked camper near the urban core.
Source: Author, 2013

The addition of the coffee shop by Lake City residents was filling the need of a gathering space to sit and relax without having to go outside of Lake City. Before, a resident said, “we had to go pretty far for good coffee, since nothing was in Lake City that wasn’t to-go.” The owners of the coffee shop said, ‘we were unemployed and wanted a coffee shop sit and think about our next steps; [that is when we decided to] open the store in 2011 because we wanted to make a difference and create jobs” [for the locals]. The point of the coffee shop “is more than a to-go, it can be an office space, reflection day, chill-out moment over a real cup of coffee. Just that little bit of home feeling and we have done that!” said the local coffee shop owner proudly.

Smiling, she goes on to say “everybody meets here, this is where Lake City Neighborhood Alliance started and we had our first talk with the Mayor.” The coffee shop also has important features like an information board for community posters and the farmers market. There is a bike rack that was custom made that occupies a parking space in front of the coffee shop on Lake City Way.

Social Dynamics

The disappointment and distrust because the absence of help from the city has resulted in a full decade of the residents putting their heads down and making do with what they can do themselves. Some have stopped participating after the disappointment of the implementation of the 1999 adopted comprehensive plan. Others were uneasy about interactions with homeless or other populations that have moved into the area (including Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and West African in addition to the Latino and Asian populations already living in Lake City). Another portion of the population either moved out or was aging out and no longer participated at the level

they had been in the 'heyday of little ol' Lake City." The Chamber was no longer linked into the community in the everyday context, due to the turnover in staff and business owners. At this time, the Lake City Chamber of Business was in transition to become the North Seattle Chamber, causing business owners to not know what is going on in Lake City or not being willing to work with residents to improve the core beyond pure economic development.

A resident said, "in 2003 I started in civic engagement, [but I was] never clear if truly [there was a] representative group or if individual goals" or pet projects were being addressed. This uncertainty only enhanced the sense of distrust of the city and of any neighborhood association that had a working relationship with them. This uncertainty influenced the different social interactions (or lack thereof) in the urban core. A Lake City resident described Saturday afternoons as having "not a soul on the street, nobody, [because there is] nothing to shop for, only food." From an outsider's perspective the urban core seemed lively because there are people on the streets, but it is in how the streets are activated that pushes some of the residents back into their homes. The core of the neighborhood at 125th and Lake City Way is the main metro hub where multiple Metro Bus lines stop and connect to other neighborhoods or cities within King County. There is a small mini park across the street from the VA where the Port-a-potty is located, which is usually occupied by homeless or vagabonds or individuals struggling with addiction. This negative tone associated with these individuals has been linked to the space itself. This mini park is also one of the main physical attributes of the urban core that outsiders would encounter when making their opinion of 'who' Lake City is. It is

also a space parents avoid with their children out of fear of safety and not wanting to be haggled for money or solicited for sex.

Demographics on the move: Another big change in the social dynamics of Lake City is the shift in demographics not only in age but also in social class and ethnicity. The local librarian remembered “when I subbed at the Lake City library, it was pretty much all white, [but now] when I do my story time I see more immigrants and refugees.” There are also challenges with the business district that make Lake City appear dangerous, including social responses to new bus routes, instability of vacancies and visible homeless population. She goes on, “lucky for me, everybody loves the library.” It is a common space where residents and families interact in the context of everyday life and not only for celebration, relieving the pressure to ‘make friends’ and helping natural relationships to slowly develop. The librarians are one of the main social connectors in Lake City because they are usually present in schools and local events, and they use the neighborhood approach model to promote literacy and compassion. Interestingly, these social issues with the core are not new, rather they are re-visited and reiterations of the neighborhood that are a continuation of the historical dynamics observed ten years ago during the comprehensive plan discussions and even the ten years before that. This will be discussed later in the findings and analysis chapter.

The community started to notice a shift in the homeless population in Lake City. Many residents acknowledge that there have always been homeless individuals, but they were Lake City’s homeless residents. The community knew the individuals and ‘grew up with them’ being on the streets and non-threatening. It is still unclear why the

perception of 'more' homeless living in Lake City was negative. Perhaps it was the younger more conservative families moving into Lake City or the lack of services in Lake City to support the needs of inside and outside residents. It was through this gut feeling of imbalance that the Mennonite Church knew they needed to do something to serve the homeless individuals on the streets. Individuals were on the streets for a variety of reasons: they lost their support or struggled with addiction and/or mental health reasons. It was in their mission to serve those in need so the church started to offer social services to the homeless population, like the morning drop-in shelter on 33rd Avenue.



Image 11- The day shelter located on 33rd Avenue, near the urban core, to provide basic need services to homeless.

Source: author, 2013

The focus on the shelter was to provide the homeless with a place to gather to have a warm cup of coffee, shower, wash clothes, develop relationships or to relax in a safe environment. One of the pastors from a local church commented that there has been a “shift in the homeless community since Mennonite Church.” The Mennonite Church (MC) is proud that 96 out of 166 clients are now in housing. The pastor at the MC emphasized that they just “try to link new folks to work and resources; there will always be new people entering [Lake City] that are underserved.” For this reason, the locality of McDermott Place on 33rd Avenue enhances the coordination of the few services in Lake City to provide a sense of place. One social provider said “McDermott Place is the link that is a sign of hope to homeless.” Another provider from Pinehurst said “before the Mennonite Church people were always passed in streets, but were always part of the streetscape” of Lake City. That the homeless population only became more visible in modern Lake City history was due to the physical elements being removed such as the big trees and bushes near the SHAG housing or the benches and bushes removal from the mini park, highlighting the mini park and Cedar Park as locations of refuge, and not pushed out of vision. “People were just not aware of how many outdoor residents were living in Lake City,” said a member of the LC homeless task force committee. There used to be a NGO called Labor Ready in Lake City that found temporary work for homeless individuals, but has since moved out of the neighborhood. There is an acceptable network between churches and social service providers focused on assisting the homeless, and some homeless do attend the task force meetings. The high turnover of staff in both services greatly impacts the link

between providers and the general community. With connectors no longer present to maintain relationships, all homeless individuals are seen as panhandling.

Another population that is not necessarily new to Lake City, but has increased in size, is the number of low-income and extremely low-income residents living within the core of the neighborhood. Some homeowner residents blame the individuals involved in the 1999 comprehensive plan for the development of Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), SHAG housing complexes in Lake City. There are also a number of private apartment building managers that accept housing subsidy.⁸ The true number of low-income and extremely poor individuals remains unclear to both the city and the residents of Lake City. The sense of “imbalance of renters to homeowners,” complain the residents, is what “you feel and see when walking around.” It may be the lack of gathering space or city involvement with building community capacity within the more vulnerable populations that has resulted in a difficult culture change. Socially, the neighborhood has responded by decreasing the social mixing and mingling of different populations. The social avoidance mirrors how residents have dealt with the changes in the physical environment over the history of Lake City: put your head down and move on. Without purposeful reasons to engage with the different cultures of Lake City perpetuates the narrative that it is ‘very hard to talk to ethnic people’; nevertheless many long term residents agree that “people have to be people regardless, make friends!” Again this highlights that the community knows what to do but just can’t, it is like they are locked in the chaos to maintain the package of Lake City.

⁸ Housing subsidy is also known as Section 8 or Housing Choice Vouchers are used to pay a portion of rent in privately owned unites. For households that earn 30 percent or less of the regional median income can qualify for this program to pay for a portion of rent and utilities.

Because the efforts of Mennonite Church to address homelessness in Lake City were supported by the Mayors office, the pastors developed a good relationship with Deputy Mayor office. For the church, this was their partnership because local leaders continued to move out of the area due to the loss of jobs or transfers in governmental workers. The connectors were lost and the bridge between individuals at the local NGO and Chambers was gone. For example, the DON North district coordinator connected the different social providers and parks and recreation staff was reassigned to a different district; this was a huge loss to the providers trying to help stabilize Lake City residents, because the coordinator was the connector who personally went from agency to agency to provide updates and news about the coming and goings of the neighborhood. The coordinator was also the bridge between the homeowners (predominantly white and in charge of deciding where and how the community conservations occur in Lake City) and the non-homeowner residents. Although the original residents of Lake City were aging out and required different services in the core than the young families with kids, there was not a huge shift in values. If anything, the “families are more conservative than their parents” and the neighborhood is still “church based,” described a long time resident. A Cedar Park resident agrees that “Yes, now 20 year olds are moving in with more energy than us, but they still want to know their neighbors even the old ones.” The new wave of young families moving into Lake City still hold the same belief system as the families before them, which is that they are “always involved around a [community] project and happy to go put in elbow grease” where there is a need.

The last straw: More residents started to feel not safe walking around, some started to feel too nervous to walk outside after 11pm. This was upsetting to them because they felt forced into their homes when they once were able to roam throughout the neighborhoods with ease. After a few more years passed, a resident remembers starting to feel scared and saw more homeless at Cedar Park and started not being outside after 8pm. Another resident points out that “a lot of people went underwater with their houses in 2007-2010” and that was when “relationships were lost among neighbors because they were busy making do. I wanted to get involved with North District Council, but [I was] frustrated with process so I [started to] pick up trash on and off weekly on LCW and do graffiti paint outs.”



A) Graffiti in from of Mennonite Church facing 125th Street.



B) Graffiti on wall of vacant lot.



C) Graffiti on ramp from parking lot to Value Village.

Image 12- Multiple locations within the urban core with graffiti markings that were eventually painted over by the Lions Club.

Source: author, 2013

Multiple residents were tired of being angry and started to do trash pick-ups in their different sub-neighborhoods. During these trash pick-up walks residents discussed what were their primary concerns and what they thought needed immediate attention in Lake City. These informal conversations were the beginnings of the Lake City

Neighborhood Alliance (LCNA), created with the purpose of representing all the neighborhood associations in the Lake City neighborhood, to build collective capacity to address issues the resident felt the city was not doing due diligence on. The formation of LCNA will be discussed later in this section.

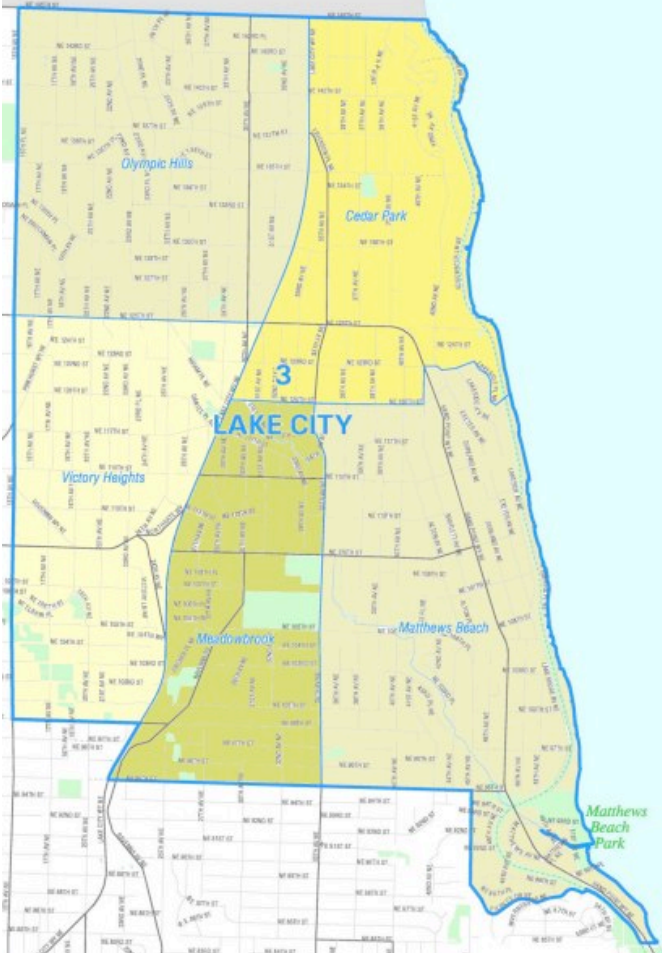


Image 13: Map of sub-neighborhoods within the Lake City neighborhood.

Source: Best Choice Realty, 2011

In one of the sub-neighborhoods near the urban core, called Douglas Park Co-operative, the turning point was when two drug houses continued to escalate with increased negative activity and squatters camping in the backyard. The presence of the

house resulted in needles along the sidewalks and at parks where school children walked. The residents mentioned that there were increases in car prowls during the day. “It was like somebody knew when people were at work,” said a resident. In 2010 to 2011 the creation of more neighborhood groups started to proliferate into the double digits (around twenty). The momentum generated by trash pick ups hosted by the newly established neighborhood groups led to increased attention to the North District Council meetings⁹.

One of the members of LCNA said that this is when neighbors really started to talk to each other. So, when noticeable problems were identified, like the dump site of bed mattresses in Cedar Park, residents rallied to clean it up together and eventually that space was reclaimed and dumping stopped.

⁹ The North District Council is part of the city of Seattle Neighborhood Involvement Structure, which is led by the Department of Neighborhoods. There are thirteen District Councils that are comprised of representatives from local neighborhood organizations (e.g. community councils, non-profit, local chamber of commerce, etc.). Each District Council oversees: the rating of neighborhood matching fund projects; serves as a funnel for budget requests; and is a forum for community issues. A representative from each District Council sits on the City Neighborhood Council, which manages: the recommendation of Neighborhood Matching Fund projects to the Mayor and City Council; oversees budget priority process; and implements Neighborhood Planning and Assistance Program.



Image 14- A dumped couch at Virgil Flaim park that was removed the next day the local residents.

Source: author, 2013

Another incident that really contributed to the formalization of LCNA was on Mother's Day. A mother described that she was at Dick's with the kids for Mother's Day in 2012, when her 6 year old saw pornographic images posted outside the local strip club and she asked to go home. She continues her story saying, "we are being choked out, literally, there is nowhere to go. Kids ask questions, they see the world and they are curious." She goes on saying that in talks at the dinner table, "we had conversations I never thought I would have [to talk] with my kids so young about prostitution and alcoholism."



Image 15- The local strip business on Lake City Way that is located near the urban core. The tree has been trimmed back to increase the readability of the sign. Source: resident, 2014.

Within the urban core, condoms, needles, and drug bags were continuously found and photo documented by the neighborhood groups. It got to a point where the trash pickups were no longer enough, and residents were left asking themselves, “what I am I supposed to do about it?” feeling powerless in Lake City. The residents didn’t know how to help and they didn’t know how to approach issues like the need for mental health services; they were questioning if it was really their job to find a solution. What was positive about the trash-pickups was two-fold, residents building relations and validation that “I’m not crazy, that being welcomed by chocolate chip cookies in my neighborhood off the core makes me feel like I have community.” There was relief that there still was a sense of community with the greater Lake City neighborhood, but the

need to build beyond the housing residential areas was important to reclaim the urban core. From the LCNA residents' perspective, "people just need places to plug into, but [the process] feels slow."

The social providers describe Lake City before the winter of 2011 as not very active. The only groups that existed were the Lake City Council, Olympic Hills, Victoria Heights, and Douglas Park. The other neighborhood associations did not start to emerge until the summer of 2011. It was the end of summer and beginning of fall 2011 that the neighborhood associations were very upset about four drug and prostitution incidents a couple days before the shelter went in. Although the shelter gave 24 hours notice, there was no public process with the Fire Station #39 for the community to grapple with and/or understand why a new social service unit was going to be added to the urban core of Lake City.

One of the direct social impacts was that the shelter became a focal point of the urban core. The code of conduct was no longer relationships, but anti-social behaviors that deterred residents from the core. The Mayor of Seattle was trying to address a need, but not providing sufficient public notice about the 2010-2011 winter shelter only increased distrust with the city and decreased residents' willingness to accept future social service providers in Lake City that may aid in stabilizing lives. Fire station #39 was catalytic in the history of modern Lake City, creating associations for different sub-groups within the neighborhood who started to do frequent walks on foot to reconnect with the needs of their community. Through these dialogues, residents began to enumerate the number of promises made by the city through the 1999 comprehensive plan that they felt were not followed up on with enough attention or detail. All they were

experiencing in their neighborhoods were the same drug houses, drug paraphernalia at playgrounds, solicitation, and theft. One mother stated that “it was the increase in needles on 127th street, my kid’s path to school that broke the camels back.” The residents forming the neighborhood associations realized that their next step was not to allow another external decision, like the shelter at Fire Station #39, to impact their community again.

The DON advised the residents to attend the PACE workshop on community building that was held in Georgetown and highlight the strategies used to mobilize the community to a point of collective decision making.¹⁰ After their experience with the PACE program, the residents knew that they needed to formalize their organization as Lake City Neighborhood Alliance. From that process, they wrote an open letter to the Mayor about the state of the neighborhood as well as invited council members on a walk tour of Lake City. The success of the walking tours and community outreach to establish the severity with which Lake City was ‘out of balance’ created a singular narrative that most residents internalized. The sense of distrust of the city to ‘do the right thing’ was continuously brought up at every community meeting before. Although the initial success of receiving external attending was attributed to the community being able to identify the neighborhood elements there bad, it also unremittingly re-surfaced in community dialogues regarding how Lake City can move forward. Therefore, the

¹⁰ The PACE Program was pilot led by the city and focused on developing community engagement and capacity building in neighborhood leaders. Residents and a contributing factor in the success of LCNA getting the attending of Seattle Council Members and the Mayor to address the concerns of Lake City used some of the skills learned from the program. Retrieved on May 10, 2014 from <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/news/newsdetail.asp?ID=13202&dept=30>

narrative prolonged the fear of working with the City and social service providers and reengaged the initial stress the urban core placed on residents.

The birth of LCNA: It was during the Fall of 2012 that the Mayor of Seattle met with LCNA at a local coffee shop to discuss what residents wanted to move forward to make their neighborhood a 'family first' community. A resident said, "I connected [into LCNA] through Cedar Park trash work.... I remember as we wonder what to call ourselves, 'who' are we?" The driving force behind the creation of LCNA was to have a grassroots or bottom-up approach to address local problems internally. One member said, "we see problems, want to address them" and the alliance was the avenue to do so in an organized manner that was not present in Lake City before. "We started at kitchen and dinner tables, then we started meeting at the coffee shop, which was a big part of LCNA and the development of neighborhood action." They knew that there was a need to address the economic instability of business in the core, but that the "chamber was a weird group of people that didn't want to be a part" of the change. Historically, the chamber has not participated in community development because it was not seen as their role or job in the community. The underlying reason for making LCNA an alliance was because the founding members did not want one neighborhood organization that was only a fraction of the community, but rather speak on behalf of all Lake City.

A LCNA priority that was identified was for social providers to be accountable and responsible for the individuals they serve and/or draw into the neighborhood. If more social services were to be provided in Lake City, they needed to meet a certain level of quality, so that there was a responsibility to live up to the standard of care

promised to stabilized residents and non-residents. It was important that the goal was “to get people on their feet again, not warehouse them in our community.” There was a struggle with residents to understand “how people can get services and be drunk during the day”; to them “it just doesn’t seem right” or fair to the residents of Lake City.

Most residents are unsure what Health and Human Services social services are and in what form they have accountability. To most, it seems like there are different levels of accountability depending on whether the social service agency was government funded, faith-based, or non-profit. Some of the concerns about accountability are: what happens when [they] are off the property; if [they are] guests in our neighborhood, how [can we make them] behave in our community; and how do we want to defend ourselves as neighbors?

There was a strong desire for seeking balance and being locally focused, not drawing outsiders regionally. These thoughts reveal the misunderstanding on the range of services that are provided by social services providers, which includes more than just housing and food. To concerned residents and business owners, the low-income development and social services on 33rd Avenue was perceived to draw outsiders regionally to Lake City. There was a “fear that the neighborhood won’t be able to provide for low-income people because the neighborhood is gentrifying, which is not fair to other residents.” Thus, another focal point of LCNA was to seek balance in the neighborhood by limiting the growth of social services and shifting focus on the development of a Business Improvement Area strategy. The developmental impacts of

33rd Avenue on the micro-community and the neighborhood will be discussed later as a focal case-study.¹¹

LCNA acknowledges there was ‘still a lot of the old guard that doesn’t play well with the city, Lions, or chamber, but to them, this not a good reason [to believe] that just because [things] have been bad for 10 years or more doesn’t mean [we] have to accommodate.’ The organization just wanted to find a way to help by creating a space for people to plug-in and feel welcomed in Lake City. They also observed ‘if [we were] locked in step with city you will get money from city like the U district.’ This meant that their organization needed to address the historical distrust due to the adverse relationship and the general opinion of residents that ‘usually the city doesn’t meet the demands of Lake City.’ On top of shifting social relationships between the neighborhood and the city, an equally important question LCNA members were asking themselves was ‘do we accept what the city wants or be different?’

Response

Before the LCNA was created there were other efforts to prevent ‘the tipping point’ such as the Lake City Task Force focused on cleaning the streets. Their focus was to clean up the Lake City core by removing landscape that homeless individuals could use to reside. Although the intention may not have been malicious, the outcome made the issues of homelessness more apparent. Without shelters or refuge from the

¹¹ The 33rd Avenue micro-community is located just east of the urban core at 125th and Lake City Way. Due to the local development of low-income housing options there is a high density of vulnerable populations on just one city block. This will be discussed at length in the focal case study towards the end of this chapter.

public's eye, Lake City outdoor neighbors were allocated to empty cemented public spaces with the core as their daily living environment.



Image 16- A makeshift sitting area near the day lighted creek on 33rd Avenue .
Source: author, 2013

After ten years or more of a neighborhood just letting things happen to them, a critical point of negative events was reached as the community responded by focusing on building up the trust again. The focus was on trying to consistently learn how to listen to each other and work together to address issues. The residents with young families were more tired of the homelessness when doing their daily tasks with their young children. The parents wanted a Lake City where their kids could thrive and safely play

and feared the urban core was approaching a tipping point with negative impacts to the relationships in the community. It was important to them that the tipping point did not repeat history, where Lake City residents retreat into their homes and wait for the tide to change because they felt powerless to take back their neighborhood.

It was the hope of the residents participating in LCNA, that there would be a return to good relationships and projects focused on addressing the housing needs through mixed-income housing models. By addressing the housing gap, it was expected that residents' lives would be stabilized and their quality of life improved, resulting into dollars being spent internally at the local businesses in the core of the neighborhood. There was a renewed interest in the success of the Pioneer Days Parade, taking place at the end of the summer. This parade is one of the historical festivals that has been passed on through each iteration of the neighborhood since it existed. Residents see it as a way to say who they are now.

The phrase 'we're up and coming' as a neighborhood is fueled by the belief that Lake City is the 'step child, the other, or the underdog' of the city of Seattle. A lot of this pride of being 'the underdog' emanates from the older residents from the little ol' Lake City era, when the Lions and Rotary clubs and car dealerships took care of the neighborhood. If something needed to be built, these clubs provided the elbow grease and this is how the community center and Virgil Flaim Park were built. Many of the positive traditions and physical attributes in Lake City today were not necessarily provided by the city; it was internal residents responding to local need. The question remains if Lake City residents now, connect to the same sentiments of the pride of the older generation but there is certainly appreciation of the social foundation in Lake City.

Many residents are struggling with the questions, ‘we are not Ballard, we are not Fremont, but maybe we want to be [like them]?’ This struggle may stem from an unsaid sense of need of permission from the old guard before re-organizing/community planning the neighborhood.

On top of the changes in demographics (age and ethnicity), there was a value shift in the community, in regard to the rights a Seattle homeowner has to certain neighborhood attributes.¹² One resident describes Lake City, saying “it has lost the blue-collar population and mom and pop businesses ‘goodies store’ that cuts a crossed economic status. We want to stay a small town, Lake City is just confused...we are a community of lots of people with vastly different experiences with nothing to bring us together to pioneer days.” It is important to the residents that Lake City continues to be an area that has something for everyone. Economic equity will be difficult, as Lake City has been called ‘the last affordable neighborhood’, which puts a sense of ‘in-demand’ pressure on the community. As one resident puts it, “my Lake City enjoys diversity, my Lake City is rough around edges, and my Lake City is having a problem right now.” With the continual influx of new residents due to affordability, it will be difficult and take time for the neighborhood to go through the community planning process of ‘who are we?’. If not settled, some residents fear the “future [of Lake City is] more prejudices under the surface being more conservation, which may not have good neighbor action minded” families moving in. With several neighborhood associations, there are a lot of opinions of what Lake city needs but a collective decision has not been decided. The new family

¹² Seattle is a City of Neighborhood with varying physical attributes manifesting in the urban villages as a resource for defining community identity and providing local economic stability. The larger question Lake City homeowners are asking is beyond this case study, but it is important to note. If the neighborhood urban design frameworks and comprehensive plans are to elevate the physical and social quality of urban villages, than it makes sense that Lake City residents have the desire to have a similar level of quality of life as adjacent neighborhoods.

residents have really high expectations and forget the complexity that comes with dense urban environments, a resident points out that the needs will continue to vary in Lake City.

People are ingrained in their old habits of avoidance and this won't be solved without further and tangible actions in the urban core; a provider said that the personal "experiences needed to reconnect and coach each [person] that it is OK to come into public space" will not happen. Ideally, all identities in Lake City can come together in one group, with everyone equally represented. Currently, it is just the loudest or the better; a resident said that they "always get their way and make things happen for them." If there is general agreement by residents and business owners that "we just can't have any more social service providers" and the focus of the community, a resident said, is "to stabilize the low-income families in Lake City now." Then what are the physical or social resources needed to be added to the neighborhood? The fear is that more visible social services providers only draw in more of the 'wrong people.'" The next steps for residents to figure out are "how to embrace other services such as childcare, job training, teen centers, murals, and more food trucks."

Whether it is the role of the external or internal stakeholders, it is essential for attention to be focused on redefining the social benefits of having a multi-dimensional definition to social services in a community. Housing and immediate care is only one facet of social services to help residents 'hang-in' during stressful life events. Social services can be used in a different capacity in the community, acting as a stabilizing agent through services such as tutoring, holiday celebrations, and family events. The desire for relationships with neighbors is a value that has been identified multiple times

in community meetings. If stability in the physical environment is achieved through the neighborhood action teams, then it is essential to develop the social dynamics so that the social service matures with the needs of the Lake City residents. If the social dynamics remain secondary to the community-oriented planning processes, then the segmentation of micro-communities within Lake City will further perpetuate the sense of isolations of residents. Those without a voice in the planning process will be remain in the shadows, to seek resources outside of Lake City. Even the neighborhood leaders working towards an affordable, family-focused community may be at risk of displacement (becoming the low-income resident that the next generation of residents complain about). Again, it returns to transforming the community narrative, once focused on the negative elements of Lake City, towards sustaining newly established connectors in the community that where once lost.

MODERN LAKE CITY (2011-2014)

Most of modern history of Lake City has been focused on identifying the negative attributes of the neighborhood and proving that there is an imbalance that needs to be addressed by the city of Seattle. The focus on imbalance was raised by a neighborhood-visioning project led by an internal developer and university collaboration. It was through these neighborhood-visioning discussions within the community, that the Mayor's office recognized LCNA as the representative group of the Lake City neighborhood. The direct reaction of residents was to start mobilizing social capacity within their community to keep the attention of the city. Especially after the outrage of Fire Station #39, a need for control over the urban core was heightened. During this time there was a proliferation of neighborhood groups that were trying to address multiple issues simultaneously and without coordination. At first, this only produced more chaos in the Lake City urban core and decreased the city's willingness to work with the community. Then, after multiple points of interaction with both the city and private developers, the leaders of the various neighborhood groups agreed to leverage commonalities as a starting point to figure out the identity of Lake City and to start to establish requests to external and internal stakeholders and developers. The LCNA neighborhood leaders were tired of being angry and having urban planning without consent in their community; they wanted to take back the reins of development. It was time to protect the value of open space and self-reliance.

Physical Elements

The physical environment of Lake City was rapidly changing in a negative way: every month the urban core lost another business, increasing the vacancy rate. There was a loss in storefronts such as a hobby shop, a soccer store, and a bakery. New businesses have slowly filled a few of the vacancies in the main core, for example, a hookah lounge, a crossfit gym and local ethnic restaurants. This static growth in the business district does not provide enough amenities to address the needs of the huge apartment complexes that are being built along the Lake City Way. Members of LCNA and the Chambers feel the physical attributes of the underserved urban core cues residents new and old to shop outside of Lake City. The rates of the apartments are too high for the quality and the neighborhood. There is a strong feeling of concern in residents and service providers that this is a negative element, “taking advantage of people because the owners know renters won’t fight back.” The Department of Urban Planning has stated at a community meeting “the neighborhood has gone through quite a bit of growth, more diversity in population and has remained relatively affordable compared to the rest of the city of Seattle.” The growing concern for the re-claiming the urban core was directed to Mayor McGinn in a public ‘call to action’ letter drafted by the LCNA in fall 2012. There was immediate response from the Mayor’s office to create an interdepartmental unit to create a three-year action plan as a guide to address the issues of concern in Lake City.



Figure 4- The structure of the neighborhood action team committees that report back to the Mayor's office.

Source: author

A lot of internal moving pieces: One of the major landowners in Lake City is changing their business model in how they deliver their product.¹³ This would result in downsizing the space needed to provide the same services of selling cars. To investigate different options to develop their land, an urban planning consultant and faculty was hired to work with the community through design charettes and informal discussions around the physical elements that Lake City needs. The landowner's consultant had the ability to work with the university, using undergraduate and graduate students to participate in classes or studios that focused on creating different scenarios of development of the urban core. The development opportunities are focused on the properties owned by local business owner.

¹³ The private landowner, known as the Pierre car dealerships has relied on a consultant and a university collaboration to create multiple public documents that have been published on different media platforms, regarding the intent of the Pierre Visioning Process.



Image 17- Potential properties of local landowner proposed for development in the urban core.

Source: Pierre Visioning Project Report, public document, <http://lakecitywayvisioning.blogspot.com/>, retrieved 2013.

A series of events hosted by university students from 2011-2013 ranged in size from engaging the whole community to analyzing sub sections. Students led the neighborhood through a series of community visioning meetings where residents were asked to draw out their mental maps of Lake City as it is now and what they hope it can be in the future.¹⁴ It is reported that the Pierre family is “going through a university faculty member because they do not want to deal with the city,” which is similar to how they ran business back in the Little Ol’ Lake City Days. One city worker said, “they didn’t even want to draw a contract with university faculty, but agree with a hand-shake.”

¹⁴ UW and CBE undertake a wide variety of projects in and about Lake City: CBE’s Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, Community Environment Program; UW-Bothell Nursing, UW-SPH Community Oriented Public Health Program. The content in this section does not include all these projects, but instead focuses on those related to the community visioning process.

A sense of hope from the Pierre Development Visioning project brought fresh breath into the residents, and shifted a campaign for the Pierre project to place a bid on Fire Station #39. This move would replace the city's proposed development of low-income housing with mixed-income model housing of affordable units, but a resident said they were "not sure for whom." One low-income housing advocate said, "that is not a desire to provide wrap around services. I was at that meeting and there were no residents to help the poor." It remains unclear to the public if there is intent to develop Fire Station #39 and how the city will respond in the placement of identified need of low-income housing from the initial assessment.

The residents want balance now or in the urban planning design plan because it is known that there is potential for Lake City to become a 'hotspot' and brought up by external developers. A city worker said, gentrification will occur at a faster rate than it is now because "developers will hop on the boat once the potential is realized." The general concern is that if external developers overpower the internal developers and business owners, then the identity of Lake City as the 'last frontier neighborhood' will be lost. What was observed in the form of social response is that the residents were willing to participate in the Pierre Visioning because they want the organization to invest in the community. It is also beneficial for the Pierre Visioning Project that the community is willing to 'go-along' with the process, although a resident points that this could "mean residents won't challenge their development in the future." Some low-income housing services providers "hope to see models like in Toronto, Canada, where every new development has mixed income and services provided." A social provider notes, look

“how the city built Rainier Beach, [that is an example] how city got things wrong, [and] now undoing racism.... look at what is not here in Lake City.”

Most participants at the Fire Station #39 stakeholders meeting with police remember that it “did not go so well and [was] very intimidating.” The community felt they were being blamed for the lack of quality in the physical and social environments of Lake City, and “it [was the residents] fault the neighborhood is bad.” Residents and service providers did not understand because it was not their fault, said a provider, that there was “no follow-up on liquor board or the police side for limiting alcohol purchased, and single serving purchase.” A service provider commented on the need for limiting alcohol sales, “this would be very helpful because there are people struggling with addiction and [at the same time] could be bad because people [may be] detoxing on the street without services.”

One resident notes that the process that the city is using to engage with the community is different than in the past. He said that “it seemed liked there were a lot of back door meetings about next steps, that I don’t think happened in 1995.” It was becoming unclear if community meetings and organizations were inclusive, like their originally intended. The original focus of the community plan in 1999 was to address the need to balance nature with urban spaces and create spaces of connection. There were some successes, said a resident, “we have the creek that was day lighted in two locations.” They continue, “now that the urban creek legacy fund dried up, so did the services; recently it [has been] hard to make things happen.” Another resident pointed out that “the greenways project seem to making headway because the city is invested.” The newer concern with the imbalance of renters versus long-term owners has

dominated community conversations. Various long-term residents have voiced that people move to Lake City because they cannot afford to go elsewhere. This is not the tone desired or necessary to promote the urban core.

The new businesses that were added before the heated events in 2012 have triggered the North Seattle Chamber to want to improve the core through the use of Business Improvement Area (BIA)¹⁵. On interviewee was unsure if the change should focus on BIA, when the first step to establishing an identity for the urban core is to focus on balance with corporations and mom and pop small ethnic shops. By having a strong grasp of the type of businesses Lake City would like to see in the urban core, it will be easy to make collective decisions as to what to do with the money from the taxes. The BIA can be a tool to address the common theme of more job opportunities, and seems appropriate to Lake City compared to what defines other neighborhoods. A major question is that since it will be hard to bring high tech jobs in Lake City, what do these other jobs look like?

In addition to the visioning project there are also other projects in Lake City that are focused on improving the physical elements in the neighborhood. The following chart¹⁶ is not a comprehensive list, just projects that have been mentioned in community meetings:

¹⁵ Business Improvement Area is a tax that the business district of communities places upon themselves to generate funds to be used to improve the physical environment. In community meetings, Columbia City and West Seattle have been identified as example neighborhoods that have used the BIA to stabilize the economic condition of the business district.

¹⁶ ^a The Mayor's Office Interdepartmental Units (IDU) were created in response to the open letter written by LCNA, stating attention is needed in Lake City. The IDU were divided into the following committees: Economic Development, Public Health and Human Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety. Later, the IDU name was changed to Neighborhood Action Teams (NATs). Despite the change in the Seattle Mayor, the NATs are still actively participating in the community.

^b Seattle Urban Planning Department has created a committee to create the Lake City Urban Design Framework led by city staff and external consultant. Note that the same consultant firm has been hired for

the Only in Seattle Grant, Lake City Future First Project. Design Framework emphases that it is a bargaining document from residents with future developers and the city. Some residents have doubts as to how much this document will determine future physical elements in Lake City. A couple commented that they 'were a part of the first improvement to Lake City in 1999 with Mayor Norm Rice, where the city was hired to do public meetings and lots of public process with little outcomes.' They go on to say that there should already be sidewalks, public spaces, and things to do in LC, because we identified 15 years ago."

^c Lake City Greenways is a non-profit organization focused on providing urban greenways to address the needs for safe routes to schools, green space for recreation, and safe bikeways. A university studio was used to visualize potential greenways designs and locations throughout Lake City. It also had another community engagement project focused on reaching the micro-community called Little Brook.

^d Light Rail Transit Oriented Communities is a project focused on the development of the proposed Light Rail stop in Northgate. City representatives from this project have participated in Lake City community meetings. The two proposed light rail stops will link to Lake City at 130th or 145th street. Since it will impact the Seattle Metro bus routes, residents were encouraged to provide feedback on the Northgate Light Rail Design to make sure their preference on the location of the light rail stop was heard. It was also advised for neighborhood leaders to start engaging with Seattle Metro sooner rather than later to advocate for bus routes to link Lake City to the light rail stops.

^f In response to LCNA advocacy for Lake City, a legislative order by the Seattle Council to the Department of Parks and Recreation to assess the gap in services for teens and seniors in summer 2013.

^g In the winter of 2014, LCNA received The Only In Seattle Grant, through the Office of Economic Development, which invests in the development of neighborhood business districts. LCNA was awarded \$30,000 to hire a consultant firm to develop community capacity.

^h The North End Social Service Providers was re-established to be formally recognized as a stakeholder in the community. There are quarterly meetings to coordinate social services in Lake City. In the spring 2014, the North End Social Service Providers are a collaboration of internal providers and the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a Lake City Summer of Fun program.

ⁱ The public safety NAT group helped advertise the efforts of the Seattle Department of Transportation with comments on the multi-modal transportation needs and updates. One government employee said, 'I'm not sure if it was by coincidence or on purpose; regardless, it was good timing' because it gives a tangible outcome. It is a visual output that is a positive feedback to resident input on the community planning process. He goes on to say 'this is good for the community because residents will see action time getting done like the 125th repaving.'

^j A large Department of Neighborhoods Grant submitted by residents in Lake City supported the Lake City Emergency Hub. Due to the lack of emergence services in the neighborhood such as hospitals, the residents of Cedar Park created the ER Hub located in the Fred Meyer parking lot that will have radio communication and supplies in case of a disaster.

Stake holders	Scale	Time period	Goal
Pierre Family Development	Private Development	Unknown	Unknown Development of land along LCW
Mayor's Office Interdepartmental Unit (NATs) ^a	Government	Three years	Next year assess LC needs
Urban Design Frame Work, Urban Planning Department ^b	Government	1 year	Created Lake City Urban Design Framework that denotes the specific elements identified by the community
Lake City Greenways ^c	27 th Street to link with Safe Routes to school	Several years	Provide safe walking and biking path (no sidewalks or safe pedestrian paths)
Light Rails Transit Oriented Communities ^d	Regional	2020	Try to link Lake City into Light Rail Station via buses
Legislative order for needs assessment by Department of Parks and Recreation for Teens and Seniors ^e	District	Summer 2013	Safe and Stable Communities
Neighborhood Associations ^f	Sub-neighborhoods within LC	Now	Positive and Safe Lake City for families
Only In Seattle Grant Lake City Future First ^g	Urban Core	Ongoing	Formalize internal structure with unified decision making authority
North End Providers Social Services ^h	Individual/Geo-hub	Everyday	Social Programing Safe and Stable Communities
Lake City Traffic Corridor Safety study &, Repaving 125 th , SDOT ⁱ	Neighborhood, government	Several years	Assessment of multi-model transportation needs and updates
Lake City Emergency HUB ^j	Neighborhood	Several years	Focus on disaster preparedness in Lake City

Social Dynamic

There are a lot of projects simultaneously occurring in Lake City, representing the social response of the active community leaders. Self-reliance and informal relationships still resonate through the community's actions and through the focus of LCNA and city-based projects. The sense of imbalance of renters and homeowners remains a central concern of the community because residents feel like there is a lack of cohesion and sense of community in their neighborhood. One individual describes that Lake City is having multiple housing characteristics, "after 6pm, [it has become] a different Lake City since the housing development" in the urban core.

To 'take back Lake City' many residents have come forward to "express [through their] actions, how to make things happen in Lake City." Individual action through the neighborhood groups has shown the desire to get to know their neighbors by applying for grants such as for a Skate Park at Virgil Flaim Park. At the same time, other efforts have been focused on blocking social services such as the winter shelter in Lake City, still representing fear and distrust in the city and other non-resident stakeholders. Maintaining the connectors that have emerged in the different social organizations will decide if working together as a collective will last or if there will be a repetition of disconnectedness.

During the Pierre Visioning process, an interviewee commented that "in the beginning only a few [were] involved" and "now [there are] more meetings" but with still the same individuals involved. What seems to be missing are "low-income residents, they don't seem to be involved." There are low-income residents who have been

“connected for a long time with North Seattle Family Center” in attempts to “get back on their feet” and participate in the community, said a provider. “This is the mission of the organization,” said a provider, “to help the community in the long run beyond the immediate services.” This common goal of stabilizing life in Lake City, in both the long standing social services and the neighborhood leaders helps to keep the groups moving forward, but can be disrupted if the distrust of the residents limits their willingness to be transparent in their communication. A positive output from the NATs is the participation of neighborhood leaders and social service providers on the same work committees. There is a concern on how long social service providers will participate in multiple community meetings if there are not tangible projects that directly benefit their clients in immediate future. One barrier that remains is the disunity around the homeless task force. As one resident puts it, “LCNA was formed as a reaction to the leader, if it were more transparent, maybe we wouldn’t exist.”

The formation of LCNA was not transparent at first: it was unclear which neighborhood groups or agencies were permitted to join the Alliance. The Mennonite Church was made aware that meetings were occurring in spring 2012 through a university faculty. The involvement of the Mennonite Church was crucial for the future development of LCNA, which is why the university faculty knew they needed to be included. The disunity around the homeless task force slowed down the ability for the alliance to make collective decisions and shifted [some] service providers to the shadow. Before the holidays, LCNA was at a decision point, which was either to remain as ‘a reactionary leadership’ or to become responsive. On paper “LCNA seems like a good idea for a third party” representative agency for the City to contact, “but they are

not inclusive enough,” said an eastside resident. One neighborhood leader said, “there was always a subtle way people got left out.” A city worker noted that some of the individuals omitted from community conversations have “good institutional memory” but are not at the table because people who participated in the 1999 comprehensive plan “were blamed for the current state of Lake City.”

Again, the history of how the city interacted with the community in the 1995 neighborhood planning effort, where “the city handled the note taking, money, and type of data collection and types of studies we need” and with modern Lake City impacts the social dynamics differently. “Back then [there were] representatives of everyone and the meetings always open, [it] didn’t feel like people [were] left out of planning, like with LCNA now.”

Neighborhood leaders admit that “at first [there was a] struggle with inclusiveness,” which resulted in limited and passive government interaction. The DON representative did not attend LCNA meetings until inclusiveness was addressed. Relationships began to develop as the alliance and community stakeholders began to have common experience together through events like the Pumpkin Drive for North Seattle Family Center or a Father’s Day event at the Seattle Housing Authority complex where residents have opportunities to get to know each other.



Image 18- The pumpkin patch drive led by local residents for a Halloween event hosted by the North Seattle Family Center.
Source: resident, 2013

A government worker commented on the change in social dynamic, “It’s a learning curve and they are getting better at realizing the need for an inclusive way to inform each other that they may not be a decision making body.” He goes on to say “it is good to have lots of community councils and finding projects that aren’t controversial so people can come together” will only enhance the social capacity of the neighborhood. Now the community is ready to learn from the Fire station #39 episode and use that experience for “positive change [in] forming new networks that did not exist before.” It is still the hope of the city that the ‘lack of social justice’ and equity will be addressed as the community goes forward with their urban design framework. As the community

develops its internal structure through the Lake City Futures First committee, social justice is still an open question for both city and residents, especially when the tools to address the issue are not yet present in the community. “Who is responsible for managing diversity?” asked an active resident.

Before the restructuring of the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce, there was a committee called the Development Council that was housed in the Lake City Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the Development Council was to be a collaborative task force that addressed the needs of the business district in the urban core of the neighborhood. In the spring of 2012, “the Homeless Task Force was voted off the priority list, which eliminated the involvement of the Mennonite Church with Community Development.” This resulted in a break in the bridge between neighborhood groups and the urban core. The 33rd Avenue micro-community felt the biggest impact in the shift in economic priority, which will be described in more detail in the focal case study later on. This reorganization of the Chamber from the Lake City Chamber of Commerce to the North Seattle Chamber had a huge impact. Geographically the area the Chamber of Commerce was responsible for expanded to cover multiple neighborhoods that have different economic demands. For example, because the Northgate Neighborhood is considered the north end ‘Welcome to Seattle’ gateway from the I-5 Freeway, there is a lot of capital being invested in the development of the Light Rail Transit Station and neighborhood around the large mall. In addition, there was a huge staff turnover that not only lost institution memory but there was a loss of connectors that bridged relationships between the different neighborhood groups in Lake City.

One particularly important turnover in relationships was the transition from the Lake City Lions Club to the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce running the Lake City Community Center and Pioneer Days Parade and Salmon Bake. A social service provider referred to Lake City “Pioneer days as bizarre and yet there is something touching about it.” He goes on to say, “I hope it [the Chamber and LCNA] preserves the character of the parade” it just needs “updated a little and not just Lions and Rotary Club” in the parade. The few that are in charge of Lake City decisions and events “keep trucking along with the former identity, even though the population has changed”; one person describes “pioneer days as carryover from suburban life: street fair, hokey, cute, and endearing all at the same,” but still “locals come out for the event.” The focus in the future needs to be on how to draw from other neighborhoods to showcase the positive attributes of Lake City. The re-branding of the identity to other neighborhoods can contribute to the ‘buying powered’ desperately needed in the urban core to stabilize the local businesses. Now that the “Lions club is not in charge of the community center the Salmon Bake doesn’t make sense,” said a provider. There was a dedication to the passing of history to the next generation of residents at the Community Center and there was a “dedication of rooms with local names (e.g. Virgil Flaim) to keep history in building.” “I noticed the dynamic change at the Community Center re-dedication,” commented a government worker. He goes on to say, “half the group bended the Mayor’s Offices ear about the need for a port-a-potty and the other half wanted to get rid of it.”

Now Lake City is really diverse, there is a little bit of everyone from Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and Horn of Africa to new conservative young families. To

some, it is the “young families (that are more conservative than my parents) that are really influencing neighborhood decisions right now”, said an older resident. Lake City has “morphed from working class, lunch box Joe, half rack beer Friday night (affordable) to yuppified upscale” social expectations, said an external provider. There are more middle class educated people and young adults from university; many know what is going on through religious organizations. New cultures and religions in Lake City have left public schools struggling “how to find a flexible way to be more open in helping support different cultures.” There is a clear need for a better method for outreach with languages. There may not be buy-in from all the middle-income parents to have relationships with low-income parents, but the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) has shown a strong interest in helping the schools with better outreach. For example, the PTA has reached out to the community builders at Lake City Court. At an experiential level, PTA parents know the importance of elevating resources for low-income students to improve the quality of learning for their kids.

One staffer commented: The North Seattle Family Center in five years has decreased in the percent of Caucasian clients and increased in the number of limited English speakers. As a community resource for capacity building and planning, “we always get overlooked, we serve so many families and never get asked” to participate in community stakeholder meetings. This can make it difficult to be active in the community because social providers have been excluded from community decisions. She says that social providers have highlighted that “we are here [in Lake City] more than in our own neighborhoods, we care about residents in Lake City.” Not being able to provide input on what attributes, physical or social, are needed in Lake City limits the

social providers' ability to contribute to stabilize individuals and families of the neighborhood.

It is commonly agreed among north end service providers that historically, the “city of Seattle puts money in South King County and little in the North End” and “the money the city is investing in North End is in the Northgate development and light rail transit.” The “people [of Lake City] are very different than Northgate” and the focus on Northgate has the potential to deepen the isolation of the neighborhood from the rest of the city.



Image 19- Focus group on Northgate Light Rail link where the discussion shifted to the needs of Lake City now.
Source: author, 2012

There is a general consensus among social service providers that “the city has to invest in breaking the barriers; resident involvement increasing is good, but everything requires investment.” The concern is that building internal capacity will not be sustainable “if the city doesn’t invest money into (local) leadership development and inclusion because it leaves us wondering then what does resident involvement mean?” Neighborhood leaders are left questioning, “what is the point of resident involvement” if the outputs do not contribute to stabilizing lives of Lake City residents. If the rules of engagement of the neighborhood continue to change, so do the perceived levels of chaos and disconnectedness, which leaves Lake City residents as returning to their internal values of seeking relationships by knowing their neighbors, but with few results in moving beyond seeking.

The community is at a critical point in their decision on how to form their internal structure to maintain the capacity that has been built. If the ‘The Only in Seattle Grant, Lake City Futures First’ is the ‘right’ leadership development in Lake City, then how will it benefit all residents of different levels of involvement and leadership with the neighborhood? There are “disproportionate assets for resources because of income, if we can’t provide [them],” said a resident, and then residents will continue to go to other neighborhoods for goods and resources. “If [the] want [is for] residents to be involved and to care about neighborhood and invest, then there need to be jobs or a starting point for future generations to get good education, mentorship, and healthcare,” agreed two providers. Currently these concerns are not being addressed through the lens of equity: the internal structure being developed for Lake City with the guidance of the City

is focused on economic development over social engagement. The concern of the neighborhood leaders is that there are too many low-income residents without resources to support them, but in the physical community planning projects occurring in Lake City do not touch the core issues on how to address disparity in Lake City. A resident describes it, “we are only engaging with diversity at a celebratory level or ornamentation of diversity [because it does not help] help us in everyday life” to address the chaos in the urban core.

Modern Lake City is still known as a small, quiet community that is family oriented and church-based. “It seems to be continuing along that path with quite a bit of economic growth,” more than there has been in the community since the ‘little ol’ Lake City’ days. There is a slow transition in the type of growth in business and housing in the urban core that is impacting the level of neighborly desire in neighborhood leaders. The new families that have moved into Lake City over the past 10-15 years either were not aware of or did not accept the social condition of Lake City. “Theft is not new to Lake City, [it] just seems more of it is going [on, which makes it] hard to move forward,” said a resident. The disagreement between newer and older homeowners regarding what is an acceptable level of crime translates into different priorities in the neighborhood. This lack of congruence makes it hard to move forward on community projects in a way that they can build upon each other. Rather, there are separate projects that may or may not overlap with the concerns of other sub-communities within Lake City. The need for self-reliance goes deeper than the neighborhood level; the residents of Lake City embrace this mantra. But there is a strong unease about the directionless small changes that is not moving forward. For the neighborhood leaders, just staying the same and absorbing

the new physical features being added to Lake City by external/internal developers is not an option.

The newer neighborhood leaders have young families as the focal point of concern, so when they moved in as people retired moved out, they brought in new ideas as to what a community looks like. They had no clue about the neighborhood plan, so it was easy to suggest to “them to start their own neighborhood groups” because they weren’t feeling like their concerns were being addressed through Lake City Community Council (LCCC). This resulted in a proliferation of neighborhood associations to address the individual issues of each sub-neighborhood within Lake City. One of the first impacts of the growth in neighborhood associations was the diluted focus on core issues of neighborhood. Cedar Park was about “streets and pedestrian safety when traveling from the north and south end of the neighborhood, Olympic Hills and Douglas Park were about something else,” said a city worker. “The newbies didn’t understand why 33rd Avenue got all the attention, when their sub-community needs weren’t being met,” said an older resident. Even with the establishment of LCNA, it got to a point where it was too hard to bring people together without some level of distrust.

Social Service Provider impact on Social Dynamics: Substance abuse and mental health services and resources will still be needed in Lake City, which means there is a need for funding through neighborhood services. The responsibility of stabilizing individuals with mental health concerns cannot be the sole responsibility of a few faith-based homeless services and the residents of Lake City. Through the development of the LCNA, the connections are beginning to be reestablished between the neighborhood associations and social service providers. One incident was when a

hostile outdoor neighbor was having a violent episode with their mental illness in the center of the urban core. Through a series of emails between neighborhood leaders and homeless service providers, the neighborhood was able to communicate on how to contain the violent situation until help was received from external agencies. Although this highlighted the community's ability to be self-reliant, it is not a sustainable solution to address the deficiency of mental health services in Lake City. There is no clear answer as to what the next steps are if the city of Seattle does not invest more funding in the North End, nor is it clear whether the VA is responsible for being more active in the community or is to be only an internally contained program.

On top of the establishment of new neighborhood associations and the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance there were also many external projects and developments simultaneously occurring in the community. At this moment in time (during the case-study), there were at least six or seven community-based planning projects that occurred in Lake City over the span of 1.5 years without including a handful of one-off projects. There were a few instances where external stakeholders took without giving back to Lake City. The main projects that will be described in this case-study are the: Pierre Visioning Project, University of Washington¹⁷ course studios or community-oriented projects, the Mayor's Office Initiative for Neighborhood Action Groups, Department of Parks Needs Assessment Legislative Order, and Lake City Greenways and Seattle Department of Transportation.

¹⁷ UW and CBE undertake a wide variety of projects in and about Lake City: CBE's Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, Community Environment Program; UW-Bothell Nursing, UW-SPH Community Oriented Public Health Program. The content in this section does not include all these projects, but instead focuses especially on those related to the community visioning process.

The focal point around which this project revolves is the Pierre Visioning Project, led by university faculty. The faculty was the connector that facilitated the initial conversation that recruited student projects in Lake City. One resident describes her presence as “instrumental” in the community input meetings around the Pierre Visioning Project and using the local American Planning Association Coffee talks and that “she was playing the role of the city like in the 1995 comprehensive planning meetings, where we had open public meetings.” Some residents found the community engagement with the Pierre’s “unusual because they are in line with the city system of beliefs.” Other’s refer to the faculty’s presence in the community as indifferent saying “she’s been around, don’t know if she is real” because “we know the visioning ultimate desire is market rate.” The uncertainty of the faculty’s role in the community can be seen as both divisive and cohesive because it is unclear “whose interests are being considered.” As one resident describes it, “the city relies on her and the UW students” and has focused on the “need to get community focused on urban design framework.”

The focus on the urban design framework is a response to the physical attributes that residents want in the urban core due to a static business district with a high turnover rate. “At first the meetings were exciting, now they are tedious, just more talking and not moving forward,” said a neighborhood leader. Remnants of distrust in the city persist as there are multiple residents serving on the same committee to ensure that the city will fulfill promises. There are some residents still angry about the street diet applied to 125th Street; a full lane was switched to a bike lane on a busy street that has a high gradient. It was an example, for the long-term residents, of the city missing the link between city code and everyday life in Lake City. As many neighbors have said, “we

know we are a Trader Joe's community, we are not asking for Whole Foods." A Little Brook resident questions with frustration, "why do we have to spend thousands dollars to study something we already know how to fix." There is a desire for more tangible products to slow down the burnout that is already happening because the number of meetings from the multiple concurrent projects in Lake City. The urban design framework and the traffic safety corridor are the only tangible products the city has proposed for the immediate future of Lake City. This can be seen as a setback because of the limited tangible outputs proposed for the near future. The development of the internal structure does not alleviate the stresses residents are feeling now; to them, this point of engagement with the city is just more of the same Seattle process.

Development of Internal Structure of Lake City: The NATs were a direct response by Mayor McGinn to the open letter from LCNA regarding the needs of Lake City. From the government view there was a noticeable movement of interested parties over the last five years that has shifted from reactive to proactive community discussions. At times some residents felt it was important to cooperate with the city despite the "collaboration feeling forced" because the neighborhood "wants to be legitimized so that the city will listen."

The success in the relationship between the city of Seattle and Lake City will be in the management of resident expectations and in the clarity on what objectives will and will not be covered. It is not appropriate "to focus on lots of parks and open space, [we are] not interested in doing that in the first years because we can't until the funds are there," said a city employee. The management style needed for the revisioning of

Lake City needs to appeal to a wide range of communication styles and value systems. To outsiders, “Lake City used to be an old school community that wasn’t concerned with economic development and had a very traditional chamber and community council.” In the past, the neighborhood “didn’t command attention like the other neighborhoods, until the recent Mayor’s office call to action.” The gap in communication between Lake City and the Mayor’s office means it will take time for outside stakeholders to understand the ‘new’ version of Lake City before engaging in tangible projects.

After a few months of intimate engagement, the city employees started to understand who Lake City thinks they want to be and acknowledging that the “neighborhood is on the right track now” for an external collaborations and interventions. It has become clear that “top-down won’t work in the way the neighborhood will want, it is more prone to tokenism and superficial response to neighborhood needs,” said a government worker. As a city employer puts it, “Lake City has had to prove their neighborhood is out-of-balance through two large public meetings and got a response for the Mayor that attention must be paid.” This is what led to the development of the social internal structure of Lake City called the NATs discussed in the previous physical environment section. The focus of creating the NATs was to get information out and create an executive committee to be the decision making body. In order to establish the social infrastructure the LCNA applied and was awarded for the Only in Seattle Grant, which provides the funds to hire an external consultant to develop an action plan and decision making body to create more economic independence in Lake City. This is a strategy that has been used in other neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill and the U-

District with the same external consultant as Lake City. One of the immediate goals of the action plan will be to develop a Business Improvement Area.

With the development of multiple projects occurring within a short time span, a sense of urgency is embodied in the residents, making them willing to participate because “you never know when the city will help us again.” This is exhausting and depletes long-term social capacity due to burnout; the comments used in public documents is only from a small fraction of residents that have the tenacity and time to attend multiple meetings at inconvenient times. The urgency and panic to participate is enhanced by the messages received from the city employees stating they “hope the Lake City residents realize now is not the time to wait and to provide input, and the time is now to give your opinion and get voice heard or a comment added to the city report.” The stress from daily encounters within the neighborhood urban core is now compounded by the stress of making sure to give comments for the city to decide if they will provide resources or not to help stabilize residents.

The strong desire for balance in the urban core now through the urban design framework is a response to the fear of Lake City becoming a ‘hotspot’ and bought up by developers, therefore taking the internal control away for the neighborhood leadership. It has been made know that developers will hop on the boat once external stakeholders realize the potential. Again, this builds upon the stress of residents and community leaders to take action now or else Lake City will become Ballard. One of the results of the heightened stress mode of operation was that neighborhood leaders trust that the Pierre Visioning Project has their best interests in mind. The sense of urgency and “we have to act now” has disabled residents to think of the long-term consequences of the

decisions and assume that the internal developer will change the physical and social environment to preserve the character and diversity of modern Lake City.

Building internal capacity: It is important to note that there are more community-oriented approaches used by city staff that interface with the community like in Seattle's Department of Transportation (SDOT) Traffic Corridor Project. The DON use Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POELs) to "get better at nurturing individuals to be leaders" from within the community, said a representative. Still, the struggle now will be on the residents who have the responsibility to track all the events, projects and planning occurring in Lake City. The point of creating the executive committee of internal stakeholders is "to keep track of all the balls in the air and provide an informative role to the neighborhood and friends of the neighborhood." Lake City is building upon the momentum of the NATs and the use of external sources to help stabilize the community to repeat the similar action plans that were applied in the 1995 comprehensive plan and little ol' Lake City era.

Given the internal independence, with little support for other neighborhoods and the city, the currency of elbow grease continues only through the use of action plan meetings and future small projects that will set-up Lake City business district. Just like in 1995, the residents are "learning the planning language to establish a tool-set for neighbors to track projects," said a government worker said. "The focus on elevating the urban planning literacy," a city worker said, is meant to avoid "overwhelming residents and to help them understand the importance of their voice being heard." This returns to that same conclusion made in generations past, that Lake City "can't rely on city to coordinate everything and the community needs to take control of it"; residents believe

this why establishing a code of conduct for urban core needs to be one of the priorities for the proposed internal decision-making unit.

City external stakeholders are encouraging the neighborhood leaders to pursue DON simple grants to fund small projects throughout the neighborhood as an example of the community's ability to build an alliance of grants rather than be in competition with each other. The focus for small projects needs to be on the low-hanging fruit that is identified in the NATs action plans. The residents were advised by city workers "not to make the list too long because few residents will be willing to stick it out." Also, there was mention of "not to rely on the big bucks," by a few city workers and residents. Taking the internal action to coordinate projects shows the city that Lake City is worth investing in to address issues of equity and social justice. From the city's perspective, 'right now only certain populations are participating' and the city will not fully participate until equity is addressed in the various neighborhood associations. This puts the neighborhood leadership at a disadvantage, as the residents may not have the training or personal time to address equity independent of city support.

In addition to applying for simple grants, the neighborhood will have to grapple with the amount of time required to build internal capacity. "The community doesn't really understand the amount of time it will take to re-build the community," said a community builder. Modern Lake City is going through a high turnover rate of property and land-use owners. It has been pointed out by city workers that the "Chamber has way too much on their plates" to focus on an action plan for economic development, updating the external facade of the buildings, and enforcing a business improvement area. It was "hard [for the Chamber] to realize how much work it was when they took on

Lake City business district, it's huge and a bigger task than most think," said a city employee. Especially because the North Seattle Chamber includes more than the Lake City neighborhood, it also focuses on Northgate and the neighborhoods in between, which takes a lot of time on task to form structures of communication and action plans.

There is a misalignment of awareness of capacity needed to revitalize the urban core of Lake City and the larger North End. In the past, the Pierre's were known for not wanting to work with the city and city process, but now with the Pierre Visioning Project, there is an opportunity for the community to undergo a thinking project. One city employee pointed out that it is also "an opportunity to figure out how to incorporate the different income levels' representation." The benefit of experiencing the visioning process and engaging with non-traditional stakeholders, like social providers, is that neighborhood leaders "will become aware of the steps and time it requires to establish a neighborhood identity." A city worker goes on to said that it is "through experience the beginnings of more successes will emerge." Once there have been enough shared experiences between the different levels of income, it is the hope of the city that the BIA may be a viable tool--once the identity of the business district has been established and priorities of the future direction of the urban core have been vetted by the community.

At this time of the redevelopment of Lake City, the focus of the local business owners and other internal stakeholders needs to be on establishing a social norm or code of conduct for businesses within urban core. It will take time to identify strategies that most business owners will want to 'buy-in' and participate in maintaining clean storefronts. Intrusively forcing the BIA onto the community will not work; it needs to be a choreographed dance between integrating the priorities of the neighborhood with the

BIA within the HUB urban village. Slowly diffusing the learned external urban design and planning tools in small tangible projects allows for the relationships to grow and thrive. Eventually self-identified 'connectors' from the different neighborhood groups establish trust and communication avenues best for residents to be informed and engaged. Then, through the foundation of neighborhood relationships the economic growth will benefit as Lake City continues to organize and re-brand.

The theme of family focused apartments with 3 to 4 bedrooms has been mentioned multiple times in community discussion as the development focus on the Pierre Visioning Plan. It has been seen as a good tool to incubate ideas on how to incorporate Lake City as a family oriented neighborhood through the BIA and Pierre Visioning Process. At the same time, there is also focus on preserving the character of Lake City through the Urban Design Framework. There is an underlying assumption from external city planners that if residents pick the physical attributes they do like about the urban core and identify others in need of attention that the social dynamic of Lake City will change. Similar to efforts in the 1999 comprehensive plan to address social concerns, the decision of fixing Lake City through planning falls on the shoulders of the neighborhood leaders. Again, the question remains if there is enough community capacity to concurrently participate in multiple community-oriented projects.

Since the neighborhood leaders established the attention of the city, a series of numerous meetings occurred within the short period of approximately two years. At the end of all the early morning and/or after hours meeting, the community was still left asking 'how can we get something now in our community?' Instead, from the multiple points of engagement of the city, the community attention of 'doing something now to

help people stabilize' has transitioned towards focusing on the development of internal structure with a hierarchy of committees and working groups.

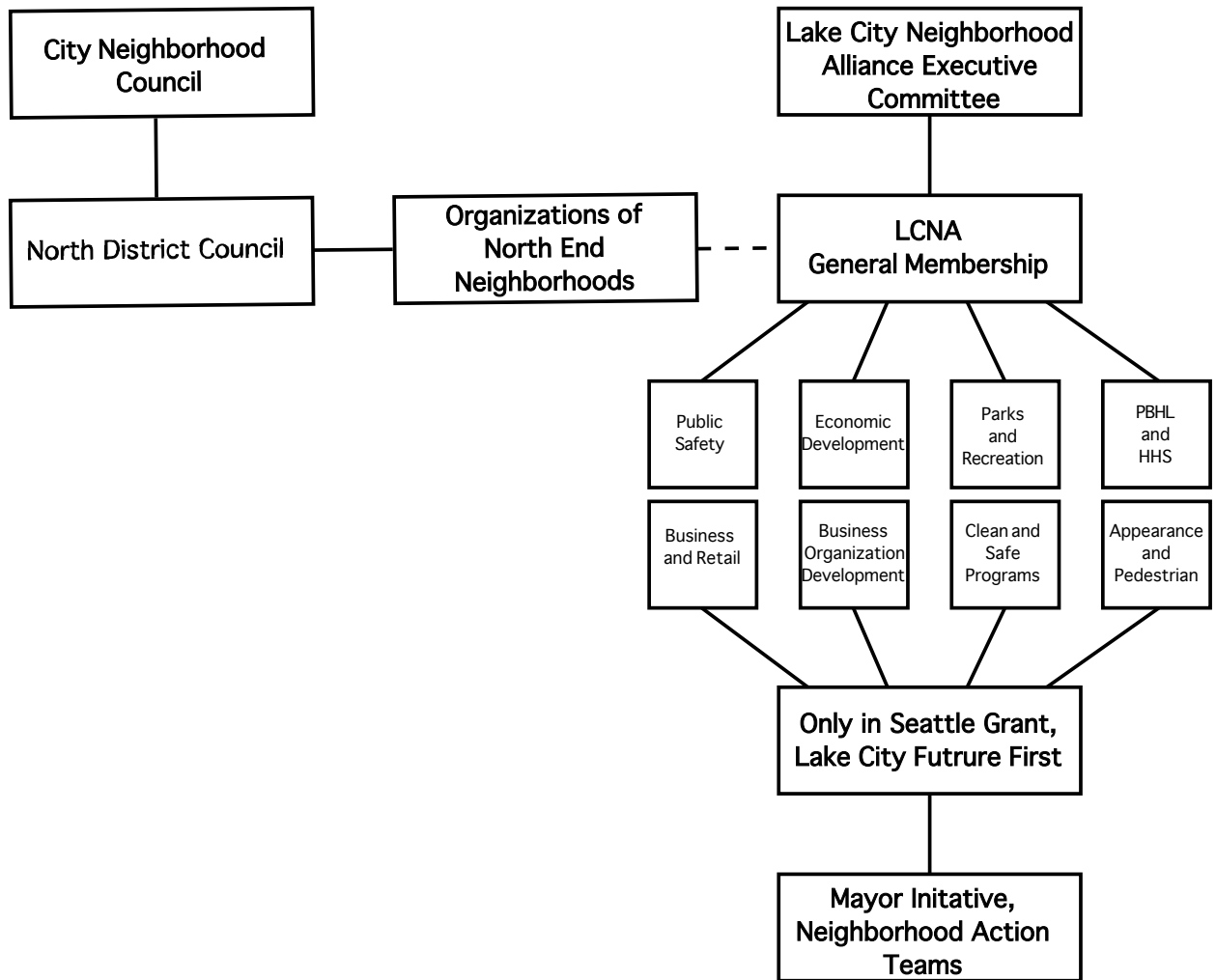


Figure 5- The internal structure to be developed as the recognized decision-making unit of the neighborhood by the city and other investors.

Source: author

The prioritization of the community to focus on the economic development and the internal structure of Lake City, guided by the city and consultants has removed the residents from the initial concerns. The strategic talks have prevented the residents from taking back the streets through local events, pushing them back into their homes

until Lake City has been granted permission to receive additional funding, generated from within, to start to address their initial concerns stated in the open letter to the Mayor. The singular focus on economic development, without deploying relationship building outputs, will further isolate residents and the lack of connection to the urban core will be exaggerated. As one resident describes it, “the city is missing the links and missing pieces needed to help Lake City. The strong push on increasing capital in the business district does not allow for the natural vibe of Lake City.” Many residents were hopeful with the election year, that Lake City had leverage as a priority neighborhood, but recent decisions on the Parks Legacy Plan and Health and Human Services resource allocation in the South End of Seattle suggest otherwise.¹⁸

Social capacity: From the service provider perspective, their role in community planning is to “help facilitate people connecting to each other and speaking up at community meetings for the voices that are not present.” At times this can be difficult because service providers struggle with justifying “giving up 2 hours of helping people to attending meetings.” There was a point in modern Lake City history where social service providers were not allowed to participate because they were not residents of the neighborhood. The residents’ distrust of the city impacts the ability to find connectors between the other neighborhood groups because, a provider states, “you have to be a homeowner and people don’t realize how we are in Lake City more than our own neighborhoods.” A faith-based provider believes “it’s our job as professionals to

¹⁸ Seattle Parks and Recreation Legacy Plan is a planning process focused on developing a strategic direction for the future of parks, playgrounds and other natural spaces throughout the city.

communicate” how the services provided are meant to enhance the livability of the community.

For this to be successful, there needs to be a connector between the neighborhood leaders and service providers for open communication in both directions, therefore diminishing assumptions and distrust of neighborhood agencies. There is valuable knowledge that service providers can contribute to the community planning process. One faith-based provider said, “community organizers know how to see the roadblocks ahead.” Overall most service providers are aware of the consequences if “outsiders’ of the neighborhood are making all the decisions; the community can feel unbalanced or not family focused.” This is similar to concerns residents have brought up in community meetings, that they felt “some social service providers weren’t sensitive to the neighborhood” and a sense of lack of control of the social dynamics of the urban core was distressing. A focus on integrating social service providers new and old with the rest of the neighborhood is a common objective that both groups can agree upon. The desire is to avoid ‘outsiders’ from making decisions for Lake City that will impact the social dynamic of residents. “In the end people still raise families the same way,” said a faith-based provider. They go on to describe focusing on family-oriented services can be a good tool to rise above ethnicity and income level and unity around common family values.

A ‘geohub¹⁹’ approach has been decided as an example of an external decision to help coordinate providers and city services through family centers to support the

¹⁹ GeoHub model is based on the 2009 Family Resource Center Initiative in San Francisco, which is to coordinate family centers and subcontractors funded to a geographic neighborhood to increase services based on the neighborhoods and population needs.

stabilization of families within distressed neighborhoods. A service provider asks, “why can’t we share things and resources?” it could be very beneficial and help maintain connectors between the different sectors within a neighborhood. Service providers that have worked in other neighborhoods with similar concerns as modern Lake City have said, “it is not nearly as bad as the 1990s crack epidemic in the South End or the gangs on the west side from 2001-2004.” She goes on to say, “Lake City doesn’t have gang graffiti; it would be simple and straightforward.” The focus “should be on understanding why young aren’t visible in the neighborhood and how to handle the chronic inebriation of white men and women in the urban core.” This connects to the concerns of the residents and the sense of social chaos that is currently dominating the identity of Lake City. Again, there is a lack of effective communication that has increased the perception of bad things happening in Lake City because neighborhood leaders have been spending the past year pointing out the bad things in order to get ‘buy-in’ from the city. So with hot button topics like homelessness, the topic becomes almost forbidden at community meetings.

As the relationship between neighborhood leaders and social service agencies improve, a provider said that it will become easy for the community to “let the experts use their skills to establish rules for their service.” For instance, they go on to say, “there are protocols used at urban rest stops like don’t stand around the building and make an appointment” that help maintain the visual order of the community. Trusting in the expertise of the experts “helps residents accept our presence,” said another provider. Unfortunately “there has been bad blow-back due to badly run facilities by external services” so “it is my job to follow up on complaints and make sure the incident is

resolved and ask the community member to be involved,” said a housing advocate. For providers, “if people have places to go for resources and services there will be less to complain about.”

Response

LCNA started at kitchen and dinner tables because of the perceived imbalance of low-income renters and social service providers contributing to the chaotic urban core of Lake City. The heart of the community has not been a place for families, rather it was a location where negative emotions festered. As a long-term resident describes it, “there is a lot of emotion in the North End and resilience only happens when people get to know each other.” The different neighborhood association group e-mail lists helped establish initial connections between the sub-communities. “The Internet is helping with neighborhood email lists about different incidents that occur in Lake City, but it also makes people aware of the negative behavior that makes people feel not safe,” said a Cedar Park resident. The desire for control and information reached a saturation point where it only reinforced fear throughout the neighborhood. The formation of the LCNA was in response to the chaotic and unsafe atmosphere that was beginning to take over the urban core. It is also a place for residents to plug in and ‘put in the elbow grease’ to improve the neighborhood through tangible projects. The maturation of LCNA required a lot of volunteer hours and personal money to finance office supplies in order to reach the point of receiving a response from Mayor McGinn to declare that ‘attention must be paid.’ “Some people moved on, some will stay, but we want to get multiple perspectives of the urban core needs at the table,” said a LCNA member.

From the elevated leadership of LCNA and the restructuring of the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce, some homeless service providers have been shifted to shadows like a bad guy. The fear of more homeless people being drawn to Lake City for services resulted in a response of blocking potential service sites and challenging

building permits for homeless veteran housing buildings. The isolation of segments of social services left them 'with nowhere to go to for processing thoughts,' said a homeless service provider. The initial blocking response of neighborhood groups split the priority of homeless services on public relations and then services for their clients. The NATs from the Mayor's Initiative helped bridge the communication between different neighborhood groups to establish the trust again in the community. Face-to-face interactions between providers and the neighborhood groups helped establish mutual respect and identification of roles in addressing the direction of the re-visioning of Lake City. The addition of service providers to the community is relatively new compared to the history of self-reliance that was established before the annexation to Seattle that residents remain proud of.

From the other perspective, those who were not a part of the alliance were "unsure of the role of LCNA and government in facilitating the transition of Lake City's identity" because of the lack of inclusion in the initial meetings that determined the decision-making processes currently being used by the internal structure. There were a "lots of judgments without being informed," said a service provider, "I know it is out of fear, [which is why] I tried to be involved in the neighborhood and attend meetings, but I have so many demands that I just can't get to everything." He ends repeating multiple times, "I try and will continue to try" to be a part of the community. A communication barrier that is still being addressed is what information do the residents have a right to know about service providers. One provider commented that "I can't share all my information because of Health Insurance Portability Accountability laws, I'm not withholding information to be malicious." He then ponders out loud and asked, "how

would people like it if I put their personal information out to the public to read like a card, I don't think they would like that very much.”

The Ripple Effect of the Community Visioning Process: The residents of Lake City feel they are forgotten, which stems from the history of neglect since the annexation. The “process [of urban planning] in Lake City is like the process in Seattle,” one resident continues to say, “we feel like we are giving input, but the decision is already made and our comments are an after-thought.” This explains why the community is responsive to the Pierre Visioning Process and the various community-oriented design projects that have taken off. Overall, the projects focused on how the Pierre developments can transform the community to be family-focused and select out ‘bad’ residents through urban design elements. These designs gave a voice through the design of process, but it also magnified what Lake City did not have compared to other neighborhoods. For some it was hard to continually participate and make the same comments for all the projects because, said a participant, “there was a level of tokenism that wasn't being addressed.” After the first few months of community meetings it had become clear that the same neighborhood leaders attended and identified the urban core and 33rd Avenue as the source of negativity, most “didn't realize how diverse the population is in Lake City and that the neighborhood has changed.” With the neighborhood leadership left to grapple with the demographic and value changes in Lake City, the neighborhood associations reacted by prioritizing the input of homeowners over renters, because of the instable nature of renters due to financial hardship or college students.

The benefit of having the university re-visioning studios focus on the Pierre Development is that it generated a sense of pride and energy of hope that things will get better. The population that responded by actively participating in the community-design and planning processes was that of young families or retired residents. It was commonly noted in meetings that the “people that want to make change are white and not of color,” which some residents found “ironic because it was very diverse [population] in Lake City even in 1995.” There has been little external guide or tools provided to neighborhood leaders to think how to reorient the community-oriented planning process to be more inclusive. Instead, the lack of the diversity was noted on the meeting minutes as an action item and then the visioning process continued on from the perspective of those who self-selected to participate. As the university projects combined the visions of the Pierre’s with the neighborhood leaders there was a general reaction that the physical environment of the neighborhood felt better because the focus of reviving the community center as the true core of the Lake City. It is unclear if it as a result of the Neighborhood Action Teams or the Visioning Process or if it a placebo effect because relationships were creating networks within the sub-communities.

The response of Lake City to the segmentation of Seattle has been to re-establish the importance of relationships depending on the connectors within community to keep track the flow of information. A city worker describes the City Seattle as “getting smaller and smaller while the neighborhoods get bigger and bigger...this blurs the unique identity of people in the neighborhoods.” External infrastructure priorities of the city have shifted from the ‘city of neighborhoods’ towards generating economic growth in the HUB urban villages. The goal of the HUB urban villages located in a cluster of

neighborhoods has shifted the management of the everyday context and neighborhood identity onto the residents. “The scary part is that people are representing and advocating for things that may not be true,” stated a social provider, and in Lake City “some of those representatives have misconceptions of what groups really want or need.” Even the few, she continued, “people of color who do find time to periodically participate are burdened with the additional burden that their individual opinions are representative for everyone and that is not always true.” This means there can be a downside to community-oriented planning, especially when there is a sense of urgency to “have your voice heard now, the time is now,” as stated by city workers.

The impact of urban design and planning decisions made in moments of high stress and fear will be built over large spans of time (10 years or more) in the form of defensive space that further segments the Lake City neighborhood. In reality things have to happen fast, and it takes time to get people up to date on issues. The lack of continuity between making a decision without truly being informed comes at the sacrifice of integrated diversity, balance (renters vs. home owners, middle vs. low-income) and community inclusion.

The urgency to wholeheartedly participate in all the community-oriented urban design and planning projects and NAT meetings has had two outcomes in Lake City. First, the sense of desire for control of internal decisions regarding the direction and identity of Lake City was heightened, thus maintaining the value of being a self-reliant community through elbow grease. But, second, the high amount of concurrent projects contributed to the chaos already present in Lake City. Since the conception of Lake City, the character of the neighborhood has always had a sense of transition and

uncertainty that was expressed differently in each historical era. The multiple identities held within the neighborhood can be described as a package, making it difficult to describe Lake City in the singular as the community-oriented projects expect the residents to do.²⁰ For this neighborhood, there are multiple ways to describe the identity of Lake City that are all correct. It just depending on the situation, one fraction of the identity is expressed at one time. Without the understanding of the operative dynamics of Lake City, this ‘leaving policy makers not informed’ as to what is the ‘best-practice’ of urban design framework for Lake City, said a service provider. He goes on to say that it is in a time that it is increasingly important “to hear what different residents think.” The barrier to address in city planning is “to figure out the timeline restrain” that community-oriented urban and design planning.

Efforts to tame the chaos: Whose job is it to manage diversity? One of the main responses to the Pierre Visioning Project has been to seek balance of the number of low-income and extremely poor residents. The social cues of seeing the range of income levels and abilities has been attributed to the lack of physical development in the urban core, besides more large apartment complexes. The unspoken question the internal developers and the neighborhood leaders are trying to address is ‘whose responsibility is it to manage diversity?’ Defining diversity is not the point of the different projects occurring Lake City, rather it is probing if the community realizes how diverse the population is culturally and in income levels. Then, comes the question of inquiring

²⁰ Autopoiesis a term used by biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela to describe the meaning of creation or refers to system capable of reproduces. The concept of autopoiesis as it relates to the package of lake city will be described further in the finding section.

what are the next steps to determine 'how' much diversity does the community feels comfortable with in the urban core.

Since the community was going through multiple community planning exercises to discuss the future development of the Lake City urban core, a grant was submitted by the LCNA to the American Planning Association (APA) to host a series of 'Coffee Talks' about the urban planning process. The topical areas ranged from pedestrian safety environments, good urban design, urban planning and business improvement areas, and density, diversity and demographics. Faculty and volunteer APA guest speakers who have a range of professional experience in urban planning in the for-profit and non-profit realm hosted the series. A common theme that was brought up by the guest speakers was to "image the Lake City you want to have and set the price there now to draw in the residents you" want in the neighborhood. Overall, the 'Coffee Talks' were well attended by the same demographic of residents: white, older and/or young family homeowners. The diversity and demographic 'Coffee Talk' was not as well attended and residents expressed their concern with how it engaged "with ethnic people and thought that maybe if they made food we can understand their culture." The intention of this session was to inform residents of the demographic changes in Lake City by hosting social service providers' to talk about their community building work with low-income residents. Despite the best efforts to avoiding talking about 'what is diversity', residents inquired how to interact with different cultures. The host of the talk was not prepared to facilitate a discussion about embracing diversity; therefore many comments were focused on using food prepared by residents from different cultures as a tool to get to know each other and the different cultures in the community.

What was missing from the Lake City visioning discussions and coffee talks was the need for individual relationships outside community meetings and grounded in everyday context. The urban core is the “interface between the different income levels and finding a purposeful way to engage and really connect with the socio-economic disadvantaged populations,” pointed out a service provider. The lack of engagement with social service providers and low-income residents has stumped the ability of the neighborhood leaders to build capacity beyond homeowner residents. During the mental map exercise led by faculty and university students, a provider said that “we got overlooked, we serve so many families and never got asked [anything]. The students, at first, reported North Seattle Family Center (NSFC) as an empty building in one of their community reports, they didn’t come into the court” to confirm who occupied the building.

After the initial mental mapping reports were submitted and presented to the community for the Pierre Visioning Process, the faculty again approached the NSFC; “to get input from the clients we serve,” noted a provider. “The report addendum did not reflect the comments of the focus group even after participating in the mental map exercise” at a smaller scale on NSFC site. By not having all stakeholders, resident or nonresident and homeowner or renters, at the initial conversations about the visioning process of Lake City, the development of connector between the different subgroups did not emerge. Those left out in the beginning stages of the community-oriented planning and design process remain feeling like guests whose voices are secondary to the priorities that have already been identified in the NAT groups and Pierre visioning projects.

The Statement of Legislative Intent adopted by City Council ordered a Needs Assessment of Lake City and to identify the gaps in services in the North End. For the summer of 2013, a needs assessment was completed by the Department of Parks and Recreation through POELs and surveys that focused on resident input on the needs of the community. The Lake City Community Center run by the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce was the focal point for increasing the services in Lake City. With minimum input from social service providers and traditional at-risk populations, the recommendations were similar to those seen in the NAT groups, which was for more services for seniors and teens. There was a missed opportunity to talk about why the Lake City Community Center is underused and non-white residents were not frequent users of the recreation services that were offered.

Service providers are able to provide the details from their experience of working with the populations of concern that can close the gaps in services not mentioned in the NAT community action plan and urban design framework. A provider emphasized the “need for focus not only on activities for fun, but on youth leadership development and job opportunities within Lake City.” A resident and provider said “we need a college or vocational school to link between UW-Seattle and UW-Bothell...just some sort of training center in Lake City to prepare folks with skill-training and job creation.” Another provider added “there needs to be more affordable childcare and head-start programs” to prepare the next generation for job stability. “We need to do something now before gangs do become a problem in Lake City,” said a concerned housing advocate.

There is some concern with social providers that have been a part of Lake City for a long time that external sources will come in with mismatching services or doubling

services already offered in Lake City. So despite services being added to the North End, the gap of needs of service is not closed. “A half a year ago I would hear from outside service providers ever so often. Now they are knocking on the door all the time to get things from our families and our families get nothing in return,” said a service provider. It has become evident to neighborhood leaders that “they can’t do everything for everyone’s wants” and to be inclusionary, a librarian said “the community can’t just rely on meetings.” Other important areas to improve on “are to have more service providers and recreation leaders that are not white.” A provider goes on to say that “it is important that providers look like the youth that residents are worried about in the urban core.”

For providers, the question is not if there is an imbalance of low-income housing to market housing. “Housing solves problems for people,” said a housing advocate. A community builder said “there is no network of safety nets in Lake City,” so low-income residents “do not have a way to express themselves” in time of need or to get the resources they need to claim some stability. “There is a need to help address substance abuse in Lake City with services such as treatment and outreach,” said a city employee. “What really has to happen is that the city needs to pony up the money, but they don’t get it up here,” said a social service provider. Without the stable housing options for low-income families, offering programs geared towards these kids will only focus on their primordial needs of housing and food and not build in additional skills like educational opportunities and leadership development. Once housing is settled, “programs can be geared towards non-white youth paired with parental case-managers to guide life-trajectory choices,” said social provider. A way to create a connection between the NAT

group and the needs of low-income residents is to ensure that the urban core is a place of acceptance and creativity, welcoming to all youth as they create their identities.

Cohesion of Community: There is a strong desire for the community to feel connected to each other, to develop social environments that make residents feel proud and like they belong to the Lake City neighborhood. Before modern Lake City history, there was a period where residents were embarrassed to claim living in the neighborhood and elected to only use the name of the sub-communities (e.g. Olympic Park, Cedar Park). For the newly established trust in the city to continue into the next generation of Lake City residents there needs to be highly visible tangible outputs in the community in a short period of time. A resident said, “the basketball court on 33rd Avenue is great, but it does not impact the community enough, there need to be something more.” This is important because the lack of resources pushes residents back into their homes by “retracting instead of reaching out for help,” said long-term resident.

The fear of people not participating because of apathy has increased the focus of the community on small social events. A local business owner said, “we need to weave our lives through activities, dances, farmers markets, yoga and gardening.” They go on to say, “we felt the transition, it shifted the vibe of the community.” The addition of apartments to the urban core of the neighborhood changed the social focus from connectedness to retracting and getting by. “Look, we are not Broadmoor, a gated community... I get experiences in Lake City,” said a resident. Lake City is a big neighborhood not connected to the business district and, without specific attention paid to connecting the social environment to the physical changes proposed in the Visioning Project, the personality of Lake City will remain chaotic. “I think it will be the same

socially even with new physical attributes in the urban core,” said a resident. People will get involved if there are small roles or activities to participate that do not require a lot of time. An older resident commented that ‘I get more emails about block watch, but really just emails. We need to have more activity to be seen on the streets.’”

It is the belief of the neighborhood leaders that the social dynamic can be changed in the urban core if the ‘right’ people are on the sidewalks that follow the newly established code of conduct. But there are other residents who still struggle to develop relationships in their micro-communities. One resident questions, “how I am supposed to spread the word about block watches and trash pick-ups if my neighbor is the drug dealer or the known shooter?” She continues to describe, “people usually come to exchange [for drugs] in our neighborhood.” The goal of this micro-neighborhood group is to focus on trash pick-ups and maintenance of blackberry bushes on city property. But, a resident noted, “it is hard to mobilize when wheelchair accessibility and unsafe streets prevent participation.” She goes on to say that “this is a hard neighborhood to mobilize, people don’t have access to computers and we need help, not just complaints.” Another resident points out that “people who live in Little Brook don’t feel empowered, but instead, feel embarrassed they don’t have money to buy a home or have time to participate” in community meetings. A provider notes, “what do you do with the bad neighbors?” She answered herself, “more punishment [is the typical recommendation, but] it still won’t change the bad neighbor or make the community better.” There have been different neighborhood approaches used to respond to the needs of the residents that may be an initial step to help with these issues. The provider points out that Lake City has traditionally been known as being a faith-based community

and churches are still one of the larger catalysts for change in the community.²¹ The faith-based community has focused efforts on homeless temporary shelters, tutoring, and English as a second language classes.

The question the neighborhood leaders are wrestling with is to what extent they depend on the external resources to stabilize. A resident said, “after gaining legislative support, do we play by the city rules or just take the long road and be open to critics.” The unsaid fear is that Lake City will be swallowed by downtown, which could lead to loss of the neighborhood’s self-reliance and ability to internally address their own issues. Eventually the “city will force values on Lake City, like housing priorities and people are here already because of low-income housing,” said a resident, “not because they want to live here.” Another issue associated with low-income housing that residents are concerned with is establishing a values system that speaks across ethnic groups.

Diversity is still connected to low-income housing and people are still struggling with it now and how to accept it as an asset to the urban planning process and development of Lake City. A city worker said, “some residents are trying to work out issues, but the majority does support diversity.” One resident questions, “what does diversity mean?” He goes on to wonder what is meant by the recommendation to support diversity that isn’t superficial. The struggle is avoiding “the ornamentation of diversity so that it is not only celebratory because that doesn’t work in the everyday context and we are not getting down to the real issues,” said a resident. Diversity is a crucial factor in any urbanizing city, and the lack of attention by the city and the

²¹ In the initial stages of LCNA, the organization did seek council in the church community as to how to move forward with development of the by-laws of the alliance and working with non-residential stakeholders.

visioning project to define what diversity means to Lake City may negatively impact future the emergence of connectors. For some residents it is believed that “diversity works against Lake City right now because we become more divided into subgroups, which leads to a future of fracture if we don’t find common values to make individual connections.” To other residents, “diversity influences Lake City negatively” because there has been little facilitation from the city how to start finding common ground to build up during the Pierre Visioning Process.” The burden of unifying the different sub-groups within Lake City has been left to the residents who have already been volunteering their time to attend urban design and planning meetings for the past two years.

With little external guidance, the ethnic population has been shifted to the shadows because the process of community-oriented urban planning has not been tailored to the demographic needs of Lake City. A resident said, “Lake City would be more interesting if diversity was more present in storefronts and community activities.” The community “has to be patient, maybe its because I’m into natural restoration,” said a resident who have been involved with the community for over 10 years. She goes on to say that “the use of youth activities and community gardens will help restore Lake City.” Another resident said, “we are not there yet, we don’t know how to think about diversity [as assets].” With the rapidly changing population demographics and housing developments neighborhood leaders will be dealing with diversity sooner rather than later. “[Maybe its because] white people are realizing they are no longer in power; I’m not sure. Or maybe it is just the good ol’ boys cling to the power or what power they still have in Lake City,” said a government worker.

The focus on neighborhood growth by enhancing the neighborhoods is appealing by making the Lake City core a satellite business district off Northgate, with the development of multi-purpose building and family style apartments diverted from the attention of the residents to the far future. The dependence on the internal structure of Lake City to be the decision-making body transforms the neighborhood from being multi-dimensional to singularly focused on middle-class families. A housing advocate describes the new neighborhood leaders as “having a disconnect between six-pack Joe and trying to bring up the community over the next 15 years to look like Ballard through the Pierre Visioning Project and NAT groups. [Lake City] has had to prove that their neighborhood is out-of-balance through public meetings” as long as external stakeholders are only focused on economic development. From the NAT groups and LCNA meetings, external stakeholders have recommended the development of the internal structure of Lake City similar to the U-District and Capitol Hill Light rail projects. As mentioned in the social dynamic session, this group is responsible for keeping track of all the concurrent projects and informing the residents. The concern of the internal stakeholder group on the city perspective and social services agencies is the manner in which information is made available when a community decision is made—it cannot continue to be exclusive.

The singular focus on balance now through the urban design framework and Pierre Visioning Projects before Lake City has limited in-depth conversations of the future of the neighborhood as it gentrifies. The residents’ reaction to limit services in the neighborhood may slow down the number of vulnerable populations, but it may lead to a faster rate of gentrification. Part of the reason Lake City does not look like Ballard or

Fremont is because neighborhood leaders believed in the ‘Lake City Way.’ A resident said, “we have always bucked and did things our own way [that makes sense for the community] and are willing to be open to critics.” Now that the neighborhood leaders are working within the same beliefs of the city, more external community development tools are being incorporated to address local issues. This is similar to what happened in 1995-1999 comprehensive plan meetings. After the community followed the leadership of the city, 15 years later unsatisfied residents have an under-development urban core that was based on the adopted 1999 comprehensive plan.

There are some residents who still do not believe the NAT groups will work at addressing the current needs of Lake City. “The city can care less, they have their plan and are going with it,” said a skeptical resident. She goes on to describe the process, “just look at the sculpture potatoes, they are blah just like Lake City is blah.” There is a response of uncertainty as to how the internal structure of Lake City will address polarizing topics. One social provider suggested the formation of advisory groups of locals to forge experience-based relationships. “Its ok if the members are polar opposites, that is how crucial dialogues occur that are needed to move Lake City community forward,” said another provider. There are opportunities for education and discourse for residents to ask questions and be informed about social services. A resident commented, “I’m not sure why new residents were surprised Lake City is not like those other neighborhoods.” A long-term provider added that “the goal is to have an increase in compassion and a decrease in lack of education” when selecting physical and social attributes to be added to the community. Mending the broken connections and creating new ones will be the difference as residents claim back the urban core.

FOCAL CASE STUDY-33RD AVENUE

In Lake City, when a resident refers to the area called '33rd Avenue', it is common knowledge that it is the micro-community that houses predominantly low-income to extreme poverty families and individuals. It is located near the urban core, just one block east of Lake City Way and slightly north of 125th Street. The residents living on this street range in ethnicity, age, family structure, and income level. The community of 33rd Avenue runs the length of one city block. Despite being small in physical size, this community consumes large portions of the community-oriented urban design and planning conversations. During the 1995-1999 comprehensive plans, the residents recruited low-income housing into Lake City to prevent the neighborhood from gentrifying and becoming "yippified." Now the concern is that the micro-neighborhood will regionally draw low-income families and homeless for services, but "Lake City cannot support it," said a newer resident. Although the 'call to action' to the Mayor by LCNA was the Fire Station #39 temporary shelter, the underlying concerns were that it would transform another portion of the core in the manner as 33rd Avenue.

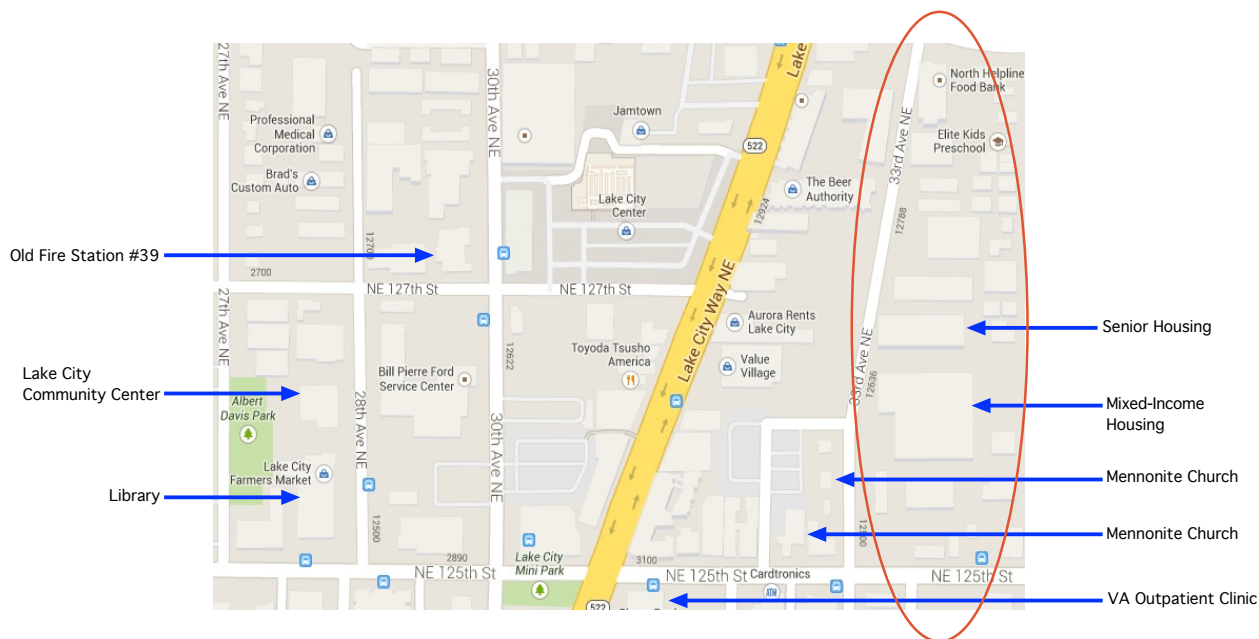


Image 20- The location of 33rd Avenue micro-community within the urban core and its proximity to Fire Station #39.

Source: Map of 33rd Avenue, Lake City, Google Maps (2014)

The fear of the urban core becoming “run-down” because more low-income residents were moving into the neighborhood was apparent in many of the local actions plans to claim back the parks. It was also a topic often brought up in the various work group meetings: NAT workgroup, the Pierre Visioning Project and Urban Design Framework. There is a feedback loop between the decisions to improve the urban core and the displaced negative attributes that shifted to the 33rd Avenue micro-community. With limited representation of 33rd residents or any low-income residents included on the current internal structure decision-making body, there is little feedback on the impact of these decisions. The lack of relationships to connect neighborhood leaders to low-income residents does not put a face on or humanize the perceived negative source. Rather, the blame for increased rates of crime and poor physical environment is placed on low-income residents instead of being considered within the context of the

neighborhood dynamics that contribute to the instability of Lake City families and individuals.

Physical Elements

The 33rd Avenue micro-community is located on a street the length of one city block just east from Lake City Way. At the south end of the block, closest to 125th Street and on the east corner, there is a metal-chained fenced car escort lot as well as the Department of Parks and Recreation owned building, occupied by staff and tenants. This building has been identified as a future site to be converted into a park (timeline unknown). Continuing north, a parking lot separates the apartment complex and the new Seattle Housing Authority Building (Lake City Court opened in 2012), which is an 86-unit, mixed-income complex that has a playground in front of the entrance and a community garden. There is a service street that separates Lake City Court from Lake City House-- a Seattle Housing Authority Building for low-income seniors that is a medium-size building with 113 one-bedroom apartments.



Image 21- Service road that separates Lake City House and Lake City Court that is owned by SHA.
Source: author, 2013

Next to the senior housing is an empty office building, followed by a vacated lot that used to be the local pool. The North End Helpline is adjacent to the row of vacant buildings that also co-locates with the Rotary Club and McDermott Place (opened in 2009). Fred Meyer is located perpendicular to 33rd Avenue and 127th Street.



Image 22- Street view of 33rd Avenue from 125th Street looking north towards 130th Street.

Source: author, 2013

The west side of 33rd Avenue does not have as many physical attributes, but there are spaces that have been described as negative or void by residents. Starting on the north end near the Fred Meyers at 137th street, there is small patch of undeveloped land the size of a driveway and then the rear parking garage entrance to the large apartment complex. There is a large-scale rental service of industrial equipment that is lined by a metal-chained fence. In front of the metal fence is a partial day lighted-creek (Little Brook creek), where residents have identified negative behavior such as drug use.²² There is also a street lamp and a brick ledge at the base of the metal fence that is

²² See Appendix-D for letter from resident Lake City House observations.

directly across the street from the Senior Housing and that is often used as a smoking area.



Image 23- View of informal sitting area near lamppost and ecofriendly porous sidewalk.

Source: author, 2013

The Value Village parking lot ramp is a huge concrete wall that is periodically marked with graffiti. On the other side of the driveway is a vacant small house that was, until recently, a local coffee shop. On the south side of the small house is God's Lil' Anchor homeless day shelter and then a local dentist office at the west corner near 125th Street.

As mentioned earlier in the case study, some of the housing growth on 33rd with homeless veteran services has been a purposeful effort to connect services and

relationship opportunities within walking range. McDermott Place is a housing organization opened in 2009 that has housed at least 20 local Lake City homeless individuals. “We held an open house to inform the community of the services our organization offers,” said employee. “The goal is that we are serving the neediest of the needy and helping not to bleed the system by stabilizing this population”; he goes on, “we have a low eviction rate that I am very proud of.” On the south end of 33rd Avenue, where God’s Lil’ Anchor is currently located, is the future development of Valor apartments: the proposal is for 20 apartments run by mental health services for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. On the bottom level will be the day shelter for homeless (the same one as before--God’s Little anchor). This was a point of tension with the residents because there was fear that the development of Valor apartments would make 33rd a regional draw for more homeless who would misbehave in the urban core. The “Valor apartments are symbolic of the city making decisions for us like they have done before in the past,” said an older resident. Residents made it harder to move forward on other collaborative projects between residents and social providers by filing for a protest petition during the Urban Design Review.

The development of the apartment complex was the trigger for many neighborhood leaders to get involved with controlling what is being built in the core. “The community was lied to and misinformed about the purpose of the project,” felt one resident. There were external social organizations saying that “low income will prevail and will be provided” for, that their focus will be to “provide the community a role to express their concerns, be involved, educate them and give them a role to help”; he continues saying “Lake City will get there.”

The Pierre Visioning Project was used to facilitate conversation with residents to re-vision an urban core that represented Lake City. From the conversations the port-a-potty located at the Mini Park at 125th Street and Lake City Way was proposed to be moved to 33rd Avenue. On Lake City Live, a local website run by LCNA, the community was surveyed where the port-a-potty should be located. It can be assumed that those who answered the survey were neighborhood leaders or residents who are members of a neighborhood association that is represented by the alliance. The port-a-potty is known to have negative behaviors associated with it, and proposing to relocate it to 33rd Avenue is a clear example of the lack of awareness on social impact. It shows disregard for those living in low-income housing and homeless individuals trying to stabilize their lives. This also highlights the skills learned from the community visioning process of trying to address the issue by simply moving it elsewhere in the community, rather than addressing the core issue.

As the community-oriented planning discussion continued for over a year and more university projects were brought into the community, the projected real estate price of Lake City property started to increase.²³ One of the local coffee shops on 33rd Avenue decided to relocate to Fremont. The owner said, “the rent doubled in price and it wasn’t affordable.” It was an unfortunate loss to the 33rd micro-community because the owner provided cheap coffee and a space to gather where most residents felt comfortable. Some of the older youth from this community would pull weeds or put up flyers in exchange for free drinks. The coffee shop location has been vacant since June 2013 and remains empty a year later. A local homeless individual described the “space

²³ Other storefront that relocated due to rent increase were: coffee shop, sandwich shop, bakery, and barbershop that residents on 33rd frequented.

as a void, people never stay there”; she goes on saying that “there are some spaces that are just void and others that are naturally in huge demand, like my corner.” Other behaviors have started to fill the vacant building that has elevated the sense of lack of safety for residents of 33rd Avenue.



Image 24- The area behind the vacated business (coffee shop) started to become a dumping ground and source of other negative behavior.
Source: author, 2013

The community builder noted how some residents are worried about their kids in the morning and evening playing near the playground.²⁴

Waves of graffiti started to appear on the large concrete wall and ramp to Value Village. A homeless resident said, “we get this graffiti that comes and goes, this is the

²⁴ Jane Jacobs note: Connect that vacated lots are like parks; they absorb the emotions and behaviors of their borders.

mini ghetto corner but I feel safe here.” The ramp is connected to the parking lot of the Mennonite Church and is known as ‘drunk corner’. There are periods of time where there is a lot of trash because it is used as a dump spot.

There are some attempts by Lake City’s outdoor neighbors to maintain orderliness by using plastic bags to hold beer cans. The negative impact is a bad smell because it is used as a bathroom and for other negative behaviors. When individuals use the ramp from the parking lot towards Value Village they are sometimes hassled by a group of men standing at the top of the platform. Yet, for some outdoor residents it is a safe space to sleep compared to other locations. One homeless person describes how she contributes to the safety of residents from 33rd Avenue who use the ramp. She said, “I try to keep the ramp safe for women, there are lots of refugees and immigrants that aren’t safe, I have to tell the men not to harm them.”

During the spring of 2013 the parking lot had campers that were semi-permanently parked and where drug exchanges occurred. One NAT meeting was at the Mennonite church, where a government official got to experience the visual cues, sounds, and smells found when one comes to this micro-community for services. The point of the meeting was to get feedback from service providers and outdoor residents about the Pierre Development. Most of the providers left the meeting unsure of the purpose of the project. One Lake City outdoor neighborhood person’s comments were on the proposed viewing platforms at Thornton creek, below Victoria Heights by an urban design student-- “are we zoo animals? So they can look down on us, ---- that!” The day after the meeting, the campers were removed from the parking lot.

There have been positive efforts by the 33rd Avenue Community to stabilize their community. One of the long-standing neighborhood associations submitted and received grants to install a permeable sidewalk and French inspired street lamps on the west side of 33rd Avenue. This also included the addition of minimal landscaping along side the sidewalks. The sidewalk installation was later celebrated by a bike parade and speech by a Mayor representative. On the new sidewalk side of the street a trash can was added next to a lamppost that has adjacent brickwork, which resembled a seating area. The residents, from both housing complexes, who participated in the knitting club created temporary art to decorate the service road between the two complexes.²⁵

Social Dynamic

An outdoor neighbor said, “14 years ago Lake City was slammed with homeless and in recent years there has been more influx of homeless.” She continues, “we can’t balance them out and teach them to behave in the community... they are mainly white males.” A local storeowner said, “people need to include each other in developing communication, we are more linked than people realize.” And then goes on to say, “meaning, if people hate the drunks, then go after the mini marts selling single serving alcoholic drinks or if you chase away the homeless then we will start to see the gangs members from Little Brook area.” The Lions Club tries to maintain the visual cleanness of 33rd micro-community through graffiti washouts and needle clean ups. “We don’t balance out because they don’t give us no where to sit...[the sitting features are] gone

²⁵ Different social services at Lake City House and Lake City Court contributed to the development of relationships.

from the Mini Park, where the port-a-potty is located, used to be like the Veterans Administrating Hospital plaza with circle sitting”, said an outdoor resident.²⁶

If people only realized that “there is old Lake City in that building (referring to McDermott),” reflected a provider, maybe there would be more compassion for residents of 33rd micro-community. “The social workers at McDermott are not very involved because they are more clinical and less neighborhood focused,” describes a service provider. This is good because individuals are being stabilized and less likely to contribute to the perceived chaos in the urban core, but it also means that the community does not feel a relationship with McDermott Place. For Lake City, there is a need to have face-to-face relationships in the community as a framework to maintain trust among residents and the code of conduct. One employee was “surprised that many people thought that McDermott Place was a shelter and not permanent housing” since there was an open house. Neighborhood leaders being misinformed about services reinforce their decision to re-inform the community.

What residents need to know is that “most of the services are within the building, that people stabilize and use housing as stepping stone to move on to next phase of life,” said an employee. “We try to support the neighborhood by having communication with property owners and police within the micro community and Fred Meyer,” said the worker. As many of the service providers have noted, the “high turnover in staff all the way up to higher management, [creates a] need to reach out and reaffirm the support system. If one of my residents does something illegal, I would support the consequences for their behaviors.” For this agency, they feel like they have positive

²⁶ The removal of sitting features at the mini park was a result of the first wave of ‘cleaning up’ Lake City as mentioned in the HUB section.

support of community with the exception of a few businesses. A local business owner said, “I think the physical environment and different type of businesses and people equalize each other out.” A worker said, “we are the perfect example of good services, we can only do it if people choose to engage and be open minded and check their facts.”

The community builder described the people of the “neighborhood as getting to know each other, which is positive and a major change in this micro-community.” A service provider identified the homeless task force as a source to stay informed about the community. Another example of positive social exchanges was during the summer afternoons, there were moms with strollers meeting at the playground for the free lunch program.²⁷ One of the limiting factors in building community capacity within the new Seattle Housing Authority²⁸ complex is the staff turnover rate.

Since the building has been occupied with residents in 2012, there have been three community builders and a reduction in their office hours.²⁹ “Lake City Court is the fifth Housing and Urban Development Hope VI housing focused on dispersing low-income throughout Seattle. The method was developed to avoid areas from being focally developed into huge complexes to magnify the problems,” said a longstanding community builder. Another provider said, “part of the concept that was we won’t need services we used to provide, but mental illness doesn’t go away.” He goes on to say, “when disbursing low-income residents the city didn’t disburse services like in the South End. For example Holly was huge and had problems, but crime did go down because of

²⁷ Free Lunch Program is supported by a faith-based organization note

²⁸ Lake City Court is not an exclusively low-income building and offers affordable rents residents.

²⁹ Lake City House and Court have an external relationship with NSFC

centralized services.” One provider points out, “people who are criminals can’t maintain jobs, that bumps them down into low income.” She goes on to say “one could be doing both drugs and working, but become less confident to care for yourself and family.”

There was a weird transition when low income families and individuals moved to the North End. “We need the kind of resources of the South End, to do what we do there here in the North End.” Many service providers agree that “without that, [they] don’t know where to tell people to go.” One goes on to say, “if I have a substance problem in Jackson Park normally I would refer him to South Youth Services or etc., but I just send them to NSFC or Shoreline, which only has is only temporary help.” The problem is that there is an influx of income of residents without resources to address their needs. “So why does Lake City have low-income housing, probably because land is available and there are townhouses in the north end,” said a provider.

Lake City Community Council (LCCC): The neighborhood association that does include the 33rd residents has been involved in adding attributes to the micro-community. Even with their success stories, it is still outsiders who are the few individuals making decisions for a population that is not represented in the urban planning decisions. Part of the reason why community builders and service providers support more housing is because “if residents feel its stable, [which, results in them] having time and then the desire to volunteer.” A long term resident said, “new residents don’t understand why 33rd got all the attention, when their needs weren’t being met.” We “need to start with face-to-face meetings of long-term and short-term residents like the father’s day event at Seattle Housing Authority complexes over to community center,” said a provider. It comes down to people meeting each other to get over the fear factor. Families are the

connection most Lake City Residents can unit around. “We all are working for family stability (hard to bring people together) and we need a different way to communicate through contact (liaisons),” said one resident. Social providers pointed out that it is hard to bring people together for meetings that don’t change the quality of life in the everyday context. A provider said, “isolated families just don’t know anybody (immigrant and east coast domestic violence) even people on street don’t connect.” She continues, “for us, the family support magic number is three--support has increased in Lake City because of the number of people.” Even within smaller communities such as “the Somali community there is no support outside that community, the same is true with Latinos,” said a provider.

One neighborhood crime worker describes some of his experiences with recent immigrant families in the North End and the impacts on the social dynamic between family members. A provider said that from their experience, “recent immigrant adults arrive in the United States with a more conservative political point of view such as East African men.” She goes on to say, “the ideology makes sense to them until they are in the States for an extended period of time, slowly becoming more liberal or democratic.” The dynamics in the family are impacted because the children of immigrants and refugees “pick all our bad habits [in American culture],” which causes conflict and stress. The provider said, “their kids are liberal because they figure out the racism by living in the South End. Look, they don’t understand how to use the system, but they do figure out that the system is racist and classist similar to the police being corrupt in their countries.” For her, the stresses placed that engulf these families from living in the North

End are a barrier to participate in community visioning meetings and shows the demand for providers in the neighborhood that from similar backgrounds.

Response

There have been attempts by both social service providers and residents to nurture a sense of compassion in the community by finding ways to integrate the residents of the 33rd Avenue Community. Specifically, the Lake City Community Council has senior residents on the executive committee and works with the Mennonite church to find better ways to communicate within the micro-community and with external stakeholders like the police. One community provider notes that “since folks have gotten to know each other they perceive less issues, not sure if there is truly less issues or people stop asking for help, assuming the first.” Providers desire to convey that “people don’t understand the label low-income, there is oppression connected with term. People internalize the concept so they don’t apply for jobs, a reflection of thinking they are not smart enough or had bad experiences and were not helped, so they don’t apply even if qualified.” So not participating in community meetings is a similar dynamic, “compared with real income folks, it makes it harder to move forward because there is no easy solution.” Therefore, meetings focused on the far future can be difficult because the level of everyday stress living in the neighborhood has impacted their ability to envision the future when right now still needs to be determined.³⁰

A housing worker said that he, “doesn't think there is a housing imbalance, there is positive growth going on in other aspects like the local business.” City employees and

³⁰ A focus group held at LCC to provide input for the Northgate Light Rail in the year 2020 was difficult for residents and youth to discussion. Rather, the discussion was focused on their current concerns such as tutoring, pedestrian safety, and money.

providers “don’t feel the homeless population in Lake City is ‘higher’ compared to other locations, which doesn’t feel like is true compared to downtown.” The worker continues to say, “business owners just fear that the homeless are affecting their business.” A provider said, ‘homelessness is not bad in Lake City comparatively, I’ve done the night count walks, people are just not aware.’”

The community-oriented planning process is being discussed in two different time frames from two different perspectives. The need to feel better right now is impacting urban planning discussion that will be enabled slowly over ten or more years. The studio designs that have stemmed from the Pierre Visioning Process have put a target on certain areas of Lake City. There has been a sense of urgency to address the target issues now, so developers will come in with external money to give the urban core the “face-lift it needs to get dollars spent in Lake City.” The impact of ‘thinking now, not later’ has created a cyclic narrative that is repeated in multiple forms at each community meeting. “There are only so many times I can hear about how out of balance and ignored Lake City is before I start to tune out at meetings,” said a participant. She goes on, “I go to these meetings because I want to do something tangible now for the residents of Lake City, regardless of [social] status.” The cyclic discussion of defending why Lake City needs external money and distrusts the city and social service providers has accelerated rates of burnout. Or, it makes the community meetings exclusive and hard for new community members to participate in because the environment is hostile and the rules of engagement change between meetings.

Without an objectively neutral third party facilitator, that is, not unduly connected to the Pierre’s, multiple conversations are occurring within the same meeting. The

Pierre Visioning Project is focused on what is unique about Lake City, which is from a historical point-of-view of remembering the 'golden days' of the neighborhood. The idea behind preserving the small town, family-first identity is that people will want to move to Lake City and adhering to the code of conduct (value system) of the community. Although the proposed sites to be developed are for family apartments (3-4 bedrooms), homeownership is still the main focus for maintaining the identity of Lake City. The government's focus "is to educate residents to go to meetings and speaking up, and learning how to work with others." A city worker emphasizes the need to "have reasonable solutions and that residents should realize you are not going to get everything and to make concessions." The city's focus is on the economic development of Lake City so it can support the different needs of its residents. Social equity is loosely mentioned at community meetings, but the main focus is on the business district and visual enhancement through the urban design framework.

For residents, concessions have been made regarding moving forward and working with social service providers, but their underlying concern is still why is Lake City selected as a stable neighborhood to take on more low-income and vulnerable populations. A resident questions, "how is the city going to help us have the resources to provide?" Social Providers have a parallel question about the placement of low-income individuals in the North End. One said, "who comes up this idea? Neighborhoods? For refugees, they are not evenly distributed and Lake City [will be] looking like a 'Baby' Rainer' if the resources like the South End are not provided in the North End." Generally, most providers believe that Lake City residents are people who want to help each other and be involved. "They are learning what different forms of

leadership look like and one doesn't have to be home-owner to be neighbor," said a resident. But, as a provider describes it, "if you are scared [of more low-income residents] how is the community supposed to change?" Another provider said, "in twenty years residents are creating their own nightmare if they don't invest now [in youth development and family services]." The concern among providers with the focus of the Pierre Visioning Project and the NAT workgroups is "if the city is moving away from soft services and moving away from cultural to economic stability then the city has removed the visible connection that is especially needed in Lake City." Controlling the social and cultural dynamics will be the internal responsibility of the neighborhood.

The external forces represented by the consultant³¹ are recommending the development of the internal structure of Lake City as the sole decision making body. There is a huge assumption that those on the internal structure represent all residents in Lake City and have the capacity to be inclusive without external support. A city worker said, "If homeowners are smart, they will work as a development association, it helped in Delridge and White Center." He goes on to say, "these places are now changing and will eventually become Columbia City where it is happening." After multiple design charrettes and community presentations regarding the future identity of Lake City, neighborhoods like Kenmore, Bothell and Maple Leaf were mentioned.

A housing advocate said, "residents are so concerned about housing and crime in Lake City and it is not as nasty as High Point." She goes on to describe how, "low-income housing does have more crime, but you have to understand why they have problems." There are behaviors that make it difficult to get jobs because residents are

³¹ Referring to the internal structure that will be developed in 2014 that is funded by the Only in Seattle Grant, Futures First Lake City by the Office of Economic development.

new to country and its customs. Also, some low-income folks work temporary jobs or manual labor jobs that are not flexible to the demands of having a child (e.g. sick days), which often results in individuals having to quit jobs. “So partner up with them, they are not the enemies of the homeowners.” A community builder said, “people that are low-income don’t want to be low-income.” For the community-oriented planning, the question that needs to be addressed to move forward inclusively is “how can you demand first from people if you didn't earn it?” There is consent among providers that the city needs to ‘face the facts’ and disperse services in the North End even though “it will be more expensive upfront, but in the long run it will help deal with problems before they explode.” This way is much like the Pierre Family Visioning Project, Urban Design Framework, and the NAT groups who are trying to address the needs of the urban core now before gentrification claims their community.

5-ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Background

When analyzing the how to interpret the data, it became clear that the same clusters of events impacted the urban core of Lake City through the different historical eras. The events always followed the same pattern with first an arrival of new businesses, then a shift in the physical composition of Lake City, followed by demographic changes in the population, and finally an establishment of codes of conduct. From figure 1 in the introduction, the clusters of events related to the themes of physical elements, social dynamics, and response and were divided by historic points of engagement with the city and/or external stakeholders that resulted in a response at the neighborhood level. It is crucial to note that the focus (of the city and external stakeholders) at each point of engagement was to address future concerns for the neighborhood; yet, the response (of the neighborhood) was to the changes of the past (see figure below). The findings about the historical dynamics of the urban design and planning process addresses the first objective, which was to understand the impacts of neighborhood planning by various stakeholders in the urban core of Lake City.

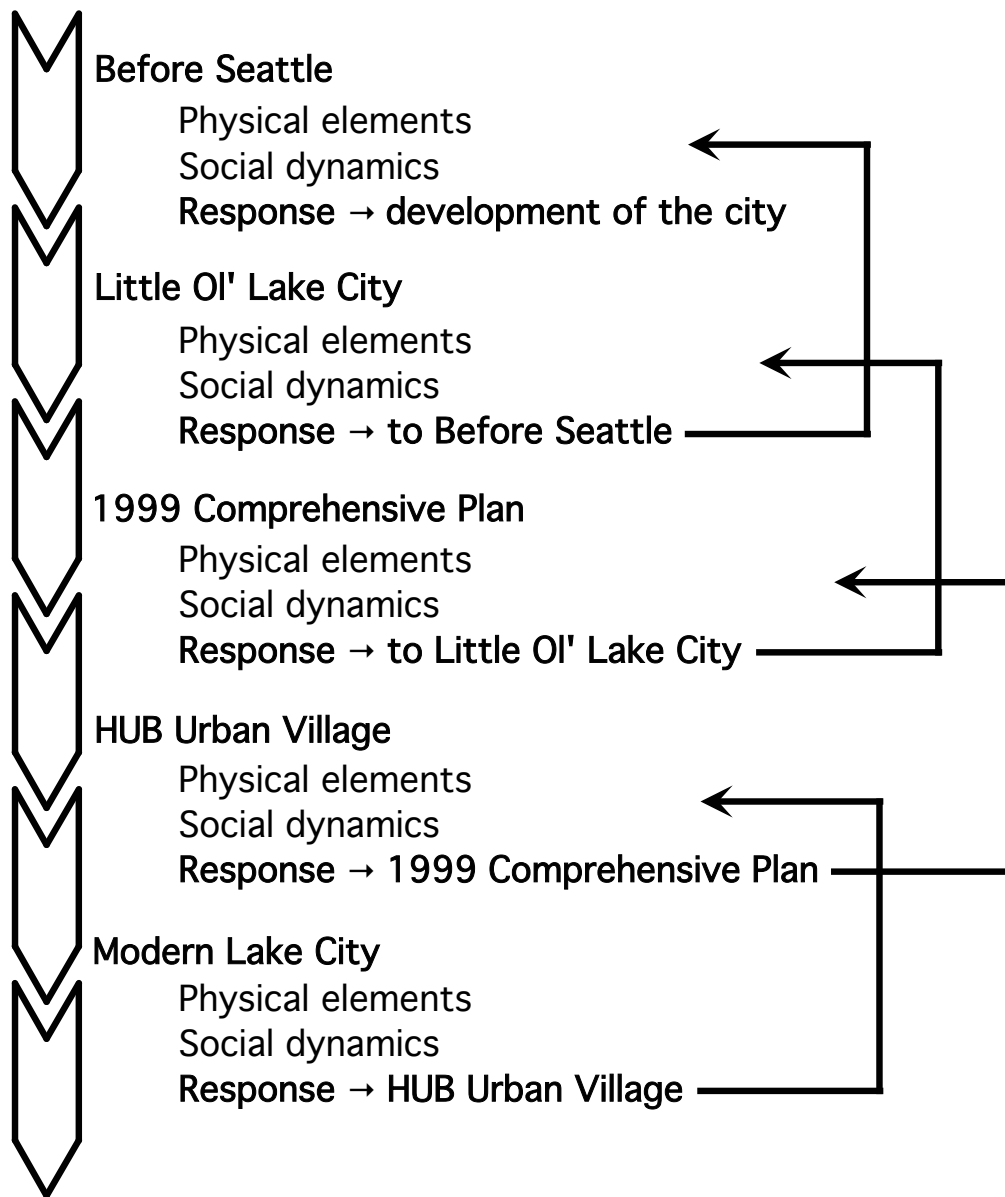


Figure 6- Delayed spiral response impacts urban planning and design for the future.
Source: author, 2014

Using the historical narrative of the community, the pattern that emerged was that a change in the physical elements such as new businesses added or removed and new housing models impacted the social dynamics in the form of demographic shifts in age,

race, family structure and income level. The response to the lack of follow-up by the city or community organizations impacted the organization of the neighborhood (physically and socially). Furthermore, each point of engagement with external stakeholders resulted in a change in the rules of communication and code of conduct, with a direct effect on the consistency in which the city provided resources to Lake City to address the needs of the residents, new and old. As a community in a constant state of transition, the establishment of relationships to stabilize the sense of chaos in the urban core was prioritized. Relationships became the currency used by residents to connect and support each other--in the form of social capacity (e.g. Pioneer Days Parade) and/or to change the physical elements (e.g. community center).

The identity of self-reliance is reinforced at the residents' point of engagement with the community planning process, shedding light on how a community-oriented urban design and planning process affects citizen engagement (objective two). At each historical point, a different version of the Lake City identity emerged and some of the frequent terms residents used to describe the relationship between the city and their neighborhood were: stepchild, dark horse, the others, or the forgotten. Therefore, what was seen in the modern history of the neighborhood was a package of Lake City, which engulfed the multiple historic identities of the neighborhood. Similar to the air molecules within a balloon, from the exterior point of view the balloon appears in a single shape, but the taut pressure of the balloon comes from within, where air molecules are bouncing off each other and the walls to maintain the balloon's shape.

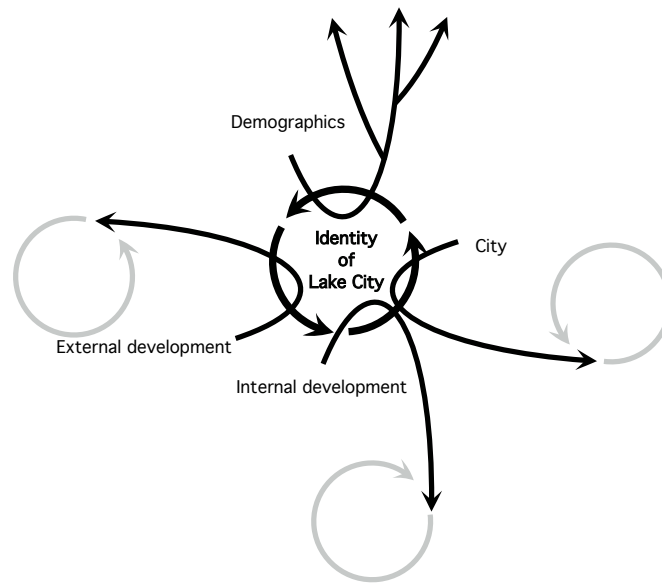


Figure 7- The external and internal forces that place pressure on Lake City.
Source: author, 2014

The package of Lake City

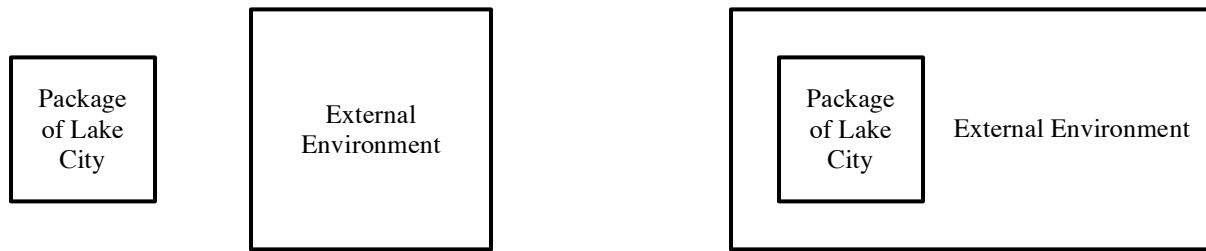
The purpose of describing the internal forces of Lake City was to understand how the self-contained system works within itself (Maturana & Varela, 1979; Mugerauer, 2014).³²

Patterns that occur within the urban core regulate the base state of existence (e.g. behavioral patterns or visual cues). For instance, the concept of being an affordable small town within Seattle has preserved the importance of relationships among residents and business owners to promote a family focused neighborhood. The local activities occurring at the everyday level established the invariant neighborhood patterns that impacted how residents selected to participate in the community (Varela, 1979; DeCerteau, 1984).

³² Autopoietic systems, as described by Maturana and Varela, empirically and theoretically, have been used as the foundation necessary to define, describe, and interpret living systems, which has had major contributions to systems theory, complexity, and dynamic systems.

The package of Lake City does not exist independently of the external environment, but rather it is these influences that refuel and renew the self-reliant identity. The external environment describes the “history of causes of the changes of state” as a result of interaction from internal and external forces (Varela, 1979; Mugerauer, 2014). A structural coupling between the two environments produces information exchange, occurring at different rates depending on the context of a particular point of engagement. The package of Lake City absorbs a portion of the external environments’ values and incorporates it into the internal structure of the neighborhood. This inter-reliant relationship between the internal and external environments impacts the development of neighborhood organizations and the organization of decision-making units that results in “law-like transactions” or code of conduct expected of residents.

The figure below illustrates the two ways to analyze the neighborhood ecology. Both are necessary to gain a comprehensive assessment of the feedback loops between package of Lake City and external environment that, over time, refines the structure of the neighborhood. Both objectives one and two are addressed by describing the neighborhood ecology of Lake City.



a) Defining separate systems

b) Understanding structural coupling transactions

Figure 8- Describing the package of Lake City and external environment to interrupt the organization and structures of the neighborhood as a dynamic system.

Source: author

The changes in the package of Lake City are contact responses with the external environment, such as the city (Varela, 1979). Although the state of the external environment is not defined by Lake City, it is relevant to the internal system because it reinforces the organizations and structures of the neighborhood insofar it impacts the everyday context of residents.³³ This is seen in the proliferation of 20 neighborhood associations in Lake City within a relatively short time period. On the one hand, the subdivision of the neighborhood signifies capacity and representation of multiple residents to the external environment. However, internally it furthers the gap in communication due the lack of connectors between the multiple new groups whose focus is to define their role within the neighborhood ecosystem. Rather than stabilizing the internal system of Lake City, the external environment disrupts the package of Lake City, displacing the

³³ These internal and external interactions are “the processes in which structure forms and constraints delimited possibilities for change” (Varela et al., 1993; Mugerauer, 2014).

underlying concern of imbalance and camouflaging it with a mimic of other neighborhood's identities.

The identities within the package of Lake City have different modes of communication depending on which historic point of engagement residents interacted with the city. Residents from the golden era of Lake City do not feel they needed the city to impose value systems such as housing patterns, compared to newer residents that are willing to be neighborhood representative that work with the city to improve the urban core. This has resulted in multiple neighborhood associations with varying perspectives on how to address and improve the 'bad' reputation of Lake City. With different projects fighting and directionless for several years, there is a crescendo in the development of chaotic environment within the confines of the neighborhood. Consequently, the identity of Lake City has not evolved as the neighborhood matures into its larger context of being a part of the city of Seattle.

For this reason, there are no general themes at the individual level that can be classified from the data. The stress of living within a chaotic environment impacts individuals differently, therefore the only themes are observed at the neighborhood scale: physical elements, social dynamics, and response. The interviews and participant-observations point to the impacts of different neighborhood associations, focused on the concerns of their sub-neighborhood instead of Lake City. The constant stress produced by uncertainty impacts the residents' ability to think beyond day-to-day existence.

The balance of stress and everyday life can be overwhelming and create disorganized physical elements and social dynamics. For a sense of control over the

urban core, residents work towards increasing the predictability of the physical elements introduced into the urban core, in hopes that it will enhance the economic stability of the community. Again, this reiterates the importance of stability for individuals and families as a community value. In the figure below, it illustrates how coordinating projects led by neighborhood associations can provide a level of stability through organized chaos that is readable to residents. This finding addresses objective three to address the impacts of different levels of engagement and perceptions of fear.

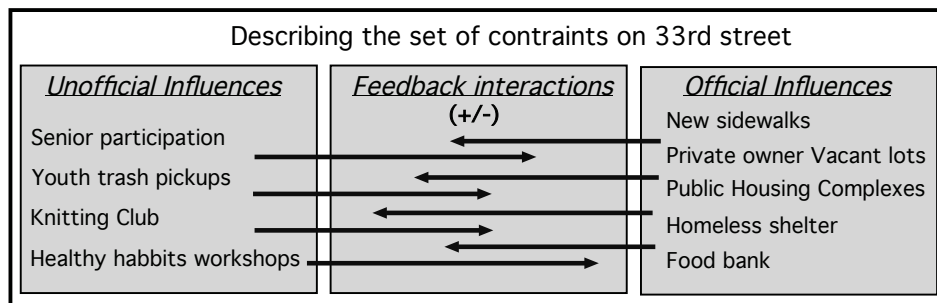
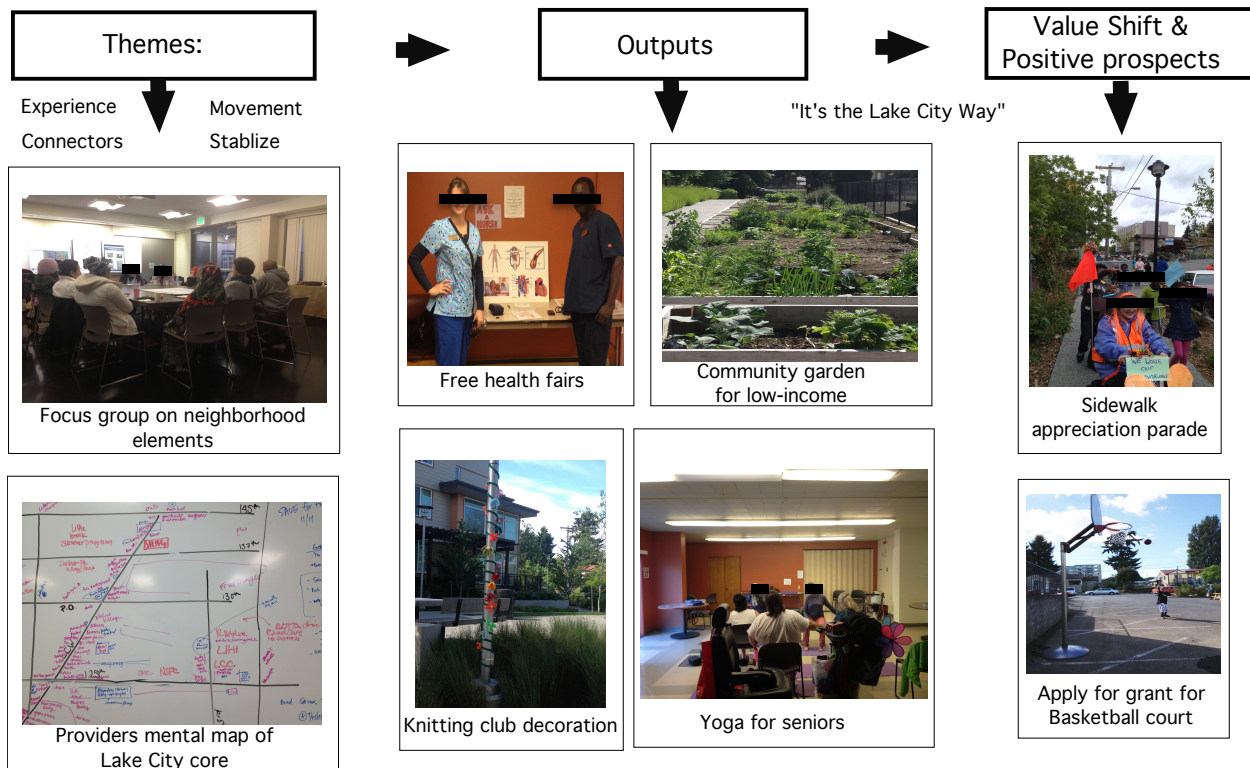


Figure-9: Aligned projects outputs to build moment for value shift and positive prospects.
Source: author, 2013.

At the time of this study, the community was in a heightened state of constant stress that was focused on getting the attention of the city as well as addressing immediate issues in the urban core. The individual level data collected did not show generalities due to the range abilities of persons to cope with the perceived challenges of living in Lake City (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011). This typically occurs when there is an imbalance between the stressful conditions being experienced and the

ability to cope or deal with the conditions with the available resources (Pearlin, 2005). Stress is most likely to affect the level of social participation when there is “ongoing or chronic exposure to stress in everyday life over which persons have limiting control,” as noted in the different points of engagement (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011). As noted in figure 2, to address stress and chaotic events occurring within the package of Lake City all factors need to be considered. However, thinking in terms of single outputs does not provide neighborhood leaders with an outline on how to guide the chaos within the package of Lake City towards a succinct goal (e.g. family- focused). More needs to be provided to residents and the city to understand the ecosystem of Lake City.

Neighborhood ecology

Regardless if the identity of Lake City has or has not modernized, it can still be an overwhelming task to select community projects—let alone prioritizing them. A road map of the different sub-neighborhood ecosystems can provide guidance in understanding the dynamics in the package of Lake City. Neighborhood ecology can describe how feedback loops between the physical elements and social dynamic inform the residents’ response. A change in state can be observed by describing the internal package of Lake City and external environment (Varela, 1979; Mugerauer, 2014). Objective four is addressed by the data collected for the case-study and used to analyze how the interactions between the different scales of change in a neighborhood will impact the decision-making process of neighborhood organizations and internal and external stakeholders. The internal and external environments were general

characterizations in order to provide guidelines for the observer to denote between the two environments (Mugerauer, 2014).

The use of describing the historical narrative in context of community-based planning and design is to provide a vehicle to understand what is 'producing on its own.' The structural coupling between the package of Lake City and its environment create a moment in history where the internal dynamic of the neighborhood can be influenced by external stakeholders. It is in the moment after engagement where the neighborhood begins to 'self constitute' through interactions with local organizations and the adjacent cities (e.g. Shoreline, Seattle, Bothell) (Mugerauer, 2014). For example, the external influence to create the 1999 comprehensive plan resulted in general urban planning recommendations for the Lake City Urban Core that can be translated multiplicatively. After the point of engagement of the city, the community re-constituted, absorbing minimally from the community planning discussion that affected the residents' daily lives. From that experience the neighborhood learned that a very detailed and specific community planning and design guideline is essential at the next point of engagement with the city and developers.

In the history of Lake City there are themes in the decision-making process that are connected to fear and connectors. The fear is the social feedback from the lack of consistent relationships and the constant change in neighborhood features (physical and social). Connectors are the individuals who are the interface between neighborhood groups and organizations; a bridge of communication can either be built or removed. Mapping out the location priorities (physical elements) of the neighborhood associations and organizations in Lake City establishes where there are common goals. The next

goal then is to identify where the connectors are located throughout the neighborhood and if bridges are needed between specific groups. This is particularly essential to Lake City, because connectors are the desired relationships that the community values and wants to maintain in the future. The emotions of the neighborhood ripple through connectors (social dynamics), which can either contribute to more chaos or tip the balance towards areas of agreement.

What is seen in Lake City is that at each point of engagement the facilitators of the community-oriented urban planning discussions can change the role of connectors, which then impacts the feedback loops between stakeholders. The ability to have bridges of communication can either empower residents in their choices on what physical elements are desired to create balance or can take away the feeling of safety in their own neighborhood. For example, consider the formalization of the Lake City internal structure³⁴ decision-making unit as the primary mode of communication with the city (see the modern Lake City section for figure), this will inevitably lead to a portion of residents never having representation in their community. Prior to receiving the Only in Seattle Grant, LCNA started in response to its distrust of the city and social service providers. The lack of connectors created negative feedback between the three parties, resulting in the miscommunication of expectations of community decisions. The chaos within the package of Lake City rose as neighborhood groups where, at times, doing projects at odds with each other. In the beginning stages of modern Lake City non-resident neighborhood groups where not invited to neighborhood association meetings as a decision-making body regarding improving the urban core, compared to the 1995-

³⁴ Internal Structure is the decision making unit that is being development be the Only in Seattle Grant, Lake City Futures First Project submitted by Lake City Neighborhood Alliance.

1999 comprehensive plans discussions where residents, social service providers, and the city were all involved since the beginning. The goal now is to accumulate a critical mass of small projects and social activities to mediate the negative response to the urban core that is affecting the well-being of residents.

Contingency and Panarchy

The description of history of neighborhood groups as ecological systems can provide models that guide which decisions may be made in different contexts.³⁵ The newly established Lake City internal decision-making unit was created under the values of Mayor McGinn and the neighborhood action teams. Again, the positive output is the establishment of connectors within the sub-communities and the development of capacity among residents to work together. The social dynamics to consider is if the relationships developed have established sufficient trust between neighborhood groups to endure the mayoral change (DeCerteau, 1984). Another aspect of objective four was to observe how the decision-making process evolves within the neighborhoods groups.

³⁵ Note: Understanding how historical system dynamics have shaped the current system. Social-ecological systems are dynamic and have a broad overview of system change through time can reveal system drivers, the effects of interventions, past disturbances and responses. (Resilience Alliance, 2007, p. 22)

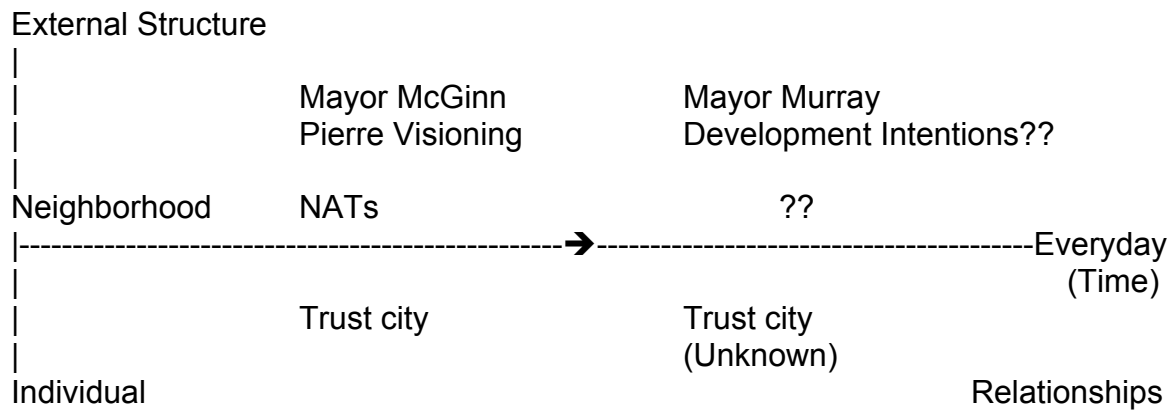


Figure 10- Example of Contingency: External Structure change in Mayors impacting local social dynamics.
 Source: author, 2014

The figure above illustrates variables to consider when analyzing the social dynamics of the neighborhood such as: Mayor Murray’s office not formally recognizing the NAT groups created under Mayor McGinn; impacts of the development plans of Pierre properties, which have not be determined; and if the city does not follow through on resident expectations, then how will it affect the newly established relationships. One of these variables can shift the neighborhood associations to ‘revert’ to old patterns of chaos as self-protection. This means that the uncertainty of the external support of Lake City’s internal structure can make the sense of distrust with the city resurface, therefore turning to neighborhood back to the chaotic interface of the urban core.

When approaching a bifurcation point of change it is essential to think through the how it will impact the internal structure of the neighborhood (e.g. mayoral change). For instance, how will Lake City continue to strive for stability for its resident when the future and funding is unpredictable? The Panarchy Model of Adaptive Cycle is able to

describe how to connect the social dynamics and connections as the foundations to build community-oriented planning.³⁶ The ecological model can be used to link the social dynamics to the physical elements by: considering the intentionality of neighborhood group and stakeholder actions, defining the limitations of the package of Lake City, and the impact of power and political on the identity of Lake City. The goal is to provide alternative possibilities for the future of Lake City beyond mere survival.³⁷

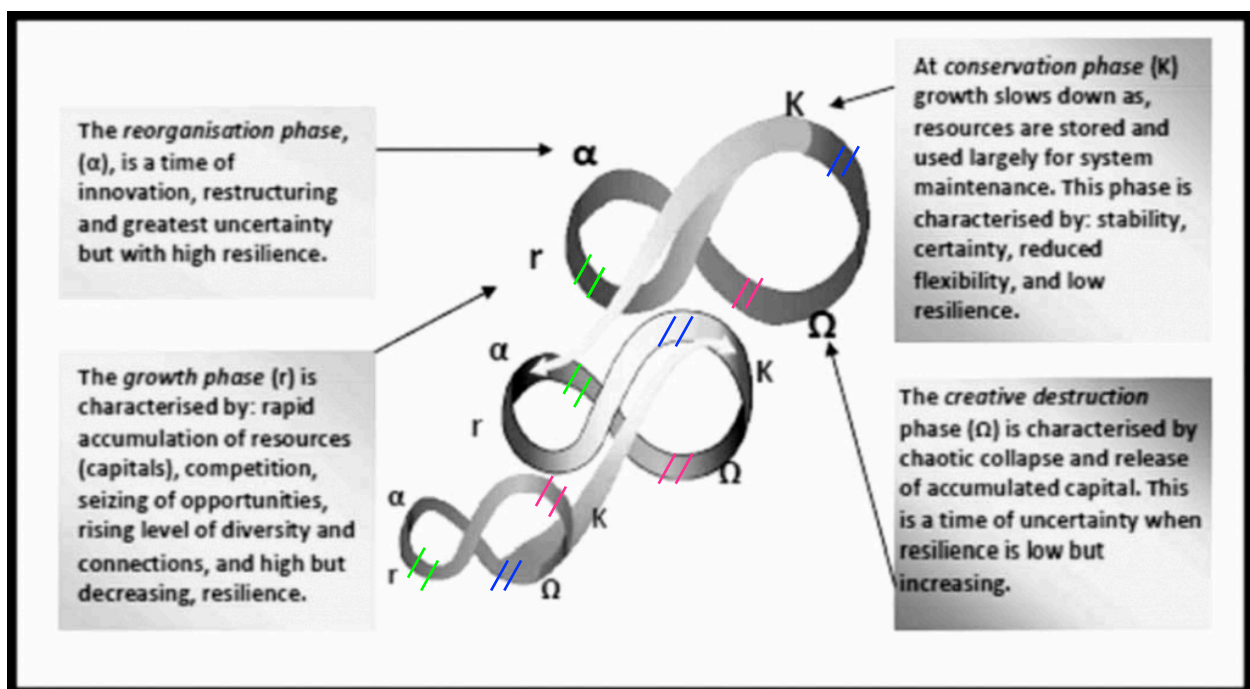


Figure 11- Panarchy model used to illustrate how to align small project at different scales and stages of change within the community.

Source: C.S. Holling, 1986

³⁶ **The Panarchy Model of Adaptive Cycle:** four distinct phases of change in the structures and function of a system: growth or exploitation, conservation, release or creative destruction, and reorganization not as a being but as a becoming (Holling, 1986).

³⁷ Note: Communities cannot be left to fend for themselves. Local authorities still need to support them, manage problems and provide the resources. I am concerned that since some communities have high levels of social capital or “natural resilience” this will be used as an excuse for government to step back and leave communities to tackle these problems on their own (Shaw & Maythorne, 2012, p. 14).

By understanding the dynamics of the Lake City and the City of Seattle, different windows of opportunity can be identified. This requires analyzing the systemic feedback loops, addressing uncertainty and unknowns through capacity development, and identifying slow (urban planning) and fast (neighborhood project) variables (Davoudi et al, 2012). This nurtures the community's capacity to deal with the unknown future and funding. Therefore scenarios such as: 'what if the Pierre Development does not happen?', 'what if the city does not provide more resources for social services?' or 'what if Lake City is no longer affordable?' will not throw the neighborhood groups into survival mode. Rather, the internal structure of Lake City can host community meetings to discuss how to line up small projects to create assemblages of stability rather than stress. Capacity begins to develop among residents by harnessing discussions on tangible outputs such as focusing on the patterns of alignment at different scales to address a topical issue (e.g. safe parks).

A critical mass of small projects by the neighborhood groups will be reached when the internal structure decides to push to larger scale concerns within the community (Hamdi, 2005). The shared experience between residents leads to relationships that develop empathy and/or compassion. The currency of strong relationships is important to Lake City's identity, which sets up the building blocks for the community to begin to think beyond the concerns of its microcommunities and towards the larger context.

What is the point of observing neighborhood groups?

The patterns of alignment for neighborhood projects to address community concerns depend on the inter-dynamics between the 20 neighborhood groups in Lake City. By observing how the various neighborhood groups interact in public meetings and from interviews, feedback loops can be categorized as positive, negative, or neutral. As noted in Liberman (2013), the rules of the community are not established until there is a shared experience. The identity of Lake City is not determined in urban design meetings; rather it is in the urban core that people observe each other and their intended movement (Liberman, 2013). The neighborhood has been 'truckin along' with its identity' as a quiet 1950's small town, but it remains unknown what the next iteration will be. The social norms for modern Lake City have yet to be established and are pending on the community-oriented planning decisions that will be made by the NATs, LCNA, and the Lake City Futures First Project. As Lake City develops the imported internal structure, the physical element decisions made to improve the urban core will impact the marginalized microcommunities.

It will not be until the next point of engagement, that the impacts of decision by the internal structure on 33rd and the neighborhood will be fully realized. What is not clear is why is NAT/LCNA emerging as the only decision-making unit with authority and recognized by city when decisions on built environment elements affect all residents. In diverse neighborhoods (with residents from different socio-economic status and ethnicities) stress can become a barrier that diverts this linking of social networks and their physical elements. Moreover, the composition of a neighborhood influences stressed life trajectories, potentially intensifying how persons with little economic or

social capital negotiate these complex neighborhood dynamics that arise between individuals, neighborhood and social environments. For this reason, it is important to analyze the 'worldly activities that compose' the internal decision making unit and the turnover of connectors because the attributes of Lake City can either compound burdens of adversity (assemblages-of-adversity) or serve as the foundation for structures of opportunity.

Conclusion

From understanding the package of Lake City and its' structural coupling with the external environment, internal or external stakeholders are provided a context to situate themselves when participating in the community planning process of Lake City. The point of this case study was not to produce recommendations or to produce best practices to the community. Rather, it is meant to be part of modern discussion to stimulate a dialogue of critical reflection on how to nurture connectors within the multiple identities using the knowledge of the residents. One of the purposes of constructing a community narrative about the historical urban design and planning and decision-making processes was for it to be used as a tool for stakeholders to situate themselves in the Lake City living system. Once situated, the narrative of the living system can be incomprehensible for everyday decision-making; therefore it was broken down into four objectives.

The two findings in this case study were: the larger context of the historical dynamics and the immediate operative dynamics of Lake City. The historical dynamics through the narrative of the neighborhood leaders provided insight as to how the identity of Lake City as the last frontier neighborhood developed with each shift in population demographics. With each iteration of the Lake City's identity, which emerged after a point of engagement with the city, the neighborhood still remained enclosed and isolated from the city. This left residents and neighborhood associations defending external stakeholders in a reactive manner, which led to the creation of the protective chaotic package of Lake City. The operative dynamics of modern Lake City provide a

snapshot of the nuanced feedback loops and relationships that maintain the package of Lake City. The importance of understanding the main concern of neighborhood of being isolated from the city with an economically depressed urban core is not directly addressed with each community-oriented planning process. It elevates the concerns that the abstract concepts of community planning actually create a stressful environment in the context of everyday life.

What is observed, is that in Lake City, forcing urbanism concepts onto a community does not necessary fix the issues of the urban core or provide respite from the everyday stresses that resident endure (Lieberman, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991; Mugerauer, 2014). Rather, it contributed to the chaotic patterns that already exist within the historical and present day relationships of the neighborhood. This has impacted the externally imposed timelines for crucial decision-making processes in the re-visioning project of Lake City. In moments of distress the neighborhood and its residents depended on the old habits of chaos as a mode of protection for external influences that did not necessarily match their values (Lieberman, 2013). What is seen is that enforcing the roles of conduct such as removing negative behavior from the west side parks can make the situation worse for other areas of the neighborhood (e.g. 33rd Avenue). The same concept of enforcement of design guidelines was observed in the Pierre Visioning and other related projects. The focus of the neighborhood leadership was to strengthen relationship among residents and to improve the urban core, but what occurred was further division of neighborhood groups and further isolated families. The Lake City Way highway has become known as the great divide between eastsiders and westsiders.

There are small success stories where increased social engagement was a positive experience and resulted in a connector emerging between two social groups. One of the most successful activities was the organized trash cleanups that were hosted in the different sub-neighborhoods. These social activities lead to residents talking about their own solutions for creating a safer urban core to raise families, which resulted in the creation of the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance. The alliance was the main driver from attracting the attention of the city to provide resources to help stabilize the core.

A by-product of the development of LCNA was the proliferation of more neighborhood groups within Lake City. This can be seen as a positive because residents want their voices heard and willing to attend meetings for the city to hear their concerns. The limitation of multiple neighborhood groups emerging at the same time means that there is little institutional memory or understanding of the urban design and planning process. This can result in revisiting the history of distrust of the neighborhood at each meeting instead of addressing the current issues of the neighborhood. To address these issues, I have created for the community a guide to Lake City and the Seattle involvement structure. (See appendix E).

At a smaller scale and equally as important, on 33rd Avenue there are a few examples of social engagement as a stage to develop relationships. As a service provider in this focal community, I saw there was a need for physical activity options that reflected the abilities of the residents. I invited a local business owner to provide free physical activity twice a month at the senior public housing complex. This was important to the operative dynamics of Lake City, because it was also an individual involved with

the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce and the community re-visioning process. It was in these moments of physical activity that the business owner was able to experience the reality of the low-income seniors and their limited ability to be actively involved in the community. The stories of the seniors were now a part of the local resident and business owner, who brought these experiences into the official meetings of the community-oriented planning process. Although the low-income seniors may not be able to attend the late evening meeting, they had a champion in another resident to bring their concerns to the table. Two years later, the free physical activity in the low-income senior housing remains strong and has expanded to seniors in Wallingford. This is just one of many examples of small change with big impacts that were occurring in Lake City.

One of the direct impacts of empowering the neighborhood associations is reflected in their decisions to participate in external community capacity processes and funding sources. This is counter to their historical relationship with external stakeholders such as the city of Seattle. It is unclear if the decision of the neighborhood associations will result in a positive impact to their community. One of their main concerns with “playing nice” with the city is having the city impose urbanization values onto Lake City, such as housing models. Although there is a focus on the economic stability of the business district, residents have been very clear for their desire to remain an affordable neighborhood. Some leaders are tracking the developments of internal (Pierre’s) and external developers because of their fear of gentrification displacing their families. The idea of controlled gentrification is a scholarly concept that makes sense in abstract, but how it unfolds in the everyday mundane often results in the displacement of the original

residents. This can flip the social response of the neighborhood towards distrusting the city to “do the right thing.”

From observations of public meetings, there is an elevated awareness in more of the neighborhood leaders' comments that point out the needs of traditionally at-risk populations. The small social activities at North Seattle Family Center (pumpkin patch drive), 33rd Avenue community (father's day celebration and the basketball court), and Little Brook (trash cleanups) have started a dialogue in the community to figure out how diversity impacts Lake City. Unfortunately, limited resources have hindered the ability to build capacity within the traditional at-risk populations. The city of Seattle is at a bifurcation point: provide resources to build capacity within the minority populations and risk slowing down the Lake City community action plans or develop an internal decision making until with the current neighborhood leaders and address social inequality after the community action plans are developed. There is limit to which the residents, who mainly are homeowners with families, can address multiple issues at different scales simultaneously. At this moment in Lake City modern history, there are opportunities to develop relationship between the different populations within Lake City before more physical elements are introduced that may further isolate residents. The question still remains, whose job is it to address diversity and equity in the neighborhood?

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Appendix A- Sight Maps for Observational Data Collection

Instructions: There will be two fields to record observational data for specific site visits. The left hand-side will be a physical map of seven observation locations throughout the Lake City Neighborhood. Use this area to map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO). On the right hand-side there are fields to note the following data points: date, time slot (in minutes), and location. Under the observation heading there are four separate sections (physical activity, type of event in space, social engagement, and other) for the researcher to further describe how the space is occupied.

Examples of observational data:

Physical activity: walking, running, soccer, football, basketball, gardening, and Frisbee.

Type of Event in space: picnic, birthday party, organized sport, pick-up game, kite flying, celebration, and family reunion.

Social Engagement: Public meeting, conversation, knitting group, book club, health education, and trash pick-up walks.

Other: Observations that cannot be categorized in the above sub-headings such as: sex and gender of subjects, drug paraphilia, disaster-preparedness drill, deserted public space (no people present and for how long).

Locations:

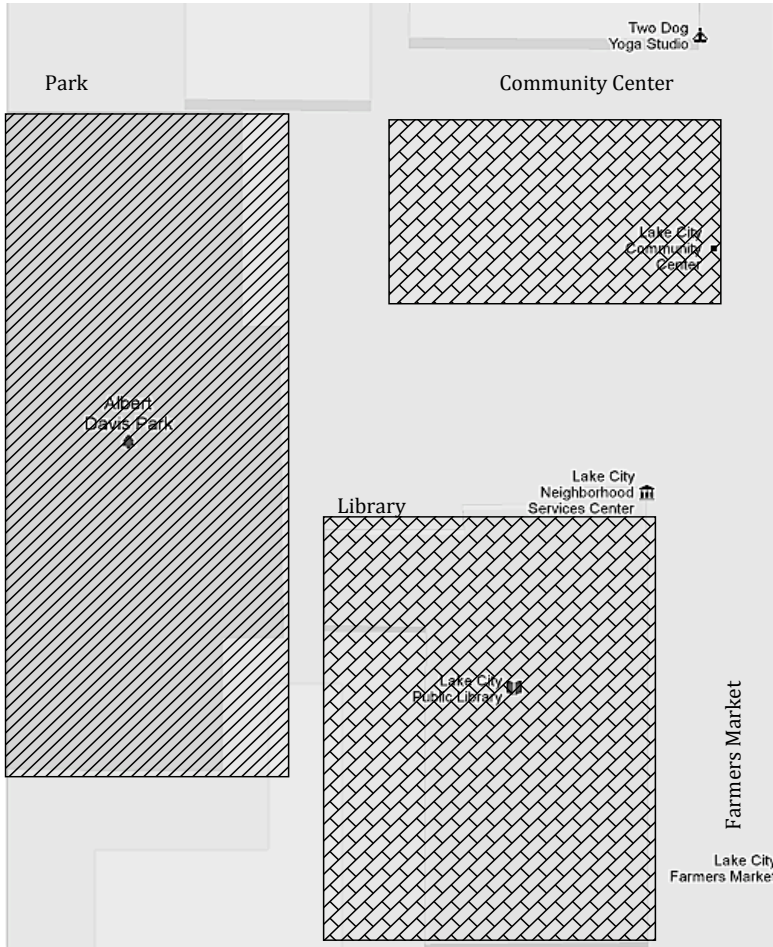
Virgil Flaim Park- Park has 2.5 acres of green space with a basketball court, open field, sand walking track, and playground. A skate-park is proposed for this site.

Church Parking lot (125th/Lake City Way NE)- A large parking lot that is lined with various types of businesses, which has different levels of activity throughout the day.

Mini Park- A pocket park located in the heart of the urban core that is completely cement with a permanent port-a-potty. There are two very active bus stops at this location.

Farmers' Market- This event occurs every Thursday from 2:30pm -7:30pm from June to September and is held within the public space between the Public Library, Lake City Community Center, and Albert Davis Park.

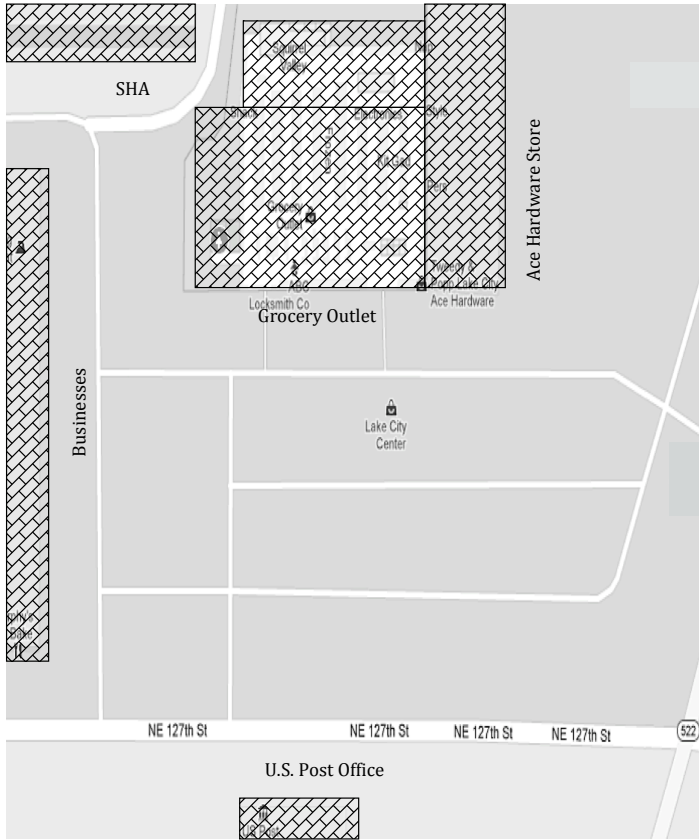
Lake City Center- This shopping area has a range of business such as the Grocery Outlet, Ace Hardware Store, Launder Mat, and Smoke Shop. There is a large parking lot that has a range of activity throughout the day. A U.S. Post Office is located directly across the street.



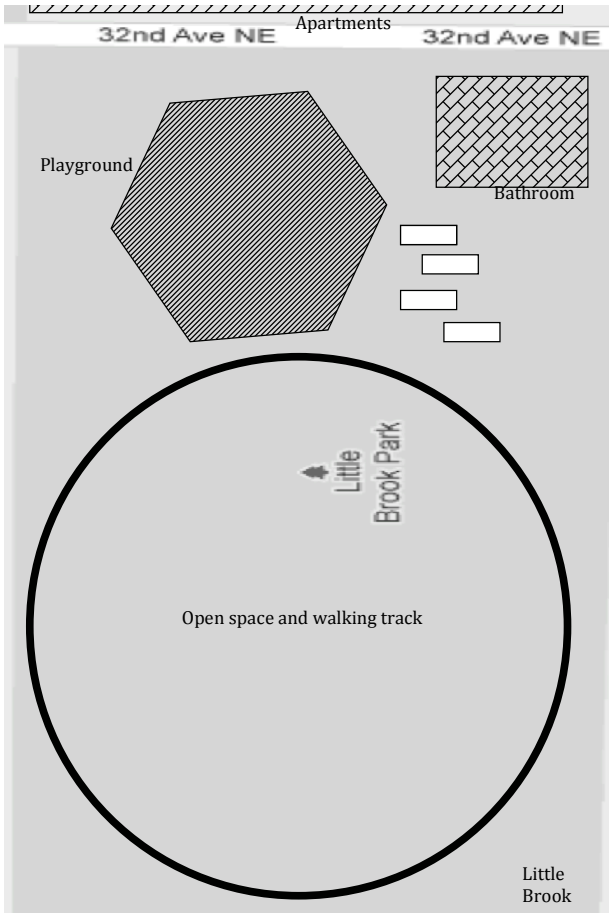
Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map

Date:	Location: Farmer's Market
Time:	<i>Map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO).</i>
Observations: Physical activity	
Type of event in space	
Social engagement	
Other	

Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map



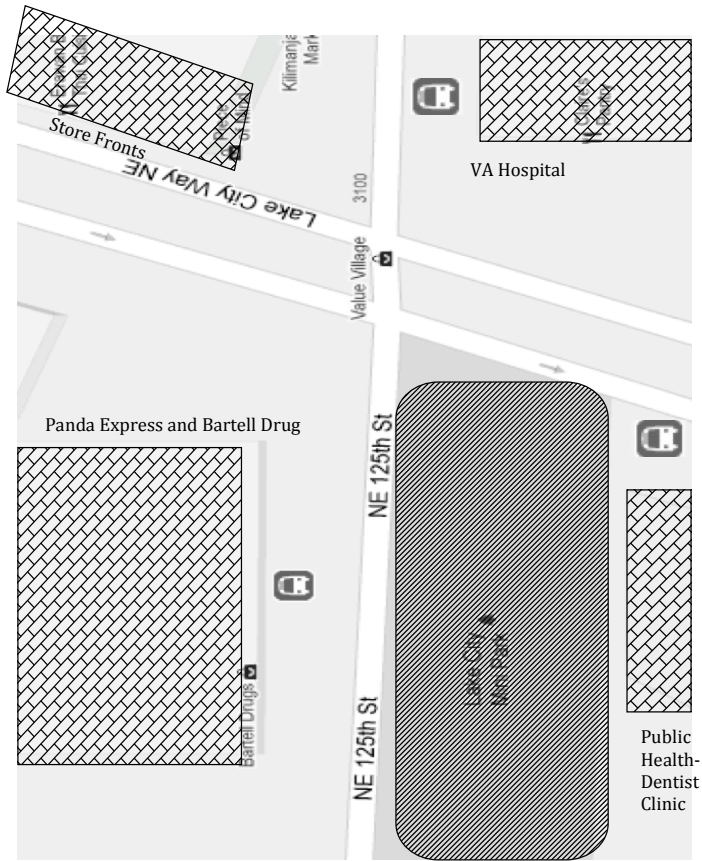
Date:	Location: Lake City Center
Time:	<i>Map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO).</i>
Observations: Physical activity	
Type of event in space	
Social engagement	
Other	



Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map

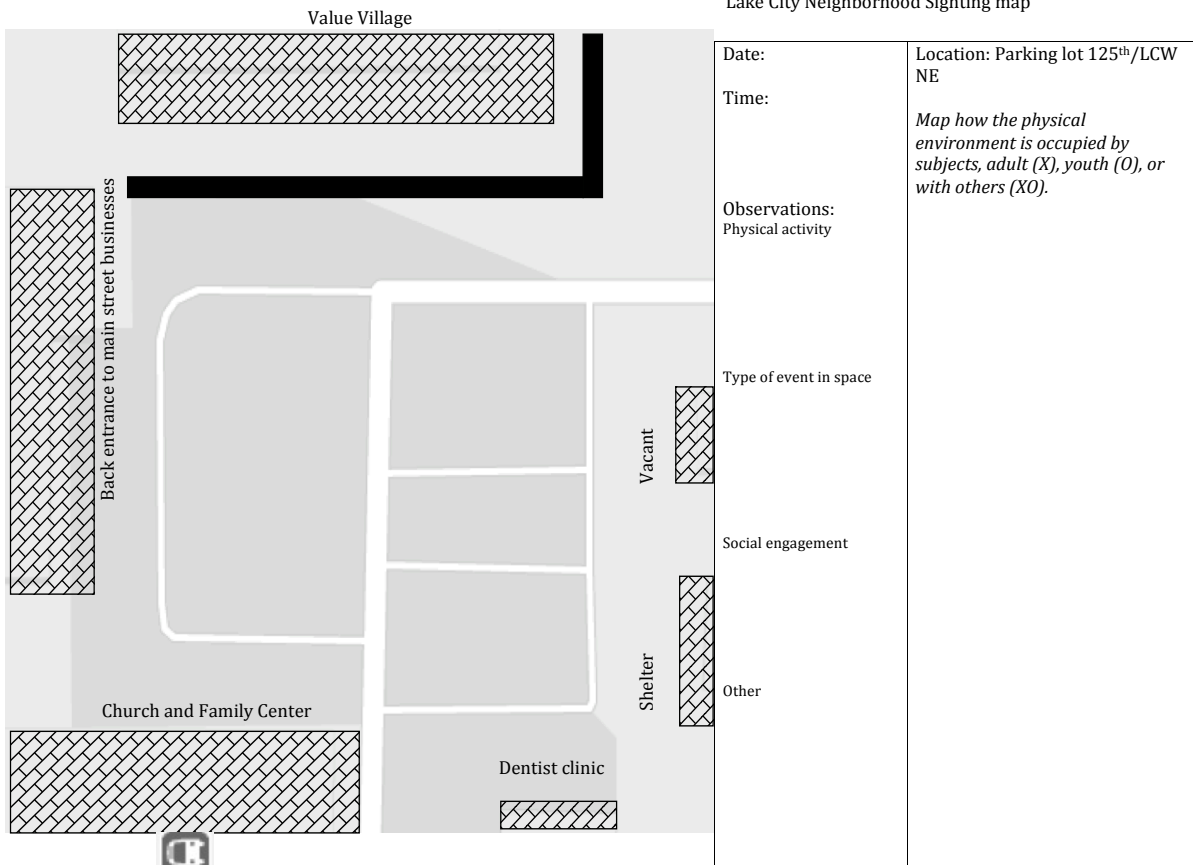
Date:	Location: Little Brook Park
Time:	<i>Map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO).</i>
Observations: Physical activity	
Type of event in space	
Social engagement	
Other	

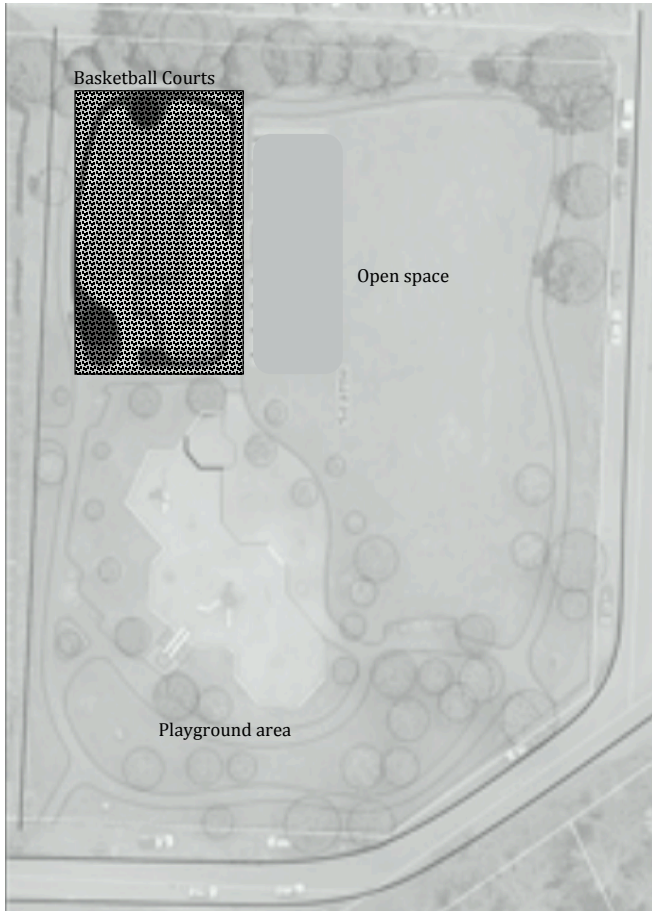
Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map



Date:	Location: Mini Park
Time:	<i>Map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO).</i>
Observations: Physical activity	
Type of event in space	
Social engagement	
Other	

Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map





Lake City Neighborhood Sighting map

Date:	Location: Virgil Flaim Park
Time:	<i>Map how the physical environment is occupied by subjects, adult (X), youth (O), or with others (XO).</i>
Observations: Physical activity	
Type of event in space	
Social engagement	
Other	

Appendix B- Introduction Letter

Sample paragraph:

Dear [Insert Name],

My name is Amber Trout, I am a graduate student at the University of Washington conducting a case-study on the Lake City Neighborhood to understand how the neighborhood design process may impact the level of social cohesion. I am contacting you for an interview to learn more about the current events that lead to re-visioning of the urban core for Lake City and what is the perceived level of livability. My interests are in observing the affects of introduction of new physical elements such as sidewalks or public space. This research will look at how social cohesion may create a safe and positive place for families to thrive. It is the hope of this research to gain a deeper understanding of the narrative of Lake City to understand the neighborhood characteristics that are replicatable for future community design decisions.

The interview can be over the phone or in-person at a determined location. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hear from you.

Please note that your responses will be confidential and anonymous. If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact me at altrout@uw.edu.

Appendix C- Interview guide

<p>Introduction Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you • Your name • Purpose • Confidentiality • Duration • How interview will be conducted • Opportunity for questions • Signature of consent 	<p>I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Amber Trout and I would like to talk to you about recent events in Lake City that have lead to address the neighborhood design and safety of residents. Specifically, how social cohesion can influence the physical environment of the neighborhood.</p> <p>The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taking notes during the interview. All response will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with the research team members and we will ensure that any information included in our case-study will NOT identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.</p> <p>Are there any questions about what I have just explained?</p> <p>Are you willing to participate in this interview?</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Interviewee Signature Date</p>
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Appendix D- Letter from 33rd Street Resident

Dear _____:

The new sidewalk on the west side of 33rd Ave NW between NE125th and 133rd is dangerous in places and needs City of Seattle attention to make it safer.

Last month I witness a woman fall from the sidewalk right around the creek area pictured in this photo (photo was not used for this dissertation). She was walking in day light.

I am espeically concerned for people using walkers, wheelchairs, and who have poor vision.

I am avalaible to show you the problems.

Please contact me.

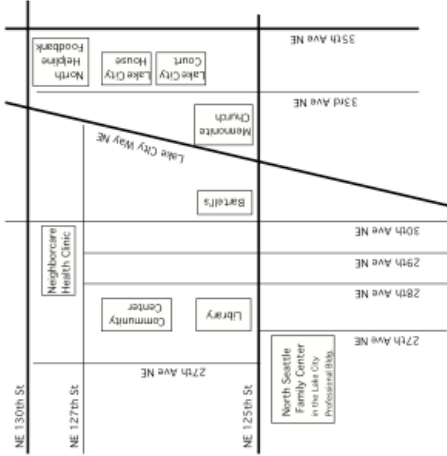
Appendix E- A guide to Lake City and the Seattle involvement structure



Prepared by: Amber Trout

Get connected
 Connéctese
 Connectez-vous
 الحصول على اتصال

1. Lake City Library:
 12501 28th Ave. NE
 Hours: 10am-8pm (MF); 10am-6pm Sa; 1pm-5pm Su
 2. North Seattle Family Center:
 2611 NE125th, Suite 145
 Hours: 9am- 5pm (M-F)
 3. Lake City Community Center:
 12531 28th Ave NE
 Hours: <http://lcccommunitycenter.org/>
 4. Neighborhood Health Clinic
 12721 30th Ave NE
 Hours: 9am-6pm (M-F)
 5. North Helpline Food Bank
 12721 30th Ave, NW
 Hours: 10am-1pm (W); 4:30-6:30pm (Th); 10-11am (Sa)



Metro Bus Routes: 41, 65, 72, 75, 372, 522

Neighborhood Networks Project

The stresses caused by rapid urbanization in the Greater Seattle area have reignited the importance for neighborhood associations, citizens, health and human service providers, parks and recreation, and the local government to work together. The question is how to share resources to promote a living and thriving community. The project used community stories to understand the growth of the neighborhood and the urbanization process.

Modern Lake City

The Lake City neighborhood, located in the Northeastern section of the City of Seattle, was known in the 1920s for being a thriving retail commerce and business center. But now, Lake City's positive elements are mainly unknown by outsiders. In 2012, an open letter from the Lake City Neighborhood Association was sent to the Mayor's office, describing the need for positive infrastructure in the urban core of Lake City: despite becoming a hotspot of development for both private and public sections, residents still felt a negative impact on their everyday lives. With the attention of the government and the private sector, multiple projects emerged to re-vision the Lake City urban core, utilizing community-oriented urban design and planning. This moment in time created an opportunity for residents to become involved in improving their neighborhood.

The package of Lake City

Lake City has had many identities over the last century. Before joining the city of Seattle, it was known as the last frontier. After annexation, it was "Little Of Lake City," the neighborhood with a small town feel and blue-collar pride. Now, in the technological revolution and rapid urbanization of the Puget Sound, Lake City has found itself searching for its identity. We need to unify all the unique identities that make Lake City a family first neighborhood. It's the Lake City Way.

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

- Lake City Neighborhood Alliance
<http://lcna-seattle.org/>
- Lake City Future First
<http://lakecityfuturefirst.org/>
- Lake City Greenways
<https://www.facebook.com/LakeCityGreenways>
- Pierre Visioning Project
<http://lakecitywayvisioning.blogspot.com/>

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Seattle, WA, 98195
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EDUCATION

- Sept. 2010 - Present **University of Washington, Seattle, WA**
Ph.D. in the Built Environment (June 2014)
- Jun. 2008 **Drexel University, School of Public Health, Philadelphia, PA**
Masters of Public Health, concentration in Environmental and Occupational Health
- Jun. 2005 **California-State University, Long Beach**
Microbiology, Chemistry minor
- Oct. 2008 Certified in Public Health (CPH)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Sept. 2013- Jun. 2014 **Community Health Program, Physical Education, Health & Recreation, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA**
Visiting Faculty member (non-tenure track)
- Intro to Public Health, Health Promotion for K-8, Society & Sex, Health Communications & Social Marketing, and Program Planning & Implementation of Health Programs
 - Develop coursework to prepare community health seniors for the Certified Health Education Specialist Exam, which covers 162 competencies and skills.
- Jun. 2013- Aug. 2013 **Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington, Seattle, WA**
Instructor, URB DP 498/598- Urbanism and Resilience
- Observed stressed life-trajectories through local and global literature, explored the physical environment and social networks as it interacts and influences the community.
- Sept. 2012- Dec. 2012 **Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington, Seattle, WA**
Instructor, URB DP 520- Quantitative Methods
- Created a positive learning environment for students through dialectic lectures, computer labs using SPSS, homework/group assignments and presentations.
- Jun. 2012 - Aug. 2012 **Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington, Seattle, WA**
Instructor, URB DP 498/598 Built Environment and Public Health
- The next generation of Built Environment and Public Health professionals: exploring the roles of collaboration between built environments and public health.
- Sept. 2011 - Jun. 2012 **Dean's Office, College of Built Environments, University of Washington, WA**
Graduate Research Assistant, Partnership of University of Washington College of Built Environments, School of Public Health, and Forterra
- Identified urban design elements with the largest material impact on health outcomes.
 - Identified which policies were most effective improving health outcomes of communities.

Jan. 2012- March.-2012	<p>Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington, Seattle, WA Teaching Assistant, URBDP 598 Healthy Community Design- Andrew Dannenberg, MD, MPH and Fritz Wagner, PhD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated student lead discussions, guest lecturer, and graded written work.
FELLOWSHIP	
Nov. 2013- Present	<p>Emerging Leaders in Science and Society, Advancing Science, Serving Society, AAAS University of Washington (Seattle) fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and systems thinking fellowship to better understand complex societal issues focused on the themes: health & well being and environment & energy. • Multi-campus collaboration with University of Washington, Purdue, Stanford, and UPenn.
UNIVERSITY SERVICE	
Oct 2013- Present	<p>Working Group: Women in the Built Environment College of Built Environments, Informal Student Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate dialogues around women experience learning, working, and mentorship opportunities in the field Built Environment. • Hold a forum to discuss and analyze the challenges women face in this field.
Jun. 2012- Jun.2013	<p>Community, Environmental & Planning Undergraduate Program, College of Built Environments, University of Washington, WA Graduate Student Mentor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through informal discussions, worked with two undergraduate students in the development of their senior research project. • Co-facilitated talk with undergraduate student to highlight the benefits of student interdepartmental research collaboration within the College of Built Environments.
Jan. 2013- Mar. 2013	<p>Built Environment PhD Steering Committee, University of Washington, WA College of Built Environments, Student Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared 5-Year Graduate School Review of the Ph.D. in the Built Environment Program by reviewing funding trends and research interest clusters.
Jan. 2012- Mar. 2012	<p>Dean Daniel Friedman Review Committee College of Built Environments, University of Washington, Student Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided report to UW Provost Ana Mari Cauce regarding the five-year performance of Dean Daniel Friedman.
Dec. 2011	<p>Design and Health Working Group-Participant American Institute of Architects-Washington, DC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed the intersection of health, safety, and welfare in professional continued-education.

- May 2011-
Sept. 2012 | **Built Environment Student Council Volunteer Planning Comm., Co-Chair**
 - Developed the mission statement and by-laws for unifying student group to represent the 15 degree granting programs under the College of Built Environment.
- Sept. 2010-
Jan. 2013 | **University of Washington Graduate & Professional Student Senate**
 - Ad Hoc Travel Grants Program Review Committee, Member
 - GPSS Departmental review of Landscape Architecture for the Graduate School.
 - Participant, GPSS lobby day in Olympia (February 2011, 2012)

COMMUNITY HEALTH EXPERIENCE

- Sept. 2013 -
Present | **North Seattle Family Center, Lake City (Seattle), WA**
Neighborhood Partnerships and Projects
 - Outreach to Lake City community members to foster relationships and align common goals through small action oriented projects.
- Jan. 2013 -
Sept 2013 | **Lake City Court Computer Lab, North Seattle Family Center, Lake City (Seattle), WA**
Computer Laboratory Staff
 - Helped provide families with building of technology skills needed for employment, job readiness, and budgeting.
 - Improved opportunities for low income and limited English speaking clients to improve on communications skills through available software for language training.
- Jun. 2012 -
Jun. 2013 | **With Every Heart Beat is Life, North Seattle Family Center, Lake City (Seattle) WA**
Community Health Worker
 - Planned and facilitated workshops to improve skills in health and nutrition, focusing on heart disease, blood pressure, physical activity, obesity, and healthy eating.
 - Prepared reports and other documents and evaluations.
 - Collaborated with several agencies and programs to provide related services.
- Mar. 2013-
Jun. 2013 | **Visual Resource Center, College of Built Environments, University of Washington, WA**
Graduate Research Assistant
 - Cataloged new digital images and existing 35 mm slides within the structure of the Collection's database (Microsoft Access).
 - Conducted research necessary for the cataloging of images of architecture, art, and related fields, and processed digital images (Adobe Photoshop).
- Jul. 2008-
Sept. 2010 | **Project Manager-Small and Medium Commercial Buildings Project (SMCBs)**
University of California, Davis-Davis, CA
Staff Research Associate Supervisor
 - Recruited buildings for study, scheduled and prepared sample site visits, and applied proposed protocols for indoor environmental quality assessment.
 - Maintained the proposed project timeline, managed daily tasks as the liaison between University of California, Davis and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
- Oct. 2006-
Jun. 2008 | **Health Explorers Post, Drexel University-Philadelphia, PA**
Health Explorer Facilitator
 - Arranged guest speakers, led group discussions, and post-high school educational counseling in various health careers for at-risk high school students.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Jan. 2014 **Lake City Urban Design Frame Work Committee, Urban Planning Department (Seattle) WA**
- 2012-Present **Mayor Initiative: Lake City Neighborhood Action Teams (Seattle, WA)**
Public Health and Human Services Workgroup
- Assist the community in identifying their needs and goals for promoting a healthful neighborhood to live, work, and play.
 - Promote communication and coordinate between the residents and health, human services provides, and other neighborhood workgroups.
 - Focus on developing social networks for youth development and senior activities through programming.
- 2012-2013 **33rd Street Basketball Court Workgroup**
- Lake City Community Council, Seattle Housing Authority, Parks and Recreation, and North Seattle Family Center
- 2012-2013 **North Seattle Family Center, Site Preceptor for graduate students:**
University of Washington Bothell Nursing Graduate Program, mini community health fair
University of Washington Nutrition Master students,
Nutrition presentations for low-income seniors and youth
University of Washington School of Public Health, MPH in Health Services
Community assessment of Little Brook Park
University of Washington, Department of Landscape Architecture,
Youth park community-based design process in the NSFC computer lab in Lake City.
- Jan. 2014 **Northgate Light Rail Transportation Focus Group**
Co-facilitated focus groups with Lake City Court Community Builder for community input for the Urban Design Framework for Northgate and light rail station.
- 2012-2013 **American Public Health Association, Environment Section**
Abstract Reviewer
Reviewed Built Environment & Health abstracts that for the 2012 APHA Annual Meeting theme, "Prevention and Wellness Across the Lifespan."

PRESENTATIONS

- (Poster) Complex Systems, Health Disparities, and Population Health: Building Bridges
The University of Michigan Network on Inequality, Complexity, & Health
Feb 24-25, 2014 Natcher Conference Center, NIH Campus, Bethesda, MD
A.L. Trout, Neighborhood Connectors: Results of a case study in Lake City (Seattle), WA
- (Talk) 5th Annual Exploring Public Health Careers Event: How to make the most of your public health career, Discipline Specific Career Panels: Environmental and Occupational Health, Feb 20, 2014, Philadelphia, PA
- (Talk) International Association for Environmental Philosophy,
17th Annual Meeting, Eugene, Oregon Oct 26-28th, 2013
Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology Session, *Community Perceptions of Place*
A.L. Trout, Neighborhood Networks & Perceptions: A Case Study in Lake City (Seattle), WA

- (Talk) American Planning Association Community Coffee Talks, Diversity and Community Engagement. Invited by Lake City Neighborhood Alliance to speak to the community about methods and tools to promote community engagement and cohesion.
- (Talk) Forterra Quarterly Executive Committee Meeting, June 2012
Presented report findings from RA position through the Dean's Office under Daniel Friedman

AWARDS

- May 2012 **Student Travel Scholarship for 49th International Making Cities Livable Conference**
True urbanism: Planning healthy communities for all-Portland, OR
- Oct. 2011 **Student Travel Scholarship for APHA 2011 Conference**
Environmental Section, American Public Health Association-Washington, DC
- Jun. 2008 **Service in Public Health Award**
Drexel University, School of Public Health-Philadelphia, PA
- Feb. 2008 **National Public Health Week Grant Recipient**
Association of Schools of Public Health-Washington, DC
- Mar. 2007 **Society for Public Health Education**
2007 National Scholarship SOPHE Recipient and Participant-Washington, DC

PUBLICATIONS

Bennett DH, Fisk W, Apte MG, Wu X, **Trout A**, Faulkner D, Sullivan D. (2012). [Ventilation, temperature, and HVAC characteristics in small and medium commercial buildings in California](#). *Indoor Air*, 22(4):309-320.
PMID: 22257121

Bennett, Deborah, Michael Apte, Xiangmei (May) Wu, **Amber Trout**, David Faulkner, Randy Maddalena, and Doug Sullivan (University of California Davis). 2011. *Indoor Environmental Quality and Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning Survey of Small and Medium Size Commercial Buildings: Field Study*. California Energy Commission.

Bennett, D.H., **Trout, A.**, Faulkner, D., Apte, M. (2009) *Pilot Report: Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in Small and Medium Commercial Buildings (SMCB) Phase II Field Study*. Report Submitted to State of California Air Resources Board.

Dillon, J.G., Mc Math, L.M., and **Trout, A.L.** (2009). Seasonal changes in bacterial diversity in the Salton Sea, *Hydrobiologica*. doi: 10.1007/s10750-009-9827-4