

Visions of Wallingford:
Neighborhood Learning through Collaborative Filmmaking

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Abstract

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Addressing the planet's most urgent socio-ecological challenges requires coordination across individuals, institutions, the built environment, and the natural world. This kind of coordination is complex and involves learning at different scales of practice. This dissertation seeks to better understand learning at the scale of the neighborhood, through a collaborative filmmaking project. Residents of a predominantly white, densifying Seattle neighborhood led a series of local walking tours, filmed these tours, and assembled the footage into a documentary film. By theorizing civic learning as a semiotic process, I examine how discourses related to neighborhood and community life inform participants' modes of expression; and how these modes of expression are laminated into modes of relation over the course of the study. Findings show that discourses of care, accessibility, and groundedness emerge and transform through participants' ongoing place-storying and infrastructuring efforts. From this analysis, I suggest implications for planners, education researchers, and others interested in creating civic media and designing civic learning environments.

To you, for making it this far.

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INTRODUCTION

The story is familiar. Our political system in the United States has fallen to shambles. Any trace of trust across partisan and ideological lines has eroded. Social media creates echo chambers and spreads fake news. Schools are subject to the political whims of gerrymandered local and state legislatures. The situation becomes more dire when we consider how gridlock at the national level is exacerbating the housing crisis (Klein, 2021), the climate crisis (Kelly et al., 2022), and the racialized inequities upon which our nation was founded (Russonello, 2021). Within this context, H. Richard Milner IV, the president of the American Education Research Association, decried the lack or misuse of education research in public conversations, inviting researchers to “critique traditional modalities and repositories while recommending and utilizing alternative modes” (Milner, 2022). How can education research become more consequential to the precarious political situation in which we are implicated? What kinds of “alternative modes” of knowledge creation and communication could we explore to overcome our intertwined socio-ecological crises?

This dissertation is one exploration into an alternative mode, considering how education research could be a site of civic engagement by bringing together a variety of unlikely stakeholders around a shared creative endeavor. It is a community education *interruption* (Biesta, 2012), aiming to jolt some new energy into civic life as we become more animated after the initial upheaval of the pandemic. Specifically, this dissertation takes the form of a collaborative filmmaking project that is focused on residents’ relationships with their neighborhood – and by extension, with each other. As residents listen, talk, move, and film together along familiar streets and sidewalks, they both co-operate with (Goodwin, 2018) and interrogate the social, material, and ecological layers with which their neighborhood is built and maintained. I argue

that this filmmaking process, as an ongoing endeavor of storytelling and storylistening (Marin et al., 2020), offers potential to meaningfully engage citizens by focusing our lenses around issues of collective concern, while allowing these foci to be reinterpreted and change over time. This dynamic quality is especially important in the context of civic education and urban planning, two fields which must be particularly nimble to respond to the rapidly devolving social-ecological crises which seem to be defining our epoch. By organizing this project as a creative collaboration across stakeholder groups and social identities, I intend to demonstrate how the development of civic media can be a catalyst for learning how to care for and with each other, toward a stronger democracy and planet (Tronto, 2013).

In short, this dissertation is about planning, stories, and learning. I probe planners to consider how people learn as they plan together, through place-storying (Blood et al., 2012) and other modes of relation. I encourage learning scientists to design and study environments where residents can share stories and plan for the future. And I suggest that we all consider the kinds of stories that guide us, the stories that we author about ourselves and the places where we live and spend time. This project attempts to anchor both individual and cultural histories within ongoing efforts to plan for and realize a future that is responsive to the needs of our entire ecology. This, we will see, is no straightforward task; a variety of stories – often conflicting stories – take shape, and require some form of negotiation or adjudication in order to align individuals' activities. Throughout this project, I remain committed to emphasizing the spatial and embodied aspects of learning, as these have too often been ignored in the history of education research (Leander et al. 2010; Taylor et al., 2014). We learn in, with, and across the various places we inhabit; these are crucial contexts to explore, particularly for those interested in contributing to social transformation.

CHAPTER 1 – RESEARCH CONTEXT

Discourse around neighborhoods emphasizes the intimacies and conflicts of “proximal communities,” (Chen & Brooks-Gunn, p. 337) as they have existed throughout history (and prehistory). The urbanist Emily Talen (2019) notes that the word “neighborhood” is found in nearly every language, and that “neighborhoods are a ubiquitous condition of human settlement” (p. 11). In this section, I focus on the concept of neighborhood as it has been taken up in the United States, specifically within three contexts which are crucial for situating this study: planning, popular culture, and education research. In this brief overview, I hope to show how neighborhood-related discourse has been used to bridge the concept of community life with that of learning and education. This finding becomes significant when considering that the vast majority of education research is still focused on learning in schools (Mehta & Datnow, 2020), which have long been recognized as being “lousy” places for learning (Becker, 1972), too often disconnected from community life (A. Bell, 2021). For these reasons, more attention to neighborhoods could help orient educators and education researchers to consider their work as being closely connected to that of urbanists and planners, and *vice versa*.

Post-war learning theories and technologies

As neighborhoods were physically developed across the country after World War Two, educational theories, practices, and technologies too often served to disconnect young people from their neighborhood learning ecologies. During this time, developmental and educational psychologists were still largely operating within a behaviorist paradigm. This posited a passive view of learners, who responded to stimuli based on a combination of genetic endowment and operant conditioning (e.g. Skinner, 1965). Moreover, this paradigm used the scientific nomenclature of education research to socially reproduce the legitimacy of gendered inequities

within the field, limiting autonomy of the predominantly female teacher workforce to that of education researchers, who were mostly white men. Schools continued to be run in a factory model, in which educators and their students were both assessed by quantifiable notions of academic achievement, which could be generalized and compared across localities (Giroux, 1980). This view of education was decidedly disconnected from meaningful participation in family, neighborhood, and civic life.

Meanwhile, the advent of the television as a medium for mass communication seemed to offer promise for teaching and learning that gelled with the dominant educational theories of the time. In the 1940s and 50s, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 242 television frequencies for educational purposes. Despite opposition to “mass education” from the American Federation of Teachers, Pittsburgh’s WQED – the first community-owned TV station in the US – began featuring particularly “able teachers” in a program which would become known as the “Fifth Grade Experiment.” The program was broadcast to 800,000 pupils in 23,000 classrooms (Levin & Hines, 2003). A report from the Ford Foundation described the effect of controlled trials by measuring student “achievement”: “(tentative) results [...] indicate that superior teaching over television stimulates much better learning on the part of the student than ordinary teaching in the classroom” (Ford Foundation, 1959, p. 9). In seeking to standardize classroom experiences as a means for advancing normative views of academic achievement, the early use of TV as an educational medium was both responsive to and influential of the behaviorist research of its time.

However, this paradigm began to shift in the 1960s and 70s, as more social and ecological learning theories gained traction in the academy. For example, Alfred Bandura’s well-known Bobo doll experiments provided convincing evidence that young people learned not only

from direct behavioral stimulus-response, but also based on observing and imitating other people (Bandura et al., 1961). Urie Bronfenbrenner's model of childhood development built on this social foundation, and extended it to consider the entire "ecology" within which people learn (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This ecology is often illustrated as concentric circles, with the individual at the center, and more distal contexts of influence radiating outward. In this model, neighborhoods affect individuals' immediate experiences via interpersonal structures, and also relate to other systems, like schools and homes (Rogoff, 2003). These interrelationships characterize the ecology as a whole, so the nested layers are a convenient way to categorize and analyze dynamic processes which are always changing and affecting each other.

These theoretical shifts in the field were paralleled by a continuous uptake of TV as a major national pastime. By 1960, more than 87% of U.S. households had a TV (The American Century, 2014), and they were watching an average of five hours of TV every day (Allen & Thompson, 2009). Along with this massive cultural transformation, there came a backlash from concerned citizens who highlighted the corrosive effects of commercialism and the glorification of violence. Bandura testified before Congress along with Fred Rogers, which persuaded the Federal Trade Commission to pass new standards related to children's advertising and programming (MacCormick, 2021). A couple years later, Bronfenbrenner likewise testified before Congress, this time in support of an antipoverty bill, which ultimately led to the creation of Head Start (Fox, 2005). These examples showcase how scholars had drawn on education research to shift cultural and legal understandings of the connection between learning and social life. At the center of these efforts was the concept of a neighborhood.

Popular children's TV centers neighborhood learning

Through the 1950s and 60s, an emerging genre of children's television took hold, with cartoons like *The Flintstones*, as well as live action shows like *Captain Kangaroo* and *The Andy Griffith Show*. Out of all the children's TV shows that arose during this time period, two stand out for both their widespread popularity and their deliberate attempts to create educational programming: *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. It is no coincidence that both of these shows emphasize the importance of learning in and with neighborhoods; they both sought to highlight the social and relational nature of learning, using the newfound communication powers of TV to create virtual neighborhoods which could mimic children's familiar experiences at home.

When *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* premiered – on Pittsburgh's WQED – in 1968, its goal was for children “to develop a broader awareness of how their lives are interconnected with the lives of others” (Murray, 2007, p. 9). To accomplish this, Fred Rogers created a sense of community, using little more than modest sets with trains and puppets; a cast of neighborhood characters, like a mailman and a police officer; and patient, uncompromising dedication that he conveyed by looking directly at the viewers and speaking frankly to them. The show also connects its eponymous model neighborhood to the “real world” more directly, when Rogers (and his camera crew) take trips to particular locations. For example, in episode 7 of season 3, Rogers goes to a dairy farm to investigate where milk comes from. A close-up of a model dairy farm is displayed in the neighborhood, which then fades to an actual dairy farm with Mister Rogers standing there. Rogers invites the viewers to meet Jane, who oversees the farm. Along the way, we meet employees and cows, and eventually observe the cows being milked. Viewers also catch a glimpse of the many tools and pieces of machinery that workers use to produce the gallons of milk which children might recognize from their own neighborhood grocery store.

By centering the idea of the neighborhood in the setting and format of the show, Rogers explored the many people, places, and processes that help children to grow. Contrary to other popular TV shows of its time, Rogers was decidedly working against “escapism [...] to promote engagement by encouraging the viewer to process both the show and the viewer’s own situation” (Costello, 2016, p. 117). The advent of the TV made it possible for Rogers to speak personally to children across the country, helping them to connect their own unique circumstances to the lives and labor of other people whom they may never meet in-person. The idea of a neighborhood served as a beautiful representation for this purpose, as it was both abstract enough to encompass a host of moving parts, and tangible enough to be relevant to children’s daily lives.

Sesame Street debuted in 1969, just one year after *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. Like *Neighborhood*, *Sesame Street* also foregrounded the idea of a neighborhood as a means to connect with its young viewers with their larger learning ecologies. The show’s set similarly brought viewers into a fictional neighborhood and introduced a host of local characters. *Sesame Street*, in particular, was designed to look like a low-income, urban neighborhood, which mirrored its desire “to help poor, black [sic] children identify with the place they saw on television” (Morrow, 2001, p. 215). The head writer, Jon Stone, explained that “inner city disadvantaged kids are so often housebound [...] They look out the window and that’s where the big kids are playing and the noise is going on” (Morrow, 2001, p. 215). This deficit and racialized view of “disadvantaged kids” undergirded the show’s theory of change, which emphasized normative developmental skills that kids would be expected to perform in classrooms. However, by centering people of color and depicting cooperation within a multiracial neighborhood, the show offered new possibilities for young people to identify and learn within their own geographic and social settings.

Unlike *Neighborhood*, which was known for its long monologues and calm, steady tone, *Sesame Street* embraced the flashy style of existing kids' shows at the time; an intentional effort to compete with these other programs. For example, the debut episode aims to teach children about the number 2 by incorporating quick cuts and pastiches that included: humans and Muppets at a drugstore purchasing two gallons of milk; a "psychedelic" animation of kids sing-counting, and live-action shots depicting couplets of turtles, hats, and ice cream cones (Newman, 2010). These creative decisions were not simply dreamed up in the writer's room. Rather, Joan Ganz Cooney, the main producer of *Sesame Street*, worked with education researchers throughout the show's development, going so far as to refer to the entire project as a "research-based experiment" about whether TV could be used to teach young children (Revelle, 2003).

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood and *Sesame Street* were both developed in response to the dominant educational theories and technologies of the time. The shows' creators saw TV as an emerging medium rife with possibilities; it contained the potential to let viewers rot their brains in its "vast wasteland," in the famous words of FCC chairman Newton Minow (1961); or the potential to help young people understand their place in the world, and learn how to contribute to their communities. These programs strived toward the latter, using video as an affective tool to demonstrate connections between people and the places where they live. In the next section, we will examine a similar trajectory within the world of planning, which also incorporated emerging video technologies as a way to emphasize participation within neighborhood learning ecologies. Along the way, we will also discuss how professional planners played a central role in the racialization of these ecologies, creating many of the very problems they later aimed to solve.

Institutionalization and power in education and planning

The term “planning,” like “education,” connotes a rigid boundary, often defined by institutional contexts. If education happens in a school, then planning happens in an office building. If education involves calculators and textbooks, then planning involves specialized maps and data arrays. If education is about teachers imparting wisdom upon students, then planning is about professional planners engineering efficient places. With this project, I take a more endogenous perspective of both planning and education, looking for whether and where planning and education happen from a members’ perspective (Stevens, 2010), rather than prematurely imposing disciplinary or professional boundaries.

Though this emphasis on localized expertise and situated activity reflects a more current trend in both education research and scholarship in planning, historically, both of these disciplines have positioned institutional learning as the transmission of best practices from more knowledgeable experts to less knowledgeable practitioners. In education research, this “expert-driven” approach has been institutionalized through The What Works Clearinghouse, the Institute of Education Sciences, and related governmental and private funding mechanisms (Penuel et al., 2020). Scholars have described how this institutionalization of “best practices” works in tandem with the federal government’s control over grant dollars to shape the kind of education research that is produced, and thus, how educators and learners conceive the purpose of learning. (Zajda et al., 2008; see also Biesta, 2007). Discourses around expertise, best practices, and scientific rationality have been mobilized to support the professionalization of both education research and planning, and in doing so they have often masked the political and economic structures which have historically granted extraordinary power to a relatively small number of elite decision-makers.

Within planning, Throgmorton (1996) describes how the profession's roots in physical design and the social sciences were reconfigured during the Industrial Revolution. During this time, rapid urbanization led to a host of challenges, ranging from the spread of communicable diseases and waste management, to exploitative working conditions and municipal corruption. In response to these multifaceted challenges, a "modernist planning" movement took hold, insisting that rational problem solving would be both necessary and sufficient to transform cities so they could realize their potential as beautiful, practical centers of residential, commercial, and social life. Central to this movement was the development of the planning profession itself, which was ostensibly formed to organize chaotic urban life for the public good. However, across the country, the physical layout of cities was ultimately designed by white men working for a ruling class of businessmen and politicians who saw progress through a gaze that ranged from colorblind and willfully ignorant to explicitly racist and colonial.

For example, Seattle's first comprehensive plan was created by Harland Bartholomew, "the first full-time city planner in the United States" (Benton, 2018, p. 1120), who popularized the use of zoning as a tool to covertly reinforce racialized neighborhood boundaries, after the Supreme Court banned housing discrimination with the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* decision (Rothstein, 2017). In Chicago, the planner Daniel Burnham was handpicked by business elites of the Chicago Commerce Club to develop the Chicago comprehensive plan (McCarthy, 1970). Burnham's design ultimately improved parks and transit for wealthy white residents while "Chicago's poorest residents continued to remain centralized in slums [...] with little to no improvements" (C. M. Sandoval, 2023, p. 21). In both cases, city officials enthusiastically accepted these plans, equating interests of the public good with those of businessmen and white residents, whom they understood as the city's tax base. This mutually reinforcing trend of

environmental racism and deference to capital continued to play out, as the planning profession gained political influence and its practitioners unilaterally made decisions which reshaped urban systems and learning ecologies.

Planning neighborhood segregation

In the 1920s, US soldiers had returned home from World War One and there was a desire to plan the development of cities as hubs for workers and families. Aerial photography had been developed for reconnaissance during the war and was taken up by planners, lending a seemingly objective “bird’s eye” view to urbanizing efforts (Campanella, 2001; Rubin, 2010). With this new vantage point and an economic boom, the country must have looked ripe for re-engineering. Around this same time, discourses around neighborhoods were codified into planning efforts, when sociologist Clarence Perry devised the concept of the “neighborhood unit,” a normative way of delineating residential zones. The central premise was simple, and directly connected to education: each neighborhood unit should start with an elementary school at the center and should house enough people to support the school (Talen, 2019; Mumford, 1954). Perry’s unit became the *de facto* blueprint for planners over the next several decades, lending credence to his idea that “residential districts of that character do not grow wild. They have to be planned and cultivated” (Perry, 1929, p. 98; cited in Madden, 2014). In this way, planners took on the role of designers of learning environments, at local and regional scales. They understood the success of neighborhoods as being closely related to the success of schools, forming a reciprocal relationship that attracted, retained, and excluded certain populations.

In particular, planners’ efforts to standardize neighborhoods functioned to maintain the racialized housing segregation that had long been in place, itself a legacy of colonization and the slave trade (Ruef, 2022). The neighborhood unit, then, was one tool planners used to continue

residential segregation, and to effectively align it with academic segregation. To take just one example, the education historian David García (2018) detailed the connections between these two forms of segregation in the town of Oxnard, California. The American Beet Sugar Company developed Oxnard as a company town, hiring Mexicans to build the railroad which would both transport sugar and effectively bisect the town into “discernable white and nonwhite social words” (p. 7). Racially restrictive housing covenants kept the Mexican laborers on one side and the white residents on the other. Then, when it came time to build the schools, “school segregation simply reflected established housing patterns” (p. 43). In this way, the efforts of professional planners denied youth of color access to the resources that would support their own development of academic and professional expertise.

This ongoing history of racial segregation highlights how conceiving “education in design terms” (Bowman, 2015) is inextricably connected to the power structures that shape planners’ thinking and practices. Racialization of private land and public space is widespread across the country, and has been supported by a host of public subsidies, racial covenants, and spatial imaginaries (Lipsitz, 2011). Though national policies directly contributed to this segregation, “government policies to isolate white families in all-white urban neighborhoods began at the local level” (Rothstein, 2017, p. 60). Bowman (2015) traces the history of these practices in the Pacific Northwest, showing how The Housing and Home Financing Agency, the Federal Housing Administration, and a variety of federal and local institutions worked together to maintain and exacerbate racialized inequities in homeownership and land use.

Bowman (2015) argues that another strand of thinking within the work of planners conceived “‘education’ as a civic project,” using school curricula, film, radio and other popular media “to teach what a planned future might look like” (p. 2-3). *Town Planners’ Cinema*, in

particular, used film as a medium to “circulate ideas with the aim of resolving issues of urban change,” (Sandercock & Attili, 2010, p. 24). Planners aimed to take a more inclusive approach to their work, using the available communication channels to emphasize collective visioning and participation in planning at a local level. However, these efforts were still largely informed by a modernist approach, in which professional planners were positioned as authorities, and “their actual mission was to persuade the public of a particular planning scheme” (Sandercock & Attili, 2010, p. 24). These early efforts demonstrate how participation in local planning efforts can be aided through the use of multimedia storytelling, and how it can likewise be co-opted, given the power structures within which the planning processes occur.

Stories in/as planning: the participatory turn

In line with the postmodern turn in geography (cf. Soja, 1989), Thorgmorton (1996) critiques modernist conceptions of planning, instead arguing “to abandon the idea that ‘planning’ and ‘the planner’ can be defined authoritatively and unambiguously” and instead that planning is best understood as “a fragmented and heterogeneous mix of stories and storytellers” which “relate to one another in an interconnected web, a web of partial truths” (p. 38). This conception of planning is appealing for two reasons. For one, it challenges the authority granted to planners, a profession which has historically served to perpetuate the racialization of public and private space. Second, it suggests that to understand planning, researchers need not exclusively turn their attention to formalized planning processes, but instead may study the activity of planning as it shows up in everyday life. Or, in the case of the present design study, researchers can create the conditions in which people of various personal and professional identities participate in these planning activities. In this way, planning is not just about expert planners, cartography, and arcane legalese, but becomes about convening stakeholders to form visions of a particular place,

and then juxtaposing these visions so that these stakeholders may weave together their own life stories into a coherent, if contested, place-story.

The idea of planning as storytelling has continued to gain popularity, particularly as planners have acknowledged the benefits of creating more participatory processes, which involve stakeholders in local decision making. In this regard, Van Hulst (2012) suggests that storytelling has been described as both a “model *of* planning” and “model *for* planning.” The former highlights the idea that storytelling is fundamental to planning, in that both plans and planners tell stories (e.g. Forester, 1993). The latter perspective goes further to argue that storytelling *should* be thoughtfully applied to planning. For example, Sandercock (2004) shares that stories can have a pedagogical function: training planners. She has asked students to craft a “housing autobiography,” in which they tell a story about the houses they have lived in, and consider how this may have shaped their ideas around housing and neighborhoods. In this study, I embrace the idea that stories can have a pedagogical function in planning. However, I do not limit the notion of pedagogy to formal academic contexts, instead acknowledging that stories are constitutive of learning within planning activities that span across contexts.

Along with this participatory, narrative turn in planning, there have been some efforts to use video as a tool for community engagement. Participatory video as a methodology has been found to yield deeper engagement and “provide a catalyst for community dialogue that wouldn’t otherwise occur” (Manuel et al., 2017, p. 1690). Compared to other, more static methods of engagement, collaborative filmmaking, in particular, allows new publics to continuously form and (re)interpret a variety of perspectives about complex, often ambiguous issues that are relevant to people’s day-to-day lives (Baumann et al., 2020). To date, there has been limited

scholarly engagement across the disciplinary boundaries of filmmaking within planning and within studies of learning and teaching.

While participatory planning efforts using different kinds of media have thoroughly engaged various communities in matters of public concern, scholars have mounted important critiques against planning efforts that center participation. In particular, a focus on consensus-building among constituents often overlooks or hides power relations within inherently political processes (Legacy, 2017). Mouffe (1999) has argued that deliberative planning models are incapable of meaningfully centering the political dimensions of planning. Instead an “agonistic pluralism” is needed, which warns against the “illusion” of a fully achieved democracy, and instead “forces us to keep the democratic contestation alive” (Mouffe, 1999, p. 757). This theoretical issue quickly takes on material consequences when we consider some of the racialized inequities mentioned above. Johnson (2022) compellingly demonstrates how “means-based planning” efforts, which focus on how planning is accomplished (e.g. participatory, deliberative), have become complicit in maintaining white supremacy and racial planning. He argues that our incredibly inequitable society demands “ends-based planning,” which is more concerned with achieving a particular outcome, like dismantling environmental racism. This project responds to both Johnson and Mouffe’s provocations by using creative participation as a way of inviting community members – many of whom are white – to wrestle with their own complicity in a set of inequitable social and political systems. The educative work involved with this kind of coalition building is important for accumulating political will for achieving the ends our society both demands and deserves. As a learning scientist, I aim to engage diverse publics and stimulate excitement for visualizing more just futures through a collaborative filmmaking project.

Learning and filmmaking

The learning sciences has had much to say about the design and implementation of technology within learning environments. With its roots in artificial intelligence in education, the discipline has attracted software engineers, data scientists, and others with an interest in developing new technologies for educational purposes. Meanwhile, other learning scientists have been more focused on exploring arts-based approaches to the design of curricula and learning environments. Despite this interest in both technology and arts within the field, there has been limited work exploring film and filmmaking, a medium which sits directly at the intersection of these two pathways. I will share a couple notable exceptions to this dearth, which have blazed a trail for the present study.

Barton & Tan (2010), worked with youth in an afterschool science and technology club to help them develop video documentaries exploring urban heat islands. Through an iterative process of storyboarding, concept mapping, and video editing, the youth began to develop critical science agency and identities as community science experts. One important aspect of these projects was that the youth were able to situate somewhat abstract scientific concepts within a local, personal context that viewers could relate to. This led to a “snowballing effect,” in which they attracted the attention of engineers and scientists, as well as state representatives and community foundation officers – many of whom “were so moved by the documentaries” that they became more closely involved with the club and the youth (p. 226).

Building off of this work, Halverson (2013) collaborated with youth media arts organizations to look specifically at the representational tasks involved in producing autobiographical films. She documented how young filmmakers and artists embark on “representational trajectories” as they dialectically refine stories of themselves with the digital

tools they use to tell them. Drawing from distributed cognition theorists, Halverson describes how “external representations function both as tools to think with [Norman, 1993; Zhang & Norman, 1994] and as tools for expressing understanding of complex concepts [Norman, 1983]” (p. 125). As youth worked with digital tools for conceiving, recording, and editing and their film, there was often a virtuous cycle, in which they became more proficient both at using the tools and at better understanding themselves, *vis a vie* the self-representations they developed through the filmmaking process.

These examples demonstrate some of the affordances that filmmaking provides for helping youth: to work through and understand complex subject matter; to develop identities as experts within particular domains; and to attract attention and support from a wide variety of stakeholders. The present study shares an interest with these projects in theorizing the filmmaking process as a site of learning. However, there are a couple important distinctions. First, whereas both of the aforementioned studies are primarily interested in understanding how individuals learn, the present study is interested in learning at the scale of the neighborhood. As I will detail in the next chapters, this too involves understanding the learning trajectories of individual participants, but then extends the analytical purview to look at how discourses form at broader social scales. Second, whereas Barton & Tan as well as Halverson are focused on youth learning through filmmaking, I designed the present study to include people of all ages and to position them as both learners and teachers.

These two distinctions respond to a call for designing learning environments that span disciplines, generations, and anchor institutions (Taylor, 2022). Learning scientists, in particular, are well-poised to study and design learning processes that span these multiple settings and populations, encouraging new kinds of movement, interactions, and relationships. I contend that

we can improve educational outcomes by examining the relationships between learning in a particular setting (e.g. schools, afterschool clubs) and learning in and across the various other settings in which learners move (Marin et al., 2020). Moreover, the field would benefit from an increased emphasis on intergenerational learning, which is especially important for justice-centered researchers who seek to catalyze urgently needed transformations in the public sphere. As with the present study, this might mean studying the way learning happens outside both the classroom and afterschool club. This collaborative filmmaking project showcases one example of how people of all ages may work and learn together, outside the confines of traditional (i.e. historically oppressive) educational infrastructures.

Research questions

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate that the idea of a neighborhood learning ecology has been central to efforts in both planning and education, though it has often been appropriated in harmful ways. At the same time, some efforts to create media and share stories within these disciplines have offered promise for stimulating generative public discourse and meaningful civic engagement. I am interested in better understanding the design decisions that help civic media projects to fulfill this potential. In particular, how might a community-based creative collaboration ameliorate the harmful legacies that have segregated our neighborhoods and reinforced feelings of polarization and alienation amidst a rapidly changing landscape? How might learning scientists work with communities on such projects, as they endeavor to make sense of their history and plan for their future? This dissertation is an attempt to work towards answering these big questions by designing, documenting, and learning from a collaborative filmmaking project within my neighborhood in Seattle. The next chapter details a conceptual

framework which has helped me to transform these big questions into the more specific, actionable research questions (RQs) which guide this project:

- RQ 1: What discourses emerge over the course of a collaborative filmmaking project about urban planning in a densifying, predominantly white Seattle neighborhood?
- RQ 2: How do inhabitants¹ express these discourses during the walking tours, the ART meetings, within the film, and in response to viewing the film?
- RQ 3: How (and to what extent) are these expressions laminated into new modes of relation over the course of the project?

¹ I use the term “inhabitant” here and throughout to refer to those who live in a particular place. While the inhabitants who participated in this study are primarily humans, this term is meant to signal that humans need not possess an elevated ontological status in order to do research with them.

CHAPTER 2 – CONCEPTUAL FRAMING

In this chapter I will introduce and connect concepts from the learning sciences, Native American studies, cultural geography, and social semiotics to develop a framework describing the theory of learning I attend to in this study. Specifically, I will define civic learning as a semiotic process – civic semiotics – through which a place is transformed as the expressions of its inhabitants are laminated into new modes of relation. There are many ways these modes of relation can unfold, and through this project, I am primarily interested in cultivating the practice of place-storying. I also introduce infrastructuring as a mode of relation, because my analysis has suggested that it too has become an important piece of the story. This chapter will begin with a definition of these two modes of relation. Then, to understand how these practices may be instantiated in microgenetic interactions, I will articulate three modes of expression which I attend to in this study: listening, talking, and moving. Collectively, I will define these ways of expressing and relating (and the lamination of the former to the latter) as modes of civic learning. This complex of ideas aims to point at local transformations within a particular set of physically situated communities. After describing this in more detail, I will then introduce the notion of discourses as mediational means, which point at the ways in which larger sociocultural influences may inform the civic learning process.

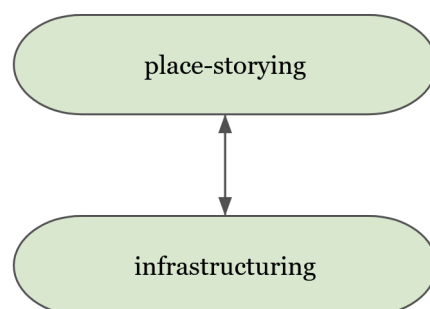
As I unpack these concepts over the duration of this section, I aim to illuminate how a theory of learning that attends to the social, material, and ecological dimensions of civic engagement could help education researchers to locate their work within a theory of change that extends beyond the classroom and conference center. If we understand learning as a phenomenon that is always “on-the-move” (Marin et al., 2020) and we aim to disrupt hegemonic systems of oppression (Esmonde & Booker, 2017), then we should strive to better understand how meaning

making moves across media and contexts, and how our local research efforts can catalyze these processes for the public good. I also hope this framing will highlight how the conceptual tools of sociocultural theory could help orient planners and other public affairs professionals to consider community building and civic engagement as processes of learning. A learning frame is essential to planning better, more equitable futures given the uncertainties associated with the “age of complexity” in which we live (Innes and Booher, 2010).

Modes of relation

In this section I describe place-storying and infrastructuring, two modes of relation which can work together to enable a community “to imagine themselves as being connected [...] through striving for common good,” which is a central goal of this project (Gordon & Mihailidis, 2016, p. 2). For heuristic purposes, I aim to demarcate each of these as unique processes. However, the reality is a bit more complicated. Each of these concepts represent a variety of activities which may feed into each other; place-storying may involve aspects of infrastructuring, and activities associated with infrastructuring may likewise be part of place-storying. Noting this interconnectedness, I introduce these as distinct concepts to help clarify the ways in which the place-storying efforts of a collaborative filmmaking project can contribute to – or hinder – the infrastructuring work through which inhabitants redesign the institutions and built environments which structure civic life.

Figure 2.1 Modes of relation



Place-storying. This design study aspires to develop processes through which participants learn to relate to each other through place-storying. This involves aligning conditions such that the inhabitants of Wallingford are able to create stories together, with their entire ecology, as a form of neighborhood planning and civic engagement. In order to explain place-storying, I will first clarify what I mean by the term “place,” and how this is closely connected with lands and waters. This is an important conceptual foundation for both education researchers and planners, because place-storying could unearth axiological innovations (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016) which help us move towards decolonizing our practices.

Human and cultural geographers have theorized extensively about the concept of place. Within this conversation, I align with Creswell (2009) in understanding place as a location imbued with meaning. However, this perspective is enriched when considering scholarship in Native American studies describing how a place’s meaning is defined by its relationships (Deloria, Jr., 2001; Basso, 1996). In fact, places emerge *from* the relationships inhabitants form with/in particular lands and waters over an extended period of time. Drawing on ethnographic studies with the Rock Cree people, Ingold (2000) describes land as “the relational field [...] the very ground from which things grow, and take on the forms they do” (p. 149). He goes on to explain that “to inhabit the land is to draw it to a particular focus, and in so doing to constitute a place” (p. 149). This framing signals a system of beliefs, often shared across Indigenous communities, that recognizes lands and waters as ontologically and epistemologically fundamental. This is because they make everything else possible: life, the formation of places, and the ways in which inhabitants come to understand themselves and those around them. From this perspective, any theory of learning must consider the ways in which lands and waters are relevant educational contexts (Marin et al. 2023). By framing place as a formation which

emerges from lands and waters, I hope to move past the nature/culture binary which has plagued much of Western education research (Bang & Marin, 2015). As part of this conception, I also understand humans – as well as the artifacts, infrastructures, and places we forge – as being fundamentally a part of the natural world.²

Drawing on Blackfoot traditions, Narcisse Blood and his colleagues (2012) use the term “place-story” to “emphasize the personal and intimate connectivity that people feel to the land and stories linked to specific places” (p. 48). Crafting place-stories is an ongoing process of collective authorship, whereby different histories come into conversation. Different people contribute and take away different things from place-stories, based on their own historical trajectories. Because of this complexity, place-stories “resist becoming lesson plans” with a single, fixed meaning (p. 53). However, they still “hold lessons and suggest outcomes” for those who participate in the process (p. 53). Notably, these participants include more-than-human inhabitants. For example, the Cree people acknowledge rocks as “ancient relatives” with “their own stories to tell” because they belong to the same “web of relationality” as plants and animals (p. 64). By coordinating attention and storying across species and other lines of difference, we become better positioned to appreciate how our well-being is all connected, and then to act in ways that honor this connectedness.

Before proceeding, I want to clarify two points which distinguish my use of the term “place-storying” with that of Blood et al. (2012). For one, in their article, they are primarily focused on “the personal and public significance of particular places and place-stories” (p. 48). They share these particular place-stories because of their potential to communicate important

² By positioning humans and the things we forge as fundamentally “natural,” I do not intend to imply that we or they are good, worth perpetuating, or resistant to change. Rather than making an axiological judgment, this is purely an ontological statement.

historical, cultural, and geographical insights. In contrast, I am primarily focused on the process of place-storying with/in a neighborhood. While the particular place-stories that come to light are certainly of interest, they are interesting primarily because they will allow me to better understand how learning happens over the course of the project. In other words, I consider place-stories to be an artifact which can provide evidence of learning-as-place-storying. Place-storying, as a process, can be identified through the practice of generating place-stories, whether or not these artifacts are inscribed on a durable medium.

Second, from their position as Blackfoot scholars, Blood et al.'s framing is focused on survivance with and for Indigenous communities. I share this axiological orientation and have attempted to work towards it in this project, noting that "honoring the 'everyday experiences of American Indians' (p. 431) is essential to decolonizing processes" (Brayboy 2005, cited in Marin & Bang, 2015). However, from my position as a white settler working primarily with other settlers, I approach place-storying aspirationally, recognizing that the enduring histories of settler colonialism have often disconnected people from their larger ecologies. At the same time, place-storying offers hope for rebuilding relations, even among settlers; walking, storying, and reading the land is not a practice exclusive to Indigenous peoples, but is rather a developmental process, in which all beings may participate (Marin & Bang, 2018). With this project, I develop an arts-based intervention in which inhabitants create place-stories together, thereby creating expressive pathways to relate to each other around common interests and concerns.

Infrastructuring. Beyond place-storying, there are numerous other modes through which inhabitants can build and sustain relationships. Here, I will describe one more mode of relation which will be relevant to this study: infrastructuring. Drawing off of Penuel (2019), I define infrastructuring as "redesign(ing) components, relations, and routines" with a diversity of

stakeholders to support joint work (p. 659). Penuel, following Susan Leigh Star, conceives infrastructures as those components, relations, and routines which become relevant to the communities of practice within which they are integrated (Star, 1999; Star & Ruhleder, 1994). Within a neighborhood context, these infrastructures might involve, for example, social structures, like community councils and homeowners associations, as well as physical aspects of the built environment, like streets and houses. Infrastructuring, then, refers to the process of redesigning these infrastructures, building on the sociomaterial systems which came before. Whereas place-storying can be identified by the new place-stories that are generated, infrastructuring can be identified by these redesigned infrastructures.

While Penuel is primarily concerned with redesigning the educational systems of schools and districts to improve students' learning outcomes, I designed the present study to open up possibilities for educational infrastructuring beyond the "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Tobin, 1994), integrating stakeholders who include, but are not limited to, school personnel. In particular, I aim to stimulate conversations that span across the efforts of planners; educators and education researchers; and those involved in studying and producing various forms of civic media. Contemporary scholarship in all of these fields recognizes the importance of attending to the (re)design of infrastructure (e.g. Shea et al., 2023; Clements et al., 2023; Rhinesmith, 2016). I argue that more theoretical and methodological tools are needed to bring these disciplines into closer conversation.

Accordingly, I offer infrastructuring as a mode of relation relevant to civic learning because, like place-storying, it is a practice which depends on some degree of sustained coordination across inhabitants and within learning ecologies. However, to be clear, this kind of coordination is not always ecologically beneficial or morally sound. In fact, as detailed in the

previous chapter, the infrastructuring efforts of planners and education researchers over the past century have often exacerbated inequities, injuring humans' relationships with each other and the rest of the natural world. In the words of Navajo geographer Andrew Curley (2021) "infrastructures (in the United States) are almost always colonial" (p. 388). This means that equity-oriented infrastructuring efforts must often interrogate and dismantle the status quo, remembering and (re)imagining (Marin et al., 2023) the kinds of components, relations, and routines which support shared wellbeing.³

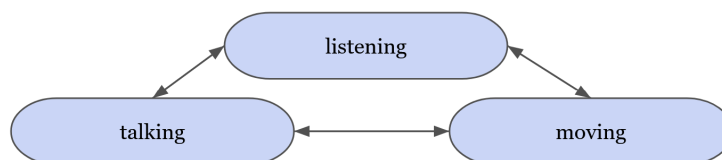
Modes of expression

So far, I have described two modes of relation which are relevant to civic learning. This study inquires into whether and how these modes are cultivated within the interactional spaces of a collaborative filmmaking project. In order to understand this, I will attend to the ways in which inhabitants express themselves as they participate in various stages of the project. These expressions may take a variety of forms, and I will describe them in my analysis. For the time being, I propose focusing on three modes of expression which are relevant to this project: listening, talking, and moving. By enumerating multiple modes of expression, I aim to show that existing processes of civic engagement infrastructures tend to prioritize some over others. By attending to a fuller spectrum of expressive possibilities, we can enable heterogeneous ways of knowing and being to come into contact, creating space for the kind of critical public sensemaking that is crucial to repairing our relationships with each other and the places we inhabit. In this section, I will describe how each of these modes are relevant to learning through place-storying. But first, I will describe the sense in which these modes are expressive.

³ By way of example, Be:Seattle is a nonprofit that is reimagining the kind of infrastructures that could support housing justice. This includes creating a network of small businesses that offer food, water, bathrooms, and other necessities to our unhoused neighbors: <https://beseattle.org>

So what is “expression?” I agree with Tim Ingold (2000), who argues that much of social scientific theory has sucked the expressiveness out of human meaning making. To illustrate this, he describes the popular notion that speaking and singing are two fundamentally different kinds of activities. According to this view, speaking might be understood as a cognitive activity in which meaning is stored as concepts and then communicated by encoding the concepts into conventional sounds (i.e. words). Singing, in contrast, is thought to be meaningful not because of any conceptual encoding, but because of its affective or felt presence. Ingold disputes this bifurcation, noting that speech and song are both part of the world in which speakers, singers, and listeners are born and develop; they have a shared history. Words do not merely represent abstract mental concepts; they gather meaning from the relationships of those who use them, and the world in which we dwell. From this relational perspective, speaking *is* “‘singing the world’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 187) in the sense of entering intentionally and expressively into it, of ‘living’ it” (p. 410). Expression is not limited to “linguistic” activities, because language is not a fundamental ontological category. Rather, “expression” denotes the ways in which inhabitants evoke meaningful affect within the “currents of activity” (p. 410) they share. The particular meanings that individuals attribute to these expressions are highly contextualized, dynamic, and negotiable, informed by the histories of similar expressions that they are perceived to signal. With this established, I now describe each of the three focal modes of expression in more detail.

Figure 2.2 Modes of expression



Listening. Nearly one century ago, the education researcher Paul Rankin categorized speaking and writing as “the two expressional (language arts),” and listening and reading as “the two understanding ones” (Rankin, 1928, p. 623). In this same article, he advocated for the importance of cultivating students’ ability to listen in the classroom, citing his findings that listening was the most frequently used language art in “ordinary living” (p. 624). This proved to be enormously influential, with new education research programs developed in the areas of listening elicitation, listening benefits, and listening instruction, all typically geared towards helping students achieve normative definitions of academic success (Beall et al., 2008). While I appreciate Rankin’s inclusion of listening as a language “art,” I push back on his taxonomy, arguing that listening, too, deserves to be considered “expressional” – particularly insofar as inhabitants listen as part of place-storying efforts with their neighbors. In this context, it is not just an individual listener who may be considered a learner, but indeed the entire neighborhood becomes more open to the possibility of learning.

This understanding of listening as wholly expressive and holistically educative builds off existing research in anthropology, as well as from the various Indigenous traditions that have been collectively referred to as storywork. In defining the latter, Sto:lo scholar Jo-anne Archibald said that “meaning comes from a synergy between the story, the context it’s used in, the way it’s told, and how one *listens* to it” (2008, p. 84, emphasis added). In this sense, listening is a creative activity; storytellers and storylisteners co-create meaning as they engage in dialogue. Place-storying involves “reciprocal meaning making, resulting in strengthened relationships and responsibility for both the teller and the listener” (Meixi & Elliott-Groves, 2020, p. 2203). Indeed, listening to the perspectives of other inhabitants can help cultivate an environment where

individuals learn to understand the public context within which their individual concerns are located, and as a result, the place itself may take on a new character.

To understand the ways in which listening can be part of a neighborhood's transformation through place-storying, I draw on thinking from anthropologists who have studied listening within social interaction. For example, instead of assuming a monolithic notion of the "hearer" of a particular speech act, I follow Goffman (1979) in questioning who may be considered a hearer, and inquire into how people are (or are not) hearing each other, which is contingent upon their status within a participation framework. I ask how participation statuses shift along with the utterances of participants' interlocutors. In this study, I am interested in understanding how these dynamics unfold, particularly as participants engage in dialogue with a variety of other inhabitants, and their own respective place-stories come into contact. In the following sections, I will describe in more detail how participation frameworks – in conjunction with ambulatory sequences – provide an analytical lens through which to surface the nature and relation of each mode of expression.

Talking. With the possible exception of writing, talking is perhaps the mode of expression that has been paid the most attention within education research and related disciplines. This can be traced back to the work of Vygotsky, who posited language as the primary medium through which people internalize cultural meanings (Vygotsky, 1963; Lemke, 2013). Then, after the "cognitive revolution" of the 1960s, the field of conversation analysis became particularly influential in helping researchers to understand conversations from the endogenous perspectives of the conversants (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Building on this foundation, I understand talking to be a culturally and historically informed expression of participants in local interactions. As mentioned above, the expressiveness of speech emerges

simultaneously from its conceptual significance and its affective presence. Erickson (2004) illustrates this beautifully in *Talk and Social Theory*, scoring stretches of conversation with musical notation to emphasize rhythm, cadence, pitch contour, and prosody. In this way, he demonstrates how talking is expressive along a number of interrelated dimensions, all of which cohere as the speaker animates them.

Talking is also a key component of place-storying, in that the inhabitants of a place enact aspects of a place's identity as they tell stories about it. Education researchers have been concerned with personal storytelling through speech and its implications for learning for quite some time (Bruner, 1991; Ochs et al., 1992; Wortham, 2001). However, there has been less scholarship devoted to the role of speech in place-storying, and its implications for learning.⁴ While place-stories may take on various forms (some of which do not require talking), the present study designs for talking as a central aspect of place-storying for a few reasons: it is a generally familiar and accessible mode of expression; it brings participants into dialogue with each other in real time, as they encounter their neighborhood together; and it can be recorded to juxtapose stories and to aid in analysis.

To understand how streams of speech are embedded within moments of place-storying, I take “a cross-sectional instantaneous view” relative to “a particular individual in the act of speaking,” noting how participants align themselves to each other and their environment (Goffman, 1979, p. 11). Goffman (1979) clarifies that this kind of analysis entails considering the multiple positions that a speaker simultaneously takes up: an animator, or “a body engaged in acoustic activity”; an author, or someone who encodes words to express personal sentiments; and a principal, or someone who is sharing their beliefs and commitments (p. 17). These positions

⁴ Some notable exceptions include the work of Megan Bang and Ananda Marin, which I discuss in relation to movement in the next section.

shift in dynamic relation with participants' footing relative to the larger participation framework. In keeping with the tradition of conversation analysis, I attend to these shifts by considering turn-taking as a basic organizing principle in conversation (Sacks et al., 1978). At the same time, I am also interested in understanding any patterns which might emerge over longer stretches of interaction, or across interactions (Agha, 2005). The next section describes how this likewise involves attending to participants' movement over the courses of the designed activities.

Moving. Movement is an incessant aspect of learning and teaching, though until relatively recently, it has not been acknowledged as a relevant context within education research (Leander et al., 2010). I join other learning scientists who study mobility as a site of learning (Marin et al., 2020), noting its unique affordances for expression. Ma & Hall (2018), for example, studied ensemble learning in a marching band. They describe how musicians learned to play a part by physically moving into formation, effectively bringing to life the representations of movement that had previously only existed on a sheet of paper. Building on this work, Hollett et al. (2022), highlight how physical movements in a ballet class are, themselves, “moving” – that is, felt affectively and relationally among the ensemble. In this way, movement can be understood as a mode of expression, in tandem with talking and listening. In fact, talking and listening themselves are inextricably connected with movement. At a basic physiological level, these activities involve the movement of our vocal chords, ear drums, and indeed, our entire body.

While recognizing that movement inevitably pervades all learning processes, I am primarily interested in understanding how physically moving through a neighborhood with other inhabitants might contribute to learning through place-storying efforts within a collaborative filmmaking project. This kind of movement offers promise for two reasons. For one, moving

through one's neighborhood is a multisensory experience which prompts memories, desires, fears, and other deeply personal feelings which might not emerge in more typical settings for education and planning (Pink, 2009). Second, moving as a group provides unique opportunities for individuals' place-stories to hybridize and become more complex. This connection between collective movement and place-storying has been explored in the context of a religious ceremony (Lund, 2008) and public history projects (Taylor, 2022; Hall et al., 2020), as well as land-based education efforts to sustain Indigenous pedagogies and cultural resurgence (Marin, 2020; Marin & Bang, 2018; Bang et al., 2014). These latter efforts are particularly instructive for this project, as they too involve "nature walks or neighborhood walks, where people are traveling between various kinds of designed environments, including those designed by more-than-humans" (Marin, 2020, p. 283).

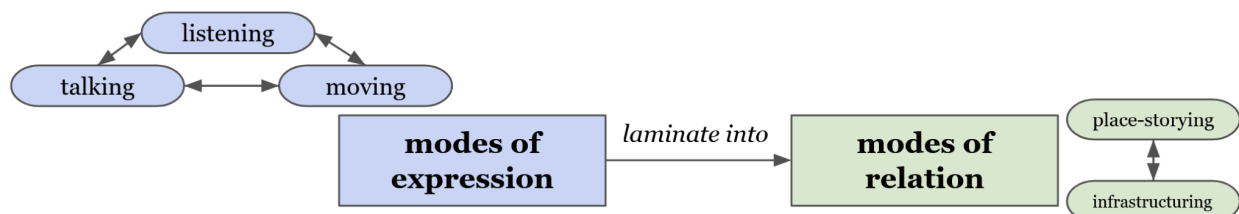
In order to study how human participants are learning during these walks, Marin (2020) developed a new unit of analysis, the ambulatory turn, which makes visible the epistemic ecologies within which land, speech, and bodily movement interact. Taking cues from conversation analysts, Marin extends the idea of a "turn" to include shifts in walking patterns, corporeal arrangements, and gestures, as well as talk. Using ambulatory turns as her unit of analysis enables Marin to understand how parent-children groups learn as they move or pause along their walks together. Ambulatory turns can also be linked together to form ambulatory sequences, which follow the place-stories of the inhabitants over the course of multiple turns. Examining ambulatory sequences "can support an analysis of learning as place-making or how spaces (i.e. stories-so-far) are interconnected through movement across land" (Marin, 2020, p. 307). Because the present study involves methods that are both relatively static (e.g. interviews in participants' homes) as well as mobile (e.g. neighborhood walking tours), I draw on both

conversational turn-taking as well as ambulatory turns and sequences to understand how participants are place-storying across each phase.

Modes of civic learning

We've covered a lot of ground. To recap, this dissertation is a design study looking at a methodology to create opportunities for civic learning at the scale of the neighborhood. So far, I have only briefly summarized an account of civic learning: the lamination of inhabitants' modes of expression into modes of relation. I then went into more detail describing place-storying and infrastructuring as two modes of relation; and listening, talking, and moving as three modes of expression. In this section I will attempt to explain more thoroughly what I mean by lamination, the connecting force between how inhabitants of a particular place express themselves in microgenetic interactions and how they relate to each other over longer stretches of time. In doing so, I will also articulate the sense in which this process might be considered civic learning, as opposed to learning in a more general sense. This description will show that to understand how local interactions within the course of this intervention are related to larger cultural and political concerns, we will need to account for the discourses which inform the modes of expression that show up in the study. Accordingly, the final section of this chapter will address discourses, positioning civic learning as a semiotic process.

Figure 2.3 Modes of civic learning



Lamination. We can think about the modes of expression as a repertoire of types of meaningful actions which are located in individuals' bodies. As I have explained in the previous sections, this does not diminish the fact that listening, talking, and moving are always part of social and ecological contexts. Nonetheless, it is the personal embodiment of these modes which defines them as expressive. At this point, we can ask how these *modes of expression* become *modes of relation*. In other words, how do these unique, situated actions become part of more sustained social practices? Here, I employ the metaphor of lamination, drawing on two closely related uses of the term by Charles Goodwin, Dorothy Holland, and Kevin Leander.

Holland and Leander (2004) use the term “lamination” to describe how episodes of interactional positioning “leave memories laced through feelings, bodily reactions, and the words and glances of others” (p. 131). The extent to which a teacher positions a student as knowledgeable or ignorant, for example, over time, can influence the way her peers treat her, and the way she thinks about herself (see also Nasir, 2011). Each episode of positioning – whether through linguistic or paralinguistic means, or through the absence of any recognition (e.g. not calling on the student when she raises her hand) – has the potential to produce a new layer of identification. Then, “as layers accumulate, as laminates of the social affixed to personal experiences thicken, they themselves become objects that mediate further action” (p. 134). It is in this sense that place-stories take on a life of their own, thrust forward by the expressions of those who participate in the process. Typically, going on a walk around one's neighborhood, or having a conversation about a new housing complex, would not become laminated into a social practice through which inhabitants can come to recognize themselves as meaningful contributors. Through this collaborative filmmaking project, I aim to create an environment such that

individuals become aware of how their expressions might be laminating particular kinds of place-stories, and are then invited to question the nature of these stories.

While Holland and Leander hint at the semiotic fields which are involved in lamination (e.g. bodily reactions, words, glances), their focus is really more on social positioning, particularly insofar as it plays a role in identity development across numerous episodes. Goodwin (2018), in contrast, is squarely focused on the mechanics of the semiotic fields themselves, especially in relation to the co-operative actions of those engaged in joint work. He uses the term “lamination” to describe the process of “rapidly joining together unlike materials with complementary properties,” such as “language structures, gestures, (and) materials invoked from the surrounding environment” (p. 105). Goodwin goes on to describe how within a variety of contexts, from kids playing hopscotch to archaeologists examining dirt, actors laminate a variety of semiotic resources (e.g. word choice, speaking volume, the hopscotch grid) in order to convey a point or get something done. This aspect of lamination is also important for considering how participants in a collaborative filmmaking project create place-stories. As I will detail in the next chapter, place-storying in this study involves the lamination of various modes of expression within and across various contexts and media, including one-on-one interviews, community walking tours, film assembly meetings, a film, and film screenings for different audiences.

Civic learning. I have described lamination as a semiotic process through which modes of expression are layered over time as resources for co-operative action and identification. But I still owe you an explanation of how – and why – I conceptualize this process as civic learning. While “civic” may evoke exclusionary, white-normed conceptions of public participation, I support efforts to reclaim the term to refer to the rights of all people to participate in processes of public concern (Mirra & Garcia, 2017; Lee et al., 2021). From the Latin *civicus*, “civic” denotes

how individuals (citizens) are embedded within a collective social fabric (city). This etymological relationship signals how a desire for social cohesion and belonging carries across markers of age, race, and immigration status, linking citizens to the cities and towns they inhabit. At the same time, civic learning theorists and practitioners in the United States need to grapple with the way Black and Native Americans, among others, have been excluded from traditional forms of citizenship, which has had lasting effects on the way civic participation looks in many of these communities. A reclaimed notion of civic learning, therefore, needs to look beyond established forms of participation, connecting learning that happens within and across both formal and informal, traditional and nontraditional learning environments (Ito et al., 2015).

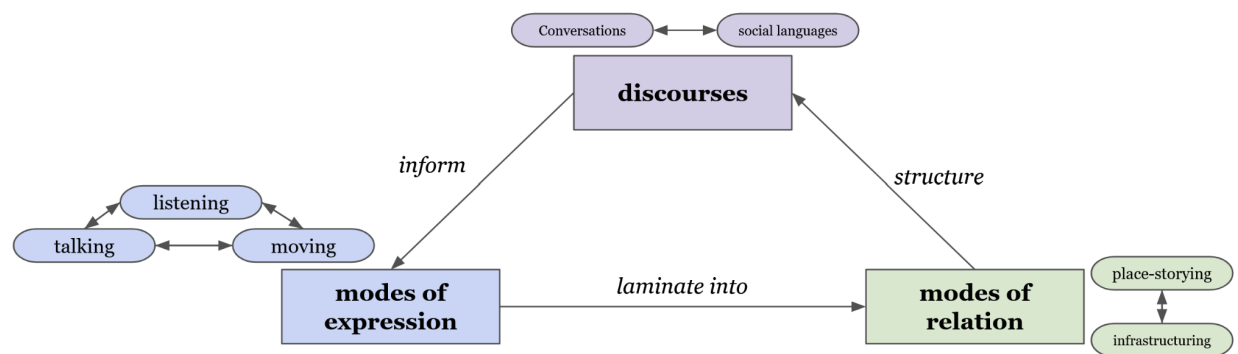
For this, I draw on the educational philosopher Gert Biesta, who describes civic learning as the processes and practices that help form and maintain democratic communities (Biesta & Cowell, 2012). Importantly, democratic communities are not defined *a priori* based on shared identities or interests, but rather by their differences, which become most visible as they come into contact. In this “pedagogy of becoming public,” the pluralities of human togetherness are brought together through the creation of a public sphere. Here, the educational agent does not serve as an instructor nor a facilitator, but an interrupter (Biesta, 2012). From this perspective, the goal is not to demand a particular kind of learning, but to “keep open the possibility of a space where freedom can appear” (Biesta, 2012, p. 693). People act as educators insofar as they support “a process of transformation in which private interests are evaluated and reformulated in light of collective needs and concerns” (Biesta & Cowell, 2012, p. 49). I consider this process of transformation, in which a public sphere is created, to be the process through which modes of expression are laminated into modes of relation. In this way, civic learning is not characterized by a particular institutional setting or population, but rather by emergent forms of relationality

among inhabitants and the places where they live. In this conception, public spheres are dynamic and contingent, offering potential for meaningful interactions to resonate across social groups and the cultural milieu.

The role of discourses in civic learning

My account of civic learning thus far involves inhabitants meaningfully engaging with each other and their neighborhoods, such that their expressions laminate into new modes of relation, effectively creating a public sphere. While I have offered some description of the semiotic nature of this process, it has been fairly limited to the local actions of participants within particular interactional spaces. In order to account for how “the conduct of talk⁵ in local social interaction is profoundly influenced by processes that occur beyond the temporal and spatial horizon of the immediate occasion” (Erickson, 2004, p. viii), I now introduce the notion of discourse as a set of interrelated mediating phenomena, which inform the way individuals express themselves, and which themselves are structured by modes of relation.

Figure 2.4 Civic semiotics



An attention to discourse has stimulated interest and debate within the social sciences for many decades, leading to a number of research programs across many disciplines. While

⁵ I extend this to include other modes of expression, as well.

cognizant of the tendency for some linguists and semioticians to reduce all meaning making to language, where “everything becomes sign and sign system” (Latour, 1993, p. 63), I find the understanding of discourse as “a general mode of semiosis, i.e. meaningful symbolic behavior” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 2) to be a particularly helpful way for conceiving how local expressions exist in a dialectic interplay with larger social, cultural, and political forces. The field of social semiotics, in particular, has transcended structuralist and cognitivist framings of signification to account for the ways in which meaning making is always accomplished with mediational means which are made available (or restricted) within social practice (Norris & Jones, 2005). Building on this work, some scholars have proposed a “geosemiotic” methodology, which emphasizes how discourses are emplaced and encountered in “the real, physical, material world” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 111). Noting the resonances with storywork, I adopt the mutually compatible orientations of both social semiotics and geosemiotics. This latter alignment is particularly important for this project, in that normative discourses involving “land use” within civic engagement and urban planning contexts have historically promoted colonialism and damaged human relationships with lands and waters (Jackson 1997; Brayboy, 2005).

Conversations. While there are many aspects of discourse that fit under the admittedly wide umbrella defined above, here I briefly describe two which are relevant to understanding how inhabitants express their positions within their neighborhood and proceed to negotiate their footing over the course of this project. The first is that of a Conversation⁶, which Gee (2011) describes as “themes, debates, or motifs” (p. 29) which “swirl around us in the media [...] and in our interactions with other people” such that knowledge about them “is an ever present background you can bring to interpret things” (p. 55). Those who are privy to these

⁶ In the findings chapters I refer to Conversations as “conversations” (lower case) to improve legibility.

Conversations are able to recognize particular sides or stances, along with the kinds of people who tend to occupy them. Within the context of this project, one such Conversation involves homelessness. At the risk of simplifying a nuanced discussion, we might understand some people as supporters of police sweeps to purge parks and public spaces of encampments and the “undesirables” who are living in them. Another group of people might support unhoused folks in living wherever they can, underscoring the systemic inequities which have forced many of them to live outside. Conversations – and the positions people take up with respect to them – are subject to constant flux, and exist on varying scales of specificity along a local/global continuum. While homelessness is in some sense a global Conversation, it is also highly contextualized within particular communities. The idea of a Conversation is flexible enough to encompass the entire continuum, and indeed implies that all local Conversations are informed by language and tropes from more global ones.

Social languages. If Conversations are the “what” of discourse, I introduce social languages as a way to understand the “who.” The notion of a social language from Bakhtin, refers to “a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (professional, age group, etc.) within a given system at a given time” (Holquist and Emerson, 1981, p. 430)” (Wertsch, 1993). In everyday speech, individuals draw on social languages by appropriating the vocabulary, cadence, and tonality of particular types of people, whether or not they do so consciously. This is the sense in which “the word in language is half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293).

Within the scope of this study, participants take up numerous social languages. Here I highlight two which become particularly salient to the analysis: New Urbanists and neighborhood defenders. While both of these social languages are used to discuss similar Conversations about housing and land use, they do so from different perspectives, working

toward different – and often diametrically opposed – political objectives. “New Urbanism” refers to a popular urban design and planning movement, which originated in the 1980s as a response to suburban sprawl associated with the post-war modernist planning paradigm (see Ch. 1; Congress for New Urbanism, 2000). The New Urbanist social language is characterized by its embrace of “ideals inspired by an idyllic image of premodernity” (Hirt, 2009, p. 249), including compactness, mixed uses, and walkability. Concepts like “smart growth,” “missing middle housing,” and “transit-oriented development” have all grown out of New Urbanism, considering how physical design can be used to address contemporary socio-spatial problems (Garde, 2020). This social language often intersects with that of YIMBYs (Yes In My Back Yard) and housing justice activists, who use a variety of data types and sometimes sharp rhetoric to advocate for more favorable housing policies (Francis, 2022).

In contrast, “neighborhood defenders” refers to residents who attempt to prevent new development in their neighborhoods out of a desire to protect their community and property (Einstein et al., 2020). Within this social language, a variety of arguments are mobilized to oppose disruptions to the status quo. Unlike NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard), who primarily express concerns due to self-interest, the neighborhood defender social language expresses an ostensible benevolence in its concern for building and maintaining a sense of community. This language is taken up by a variety of people for varied reasons. However, it tends to be used by older, white homeowners, many of whom draw on their professional experience in planning, architecture, government, law, or health in an attempt to more credibly advocate for stalling up development (Einstein et al., 2020). As the housing and climate crises intensify, the social languages of New Urbanists and neighborhood defenders are both taking on more urgency in public discourse.

An analysis of how Conversations and social languages show up in particular expressions can help explain the ways in which social and cultural influences may inform inhabitants' perspectives, and how these perspectives change over time. In describing his approach to values coding, Saldaña (2021, p. 168), quoting Scollon & Scollon (2004), notes that "all discourse, but also all action is inherently a system of attitudes. Any action implies value, attitude, affect, emotion (p. 144)." It is for this reason that attention to discourse can help us understand how participants' utterances communicate axiological positions, and the ways in which other participants align or disalign themselves with respect to these positions as they engage in interaction. However, rather than attributing discursive phenomena as a characteristic belonging to a participant, I am instead more interested in understanding how different Conversations and social languages interact, hybridize, and evolve over the course of an interaction, an ambulatory sequence, or a larger arc throughout the project. This kind of analysis recognizes that axiological and discursive positions may shift along with the way participants are positioned socially and physically in interaction. In the next chapter, I explain how I intend to operationalize this theoretical perspective to answer the research questions guiding this study.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODS

The purpose of this research is to a) design a learning environment in which community members express personal place-stories; and b) to better understand how the participants – and their neighborhood more holistically – weave these place-stories together, and perhaps learn to imbue these stories with cultural, political, and material significance. Both of these goals are oriented around the idea that addressing urgent socio-ecological challenges requires collective learning in which humans work in solidarity with their broader ecologies to restore their relations with each other. In this section I will describe the research design and methods that help me to work towards these goals. I will begin by situating my project as a participatory design research study, which informs how I collect data. Then, I will situate my project as a critical place inquiry, which informs how I analyze data. After describing these methodological orientations, I will go into more detail about the study itself, describing the research setting, data collection methods, and my analytic approach.

Methodological orientations

Participatory design research (PDR) is a subset of the tradition of design research in education. Broadly speaking, the present study is a design research project in the sense that it “eliminates the boundary between design and research” (Edelson, 2002, p. 107). Throughout the project, I have been continually making decisions to balance goals and constraints, incorporating lessons learned to refine the design. In the process, I have formed testable conjectures about participants’ learning, and the degree to which the designed environment has supported those shifts (Cobb et al., 2003; W. Sandoval, 2014). To take one example, I conjectured that involving community members in the process of assembling the film would support dialogue with

heterogeneous perspectives in the formation of a neighborhood place-story. (Chs. 4 and 6 describe the extent to which this conjecture was confirmed.)

While design research has been an immensely useful meta-methodology, bringing together a variety of education researchers with different epistemological orientations (P. Bell, 2004), learning scientists have more recently begun to interrogate how this research may be implemented and taken up within the current sociopolitical landscape in education. With this in mind, participatory design research has been introduced as a set of design commitments which link “both structural critiques of normative hierarchies of power and imagined possible futures” while also being “committed to consequential impacts in the here and now” (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016, p. 174). The present study shares these commitments. In particular, it grapples with tensions around honoring heterogeneous ways of knowing and being, while recognizing the need for critical praxis and alignment in the face of pressing contemporary challenges. PDR describes an overarching theory of action – namely, that research is understood as a collaboration with community members that contributes to local social transformation, as well as a more nuanced understanding of learning that can be usefully adapted across settings and populations. In this way, it emphasizes the processes through which research is carried out.

Critical place inquiry (CPI), in contrast, focuses attention on the particular place where the research is conducted, illuminating and interrogating locally relevant power structures. CPI is decidedly ambivalent about the particular methods that are used to conduct this kind of investigation, including a variety of approaches under its wide umbrella. Techniques from PDR and CPI can be used together to iteratively design a research study with community members, investigating their shared places and the systems of power and oppression that operate within them. Tuck and McKenzie (2014, p. 75) write that critical place inquiry

takes up critical questions and develops corresponding methodological approaches that are informed by the embeddedness of social life in and with places, and [...] seeks to be a form of action in responding to critical place issues such as those of globalization and neoliberalism, settler colonialism, and environmental degradation.

In *Places in Research*, Tuck and McKenzie (2014, p. 119-121) listed several methods that have been used in critical place inquiries. Video/digital storytelling methods are said to evoke connections to place; time spent in places; narratives of places and place-related issues; and participants speaking out on place-related issues. Furthermore, video and photography may reveal concrete aspects of places, like appearance, sounds, and smells; and, if used as part of an elicitation strategy, video narration may reveal participants' emotions, personal meanings, and uses of places. This array of possibilities offers a glimpse into the many ways video may be used to interpret and construct places, through the lens of personal stories and interpersonal dialogue.

Video-based critical place inquiry for planning & community engagement. Fortunately, others have paved the way for the kind of methodology I am proposing in this study. As mentioned in Ch. 1, Sandercock and Attili (2010) conducted a critical place inquiry using ethnographic filmmaking as a tool for social research, community engagement, and policy dialogue. The principal investigators, along with a group of graduate students, worked with Collingswood Neighborhood House (CNH), a community-based organization in Vancouver, BC, to better understand how the local neighborhood had overcome anti-immigrant sentiment in the 1970s and 80s. CNH staff acclimated the researchers to Collingswood through walking tours and extended conversations. Then, together, they agreed on themes that the film would cover. Over the course of the next three months, the students interviewed CNH staff along with many of the neighborhood residents, which resulted in a host of mini-films or "micro-stories," and were screened at the annual CNH meeting to residents and staff. These micro-stories were then compiled to create a "talking heads" story, which allowed the researchers to narrow in on a more

focused, overarching narrative and incorporate relevant archival media and other imagery. The final film was received well by the residents, and ultimately, there was demand to screen it across Canada. Sandercock and Attili produced a manual to accompany the film, and a protocol to facilitate workshops which were customizable to specific community issues.

I share this example because it closely maps onto the present study. Both draw on the affordances of multimodal storytelling to create learning environments for visioning and local social transformation. In this regard, audiovisual methods offer unparalleled expressive and aesthetic possibilities. When done well, collaborative filmmaking projects, in particular, can engage a large, diverse group of stakeholders who do not typically participate in planning discussions. They refocus the settings of public dialogue from town halls and offices to the streets, sidewalks, homes, and neighborhoods in which people live and for which people care so deeply. *Visions of Wallingford*, for example, incorporated the perspective of a man who builds foundations for local houses, and is currently facing housing insecurity. I met him while I was filming b-roll on Wallingford's main commercial corridor, and he became interested in getting involved with the project. (See Ch. 6 for more details.) Education researchers and planners can similarly invite stakeholders into their work by meeting people where they are, and offering opportunities to create something meaningful together.

Research setting

This study takes place in the Wallingford neighborhood in north Seattle. Wallingford is located between two major highways, just west of the University of Washington, and a short drive or bus ride downtown. Since it was platted in the late 1800s, it has been a predominantly white, blue-collar neighborhood known for its quaint Craftsman-style homes and the feel of “a small town in the big city” (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, 1998). Wallingford borders

Lake Union to the south, and historically, many of the residents have been laborers in the maritime industry or the Seattle Gas Company, which was situated on the shore. In fact, despite the neighborhood's relative racial homogeneity, South Wallingford had been redlined because of its proximity to the noxious gas plant (which was converted into Gas Works Park in the 1970s) (Sawyer, 2020).

Over the past few decades, as Seattle has become a major tech hub, housing prices have skyrocketed, displacing some and changing the socio-economic makeup of the area. The neighborhood is now a hodgepodge of relative old timers, who have stayed in place and have seen their property values (and taxes) rise precipitously; and newcomers, many of whom have relatively high incomes, which enable them to purchase houses. However, despite a strong presence of homeowners in public forums like the Wallingford Community Council, about 55% of local residents are renters (U.S Census Bureau, 2020). Most current residents have moved into the neighborhood within the past 10 years (U.S Census Bureau, 2020), indicating a high rate of displacement.

Wallingford's rising housing prices and rate of displacement reflects a broader trend across the city and the country. A primary driver is the limited supply of housing, which has been constrained by racialized zoning changes throughout the past century (Rothstein, 2017). The advent of zoning in the US has reduced the amount of land available to develop "missing middle" housing, like townhouses, duplexes, and small apartment buildings (Mohler, 2020). In response to these constraints, the City of Seattle has begun to ease zoning regulations to allow more density in "urban villages" across the city. Additional "upzones" are currently being considered in an update to the Comprehensive Plan that is underway. These zoning changes mean that the buildings, the people, and the senses of place (Raymond et al., 2021) in

Wallingford are changing, as well. The eclectic architecture in the neighborhood, which runs the gamut from Colonial Revival to Craftsman and Shingle Style (Historic Wallingford, n.d.1), are being torn down and replaced with less traditional materials and aesthetics.

In response to these changes, local organizations have formed to advocate for a particular vision of what the neighborhood is and should be in the future. For example, Historic Wallingford, a local, volunteer-run nonprofit, successfully petitioned the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to officially designate a section of the neighborhood in the National Registry of Historic Places (Historic Wallingford, n.d.2). They have said that this will not affect zoning or land use decisions, but others have disagreed, claiming that this effort will, in fact, carry forward Seattle's history of residential segregation (Eliason, 2021). Other groups, like Welcoming Wallingford and Wallingford for All, have sprung up in opposition to these kinds of efforts, focusing their advocacy on housing density, public transit, and pedestrian safety.

To date, there have been limited opportunities for different factions to engage in productive dialogue about these issues. Much of the conversation happens online, on local blogs, NextDoor pages and Facebook groups. While these forums serve as important sites of engagement, extant literature reveals that they seldom lead to meaningful deliberation (e.g. Castaño-Pulgarín et al., 2021; Vaidhyanathan, 2018). The Wallingford Community Council (WCC) has served as the central public forum for neighborhood planning and organizing, and hosts regular in-person meetings. From initial interviews with community members, the WCC has been derided as exclusionary and hostile to renters who have attempted to join the leadership team. It seems the local civic infrastructure has provided limited opportunities for community members to engage – particularly around the challenging, critical conversations related to the

ongoing legacies of colonization and racial segregation, in which Wallingford and its residents have been a part.

Researcher positionality and project history

When I moved to Seattle in the summer of 2018, I was fortunate to have a good place to live. My friend Steve had connected me to a group house in Wallingford. The people in The Lodge (group houses in Seattle had names, apparently) hosted a weekly potluck that attracted dozens of people. Over the next year, as I attended classes at UW, I got to know neighbors, classmates, friends of friends, and even friends of family, all through the group house and our “family dinners.” I would also spend hours strolling through the neighborhood, adoring the architecture, the mountain views, the kale and chard plots occupying every inch of available space; it was all such a nice change of pace from life on the East Coast.

Then, our landlord kicked us out. Fortunately, through our family dinners, I became friends with someone who was looking for a roommate at Ground Zero, another group house on the other side of the neighborhood. So, over the next year, as my courses ramped up and the pandemic irreversibly changed life on planet Earth, I was cooped up in a new home. During this time, I learned quite a bit more about the neighborhood by doing historical research, reading old neighborhood- and city-level planning documents, as well as local blogs. I also started filming a documentary with a friend, guided by the loose question, “Who is Wallingford?” By interviewing neighbors and filming b-roll of sidewalks, streets, graffiti, and gardens, I began to gain a better appreciation for some of the neighborhood’s beauty, as well as points of contention.

Throughout this process, I learned more about the culture and ecology of the area, which informed and propelled my research. For one, I began to appreciate how important engagement with (and perceptions of) the natural world was to the neighborhood’s vitality. Residents relished

the mountain views, proximity to Lake Union, and, as with the rest of the city, easy “access to nature.” Accordingly, institutions dedicated to gardening thrived in Wallingford, like Tilth Alliance⁷ and a local p-patch. I also learned that housing, homelessness, and more broadly, land use issues, were a top concern for just about everyone I talked to. Some bemoaned the notorious “Seattle Process,” which historically had slowed down development in favor of extensive public hearings, deliberation, and litigation. Others lamented the neighborhood-oriented planning efforts of the 1990s (Sirianni, 2007).

A year into my tenure at Ground Zero, and several months into the film, Steve invited me to move in with him at the Plum House, another group house which also happened to be in Wallingford. This was in 2020. Since that time, I have had the opportunity to collaborate on the documentary and my neighborhood research with other UW students via two different courses. First, as a graduate student mentor for the Learning Within and Across Settings class, I worked with a small group of undergraduates in the Education, Community, and Organizations program, who opted to help film and interview Wallingford residents. Ultimately, each student made their own short film (Shafer et al., 2021), which were all screened over a Zoom call with the people they had interviewed. Second, as part of Community Inclusion and Equity in Changing the Public Realm, I worked with social work and urban planning graduate students to collect and analyze data about Wallingford in relation to city-wide issues of gentrification and displacement. Based on our research, we created a StoryMap in ArcGIS that told a story of Wallingford’s change over time (Hock et al., 2021).

Over summer 2021, I wrapped principal photography and put together a rough cut of the documentary, which I had hoped to screen at a community premiere in the fall. After sharing the

⁷ Tilth Alliance boasts a variety of programs, including a free “gardening hotline,” where people call-in from all over the world to talk to professional gardening experts.

rough cut with a group of documentary filmmakers, I received encouraging feedback, but nonetheless realized that the film was disjointed and was not telling the story I wanted it to tell. Moreover, as I read through some of the literature around video-based research in the learning sciences and in planning, I became unsure whether I had been going about making the film in the right way. So, I decided to put it on the backburner and instead build relationships with community members. Ultimately, these relationships became the impetus for my dissertation research and guided the design of the study.

Data collection

There are five primary methods of data collection for this project, each of which are summarized in Table 3.1. As I describe these methods, I will note the selection criteria, how I recruited participants, how the method responds to the local geography, and the method's overall purpose within the research design.

Table 3.1 Data collection summary

Method	Quantity	Data type	Timeline
Initial interviews	28	audio, notes, memos, participant-made maps	March – June 2022
Walking tours	6	audio, video, memos	June – July 2022
ART meetings	3	audio, video, memos, participant-made content logs	August – Sept 2022
Screenings	8	audio, video, notes, memos, visioning packets	February 2023 – April 2024
Exit interviews	17	audio, notes, memos	March – April 2023

Initial interviews. I began the project with semi-structured interviews to elicit community members' place-stories. To recruit participants, I started with the relationships I had established prior to formally engaging in dissertation research. I also reached out to community-based organizations, posted on local online groups, and occasionally met people serendipitously while walking around the neighborhood. With this mixed approach, I had varying levels of knowledge of participants' backgrounds prior to interviewing them. My goal with recruitment was twofold: a) to better understand the most prevalent attitudes and discourses circulating around Wallingford; and b) to represent counternarratives and the diversity of local perspectives. In total, I interviewed 35 community members over the course of 28 separate interviews. Overall, interviewees were demographically similar to the neighborhood overall (that is, they skewed towards white, older homeowners). However, a variety of identities were represented, with several renters, and some identifying as homeless, kids, disabled, queer, trans, Indian-American, Japanese-American, Hispanic, and multiracial. Most interviewees lived in Wallingford, but a few had other associations, including: working in the neighborhood, living there in the past, and participating in local organizations.

I used a semi-structured interview format because it enabled me to compare responses to standard questions across participants, but was flexible enough for participants to expand on issues that they felt were most important (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Most interviews lasted 90-120 minutes and took place in participants' homes. The interviews were all audio-recorded, and I wrote an analytic memo after each was finished. The interviews explored several aspects of their home and neighborhood life, including their personal histories in Wallingford, local challenges, and the neighborhood's history and future. Because most residents seemed to be interested in

land use issues, the interview focused on these specifically. I asked about their “relationship with land,” in an attempt to approach this familiar conversation in a more personal way. Participants also drew a free recall map (Wiegand, 1998) of the neighborhood, marking and describing locations of significance. These maps served as an invitation and a resource for participants to lead their own walking tours of the neighborhood.

Walking tours. Overall, I worked with other community members to organize six walking tours, each focused on a particular location, or an aspect of the built environment or natural world. These included: mosaic art, housing, waterways, Meridian Park, plants, and 45th Street (the main commercial strip). Two of these tours had already been organized years before the project started, and had helped inspire the walking tour format that I adopted for this study. By grouping together several different kinds of walking tours under the auspices of a single project focused on the planning within an urban neighborhood, I hoped to invite participants into a mode of storying that expanded beyond reductive notions of “land use.” I also hoped that physically moving through the neighborhood together would facilitate new ways of being in relation with each other and with the mountains, lakes, houses, flora, and fauna that we might encounter along the way.

I recruited tour leaders during the initial interviews. On some occasions, more than one person expressed interest in a similar subject. When this happened, the two people were paired, with one designated as a tour leader, and another as a discussant. The discussant’s role was to engage the tour leader in conversation throughout the tour. I recruited additional discussants for the remainder of the tours, as I thought it would be make it easier for the tour leader to have a designated person they could be in conversation with – especially with cameras rolling. As with the initial interviews, tour leaders and discussants tended to be white, older homeowners.

However, I made efforts to prioritize individuals with a diversity of identities and backgrounds who expressed interest. As a result, these roles included people who identify as multiracial, queer, trans, and a kid. Tour leaders also included a trauma-informed physician who owns a local art studio; and a public housing and transit advocate who lives in an accessory dwelling unit.

My primary intention for these tours was for the tour leaders and discussants to be able to express their own personal place-stories, and to share them with an attentive audience of neighbors. For this reason, the tour leaders and discussants were outfitted with lavalier microphones and positioned as leaders prior to and during the event. However, I also tried to find a balance, where attendees could engage the leaders in dialogue, sharing and negotiating their own memories, concerns, and desires while walking through the neighborhood. To prepare them for their roles, I provided both the tour leaders and discussants with short written documents outlining the purpose of the project, how their tour fit into it, and some questions they might consider with attendees during the tour. We also worked together to identify physical and social spaces for opening up conversation throughout.

In addition to those leading the tour and those attending it, a third group was present during the tours: the A/V team. This was a group of three to five people per tour, including camera operators and a sound mixer/boom operator. The crew consisted of myself, as well as a few undergraduate students at the University of Washington, all of whom were closely familiar with Wallingford. (In fact, the main camera operator's parents each led a tour for this project.) All crew members had some previous experience with audio/video production, and I led a training session to familiarize everyone with the equipment and the techniques we'd be using to record the tours. With an A/V team in the mix, each tour felt like a production, and participants were keenly aware that they were not just involved in a walking tour, but in the making of a

movie. In this way, the data collection process paralleled the filmmaking process, and was designed to support the sense that a significant local event was taking place.

ART meetings. After the tours were complete, I convened an Assembly/Review Team (ART)⁸, who were tasked with determining the narrative of the film. The ART consisted of about a dozen community members, each of whom attended between one and three meetings. I specifically invited tour leaders, attendees, and the production crew to join ART, as I was interested to see how this might deepen their engagement with the project and with the neighborhood. I also tried to recruit a group with a diversity of identities and viewpoints. The final group included a local filmmaker, a housing justice advocate, a retired planner, a middle-school student interested in media production, and a local preschool owner, among others. Unfortunately, it proved quite challenging to recruit a racially diverse group in this predominantly white neighborhood. This challenge was compounded by not having funding to compensate ART participants for their time. Regardless, I did identify and invite some people of color who had expressed interest in the project. However, when it came time to actually assemble the team, all of the participants who showed up identified as white.

I hosted three ART meetings. Before the first meeting, participants each watched footage of one of the tours (which they did not participate in) and filled out a content log. They were also invited to write or film a personal reflection after reviewing the footage. These activities were designed to engage them closely with the video, and to scaffold a presentation they would deliver to the group during the first ART meeting. During this meeting, everyone had a chance to present the tour they reviewed. We then discussed which clips to include in the film, as well as general themes that were emerging. After this first meeting, I incorporated guidance from the ART,

⁸ This was originally called the Film Assembly Review Team, but the acronym wasn't quite right.

stitching together relevant clips to produce the first cut of the film. We watched this together during the second meeting, which was a few weeks later. During that meeting, the ART offered further guidance for collecting additional footage and further refining the narrative. I incorporated this guidance into another cut of the film, which we reviewed on our third and final meeting. During this meeting, the sound designer and animator both joined the other members to discuss how their artistic modalities could be implemented in the film. Over the course of these meetings, the group brought different (sometimes competing) place-stories into dialogue. However, we aimed to create a narrative arc that would do justice to the multiplicity of perspectives that emerged in the footage.

Screenings. The purpose of the screenings was to provide a launching off point for “first forecasting what will happen in the future, then shaping the trajectories of work to converge” (Neumann & Star, 1996, p. 237). I aimed to convene a variety of individuals and institutions for further developing a place-story for Wallingford (and the region more generally); illuminating existing civic learning trajectories; and creating space for new learning trajectories to form and come into contact with those which are already in motion. In addition to the actual screening of the film, each screening included activities designed to elicit individuals sharing their own place-stories, and for these stories to merge. I encouraged multiple modes of expression so that participants were not simply passive audiences, but were able to speak, move, and listen with their fellow community members.

So far there have been eight screenings, each with a different audience in a different location. These included a general screening at the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford, one with Tent City 3 on the UW campus, one on Zoom for remote attendees, one in the Learning Within and Across Settings undergraduate class at UW, one with students at Lincoln High

School in Wallingford, one focused on professional planners hosted in partnership with the UW Urban Design and Planning program, one at a co-living house in Wallingford, and one hosted at my house that focused on students in the UW Master of Urban Planning program. I organized a variety of screenings because I was interested in seeing the extent to which the film resonated with different audiences and within different contexts.

Each event was unique, depending on the specificities of the group and venue. For purposes of illustration, I will describe the flow of events during the Good Shepherd Center screening, which was the most elaborate and well-attended.⁹ As people filtered into the room, they were greeted by community members who had attended a facilitator training prior to the event. The greeters encouraged participants to put on name tags and fill out a “visioning packet” over the course of the event, which I designed to help scaffold their thinking and conversation with others, as well as to gauge the most pressing local issues on their mind (see Appendix C). To begin, they wrote any initial comments and questions around topics related to land use (i.e. houses, businesses, wildlife, food, transportation, public spaces) in Wallingford. Then, after a critical mass had arrived and filled out their packets, I introduced the project and screened the film. Immediately after the film was over, viewers were asked to record their thoughts about the film in their visioning packet. Then, we posted still images from the film on the wall and prompted participants to do a gallery walk, responding to these images with sticky notes. The evening ended with small group discussions around a particular theme (all of which mapped onto those listed in the first section of their visioning packets). Trained facilitators led conversations designed for deliberation around this particular theme, as they fit into a vision for the

⁹ The Good Shepherd Center was an important site to host the main public screening because after members of the Wallingford Community Council had “saved” it from redevelopment in the 1970s, it has come to represent the benefits of historic preservation and public space in the neighborhood. The Center was also featured in the film.

neighborhood. A team of community members and colleagues volunteered to record these conversations via field notes, audio, and/or video. Finally, participants filled out a final section of their packet, reflecting on their overall experience at the screening and with the project. I emailed participants a follow-up survey a week after the screening. This gave them an additional opportunity to share their thoughts after they had time to process the event.

Exit interviews. The final stage of formal data collection involved a round of exit interviews with participants who have been heavily involved in the project. These included tour leaders and discussants; and others who participated in an initial interview who had also attended a screening. Through this design decision, I hope to gain a more diachronic and in-depth understanding of the experiences of a subset of participants. During the exit interviews, I tried to open up space for these participants to describe any shifts in understanding or participation, with special attention to how they might be interrogating existing civic infrastructure or innovating new civic learning trajectories (Mirra & Garcia, 2017). I also used their visioning packet responses as a launching off point for better understanding their experiences at the screening.

Other data. There are a few additional data sources. For one, I have been keeping a running diary related to the project. This has been a helpful reference point for keeping track of the order of events, as well as my emerging hunches and analyses. Another data source includes the websites of local civic groups, like the Wallingford Community Council and Historic Wallingford. These sites provide a window into the visions of these groups, as well as some of their recent activities. In addition, I have been attending some of the local meetings for these groups, as well as other regional civic groups, like the Seattle Planning Commission. Field notes from these meetings, and email communications from these groups, can be used to provide additional context for discourses around local and regional land use issues; as well as an

understanding of the modes of expression that are afforded in these spaces. Finally, I have drawn on Census data from the American Community Survey to better understand local demographics.

Analytic approach

The purpose of this analysis is to gain insight into the ways that inhabitants of a predominantly white, densifying Seattle neighborhood express themselves during a collaborative filmmaking project. In particular, I am interested in understanding if and how, through these expressions, they learn to be in new modes of relation as they traverse along the project’s designed activities. In order to do this, I look at how participants invoke discourses as they listen, talk, and move; and how these discourses become hybridized and change form across a variety of media and activities – from interviews to walking tours, to a film and the subsequent interactions it spurs. By studying this process, I hope to clarify how elements of this intervention support place-storying and infrastructuring efforts that enable participants to become more civically engaged in meaningful ways. Table 3.2 shows how each research question maps onto the methods for data collection and analysis (also see Table 3.1, above, for data types). In the remainder of the chapter, I will describe my analytic approach. First, I will discuss how the creation of the film is itself an analytic process. Then, I will discuss in more depth how each of the analytic methods enabled me to address the research questions.

Table 3.2 Methods to investigate each research question

Research question	Data collection methods	Analytic methods
What discourses emerge over the course of a collaborative filmmaking project about urban planning in a densifying, predominantly white Seattle neighborhood? (RQ 1)	initial interviews walking tours ART meetings screenings exit interviews	discourse analysis

How do inhabitants express these discourses during the walking tours, the ART meetings, within the film, and in response to viewing the film? (RQ 2)	walking tours ART meetings the film film screenings	discourse analysis interaction analysis multimodal film analysis
How (and to what extent) are these expressions laminated into new modes of relation over the course of the project? (RQ 3)	initial interviews walking tours ART meetings screenings exit interviews documents/field notes	interaction analysis mediated discourse analysis

Filmmaking as analysis. I designed this study as a form of public scholarship, working with community members to develop story as theory, “a way to orient oneself and others toward the world and life” (Brayboy, 2013, p. 439). During the walking tours, tour leaders and attendees shared their own place-stories as they moved together, highlighting aspects of Wallingford they deemed most salient. Then during the film assembly process, the ART and I were striving to create a coherent narrative for the film – and therefore, for the neighborhood – by selecting and juxtaposing relevant clips from the walking tours. Each ART member reviewed footage from one of the walking tours and created a content log based on their observations. Separate columns provided spaces for marking timestamps, a description of activities, as well as any relevant notes about those activities. As detailed in Chs. 4 and 6, the three ART meetings served as an opportunity to iteratively and co-operatively develop a more nuanced, multiperspectival place-story, recognizing points of overlap, dissensus, and omission.

While much of the film’s narrative was guided by community input during the ART meetings, there were aspects of the film assembly process that were a bit more insular. I spent many hours in Adobe Premiere watching and rewatching footage, marking clips, and joining

together sequences that I hoped would express a particular kind of meaning or feeling in the viewer.¹⁰ I was then able to share these sequences with community members, as well as a professional video editor, as a form of member checking. These editing processes are closely connected to the process of qualitative research in that they are iterative, integrate multiple data sources, present rich contextual details, interrogate the researcher's beliefs, and take place over a prolonged duration to develop an in-depth understanding (Bhattacharya, 2017). Others have described film editing as a site for video analysis, particularly with its methodological connections to conversation analysis and ethnomethodology (Laurier et al., 2008). Similarly, famed Hollywood editor Walter Murch (2001) suggests paying close attention to the minute details of characters' body language, to make cuts and stitch together a cohesive narrative based on endogenous sensemaking. In this sense, the film itself represents findings which "become partially perceptible through an aesthetic, not an analytic lens" (Silvis, 2019, p. 18). My hope is that viewers who are not apt to read an academic manuscript are able to more viscerally experience the various expressions that participants embody along the place-storying process.

In the next phase of research, after the film had been completed and screened for a variety of audiences, I attempted to ground these aesthetic findings more analytically, digging into particular interactions and discourses which proved to be consequential to the project's place-storying and infrastructuring efforts. Along the way, I drew on four distinct, yet mutually compatible, analytic methods. I present them here in a linear fashion for clarity, but the actual analytic process involved some movement between them, augmenting the more macro view of the mediated discourse analysis with the more fine-grained scrutiny of the other analytic techniques.

¹⁰ In Ch. 6 I go into more detail about the kinds of meanings and feelings I tried to express in the film, and how viewers responded to it.

Discourse analysis. To answer the first research question, I conducted a discourse analysis (Gee, 2011), focusing on Conversations and social languages, as described in the previous chapter. I found my way into the robust dataset by drawing heavily on my research diary and the analytic memos I had written after each of the interviews, walking tours, ART meetings and screenings. These enabled me to get a sense of some of the commonalities across participant perspectives (Erickson, 1977). For example, I recognized that participants' often reported feeling a sense of connection to the land in Wallingford through gardening. I also noted that participants commonly recognized that the neighborhood was rapidly changing, and seldom felt like they were able to contribute meaningfully toward the direction of this change. I began to inductively develop codes based on these observations, using the Atlas.ti software as a way to organize them across the corpus. Some of the codes signaled Conversations, like neighborhood change, aesthetics, and homelessness. Others signaled social languages, including those of New Urbanists and neighborhood defenders. Over time, as I engaged in other analyses, I continued to revisit and refine these codes.

Interaction analysis. I was fortunate to be part of multiple interaction analysis groups, which offered a structured format for leafing through my video data, identifying hot spots, and co-viewing the data with other researchers to develop emerging findings (Jordan & Henderson, 1995). This contributed to my understanding of all three research questions, but particularly RQ 2, as I analyzed participants' expressions during the walking tours and the ART meetings. I had begun this investigation through two analytic processes described above: editing the film and revisiting my analytic memos. Then, with a high-level understanding of the corpus in place, I began to identify possible hot spots by reading through the content logs that ART members had developed, as well as the clips I had marked in Premiere. To narrow down the myriad

possibilities for further analysis, I looked for disagreements or moments of tension, which suggested that participants were emotionally engaged in group sensemaking about important neighborhood issues (Taylor, 2020). As described in the previous chapter, I focused on ambulatory turns (Marin, 2020) as a unit of analysis for data of the walking tours, and conversational turns for data from the ART meetings, where the participants were generally stationary. I used Google's My Maps tool to visualize the walking tour routes, and when I shared clips during interaction analysis lab meetings, I provided detailed transcripts, using orthographic techniques to help visualize the expressive qualities of speech and interaction (Sacks et al., 1978; see Appendix A). I also revisited these clips in Premiere, where I could more readily switch between video and audio sources, adjust clip duration and exposure, and zoom in or out. Throughout this process, I looked for the ways in which participants' expressions may have been informed by cultural discourses, and how these expressions interacted over the course of the exchange.

Multimodal film analysis. The film, as an artifact, became an important object for analysis. For one, it included much of the same audiovisual data which I had been interactionally analyzing. Also, its composition represented the product of participants' joint work, as well as a launching-off point for further discussion about the neighborhood's past, history, and future. Extant literature in the learning sciences has had more to say about minimally edited video footage than filmic analysis (e.g. Erickson, 2014), so to address the expressive meanings located within the film (RQ 2), I turned to Bateman and Schmidt's *Multimodal Film Analysis* (2012). Their technique considers film as a "bundl(e) of richly articulated semiotic modes" (p. 129), presented through shot type, sequencing, color, movement, music, etc. In Ch. 6, I reflect on my

own editorial decisions with respect to these modes and the meaning potentials they offer for extending the discourses which had surfaced during the walking tours and the ART meetings.

Mediated discourse analysis. The first two research questions ladder up to the third, in that I needed to understand the nature of the relevant discourses, and how inhabitants were expressing them, in order to understand how they were being transformed over the course of the study. In the previous chapter, I described how this discursive transformation indicates the lamination of expressions into modes of relation, like place-storying and infrastructuring. Tracing this transformation required an analytic technique that extends beyond individual turns, and often beyond bounded interactional sequences, to better understand relational development across media and phases of the project. For this, I employed a mediated discourse analysis (MDA), which “broaden(s) the ‘circumference’ of discourse analysis (S. Scollon, 2001) to include things like objects, gestures, non-verbal sounds and built environments” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 9). MDA is flexible enough to accommodate a variety of approaches, including those that focus on the perspective of participants within a given interaction (e.g. ethnomethodology, interactional sociolinguistics), as well as those that are more concerned with the ways in which larger systems structure the resources and interactions which are made available to individual actors (e.g. critical discourse analysis). This flexibility is enormously helpful for theorizing civic learning in this study as a social- and geo-semiotic process, in that it can be used to connect locally situated expressions with the larger cultural milieu, showing how a place and its inhabitants are transformed in the process (see Fig. 4, above).

To address RQ 3, I began to switch my unit of analysis from particular mediated actions – the conversational and ambulatory turns – to the arcs or trajectories of these actions as they intersected with particular discourses over the course of the study: what Scollon & Scollon

(2004) refer to as “semiotic cycles.” This involved tracing the instances in which discourses became resemiotized, or changed across interactions, contexts, and media (Iedema, 2001). Sometimes, as in Ch. 5, the semiotic cycle began and ended within a single event, like a walking tour. Other times, I identified linked events through reported speech, parallelism, and shared referents (Wortham & Reyes, 2015). For an example of the latter, let’s briefly consider the analysis that became Ch. 4 of this manuscript. I began with a conflict that occurred during an ART meeting. This conflict was spurred by a discussion about a particular scene during the plant tour, when the participants picked fruit from a cherry tree. After analyzing this ART meeting scene, I then analyzed the plant tour scene, to see how the discourses in the latter had transformed into those of the former. I continued this process again, linking to yet another scene in the corpus, and tracing the parallel processes of resemiotization and place-storying throughout.

This analysis became easier as I began to appreciate the importance of some of the objects, artifacts, and elements of the natural world which were highlighted in participants’ shared perceptual space (Goodwin, 2018). The aforementioned cherry tree, for example, was indexed by participants across several episodes as a way to make sense of community care. As I noticed different discourses converging within the cherry tree, I began to pay attention to the tree as a semiotic aggregate (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), which effectively became its own unit of analysis. The semiotic cycles for each of the chapters began to form dialectically around these aggregates: the aggregates grounded the discourses, and the discourses resemiotized across participants’ interactions throughout the project. Ultimately, I identified the most salient semiotic aggregates and determined how they became central to participants’ place-storying and infrastructuring efforts. This resulted in the three findings chapters of this manuscript, which, respectively, consider discourses of care, accessibility, and groundedness.

CHAPTER 4 – FRUIT TREES & TRAFFIC CIRCLES: CULTIVATING COMMUNITY CARE

In this chapter I will describe how a conversation related to community care emerged and transformed over the course of the project. I argue that the notion of community care, while not referred to explicitly, becomes a focal point of interaction in this project, mobilizing a variety of inhabitants, discourses, technologies, and elements of the built environment and natural world. Specifically, I aim to show how participants describe, negotiate, and embody partially overlapping ideals of community care by grounding abstract discourses within a particular fruit tree in the neighborhood. This fruit tree serves as a semiotic aggregate (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), enabling a virtuous – if somewhat contentious – cycle of community care as participants co-operatively create stories with and about their neighborhood. In this analysis I will describe how learning processes become manifest in two ways. For one, as participants discuss and embody aspects of community care, they take up positions as both teachers and learners across the collaborative filmmaking project. In addition, as participants' expressions laminate within and across interactions, the neighborhood learns to develop new stories and relationships which may further support meaningful civic engagement.

At the outset I'll note that the notion of "community care" is ambiguous. What is a community, anyway? Who is caring for whom? And what does that care look like? These are important questions. Rather than attempting to answer them definitively, I analyze the extent to which these questions are taken up and negotiated in the study. While grounded firmly in the data, my analysis of community care builds on feminist scholarship that recognizes care as a site of tensions and contradictions: care is a universal need, yet must be specifically formulated for each situation (Tronto, 1993); care can be a source of both bone-grinding labor and heartwarming connection (Duffy et al., 2015); care work is ubiquitous yet often made invisible

(Star & Strauss, 1999); those performing the bulk of the care work – women, and often women of color – are not typically positioned to receive much care themselves (Collins, 1990). With these tensions in mind, Tronto and Fisher (1990) describe the complexities associated with care, by offering a four-phase model which is relevant for this analysis: 1) “caring about” involves being attentive to needs for care; 2) “caring for” involves assuming responsibility for organizing care; 3) “caregiving” is the work involved with actually meeting the identified needs; and 4) “care receiving” involves a responsiveness to the caregiver. In the sections that follow, I borrow these phrases to show how discourses of community care are expressed within and across the study’s designed activities.

This chapter will proceed by examining discourses of community care across four episodes, which transpired across three events: one walking tour and two film assembly meetings. I describe each event in chronological order, as I aim to depict the extent to which earlier events inform subsequent events, demonstrating a discursive progression over the course of the study. I selected these events for a couple reasons. For one, thematically, they seem to be relevant to the participants of the study and the larger Wallingford community. During the initial interviews, I was struck by how many participants reported that they feel closely connected to the land in Wallingford through gardening. Consequently, focusing on the plant tour and the subsequent discussions around it offers promise for better understanding some of the discourses that are actively implicated in local expressions and relations. In addition, discourses of community care, which emerged from analysis of these events, seem especially relevant for learning scientists, planners, and civic media practitioners, all of whom could benefit from better understanding the processes through which inhabitants learn to better care for the communities in which we are situated.

Background on the plant tour

The idea of a tour focused on local plant life came from a virtual “meet and greet” event I hosted on Zoom for community members to learn more about the project. During this meeting, I shared that I had never seen a rosemary bush prior to moving to Seattle. This prompted Gema to unmute and start talking about the different plants she sees as she walks through the neighborhood with her six-year-old daughter, Luna. “That could be a tour right there,” Gema suggested. Then Luna chimed in to talk about seeing fennel during a recent walk. Others on the Zoom call were enthusiastic about this idea of a plant tour. Two weeks later, I interviewed Luna and Gema and we fleshed out what this might look like. The duo were interested in taking a familiar route near their apartment and focusing on the many edible plants they would often encounter.

Gema also offered to recruit Luna’s classmates and their caregivers, effectively turning this into a tour by and for local kindergarteners. I invited Luna to be the tour guide, as I wanted to affirm her position as an emerging local expert. I thought this positioning might enhance her engagement, as well as that of the group overall. I also recruited Jordan Sherry-Wagner, a fellow graduate student in the learning sciences, to be the discussant for the tour. Jordan had founded a preschool and had a small child of his own. He also had experience as a research assistant with the Learning in Places project, and was interested in framing this tour as a “wondering walk,” where participants are encouraged to “take a walk with your family to wonder and notice who and what is in your neighborhood ecosystem” (Learning in Places Collaborative, 2021). I was hopeful that with this orientation, Jordan would help stimulate an environment where the group would become more attuned to their relationships with the natural world.

The plant tour took place on June 26, 2022. At this point, I had already worked with various community members to organize, lead, and film two tours: one on mosaic art and another on housing. During the plant tour, I was operating the main camera. I was also working with a B-camera operator and an audio technician who were undergraduate students at UW and had both helped record the previous tours. Carter, the B-camera operator, lived in the neighborhood. He was friends with Malachy, the audio technician, who was also a UW student and used to work in Wallingford. In addition to operating a boom mic, Malachy was also recording audio from clip-on microphones attached to Luna and Jordan. This audiovisual configuration was designed to center the tour leader and discussant, while also allowing for the other tour participants to be recorded throughout the tour.

Episode 1: Embodying community care at the cherry tree

The tour took place over the course of two hours during a hot, sunny afternoon. In this section I examine one focal episode which occurred about an hour into the tour. By this point, the group had already been walking and observing plants together, and seemed to be getting more comfortable with each other and with the cameras. Luna, for example, shifted her demeanor from taciturn and a bit downtrodden to energetic and talkative. Also, the group's spatial configuration became a bit more elastic. The kids, for example, began merrily running down the sidewalk and then waiting for the adults to catch up. At one point Gema went ahead of the group to scout out the route. Once they reconvened, about 15 minutes later, Gema pointed out a cherry tree in the nearby traffic circle and invited everyone to pick fruit. The kids ran to the tree and began eating cherries.

*Transcript 4.1 Somebody wanna eat some cherries?*¹¹

- 1 Gema: Somebody wanna eat some cher[ries?
2 Luna: [((darts to the cherry tree)) Cherries! I got the
3 [red ones! I got the two red ones!=
4 Claire: [((runs behind Luna))
5 Jordan: =Alright. I'm [gonna go watch for cars.
6 Luna: [The two ((plucks cherries)) super red ones.
7 Jordan: Oh [wo::w=
8 Luna: =[[((walks to Claire and offers her a cherry)) Do you want this one? It's super
9 (.) red.

Figure 4.1 Luna offers a cherry to Claire (lines 8-9)



Once Jordan sees the kids run to the tree, he volunteers to watch for cars (line 5). Meanwhile, Luna picks two cherries and offers one of the “super red ones” to her classmate, Claire (lines 8-9; Fig. 4.1). Each of these actions demonstrate care for the group; Luna wants to share the joy of eating freshly picked cherries, and Jordan wants to sustain a safe environment for cherry picking. At this point in the tour, the group has been acting as a small community,

¹¹ Transcription conventions can be found in Appendix A.

temporarily banded together by overlapping identities (e.g. Wallingford residents, kindergarteners and caregivers) and interests (e.g. appreciating local plants, helping to create a movie about their neighborhood). With this in mind, Luna and Jordan are each demonstrating and embodying community care at an interactional, hyper-local level. These actions parallel discourses of community care which, based on the initial project interviews, seem to be circulating throughout the neighborhood.

Discourses of community care can be traced backwards in time through the creation of the traffic circle itself, and the subsequent planting of the cherry tree. In the 1970s, Seattle became one of the first US cities to systematically construct neighborhood traffic circles as a traffic calming measure. City officials and inhabitants involved in this planning process cared about developing “safe and walkable neighborhoods” (Seattle Department of Transportation, n.d.). The traffic circles enabled inhabitants to care for each other, by encouraging slower driving and creating more opportunities for using the street as a public space. Then, in this particular traffic circle, as with many others in Wallingford, residents have cultivated plants. This can be thought of as another kind of community care, as inhabitants are reclaiming a small portion of land for sustaining life. Furthermore, the cherry tree captures carbon, provides fruit for humans and other animals, and adds natural beauty to the vast stretches of pavement that comprise the urban street network. In this way, the cherry tree also gives care to the humans who live near it. Thus, a virtuous cycle of care had been set in motion decades ago, and it is still circulating. As this interaction illustrates, the cherry tree engages people passing by and can further encourage giving and receiving care within the neighborhood.

Over the course of the next three minutes, as the group picks cherries, they continue to demonstrate care for each other in a variety of ways: they offer fruit to each other (e.g. Fig. 4.1),

the adults attentively watch and listen for cars, kids embrace their caregivers, Jordan warns the kids to watch out for seeds, and a mom removes seeds for her daughter. While these interactions all involve people caring for others in their immediate tour group, the group also begins to demonstrate care for the larger community.

Transcript 4.2 Good cherries for a pie

- 10 Jahna: They're very sour. Well, these would be really good in a pie.
11 Jordan: M-hm::
12 Jen: Yeah, [they'd be good in a pie.
13 Jahna: [Good cherries for a pie.=
14 Neil: =(Pick cherries for a pie?)
15 Jahna: Well
16 Jordan: Ya might need ta (.) you might need to you might need to come back with a big
17 basket.
18 *(7 lines omitted, talking about the cherries and an incoming car)*
19 Neil: *(inaud)*
20 Jahna: We::ll, I mean I do think (there's enough for everybody. But if we took the whole
21 batch that way everybody else wouldn't get some.) But I-I can understand that
22 you wanna make a pie.

Once Jahna introduces the idea that the sour cherries would “be really good in a pie” (line 10), others in the group get excited about this possibility. Jahna's son, Neil, and Jordan discuss the possibility of actually picking cherries for this purpose (lines 14-17). This prompts Jahna to take on a social language reminiscent of a parent or elementary school teacher as she encourages her son to consider making sure “there's enough for everybody” (line 20). With this suggestion, Jahna extends the participants' consideration of picking fruit, from a fun activity that nourishes them individually, to an activity that has implications for the broader community. In doing so, the tour group's embodied discourse around hyper-local community care becomes positioned in a more relational way, operating at the scale of the neighborhood, rather than the scale of individuals on the tour. Similarly, a discourse of neighborhood-level community care seems to

inform Gema's ongoing participation in Wallingford. This becomes apparent as she shares details about her personal history with Jordan.

Transcript 4.3 We came out here with the neighborhood people

- 23 Gema: When I was in high school. I think um– Did I tell you this?
24 Jordan: Hm?
25 Gema: When I was in high school, we came out here with (.) the neighborhood people
26 and did some of these roundabouts so=
27 Jordan: =Mmm ni::ce.
28 Gema: So I'm very proud to say my hand (.)
29 Jordan: Yeah.
30 Gema: It was twenty (.) five years ago. But? ya know ((giggles))

Gema recalls that when she was in high school, she “came out here with the neighborhood people and did some of these roundabouts” (lines 25-26). While she does not specify exactly what she “did,” Gema seems to imply that she helped cultivate plants, like the cherry tree the group is presently enjoying. Here, the physical instantiation of the cherry tree and the roundabout – as well as the group's enjoyment of it – serves as a stimulus for Gema to share her own personal history of caring for roundabouts in Wallingford, and thus for community care more generally. She is “very proud to say (her) hand” (line 28) went into caring for the roundabouts, signaling a sense of satisfaction for her labor. Through this interaction, Gema shares her pride and contentment with other community members by connecting her personal history with the ongoing place-story of the group and the larger community. I designed the walking tours with this goal in mind. By physically moving through the neighborhood together, I hoped that participants' unique experiences would come into conversation with each other and with their environment. In this instance, Gema appears to be authoring herself as an ongoing contributor to the neighborhood, caring for the built environment and the natural world in such a way that these environmental features invite others to continue caring about and caring for the community.

Episode 2: Relating community care to the cherry tree

About an hour after picking cherries, we had traveled just a few blocks and arrived at what would prove to be the final stop of the tour: a strip of grass along the sidewalk, adjacent to a single detached house, and near a small park and a waste transfer station. (The Wallingford Community Council had advocated for the park as a consolation for locating a transfer station in the neighborhood.) Nearing the two-hour mark of the tour, the group sat down in the shade and settled in. Some kids nestled up against their caregivers or began playing on the sidewalk. I seized this as an opportunity to debrief our walk and connect it with some of the larger themes of the project. Similar to the initial interviews, I surveyed the group about how long they had lived in Wallingford. Then I asked them if and how the neighborhood had changed since they'd moved here. The adults began discussing the development of new townhouses and apartments, and associated concerns related to affordability, safety, and parking. Sensing this conversation was retreading territory that was both familiar and perhaps not particularly useful, I tried to transition the discussion back to the tour itself.

Transcript 4.4 Being able to stop at the cherry tree

- 1 Ari: How about any connections between the walk that we just did, where we're uh I
2 guess just uh recognizing? what's here (.) parts of the natural world. U:h (.)
3 appreciating it. Trying to become more in touch with it. I think that's kinda the
4 purpose of what we're doing today. [(inaud)]
6 Jordan: [Yeah. I mean, I was going to say that. I mean
7 one of the things I think about is more more ((points pinky east, toward cherry
8 tree)) like I mean being able to stop at the cherry tree [(.) um in the middle
9 Gema: [Mhm ((nods))
10 Jordan: and having more publicly available (.) u:::m [(.) ya know like community (.) not
11 like community garden space, but just like (.) ya know as you're walking along
the
12 neighborhood.
15 Jen: Natural space? ((nods)) =
16 Jordan: =((nods)) Yeah natural space.

Figure 4.2: Jordan points toward the cherry tree (lines 7-8)



When I ask the group about connections they are making between our walking tour and appreciating the natural world, Jordan's initial response is "being able to stop at the cherry tree" (lines 7-8; Fig. 4.2), which he sees as an example of "community garden space" that is "publicly available" (lines 10-11). This expression indicates that the group's intimate shared experience at the cherry tree resonated with Jordan as an immediate, embodied manifestation of discourses around community care and public space. He is able to index these somewhat intangible discourses by pointing (literally, at line 7; Fig. 4.2) to the physical presence of the cherry tree. It's also something which he'd like to "hav(e) more" of (line 10). As Jordan speaks, Gema and Jen indicate their agreement by nodding. Jen also helps Jordan articulate this desire by offering the phrase "natural space" (line 15). Then, Jordan goes on to problematize the ideal he introduced, of having more publicly available community garden space.

Transcript 4.5 They're building buildings they could never live in

- 17 Jordan: =Uhm [(1.5) I mean, I (just got scared) when you first said that because my first
18 thought is like ((chortles)) I think what would ((looks towards Luna & Riya))

19 (take is) like (.) to have a neighborhood where anybody that wants (.) ta li:ve
 20 around here [could.
 21 Jen: [((nods))
 22 Jordan: Like, I often think about ((*points pinky east*)) the people that, you know, are
 23 buil-ding a lot of these new [townhouse complexes,
 24 Jen: [((nods))
 25 Jordan: like they're building [buildings that they'd ((*shakes head*)) ne:ver have an
 26 opportunity to [live in.=
 27 Jen: [((nods emphatically))
 28 Gema: =Yeah=
 29 Jordan: =And so I don't know if- I don't know what (.) gets us in that directio::n.

Here, Jordan recognizes that being able to enjoy local green spaces comes at a fairly steep cost: the cost of housing in the neighborhood. In recognizing this, he hybridizes conversations related to community green spaces with those of housing affordability and equity. Specifically, he concretizes these rather abstract conversations by referring to the actual construction workers who build new townhouses, and he suggests that these blue-collar workers would not be able to afford to live in their own creations (lines 22-26). As with his earlier remark about the cherry tree, Jordan extends his pinky toward the group's earlier route to indicate that he is referring to something in their shared perceptual space. In both of these conversational turns, Jordan relates general discourses about neighborhood life to specific features of Wallingford that the group have experienced together on the tour: the joys and care associated with the cherry tree in the traffic circle, as well as the disruption associated with townhouse construction.

In addition, Jordan humanizes the construction of new townhouses by pointing to the people who build them, and effectively making a bid for the group to consider an implicit tension of the tour: When we advocate for more parks and trees in Wallingford, who might “have an opportunity” (lines 25-26) to benefit from them, and what disparities or injustices does this reveal? Following our ongoing discursive thread, Jordan seems to also be implicitly asking: “Given that public green spaces are an important physical manifestation and source of

community care, how should we think about our community, and what should care look like with/in/around these spaces?” With his remarks, Jordan, who is white, expands the scope of who the group ought to care about, inviting possible critiques about racist and classist housing segregation in the city. But Jordan stops short of advancing this critique here, and ultimately admits that “I don’t know what gets us in that direction” (line 29) of cultivating a neighborhood replete with green spaces that are open to everyone. Gema responds as follows.

Transcript 4.6 Wallingford is these fruit trees

- 30 Gema: Yeah tha-with all this construction that's my (.) main thing [ih-is it's losing
 31 Jordan: [((gets up, turns toward
 32 Gema, sits down, and scoots back))
 33 Gema: ((raises arm and rotates hand)) these little areas o:f (1) of green and these little::
 34 (.) ya know corners o:f (.) of plants a:nd (.) and just going en and and and (.)
 35 hanging out. Because ((extends hand toward Riya, Luna, and grass)) even this,
 36 [ya know.
 37 Jen: [((looks, nods)) Right=
 38 Gema: =Once they build those buildings, this is gone.
 39 Jordan: [Yeah.
 40 Jen: [((nods))
 41 Gema: I think I've always been attracted to: (.) Wallingford and, ya know ((raises arm))
 42 in my twenties I didn't have kids, [but I always I was like, “Gosh, it just seems
 43 like such a: (.) open, friendly neighborhood. And then when I [had kids, I'm like
 44 this is this is where I want to be:.
 45 Jen: [((nods))
 46 Gema: Um but ((waves arm)) seeing all this (1) uh-all these construction coming up and
 47 and eliminating I think it's just taking away from the character of the
 48 neighborhood.
 49 Jordan: Yeah
 50 Gema: Itself. And I think that that's what it is Wallingford is Wallingford ((pulses hand
 51 east)) is these little [pockets of ((shakes hand)) you know,
 52 Jen: [((nods throughout Gema's statement))
 53 Gema: little natural areas and fruit trees and whatever not that are (.) slowly being
 54 ((brushes hand horizontally))

Figure 4.3 Gema gestures toward the cherry tree (lines 50-53)



Gema substantively enters the conversation here by riffing on the discourse related to construction of new townhouses, which Jordan had previously introduced (lines 22-23). However, instead of following Jordan's discursive thread, hybridizing conversations of community green spaces with housing affordability and equity, Gema uses this opportunity to share "my main thing" when it comes to "all this construction" (line 30): a claim that "Once they build those buildings, this is gone" (line 38). As she declares this, Gema uses hand gestures to signal that she is referring to the neighborhood's community green spaces, like the one they are presently sitting in (lines 33, 35). The way she extends her hand suggests she is referring not just to the grass and trees, but to the tour group's present experience in this place. This includes their kids playing together, and perhaps even the conversation and community building that the group is currently engaged in. (Gema's hand is also simultaneously extended roughly in the direction of the cherry tree, resembling Jordan's earlier deictic reference.) In this way, Gema is personalizing

the conversation about neighborhood change, making visible the consequences of new townhouse construction. If we continue to construct townhouses, Gema implies, these beautiful green spaces for playing with our children, taking care of each other, and building relationships, will disappear.

In this moment, Gema, who is multiracial, ignores Jordan's bid to steer the conversation toward housing equity, instead focusing the conversation of community care in a hyper-local way, personalizing it to the group of caregivers and their children. Gema then further veers away from Jordan's bid by relating her own local personal history. She describes how in her twenties she dreamed of having kids and living in this "open, friendly neighborhood" (line 43). Then she goes a step further, discursively extending this personal ambition of living in a verdant family-friendly neighborhood, by declaring that this ideal constitutes "the character of the neighborhood" (lines 47-48). In other words, Gema equates her own ideal for the neighborhood with the identity of the neighborhood itself. This tees her up to drive home the point that the neighborhood's identity is being threatened by new construction. In particular, to further illustrate this point, she evokes the "pockets of little natural areas and fruit trees" (line 51, 53; Fig. 4.3) that will disappear. Her choice to reference fruit trees here is significant, in that it builds on Jordan's earlier statement about the cherry tree; both point to the shared experience of joy and community care that the group has embodied together, just one hour prior. And once again, Gema's outstretched hand (lines 50-51; Fig. 4.3) indicates the intimate proximity of this experience within the group's shared perceptual space.

Gema's discursive move of re-localizing the conversation around community care is taken up by the others, who provide physical and verbal affirmations (lines 37, 39, 40, 45, 49, 52). At this point, Jordan's bid has been diminished, in that the group is not working to expand

the notion of who the community should care about. Instead, Gema's notion of community care becomes better established, emphasizing the hyper-localized caregiving and care receiving that the fruit tree facilitates.

While the adults seem to temporarily settle on this understanding, during this four-minute interaction, two of the kids were demonstrating another understanding of community care, which we might describe as more relational (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). Luna and Riya were sitting on the sidewalk a few feet from the rest of the group, looking at a flower bush next to them.

Transcript 4.7 That's somebody else's, so don't pick all of them

- 55 Riya: Can you pih can you pick a flower for me? Just hold it just hold it when when I'm
56 finished doing this. (.) I wanna do it again.
57 Luna: K, a whole flower or a flower petal?
58 Riya: But I want the big flower.
59 Luna: U::m the ((stands up)) high ones? Which one?
60 ((Riya stands up and approaches the flower bush; Luna follows))
61 Luna: ((picks a flower and accidentally drops it)) Uh oh. (.) We::ll ((crouches to
62 retrieve it))
63 Riya: Cuz that's somebody else's, so don't pick all of them.

Riya, who is a bit smaller than Luna, requests Luna's help to pick a flower from the bush (line 55). Luna picks a flower and it falls to the ground, so she signals this was a mistake and picks it up (line 61). At this moment, Riya tells Luna that the flower bush is "somebody else's, so don't pick all of (the flowers)" (line 63). Here, the kids are performing a discourse of community care. Luna gives care to Riya by helping her pick a flower, and Riya cares for the larger community by encouraging Luna to leave flowers for other people to enjoy. Riya recognizes that while it may be acceptable to take one flower, taking too many would be depriving others of the satisfaction that flowers can provide.

Riya's statement demonstrates a few things. For one, it shows that Riya is likely being taught by her caregivers how to perform care for others. Riya is reiterating a common dictum in

the social language of parenting and early childhood education: don't take it all, leave some for others! In this way, Riya takes on the discursive position of caregiver for both Luna and the broader community. A similar kind of discourse was performed at different points throughout the tour, including when the group was at the cherry tree. Recall that when Neil asked his mom, Jahna, if they could collect enough cherries to make a pie, she said that "if we took the whole batch that way everybody else wouldn't get some" (Transcript 4.2, line 20-21) In fact, Riya was right next to the duo during this conversation, rendering it plausible that she heard them, and this informed her present exchange with Luna. Regardless of whether there was a direct causal link, these examples show that discourses of community care were circulating throughout the tour.

At the same time, we could locate Riya's statement within a more legalistic discourse. When she says "that's somebody else's, so don't pick all of them," It's unclear whether Riya is referring to a general "somebody else," as in all community members who pass by, or rather specifically to the person who lives in the adjacent house and owns this bush. With this latter reading, Riya may no longer be demonstrating community care, but rather deference to the law and property rights. It is likely that Riya herself might not have had just one of these two articulations in mind as she spoke, but was instead merely extending familiar cultural discourses and norms which blend the two. In this way Riya's utterance echoes those of the adults sitting a few feet away, as they discuss the importance of green spaces, but are not quite settled on what this means in the context of their increasingly expensive (and therefore exclusive) neighborhood. Both the adults and the children know that it is important to share green spaces as part of a community, but the concept of community care is still punctuated by a question mark at the end of this exchange. This conversation was rekindled six weeks later, when we started to review footage of the tours.

Background on the ART meetings

After all of the walking tours were completed, I convened a group of community members to help review footage of the tours and establish a narrative of the film. This group of about 10 people, dubbed the Assembly/Review Team (ART), was a fairly eclectic bunch. It included people who had been intimately involved with the project, like Carter and Malachy, who helped record the tours, and Barb, who was a discussant on a tour (and is also Carter's mom). We were also joined by Jen and Margaret, a mother and daughter duo who had been on the plant tour and wrote about their experience on the local neighborhood blog. The ART also included: a local filmmaker who had not been previously involved with the project, a retired fellow of the American Planning Association, the musician who developed the film score, and Tara, who hosted the ART meetings at two of the local preschools she owned and operated. All of the ART members were white.

We met a total of three times during weeknights in August and September 2022. The meetings were designed to be fun and social, with ample food, soft drinks, and discussion. At the same time, I designed them to be a site for surfacing and discussing local tensions which had emerged during the initial interviews and the walking tours. Prior to the first meeting, each ART member was tasked with reviewing footage from a particular tour. I tried to assign each ART member to review footage from a tour they were interested in but had not attended. I hoped this would help the group to gain different perspectives of each tour. I instructed each participant to create a content log of the footage they reviewed, and asked them to highlight any sections that they found to be aesthetically interesting or emotionally evocative (Tobin & Hsueh, 2014). Then, during the first ART meeting, each participant had an opportunity to present their findings to the group and to share one video clip for discussion. The participants knew that these discussions

would inform the narrative of the film. I wanted to incorporate their perspectives throughout the editing process, so the second ART meeting was focused on watching and providing feedback for a rough cut of the film. During the final ART meeting participants watched a fine cut and provided additional feedback, geared especially towards music and visual effects. In this section I will analyze episodes from the first two ART meetings. These episodes extend the conversation about what community care looks like and how it is cultivated, specifically related to fruit trees in public spaces.

Episode 3: Contesting community care for the cherry tree

To kick things off during the first ART meeting, after everyone grabbed food, I described the purpose of these meetings and everyone had a chance to introduce themselves. Then, Nicole and Malachy each presented their experiences reviewing the waterways tour. This was followed by watching a short clip from the waterways tour and a substantial discussion. By the time it was Barb's turn to present the plant tour, we were nearly one hour into the meeting. As she introduced the tour to the group, Barb acknowledged some of the benefits of having kids and families walk around the neighborhood to observe plants.

Transcript 4.8 I hadn't really thought about the land use aspect

- 1 Barb: I appreciate that you know you do that and you do that on a °regular basis and you
2 really get to know your neighborhood and how it changes over time.° Um that it's
3 mostly, you know, for this tour it was kid perspective. ((chuckles)) You know,
4 kid-centered, kid-focused. So there was uh, I mean, that energy, which I've been
5 on plenty of field ((chuckles)) field trips. Carter going when he was at John
6 Stanford. So those are [fun.
7 Ari: [(guffaws)]=
8 Barb: =but they were usually directed by an adult.=
9 =(group laughs)=
10 Barb: =So you know it was all over the place that way. But um I hadn't really thought
11 about the land use aspect of it, but that's kind of what I came back to because of
12 that. I mean, in general, what you got is kids and parents are walking down the
13 street.

Barb shares that regularly walking around to observe plants can help you “really get to know your neighborhood and how it changes over time” (line 2). She is drawing on discourses of neighborhood change, which were prevalent throughout the initial interviews and the walking tours. However, rather than expressing anxiety or uncertainty about her changing neighborhood (as many longtime residents – including Gema – had expressed during the interviews and the tours), reviewing the plant tour helped Barb to see this wondering walk as a way to better understand this change, perhaps setting the foundation for more informed discussions and civic engagement.

Though Barb has lived in the neighborhood for decades and been caring for fruit trees for much of this time, reviewing this footage prompted her to consider “the land use aspect of it” (line 11), which she “hadn’t really thought about” before (lines 10-11). This quote demonstrates how through the place-storying practices of this filmmaking project, Barb is beginning to hybridize discourses related to plant life and land use. This is especially significant, given that so many people in Wallingford feel connected to the natural world through gardening, but do not often feel meaningfully involved in civic processes related to land use. Moreover, the ART members’ emotional tenor seems to be joyful, as evidenced by the laughter throughout this exchange. And Barb notes that the plant tour had “that energy” which she attributes to its “kid-centered” nature (line 4). In contrast, traditional notions of civic engagement around land use are typically more staid; they often take place indoors, are sedentary, and do not encourage youth participation – let alone youth leadership (Mitra et al., 2014; Meléndez et al., 2023)!

Shortly after this exchange, Barb shifts gears to discuss what she perceived as a focal episode. Out of the two hours of footage she reviewed, the majority of her presentation centered

around just one short scene during the plant tour: the one described in the previous section, where the group picks cherries from the tree in the traffic circle.

Transcript 4.9 Somebody takes care of this tree

14 Barb: *((clears throat))* But then the *((giggling))* part the part that really *((shakes head*
15 *and hands))* struck me is that uh towards the end, which is actually getting very
16 close to my house, is um (.) a cherry tree. So there's a cherry tree and a traffic
17 circle. A::nd (1) the-the mom of the kindergartner actually *((lifts hands quickly))*
18 invited the kids *((lifts hands quickly))* to come and taste the cherries. (1) And (.)
19 everybody was *((makes explosion sound and hand gesture))* cherries and well (.) I
20 think it looked like (.) sour tart cherry [(.) tree to me so:
21 Ari: *[((giggles))*
22 Barb: probably wouldn't be good *((chuckles))* even if it were ripe. But (.) there *((waves*
23 *hands))* wasn't any mention of *((tongue click))* (.) *((polite voice))* “Oh,
24 somebody planted this tree.” And “Oh, somebody takes care of this tree.”
25 *((chuckles))* And so that (.) that um kind of (1.5) disturbed *((chuckles))* me.
26 *((laughs))* Because I think there is a real disconnect. I mean, I worked or
27 volunteered with fruit trees for 14 years [...]

This scene strikes Barb for a couple reasons. For one, she says it’s “very close to my house” (lines 15-16). She seems to be familiar with the tree and the part of the neighborhood where it lives. Also, she has “worked or volunteered with fruit trees for 14 years” (lines 26-27). Barb appreciates the human labor that goes into caring for and giving care to fruit trees in public spaces, which others may take for granted. Together, these geographic and professional proximities come together to make that scene emotionally salient for Barb. In particular, she is “kind of disturbed” (line 25) that “there is a real disconnect” (line 26) where parents let their kids eat the fruit from the tree, without asking for permission or even referencing the trees’ caretakers.¹² Similarly, in her content log of the tour, Barb noted: “Footage of kids picking cherries in traffic circle tree [no adult stops them].” Out of all of possible meanings associated

¹² Barb never mentions the plant tour exchange described above, where Jahna encourages her son to “(make sure) there’s enough (fruit) for everybody.” It is quite possible that Barb simply didn’t hear this, as the volume was muffled in the footage she reviewed.

with this clip, Barb is particularly attuned to something she does *not* see: adult intervention in a moment when she feels it is sorely needed.

With Barb's statement during the ART meeting, she is extending the conversation about community care of fruit trees in public spaces. Rather than embodying community care at a hyper-local level, as the plant tour group did, Barb is contesting its meaning. She argues that this hyper-local care is in some sense illegitimate or insufficient because it fails to honor the community members who are performing the care labor which sustains the fruit tree. Barb cares about the fruit trees, but no one on the tour seems to care about her. In this way, Barb takes on the social language of a seasoned, if somewhat jaded, tree carer and community volunteer. She seems to be distraught with her neighbors who benefit from the fruits of her labor, but who don't offer any form of reciprocity or consideration for her work. A few sentences later, she expands on this idea by referencing another scene in the plant tour: the tour group's ending conversation, which was described in the previous episode of this chapter.

Transcript 4.10 This is definitely a community thing

28 Barb: Anyway, at the end of the tour there was some discussion about public kind of
29 what are your impressions of Wallingford and a couple of the people said, "Oh
30 yeah, we need more public (1) not public spaces, but pub spaces that are like (.)
31 that are friendly to (.) whoever" and the ((tilts head)) cherry tree was specifically
32 mentioned actually °and I'm just like° ((palms head and moves hands away from
33 head with an explosion sound)) becuz ((opens palms)) this is great ((circles
34 palms)) if this is what everybody agree:s? (.) °to°. I mean, this is definitely a
35 community thing that if you're gonna have public spaces, then you're, you're
36 respectful of what's (.) in the space when it's not obviously somebody's yard? then
37 what's going on with that? Do we need signs? Um (.) so anyway, I think this is a
38 real ((circles finger)) conversation that I've heard from people for a long time.

In this passage, Barb revoices discourses of community and public spaces that she hears others discuss during the tour. She notes that "the cherry tree was specifically mentioned" as a "friendly" public space (lines 31-32) that the neighborhood ought to appreciate and preserve.

Barb is both emphasizing and problematizing the way this particular cherry tree has come to represent an ideal of friendly public green spaces during the walking tour, though the tour participants are apparently unfamiliar with the caretakers of this tree or any locally established norms around picking its fruit. The tour participants, in Barb's view, embody a "conversation that I've heard from people for a long time" (line 38) about picking fruit from trees in public spaces. This declaration serves to reanimate the conversation locally, as Tara, the owner of the preschool, chimes in.

Transcript 4.11 But they don't take care of it

- 39 Tara: So is the cherry tree in ((draws circle with finger)) one of those roundabouts?
 40 Jen: It's [in the roundabout.
 41 Barb: [Yup
 42 Jen: It's right in the roundabout.=
 43 Barb: =It's in the roundabout. Yeah which is? [(1) not that
 44 Tara: [So you consider that to belong to a
 45 neighbor?
 46 Barb: ((shrugs))
 47 Tara: rather than—
 48 Barb: It's not the City. City doesn't take care of [that. The City doesn't take care of (.)
 49 Tara: [Right
 50 Jen: Well [everything in the planting strip is ((palm up)) technically right of way.=
 51 Barb: [anything
 52 Tara: Right=
 53 Barb: =Yeah. But they don't take care of it.=
 54 Jen: =Right.
 55 Tara: Yeah.
 56 Barb: Yeah. ((claps thrice)) The homeowner, the adjacent homeowner [or renter
 57 Jen: [Until you do
 58 something wrong.=
 59 Ari: =((smiling exhale))
 60 Barb: Yeah. [I mean yeah. ((laughs))
 61 Jen: [They send you a— ((laughs))
 62 Tara: [Yeah ((laughs))
 63 Barb: ((smiling)) Yeah.
 64 ((group laughs))

Figure 4.4 Tara asks Barb to specify the location of the cherry tree (line 39)



In this passage Tara begins to establish grounds for a claim she will soon make – that fruit trees in the public right of way should be available for anyone to pick from. To do this, she begins to take up a legalistic social language, clarifying whether the tree’s position is “*in* one of those roundabouts” by drawing a circle with her finger (line 39; Fig. 4.4). Then, she uses this shared understanding of jurisdictional placement to express incredulity to Barb’s claim that the tree should “belong to a neighbor” (lines 44-45). Jen, too, takes up this legalistic language, building on Tara’s line of argument to point out that the tree is “technically” in the right of way (line 50), and therefore open to the public. But during this exchange, Barb insists on orienting the conversation to care, noting at lines 48 and 53 that “the City” doesn’t “take care of” flora in the public right of way. In doing so, once again, Barb takes up the social language of a seasoned volunteer. She is able to speak fluently about jurisdictional boundaries, only to declare them irrelevant to the present conversation. From her position as a caretaker of local fruit trees, it is clear that the central question is not one of ownership, but one of care. However, to her

neighbors, this distinction may be unfamiliar given the way care work has been privatized, commodified, and domesticated (Tronto, 2010; Duffy et al., 2015). Without the lived experience of caring for these fruit trees, the neighbors resort to more familiar capitalist notions of public/private property to understand their rights within neighborhood green spaces.

Soon after Barb mentions “the City” (line 48), Jen jokes that they only get involved when “you do something wrong” (lines 57-58). This sends the group into a knowing laughter (lines 59-64), as the City becomes the butt of the joke. The residents at this meeting seem to share an understanding that the City may be slow to provide support, but quick to punish transgressors. This shared laughter temporarily aligns the group in a way that suggests they can’t simply depend on a government agency to settle their disputes nor to proactively care for their trees. Next, perhaps inspired by Barb’s insistence on highlighting the role of the caretaker, Jen chimes in and begins to share a personal place-story.

Transcript 4.12 Is anybody taking care of this?

- 65 Jen: So my understanding the circle, because I just know when they first started um
66 being put in, a friend of mine had one put it in by her just she's on the
67 corner so that's right next to her house.=
- 68 Marg: =Allie?=
69 Jen: =No, Mary-Kate. (.) Um and she got together with her neighbors and (1) they all
70 planted it together. [...] I kind of I guess we have we have a circle by us that has
71 an apple tree in it.=
- 72 Marg: =We made applesauce last year.=
- 73 Jen: ((*extends hands toward Margaret*))
- 74 Barb: Mhm, You know what [(.) would you mind telling me what the intersection is?
- 75 Jen: [I don't know wh
- 76 Barb: I might know that tree.=
- 77 Jen: =Yeah uh ff uh
- 78 Barb: Is it [by the
- 79 Jen: [17th and Dewberry.
- 80 Barb: Okay, [no. I don't know that one.
- 81 Jen: [Yeah it's a tree– it's not a produ-productive tree. ((*chuckles*)) We made
like
- 82 ((*small hand gesture*)) applesauce, not ((*big hand gesture*)) applesauce.=

83 Barb: =Yeah.=

84 Jen: =Um and none of my neighborss (.) like usually you'd think it would be like

85 ((*circles arms*)) close by, but I guess not necessarily. But I never even thought=

86 Tara: =I wo[uld.

87 Jen: [I didn't. I didn't think about it. But it does it makes sense? But ((*points to*

88 *self*)) I feel like I pay attention to that stuff. And I ((*points toward Barb*)) never

89 even thought about that.=

90 Barb: =Mhm see that's the stuff that ((*clicks tongue and points toward Jen*)) so I don't

91 pay attention like ((*extends arms toward ground and wiggles fingers*)) oh you

92 know, little stuff on the ground, but ((*points toward Jen, relaxes arm, points*

93 *toward Jen again*)) fruit trees and traffic circles that ((*points toward Jen*)) aren't

94 getting pruned? ((*points toward Jen*)) I mean, I've done that. ((*opens palms*))

95 That's why I was asking. (.) Which=

96 Jen: =So but you've done that because no one's taking [care of it.

97 Barb: [((*nods*)) Mhm=

98 Jen: =And it's a pub— so:=

99 Barb: =and I met the neighbors and I said ((*palms out*)) “Is anybody taking ca:re of

100 thi:s?”

Figure 4.5 Barb points out her care work (lines 93-94)



To engage Barb in joint sensemaking around community care of fruit trees, Jen describes two fruit trees that she is personally familiar with: one that her friend planted with their neighbors (line 69), and one that is near Jen's house (line 70). This discursive move accomplishes a couple things. For one, it engages her daughter, Margaret (Marg in the transcript), in discussion (lines 68, 72). Up to this point, Margaret had spoken very little during this meeting. Here, she becomes a contributor, drawing on her knowledge of the neighborhood as an entry point into the conversation. Second, it enables the group to contextualize the discussion about care, ownership, and public spaces within a particular green space that is locally relevant and meaningful. Jen admits that she and Margaret made applesauce from an apple tree in a nearby traffic circle, without considering who cares for the tree. Because they were also on the plant tour, this admission could begin to laminate this pattern of behavior to them as freewheeling fruit pickers.

Barb initially responds by trying to determine whether she “might know that tree” (line 76) – perhaps she *is* one of its human caretakers, or knows who the caretakers are. If this were the case, the group’s hypothetical discussion would take on material significance, in that Barb would have some standing to establish norms around picking fruit from that particular tree. This proves not to be the case, though Barb’s insistence on centering care nonetheless elicits a response from Jen: “I feel like I pay attention to that stuff. And I never even thought about that” (lines 88-89). While uttering this last sentence, Jen points toward Barb, suggesting that she is referring to Barb, or perhaps Barb as the embodiment of neighborhood fruit tree caretakers. Jen has received nourishment from the fruit tree and has shared memorable experiences with her daughter making applesauce from it, but it hadn’t occurred to her that the tree might have human caretakers like Barb, with their own feelings about who should benefit from the fruits of their labor.

In response to this admission, Barb mirrors Jen’s body language by pointing to *her* (multiple times; lines 90, 92, 93; Fig. 4.5), physically evoking the kind of reciprocity for which Barb is asking. Barb also reconfigures Jen’s words, saying “I’ve done that” (line 94; Fig. 4.5), which underscores the difference between enjoying fruit from a fruit tree (receiving care), thinking about the care that sustains that fruit tree (caring about), working with neighbors to coordinate care (caring for), and actually doing that care work (giving care) (Tronto, 1993). Barb then continues to draw on her own experience to clarify how Jen – and indeed the entire group – could begin to learn to more sufficiently care about and care for the fruit trees in their own lives: “I met the neighbors and I said, “Is anybody taking care of this” (lines 99-100). She offers the simple solution of getting to know one’s neighbor, which is perhaps the first step in organizing a community care network, where everyone shares the benefits and responsibilities associated with

caring for fruit trees. Through this exchange, as multiple place-stories coalesce, the group's physical presence and willingness to engage in dialogue is beginning to embody the kind of network of community care which they are discussing. Then, Tara introduces her own place-story into the conversation.

Transcript 4.13 I wish that all the trees were out there for the community

- 101 Tara: But I think it is interesting because I would rather I have a friend who is – What
 102 do they call them, guerilla (.) gardener.=
- 103 Jen: *=((laughs))*=
- 104 Tara: =And so he goes around an plants things in ugly little un-cared for corners (.)
 105 a::nd I walk around and *((smiles))* look at them and my *((places hand on heart))*
 106 heart just feels so happy to see, wow, look at that rosemary bush. And look at
 107 that (.) ya know I've [given them some plants.
- 108 Barb: [So that's good. I mean rosemary. [Ya know, something that
 109 can take care of itself and live in a drought.
- 110 Tara: [Yeah. (.) and an (.) roses
 111 or whatever or ya know whenever I'm like, "Hey, and I've got this bush I don't
 112 want any more." A::nd um somebody did that *((points east))* on this corner er
 113 *((points west))* outside here [on Dewberry
- 114 Barb: *(((looks west and nods)))*
- 115 Tara: Um on the corner there which is a bunch of oakleaf hydrangeas (.) and they look
 116 very beautiful on what was formerly a very ugly island. And *((looks up and*
 117 *places hand on heart))* so it's an interesting perspective you have=
- 118 Barb: *(((tilts head)))*=
- 119 Tara: =because I feel like um I wish that all *((extends arm toward Barb))* the trees on
 120 the *((waves arm with pointed finger))* parking strips were just out there for the
 121 community=
- 122 Barb: *(((nods)))* Mhm=
- 123 Tara: because what *((hand on heart))* I see (.) and I'm *((shakes head))* mortified by it
 124 [is fru:it *((opens hand and lowers it))* just *((circles arms))* all over this city.
- 125 Barb: *(((nods)))*
- 126 Tara: People are hungry, people can't afford fruit and there's fruit just falling to the
 127 ground.
- 128 Jen: *(((nods)))* °Yeah°=
- 129 Tara: =And I would walk around *((circles finger))* lower Wallingford (.) where um a
 130 couple of my preschools are and we would *((mimics holding a basket))* take our
 131 little baskets and we would pick up the windfalls. And very angry neighbor would
 132 come out and tell me *((raises index finger))* *((angrily))* "Don't you take my
 133 apples." And I said, *((earnestly))* "I'm so: sorry.=

134 ((Ari and Carter smile))
135 Tara: =Could we? We were just picking up the windfalls. Is ((raised voice)) that okay?
136 And he said, ((curtly)) “Yes, but don't ever pick the tree.” And I said,
137 ((innocently)) “I would never pick your tree.” (1) And ((looks at Barb)) so it's an
138 interesting thing. (.) Like, I get that like ((looks up)) you you plant it and you
139 take care of it, but it's like ((makes eye contact with Jen)) I don't know, I [kind of
140 Barb: [Well
141 ((opens palms)) it's, I mean I've been hearing about this for=
142 Tara: =Yeah=
143 Barb: =14 years, so I mean, [it's ((leans and speaks loudly)) the people who have the
144 trees. (.) who don't like them
145 Tara: ((raises hand)) Incidentally (1) I got a lot of fig trees (.)
146 that I would love you to come and pick. ((laughs))=
147 =((Ari and Barb laugh))-
148 Barb: =Yeah, ((opens hands toward Tara)) well [there you go.
149 Tara: [Five. ((chuckles))
150 Barb: But I mean, [this is a this is such a great opportunity
151 Nicole: ((laughs)) (I'm there!)
152 Tara: [And plums ((laughs heartily))
153 Barb: for talking to your neighbors.=
154 Tara: Yeah.=
155 Jen: =Mhm

Over the course of this segment, which lasts about two minutes, Tara shares two anecdotes which ostensibly serve as counterexamples to Barb's normative claim for deference to plant caretakers. Like Jen, who had just been speaking, Tara offers one example of a friend and another in which she is the main character. The former example illustrates the idea of "guerilla garden(ing)" (line 102) as a normative ethic, in which "ugly little uncared for corners" (line 104) are transformed through acts of kindness, when individuals cultivate plants on land they don't own. From this perspective, individuals, like Tara's friend, take it upon themselves to care for plants and public spaces on an *ad hoc* basis, perhaps leading to a virtuous cycle of caring about, caring for, giving care, and receiving care with the plants in one's community. As Tara shares this story, she smiles, places her hand on heart, and shares that her "heart just feels so happy to

see” the rosemary bush that the guerilla gardener planted (lines 105-106). In this way, she demonstrates how care – along with plants – might be cultivated and spread organically among the gardeners and those who joyfully encounter their handiwork. Barb affirms this particular example of guerilla gardening, noting rosemary “can take care of itself” (line 109), and therefore does not depend on humans to the same extent that fruit trees do. However, this response signals that Barb is privileging *the coordination* of community care, wherein (human) neighbors organize systems so the plants in their community can thrive, and that necessarily involves recognizing the care labor that is required and the way this labor is distributed (Power & Williams, 2019). Though Barb and Tara are temporarily aligned in terms of the rosemary example, their intersubjective understanding of community care still seems fraught by discrepancies related to the coordination and recognition of care work.

Tara then says she wishes that the trees in the public right of way were “just out there for the community” (lines 120-121) because she’s “mortified” that fruit is “all over this city” (lines 123-124), “falling to the ground” when “people are hungry” (lines 126-127). By invoking a discourse of “the community” with respect to citywide hunger, Tara is expanding the scale of the discussion and virtuously positioning her desire for unconditional fruit picking. The group is no longer just talking about whether Wallingford residents should be allowed to pick fruit in public spaces, as did the kids on the plant tour, as well as Jen and Margaret. Rather, Tara makes a bid to consider the extent to which norms governing fruit picking align with ideals of food justice. Though Tara never mentions race or whiteness, her description of hunger “all over this city” possibly contains a critique that Wallingford, which is a predominantly white neighborhood, ought to be considering how to distribute their fruit to communities of color in other parts of the city.

After establishing this moral basis for her argument, Tara proceeds to share a personal place-story, in which she re-enacts a time she and her preschoolers picked up fruit that had fallen from a nearby tree. Tara's tone and body language convey she was unfairly chastised by the property owner, and that he was being overly protective of the fruit, which would have otherwise been wasted (lines 131-136). Tara follows this dramatic depiction by attempting to directly challenge Barb's grounds for setting norms: "I get that like you you plant it and you take care of it, but it's like [...]" (lines 138-139). Perhaps Tara was going to continue to hybridize discourses related to food justice and public spaces, to set out a more favorable vision for community care of fruit trees. However, she isn't quite sure what to say, stuttering and making eye contact with Jen (line 139), whom she has aligned with on this issue thus far. Barb takes this opportunity to interject, reminding the group that she has been involved in this conversation for 14 years (line 141, 143), and therefore her perspective should hold weight. Tara acknowledges this (line 42) and then invites Barb to pick fruit from her fig trees (lines 145-146).

In this exchange, both Barb and Tara are performing discourses which correspond to their ideals of community care. Tara recognizes that she has "a lot of fig trees" (line 145) which would be too much to eat for herself, so she invites Barb to pick them. This parallels her desire for being able to pick others' fruit trees, enjoy the fruit, and prevent food waste in the process. And recall that Barb, for her part, initiated this discussion after reviewing the parents' lack of consideration when they encouraged their kids to pick cherries during the plant tour. Consequently, Barb stimulated a community dialogue about the rights and responsibilities associated with caring for fruit trees in the neighborhood. She offered an educative example of herself doing this (lines 99-100), and then concluded the present discussion by noting that "this is such a great opportunity for talking to your neighbors" (lines 150, 153). In this way, this ART

meeting involves a meta-discussion about talking to your neighbors, and it also *is* a discussion among neighbors. The ART group performs community care – or at least moves in this direction – by dialoguing about the meaning of community care within their neighborhood.

Background on the second ART meeting

After the first ART meeting, I synthesized participants' feedback regarding scenes to include in the film and emerging themes to highlight. Then, with this feedback in mind, I put together a rough cut of the film to screen during the second ART meeting. The purpose of this second meeting was to provide additional feedback to further refine the film. In particular, I was interested in hearing what was missing from the rough cut. Most of the footage, and thus the narrative, was centered on the walking tours. In order to tell a story of the neighborhood, I wondered what perspectives might not have been represented during the tours.

The second ART meeting took place on September 1, 2022 – 20 days after the first meeting. Like the first one, this meeting also took place at Tara's home, which doubles as a preschool. Most of the same people were present at this meeting, with some exceptions. For example, during this second meeting EJ, the composer of the film score, joined us for the first time. A few guests also joined remotely (via Zoom), including Jen and Margaret. As ART members arrived, they were invited to grab a plate of food that my partner, Sage, had prepared. Once everyone sat down with their food, I described the purpose of the meeting and we went through a round of introductions. Then, we watched the rough cut, which took about an hour. The focal episode that I highlight in this section took place immediately after the screening, about an hour and a half into the meeting.

Episode 4: Materializing community care from the cherry tree

Transcript 4.18 We have cherry pie

1 Ari: Do people want a minute ta go to the bathroom and stretch (.) before we launch

2 into the conversation?

3 Jude: I want to [(*inaud*)

4 Ari: [OK. Maybe let's take like five minutes (.) and (.) (*flicks wrist*)) then

5 (*stands, starts walking, and circles arms*)) let-let those ideas marinate.

6 (2)

7 Austin: I'll have to get a few more Fritos.=

8 Ari: =Yeah get some more Fritos.

9 (*group laughs, Austin stands*))

10 (4)

11 Tara: I mi::ght have enough popsicles

12 (*group laughs*))

13 Austin: Oh [baby!

14 Ari: [It would be better to eat the popsicles before we start talking. Just cuz last

15 time we were taking off the wrappers it was really noisy. So let's get (*points to*

16 *Jude, who is getting up*)) yea::h [(*thumbs up*))

17 Tara: [Now?=
18 Ari: =Yeah, now would be actually a great time.=

19 Barb: =Well, (*stands up*)) we have cherry pie. [(*puts down notebook and grabs plate*

20 *from under chair*))

21 Tara: [Oh my God!

22 [(*group cheers loudly*))

23 Ari: We got cherry pi:e. (.) [Thanks to (*points to Barb*)) Barb

After I suggest we take five, the conversation quickly turns to food. Austin says he's going to "get some more Fritos" (line 7) and then Tara, who is hosting the event at her house, offers popsicles to the group (line 11). Shortly thereafter, Barb announces, "Well, we have cherry pie" (line 19), to which the group responds by cheering (line 22) and Tara exclaims, "Oh my God!" (line 21). During the first ART meeting, Tara had likewise supplied popsicles, and Barb had baked brownies. This consistent nourishment is a way that both Tara and Barb are giving care to the community of practice that represents – and, through the filmmaking project, is actively representing – the larger community (e.g. Jarosz, 2011). Barb's choice of baking a cherry pie is significant, in that it directly relates to the group's extensive conversation just a few weeks prior that centered around the cherry tree in the traffic circle. Barb does not explicitly

make this connection, but by offering the fruits of her labor, she is building on the discursive foundation of the cherry tree that the group had previously established, to materialize the group's partially overlapping ideals about community care. A few minutes later, before we reconvened as a group, some ART members had sat down to eat their desserts and chat with each other.

Transcript 4.19 Cherry pie, my favorite

- 24 Tara: *((looks at Barb, walks onto the patio with a plate of pie))* Cherry pi::e, my
 25 fa:vorite.=
- 26 Barb: *((sitting down, eating pie))* =Mhm *((looks at Tara and turns toward her))*
- 27 Tara: *((sits down))* My grandfather (.) (did this joke.) Because he'd always stop when
 28 he'd come pick us up and he'd say– his finger would be bent, not straight– and
 29 he'd say, “Can you get under that?” *((chortles))* (With) cherry pie was his
 30 favorite.=
- 31 Barb: =O::h!=
- 32 Tara: =“Can you get under that?”=
- 33 Barb: =Waddayou mean? I don't know whachu mean: “Can you get under that?”
- 34 Tara: He meant can you eat it all?=
 35 Barb: =Oh! *((looks at pie slice and grabs it))* Oh, OK.
- 36 Tara: Ya know, he was (born *((chuckles))* in) (.)
- 37 Barb: [Yea:h!
- 38 Tara: [(a different culture)
- 39 Barb: Yea:h!

As soon as Tara enters the vicinity, she looks at Barb and engages her in conversation about cherry pie (lines 24-25). Though Barb can't immediately see Tara because of the way her chair is positioned, she knows that Tara is talking to her and immediately responds with an audible “mhm,” makes eye contact, and repositions her body toward Tara (line 26). Tara shares a personal anecdote which reveals a connection between the pie and her grandfather. Though Barb is not initially sure what the anecdote means, her immediate response – an enthusiastic “Oh!” (line 31) – and subsequent questions indicate that she is interested in Tara's story. After this initial exchange, the two resume eating their pie. EJ, the film composer, had been having a side

conversation, which temporarily commands the attention of the group. The next segment begins about eight seconds after the previous one.

Transcript 4.20 Are these from your tree?

- 40 Tara: *((looking down at the pie and forking it))* Mmm, wo:w, this is goo::d.
41 (5) *((EJ continues to talk about his music in the film))*
42 Barb: *((glances toward Tara while both eat pie))*
43 (5) *((EJ continuously talking))*
44 Tara: *((looking down))* Wow
45 Barb: *((looking down))* [This is
46 Tara: [(This) *(inaud)* pie (is gorgeous.)
47 Barb: *((looks at Tara))* Sweet, [sweet cherries.
48 Tara: [((makes eye contact with Barb))
49 Barb: [I don't have any,
50 Tara: [Mhm *((nods))*=
51 Barb: =I don't have a *((looks down, touches pie))* (1) sour (.) tart cherry tr-tree.=
52 Tara: =So yummy. (1) Are these from your tree? *((takes a bite, looks at Barb))*
53 Barb: *((nods, makes eye contact))*
54 Tara: *((tilts head))* Are you sharing?
55 Barb: I had 40 lbs this year.
56 Tara: *((extends neck toward Barb, opens mouth in surprise))*
57 Barb: *((smiles))* These were frozen. *((chuckles))*=
58 Tara: How did you get them down?
59 (1)
60 Barb: *((matter-of-factly))* It's not a big tree.=
61 Tara: =Did you shake it?
62 Barb: No, I pick em. It's not a big tree. It's-it's only about ten feet tall. *((bites pie))*

Figure 4.6 Tara compliments Barb's cherry pie and asks about her tree (lines 52-54)



Despite a temporary lull in the conversation, Tara and Barb continue to demonstrate that they share a common formation (Kendon, 1990) by occasionally talking and glancing at each other (lines 40, 42). Eventually they begin trying to speak to each other at the same time (lines 45-46) and Barb says that the cherries are “sweet” (line 47) because “I don’t have a sour tart cherry tr-tree” (line 51). Though this statement appears to come out of the blue, it actually follows directly from the ongoing conversation about the cherry tree in the traffic circle. Recall that during the plant tour, the group notes that the cherries are sour, leading Jahna to suggest that “these would be really good in a pie” (Transcript 4.2, line 10). Then, during Barb’s presentation of this episode during the first ART meeting, she said, “I think it looked like sour tart cherry tree to me so probably wouldn’t be good even if it were ripe” (Transcript 4.9, lines 19-22). Presently, Barb repeats almost exactly the same phrase: “sour tart cherry tr-tree.” Within this new context, Barb is saying that she doesn’t have one of these trees, but was rather only able to use “sweet cherries” to make the pie that Barb and Tara are enjoying. In this way, Barb makes a direct

reference to the ongoing conversation about community care, extending the dialogue from the previous ART meeting. In addition to simply referencing this conversation, Barb has cooked up a physical manifestation of it in the form of a cherry pie, which she is using to perform community care.

Tara, for her part, builds on the ongoing conversation in a variety of ways. For example, her question, “Are you sharing?” (line 54; Fig. 4.6) generally evokes discourse around public spaces that the group had engaged in during the first meeting; and it specifically parallels Tara’s invitation at the end of that meeting, for Barb to come pick figs from her trees. In addition, throughout the present exchange, Tara is enthusiastic and complimentary about Barb’s contribution, saying her pie is “my favorite” (line 24), “gorgeous” (line 46), and “so yummy” (line 52; Fig. 4.6). Tara also shares a personal story about her grandfather and then asks questions (lines 52, 54, 58, 61), inviting Barb to share more about the labor that went into creating the pie. With these actions, Tara is demonstrating the reciprocity that Barb had asked for directly in the previous ART meeting. As a caretaker of local fruit trees, Barb called on the members of the neighborhood to recognize the humans who are caring for the trees in public spaces near them, and to consider their wishes before picking fruit. During that meeting, Tara had played “devil’s advocate” with Barb (Transcript 4.16, lines 53-54), advocating for a neighborhood where anyone is free to pick fruit, regardless of their relationship to the tree or its caretakers. Now, in contrast, Tara is demonstrating that she does indeed care about Barb’s efforts.

The conversation continues, and Tara becomes more physically animated as she shares a brief anecdote about her experience working on a peach orchard, using a machine to shake fruit from the trees. Barb encourages her by nodding and asking questions. Then, in the exchange

depicted below, Barb engages in a reciprocal telling (Berger, 2023) with her own experience growing up on an orchard.

Transcript 4.21 Very hot and very heavy

- 63 Barb: *((takes a bite))* Oh. (3) You know I grew up on an orchard. *((glances at Tara))*
64 And picked the cherries—picked really big cherry trees.
65 Tara: Oh
66 Barb: We had super tall ladders.
67 Tara: Yeah, I picked uh peaches.=
68 Barb: =Mhm=
69 Tara: =I only ever needed to do that one summer.
70 Barb: *((briefly makes eye contact with Tara, then looks away))* Yeah, well I was stuck.
71 *((chuckles))*=
72 Tara: =It's very hard work. *((brushes hair to the side))*
73 Barb: Yup. Hot.
74 (3)
75 Tara: In Oregon, Willamette Valley *((tilts head and widens eyes))*
76 Barb: *((looks at Tara))* Mhm *((nods head))*
77 Tara: My friends, I was in college, my friends took bets on how long I would last.=
78 Barb: =O::oh=
79 Tara: =*((small nod))* I made it through the whole summer.=
80 Barb: =Oh wo::w. Picking?
81 Tara: *((forks pie))* Hm? *((nods))* Picking.=
82 Barb: =Wo::w, [that's a lot.
83 Tara: [I had to pick into a bucket? (there when the tree ripened.)
84 Barb: Mhm
85 Tara: And just *((raises and lowers finger))* up and down the ladder all day.=
86 Barb: =Peaches, yeah. Because yeah the trees aren't (.) that big. And then they're but
87 they're (3) they're gradual.=
88 Tara: =And the ladders were wood. *((takes a bite and makes brief eye contact with*
89 *Barb))*=
90 Barb: =*((nods))* Mhm.=
91 Tara: =*((makes hand circles))*=
92 Barb: =*((nods))* All those- we only [had one (.)
93 Tara: [*((nods))*
94 Barb: metal ladder and that was for my mom's [*((nods))*.
95 Tara: [*((nods and laughs))*
96 Barb: So they were really heavy.
97 Tara: *((smiling))* (Very hot and very heavy.) *((takes a bite))*

In this exchange, Barb reveals that she is intimately familiar with picking cherries, and with cultivating fruit trees more generally. Tara interjects at various points to relate her own personal history of picking fruit in Oregon, admitting that “I only ever needed to do that one summer” (line 69). Barb, in contrast, replies, “Yeah, well I was stuck,” positioning herself as being both more experienced and stuck in that work. Tara uses this opportunity to acknowledge the “very hard work” (line 72) of picking fruit, immediately after demonstrating her legitimate (though brief) lived experience of performing this work herself. Tara further emphasizes her understanding of the difficulty of the work by describing how she “made it through the whole summer” (line 79) despite having to go “up and down the ladder all day” (line 85).

Throughout, Barb continues to use the social language of a more experienced fruit picker. She describes the size of the peaches (line 86) and relates the weight of Tara’s wooden ladder with her mom’s metal ladder (lines 92-96). As she does this, the duo’s personal histories and place-stories begin to more closely merge. Tara relates Barb’s cherry pie to an intimate memory of her grandfather and to her experience picking peaches. Barb then relates Tara’s experience picking peaches to her own experience growing up on an orchard. By the end of this exchange, Barb and Tara are fluidly moving back and forth between each other’s personal histories and are finding connections between them. This episode ends with Tara smiling as she reiterates Barb’s description of lugging around ladders and picking fruit: “very hot and very heavy” (line 97). Tara seems content to position herself as less experienced than Barb at working with fruit trees, establishing a level of deference that may not have been clear during their somewhat contentious discussion during the previous ART meeting.

Notably, throughout this entire sequence, Tara and Barb are eating pie as they are relating to each other about the people, places, labor, and life experiences that went into creating it. The

cherry pie becomes a conceptual substrate as well as a physical one (Goodwin, 2018), itself an extension of the cherry tree which started the conversation. The activity of eating the pie together establishes a joint rhythmic activity (Ingold, 1993), in which both Tara and Barb were able to flexibly alternate between talking, listening and eating; and between making eye contact with each other and looking down at their plates. This eating time was an organic outgrowth of break time during the ART meeting, between the more defined activities of watching a long video and entering into a concentrated discussion about it. Extensive literature in the learning sciences demonstrates that these informal times offer important opportunities for relationship building, which is often more difficult during formal programming (Nasir et al., 2020). Here, we see an example of how this plays out during a collaborative filmmaking project, where the video itself worked in tandem with ART meeting participation structures to enable participants to reflect on, dialogue about, and perform community care with their neighbors.

Discussion

In this chapter I have traced the discursive arc or semiotic cycle (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) of community care, as it showed up throughout four episodes, three events, and two different phases of this project. During the first episode of the plant tour, the group embodies community care by sharing fruit from a cherry tree in a traffic circle. During the second episode of that tour, the group draws on their experience at the cherry tree to relate conversations about community care, public space, and neighborhood change. These conversations were extended during the ART meetings, when a group of community members discussed the plant tour and contested how to care about and for the fruit trees in the neighborhood. During the first ART meeting, Barb presents a summary of the tour, problematizing how the tour participants picked cherries without recognizing the cherry tree's caretakers. This leads to a dialogue about the

meaning of community care, in which Tara disagrees with Barb and the group performs discourses which correspond to their understandings of the concept. Tara argues that everyone should be able to pick fruit trees in the public right of way, and implies this could lead to a virtuous cycle of giving and receiving care. Barb, on the other hand, argues that those interested in picking fruit should care for the fruit trees, by getting to know their neighbors and coordinating a community care network. Finally, during the second ART meeting, Barb materializes community care by baking a cherry pie (made with cherries she harvested) and sharing it with the group. This gesture creates an opportunity for Tara to recognize Barb's care labor, effectively establishing the grounds for further solidarity in working towards partially overlapping ideals of community care.

Scollon & Scollon (2003) note that within geosemiotics, or the study of discourses in the material environment, "there is a dynamic tension between the centrifugal forces by which discourses distribute themselves across time and space and the centripetal forces by which discourses converge in time and space to form semiotic aggregates" (p. 168). Over the course of the arc I have described in this chapter, discourses of community care take on different meanings as they follow centrifugal forces, hybridizing with other discourses and circulating among the built environment, the natural world, and participants' bodies. Throughout this circulation, the cherry tree becomes a semiotic aggregate, physically grounding these discourses for those who encounter it; its presence calms traffic, enabling residents to use the street as a public space. It provides nourishment, beauty, and other public and ecological benefits. The cherry tree also conceptually grounds these discourses, enabling participants to relate otherwise abstract conversations about community care, public space, neighborhood change to their own personally relevant and shared experiences. Researchers interested in better understanding civic learning

could take a similar theoretical and analytic approach, paying attention to the semiotic aggregates that inhabitants use to make sense of community conversations and begin organizing joint work.

Recognizing and establishing these semiotic aggregates is a crucial part of participatory planning processes, particularly within communities that are undergoing rapid change. This recognition can help residents to develop place-stories that demonstrate meaningful interconnections among themselves, their neighbors, and their entire ecology, sowing the seeds for further collaboration. This contrasts with conventional planning methods, which (like conventional education methods) too often physically and semiotically distance individuals from their meaningful home and neighborhood contexts (Taylor, 2020). Recently there has been increased interest in implementing walking tours as part of city planning initiatives (e.g. Partida, 2023). This analysis shows how walking tours can work in tandem with multimodal technologies for data collection and storytelling, creating opportunities for residents to embody, relate, contest, and materialize important discourses with their neighbors across space and time. Discourses related to community care are particularly important within participatory planning and civic engagement efforts, given that normative civic infrastructures tend to promote more individualistic discourses related to property ownership (Einstein et al., 2020). We need to establish new infrastructures and new ways of understanding what care could look like within our cities and neighborhoods. There have been recent efforts within planning and urban affairs scholarship to theorize “caring cities” (e.g. Marchigiani, 2021) “caring public spaces” (Nelischer et al., 2024), and “geographies of care and responsibility” (Lawson, 2007). The present study builds off of these efforts, demonstrating how inhabitants could learn to develop these caring spaces and practices. It also suggests that attending to the contradictions and tensions within discourses of care is an important site for continued investigation.

Within this chapter, we have seen how discourses of community care emerged organically from inhabitants spending time together, walking through the neighborhood, and piecing together a narrative based on interpretations of these shared experiences. While these discourses did indeed materialize in the direction of a more relational conception of care, they also remained color-evasive (Annamma et al., 2017) and demonstrated a limited degree of critical reflection over the participants' relative capacities to give and receive care. Many – but not all – of the focal participants in this analysis are white women, many are property owners, and all live in a predominantly white neighborhood. These identities informed their conversations, which often hovered around a more localized (and hence exclusive) understanding of community care. Participants commonly expressed a desire for more access to fruit trees and green spaces in the neighborhood, without problematizing the inequities of access associated with racialized segregation across neighborhoods in the city. In the instances where Jordan and Tara hinted at housing and food inequities, respectively, they were quickly cast aside as the conversation strayed back to more personal concerns. Tronto (1993) suggests that caregivers, particularly those in positions of privilege, may have a “parochial” understanding of how care should be distributed, emphasizing a “concern with the local” (p. 146), with limited consideration of the needs of others outside their families or social spheres. For this reason, a more critical or expansive conversation may have only emerged from a semiotic aggregate that more forcefully convened discourses of community care with those of inequities and environmental racism. Otherwise, stubbornly embedded conceptions of whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) obscure privileges built into our intersections, foreclosing opportunities to take responsibility for how care might be coordinated across social and geographic markers.

Civic media scholars and practitioners might benefit from some reflections on how I could have improved the research design to encourage more critical conversations. For one, I could have intervened at any point during the plant tour and the ART meetings, particularly during the moments when the participants began to hybridize discourses of community care with those of housing and food inequities. I could have also better supported Luna and Jordan to address these issues during the plant tour. Prior to each tour, I had sent online guidebooks to tour leaders and discussants, which included prompts encouraging them to consider connections between their neighborhood and larger challenges, like racial inequities and climate change (see Appendix B). In retrospect, it might have been worthwhile to spend more time with each tour leader, designing the tours to further encourage discussion around these prompts. These changes could have helped shift existing semiotic aggregates, like the cherry tree, so inhabitants begin to see familiar neighborhood landmarks in a new light. That being said, this chapter was primarily focused on how the film served as a motivation for creative collaboration, catalyzing these important neighborhood conversations. One of the affordances of the filmmaking process is that new layers of meaning can be added as discourses are juxtaposed in the editing room, enabling a more complex place-story to emerge. In Ch. 6, we begin to see how the film-as-artifact enters into the discursive meaning-making process.

Despite some of the missed opportunities listed above, this analysis contributes to an understanding of learning and teaching within participatory planning and civic media projects. Throughout the events which constitute this discursive arc, participants have taken up the social languages of learners and teachers, or have been positioned as such by fellow community members. Barb, for example, routinely takes up the social language of an advisor or teacher, given her relative expertise in caring for fruit trees. This positioning was supported by the

participation structures of the ART meetings. During the first ART meeting, she (along with everyone else) was given an opportunity to present at length, without interruption, about a walking tour she reviewed. Unlike traditional schooling, Barb's pedagogical positioning was challengeable, and ultimately led the group into a generative discussion about what community care should look like in their local context. Moreover, during this discussion and throughout the arc, participants sometimes positioned themselves as not-knowing, which is anathema in many formal educational contexts. For example, at the end of the plant tour, Jordan admitted that he didn't know how to redress housing inequities. These moments are important indicators of how interventionists (e.g. housing justice activists) might target their communications to help communities learn how to become more meaningfully civically engaged.

Beyond identifying individual moments of teaching and learning, this analysis points at how the neighborhood as a whole is learning how to "care with" each other, a phase which Tronto added onto her initial framework to signify how care could be embedded within civic efforts (Tronto, 2013). Across the four episodes depicted in this chapter, we start to see "caring with" emerge as participants' expressions become laminated into a mode of relation, which I describe as place-storying. Several participants share their own personal histories, which intertwine as they lead each other on walking tours or sit together to review these tours and determine the broader narrative they depict of their neighborhood. Through place-storying, participants considered their relationship to the natural world, the built environment, and each other. Moreover, some of the participants established a basis for building stronger relationships, while recognizing differences in their understandings of important ideals, like community care.

However, the participants described here represent a small fraction of those who live in and around Wallingford. Therefore, any claims about the entire neighborhood learning must be

understood as an initial step situated within a longer process of social and ecological transformation. Because of the constraints associated with organizing dissertation research with limited funding and a limited timeline, the findings in this chapter suggest what might be possible, given sustained efforts that are well-integrated within ongoing local efforts. What if community-based organizations focused on food and housing justice, for example, had been leading this project? What if there were multiple iterations that spanned across neighborhoods, fomenting a larger, ongoing dialogue? What if this dialogue was integrated within formal citywide planning processes? The next two findings chapters more directly take up the mantle of these kinds of questions, by describing the infrastructuring work that emerged from this study.

CHAPTER 5 – STREETS & HOUSES: BUILDING AN ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY

Accessibility is a virtue. Like care, as a concept, it seems to have only positive connotations. Planners and politicians envision cities that are more accessible. Educators aim to make their curricula more accessible. Yet also like care, the meaning of accessibility is contested, particularly when moving from abstract conversations to particular instantiations within a political economy. What are we aiming to make more accessible? For whom? And what tradeoffs are involved to create this accessibility? Building an accessible community requires ongoing work that is both conceptually and politically complex. This chapter examines one example of this work, as it follows the conversation of accessibility across three episodes of this project, which take place over the course of one walking tour about housing. Through this analysis, I aim to show how discourses of accessibility are sharpened, negotiated, and differentiated as they come into contact; sometimes congenially, and other times under more tense circumstances. I argue that the design of this neighborhood walking tour enables participants to learn to become more civically engaged, as they access each other in new ways through place-storying and infrastructuring. As participants physically come together to move through their neighborhood, they make sense of discourses related to accessibility by grounding them in particular aspects of the built environment in their shared perceptual space. Moreover, the group's shared physical space enables them to embody accessibility, prefiguring what might be possible given new infrastructural developments.

Within this chapter, I attempt to unravel the various interconnected meanings of accessibility from the participants' perspectives. While privileging these endogenous accounts, my analysis is informed by geographers and urban planners who have theorized extensively on the topic. Drawing on Marchigiani (2021), I understand accessibility as involving "spatial

dimensions of care” (p. 76) which maximize well-being at the scale of the neighborhood or city. From this perspective, it becomes clear that discourses related to community care, accessibility, neighborhood change, and housing affordability are all deeply related. In order to “expand the scope of urban care thinking” suggest Power and Williams (2020, p. 5), theorists ought to consider “the webs of relations that sustain the conditions of life, including access to sufficient quality food, affordable, appropriate accommodation, and the ecological conditions that sustain well-being.” These conceptualizations resonate with some of the core tenets of sustainable accessibility, including all citizens’ rights to basic services and proximity to everyday activities (Sola et al., 2018). Though, as these authors have pointed out, adherence to basic principles of sustainability are rife with tensions insofar as they ultimately involve political questions about how resources are distributed.

With these considerations in mind, I have selected episodes in which participants attempt to expand the scope of urban care thinking through discourses of accessibility, and in which these attempts result in politicized tensions. My hope in doing so is not to reify familiar, tired debates, but rather to show how the flaring of these tensions can be part of educative processes, particularly in the context of a creative collaboration convening a variety of stakeholders who take up different discursive, physical, social, and institutional positions. In this way, the purpose of this chapter reflects the broader purpose of this project: to expand narrow conceptions of “land use” issues, moving beyond questions of housing and zoning to those of relationships. Before we ask what kinds of physical structures we should build, we ought to be asking about the social structures for which we are building. For this reason, I hope this chapter demonstrates the immense importance of participants’ relentless attempts to understand their material and social needs in the context of the buildings in their immediate environment. The fundamental inequities

and colossal challenges our society faces demand that we change what and how we are building; this analysis offers an account of how we might learn to build something better.

Background on the housing tour

In Ch. 3, I described how this project was inspired by widespread tensions I noticed in Wallingford related to zoning regulations, neighborhood densification, and the preservation or destruction of “single-family” houses¹³. These tensions manifested as verbal – and occasionally physical – altercations at community council meetings. They showed up on Nextdoor and local Facebook groups, as well as on lawn signs advocating for or against particular policies. As I developed the scope and methodology of this project, I decided not to focus on housing per se, but rather to consider more broadly the past, present, and future of the neighborhood, especially insofar as this centered inhabitants’ relationships with the lands and waters that comprise it. This expansive view, I reasoned, would invite more people into the conversation, and perhaps help us circumvent the impasse that seemed to be forestalling more meaningful deliberation and civic engagement. At the same time, I also wanted to embrace participants’ interests and find ways of incorporating them into the project.

When it came time to organize walking tours, I first reached out to those who had expressed interest in leading a tour during the initial interviews. Talking with these participants, it seemed that each potential tour coalesced nicely around a particular theme related to land or water. Unsurprisingly, the most common theme was housing, with five different people

¹³ I use quotes here to signal that “single-family” is how participants tended to refer to sizable standalone houses in the neighborhood. Up until mid-2021, this term was also used as an official zoning designation in Seattle. The Seattle City Council officially changed the designation to “neighborhood residential” to reflect the diversity of possible resident affiliations within a single house. In the remainder of this chapter I continue using “single-family” (without quotes) in line with how participants used the term colloquially. Their usage of this term contrasts with “DADU” or “ADU,” which they reserved for smaller detached houses added to the lot of larger single-family houses, regardless of the zoning designation.

expressing interest in leading a tour in some way related to this topic. I convened this group on a Zoom call and invited them to decide on one person to be the tour leader and one to be the discussant. After a bit of discussion, Kelli volunteered to be the tour leader and Alan the discussant. (Sagar, another participant on the call, decided to take photos, documenting the tour for a local urbanist¹⁴ blog.) The timing of the tour was fortuitous for Kelli, an urbanist and density advocate, as the City of Seattle was updating its comprehensive plan, and policymakers at the state level were considering legislation that would remove restrictions on building larger, denser housing typologies in more areas.

In the remainder of this chapter, I detail how the housing tour enabled participants to engage in discourses of accessibility across a variety of episodes. Each episode begins with a particular housing typology, and shows how references to this typology within participants' shared perceptual space act as semiotic markers to index a particular kind (or kinds) of accessibility. In the first episode, Kelli's DADU house establishes a discourse related to *geographic accessibility*, a term I use to emphasize the relationship between the supply of housing in an urban area and the access to amenities for people who live there. Episode two locates single-family houses in relation to discourses of geographic and *financial accessibility* for residents, before pivoting to residents' *transit accessibility*, *vis a vis* the streets that run through the neighborhood.¹⁵ Finally in episode three, a mid-size mixed-use building becomes a substrate,

¹⁴ In this chapter I use the terms urbanist and New Urbanist roughly interchangeably, to refer broadly to a set of ideologies that champion the social, economic, and ecological potential of urban centers; and advocate for density and diversity of building typologies; walkability, bikeability, and public transit; and participatory planning processes. (See Ch. 2.)

¹⁵ The urban planner Richard Sendi (2014) argues that since housing should be a universal human right, scholars, planners, and policymakers ought to look beyond "affordability" – a highly subjective concept inflected with neoliberal logics – to "housing accessibility," or the available supply of housing in relation to housing needs. Some have argued that enabling and building DADUs can contribute to housing accessibility (e.g. Cipkar, 2022). Others have emphasized that densification needs to be accompanied by tools and policies to promote equitable access (e.g. Cavicchia, 2023). While recognizing the close interconnections between all three of these discourses of accessibility, here I distinguish them to account for how participants were advocating for accessibility in the corpus.

or “point of departure” (Goodwin, 2018), for discourses of accessibility – and the tour participants who embody them – to take to the streets and ultimately achieve some degree of alignment.

Table 5.1 Housing tour participants¹⁶

Name	Institutional affiliation(s)	Role on tour
Kelli	Wallingford for All	Tour leader
Danny	Wallingford for All	Participant
Bryan	Wallingford for All	Recorder
Alan	Wallingford Community Council	Discussant
Sagar	Sound Transit (public transit agency)	Recorder
Vanessa	Historic Wallingford	Participant
Edith	Wallingford Community Council	Participant
Greg	Wallingford Community Council	Recorder
Katie	Wallingford for All	Participant
Rick	Welcoming Wallingford, Seattle Planning Commission	Participant

Episode 1: Establishing geographic accessibility with a DADU

For our initial project interview, Kelli Zoomed in from her DADU (detached accessory dwelling unit), just a few blocks from my house. Her Zoom name read: “Kelli Refer (she/her) Wallingford DADU resident.” Out of many possible identities she could have typed out (or none at all), Kelli chose to center her DADU as primary means of self-characterization. Early on in the

¹⁶ This table includes the focal tour participants, listed in the order they appear in this chapter. “Recorder” indicates the role for participants who recorded photos, audio, and/or field notes, to be used in a blog post recapping the tour. “Participant” indicates attendees without other role designations. See Ch. 3 for more details on the tour roles and the institutional affiliations.

call she told me about her personal housing story, further reinforcing this connection: she and her partner were only able to afford to stay in Seattle because their friends, who lived in a single-family house on a substantial lot, worked with them to build a DADU on their property. She explained how this DADU enabled her to continue to stay in place and access the things she loves about Seattle – beautiful gardens and parks, great local businesses, her friends. For Kelli, her DADU had become a physical manifestation of this geographic accessibility, anchoring her in a place she and her partner loved, and enabling them to start a family there. Later in the interview, when discussing possible walking tours, Kelli suggested leading a tour of DADUs in the neighborhood, including her own. She and her partner had been inviting people over to view their DADU anyway. “It’s been something that we kind of want to evangelize on,” she told me.

A few weeks later, during the online public meet and greet kicking off the walking tours, Kelli shared some details about her tour, which was one of the first to be scheduled. By this point, the focus of the tour had expanded slightly, from a DADU tour to a tour showcasing the diverse housing typologies in the neighborhood. She explained to the group of about 50 community members on the call that the walking tour would explore her own backyard cottage/DADU, as well as a host of apartments, townhouses, and single-family houses. This would enable the group to “see what density is already part of the historic fabric of Wallingford.” With this statement, Kelli was hybridizing discourses of historic preservation with those of New Urbanism (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2000). This reflects her sociopolitical goals of the tour: to encourage a place-story of Wallingford that emphasizes density and walkability. This tour was an opportunity for her to push back on narratives that privilege homeownership and normalize large detached, single-family homes. Anticipating that tensions might surface during the tour, I met with Kelli individually after she developed a tour route to plan stops for group

discussion, and to talk through techniques for eliciting a variety of perspectives from the attendees.

The housing tour took place three weeks after the meet and greet, on June 16, 2022. A group of about a dozen people met up on the east side of the neighborhood, on the street where Kelli lives. After an introduction activity, Kelli led the group halfway down the block, then turned and faced everyone to talk about her “personal quest for housing in Seattle.” Over the next few minutes, she shared a very similar story to the one she had told me several weeks prior, during our initial Zoom interview. The following transcript represents the last minute of her monologue.

Transcript 5.1 We've been able to stay in Seattle

- 1 Kelli: We now live in a DADU in a backyard cottage house and it's something that (.)
2 has been really a gift to our family where we've been able to *((pulses down))* stay
3 (.) in Seattle? and also *((extends arm toward Danny))* have kind of this *((swirls*
4 *arms))* additional community. We now have a 4-and-a-half-year-old. We moved
5 into our house on her first birthday. And this was a really great opportunity for us
6 to: kind of have that *((circulates arms))* village of raising a child. Um we also got
7 really lucky in that *((extends arm toward Danny))* some of our *((smiles))* other
8 [friends, Danny, who's on this tour, moved close by, and so we've been able to
9 Danny:*((smiles))*
10 Kelli: *((pulses hands))* knit together really kind of the sense of community (.) in
11 Wallingford? and it's why we're really passionate about making this a *((pulses*
12 *down on each word))* livable community for everyone? with-with *((passionately))*
13 housing that families can afford if you're not a millionaire. *((nods))* So that's kind
14 of what my like personal story of housing is. And now we're going to walk
15 *((extends arms toward her house))* over (.) to: my house. *((leads group toward*
16 *house))*

In this passage, which punctuates Kelli's story, her house takes on a meaning that transcends its physical structure. It has enabled “our family [...] to stay in Seattle,” she says, pulsing her hands down (lines 2-3) to bring home the point: she is here today, on this ground, because of the DADU. Kelli uses the word “community” twice here (lines 4 & 12) – and four

times over the course of this story – to emphasize the connection between the physical structure and the social structure she has built in the neighborhood. She further expresses this by signaling with both words (line 8) and gestures (lines 3 & 7) that her friend, Danny, who is also present on the tour, moved in nearby. Danny’s physical presence on the tour substantiates Kelli’s claim that the DADU enabled her to access others in her social network and thereby build a community together. Discourses of accessibility and community become embodied as Kelli and Danny congregate with the rest of the group, on the street where Kelli lives. Moreover, Kelli’s story takes on an educative function as an example that others might follow to create more density, and therefore more geographic accessibility, within the neighborhood.

The group then follows Kelli a bit farther down the block, through a side yard of a single-family house, and into the back, where her spouse, Tom, and daughter, Fiona, have just arrived and are standing in front of their DADU.

Transcript 5.2 Do you like living in our house?

- 17 *((Kelli leads the group through a side yard of a single-family house))*
- 18 Kelli: Oh! My family’s here!
- 19 Bryan: *((giggles))*
- 20 Fiona: Mo::m!
- 21 Kelli: Hi babe!
- 22 Tom: (inaud)
- 23 Kelli: (inaud) *((picks up Fiona))*
- 24 (7) *((group walks to the back of house to reveal a DADU and a garden))*
- 25 Kelli: Tom, can you move the bike?
- 26 *((Kelli and Bryan look at Tom’s bike, which is partially blocking the path. The*
- 27 *bike can hold two people and there is a purple book bag in the front basket.))*
- 28 Kelli: *((grabs bike))*
- 29 Bryan: (inaud) Can you just pull it?
- 30 Kelli: U:h a:h e:l
- 31 Bryan: *((begins to pull bike))*
- 32 Kelli: [I’ll have Tom do it. I don’t know.
- 33 Bryan: *((lets go of bike))*
- 34 Kelli: *((looks at group entering))* Al-right. *((beckons with arm))* *((to Tom))* Sorry
- 35 we’re (.) we’re buil– *((laughs))* Our timing worked out well.

36 Fiona: (inaud)?
 37 Kelli: ((to Fiona)) I'm doing a video project. ((to group)) Come on back. ((extends arm
 38 toward bike)) Sorry we got our bike in the way my family just got home from (.)
 39 ((sing-songy)) preschool. ((to Fiona)) How was your day?
 40 Fiona: °Good°
 41 Kelli: You wanna say hi?=
 42 Fiona: =((to group)) °Hi:°
 43 Kelli: Do you like living in our house?=
 44 Fiona: =°Uh huh°
 45 Kelli: Yeah? (1) [((laughs))
 46 Fiona: [((smiles))
 47 Kelli: ((looks at group, friendly)) U:m so ((extends arm toward DADU)) this is our
 48 backyard (.) cottage. U:m it was completed in 2019. ((turns toward Tom)) This is
 49 my spouse, Tom, and my child, Fiona. ((laughs with Fiona)) Hi::
 50 Tom: ((walks toward Kelli and Fiona, wearing a shirt that reads: FUND PUBLIC
 51 TRANSIT))
 52 ((Fiona playfully pushes Tom as he passes them to move the bike))

After talking to the group about her quest for housing, Kelli takes them to see the house which she ultimately developed and now lives in with her family. Along the way, they encounter her spouse and daughter, who have just biked home from preschool. Kelli exclaims, “Oh! My family’s here!” (line 18), demonstrating that she wasn’t expecting them but is happy to see them. This serendipitous encounter that Kelli articulates for the group suggests the kind of geographic accessibility one gets from living in a neighborhood, bumping into family and friends. Kelli lifts up Fiona (line 23) and holds her in her arm for the duration of this episode. Like Danny’s presence in the previous episode, the presence of Fiona and Tom serves to embody discourses of accessibility, animating Kelli’s housing story by bringing the characters to life.

As the group begins to filter in through the side yard, Kelli notices that Tom’s bike is in the path, blocking people from getting through. She asks Tom to move it (line 25), but he has temporarily left the area. The bike, like Kelli’s family, is a physical manifestation of accessibility. Its presence implies that they are able to get around without needing a car.

Moreover, this particular bike is big enough to hold two passengers and, having just gotten home from preschool, is still holding Fiona's purple backpack (line 27). Unlike other parts of the world, this kind of intergenerational cycling is relatively uncommon in the United States. In Seattle, residents were quite supportive of bike paths at the turn of the last century, but once cars became readily available, "bikes became old news," and car infrastructure garnered more public support, creating unsafe conditions for cyclists (Fucoloro, 2023, p. 29). As post-war planning prioritized suburbs over urban villages, highways over bike paths, discourses of accessibility became further cemented into those of private automobile transit (Handy, 1993). In response, New Urbanist and sustainable accessibility advocates have sought to reconcile discourses of accessibility with those of walkability, bikeability, public transit, and housing density, which are meant to reinforce each other, reducing societal dependence on private automobiles (Talen, 2002). Tom's shirt, which reads FUND PUBLIC TRANSIT (lines 50-51) further adds to the visual semiotics (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020) of these discourses. By this point early on in the tour, it is becoming clearer that Kelli and Tom are advocates, and this tour is meant to "evangelize" the relationship of these discourses.

As everyone moves into the yard, Kelli is standing in front of her DADU and still holding her daughter. She takes on the social language of a mother, joyfully asking Fiona about her day (line 39). Kelli then asks Fiona, "Do you like living in our house?" (line 43), to which she replies affirmatively (line 44). This brief exchange establishes the DADU as a physical structure which supports the social structure of family and community. The two share an intimate laugh (lines 45-46) and then Kelli immediately indexes her "backyard cottage" with both words (line 48) and a gesture (line 47), further solidifying the connection between these physical and social structures. At this point, Kelli introduces the group to her family (line 48-49), and as the episode

ends, Kelli gets ready to share more details about how the DADU – and thus, the community – was built.

Episode 2: Expanding accessibility discourses with single-family homes

After leaving the DADU, the group continues to walk around the neighborhood. Over the next half-hour, they take a look at a variety of housing: a shared house that had been rented out until the landlords sold the property; a single-family house that was built on a “double lot,” effectively doubling the density of the lot; Alan’s single-family house that he lives in with his wife, but is getting hard for them to traverse in their old age; and a recently built townhouse. Then, about an hour into the tour, Kelli stops the group on the sidewalk in front of the driveway of a single-family house, saying: “We’re gonna do a little circle up and create some space for everybody to reflect.” She then offers two prompts, which she and I had previously discussed: 1) What have you noticed so far during the tour?; and 2) What do you want the future of Wallingford to be like? She instructs the tour members to pair up and chat before reconvening for a full-group discussion.

People chat for a few minutes and the owner of the house we are standing in front of comes home. He asks Sandi, one of the participants, what’s going on, and she begins to explain the purpose of the project. Then the homeowner amicably asks the group to move to a nearby parking strip so we’re not blocking his driveway. As we shuffle over, Kelli takes this as a cue to transition into the full group discussion.

Transcript 5.3 We can keep evolving

- 1 ((group walks onto the parking strip))
- 2 Kelli: Alright let’s circle up i:n (.) the grass. (1) U:m and just wanted ta: offer some
- 3 space for people ta share (.) reflections and thoughts and I would love to like (.)
- 4 really open up-up some dialogue.
- 5 (7) ((sports car drives by and roars engine))
- 6 Kelli: [Alright

7 Danny: [Um=
 8 Kelli: =((swings arm toward Danny))=
 9 Danny: =I can break the silence, I guess ((laughs))
 10 Kelli: [Thank you!
 11 Danny: Um I: (.) The thing that really stood out to me-I mean ((points toward his house))
 12 I-I live in the neighborhood so I ((circles finger)) see all these houses a lo:t? u:m.
 13 (1) But the thing that I didn't realize ((points thumb at Alan and looks at him)) and
 14 this is- Alan you were sharing about this- was which of the houses were built as
 15 ((pulses hands down)) infill? (.) wi-that were formerly ((extends arm)) double
 16 lots?=
 17 Alan: =((nodding)) Yeah=
 18 Danny: Cuz they all just look really old to me. And so ((turns head toward Kelli)) I think
 19 that's such an important reminder as ((flicks wrist down)) Wallingford (.) is facing
 20 questions about ((grasping gesture)) density and what can ((grasping gesture))
 21 density look like. And it's a very ((pulls hands apart)) polarizing issue? Like I
 22 think it's cool to be reminded tha:t ((scanning group)) um ya know, people were
 23 probably upset when those ((looks at Alan)) la:wns became ((pulses hands))
 24 houses and the neighborhood is ((circles arms)) changing and collapsing it's like
 25 no, these ((opens arms)) houses look beautiful? More ((opens arms)) people live
 26 here. And so ((circles hands)) we can keep evolving and iterating and ((opens
 27 arms)) nothing about this neighborhood is static. So ((extends arm toward Alan))
 28 that-that was a cool little insight.

To begin the conversation, perhaps anticipating there might be some competing political priorities among participants, Kelli offers that she “would love to [...] open up [...] some dialogue” (lines 3-4). A brief, pregnant pause is filled by a sports car roaring its engine (line 5), audibly reminding participants that they are standing next to a road. Danny is the first to speak. Like Kelli, he introduces himself by virtue of his nearby house, which he indexes verbally (line 12) and gesturally (line 11). This brief introduction establishes Danny both as a resident, with some authority to offer perspective, as well as a neighbor, to whom others can relate socially. He proceeds to reference Alan’s earlier comments on the tour, about how some of the single-family houses in the neighborhood were “built as infill” on what “were formerly double lots” (lines 15-16). Though the single-family houses “all just look really old to me” (line 18), Alan’s historical

perspective helped Danny to see that “these houses look beautiful” because they enable “more people (to) live here” (lines 25-26).

From Danny’s view, these single-family houses stand as a discursive manifestation of more density – and thus, more geographic accessibility, – relative to what came before. This is significant because it contrasts with ongoing discourses that pit single-family houses as a *barrier* to greater density, which were prevalent both in initial project interviews and more broadly (e.g. Whittemore, 2021). Further, Danny extrapolates that “nothing about this neighborhood is static” (line 27) and “we can keep evolving and iterating” (line 26). With these comments, Danny makes a bid for the group to understand single-family houses as one stage in a longer process of evolution, in which residents have agency to usher along a built environment that is more responsive to the needs of the growing city. Next, Alan responds.

Transcript 5.4 Subdivide and do even more units

- 29 Alan: Ya ya you’ll still pull a a have it be controversial says *((gasps dramatically))* “But
30 they built a single family house on th-lot?” *((crosses fingers in front of face))*
31 “Oo:::h!”
32 Danny: [Right
33 Alan: [No. It was nice. You now have two peop-two houses (.) instead of just one. But
34 they, I don't know. Maybe they do have a duplex but they haven't talked to me.=
35 Danny: =Yeah, [but,
36 Alan: [Um it’s nice
37 Danny: like, the more can subdivide and *((throws up arms))* do even more units=
38 Alan: =Exact[ly
39 Danny: [like that [that’s even better.
40 Alan: [And they made it look like it’s been there for a while. [It fooled
41 you:
42 Danny: *[((smiles*
43 *and nods))* [Yeah
44 Alan: *[((laughs))*

Alan, who is standing next to Danny, immediately offers a rejoinder: building a single-family house on a double lot may increase density in a relative sense, but in a more practical

sense, it is still not doing as much as would a duplex (or other housing typologies) (lines 29-34). The tone of Alan's voice, as well as his dramatic gasping (line 29) and hex gesture (line 30), suggest that he is purposely ventriloquizing (Bakhtin, 1981) housing density advocates, like Kelli and Danny. Perhaps Alan is surprised to hear Danny's unusual association of single-family houses with density, and he is using this opportunity to prompt Danny to explain further. At any rate, Danny, speaking with the social language of a New Urbanist, clarifies that single-family houses offer possibilities for homeowners to "subdivide and do even more units" (line 37) which is "even better" (line 39).

Alan reveals that he is agreeable to this solution for more density (line 38), and then moves onto the issue he is more concerned with: that the housing "look(s) like it's been there for a while" (line 40). Throughout the tour, Alan has emphasized that new developments should look complementary to the existing housing stock. This comment, along with Danny's earlier comment about the "beautiful" houses (line 25), demonstrate that these participants are hybridizing axiological discourses: housing can be both beautiful and enable more geographic accessibility. This is in contrast with discourses that surfaced throughout the project, in which new housing developments were perceived as ugly (Lee et al., 2023). Immediately after Danny and Alan's exchange, Sagar, who works at a public transit agency, picks up on some of these themes.

Transcript 5.5 It's what we need to see more of

40 Sagar: I guess, you know I just really enjoyed seeing the diversity? in housing. I mean
41 ((looks at Kelli)) you showed some really fantastic examples uh especially like (.)
42 ((smiling)) I'm a townhome fan so like ((extends arm north)) I love the
43 townhomes that you showed. U:h I think the green space makes a lot of difference
44 and then the ((shakes wrist north)) use of natural materials u:m. So yeah, I mean
45 um using kind of that ((rotates wrist)) same style in more places I think would be
46 nice to ((shakes arm)) blend it in more and then the backyard uh– the ADU that

47 you live in was also fantastic. I mean, being able to— it looks like a single family
48 home, but it's like ((*circles arm*)) three units in a in the same lot is uh yeah I think
49 really nice way to increase the number of units. So
50 Van: Yeah, it's what we need to see more of, [for sure.
51 Sagar: [Yeah

Sagar reiterates what Kelli has declared to be the purpose of the tour: to see the diversity in Wallingford housing (line 40). He then contextualizes this by referencing particular buildings they have seen together on the tour: townhomes (lines 43) and Kelli's ADU (line 46). These typologies are considered "diverse" relative to the majority of housing in the neighborhood, which is composed of larger single-family homes. Like Kelli, Sagar signals that within this context, more housing diversity will contribute to more housing density, which will allow more people to access the neighborhood. And like Danny and Alan, Sagar further hybridizes these discourses of density/accessibility with those of aesthetics. He acknowledges that the townhouse's "style" of green space and natural materials allow it to "blend [...] in more" so "it looks like a single family home" even though it's "three units [...] in the same lot" (lines 45-48). This hybridization is strategic, in that it moves past familiar debates about new housing development destroying the character of the neighborhood. Sagar's expression here, adding onto those of Danny and Alan, continues to build a place-story of Wallingford as an evolving neighborhood that maintains its beautiful aesthetics while creating more geographic accessibility.

This segment ends with Vanessa (Van in the transcript) agreeing “it’s what we need to see more of” (line 50), At the time I was surprised to hear her say this. Vanessa is a member of Historic Wallingford, a community-based organization that advocates for historic preservation of the local housing stock. As described in Ch. 3, this group had become embroiled in debates about the ethics of preserving single-family housing in a city that desperately needs to accommodate more people. During this conversation, Vanessa supports Sagar’s claim that Wallingford can

both increase accessibility for more people, while preserving the historic aesthetics of the neighborhood. Up to this point everyone seems to be in agreement. Then, Edith, an older white woman, joins in. She comments on how expensive the new townhouses are, and then says the following.

Transcript 5.6 Tearing down single-family dwellings

- 52 Edith: I'm just stumped as to how we can really make affordable housing. I'm a former
53 teacher. [I want to see families continue to be in Seattle.
- 54 Kelli: [Mhm ((nodding))
- 55 Edith: But (.) what we're doing and even tearing ((chops)) down some of these ((chops))
56 single-family dwellings [(.) and (.) you know, putting up the new houses.
57 ((lawnmower sound in the distance))
- 58 Edith: These houses are mansions.=
59 Kelli: =Yes ((big nod))=
60 Edith: =And I don't think that most young families are gonna be able to afford them. So I
61 just (.) ((exasperated)) Ya know I hear a lot of ((jutting hands out)) things being
62 tossed around about "affordable housing, affordable housing." Um when you
63 really get down to the nuts and bolts, I'd like to hear some more ((clasps hand))
64 practicalities [about how it's done.
- 65 Kelli: (((nodding, raises eyebrows thoughtfully))
66 (2) ((airplane noise))
- 67 Edith: And I know another thing that I'm concerned about is that (.) a lot of the housing
68 does not have [a ((opens hands)) place for [parking!
69 ((airplane noise louder))
- 70 Kelli: (((leans in toward Edith))
- 71 Edith: Well, that's fine for some things, but for a lot of people they [need a car to get to
72 work!
- 73 Kelli: (((nodding less enthusiastically))
- 74 Edith: or they need a car to ((curves hand down)) go places in the evenings. I think
75 there's a lot of unreality and especially, ya know you got two or three kids
76 and a dog. (.) It's real tricky sometimes to do all you need to do on the bus! So-so
77 again, I, ya know you have this um ((raises arm)) theoretical, but I really don't
((chuckles)) think that a lot of people have considered the practicalities.

Edith's tone immediately contrasts with that of the other participants. Danny, Alan, Vanessa, and Sagar have all been conversing amicably, generally in agreement about the need

for more housing diversity as a means to create more geographic accessibility for more people. Edith, on the other hand, is exasperated, voicing the concerns of many neighborhood residents who have seen beloved single-family Craftsman homes getting torn down, and replaced with new housing developments that are expensive and evoke a different visual aesthetic. She argues that housing diversity in and of itself will not lead to more accessibility, because it does not guarantee that the new housing will be financially accessible to families (line 58). Like Danny in transcript 5.3, Edith describes single-family houses as part of the solution for accessibility. But there is an important distinction: Danny sees these houses as an incremental improvement insofar as they are built on double lots, but would welcome them being subdivided or converted so we can “do even more units” (line 37). Edith laments this kind of change, drawing on the social language of a neighborhood defender (Einstein et al., 2020) to decry “tearing down some of these single-family dwellings” (lines 55-56).

In this section, Edith gives two reasons for wanting to preserve single-family houses. The first is that the houses that replace them are mansions (line 56), which is incongruent with the need for affordable housing. Up to this point in Edith’s monologue, Kelli has been nodding enthusiastically, suggesting she is listening and understands Edith’s concerns (lines 54, 57, 63). Kelli even leans in to make sure she hears Edith over the loud airplane noise (line 68) (itself an audible reminder of the disruption associated with more people coming to Seattle). When Edith offers a second reason for preserving single-family houses – that “a lot of the (new) housing does not have a place for parking,” (lines 65-66) Kelli’s enthusiasm begins to wane (lines 71-72). Perhaps this is because it has become clearer to Kelli that Edith is expressing a discourse around accessibility which privileges the status quo, a nuclear family complete with “two or three kids and a dog” (lines 74-75). This discourse, in which Edith associates the preservation of single-

family housing and parking, presents a version of accessibility that clashes with that of Kelli. A minute later, after Edith shares more of her personal housing story (not transcribed), Kelli responds.

Transcript 5.7 I design those large-scale projects

- 78 Kelli: Yeah, I really appreciate that. I really appreciate the lack of affordable housing.
79 I think one thing is that parking is [one of the contributors to
80 *(((bus drives by)))*
81 Kelli: *(((raises voice over the sound of the bus)))* a lack of affordable housing. Um it is
82 one of those things that takes up *(((opens arms)))* a lot of (.) space on the on the
83 property. Like in our house we have space for a parking lot. I my family is
84 *(((smacks hands)))* deeply committed to being car-free. Like I am a *(((smacks*
85 *hands)))* transit advocate by profession. So not everyone is as stubborn (.) as I am
86 about being car-free. But like if we didn't have that parking space, my kid could
87 have a-a bigger-sized bedroom. [So like parking I think is one of those things that
88 *(((minivan drives by)))*
89 Kelli: is often the barrier to also like affordable multi-unit, like apartment buildings.
90 Th-those parking stalls can be \$30,000 *(((shaking head)))* a stall, and that is built
91 into the cost of housing.=
92 Arch: =May I [may I (.) correct that?
93 Kelli: [Oh yeah.
94 Arch: I'm an architect [I design those *(((points north)))* I design those (.) large-scale (.)
95 projects.
96 Kelli: [Mhm *(((nods)))*
97 *(8 lines omitted, architect describing nearby projects)*
98 Arch: I'm doing one right now up in Roosevelt. It's right next to the new transit station.
99 It's called transit-oriented development. (.) *(((earnestly, emphasizing with hands)))*
100 And it's exactly what we want in Seattle. But the developer is tied by the people
101 investing in the project. They have to, unfortunately, provide some parking.
102 I would love to see *(((swipes hand)))* no parking in those projects, but they do
103 decouple it [and they charge,
104 Kelli: [Mhm
105 Arch: which means they charge extra to have parking.=
106 Kelli: =OK=
107 Arch: =The parking is not linked to the unit. It's-they'll charge, ya know, several
108 hundred dollars to the for the car [and they'll charge *(((rolls eyes)))*
109 Kelli: *(((nodding)))*
110 Arch: several thousand dollars obviously for the unit.

111 Kelli: Thank you for sharing that.

112 Arch: *((smiling))* Sure.

After listening to Edith share her concerns about parking and affordable housing over the course of two minutes, Kelli eventually chimes in, demonstrating she's been listening by saying, "Yeah, I really appreciate that" (line 78). She then immediately reframes Edith's concerns about the lack of affordable housing. Edith had previously described single-family houses as a solution to financial accessibility (lines 55-58), and, because they typically include space for parking, unlike "a lot of the [new] housing," (line 65), a solution for transit accessibility as well. Kelli challenges this association, claiming that "parking is one of the contributors to a lack of affordable housing" (lines 79, 81). To bolster this claim, Kelli draws on her own DADU and family, whom the group had met earlier on the tour: "In our house we have space for a parking lot," she says (line 83). "If we didn't have that parking space," which she was legally required to include when developing the DADU, "my kid could have a-a bigger-sized bedroom" (lines 86-87). In order to more directly relate this personal place-story with discourses of financial accessibility, she goes on to describe how expensive parking stalls are, and that they are "built into the cost of housing" (lines 90-91). By grounding discourses of accessibility within a familiar physical and social structure that the group had been acquainted with, Kelli attempts to reframe normative discourses of accessibility, which are materialized in the built environment all around them – and this is no easy task! During this discussion, the group is literally surrounded by single-family houses; they have been asked to move off of the sidewalk because they were blocking the driveway of a single-family house; and automobiles are passing by them constantly (line 5, 64, 80, 88).

Kelli's rebuttal is met with an immediate response from the homeowner, who had previously asked the group to move over, and had been observing the conversation the whole

time. He identifies himself as an architect (labeled Arch in the transcript) and asks to “correct” Kelli’s statement (lines 92, 94). Though he aligns with Kelli in wanting to reduce parking (line 102), he disputes her claim that parking stalls are “often the barrier to [...] affordable multi-unit [...] apartment buildings” (line 89); rather, residents are “charge(d) extra to have parking” (line 105). The architect’s perspective diminishes Kelli’s claim about parking as a barrier to financial accessibility, but it does provide context about the challenges of creating more geographic accessibility. Namely, denser housing typologies, such as the project the architect is “doing [...] right now” (line 98) must include parking in order to get financed (lines 100-101). This arcane detail reveals similar restrictions to those which Kelli had mentioned previously in the context of her DADU. Synthesizing these niche perspectives reveals how deeply embedded parking is into our physical and social structures, exacerbating a paradox of accessibility (Labbé et al., 2020): as a requirement by both governmental and financial institutions, parking enables more transit accessibility for some, but disables more geographic accessibility for others.

After the architect’s comments, Edith and Alan each share a bit more about their personal needs for a car. Kelli responds that “the reality is not everyone is in that situation” (not transcribed), building off of the substrate of Edith’s earlier statement about there being “a lot of unreality” with those who believe cars are unnecessary (line 74). This back-and-forth picks up again as Greg, an older white resident and a member of the Wallingford Community Council, joins into this discussion for the first time.

Transcript 5.8 We could have more pedestrianized streets

113 Greg: When you don't have enough parking, the first impact is on pedestrians (1)

114 because people park across sidewalks.

115 Edith: [Yeah

116 Greg: [They park– make it difficult for people to walk and dangerous (.) to walk. So it's

117 it's easy to say, "Oh, well nobody will have a car." But the reality is (.) people do
 118 have cars and lots of cars. And if you don't (.) think and plan for them, you'll end
 119 up with unsafe situations that are ((*shakes head*)) not pedestrian[(-prone).
 120 Kelli: [I mean our-our
 121 most unsafe thing is actually havin'-we ((*extends arm toward the street*)) could
 122 have more pedestrianized streets and have like ((*pulses hands*)) actual people (.)
 123 ((*emphasizes words with hands*)) people, places, streets like ((*points and looks*
 124 *south*)) the Healthy Streets on 44th? That could be ((*opens arms, palms down*))
 125 totally car-free and that would be ((*palms up*)) safer for everybody ((*releases*
 126 *arms to slap legs*)) than than really getting hung up on like- ((*looks away briefly,*
 127 *then back to Greg, earnestly*)) Yes people blocking the sidewalk is a big pet peeve
 128 of mine. You're ((*shakes head*)) not wrong there. But I think there's so many more
 129 ((*circles arms*)) creative solu:tions.

With the relationship between parking and financial accessibility in question, Greg makes a bid to re-establish Edith's claim that parking is important for transit accessibility. However, rather than pursuing Edith's tactic of drawing on one's personal needs for parking, Greg approaches the issue by noting the importance of parking for pedestrians. By this point on the tour, he can likely infer this is a meaningful issue for Kelli and others who are present; he is attempting to convince the pedestrian advocates on the tour that ample parking is in their best interest. In making this claim, Greg is also expanding discourses of accessibility to acknowledge multiple kinds of transit needs, hinting at some of the tradeoffs that may be necessary to make relevant political decisions (e.g. government subsidies for parking instead of sidewalks). To drive the point home, Greg hybridizes discourses of accessibility with those of safety, noting that if drivers are forced to park across sidewalks, "the first impact is on pedestrians" (line 113) which makes it "unsafe" (line 119) and "dangerous to walk" (line 116). Further, he picks up on Edith and Kelli's uses of "reality" to argue that "the reality is people do have cars and lots of cars," so we should "plan for them" (lines 117-118) to create safer, more accessible transit conditions for everyone. Greg's statement is oriented toward a particular political outcome, but it

brings into focus a central question of relevance for all community leaders, planners, and politicians: Given that we live in a society replete with cars (and roads, and single-family houses, and a host of other arguably harmful technologies and infrastructures), how do we plan for a safer, more accessible future?

While Kelli is unaligned with Greg and Edith in answering this question, she does express that the question itself is an important one. In this scene, she responds to it by beginning to share her own vision. To do so, she first problematizes Greg's attribution of a lack of parking as the barrier to safety and transit accessibility. Rather, she positions *cars* as "our most unsafe thing" (lines 120-121). Kelli doesn't elaborate on this point here, perhaps relying on familiar New Urbanist discourses, ongoing stories of local pedestrian fatalities circulating in the media (e.g. Takahama, 2020), and/or the way these discourses are materially situated within their own bodies as they navigate streets and sidewalks on this walking tour. Instead, she directly points to a solution, physically pointing (line 121, 123-124) to "pedestrianized streets" with "actual people [...] like the Healthy Streets on 44th" (lines 122-124). Kelli is referring to the Healthy Streets program established within the Seattle Department of Transportation during the COVID pandemic. The program designates certain streets which "are closed to pass through traffic, but open to people walking, rolling, biking, and playing. The goal of this program is to open up more public space for people to use—improving community and individual health" (Seattle Department of Transportation, 2024). By referencing a nearby Healthy Street, Kelli is once again using a familiar physical and social structure to ground her discursive reasoning, demonstrating how if more streets were "totally car-free [...] that would be safer for everybody" (line 125).

By this point, the conversation was getting a bit heated. Edith and Kelli had both spoken passionately about their visions for a safer, more accessible neighborhood, and there was a

schism over whether to prioritize cars, parking, and single-family houses, on the one hand; or pedestrianized streets, DADUs, and more diversity in housing typologies, on the other. This discussion had progressed over the course of 10 minutes. Sensing a bit of familiar tension and frustration that had plagued previous civic engagement activities in this neighborhood, I felt obliged to step in and invite additional voices into the conversation.

Transcript 5.9 How do we get more of these?

- 130 Ari: Is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet, who wants to (.) contribute?
131 (7)
132 Katie: *((standing next to her bike))* Not necessarily like a thought, but like, how do we:
133 get more of the:se *((points south))* u:m *((moves hands back and forth))* like uh
134 walking access, closed-car uh neighborhood (.) streets? Does anybody know?
135 Kelli: *((smiling, small shrug))*
136 Katie: Like, do we just talk to Alex Pederson and be like, “Hey, can you designate
137 *((points south))* the seat or the street as to like no: (.) like limited access?” Is that
138 how that works?
139 Kelli: I mean, we have the Stay Healthy streets [and that's kind of the first step in the
140 Katie: [°Yeah°
141 Kelli: right direction. I think creating more perman:nt (.) like barriers (.) is-is one of the
142 steps there. [But
143 Arch: [Talk-talk yeah to the City. We (.) when we: ya know *((turns slightly*
144 *toward partner))* we raised two-two kids here on this street we were concerned
145 because people raced down it.=
146 =*((several participants nod))*=
147 Arch: =It's a couplet *((points east))* with Latona. *((waves arm north and south))* so um
148 yeah *((chuckles))* even Metro races-used to race down. They're less bad now. U:h
149 we talked to the City. We *((turns and extends arm toward street))* had parking
150 instituted on both sides as a traffic-calming measure.
151 *(18 lines omitted, architect recounting challenges working with the City)*
152 Katie: Yeah like one of the things we want to do: is like add mo:re of those *((opens*
153 *arms))* big roundabouts that=
154 Edith: =Mhm *((nods))*=
155 Katie: =are just the mound?
156 *((several participants nod))*
157 Katie: The actual like *((circles arms))* physical like sidewalk (.) and then u:m (.)
158 roundabout just so that we could *((holds hand parallel to street))* slow down (.) uh
159 I think Wallingford Ave. which everybody loves *((swings arms))* to zoom
160 through.

Katie breaks the silence, asking how to “get more of these [...] walking access, closed car [...] neighborhood streets” (lines 133-134). This was Katie’s first time speaking during this discussion, as well as her first time addressing the whole group over the course of the tour. She takes this opportunity to build off of the conversation around pedestrianized streets that Kelli had previously introduced. Kelli had established that pedestrianized streets already exist in this neighborhood by verbally and physically indexing a nearby Healthy Street (lines 123-124). This enabled her to more forcefully argue that for creating “more” of them (line 122) to enhance local safety and accessibility. Katie co-operatively builds off of this expression, similarly articulating a desire for more pedestrianized streets, complete with her own gesture in the same direction as that of Kelli (line 133). However, rather than taking up the social language of an expert urbanist, as Kelli has done over the course of the tour, Katie admits her ignorance, asking “Does anybody know?” (line 134). This encourages Kelli to position the Stay Healthy streets as “the first step” (line 139) and to further envision “creating more permanent barriers” to protect pedestrians (line 141).

The architect continues to build on the conversation, advising Katie to “talk [...] to the City” (line 143). He then shares his own experience having done so for the street they are presently standing beside. Ironically, the solution the architect and his neighbors ultimately arrived at with the City to increase pedestrian safety/accessibility was to institute parking as a traffic-calming measure (lines 149-150). Because of bureaucratic regulations (not transcribed), it seemed the only way to get cars to slow down for pedestrians was by adding street parking, thus encouraging more cars to drive on the road. So while Kelli and the architect offer hope that change is possible, Greg’s entreaty to reckon with “the reality” that “people do have [...] lots of cars” (lines 117-118) reemerges as an ongoing challenge to address, given the limitations of

existing physical, social, and political infrastructures. Despite this implicit paradox of accessibility, Katie remains hopeful, suggesting that “one of the things we want to do is [...] add more of those big roundabouts” (lines 152-153). As with the previous chapter, the roundabout once again serves as a concrete manifestation of discursive community ideals. Katie’s concerns with creating streets that are safe and pedestrian-friendly seem to encourage a near-consensus among the group, with several members nodding as she speaks (lines 146, 156, 162). Even Edith, who has unaligned herself with Kelli, Danny, Sagar, and others on some issues of accessibility, seems agreeable here, nodding as Katie describes her vision for a roundabout (line 154).

Over the course of this episode’s lengthy exchange, participants make bids to story Wallingford as a particular kind of place, drawing on features of the built environment to ground discourses related to accessibility. Danny reanimates Alan’s previous comments to historicize single-family homes built on double lots, describing them as a step towards more geographic accessibility and a symbol of the participants’ agency to build a more thoroughly accessible community. Sagar, Vanessa, and Kelli all likewise express a desire to create more geographic accessibility, building off of the group’s shared experience at Kelli’s DADU and a nearby townhouse. Edith problematizes this place-story, expanding the discourse of accessibility to include notions of financial accessibility and transit accessibility. She draws on her personal experience in the neighborhood to argue that single-family homes and parking are necessary to achieve these ideals. This leads to a discussion which inspires the architect/homeowner to share his professional expertise, and a robust conversation around transit accessibility ensues, articulating some of the tradeoffs involved with planning for an accessible neighborhood.

This episode offers an illustration of how place-storying occurs through a group discussion during a neighborhood walking tour. At the same time, it also shows how place-

storying works in tandem with infrastructuring as a community planning initiative. The walking tour physically brings together neighbors occupying a variety of social, professional, and institutional positions to tell a story with and about their neighborhood. Edith and Greg are older residents and long-time members of the Wallingford Community Council – a group which is notorious for being antagonistic to planners and developers. During this tour, they interface with Sagar, a density advocate who works at a public transit agency, and an architect helping to develop a nearby apartment building. Kelli and Danny are members of Wallingford for All, a group founded in response to Historic Wallingford’s efforts to designate a section of the neighborhood in the National Registry of Historic Places. During this tour, they interface directly with Vanessa, who is a member of Historic Wallingford. This kind of social-physical mixing is an important first step towards the redesign and rebuilding work involved in infrastructuring a neighborhood that houses people with diverse needs.

As we have seen over the course of this analysis, participants’ movement through the neighborhood together creates opportunities for features of the built environment to serve as semiotic aggregates, which participants index throughout the tour to make sense of discourses related to care and accessibility. Over the course of this episode, these semiotic aggregates (e.g. Kelli’s DADU, the Healthy Street on 44th) emerge in relation to the participants’ positionalities to reveal civic learning trajectories that may lead to material changes in the neighborhood. In particular, at the end of this episode, Katie taps the group’s expertise to better understand how to create streets that are more accessible for pedestrians. Her ultimate desire to build a roundabout – which itself has been used as a semiotic aggregate for safety, accessibility, and care – seems to attract unanimous support from the group. In this way, the place-storying efforts of this walking tour created conditions for infrastructuring design work to build accessibility at the scale of the

neighborhood. Furthermore, shortly after Katie expresses a desire to build more roundabouts, Sagar mentions that the City of Seattle is currently seeking public input for a transportation plan, and he invites the group to add comments to encourage more pedestrian accessibility (not transcribed). This shows how the walking tour presents opportunities for infrastructuring that could align local efforts, to build accessibility at larger social and spatial scales. In the final episode of this chapter, we see how pedestrianized streets enable the group to move closer toward alignment.

Episode 3: Aligning accessibility discourses with pedestrianized streets

Kelli continues leading the group through Wallingford. They stop briefly at a condominium and then, about eight minutes after the episode two discussion had ended, Kelli stops the group again to look at a mixed-use building near the neighborhood's main commercial corridor. They are standing on a residential street surrounded by single-family houses and can see the mixed-use building a few lots away.

Transcript 5.10 Vibrant local business districts

- 1 *((group walks in a loose cluster, with Kelli toward the front))*
- 2 Kelli: This building *((extends arm south))* on the corner he:re (.) of 1st and 45th (.) um
- 3 not only does it have some housing above it but it also *((stops walking, brings in*
- 4 *arm, faces group))* has some really small retail *((turns to building))* spaces *((turns*
- 5 *back to group))* and that's something that I think is also really really important as
- 6 we're looking at like the *((circles arms open))* future of Wallingford=
- 7 Bryan: =Mm=
- 8 Kelli: =Um when we're building new buildings really *((circles arms open))* big um like
- 9 some of the new hou-places on Stone like those rents for the retail spaces are
- 10 *((circles arms open))* over a million dollars.
- 11 Edith: [*((slow nod))*]
- 12 Kelli: [So that's a really hard start-up cost for small local businesses to front. But at this
- 13 *((turns and points south))* like unit there's a like little handyman fix-it uh repair (.)
- 14 business and there's also like piano lessons there. And so it's a cool kind of small
- 15 retail space? (.) um fo:r businesses that aren't going to be able to afford the rents
- 16 in some of the other places. So I think that's another piece of like affordability is
- 17 also looking at the affordability of the retail and how do we maintain kind of

18 ((pulses arms)) vibrant local business districts in Wallingford ((earnestly)) which
19 is another priority of mine. I love you know the cool restaurants and ((nodding))
20 businesses too so I don't want them to °go° anywhere.=

Figure 5.1 Kelli indexes a mixed-use building to illustrate a vibrant business district (lines 1-4)¹⁷



Kelli introduces a building that contains both housing and “some really small retail spaces” (line 4; Fig. 5.1) including a “little handyman” and piano lessons (lines 13-14). The building – and the particular businesses in it – illustrate how a “vibrant local business district” (line 18) is possible when rents are affordable. This affordability is the direct result of the neighborhood building a diversity of housing typologies; in particular, those with mid-range density such as the mixed-use building in front of them. While Kelli doesn't explicitly use the term “accessibility” here, her narration implies that modestly increasing geographic accessibility for residents can likewise make the neighborhood more vibrant by increasing financial accessibility for “cool [...] small retail space(s)” (line 14) and “cool restaurants” (line 19).

¹⁷ Each figure in this episode is represented on a map at the end of the episode (Fig. 5.8).

She contrasts this building with others on Stone Way (a nearby commercial street with high-rise apartment buildings), where the rents are more expensive, which is hard “for small local businesses to front” (line 12). It might seem unusual that Kelli, an urbanist and density advocate, is indicating neighborhood challenges associated with building the densest typologies available. However, bringing the group to view this medium-density mixed-use building enables her to present an example of “the future of Wallingford” (line 6) which is possibly more palatable than one characterized by tall apartment buildings and lifeless chain businesses. Perhaps viewing this as a happy medium that the whole group can support, Kelli takes on the social language of a team player, earnestly saying that she “too” (line 20) doesn’t want the cool, local businesses to be displaced as the neighborhood grows. Next, Edith offers a rejoinder.

Transcript 5.11 The data doesn’t support that

- 21 Edith: *=((emphatically))* Most Wallingford businesses say one of their big problems is
 22 lack of parking [and that people can't come and park
 23 Kelli: *[((nodding))*
 24 Edith: so um *((shrugs))* ya know if you don't like cars what's going to happen to these
 25 businesses are *((curls fingers toward ground))* dependent on car traffic to bring
 26 [people in.
 27 Kelli: *[((nods))* (.) I-I'm curious if they really are as dependent on cars as-as *[((shrugs))*
 28 they think.
 29 Rick: *[((to Edith))*
 30 The data-the data doesn't support that.=
 31 Sagar: =Yeah I mean around the world every time they pedestrianize streets I know like
 32 uh the businesses will complain but then they find that more people actually end
 33 up going because it's a more pleasant experience. I think most of em get it through
 34 foot traffic and I would probably imagine a lot of those 45th businesses– I don't
 35 *((raises right hand briefly))* think people from like *((waves left hand forward))*
 36 Fremont are driving and parking it's like *((circles left hand))* people like us
 37 walking to those businesses. So I don’t know.

Figure 5.2 Sagar calls attention to the group's presence to counter Edith's claim (lines 36-37)



Despite Kelli's efforts to find common ground, Edith immediately, forcefully disputes Kelli's claim that promoting modest geographic accessibility will increase financial accessibility for small businesses. Instead, Edith claims that a "lack of parking" is a more significant challenge to the financial accessibility of "most Wallingford businesses" (lines 21-22). With this expression, Edith expands discourses of accessibility to include transit accessibility – particularly, the accessibility of customers who use cars. This is similar to her response several minutes earlier, during the group discussion by the architect's house; she fluidly transitioned the conversation from affordable housing to parking (Transcript 5.6). In both instances Edith indicates that these two accessibility issues need to be considered together.

Kelli listens to Edith, making eye contact and nodding along (line 23). Then she says she's "curious" if the businesses "really are as dependent on cars as-as they think" (lines 27-28). Immediately, Rick affirms Kelli, telling Edith that "the data doesn't support" small businesses' need for parking (line 30). Then, in rapid succession, Sagar affirms Rick, noting that "around the

world every time they pedestrianize streets,” despite businesses complaining, “more people actually end up going” via “foot traffic” (lines 31-34). With these three back-to-back conversational turns, Kelli, Rick, and Sagar, align on issues of accessibility, building on each other to solidify a counter to Edith’s claim about the need for parking: Kelli expresses an initial skepticism, which Rick supports by taking up the social language of an expert urbanist. Sagar then provides more color to Rick’s brief, vague claim about “data,” expanding the scale of the conversation by saying that pedestrianized streets have been successful at promoting accessibility around the world. Sagar further substantiates this claim by circling his hand and saying that “it’s [...] people like us walking to those businesses” who keep them financially viable (lines 36-37; Fig. 5.2). This gestural and verbal indexing uses the group’s embodied presence in the street as evidence that both financial and transit accessibility are possible to support small businesses in the neighborhood. Sagar has discursively built off of Kelli’s initial substrate – the mixed-use building in front of them, extending it to include the participants themselves, as they walk through the neighborhood.

Next Bryan and Alan pick up on the topic of pedestrianized streets, each taking a turn to relate their own personal experiences with particular businesses – and the buildings that contain them – in the neighborhood (not transcribed). Their anecdotes about the business’s success (or lack thereof) each provide evidence for Kelli or Edith, respectively, as they argue for or against prioritizing pedestrian access or parking. Then, Kelli describes the route for the rest of the tour and the group starts walking north, the direction from which they came.

Transcript 5.12 So what data are you talking about?

38 *((Group begins walking down a narrow street, with Kelli towards the back))*

39 (7)

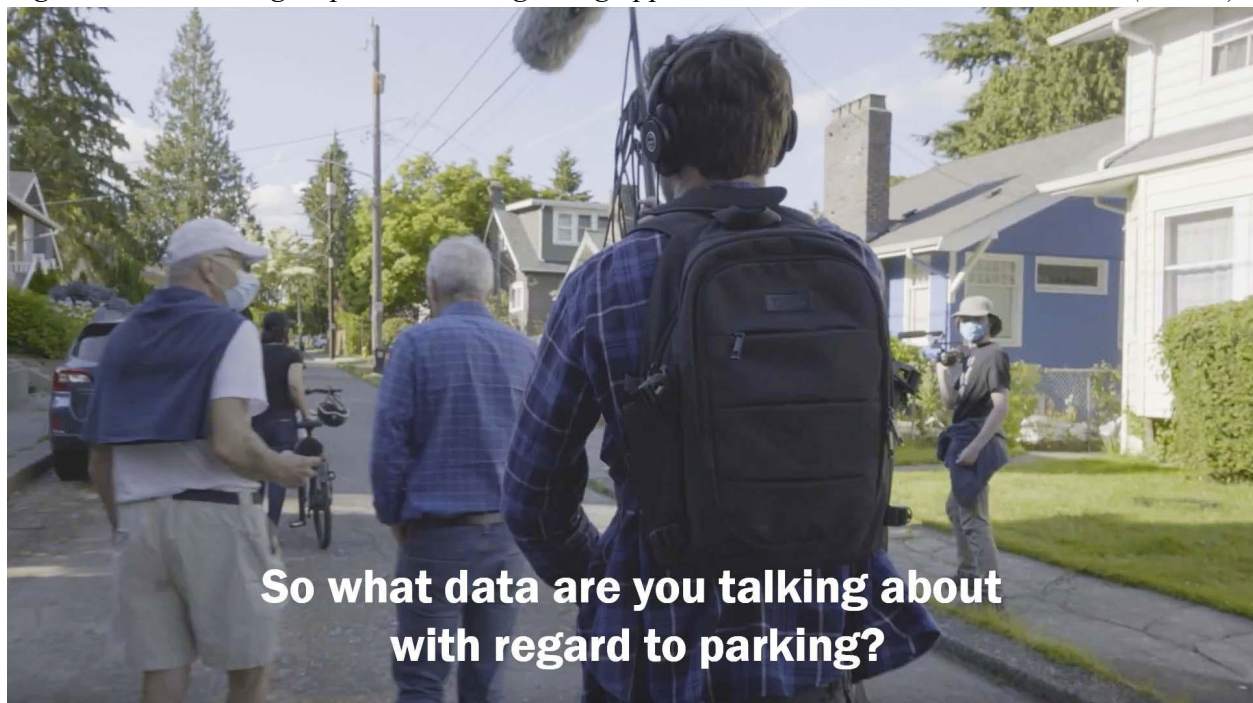
40 Greg: *((approaching Rick))* So: what data are you talking about with regard to parking?

41 *((Edith turns towards Rick and Greg))*

42 Rick: Uh, similar to what was mentioned just after (.) I spoke, there-there are a

43 Danny: [((looks at Rick and Greg))
 44 Edith: [((approaches Rick and Greg))
 45 Rick: [number of cities around the world where they've eliminated on-street parking and
 46 created pedestrianized streets. (.) And Auckland, New Zealand is-is a case where
 47 they-they have something called a shared street network. Really controversial
 48 when they first proposed it. Businesses went ballistic. So they did it on a trial
 49 basis an-and they were ((raises hand to chest)) very smart. What they did is
 50 they-they (.) u:m (1) they took data on all of the businesses ((glances at Greg))
 51 before they did the project.=
 52 Greg: =Mhm
 53 Rick: And then they went ((glances at Greg)) back and did the same analy[sis after the
 54 project was completed.
 55 Danny: [(looks at
 56 Rick and Greg, walking beside them))
 57 Rick: And what they found is there was a 20% increase
 58 Greg: Hm=
 59 Rick: =in business which-which they then used to promote the project, the next phase of
 60 the project.

Figure 5.3 Once the group starts moving, Greg approaches Rick to learn about “data” (line 40)



After the group starts moving, Greg approaches Rick and asks him about the “data” (line 40) he had referred to previously (line 40; Fig. 5.3). Greg could have potentially asked Rick

about this during the full group discussion moments prior. But throughout the tour, Greg had been somewhat reluctant to speak in these full group settings, preferring instead to participate in smaller conversations (see Transcript 5.8 for a notable exception). Also, when Rick had mentioned “the data” previously, Sagar immediately followed up with this claim (line 31), and the conversation then veered in a different direction. These factors may have posed challenges for Greg to follow-up earlier. But finally, once the full group conversation disbands and everyone starts moving, Greg finds an opening to ask Rick for more details. By asking Rick this question, Greg positions himself as a learner and Rick as a teacher.

Rick, in response, once again takes up the tone and social language of an expert urbanist, describing the positive effects of pedestrianized streets on businesses. Like Sagar had just done during the full group conversation, Rick expands the scale of conversation by sharing that “a number of cities around the world (have) [...] created pedestrianized streets” (lines 45-46). Then, unlike Sagar, who personalized the conversation by attending to the participants’ shared physical presence on the street, Rick offers a datum related to a shared street network in New Zealand. Rick says that the local businesses “went ballistic” (line 48), which is consistent with Edith’s claim that “most businesses in Wallingford say one of their big problems is lack of parking” (lines 21-22). However, Rick undermines the significance of this perception by describing how the pedestrianized streets actually led to a “20% increase in business” (lines 57, 59).

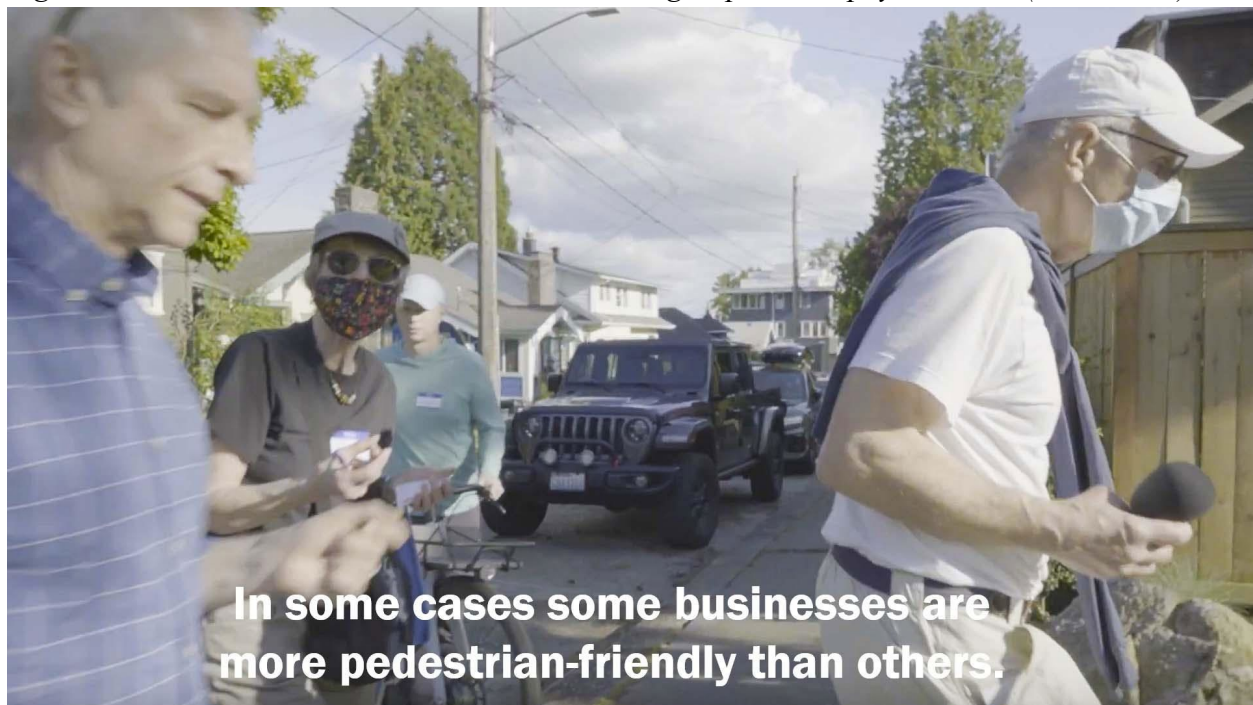
During this one-minute exchange between Greg and Rick, Danny and Edith also get pulled into the duo’s conversational and ambulatory sequence (Marin, 2020; see Ch. 2). Danny looks at them early on (line 43), and begins to sync up his walking pace with theirs over this exchange. Edith approaches them (line 44) and walks beside them throughout. Neither Danny

nor Edith participate verbally during this stretch of conversation, which takes place as the group walks north along a stretch of road. Then, the group – and the conversation – takes a left turn.

Transcript 5.13 We only want pedestrian-friendly businesses

- 61 Rick: And so over about a *((brushes nose))* five-year time frame, what they fo:und (.)
62 *[((Rick, Edith, Greg, and Danny slowly round a street corner))*
63 Dayne: *[((moves his bike out of the way))*
64 Rick: is that businesses went from *((looks at Edith))* resisting this idea (.) to wanting it
65 on their street.
66 *[((Rick and Edith walk onto the sidewalk side-by-side, Greg walks in front, Danny*
67 *stays in the street, to their right))*
68 Edith: [But were they the same businesses?=
69 Rick: =The same businesses, yeah. [Yeah
70 Edith: [Because in some cases-some businesses *((opens*
71 *hands))* are more (.) pedestrian-friendly than others. And so [uh m-my fear is that
72 you get mo:re
73 Rick: [Well but we, but we
74 only w- *((opens palm))* But in our neighborhoods (.) *((shaking head))* we only
75 wa:nt pedestrian-friendly business.=
76 Edith: =Oh really? *((shrugs))*=
77 Rick: =*((earnestly))* Yeah.=
78 Edith: =O-kay. *((adjusts face mask))* [Well
79 Rick: [I mean, I would think so. If we want our
80 neighborhoods to be *((puts hand on chin))* walkable and-and livable and
81 enjoyable, I would *((opens hand))* think we'd want to encourage
82 [pedestrian-friendly businesses.

Figure 5.4 Edith takes a conversational turn as the group takes a physical turn (lines 70-71)



Rick finishes up his anecdote as the group rounds the street corner, which opens an opportunity for Edith to take a turn (Fig. 5.4). This kind of relationship between the group's ambulatory dynamics and their conversational dynamics appeared throughout the data corpus, where twists and turns in the walking route opened up space for new participants to enter into dialogue, and for participants to advance their conversations in new ways. Edith's initial question to Rick – "But were they the same businesses?" (line 66) – redirects this conversation as the duo begins walking side-by-side on the sidewalk. It becomes a prelude as Edith begins to voice a "fear" (line 71) that pedestrianized streets will drive out important local businesses that depend on car-driving customers. In other words, she fears that increasing pedestrian accessibility to businesses will decrease financial accessibility for some of the businesses, which will in turn force them to close down or relocate, thus reducing Edith's ability to access them at all.

Rick, taking a stand in line with New Urbanist principles, declares that "in our neighborhoods we only want pedestrian-friendly businesses" (lines 74-75). It is not totally clear

who the “we” refers to, but Rick seems to be speaking broadly for residents across neighborhoods, presumably including the participants of this tour group. This prompts Edith to immediately respond, “Oh really?” (line 76), perhaps suggesting that Rick’s claim is inapposite to her personal experience (Heritage, 1998). However, instead of escalating this apparent conflict, as Edith had in the previous episode, here she says “Okay” and pauses to adjust her face mask (line 78). This enables Rick to further establish a connection between his vision of accessibility and the group’s shared (if vague) ideal of a “livable and enjoyable” neighborhood (lines 80-81). Edith’s eventual response begins in a way that is a bit less charged than her previous turns.

Transcript 5.14 Harold’s Lamps

- 83 Edith: [Well, I think so as much as *((opens hands))* possible. But some businesses again
 84 well I’m thinking about *((twirls finger))* uh the lamp store down on 45th Street. I=
 85 Rick: =Sure=
 86 Edith: =That seems to draw from throughout the city, it’s well-known, and it’s one of the
 87 few places where I guess *((opens hands))* you can get certain kinds of lamps.
 88 Rick: *((nods))* Sure
 89 Edith: So: (.) *((points finger up))* Harold’s Lamps, that’s what it is. [Um
 90 Rick: [Yeah. Yep.=
 91 Edith: =[Do we-do we
 92 Rick: =[*((looks at Edith))* It’s been there for a long time.=
 93 Edith: =Yeah
 94 Rick: [Yeah, long time
 95 Edith: [D-do we really not want Harold’s Lamps and that kind of business?=
 96 Rick: =Well, *((rubs eye))* but a-but again I think u:m=
 97 Edith: [=Ca-cause I don’t think they can exist just on pedestrian traffic.
 98 [*((Rick and Edith walk past a single-family house with a kid, two dogs, and two*
 99 *adults playing on the front yard))*
 100 Rick: *((hands in pockets))* Well, but it’s not just pedestrian traffic. There are-there are
 101 two of the most ro-bust east-west bus lines that run on 45th.=
 102 Edith: =And I’m *((opens hands))* going to bring my *((scoffs))* big lamp on the bus down
 103 to Harold’s ta [(.) (get something fixed up)?
 104 Rick: [(I think it depends.) I guess it depends how big the lamp is.
 105 *((adults and kid turn to look at the group walking past))*
 106 Edith: Man, I’ve seen them lug some big ones in the::re. And-and as you get older-even

107 a smaller lamp.=
108 Rick: =Sure=
109 Edith: =I would have trouble carrying [it on the bus for a long distance.
110 Rick: [Sure

Figure 5.5 Rick and Edith walk past a family playing in their yard (lines 98-99, 105)



Edith begins this turn by conceding that pedestrian accessibility is a good thing, something to strive for “as much as possible” (line 83). She then veers the conversation back to the need for parking, by emphasizing its effect on the financial accessibility of one business in particular: Harold’s Lamps. Her choice here is strategic, in that this business is unique, independently owned, and a longtime fixture in downtown Wallingford. Rick acknowledges its significance to the neighborhood, making eye contact with Edith and agreeing with her verbally to demonstrate that he hears her point (line 92). Edith and Rick are reciprocating goodwill, noting merits in each other’s concerns for accessibility. Furthermore, as Edith continues to make her case for more parking, Rick nods along and says “sure” (lines 88, 108, 110).

But as Edith claims that Harold's won't be able to exist "just on pedestrian traffic" (line 97), Rick disputes her reasoning; he points out that "two of the most robust east-west bus lines" service Harold's, creating transit accessibility for customers without cars (line 101). Edith further dismisses the adequacy of Rick's notion of transit accessibility, by saying that "as you get older [...] I would have trouble carrying" a lamp "on the bus for a long distance" (lines 106, 109). Edith and Rick are both seniors, with Edith being perhaps a bit older. Even while they are actively walking through the neighborhood having this conversation, Edith urges Rick to consider the possible negative effects of pedestrianized streets on older residents who currently rely on cars to access local businesses. In this way, Edith reintroduces the paradox of accessibility, interrogating for whom pedestrianized streets enable or disable access.

Notably, while her critique here is fairly focused on her own personal experience as a senior (note the use of first-person in line 109), Edith's analysis does not extend to her positionality as a white landowner who owns a car and is able to drive it and make a purchase from a boutique lamp store. Rather, these aspects of Edith's intersectional identity are able to go unspoken in this predominantly white tour group, as they walk through and talk about a predominantly white neighborhood. As Rick and Edith have this conversation, they are surrounded by single-family houses, cars, and driveways. They walk past a kid, adults, and dogs playing on a front lawn (line 98; Fig. 5.5). These mundane, often subconscious semiotic cues in the environment reinforce the American Dream discourse that Edith referred to in the previous episode, when she argued that "a lot of people [...] need a car" considering "you got two or three kids and a dog. It's real tricky sometimes to do all you need to do on the bus!" (Transcript 5.6, lines 71, 76-77). In the present exchange, Edith reanimates this discourse by focusing on private

automobiles as a primary means of accessing a particular business-building, situated just a few blocks away.

While the location of the walking tour subjects participants to normative semiotic cues, in some sense legitimizing Edith's discourse, the walking tour format also serves as a potential disruption, capturing the attention of residents (e.g. line 105, Fig. 5.5; the architect) as a throng of people, cameras, and microphones cavalcades through. Some tour participants take advantage of this disruption, publicly challenging normative discourses of accessibility. Picking up on this possibility, Danny responds to Edith's concerns.

Transcript 5.15 You can free up the streets

- 111 ((Danny, Rick, and Edith cross the street))
112 Danny: There's a-there's business parking for those businesses that's off-street.=
113 Rick: =Yeah=
114 Danny: =So I don't, I wouldn't be:=
115 Edith: = ((*passionately*)) There's some but we're saying we want to get ((*chops hand*))
116 rid of that parking [well (.) w-
117 ((*Danny, Rick, and Edith walk onto the sidewalk*))
118 Danny: [No. No what we're-I think what [we're talking about is
119 Rick: ((*puffs cheeks and exhales*))
120 Danny: ((*makes eye contact with Edith*)) like the on-stree:t (1) like the-the ((*points at*
121 *parked cars*)) cars on both si:des (.) ((*opens arms*))
122 Edith: [Uh-huh
123 Danny: [The streets being ((*moves hands parallel back and forth*)) congested and the
124 traffic everyone [looking for parking,
125 Rick: [Yeah
126 Danny: back (.) backing in. You can free up the streets and make them=
127 Rick: =Yeah=
128 Danny: =really vibrant, pedestrian spaces.

Figure 5.6 Danny indexes parked cars to advocate for pedestrianized streets (lines 118-123)



Up to this point in the conversation, Danny had been following along silently. He had physically joined in at the same time Edith had, shortly after Greg approached Rick (line 43). In the two minutes that followed, Danny remained near the group, especially when they were walking in the street (Transcript 5.12). But like Greg, Danny became farther from Rick and Edith once they turned a corner and the duo began walking side-by-side on the sidewalk (lines 66-67). Presently, as the group crosses the street, Danny finds a physical and conversational opening to interject. This fluidity in the F-formation¹⁸ served as an important sensemaking resource throughout the walking tours, and particularly in this sequence. Greg was able to casually approach Rick to ask for more information about the “data” on pedestrianized streets, without the extra pressure of an entire group staring at him. Danny and Edith both followed along in this exchange, entering in to support or contest a particular claim, when they felt it was appropriate to

¹⁸ An F-formation “arises whenever two or more people sustain a spatial and orientational relationship in which the space between them is one to which they have equal, direct, and exclusive access” (Kendon, 1990, p. 209).

do so. And at this point, Greg has seemingly opted out of the conversation. Unlike traditional educational or planning contexts, where participants have more rigid roles and expectations, this walking tour format provides a degree of flexibility to support a fuller range of expressive and relational possibilities.

Danny reminds Edith that there exists parking for Harold's and other local businesses. This elicits an emphatic response from Edith, declaring baldly that "we're saying we want to get rid of that parking" (lines 115-116). Danny disagrees, rendering a discrepancy among the participants' understanding of what the conversation is "about" (line 118; Fig. 5.6). Throughout this episode, Kelli's initial substrate of the mixed-use building and the goal it represents – a future with "vibrant local business districts" (line 18) – has been contested as participants have discussed theories of how to achieve this goal, especially insofar as it intersects with discourses of accessibility. The group's current epistemic discrepancy seems to hinge on the meaning of "pedestrianized streets" – urbanist jargon that Rick said involved "eliminat(ing) on-street parking" (line 45). Though Danny has attempted to reassure Edith that Harold's has "off-street" parking (line 112), Edith describes the difference between the current state of affairs, and a possible future in which all parking is eliminated.

Rick, who is a professional architect and planner, may be growing a bit weary of Edith's relentless emphasis on parking. From conversations with Rick, I learned that he has been hearing about parking concerns for a long time, and this discourse can become tiring. During this exchange, Rick puffs his cheeks and exhales (line 117), perhaps happy that Danny has joined the conversation to explain how pedestrianized streets could work. To do this, Danny points to the cars parked on both sides of the street (lines 118-119; Fig. 5.6), and relays a familiar concern about congestion and "looking for parking" (lines 121-122). In doing so, he indexes particular

cars in the group's shared perceptual space and attempts to semiotically reposition the idea of cars, from a technology that facilitates accessibility for drivers, to one that constrains accessibility for pedestrians. Danny goes on to offer a positive vision of the future: "you can free up the streets and make them really vibrant pedestrian places" (lines 124, 126). By sharing this as they are walking through the neighborhood, participating in a collaborative filmmaking project and having an important local dialogue, the group is prefiguring what this vibrant pedestrian place could look like, and Danny is naming this for them to appreciate.

Edith, however, is not persuaded. She continues to assert the importance of parking for local businesses (not transcribed). After a bit of back-and-forth between Rick and Edith, Rick eventually attempts to clarify his perspective on parking in the city.

Transcript 5.16 I wouldn't have any problems with that

127 Rick: Yeah. I don't think (.) anyone is suggesting that we eliminate parking (.) entirely.

128 Edith: *((matter-of-factly))* I hear a lot of people that sound like they're movin in that
129 direction.

130 Rick: Yeah, I-I-I (.) I mean, I think we need less parking. I mean, another-another (1)
131 challenge that we face is (.) ya know, we have about half a million *((looks at*
132 *Edith))* on-street parking spaces (.) [in Seattle.

133 Edith: [Mhm

134 Rick: And we meter 15,000 of them. But the rest we really give away. We should be
135 charging for that.

136 *[((Rick & Edith step onto the sidewalk, joining the rest of the group))*

137 Edith: Well that- [I wouldn't have any problems with that, up to a certain amount

138 Kelli: *((to group))* [Because I looked at how many uh units there were for rent (.) in this
139 area.

140 Rick: I mean that would open up a lot of (.)

141 Edith: Mhm

142 Rick: parking.

Figure 5.7 Edith aligns with Rick as the duo align with the rest of the group (lines 136-137)



Edith remains concerned that “a lot of people” want to eliminate parking (line 128), despite Danny (line 118) and Rick’s (line 127) explicit statements to the contrary. In response, Rick clarifies that “I think we need less parking” (line 130). He puts this in perspective by expanding the scale of the conversation from the localized issues of accessibility in Wallingford – which Edith had been concerned with – to the broader issues of accessibility across Seattle. Rick begins by declaring that “we have about half a million on-street parking spaces in Seattle” (lines 131-132), which elicits an agreeable “mhm” from Edith (line 133). Then he says that “we meter 15,000 of them. But the rest we really give away” (line 134). This quantification enables Rick to describe a macroeconomic relationship between Edith’s personal ability to access local stores, like Harold’s Lamps, and patterns of accessibility throughout the city. In particular, Rick implies there is an opportunity cost to the city’s excess of publicly subsidized parking, and “we should be charging for that” (lines 134-135) to fund accessibility via other modes. At this point,

Rick had been listening to and engaging with Edith for about four minutes. With this foundation established, and Rick laying out an accessibility challenge in macroeconomic terms that Edith can understand, she eventually agrees, saying, “I wouldn’t have any problems with” charging for parking, “up to a certain amount” (line 137; 5.7). This offering comes just as the duo join the rest of the tour group on the sidewalk (line 136), where Kelli is ready to introduce the next tour stop.

To recap, this ambulatory sequence began when Kelli brought the group to a mixed-use building, to show how it represented “the future of Wallingford” because it increased financial accessibility for small businesses as well as geographic accessibility for residents (Transcript 5.10). Edith contested this, claiming that Kelli had overlooked the importance of customer transit accessibility via parking. Then Kelli, Rick, and Sagar each disputed this counterclaim, building on each other to further sharpen a critique against the relationship between parking and small businesses’ financial accessibility. Sagar, in particular, drew on the group’s embodied presence on the street to make his point (Transcript 5.11). Then, as the group began to walk, Greg asked Rick to expand on the data he had briefly mentioned, supporting the connection between pedestrian and business accessibility (Transcript 5.12). Rick subsequently described a shared streets network in New Zealand, pausing as they took a turn on the road. This physical turn opened an opportunity for Edith to take a conversational turn, more explicitly considering a tension between different discourses of accessibility (Transcript 5.13). Edith localized and personalized the conversation, discussing a beloved local business’s dependence on parking (Transcript 5.14). Danny contested this claim and further signaled issues with parking by pointing to congestion on the streets around them (Transcript 5.15). Finally, Rick expanded the scale of the conversation, pointing out the opportunity cost of public parking subsidies. This elicited tentative alignment with Edith, just as the group reconvened for the next tour stop.

Overall in just a few minutes, the group has been on quite a journey (see Fig. 5.8, below)! The cadre of urbanists on the tour have supported each other to articulate a vision of the future of the neighborhood, to listen to Edith's accessibility concerns, to discredit aspects of them with embodied and empirical evidence, and to situate these concerns within a broader macroeconomic context. The format of the walking tour supported this journey by enabling the tour group to coordinate attention at tour stops; to ground discourses of accessibility within particular aspects of the built environment; to participate flexibly, asking for clarification, providing input, or removing themselves as they felt appropriate; and, by *creating* public space as they walked through the street, to begin to prefigure the kind of accessibility for which they desire. Rick and Edith begin to access each other personally and discursively as the duo regains physical access to the rest of the tour group. Throughout the corpus there are other examples of interactional partners achieving some degree of discursive alignment as they become physically aligned with the larger group. Similarly, as we have seen in this episode, the transition from physical alignment during a tour stop to the group's dispersal as they begin to walk, opens up possibilities for the conversation to move in new directions. Collectively, these data indicate that transitions between ambulatory turns offer enormous potential for designers of learning environments and planning processes, as well as analysts seeking to better understand these contexts.

Figure 5.8 Mapping out each figure along the ambulatory sequence



Discussion

In this chapter we have seen how discourses of accessibility have emerged and transformed over the course of three episodes during one walking tour focused on housing. During the first episode, Kelli, the tour leader, describes her quest to find housing in Seattle and establishes her DADU as a protagonist in this personal place-story. The DADU has enabled Kelli and her family to stay in Seattle and thus, it establishes geographic accessibility to the amenities and community she has come to love about the city. While telling this story, she gestures at her friend, Danny, who is on the tour. Kelli then leads the group to her DADU, where her husband and daughter have just arrived home from preschool. This physical manifestation of Kelli's friends and family in front of the DADU becomes an embodiment of the discourses of accessibility and community for which she is championing.

In the second episode, Kelli opens up space for a group dialogue on the parking strip beside a street and a single-family home. During this discussion, Danny comments on how some

of the single-family homes they have viewed were built on double lots, and makes a bid to position these homes as a step toward greater geographic accessibility within a changing neighborhood. Edith contests Danny's New Urbanist social language, instead taking up that of a neighborhood defender, and advocates to preserve single-family homes as a means of preserving financial accessibility. She likewise expands accessibility discourses to consider residents' transit accessibility via parking. This stimulates a conversation among Kelli, Greg, and the architect who owns the home they are standing beside, in which the participants discuss some of the tradeoffs involved in attempts to balance different aspects of accessibility for different people (i.e. the paradox of accessibility); as well as some of the structural barriers to building more accessible communities. Kelli considers pedestrianized streets as a solution for greater transit accessibility via walking, and points to a nearby Healthy Street as an example. Then Katie asks how to create more of these streets, and other tour members offer guidance.

The third episode picks back up on the idea of pedestrianized streets, relating discourses of geographic accessibility, financial accessibility, and transit accessibility in response to Edith's continued provocation to consider the need for parking. The ambulatory sequence that constitutes this episode begins with a tour stop at a mixed-use building, continues as the group and conversation moves along a sinuous path considering the paradox of accessibility, and reaches a tentative interactional alignment a few minutes later, during the group's physical alignment at the subsequent tour stop (Fig. 5.8).

Across these three episodes, we see how accessibility, like care, is both a universal ideal when discussed in the abstract, and a highly contentious subject, involving politicized discourses and tradeoffs, when considered within the concrete context of a particular neighborhood undergoing rapid change. Accordingly, in the previous chapter and in this one, planning for care

and accessibility has involved complex expressive, interactional work, mobilizing a variety of discourses, bodies, and aspects of the built environment. The walking tour format provided a generative entry point into these planning conversations by physically convening stakeholders and enabling them to mark semiotic aggregates, which became focal points for the group's ongoing place-storying efforts. This chapter, in particular, demonstrates the relationship between place-storying and infrastructuring. As participants gathered to share their own personal place-stories, and to make bids for the ongoing place-story of the neighborhood, they exchanged expertise and began to make connections across institutions. This tour brought together members of Historic Wallingford and the Wallingford Community Council – two organizations which had been denigrated by urbanists for their conservatism – with members of Welcoming Wallingford and Wallingford for All, two urbanist organizations that had sprung up in opposition to the efforts of the aforementioned groups. For the first time, the discourses of these institutions came into contact in the same physical and interactional space, under the auspices of a creative collaboration. These participants were joined by other institutional affiliates, including members of a local government transit agency, the Seattle Planning Commission, and an architect who designs nearby apartment buildings. Each participant brought their own perspective to the conversation, and was thus able to add nuance to some of the overly simplistic or romanticized accounts of accessibility that tend to permeate within homogeneous institutional contexts (Saha et al., 2021). In this way, the group engaged in agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 1999; see Ch. 1) while sharing intimate and professional concerns and planning for accessibility in their neighborhood.

At the same time, despite a breadth of evidences and sensemaking resources mobilized, the discussion in this chapter remained relatively focused on the experiences and desires of the

individuals present – many of whom are white landowners living in/around Wallingford. In order to more substantially address the critical question of “Accessibility for whom?” we would need to consider the perspectives of those who are denied equitable access to the neighborhood, including those who have been displaced and those who are unhoused.¹⁹ Moreover, the embrace of conflicting perspectives within the tours risks providing disproportional airtime to the loudest voice in the room (or street), conflating meaningful disagreement with the reinscription of dominant narratives (Einstein et al., 2020; Oreskes & Conway, 2010). In this chapter, some might see Edith and Greg’s provocations to prioritize parking as a productive prompt, encouraging the group to expand their notions of accessibility. At the same time, without a critical assessment of their own positionality in relation to larger accessibility concerns, these two white landowners’ comments also partially derailed efforts to story Wallingford as a place that could become an accessible, caring city, which involves “questioning how to make urban facilities as accessible as possible, on foot, by bike, by public transport, by internet, according to people’s different capabilities” (Marchigiani, 2021, p. 79). This central tension of democracy – how to meaningfully involve citizens in the political process, given the material reality of our inequitable society (Fraser, 2013) – is of utmost importance for those interested in creating more accessible cities. Efforts to create more geographic accessibility by removing zoning restrictions; efforts to create more financial accessibility by redistributing wealth; and efforts to create more transit accessibility by pedestrianizing streets and funding public transit; are all contingent on garnering and mobilizing broad public support. For this reason, we need to better understand the processes through which those who have historically had more power in planning processes (i.e.

¹⁹ The next chapter shows how the film attempted to address this paucity in the walking tours.

white landowners) could come to understand their own accessibility concerns as intertwined with those of their neighbors.

This chapter provides a microinteractional account of how Wallingford residents – many of whom are white landowners – make sense of local accessibility issues, by showing how their expressions begin to laminate over the course of the walking tour. Kelli verbally evoked discourses of accessibility by sharing her own place-story of building a DADU in Wallingford. She also materialized these discourses by bringing the tour group to the DADU. And, by welcoming the group to her home, referencing her close friend who was part of the group, and introducing everyone to her family, she invited the group to embody discourses of accessibility – which Kelli has been able to enjoy because of her DADU. Later on, Sagar countered Edith’s claim to prioritize parking in a similar fashion, by articulating how the tour group was embodying accessibility as they walked around the neighborhood together (Fig. 5.2). After this (stationary) discussion, as the group began moving again, their embodiment of accessibility took on a new layer of meaning, as those expressing the social language of neighborhood defenders began to more authentically access those expressing the social language of New Urbanists. Greg, a member of the Wallingford Community Council, approached Rick and positioned him as a teacher (Fig. 5.3). Edith and Danny, too, joined in on this informal discussion, walking through their neighborhood street as Rick explained the successes of pedestrianized streets in other parts of the world, and ultimately helped Edith to understand how her accessibility concerns were situated within a larger macroeconomic context (Fig. 5.7).

This account contributes to the literature exploring walking tours, by illustrating some of the processes by which “the dialogic, relational space between walker and co-walker” facilitates ‘collaborative knowledge production’” (O’Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 50; Myers; 2010). With

this in mind, planners, as well as advocates for sustainable and equitable development, might consider designing community engagement events that take place on-the-move via a similar walking tour format, which provides opportunities for whole group discussion in places that stimulate locally meaningful conversations, as well opportunities for more casual side conversations as the group ambles through streets and sidewalks. In this way, participants can express themselves when and how they feel appropriate.

At the same time, organizers should be keenly attuned to power dynamics within the space, otherwise dominant discourses could reinforce misinformed or harmful tropes. One way to attenuate this possibility is by thoughtfully choosing tour leaders and discussants with relevant expertise and credibility, and working with them before the tour to anticipate possible tensions that might arise. The tour leader should also set aside time at the beginning of the tour, and perhaps prior to any whole group discussions, to have a meta-conversation about the purpose of the tour, and how participants show up in the space. This might involve encouraging participants to approach familiar surroundings with a newfound curiosity, and to pay attention to what they are learning from the experience (see Appendix B). Organizers should also carefully consider whether they want to open up a given tour to the general public, and/or whether there should be a protocol for actively recruiting (or prohibiting) participants with particular identities or expressing particular ideologies.

One of the advantages of situating this walking tour within a larger filmmaking project is that participants know that their experiences, desires, concerns, and questions from the tour could be made durable and become part of a longer, ongoing conversation. That is, they begin to see place-storying as an ongoing activity through which they could contribute to some meaningful aspect of socio-ecological transformation. In this way, the walking tours – and the creative

collaboration more generally – help make visible possible civic learning trajectories. We have seen in this chapter how these trajectories might involve building DADUs; advocating for more diversity in housing typologies; working with neighbors and local government to institute traffic calming measures; and interfacing with others across institutional boundaries. In this way, the place-storying process becomes enmeshed with the infrastructuring work necessary to create material change. The potential synergies across these two modes of relation could offer promise for additional design research, particularly as learning scientists continue to think about learning at the scale of the city (e.g. Taylor, 2017, Pinkard, 2019). As participants articulate narratives about society’s most pressing challenges, they might discover new opportunities to address them through unexpected collaboration and generative conflict. The next chapter illustrates this more vividly by tracing a semiotic cycle beyond the tours, to the film and the subsequent interactions it spurs.

CHAPTER 6 – COLLABORATION & CONTESTATION: GROUNDING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

In this final findings chapter, I discuss one additional conversation that came up over and over again throughout the project: groundedness. Though participants did not use this word, they ubiquitously expressed the importance of groundedness as they considered the past, present, and future of their neighborhood. Drawing on insights from environmental psychology, cultural geography, and related fields, I understand groundedness as the perception of the historical and ongoing continuity of identity within cultural and political contexts. It's about the extent to which inhabitants' place-stories connect, and the ways in which these connections or contradictions may (or may not) honor their personal narratives. The term evokes the materiality of the places in which we live and spend time; the way a sense of place becomes tangible as we tether our identities to familiar features in the environment. Over the course of this project, I began to better appreciate how important it was for inhabitants to feel grounded within their home and neighborhood. Groundedness became both a resource for place-storying and infrastructuring, and in some cases, an outcome of these processes. I think this insight describes both a fundamental human need related to belonging and safety (Manzo & Perkins, 2006), as well as a consequence of the design of this project, which took a decidedly localized focus, drawing on a Wallingford neighborhood identity to encourage meaningful participation (Martin, 2003). This strategy was largely successful, in that I was able to engage hundreds of people across the different phases of data collection and analysis, many of whom expressed intimate concern for the social, political, and physical direction our neighborhood is heading. Participants of varied ideological persuasions sought to find or affirm a sense of groundedness as they ventured outside the confines of familiar structures.

But as with care and accessibility, the most interesting question is not whether participants expressed a desire for groundedness, but rather how these expressions emerged and transformed over the course of the study. Each designed activity – from the initial interviews and free recall maps, to the walking tours, to the ART meetings, to the screenings and small group discussions, to the exit interviews – encouraged participants to consider what they were grounding their neighborhood identities in, and how this related to their personal identities. Along the way, two high-level themes swung into place, acting as two sides of an oscillating pendulum: grounding a sense of community in collaboration around common ideals, and grounding a sense of community in the contestation of the way these ideals are carried out within a dynamic political economy (DeFilippis et al., 2010). The previous findings chapters have demonstrated how this contestation unfolded for notions of care and accessibility. In this chapter, I detail how, perhaps more fundamentally, the foundation upon which these conversations were carried out was itself contested, as participants considered the glaring contradictions of discussions about land within a perversely inequitable landscape. I argue that through this collaborative filmmaking project, the film itself became a semiotic aggregate, bringing into focus these tensions and contradictions, by mobilizing an assemblage of people, buildings, technologies, and aspects of the natural world. In the process, different possibilities for grounding identity emerged and interacted, laying the groundwork for meaningful civic engagement and learning.

This chapter details the semiotic cycle of “groundedness” discourses across three episodes, depicted chronologically to establish a progression across phases of the project. We begin where Ch. 4 ended, during the second ART meeting, when participants were discussing the narrative of the film. Then, we follow this conversation into the film itself, showing how these

discourses became resemiotized (Iedema, 2001; see Ch. 2) onto a more durable medium. Finally, in the third and final episode of this chapter, we discuss responses to the film, tracing the discourses across screenings, participants, and media to better understand how interpretations of the film relate to discursive transformations in and about the neighborhood.

Background on the second ART meeting

As discussed in Ch. 4, the purpose of the second ART meeting was to review a rough cut of the film I had put together based on footage from the walking tours, and to determine what edits or additional footage would be necessary to create the finished product. There were a dozen people present during this meeting, most of whom had been involved with previous phases of the project. Recall that I had attempted to recruit a racially diverse group, but nonetheless all of the ART members identified as white (see Ch. 3). Despite this racial homogeneity, we were fortunate to have people with a variety of personal and professional backgrounds present. This included Jude, an acclaimed urban planner who had recently retired; Austin, a software engineer; Chris, a writer and filmmaker; EJ, the musician who scored the film; Malachy and Carter, who helped record audio and video for the tours; Barb, a dedicated caretaker of local fruit trees (see Ch. 4); and Tara, who owns local preschools, including her house (which doubled as a preschool), where the present meeting takes place.

Chapter 4 ended with a reconciliation between Barb and Tara, as they learned about each others' histories of caring for fruit trees as they ate a cherry pie that Barb had baked for the occasion. That episode began about an hour and a half into the meeting, immediately after we had watched the rough cut. The present episode takes place about half an hour after that episode had ended. By this point, the group had finished eating pie and had been engaged in discussion, offering detailed suggestions for refining the film. Most of these suggestions had been about

including additional b-roll shots or adjusting the relative distribution of airtime for the tours.

Then Jude offers more substantive feedback, which changes the trajectory of the conversation, both in the moment, and with more distal consequences.

Episode 1: Grounding Wallingford during the ART meeting

Transcript 6.1 We ought to acknowledge the very whiteness of it

- 1 Jude: I-I want to introduce a-a-a (.) notion that as a city planner, I couldn't help but (.)
2 think about although I really like the tone of the film. It's very romanticized.=
3 Austin:=((*nods*))=
4 Jude: Ya know, Wallingford is a wealthy (.) white [(.) older (.) neighborhood.
5 Ari: [(*nods and smiles*)]
6 Austin:°Mm, yeah°
7 Jude: Um a::nd (1) we-we romanticize it as a neighborhood with children that's
8 affordable. And there are affordable housing in it but, by and large, [it's very
9 Barb: [°Not mu:ch°
10 Jude: expensive and (.) uh and very white.
11 ((*Ari and Austin nod*))
12 Jude: Uh and I think we ((*raises index fingers*)) ought to acknowledge ((*nodding*)) the
13 very whiteness of it [(.) somewhere.=
14 Ari: [(*nods*)]
15 Tara: =Some- [I think somebody did
16 Mal: [(*raises index finger*))
17 Tara: [talk about that.
18 Mal: [Yeah, E.T. said that.
19 Austin:°Yeah.° (1) I-I ((*points toward Jude*)) [I'd like to add on to that.
20 Jude: [I'd like mo:re.

After this group of white people spends two hours watching and discussing footage of the walking tours, which were themselves predominantly white, Jude is the first to directly address the racialized component of the film and the neighborhood. She does not introduce this notion in terms of her own whiteness, but rather from her experience as a city planner (line 1). Jude says that the film is “very romanticized” (line 2), and elaborates that it doesn’t situate the neighborhood within relevant racial and socioeconomic contexts. As she describes this critique, Ari and Austin nod throughout (lines 3, 5, 11, 14), indicating their alignment. Tara and Malachy

note that E.T., one of the tour leaders, did mention the neighborhood's whiteness in the rough cut (lines 15-18). This prompts Jude to further specify that E.T.'s brief mention was insufficient, and she'd "like more" (line 20). In this exchange, Jude is making a bid to more firmly ground Wallingford's identity in its whiteness. No one overtly expresses disagreement with this bid, but Tara and Malachy's response indicate a possible rupture about the significance of this grounding in the assembly of the film. Next, Austin picks up on Jude's bid.

Transcript 6.2 You can only improve the community if you highlight friction

- 21 Austin: U:m, I'm not sure *((looking up in thought))* how many (.) of the walking tours
 22 [included *((claws hand))* tension.=
 23 EJ: *[((reaches for water bottle and takes a sip))*
 24 =*((Ari and Tara nod))*=
 25 Austin: And I think that the housing tour did.
 26 Carter: *((nods))*
 27 Austin: And it was tension [born from a place where the *((points at self))* speakers were in
 28 Barb: *[((nods))*
 29 Austin: a lived [(.) reality of the tension
 30 *[((Ari and Barb nod))*
 31 *(5 lines omitted, Austin contrasts tensions within the tours)*
 32 Austin: Um, I would draw on for more of that tension there. Uh if (.) I-I-I know you were
 33 thinking about going on a tour with someone u:h (.) who was unhoused.
 34 Ari: *((nodding))*
 35 Austin: [I think that would be an excellent (.) perspective (.)
 36 Tara: [Yeah *((nods))*
 37 Austin: [um for this. [Because it's a *((brushes hand))* totally different way to experience a
 38 EJ: *[((nods))*
 39 Austin: community (.) um that-that is wealthy, that is white.
 40 EJ: *((nodding))*
 41 *(3 lines omitted, Austin mentions existing tour footage)*
 42 Austin: An-anything to (.) problematize the community because I think that (2)
 43 people-people want this to be an opportunity to improve Wallingford
 44 =*((Ari and Tara nodding))*=
 45 Austin: and I think you can only improve the community if you highlight friction.

Austin builds on Jude's critique, which is about how the film romanticizes Wallingford, without acknowledging its whiteness and upper class status. But rather than framing this in terms

of the identities that Jude has mentioned, Austin instead focuses on the narrative or dramatic arc of the story depicted in the film. He emphasizes that for the film to be successful, it needs to include tension. Austin cites the housing tour as an example of tension (lines 25-29), likely referencing exchanges between Edith and the urbanists in the rough cut – some of which were depicted in the previous chapter. In order to include more of that kind of tension in the film, Austin affirms a possible lead I had, to film someone I knew living in his van in the neighborhood (lines 32-35).

Over the course of this exchange, as Austin shifts Jude’s identity-based critique of the neighborhood to a narrative-based critique about the film, he creates more alignment with the other participants. At the beginning, before Austin articulates his thoughts, EJ takes a sip of water, perhaps getting ready for what’s to come (line 23). By line 38, EJ is nodding along. Carter (line 26), Barb (lines 28 & 30), and Tara (lines 24, 36, 44) all begin to nod as well, whereas they sat relatively inert throughout Jude’s previous discussion of whiteness. By the end of his turn, Austin has established support for his claim that “you can only improve the community if you highlight friction” (line 45), grounding a critical, if somewhat vague, conception of what community engagement ought to entail. Then, after a brief exchange between Jude and Ari (not transcribed), Tara offers a suggestion for additional footage.

Transcript 6.3 We probably all have been to The Guild

- 46 Tara: Focus on the images, the dark side or the *((shrugs))* underbelly of, you know,
 47 what's going on. You know, or-o::r the graffiti, compared to maybe a mural that is
 48 done somewhere. You know? I think a *((gestures toward Austin))* little bit of
 49 tension for me anyway, was like seeing the bulldozer [outside the 45th Street.
 50 Austin: *[((nodding))]*
 51 Tara: And that’s a huge tension for Wallingford. That should never be taken °do:wn.° I
 52 mean, *((earnestly))* how awesome if we have a little theater right here?
 53 EJ: *((nods))*
 54 Tara: You know, and yet *((makes whooshing sound and jolts thumb back))*, out it goes.
 55 Jude: Well

56 Barb: W'tried. *((laughs))*
 57 Tara: [I know.
 58 Jude: But (.) it-it doesn't (1)
 59 Barb: It doesn't [qualify.
 60 Jude: [It would be (.) financially unfeasible to bring it to code.
 61 *(6 lines omitted, Tara and Jude discuss building finances)*
 62 Tara: *((interrupting Jude))* Anyway, I mean=
 63 Jude: =Yeah=
 64 Tara: the point is like having a [theater would have been nice.
 65 Jude: *((cordially))* Yeah, mhm
 66 Tara: We probably *((acknowledges group))* all have been to The Guild=
 67 Barb: =Yeah, [many times.
 68 Tara: [and loved it.
 69 Jude: *((nods))*

Tara continues to build off of Austin's bid to highlight tension in the film. She suggests juxtaposing images of graffiti with a mural (line 47), and then mentions the bulldozer on 45th Street as being "a little bit of tension for me anyway" (lines 48-49). Tara is referring to the bulldozer parked in front of The Guild theater, which was visible during one of the tours. The Guild had been operating for several decades but had closed down and sat vacant on the main thoroughfare for the past few years. In the rough cut the group had just watched, one of the tour participants becomes distraught seeing the bulldozer. Its presence was an indicator that the neighborhood's beloved theater was about to be demolished. Kathy, the tour participant, asked the group, "Do we need to chain ourselves in front of this to save the building? I mean, this is the whole sense of place thing, right? This is Wallingford." This prompts another tour participant to say, "It was a pretty bad sign when the bulldozer showed up out front."

During that tour, Kathy and others present a tension familiar to many in the neighborhood: the houses, businesses, landmarks and thus, the general "sense of place" with which they have grounded Wallingford's identity are changing before their eyes. For longtime residents this may be particularly troubling, as their shifting neighborhood identity may

destabilize their own personal identities (Low, 1992). In Ch. 4, we saw how Gema viewed the ongoing construction as “taking away from the character of the neighborhood” (Transcript 4.6). In Ch. 5, we saw how Edith lamented the removal of familiar single-family houses (Transcript 5.6). Here, the bulldozer acts as a visual semiotic marker of neighborhood change and the uncomfortable, ungrounded feelings that this engenders.

By referencing the bulldozer during the present ART discussion, Tara accomplishes a few things. For one, she reanimates Kathy’s concerns about the destruction of The Guild. In doing so, she also resemiotizes the bulldozer as a metonym for neighborhood change with a negative valence, as the loss of a sense of place. This discursive association travels from the walking tour and into the ART discussion *vis a vis* its presence in the rough cut. Finally, by bringing this up in response to Austin’s bid, Tara is hybridizing these aforementioned discourses with those of narrative storytelling and dramatic tension; she suggests that the destruction of The Guild, and thus, a familiar sense of place, is “a huge tension for Wallingford” (line 51) which the film could address. Despite Jude’s pragmatism about how “it would be financially unfeasible to bring it to code” (line 60), Tara is resolute about the cultural significance of theater. To emphasize this, she draws on the group’s personal experience, saying that “we probably all have been to The Guild” (line 66). Barb and Jude respond affirmatively (lines 67 & 69), which temporarily aligns them as they discuss the filmic representation of their neighborhood.

By this point, the conversation has strayed from Jude’s original provocation about how the film is “very romanticized” (line 2) and “we ought to acknowledge the very whiteness of it” (lines 12-13). In fact, Jude may very well have been critiquing the very scene Tara has just reanimated! In that scene, Kathy and most of the others on the tour are white, and they were

bemoaning the loss of a vacant building, which had previously been a theater that had always served a predominantly white audience. Recognizing this lapse, I jump into the conversation.

Transcript 6.4 We can't ignore the racial component

- 70 Ari: Well, yeah. I want to I wanna pose a question now *((extends hand))* to the group,
71 u:h which is one of the questions that we started with, is what additional footage
72 do we need for this film? Let's say *((shrugs))* maybe even beyond just like a few
73 b-roll shots. Is there anything else more *((pulses hand))* substantive? (.) um to add
74 on to the film? And also *((points at Austin))* I-I really want to highlight (.) what
75 *((points at Jude))* Jude and Austin were talking about, which is that I-I think we
76 can't ignore the racial component [of what's happening *((looks toward Barb))*
77 *((Tara and Barb nod))*
78 Ari: in Wallingford, and particularly as we talk about housing? *((fixes gaze toward*
79 *Tara))* And *((sticks out thumb))* part of that is talking about (.) u:h *((sticks out*
80 *index finger))* whe::n *((turns palms up))* (.) °uh white people came in,° y'know, a
81 couple hundred years ago and (.) killed all the people [who were living here and
82 Tara: *((tightens lips and nods))*
83 Ari: *((pushes))* pushed them out, actually not all of them, because there still are
84 Duwamish people here and *((claws hand))* I think that's an [important context.
85 Barb: *((shakes head))* Didn't
86 kill them.
87 Ari: [We:ll
88 Barb: [I mean it didn't work quite (.) like that.
89 Ari: *((gestures toward Barb))*
90 Barb: [I just finished *((extends hand))* reading a couple-a books [so
91 Ari: [Ut *((beckons))*
92 Barb: It's a real partnership. I mean, over time they were *((extends arms))* pushed out,
93 but it was *((smacks hands twice))* (2) the:: (1) started well anyway, the businesses,
94 the:: (.) the *((taps index finger on hand))* mills and, well, all the businesses relied
95 on Native people (.) as crews. [They worked with them.
96 Ari: *((nods))*
97 Barb: They didn't have enough (.) workers *((shrugs))*. And so it was a real (.)
98 partner-ship *((circles hands))* [ya know *((raises and lowers hand))*.
99 Austin: *((smiles))*
100 Barb: Most of the time it wasn't a full blown problem until (.) um (.) you get a mayor
101 that wanted the-the Natives pushed out of the city.
102 *(3 lines omitted, Barb discusses Natives' jobs)*
103 Austin: It was a long play.

I begin by reminding the group of our original prompt for the meeting, which is to determine what additional footage could improve the film, beyond just that of the walking tours (lines 70-74). In particular, I revoice Jude and Austin's perspectives about presenting "the racial component" (line 76), "particularly as we talk about housing" (line 78). I proceed to make eye contact with Tara as I describe when "the white people came in" and "killed all the people who were living here and pushed them out" (lines 80-83). Tara nods (line 82), but Barb protests my account, shaking her head and saying "didn't kill them" (lines 85-86). Barb then takes up the position of a teacher, which I affirm by refraining from speaking and gesturing towards her to continue (lines 89 & 91). Based on the "couple-a books" Barb has read (line 90), she describes early contact among the Natives and settlers as "a real partnership" (line 92) in which "the businesses relied on Native people as crews" (lines 94-95). Barb does acknowledge that sometimes mayors would "push" Natives "out of the city", but "most of the time it wasn't a full blown problem" (lines 100-101).

In contrast to my more violent account, Barb presents a version of local history which glosses over some of the uglier details, instead focusing on the business "partnerships" which enabled settler colonialism to unfold over time. Her partnership model is partially accurate, in the sense that some of the Coast Salish peoples²⁰ were indeed employed by the white settlers. However, it fails to account, for example, for "the fatal starvation of many Duwamish people and the burning of ninety Longhouses" (Allain, 2014, p. 2). Perhaps recognizing this omission, Austin smiles (line 99) after Barb says "it was a real partnership" and then he remarks, "it was a long play" (line 103) – presumably referring to the settlers' plans for displacing the Native

²⁰ I use "Coast Salish" to refer collectively to all of the Tribes who have deep historic and cultural relations with the Salish Sea and the surrounding lands and waters. This includes several federally recognized Tribes, as well as the Duwamish Tribe (see Puget Sound Regional Council, n.d.; Duwamish Tribal Services, n.d.).

population. Despite Austin and Ari's efforts to foreground settler violence, in this exchange Barb maintains a posture perhaps more accurately described as a "settler adoption fantasy" in which "the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land [...] to the settler for safe-keeping" Tuck & Wang, 2012, p. 14). Next, the group brainstorms how to move forward with the film.

Transcript 6.5 Do they notice the nice mosaics?

- 104 EJ: I think it might be good to acknowl- I remember when we had a Zoo:m. It was a
 105 few weeks ago, a month or two ago, we had that Zoom meeting and I think
 106 whoever was hosting it started it off with a land acknowledgment
 107 ((Ari and Tara nod and say "mhm"))
 108 EJ: as to where this land came from originally. So I (not) ((shrugs)) that might be a
 109 good way to (.) [s-something to incorporate or start the film off (maybe).
 110 (4 lines omitted, Barb describes locations of different Coast Salish peoples)
 111 Tara: There's some really beautiful old photographs of Seattle back then.=
 112 Barb: =Mhm=
 113 Tara: And that could start it off [with an acknowledgement of the First People.
 114 Mal: [((nodding))
 115 Tara: And then, you know, ((brushes arm)) go on to [show the city now.
 116 Barb: [Mhm ((nodding))
 117 Austin: What-what I would prefer in terms of like adding more footage.=
 118 =((Barb and EJ each grab a water bottle))=
 119 Austin: =You can talk about people ((extends hand)) acknowledging (1) injustices. You
 120 can talk to CEOs about how they help (.) these people. Or you can (2) put
 121 someone at the forefront who is one of those people=
 122 =((Barb and Tara nod))=
 123 Austin: and juxtapose how they view the community, when they're in the community.
 124 When-when they're walking around, do they notice the nice mosaics or do they
 125 have other concerns? How-how ((gestures toward self)) do they feel in relation to
 126 the community (.) and-and why do they feel that way? I think that, uh (1) there's
 127 a lot of talk (.) about what should be done or what's broken from a lot of people
 128 who aren't part of those communities.
 129 =((Ari and Tara nod))=
 130 Austin: And I think actually ((pushes arm forward)) having that voice in the movie would
 be great.

First, EJ suggests including a land acknowledgment, similar to the one that kicked off the “meet and greet” event I hosted on Zoom for the project (lines 104-109). Then, Tara adds onto this, suggesting we include some “old photographs of Seattle back then” (line 111) and then “go on to show the city now” (line 115). These suggestions would likely keep Coast Salish peoples on the margins of the film’s narrative, relegating their presence to historical figures, as opposed to that of contemporary actors within the neighborhood. They “acknowledge” that Wallingford is in some sense grounded in these Tribal place-stories, but don’t substantiate this groundedness by connecting these place-stories to those of the community members on the walking tours.

In response to these suggestions, Austin offers an alternative path forward, generalizing from the racialized dimension of the conversation to instead talk about “injustices” more broadly (line 119). This re-establishes his previous claim that “you can only improve the community if you highlight friction” (line 45) – and presumably, there are many different possible frictions to consider. Here, he suggests featuring someone in the film “who is one of those people” (line 121) who experiences injustices. “Do they notice the nice mosaics, or do they have other concerns?” Austin ponders (lines 124-125). This rhetorical question is in direct response to Tara’s earlier suggestion to juxtapose a shot of a mural with one of graffiti (line 47), and it underscores an important distinction. When Tara describes tensions in the neighborhood, she includes the demolition of The Guild theater, and graffiti scrawled across building facades. These tensions are most palpable to people in privileged social positions, who have a vested interest in the maintenance of a “sense of place” that has historically been quite exclusionary. In contrast, Austin makes a bid to include the place-stories of those who have less privilege, which might unearth some more significant tensions.

After this discussion, Jude, Austin, Barb, and Tara briefly consider some of the possibilities and challenges associated with recruiting someone with lived experience, and perhaps a Native person, to be in the film (not transcribed). Then Tara asks me the following.

Transcript 6.6 What's your dissertation about?

- 131 Tara: *((to Ari))* Sometimes I feel like (.) like you know like what's your what's your
132 dissertation *((chuckles))* about?=
133 Barb: =°Yeah°=
134 Tara: =And it I just think we can sometimes belabor it a little bit too much and try to be
135 like, *((opens hands))* appropriate.=
136 Ari: =*((nods))*=
137 Tara: And then it comes almost across as like a little saccharine, if I can [say it like that.
138 Ari: [Yeah, for sure.
139 Tara: And-and I don't (.) I mea:n (.) it's just my opinion but I don't really feel like it's a
140 lot about (.) what wa::s, more about what could be in the future. And for me like
141 everyone is talking about community. And for me, *((shakes hands in front of*
142 *chest))* that's what really speaks and that's *((extends hand toward Ari))* why I in
143 the first place met with you. Because I (2) part of the community, [I have multiple
144 Austin: *((nods))*
145 Tara: preschools in this community and I feel very strongly that that's what *((brushes*
146 *arm))* all my families keep saying, that what they want is community=
147 =*((Austin and Jude nod))*=
148 Tara: =and want and that's why we *((places hand on heart))* those of us who've been
149 here for many, many, many years are (.) don't want to lose.=
150 Ari: =Mm=
151 Tara: =And when you build *((touches hands together))* pack in apartment buildings,
152 those people: *((chuckles))* and I've lived in an apartment building my ch-children
153 live in ap. *((circles hand))* It's very transient and it's not really so much about
154 community. So how do you speak to: (.) this beautiful place that we have that has
155 to grow and it will expand, but how do we do it in such a way that we keep that
156 sort of beauty and connection with each other?

Tara expresses concern that our conversation about settler colonialism and the racialized aspects of land use might be straying a bit from the purpose of the film and the larger project.

“What’s your dissertation about?” she asks rhetorically (lines 131-132). Tara says she got involved with this effort because she’s “part of the community” (lines 142-143) and she wants to

build community through this project. Tara then pivots back to the implicit tension around the changing neighborhood with its new apartment buildings, and the associated challenges with building community (lines 151-156). In contrast, the challenges of overcoming “injustices” which Austin had previously mentioned (line 119) have been cast aside, seemingly irrelevant to the neighborhood’s central tensions insofar as they affect “those of us who’ve been here for many, many, many years” (lines 148-149). Tara centers long-time residents (presumably homeowners) as the protagonist of the place-story, who are attempting to “keep that sort of beauty and connection with each other” (lines 155-156) in the face of demolition, development, and change which is shaking the ground beneath them. This prompts Jude to join in.

Transcript 6.7 Someone who experiences Wallingford in a very different way

- 157 Jude: I agree that (.) bringing in much about Native uh people here, it's-it's kind of (.)
 158 it's a very small proportion of the current population and (1) it's a little bit
 159 over-sentimental I think to bring a lot of [it in.
 160 Tara: [((nods))
 161 Jude: But to (1) doff your hat to it, I think is (.) almost ((shifts in seat)) if you don't do
 162 it, you're kind of not doing it at your peril. And also not mentioning the-the social
 163 inequities (1) at all I think would be (1) (t'your p'ril).
 164 (4 lines omitted, Jude says the film could get a lot of viewing)
 165 Jude: We don't want to get in trouble ((chuckles)) with this. You know, we want to be
 166 ((circling hand)) respect-ful enough of whatever (.) people are sensitive to suh
 167 thuh we-they're ((glances toward Tara)) not gonna ru-[run out of the house. (1)
 168 Tara: [((nods))
 169 Jude: Y'know what I (.) [I mean?
 170 Austin: [Yeah, I-I-I-I-I'd say in-include these elements (1) for the right
 171 (.) reasons. I-I mean, I mean, to me, I-I think what would add most (.) to this
 172 movie isn't bringing someone in who's (.) u:h Indigenous just because they're
 173 Indigenous. I-I think what would be most interesting is (1) ha-having someone in
 174 this movie (1) who: ((squarely)) experiences Wallingford in a very different way=
 175 Tara: [=Yeah=
 176 Ari: [=((nods))=
 177 Austin: =than other people to highlight=
 178 Ari: =Mm=
 179 Austin: =how Wallingford can appear (.) to: (.) uh people who aren't in the demographic
 180 of this u::h of this movie. And-and that could be: uh based on racial difference, it

This is especially significant given that moments ago, Tara expressed hesitation about “trying to be like, appropriate” (lines 134-135) which can come off as “saccharine” (line 137); and she had nodded along to Jude’s similar hesitation (line 160). Tara’s realignment with Austin in this exchange indicates the nuances involved with trying to tell a place-story that does justice to both sides of the pendulum of groundedness within a predominantly white neighborhood: grounding the common ideals that build community, while grounding the contestation that has perpetuated segregation since the neighborhood was first platted. As Austin finds the right words and Tara realigns her commitments, the group is learning to tell a more complex place-story. Austin emphasizes this by pointing to the TV, where the group has just watched the rough cut (lines 184-185). This gestural indexing indicates how the inchoate film is becoming a semiotic resource for the ART members to make sense of their neighborhood, as they seek out new perspectives which may unsettle their common experiences. This is further clarified three minutes later, when Chris, a writer and documentary filmmaker, enters the conversation.

Transcript 6.8 Now you have a real reason to feature them

- 186 Chris: Ari, I had uh some notes on like structure, [if you’re cool with that.
 187 Ari: [((nods)) Yeah. Yeah.
 188 Chris: So I think, like ((scratches chin)) you have a lot of u:h options in terms of what
 189 you decide, like the core tension or core [theme (.) ((pulses hands)) is.
 190 Ari: [((nodding))
 191 Chris: And-and I think it's a decision that like you would have to make as the filmmaker
 192 in terms of like establishing some sort of hierarchy of like what proportion of the
 193 air time is devoted to which kind of (.) tensions based on the tours? Like some
 194 tours (.) they can't all compete for the same amount of time on the screen because
 195 then you're seeing the viewer being like, “Well, what is it actually about?”
 196 (10 lines omitted, Chris emphasizes the importance of thematic continuity)
 197 Chris: You're like making a movie about tours a::nd you could – the movie itself is a
 198 tour of a place.=
 199 Ari: =((nodding))=
 200 Chris: And so there's all these themes that come up around like orientation and where
 201 you are. Um and I think you can do some ((scratches chin)) really cool things
 202 playing around with um (.) orienting the viewer.

203 *(4 lines omitted, Chris describes the core theme as a frame)*
 204 Chris: So maybe that like helps organize uh (1) which voices – *((turns toward Austin))*
 205 kind of to your point – you don't want to tokenize anybody just to *((waves arm))*
 206 have them on screen.=
 207 Ari: = *((nodding))* Right.=
 208 Austin: = *((nods))* =
 209 Chris: =But if they're on the screen to serve a reason that *((points up))* points back to that
 210 theme (.) [like (.)
 211 Ari: *((nodding emphatically))*
 212 Chris: [now you have a real like a reason ta *((nods and shrugs))* feature them.
 213 Barb: [Mm *((nods))*

Chris picks up on Austin's earlier bid to "draw on for more of that tension" (line 32) in the film. But whereas Austin's motivation is that "you can only improve the community if you highlight friction" (line 45), Chris's motivation is about improving the film.²¹ Taking up the social language of a filmmaker, Chris offers "notes on [...] structure" (line 186) which are focused on establishing a coherent narrative for the viewer. He understands this coherence as pivoting around a "core tension or core theme" (line 189) which must be emphasized consistently throughout the film. Like the walking tours, in which tour guides curated a shared experience in and about the neighborhood, "the movie itself is a tour of a place" (lines 197-198), and the filmmaker needs to "establish some sort of hierarchy" (line 192) by choosing which narrative pathways to follow.

Once this narrative groundedness is established, Chris reasons, the filmmaker has a warrant to invite participation from people of varying identities, insofar as they would contribute to the story (lines 204-212). In particular, this principle could invite participation from Natives and other nondominant groups, while circumventing Austin's concerns about some of the ART members' previous suggestions for representation (Transcripts 6.5, 6.7), which could be

²¹ Chris is a friend of mine who doesn't live in the Seattle area. He was totally unfamiliar with Wallingford prior to his visit, which happened to overlap with this ART meeting.

tokenizing. Barb's affirmation (line 213) indicates that despite some incongruities in the group's understandings of the area's colonial history, they are all seemingly in alignment about the need to emphasize a core tension from nondominant perspectives. By discussing the structure of the film with the social language of a filmmaker, Chris is able to advocate for Austin's bid to more meaningfully represent social inequities. This is in contrast to Tara's bid to represent a "huge tension for Wallingford" (line 51) from the perspective of the predominantly white population of homeowners. In this way, as the film begins to gain coherence, so too do the participants in the process for better understanding their neighborhood.

Background on the film

In the next episode, we will follow the conversation on groundedness, as it moves from the ART meeting to the film, demonstrating how the film-as-artifact becomes a semiotic aggregate. The rough cut of the tours presented the ART members with some semblance of a mirror of their neighborhood, enabling them to reflect on both the importance of community building, as well as the tensions associated with localized social inequities. To improve the film and the neighborhood, we needed to convene additional perspectives, cutting through the relative racial and experiential homogeneity that had manifested on the walking tours. In this section, I offer a brief account of how I attempted to move the rough cut in a more promising direction. Then, in the second episode, we'll look at the film itself, using techniques adopted from multimodal film analysis (Bateman & Schmidt, 2013) in order to understand how groundedness discourses become resemiotized onto a more durable medium. This will set us up nicely for the third and final episode in the chapter, where we examine responses to the film.

After the second ART meeting, I had just a few weeks to make edits to the rough cut, collect additional footage, and incorporate it into a new version for the third and final ART

meeting. I knew I needed to recruit someone who, in the words of Austin, “experiences Wallingford in a very different way.” And, in Chris’s words, they needed to “serve a reason that points back to that (core) theme” of the film. I had been in touch with a local grocer who was living in his van, and thought he could offer an interesting perspective. But when I spent an afternoon driving and walking around with him, I realized his perspective seemed to align pretty closely with many of the tour participants featured in the film: what felt to me like a white gaze in views around housing, homelessness, and safety. I was not sure this footage was what I needed to improve the film.

I had also been interested in including the perspective of someone from the Duwamish Tribe, who could speak to local history on a longer time scale, consider “land use” issues in a more relational way, and position the housing crisis within the context of settler colonialism. This now felt doubly important, considering the pushback I had gotten during the previous ART meeting. But I knew that this was a big ask, and without having existing relationships within the Tribe, it could feel extractive. Several months prior, I had been in touch with the Tribe’s communications director and expressed interest in volunteering to help record videos for them. Unfortunately, this never came to fruition. I had sent the director another email a week prior to the second ART meeting, introducing *Visions of Wallingford*, and asking whether he could invite a Tribal member to participate. Fortunately, just in the nick of time, he connected me with Ken Workman, a direct descendent of Chief Seattle, and a retired Boeing engineer who lived in West Seattle.

After chatting with Ken, it became clear he was very interested in the project, and felt comfortable speaking on-camera. He was happy to participate – in part because he was interested in the creative aspects of filmmaking (his wife is a documentarian) – but he had no connection

specifically to the Wallingford neighborhood. He did, however, recall spending time at his grandparents' house in the nearby Green Lake neighborhood when he was a kid. We decided to meet up a few days later by the lake and film him looking for the house, which he hadn't been to in decades. My roommate, David, who had been present during the ART meetings, interviewed Ken while I operated the camera. During the shoot, we didn't end up finding his grandparents' house. However, we did get some promising footage of Ken walking around the lake, talking about the connection between the natural world and the built environment; the history and the future; and even about Wallingford specifically.

We filmed Ken on September 21, 2022, just five days before the third ART meeting, when I would need to present a new cut of the film. The next day, September 22, I was walking around the neighborhood to film b-roll. As I passed The Guild theater I noticed they were starting demolition. I began chatting with one of the construction workers and got his permission to film him on the job. He talked about residents' emotional reactions to the demolition, which were sometimes demeaning, and he put this in the context of the changing city. After a few minutes, I crossed the street to get a wide shot. A man approached me, who I recognized; I had often seen him panhandling by the entrance to the highway, near my house. He was curious about what I was filming. When I described the project, he expressed interest in being recorded – he had never been on-camera before. I learned that his name was Simone Big Wolf and he identified with a few different tribes. We spent the next hour walking around the neighborhood, as he looked for a vacant street corner to panhandle, and he generously shared some of his experiences with me.

Over the course of two days, I went from having no adequate footage to supplement the walking tours, to having three perspectives that cut against the white, normative views in the

neighborhood. And all three interactions felt organic, authentic, and intensely meaningful. I felt like I was on the right track. In the next episode I will present these perspectives in more detail, insofar as they were featured in the film and relate to discourses of groundedness. In this way I hope to show how these discourses were resemiotized from their initial expression during our synchronous encounters, to their juxtaposition within the overall context of the film.

Episode 2: Covering new ground with the film

*Figure 6.1 Opening shot, The Guild (0 min, 8 sec)*²²



The film opens with a shot walking down the sidewalk by The Guild's facade (Fig. 6.1). The Guild had been closed down for a couple years at this point, and there's some graffiti scrawled on the wall. This shot is part of a minute-long montage sequence with eerie music and shots of Wallingford in low light. The sequence ends with a man peering into a black void of a

²² The timestamp indicates the place in the original version of the film where this image appears. The arrows in the image indicate the direction of the camera's movement, and the ghost icon indicates the eerie background music. (These icons do not appear in the film.)

hollowed out building, the former site of a bar that was situated beside The Guild. I designed this sequence to foreshadow some of the tensions associated with the changing neighborhood.

Next, the film transitions into footage from the online “meet and greet” which kicked off the project, via a Zoom recording. I share an anecdote about Wallingford, and participants discuss the walking tours they will give. This includes Gema and Luna coming up with the idea for a tour focused on local plants, as discussed in Ch. 4. Then Melissa, one of the tour leaders, describes the purpose of the project – to “cultivate stronger relationships, relationships with each other, and also with the land that we occupy.” The film transitions into a short voice over, in which I describe how I love the neighborhood, but housing prices have skyrocketed. Then, about five minutes into the film, we arrive on the first walking tour.

Figure 6.2 Bulldozer in front of The Guild (6 min, 50 sec)



Melissa begins the tour by describing how “placelessness” is affecting modern urban communities, and suggests that Wallingford – with its distinct architecture, small businesses, and walkability – is an “antidote to placelessness.” By starting out the movie with this exposition, I

intended to set the narrative and dramatic stakes, by demonstrating why people care about maintaining this neighborhood in its current form. Then, as the tour group begins moving, they encounter a bulldozer in front of The Guild (Fig. 6.2). The camera slowly moves forward along the sidewalk, paralleling the film's opening shot (Fig. 6.1), and making the bulldozer appear to grow slightly as we move toward it. Similarly, the eerie music from the beginning of the film reappears, further establishing tensions around The Guild as a central structure in the narrative arc.

As the group gathers in front of the theater, Melissa offers a brief history of it, and the film overlays black-and-white photographs depicting its programming and the crowds that it drew. Kathy, one of the tour participants, asks, "Do we need to chain ourselves in front of this to save the building? I mean it's so sad [...] This is the whole sense of place thing, right?" This prompts another participant to say, "Yup, it was a pretty bad sign when the bulldozers showed up." This scene aims to establish a common sentiment that I gathered from initial interviews and in the ART meetings: Wallingford residents feel grounded in the landmarks that they perceive to form a sense of place and build community. These landmarks are often buildings, as we saw in Ch. 5, and sometimes involve other aspects of the built environment and natural world, as we saw in Ch. 4. When these familiar landmarks are removed, as depicted in this scene, residents become upset or frustrated. The bulldozer, in particular, acts as a semiotic marker of discourses around neighborhood change, placelessness, and (a lack of) groundedness (see also the discussion of Transcript 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Majken introduces a bench in a traffic circle she beautified (9 min, 41 sec)



The film transitions to another walking tour, where we follow a group of mosaic artists showing off some of their art decorating public spaces. This includes an anecdote about how Majken, the tour leader, saw that someone put a bench in a traffic circle, so she decided to add a mosaic on top of it (Fig. 6.3). This scene aims to illustrate how residents are grounding themselves in the neighborhood through creative collaboration, by acting as agents of positive change in the built environment, rather than “chaining” themselves to hold onto the neighborhood’s former self. However, because this anecdote doesn’t acknowledge racialized inequities and is shared by a white resident within a predominantly white neighborhood, it still grounds Wallingford’s place-story within a normative white gaze (see Transcript 6.5).

We also hear from Margaret Birdsall, an elder who fought to preserve The Good Shepherd Center in Meridian Park as a community space in the 1970s, when developers were attempting to build a shopping mall there. This scene ends with her saying, “We live together, we take care of each other, and the land is so important to that.” It’s followed by a long shot of

the plants and animals in Meridian Park, and then a shot of birds flying around nearby houses with a relatively modern aesthetic. This scene foreshadows another theme of the film – that residents can be grounded through relationships with each other and the rest of the nature world, even as familiar landmarks change.

Figure 6.4 The ART meeting (14 min, 4 sec to 14 min, 32 sec)²³



Then, about 14 minutes into the film, I give a voiceover narration that introduces the ART as a group of community members who watched a rough cut and provided suggestions. It cuts to footage of the second ART meeting (Fig 6.4), which I analyzed in the previous episode in this chapter. The film depicts an abbreviated version of the analyzed exchange, beginning with Jude asserting, “It’s very romanticized” (line 2). “Ya know, Wallingford is a wealthy, white, older neighborhood” (line 4) “and I think we ought to acknowledge the very whiteness of it

²³ This image represents a four-shot sequence, beginning in the top-left and moving clockwise over the course of 28 seconds. The sun icons represent optimistic acoustic guitar music played in the background between the second, third, and fourth short in the sequence.

somewhere” (lines 12-13). It then cuts to Austin’s solution: “I think what would be most interesting is having someone in this movie who experiences Wallingford in a very different way” (lines 173-174). As Austin speaks, there’s a brief b-roll shot of Simone Big Wolf walking away from the camera and optimistic acoustic guitar music fades in. Then, as the music continues, it cuts back to Chris saying, “You don’t want to tokenize anybody just to have them on screen” (lines 205-206). “But if they’re on screen to serve a reason that points back to that theme, like, now you have a real [...] reason to feature them” (lines 209-212). Then there’s a shot of Ken Workman walking away from the camera, paralleling that of Simone just seconds prior.

This scene was intended to problematize the dominant, colorblind views of groundedness presented earlier in the film, by pointing to the whiteness of the walking tours and the neighborhood more generally. I wanted to show how some community members were pushing back against normative discourses, recognizing that while groundedness is a universal virtue, in order to be just, it must be understood within a racialized context. Because a feature film doesn’t have the luxury of presenting a turn-by-turn interaction analysis of several minutes of relevant discussion (as in the previous episode), I attempted to cull the most concise statements that would establish this narrative. And by interlacing footage of Simone and Ken with that of the ART discussion, I aimed to depict how the ART conversation had directly led to more diversity in the film and thus, a more nuanced place-story. In this way, I hoped to further emphasize the possibilities associated with this kind of civic engagement and place-storying methodology.

Figure 6.5 Ken describes his ancestors' lifecycles (15 min, 17 sec)



To begin the second act of the film, Ken is shown looking at Green Lake for several quiet, peaceful seconds. Then, standing by the lake and surrounded by trees, he explains how modern science and Duwamish cosmology converge on an understanding of ecology and lifecycles:

Our people as Duwamish people, Native people, knew this to be true, that we are part of this planet. And we know by modern science today that whatever's in the ground ends up in the trees through this symbiotic relationship between the fungi in the ground and the roots of the trees. So all that stuff that was grandma and grandpa and aunties and uncles, it all breaks down when it decays. And then when the spring rains come out here through this relationship between the fungi and the roots in the trees, that stuff then migrates back up into the trees when all the sap runs back up to the trees.

As Ken mentions the “spring rains,” an animation²⁴ appears behind him, depicting a human corpse lying on the ground and raindrops splattering on it. The animation continues to visualize Ken’s description, as mushrooms sprout from the body and then the body transforms

²⁴ Many thanks to my sister, Jess Hock, for creating beautiful animations for the film.

into a tree (Fig. 6.5). I anticipated that those watching the film might be unfamiliar with the ecological process Ken was describing, so this animation was intended to bring it to life, bridging different epistemological paradigms and modalities.

Unlike Kathy and others on the walking tours depicted earlier in the film, Ken offers a way of understanding groundedness that does not rely on familiar landmarks in the built environment. Rather, Ken, as a Duwamish man, is grounded in the *ground*. He knows that the ground in the Seattle area is composed of his ancestors, who have lived and died there for thousands of years, long predating theaters, single-family houses, roads, and settler contact. In this way, Ken feels an intimate relationality connecting the lands and waters with his culture and history. He goes on to share more about how this lifecycle has progressed:

These trees make oxygen. And specifically today they are sequestering carbon and they are helping to keep us alive. So grandma and grandpa are doing all kinds of things to save *the planet*, but we also used them for our houses. So grandma and grandpa, in the form of trees, are in the posts that we have on our houses. So when you hear us talk about how our houses have souls, that's what we're talking about.

Although we were ultimately unable to find Ken's grandparents' old house – a potential source of groundedness – Ken continues to reference “grandma and grandpa” as part of an ecological process that is “helping to keep us alive.” Indeed, Ken seemed relatively unphased that the particular house of his childhood memories was nowhere to be found. Instead, he is content to acknowledge that his ancestors still exist in a more distributed sense, in the trees and their symbiotic relationship with mushrooms, where they are “sav(ing) the planet,” which is the ultimate source of groundedness for all forms of life. In the span of just a few sentences, Ken also begins to tie this narrative thread about the natural world and, implicitly, the climate crisis, with the thread about housing, which will persist throughout the rest of the film. Ken relates the natural world with the built environment, locating human beings as central participants. The film

picks up on this thread, as it depicts Ken standing closer to the road, where he can see some of the nearby houses:

Now, bear in mind that a 50-year-old tree isn't very big in diameter. It's only a foot, foot-and-a-half or so in diameter, which means that's absolute minimum to take down and put into a mill. So back in the day when these houses were built, they were taking down bigger trees. And the trees were typically 200 years old, maybe three. And those timbers are in here. And so in *these* houses could be the uh the ghosts of the Duwamish people.

Ken indexes particular nearby houses, just as he had previously indexed particular nearby trees, to continue his story about his ancestors' ongoing participation within the neighborhood. Through this story, Ken demonstrates how "grandma and grandpa" support local residents' feelings of groundedness by housing them, as they support Ken's groundedness through a sense of historical and cultural continuity. In doing so, Ken offers a way of understanding the intimate connections between the Duwamish Tribe and North Seattle residents, the vast majority of whom are settlers. This is in contrast to dominant discourses, which marginalize Tribal members by relegating them to the annals of history (e.g. Transcript 6.5) or otherwise neglecting to attend to their continued local significance (e.g. Transcript 6.7). Unlike my attempt to underscore this significance during the ART meeting (Transcript 6.4), Ken's description is lucid, tangible, and relevant to an audience that is fiercely attentive to the houses that ground their personal, family, and neighborhood lives.

Figure 6.6 A construction worker describes reactions to *The Guild's* demolition (18 min, 51 sec)



The film cuts away from Ken and shows some of the houses in the neighborhood, including a “ghostly” house in disrepair. The eerie music from earlier in the film returns. This parallelism is intended to evoke the familiar tension that Kathy had previously articulated upon seeing the bulldozer in front of *The Guild*. This time, as we are again presented with *The Guild*, there are chain link fences and yellow caution tape blocking access, and a construction worker sweeping the sidewalk: the demolition is underway. A concerned woman, who presents as white, approaches the construction worker and asks what’s going on with “the crime scene.” The construction worker says that “we’re just tearing this up right here, that’s all.” The woman leaves, and the worker begins talking to the camera as he continues to sweep:

Earlier [...] this chick came and, she she started bursting all out, saying, “What the hell are you guys doing?” [...] She wanted a piece of of whatever, a letter, whatever. She was saying “I used to work here.” She started going off. She was trying to whoop somebody’s butt, man. [...] So. I mean hey, you know, I didn’t know what it meant to the city until everybody here started recording and everybody was in disbelief. I was just like, like I said, I don’t live around this area, but I [...] feel like the *bad guy*, man. Everybody was

just I could just tell by the way they were looking at us that, you know, they weren't happy at all, you know, calling us names [...] People are losing it here.

This scene shows how tensions around the changing neighborhood are reaching a fever pitch, as a beloved local landmark is getting demolished. Community members desperately search for “a piece of [...] a letter, whatever,” emphasizing the materiality, and perhaps nostalgia, associated with their struggle to maintain a sense of groundedness. Unlike Ken, who drew on his Duwamish identity to express groundedness amidst changing materialities, the construction worker relays the fear, anxiety, and anger of residents who ground their sense of identity within a familiar building that is being uprooted. This juxtaposition between Ken and the construction worker, which itself is juxtaposed beside Jude’s “whiteness” critique of the walking tours, begins to visualize how differing discourses of groundedness show up in relation to a predominantly white neighborhood. The construction worker, who presents as Latino, feels like “the bad guy” as residents are “trying to whoop somebody’s butt” and are “calling us names.” By describing this scene from this outsider’s perspective (in contrast to that of Kathy and others on the tours), the viewer is encouraged to take a critical distance and begin to consider how locally situated discourses of groundedness affect those living in other places. Then, within the same interactional turn, the worker says the following:

But hey, I would be in the same situation if I was y’all, man, I mean, I don't blame y’all. Any little piece of history and you know, now it's just going to turn into a different city. Now that's going to be a [...] five-story building. So, I mean, it is what it is.

The ending of this monologue came as a bit of a surprise to me; the construction worker might have been incensed at residents’ demeaning comments and gestures. Instead, while acknowledging that these emotional responses are misplaced toward the construction workers, he empathizes with them. The worker, too, takes up discourses of neighborhood change that imply a

strong connection between groundedness and familiar buildings. In this way, we can see the pendulum of groundedness swinging between feelings of complicity and acceptance in the destruction of an iconic building. After a brief pause, he goes back to sweeping and his partner tosses scrap metal into a pile of rubble, underscoring the crushing inevitability of what's to come. Then, the film cuts to Simone Big Wolf, who is standing across the street and watching the ongoing demolition.

Figure 6.7 The Guild as it gets demolished (19 min, 57 sec)



“They might have to demolition all these buildings across,” Simone says, pointing to each one. “That one’s first, that one’s second, that one’s third, and that one’s fourth. Ya know what I mean?” I ask him how he feels about that, and he says, “Making better building,” and laughs. Then, the camera pans to reveal a striking image of The Guild with its facade half-demolished (Fig 6.7). Simone’s easygoing attitude and optimism about The Guild’s demolition and the future of this block is a marked contrast to the anxiety relayed by the construction worker just moments prior. As the viewer begins to process this juxtaposition, the film cuts to Simone

saying, “But anyhow, let’s go this way,” and we follow him down a nearby sidewalk. While walking, Simone shows us a sign he made that says, “Anything helps. Thank you.” He explains that he’s looking for a vacant street corner to panhandle, as he needs to make money to support his friend and her baby. “If I make it, I make it,” he says, smiling.

Figure 6.8 Simone points to a jet, symbolizing the future (21 min, 22 sec)



Then, after a few more paces, he asks me, “What is this for? What documentary?” I explain that “it’s about the neighborhood we’re in, Wallingford. It’s sort of about people’s relationships with land, and uh, how that’s changing over time, and thinking about where we’re headed in the future.” Simone looks up and points to a jet (Fig. 6.8). “See that jet?” he asks. “That’s where we’re going.” As Simone giggles, the camera pans to view the jet in the bright blue sky. “Nobody knows if it’s gonna land or crash,” he continues. “I hope it lands, yeah,” he says, smiling as he walks toward the camera.

After revealing some intimate details of his personal life, allowing the viewer to briefly take a walk in his shoes, Simone had flipped the script, asking me to explain the documentary.

My brief description from behind the camera helps to ground the film within the Wallingford neighborhood, establishing “land” and “the future” as primary concerns. Simone responded to these rather abstract concepts by pointing to a jet within our shared perceptual space. For Simone, this jet symbolizes the uncertain plight of the neighborhood amidst a changing landscape.²⁵ Despite this uncertainty, Simone remains decidedly optimistic. His attitude contrasts with that of Kathy, who expressed sadness and wanted to chain herself to The Guild; and to many of the (presumably housed) Wallingford residents, who the construction worker had depicted earlier as being anxious and angry. In general, Simone seems relatively content living with this kind of uncertainty; apparently, his groundedness is not tethered to the same physical structures as his housed neighbors.

The film cuts to Simone walking down a different sidewalk, still looking for a vacant street corner, but every corner seems to be already occupied by others panhandling. The viewer is invited to infer a relationship between the lack of housing density, and the increasing density of visible poverty in the neighborhood. We then follow Simone as he crosses a major road, no crosswalk in sight, weaving in between cars stopped at a light. This underscores how Simone is forced to navigate his way through the labyrinthian social and physical structures that were designed to keep Natives and other nondominant groups on the margins. Eventually, we arrive on yet another sidewalk next to an on-ramp to the highway, where Simone stands facing the camera and offers a brief history of his life, cars racing by in the background.

I had a job; I fought forest fires for three years. I almost killed myself on that one. And then I did a lotta landscaping. Um, a lot of sidewalk constructions, foundations for buildings, the houses, but yeah. I did a lot of stuff around here. It's amazing I'm still alive. I've been shot. I've been stabbed. I've been drinking a lot, yeah. But anyhow, yeah. I've

²⁵ The jet also holds local significance in relation to Boeing, the airplane manufacturer that was founded in Seattle more than 100 years ago. The changing neighborhood is largely the result of the city's changing economy, fueled by the tech boom.

made my life kind of, you know, comfortable, you know? It's hard to do, but you got to go to certain places, you know?

Simone's testimony reveals that he has helped to save land from being scorched from forest fires, and he has built the foundations for some of the local houses. He has put his life on the line in order to contribute to a society that has disrupted the lifeways of his communities.²⁶ While the viewer is left to imagine the ways in which this Native man experiencing housing insecurity and physical violence might lack a sense of groundedness, his demeanor appears relentlessly optimistic and grounded with what's right in front of him. Throughout his depiction in the film, Simone seems to make sense of the changing landscape as he moves through it, pointing out buildings and airplanes along the way. We follow him a bit further down the sidewalk, as he points to some of the foundations he built and mimics some of the landscaping work he continues to do on some of these properties. Simone's relatively nomadic, outdoor lifestyle has become intertwined with his ongoing labor to build the foundation of the neighborhood, and to maintain it.

Then, to contextualize Simone's experience within a wider social and geographic purview, the film cuts back to Ken at Green Lake:

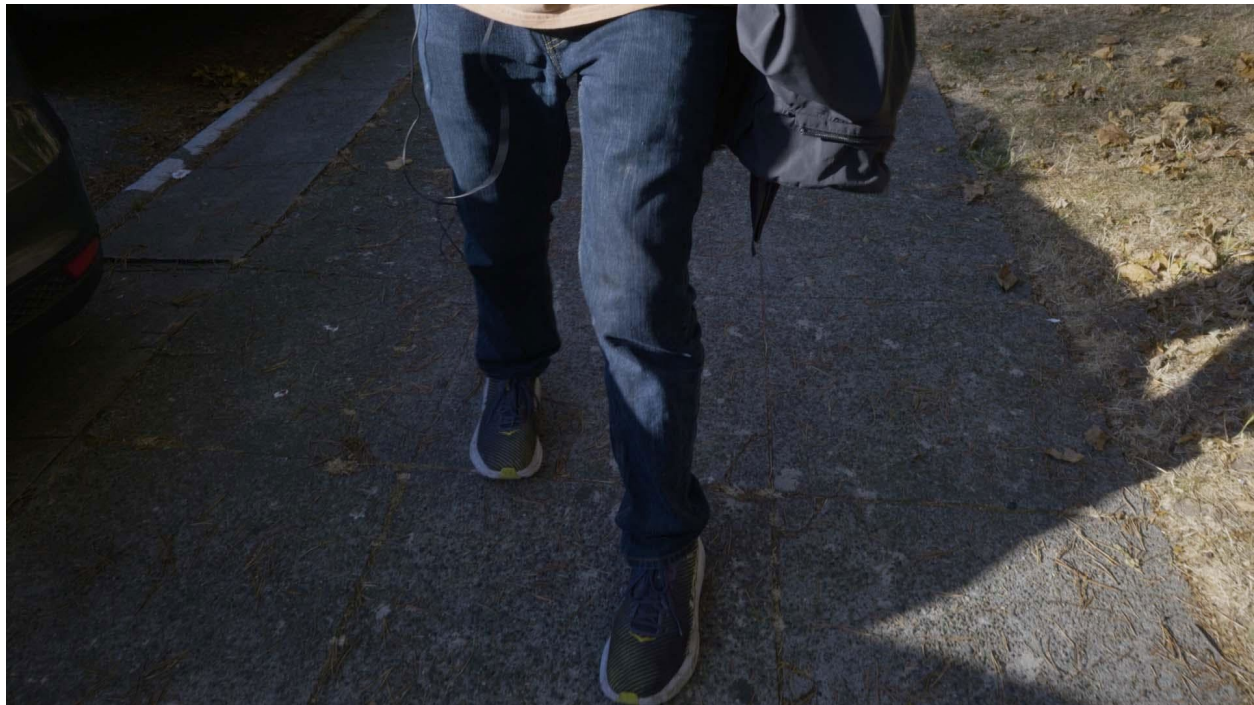
The population of the world is growing. It's not as if people are moving from one place to another. The whole human population is growing. [...] And so the only thing that can happen here from my own studies, my personal studies, is that all growth has to go up. And that large single-family dwellings, they have to go away because there's no more room and there's so many people.

Here, Ken begins to describe how the single-family houses in the neighborhood are precluding it from accommodating the growing population. In a cruel irony, it seems, Simone's labor to build these houses is exacerbating the conditions which are preventing him from owning

²⁶ Simone identified as Blackfoot, Okanagan, Nez Perce and Shoshone.

a home. I intended Simone's personal place-story to set up the emotional stakes for Ken, who empathetically shared that "single-family dwellings, they have to go away." This juxtaposition seemed especially important, as I anticipated that the need for these dramatic changes to the built environment would be difficult for some of the viewers to fully accept. Ken also felt like a good person to deliver this message, as he had previously acknowledged how his ancestors are embedded within these very houses. Rather than extolling these houses for incorporating "the ghosts of the Duwamish," Ken has expressed an ontological understanding that life constantly changes forms, and our responsibility is to save the planet while taking care of each other's basic needs. If Ken thinks we should tear down the houses built from his ancestors, on their land, then perhaps the current residents might be persuaded.

Fig. 6.9 – Simone demonstrating his connection to the land (25 min, 12 sec)



In the final shot of this scene, we revisit Simone, who is walking down another stretch of sidewalk. I ask him how connected he feels to the land here. "Man, it's like, put one foot to the next," he says, looking at his feet as he takes deliberately punctuated steps. "Just keep on going.

And you knock on wood because you want something true to come out.” As he says this last line, without missing a beat, he approaches a wooden telephone post and knocks on it to punctuate his words. Yet again, Simone makes sense of my relatively abstract question by drawing on the features in our shared perceptual space. He expresses his connection to the land by emphasizing the physical act of moving through it, each step connecting to the ground beneath his feet (Fig. 6.9). The telephone pole, like the jet, seems to appear at exactly the right time for Simone to make his point, expressing an uncertainty and inevitability about the future, as well as an optimism that “something true” might emerge.

Overall, this scene depicts one of the serendipities that happened as a result of creating this documentary. I had stumbled upon The Guild being demolished while filming b-roll to address some of the ART’s recommendations to improve the rough cut. The footage of this demolition, as it turned out, would become tremendously relevant for a couple reasons. For one, The Guild’s impending demolition had become a focal point of conversation during one of the walking tours (Fig. 6.2), and then during the ART meeting, in which Tara introduced it as a central tension (Transcript 6.3). In particular, as the construction worker clarified, this was a tension because some residents perceived its destruction as undermining their sense of groundedness in the neighborhood.

The second reason is that while filming the demolition, I met Simone, who happened to be watching it from across the street. He wanted to be recorded for the documentary, linking his personal place-story with that of the larger neighborhood. And, as it turned out, Simone’s place-story offers a totally different perspective on groundedness than others who had been lamenting the loss of The Guild. He expresses how groundedness need not depend on landmark buildings, or even a house, but rather by what's right in front of you: the sidewalk, a light pole, an airplane.

In this way, Simone, like Ken, expresses an ongoing sense of groundedness in his position on the planet, which serves as a home to us all. This perspective, as Austin and Chris advised, ended up enriching this film (Transcripts 6.7, 6.8) and offering potential to improve the community (Transcript 6.2) by emphasizing a core tension. In doing so, it also attempts to overcome the tokenization that might come from featuring someone solely based on their social markers – Simone literally built the foundation of this neighborhood but is experiencing housing insecurity. And rather than taking a deficit perspective on what Simone lacks, Simone takes the viewer on a walking tour of his own, effortlessly demonstrating a new way of understanding groundedness with grace and a sense of humor.

Figure 6.9 A title card emphasizing Ken's story about colonization (30 min, 14 sec)



After following Ken and Simone's counter-place-stories for several minutes, the film cuts back to the walking tours. We follow Luna and her friends on the plant tour as they merrily run around and pick fruit from a cherry tree. This scene acts as a visual semiotic marker of community care and groundedness. By juxtaposing the shots of kids and families enjoying

plentiful fruit in the traffic circle with those of Simone struggling to make ends meet, I intended to evoke questions about how to reconcile ideals of community with the widespread inequities segregating communities (see Ch. 4). In the next shot, the plant tour group approaches a lemonade stand on a parking strip. The mother and son running it say they are raising money for the Downtown Emergency Services Center, which supports people experiencing homelessness. This serendipitous meeting hints at one possible path forward for Wallingford residents to become more civically engaged, activating public space for the public good.

The film continues to offer possible pathways for engagement, as it transitions into residents walking down a neighborhood pathway during the housing tour. In a close-up shot, we see Kelli recounting her personal place-story of building a DADU in the neighborhood. Then, we follow Kelli to see the DADU itself, bringing to life discourses of accessibility and the groundedness which undergirds it (see Ch. 5). Just as Kelli's DADU is enthusiastically presented as a possible – if partial – solution to the housing crisis, Edith appears on-camera to deflate this enthusiasm: "I'm just questioning this whole concept of affordable housing in this area," she says, and goes onto lament the destruction of single-family houses (Transcript 5.6, lines 52-62). As she says "single-family houses," the film's eerie musical motif returns, aurally reinforcing the destruction of familiar landmarks as a perceived threat to groundedness. But instead of lingering on this white gaze, the film cuts to a black screen, which is populated by text as Ken speaks it: "3 years, 2 months, 9 days" (Fig 6.9). Then we see Ken at Green Lake saying the following:

That's how long it took from the time that my grandpa – Chief Seattle – standing on the shore of Alki saying, "Welcome." Three years, two months and nine days. Sign this piece of paper and get out of Dodge. Gentrification. That's all it took for us to – 10,000 years of living here. Three years, two months and nine days. This has been our story since almost day one, when grandpa said, "Welcome to the neighborhood."

In this passage, Ken offers a long view of local history (Smith et al., 2019), which, as we saw during the ART meeting, has been euphemized in settler retellings (Transcript 6.4). As a direct descendent of Chief Seattle, Ken has the gravitas to underscore the longstanding history of the Coast Salish peoples, as well as the sudden, violent disruption of colonization. Edith, a white elder, had shared a personal place-story which goes back decades and argues for preserving familiar housing as a source of groundedness and accessibility. Ken, drawing on his Duwamish identity, shares a place-story which goes back thousands of years, and positions Edith's place-story within the important context of settler colonialism. The eerie music bridges the cut from Edith to Ken, suggesting that the core tension of the film – and thus, the neighborhood – is not simply the gentrification that began with the tech boom, but rather the original gentrification, which began when the Denny Party arrived on Alki Beach (cf. Thrush, 2017). In this way, the filmic semiotics shift the pendulum of groundedness from a wholesale acceptance of “community,” toward the need for contesting the way community is grounded within a settler society. Then, as Ken continues, the pendulum begins to shift back in the other direction:

So to the people of Wallingford, I would say it's coming. Figure out how you can best mitigate it because it's coming. I'm not sure what they're going to do. Maybe it's the City. Maybe they can say, “Hey, we do need affordable housing.” And what does that look like? Is it communal housing? I don't know.

Ken begins to hybridize the previous discourses of decolonization with those of housing affordability and accessibility. Rather than expressing anger at white settlers like Edith who are occupying Native land, Ken expresses a concern for the way gentrification has continued to affect people living in the area. In this way, as Ken accounts for the ongoing legacies of racialized violence, he challenges the individualism and sectarianism which often insidiously perpetuate it. Ken invites Wallingford residents into conversations about gentrification by positioning them as both gentrifiers and people experiencing gentrification. This kind of nuance,

which greatly contributed to the neighborhood's overall place-story, was possible because of Ken's willingness to appear in the film. The housing walking tour, as detailed in Ch. 5, contained its own nuances, but neglected to crystallize this kind of place-story, in part because Edith's insistence on centering single-family houses and parking often derailed conversations about building a more equitably accessible neighborhood. Through the editing process, the ART and I developed a narrative that aimed to avoid this pitfall, creating a dialogue between people and discourses that seldom make contact.

Figure 6.10 Hopeful artwork as The Guild gets demolished (46 min, 20 sec)



The final act of the film shows clips from group discussions at the end of the walking tours, where residents consider how the neighborhood should look in the future. There's an apparent consensus around a few points: a) change is inevitable, b) cultivating relationships is important for maintaining a sense of groundedness, and c) there might be creative ways to change the physical design of the neighborhood to help facilitate this cultivation. Then it cuts back to the Zoom meeting which introduced the walking tours at the beginning of the film. The

meeting has ended and participants begin to sign off. Margaret Birdsall, an elder who appeared earlier, stays on to ask me a question:

My knowledge is so dated. How much value can I give? Because it's almost like what you're all talking about is not the Wallingford I know. Where do we spend so much of our time? Where we live! And we call that our neighborhood – and it's changing! And it's not just the history that's on your shoulders. It's the current and the future.

Margaret voices a familiar concern about the changing neighborhood and the implied threat this poses to her groundedness. But rather than getting bogged down in the social language of a neighborhood defender (Einstein et al., 2020) like some of her peers, Margaret looks to “the current and the future.” The visual semiotics of the film reinforce this transition, as it displays The Guild being bulldozed and then cuts to artwork at the base of the derelict theater, saying “INVEST IN COMMUNITY” (Fig. 6.10). Moreover, the optimistic acoustic guitar leitmotif returns, suggesting a marked transition from previous scenes of The Guild, which had been accompanied by eerie music. This sequence aims to express hopefulness about the future, even amidst the demolition of familiar landmarks. The destruction of The Guild had represented a threat to groundedness in the first act of the film. Now, after following a host of characters along a journey through the neighborhood, Margaret’s emphasis on the future signifies an optimism for discovering new possibilities to ground the neighborhood in more equitable growth and development. We then see clips illustrating some of these possibilities: a free food pantry in someone’s front yard; a flyer asking the reader to let unhoused people sleep in their garage; people holding a banner by an overpass, imploring passerbys to “STAND WITH TRIBES” and breach dams.

The film ends with Margaret unsuccessfully trying to get out of the Zoom room. Jon says “I have an option to remove you,” which prompts Margaret to exclaim: “I don’t want to be removed!” We all laugh, recognizing the black humor, and Margaret says, “I’m here for the long

haul!” Margaret is figuring out how to ground her own identity within a neighborhood that is changing before her eyes. It’s a challenging feat for someone who has lived in the same place for several decades, but as long as she’s here, she’s going to try.

Background on the screenings and subsequent data collection

The first episode of this chapter analyzed an in-person discussion during the ART meeting based on a rough cut of the film, in which participants advocated for grounding the film in particular ways. Jude, Austin, and Chris all wanted it to depict inequitable segregation as a core tension in the neighborhood. Tara, on the other hand, wanted to center community building, and offered the destruction of The Guild as a core tension. We have seen in the previous episode how, in my attempt to bring these perspectives into dialogue, the film became a semiotic aggregate, hybridizing a variety of discourses of groundedness. Viewers watch Kelli, Edith, Ken, Simone, the construction worker, and even some of the ART members animate these discourses as they co-operatively develop a place-story. In the third and final episode of this chapter, I will show how the life of the film extends back into the sociomaterial environment, as groundedness discourses become reanimated in the film screenings and subsequent data collection.

To date, there have been eight screenings, each of which was designed to extend conversations in the film. Many of the screenings were geared toward a particular audience, and each featured a different configuration of activities and prompts for engagement (as well as data collection; see Ch. 3 for more details). In addition to the screenings, I also conducted 18 exit interviews with participants who had seen the film and been heavily involved in the filmmaking process. A comprehensive analysis of these data is beyond the scope of this manuscript. Instead, in this episode, I follow the groundedness conversation to better understand how the film-as-artifact helped or hindered civic learning through processes of place-storying and

infrastructuring. This, I hope, will demonstrate how a creative, multimodal collaboration enables local stakeholders to relate to each other and their neighborhood in new ways. However, as with the previous episodes in this chapter, collaboration around common ideals characterizes just one arc of the pendulum of groundedness. Here too the pendulum continues to oscillate between building community and contesting community, as participants center the core tensions of grounding one's identity in a racialized, colonial neighborhood.

Episode 3: Finding common ground beyond the film

The screenings elicited mixed responses and participation

During most of the screenings, immediately after watching the film, I invited participants to offer written feedback in their visioning packets. This offered an opportunity to understand how they were making sense of the film in the moment. The responses from the main public screening were quite varied: for some, “the value and importance of COMMUNITY really resonated.” Others felt “sadness about change.” And still others noted the “lack of racial diversity” or wanted a more “critical look,” situating Wallingford within “larger systems e.g. Seattle.” In the words of one respondent, aptly summarizing their neighbors, “Wallingford is many things to many people.” Given my engagement thus far in the project, I was not surprised to see this diversity in the way participants were grounding their neighborhood identity in relation to the film.

This diversity was also represented during the gallery walk, which took place immediately after participants wrote in their packets. Participants walked around the room, looked at freeze frames from the film that were posted on the wall, and responded to them using post-it notes. One image depicted Ken and an animated body turning into a tree (Fig. 6.5). In response to this, one participant wrote that “Historic Wallingford also includes Duwamish and

tribal history!” – indicating discourses of historic preservation and decolonization were being hybridized. Another, nearly quoting Ken in the film, said that green spaces “reconnect us with each other & the land.” Still another simply wrote, “You let Ken wander on too long.” This kind of ambivalence was evident across the images. For example, an image of a bulldozer in front of The Guild (Fig. 6.2) elicited both “So SAD to lose the Guild 45th” and “It’s an opportunity for an improve(d) community space.” Another comment combined these two sentiments, saying, “Sad to see a beautiful art deco building go but hope it becomes a mixed use building.” This latter comment, which was substantiated in several of the exit interviews, demonstrates how many residents feel their groundedness is threatened by the demolition of beloved landmarks; yet simultaneously they recognize that change is inevitable, and it could provide new opportunities for regrounding identities in something new.

After the gallery walk, during most of the screenings, participants were invited to form small groups and continue the conversation. Following the previous written exercises, this would be the first opportunity participants would have to respond to the film face-to-face with their neighbors. I hoped the film would offer a variety of common touch points for participants to express their hopes and concerns in grounding their personal and neighborhood identities. From stories I had heard about previous civic engagement efforts around land use in Wallingford, I expected these conversations might surface ongoing tensions. However, with such a breadth and depth of community input across the whole filmmaking process, I was curious to see whether and how these tensions would show up. To my surprise, during the main public screening, the small group discussions were characterized more by their camaraderie and collaboration than by ideologues butting heads against each other. This was in part because each small group was facilitated by community members who had attended an online training I had previously

organized. And a small group focused on housing, the most contentious issue, was facilitated by a housing reporter from the local National Public Radio affiliate. However, during the exit interviews, I found out that some of the participants who may have spurred more disagreement had opted out of these potentially divisive conversations. Two of the Historic Wallingford representatives, for example, joined the “plants and animals” group instead of the “housing” group because, in the words of one, they wanted to avoid “controversy.” A few members of Wallingford for All (W4A) had avoided the discussions altogether, having left the screening immediately after the film ended.

Contesting community in the Wallingford for All email thread

At 8:19pm on March 16, 2022 – while the main public screening was still happening – Laura sent a message to the W4A email list serv. Laura helped W4A get started and is a thought leader in the Yes In My BackYard (YIMBY) housing justice movement. I had interviewed her at the beginning of this project, and she introduced me to Kelli, who led the DADU tour. I had acknowledged her contribution by including her name in the credits. Laura’s email read:

[SUBJECT] Visions of Wallingford — my 2 cents.

The film was empty. It didn’t do any education. It was a montage of white suburban culture. Very one sided.

The way it edited comments from Ken Workman, and Kelli didn’t fully represent who they are.

The film stubbornly looked back and was like an Instagram filter of an afternoon of middle class bliss interrupted by the deep and tragic loss of The Guild.

I want my name off the credits.

- Laura

Laura implies that the film promoted a racist, classist vision of the neighborhood's identity, which centers "white suburban culture" and "middle class bliss." To solidify her point, she references "the deep and tragic loss of The Guild," which in the film, presumably, she feels overshadows important social inequities. This critique extends the conversation which happened during the ART meeting analyzed in the first episode of this chapter. Recall that Jude made a bid to avoid romanticizing the neighborhood (Transcript 6.1) and Austin advised us to highlight social tensions as a way of doing this (Transcript 6.2). Tara suggested that the demolition of The Guild could be an important tension to highlight (Transcript 6.3), and I added that "we can't ignore the racial component" (Transcript 6.4). This conversation encouraged me to gather additional footage and problematize the white gaze that characterized much of the tours. As discussed in the previous episode, the film includes Jude's critique during this ART meeting (Fig. 6.4). Also, in addition to showcasing the demolition of The Guild, the film dedicates a significant amount of its runtime to perspectives of members from nondominant groups, including a member of the Duwamish Tribe, a Latino-presenting construction worker helping to demolish The Guild, and a Native man experiencing housing insecurity. Laura's message, to my surprise, seemed to ignore or downplay the significance of these counter-stories, instead emphasizing The Guild's demolition as the core, colorblind narrative tension. She suggests that the film's emphasis on building community – and its *absence* of contesting community within this predominantly white neighborhood – is grounding Wallingford's identity in the wrong way.

By sending this email to the entire list serv while the screening was still happening, Laura accomplished a couple things. For one, she was able to preempt others' interpretations of the film and the project. She lets these local housing activists know that she doesn't want to ground her own identity in that of the film ("I want my name off the credits"). Moreover, as a mentor to

W4A members, she implies that this group should not ground its identity in that of the film either. In other words, Laura attempted to protect this housing justice group from being coopted by an effort that she sees as running counter to its goals. Rather than participating in the small group discussions, where she could have directly brought her critique into dialogue with others' perspectives, she chose to leave the venue and share it only with other like-minded activists. This response countered my intentions for the event, as it further insulated factions of community members, rather than fostering a more collaborative place-storying effort. In this way, the form of Laura's critique matched its content: contestation became a strategy for galvanizing activists and creating political change (DeFilippis et al., 2010). Overall, this infrastructuring work helps to clarify the purpose of W4A, by distinguishing it from nominally collaborative efforts that uncritically lament the loss of landmarks and preserve "middle class bliss."

The email thread garnered additional comments over the next few days. One respondent, whom I had met up with early on to discuss local housing issues, accused me of being a "NIMBY" (see Ch. 2). They also noted that the project was funded by 4Culture, which has connections to Historic Wallingford. At this point I chimed in to the email thread to clarify that 4Culture had no input into the content of the film. I also noted that the film was supposed to be a jumping off point for further discussion, which is why we had built in additional time after the screening for small group discussions. Then I thanked Laura for the criticism and invited readers to join an upcoming online film screening to share their feedback.

On March 21, after attending this screening, Bryan offered a long, intricate response in the email thread. Like Laura, he discusses The Guild's demolition. But unlike Laura, Bryan's analysis of the event focuses on the story of the "Hispanic construction worker," questioning "what the hell neighborhood character means if people here are punching down by making him

feel bad for just doing his job.” This comment indicates that the film helped Bryan to articulate an important critique: grounding neighborhood character in landmark buildings can lead to real harm, particularly across racialized positionalities. To further solidify this critique, Bryan suggests that Jude “straight up deserves a medal” for her comment about Wallingford’s whiteness. He goes on to reference Simone and Ken’s counter-stories, which, respectively, support a discussion of the “vilification of the homeless in our community” and how “Wallingford’s long-time White homeowners are the gentrifiers.” Ultimately, Bryan writes that the balance of the film was off: “It felt a bit like a documentary about a national park in an extreme drought where folks who ‘really like campfires’ got equal (or more) time without intentionally centering [...] the tension between that and the looming [housing] problem.” Throughout this response, Bryan both critiques the film and draws on its characters to emphasize the need for contestation in grounding community. But instead of contesting participation in the project, as Laura had, Bryan embraced it; he stayed for the small group discussion following the screening, and graciously shared his thoughts with me during a two-hour exit interview.

Two years later, when discussing this email exchange with Laura, she told me that working in housing justice had been harrowing – more so than other justice movements because of its deeply personal nature – and her response in the thread reflected the emotional challenges she was facing. Local conversations around housing and neighborhood change had become polarizing, sometimes to the detriment of those involved. In order to build community that is grounded in a sense of justice, some of the activists were contesting community to the point of alienation. During our initial interview together and meetings I had attended with Laura, she had often framed housing justice as a political fight, pitting YIMBYs against NIMBYs (cf. Holleran, 2021). Perhaps for this reason, my attempts to bring different factions into conversation had

aroused suspicion; several months prior at a Welcoming Wallingford meeting, Laura had half-jokingly accused me of being a spy. This aura of mistrust extended across individuals and institutions. During our respective exit interviews, for example, both Kelli (from Wallingford for All) and Rhonda (from Historic Wallingford) expressed that prior to viewing the film, they had been worried it would depict them as an antagonist. These emotional and ideological fissures are deep and persistent, and this project offered a unique, if not immediately successful, opportunity to bridge their boundaries.

Collaborative infrastructuring to reground the neighborhood's identity

During the exit interviews, participants more or less unanimously expressed the inevitability of their changing neighborhood. The emotions associated with that change, however, varied substantially: fear, joy, excitement, anxiety. Kathy, the woman who considered chaining herself to The Guild, told me that “what Wallingford was, it's gone. And I had not really realized that until I saw the film.” To contextualize this, she too draws on The Guild, saying that “I realize it has been gone for a very long time but that I haven't really grieved.” The film's depiction of The Guild's destruction resonated with her, enabling her to grieve the loss of a familiar landmark the way one might grieve the loss of a friend or relative (Brown & Perkins, 1992). But instead of wallowing in her grief, Kathy became energized through her experience at the screening. In her small group discussion, which was focused on commerce, Kathy shared an idea for a local venture capital fund that could support small businesses that were trying to gain a foothold in the neighborhood. She also discussed the possibility of conducting a survey to better understand the current makeup and needs of local residents. These efforts, in her estimation, would help to “really understand what our demographics truly are” and to “think about how do we create a community that is truly inclusive and welcoming to all.” While this response risks

downplaying the ongoing racialized segregation across the city, it also represents a significant shift from one of the characters in the film who seemed to embody potentially harmful discourses of groundedness. Instead, after watching the film, Kathy expresses a new understanding: the neighborhood's identity should be grounded in the needs of the community, which may involve *replacing* existing buildings, rather than fighting tooth and nail to preserve them.

If we understand Kathy's participation in the project as a civic learning trajectory (Meléndez et al., 2023), it might help us move past the kind of binary us vs. them thinking that has polarized residents, stoking fears and anxieties. During the walking tour, while storying her neighborhood, Kathy felt a sense of grief and a threat to her groundedness. After watching the film (which served as an artifact of this place-storying process), she was able to acknowledge and name these feelings. Then, during the small group discussion, she began infrastructuring in an attempt to reground her neighborhood's identity in a more inclusive way. Though Kathy was admittedly a bit unsure of how to achieve more housing justice and diversity within Wallingford, her efforts to establish a more inclusive commercial environment indicate possibilities for creating partnerships which span across residents, businesses, and perhaps even local organizations that are already engaged in this justice work. Recall that Kelli, for example, similarly expressed a desire for supporting local businesses and creating a vibrant business district (Transcript 5.10). Kelli is also a key member of W4A, with substantial policy experience and a commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable neighborhood. What might happen if Kelli teamed up with Kathy, who is a retired leader of a technology company (with ample local resources)? This project was fecund with these kinds of opportunities for motivated residents – with overlapping ideals and institutional connections – to continue the infrastructuring work that

could ultimately ground a sense of community in a more critical-minded collaboration. These opportunities are especially significant, given the challenging, tiresome organizing work it takes to build and maintain a social movement.

During Kelli's exit interview, she admitted that W4A was going through an "identity crisis" and indicated an openness to including more people, beyond their circle of committed housing justice activists. She said:

From an organizing perspective, you can't be so alienating that you don't build your movement, right? Like we need to build a movement in Wallingford of people who are open to some change, and who are excited about doing some mosaics on new buildings. I think there needs to be some space for growth and there needs to be some space for finding commonality in our differences [...] which is why I participated in this project.

With this comment, Kelli recognizes that her participation signified an attempt to try to bridge some of the fissures which had been dividing the neighborhood. At a W4A meeting I attended a few weeks after Kelli's exit interview, she and other regular members were joined by some folks who had never previously attended a meeting, including members from the Wallingford Community Council (WCC) and Historic Wallingford. These new participants supported housing density, despite what their institutional affiliations might suggest. In fact, Ted, a WCC board member (and a leader of one of the walking tours), used this opportunity to clarify the "misconception" that the WCC is against density. He also encouraged everyone present to come to the next WCC meeting. In this way, the local institutions were regrounding their values as they sought new ways of working together. The W4A organizers similarly used this meeting as an opportunity of articulating possible strategies for moving forward, and one of them was focused around "positive messaging" and "storytelling" for the benefits of density. The pendulum of groundedness, it seems, was swinging back toward collaboration. This resonated with several of the participants as we discussed possible projects, including edits to the film.

The film evolves along with the neighborhood's place-story

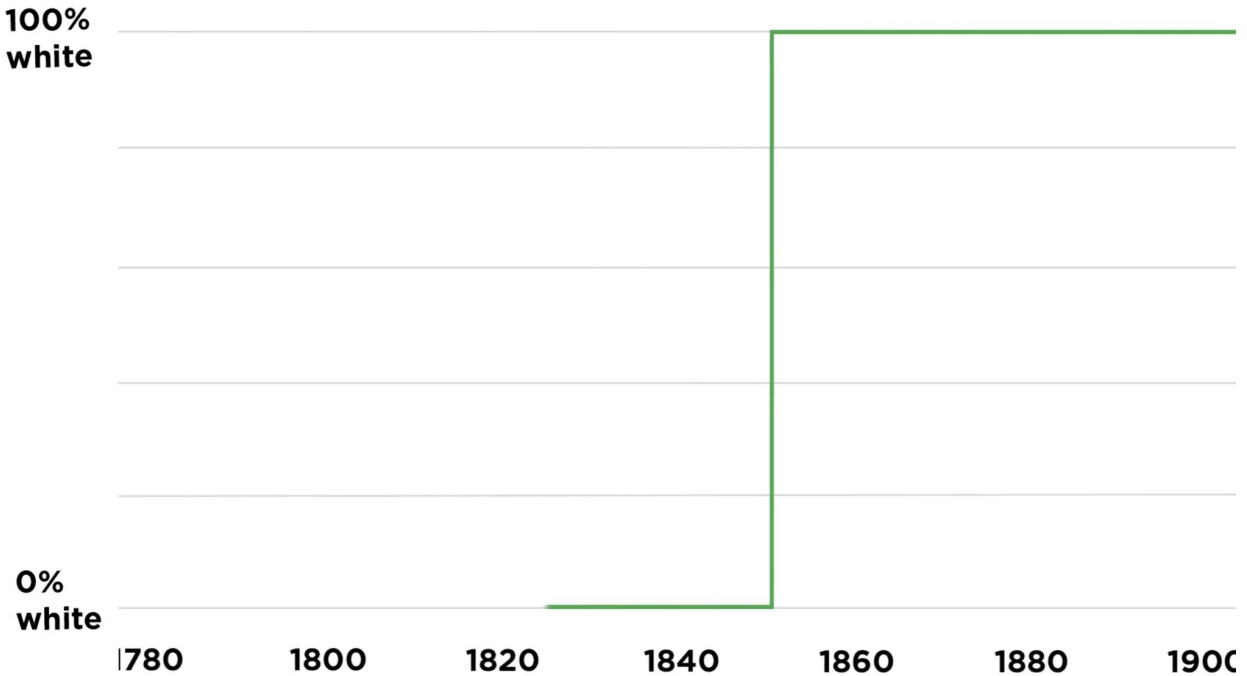
Figure 6.11 Signs depicting a core tension in the neighborhood



In response to the criticisms that surfaced, I made some changes to the film. These were designed to lift the pendulum to new heights, more firmly establishing the need for contesting the status quo, as well as more clearly laying out possibilities for future collaboration. For one, after Jude says “we ought to acknowledge the very whiteness” of Wallingford (Fig. 6.4), I recorded a voiceover describing how the neighborhood has been predominantly white since it was settled. This is accompanied by an animated line graph that quantifies Wallingford’s (slightly decreasing) whiteness over time. The graph, with its green line, is visually reminiscent of another graph which appeared earlier in the film, showing how housing prices have risen in recent years. In this way, I hoped to create a semiotic connection between the price of housing and the position of white landowners. Then, more directly, I ask, “So how do you build community in a community that’s built on racism?” The image transitions into a light pole with two familiar

signs which, juxtaposed, aim to capture this contradiction: “NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH” and “SLOW DOWN KIDS PLAYING” (Fig. 6.11).

Figure 6.12 A line graph augments Ken’s story



The line graph appears twice more in the film, serving as a visual motif to reinforce this important context of racialization and privilege within discourses of groundedness and community building. The graph next appears when Ken describes white settlers as the original gentrifiers of Seattle. This time, however, the graph moves backwards in time, so that Wallingford’s whiteness increases slightly as it moves to the early 1900s. But rather than ending there, where the initial graph had begun, it continues to extend to the left, reaching farther back in time. As Ken says, “This has been our story,” referring to the Duwamish story of forced displacement, the green line plummets from “100% white” to “0% white” at 1851, the year when the Denny Party landed (Fig. 6.12). This plummet is accompanied by a hammer sound – the same sound which appeared earlier in the film, when a construction worker hammers a wooden house frame together as I discussed rising housing prices. The line, which is now fixed at “0%

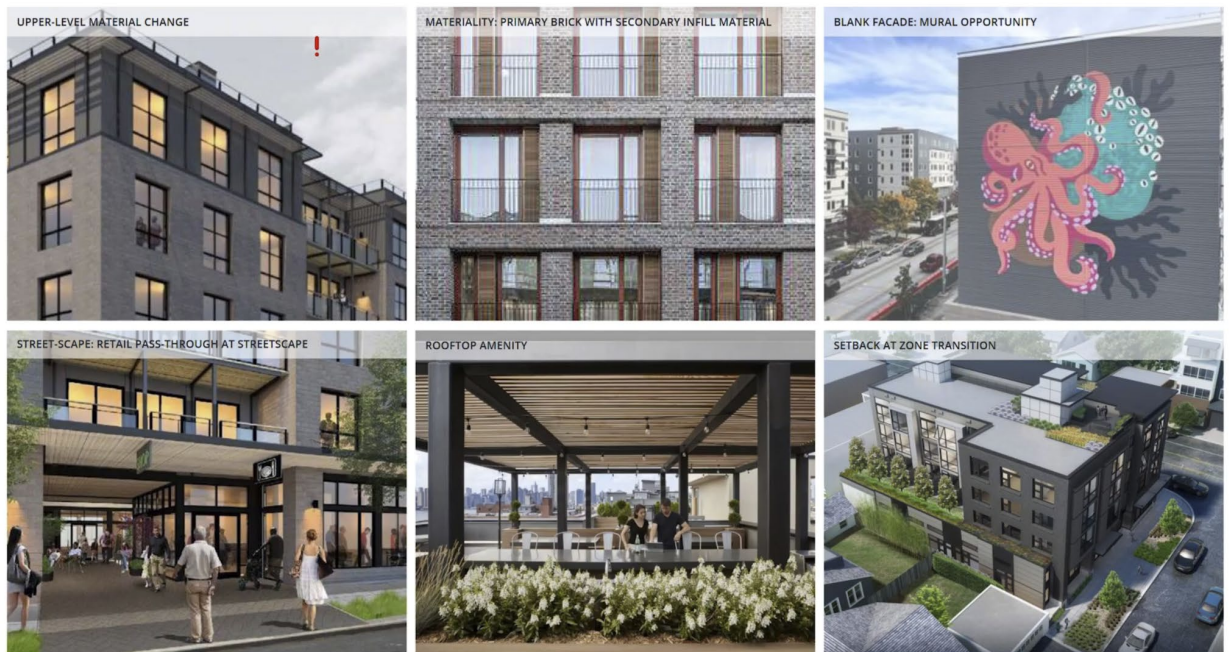
white,” continues to extend farther back in time, indicating the thousands of years of Duwamish and Coast Salish life prior to colonization.

This line resurfaces one more time in the film, in the final act, when Greg, a longtime WCC member (see Ch. 5), describes his utopian vision of Wallingford: a yard that “you can control,” kids playing, trees. As he laments, “That’s clearly not the direction we’re headed,” the green line follows him and the rest of the tour group, representing the racialized subtext of Greg’s desire to maintain the status quo. This is an example of how I began to use filmic semiotics to more actively critique perspectives from some of the residents, rather than merely presenting them. During a different scene, I juxtaposed someone talking about electric vehicles as a panacea, with an image of a Tesla driving by a man sleeping on the sidewalk. These editing decisions supplanted a sense of apparent impartiality in the film’s presentation – which actually privileged the perspectives of people who showed up on the tours. Instead, picking up on the advice of Austin and Chris during the ART meeting, as well as some of the W4A members, I emphasized the tensions that need to be addressed in order to sufficiently ground the community in its history and the hope for a better future.

Figure 6.13 A rendering of the apartment building replacing The Guild

ARCHITECTURAL MASSING CONCEPTS - PRECEDENT IMAGES (8.8)

CLARK /
BARNES



To complete the narrative arc of the film on the pendulum's hopeful upswing, I revisited the ending with Margaret on the Zoom call. This time, after Margaret says, "It's not just the history on your shoulders. It's the current and the future," the film transitions from the destruction of The Guild to images showing that a new apartment building will take its place. We see a Wally Hood blog post, colorful renderings of the building (Fig. 6.13), and a public comment welcoming the new development. Then, as Margaret goes on to ask for something that will inspire her grandkids, the names of several organizations doing justice work appear on the screen, as well as a URL to learn more. Through these additions, I hoped to more clearly articulate the film's main takeaway: as our neighborhood continues to change, we can maintain a sense of groundedness by pairing a critical orientation with community building and collaboration.

Discussion

Over the course of this chapter, we have seen how discourses of groundedness have shown up across multiple phases of this project. In the first episode, ART members discussed whether the film should ground the notion of community around common ideals, or rather the contestation of how these ideals are realized, given the material constraints associated with land use in Wallingford. By looking at the neighborhood as the subject of a story, Chris and Austin drew on filmic and creative social languages to successfully advocate for developing a narrative arc around a core tension. There were differing perceptions about the nature of this tension, with some centering longtime Wallingford residents, and others centering the systemic inequities which have enabled these residents to prosper. Despite some initial misalignment around if and how to represent Coast Salish peoples, ultimately, the group agreed that including some nondominant perspectives would enrich the film.

These nondominant perspectives entered the orbit of the emerging place-story serendipitously over the course of two days, as The Guild theater was being demolished. As a result, Ken, Simone, the construction worker, and The Guild itself became significant characters in the film, appearing just in time to extend the conversation around groundedness that was introduced during the walking tours. As they expressed discourses of neighborhood change, housing affordability, and decolonization, they offered alternative possibilities for grounding the identity of the neighborhood and thus, the people who live there. Ken's critical perspective of the city's white settlers was paired with a sense of empathy, as well as a more relational, holistic understanding of groundedness. For this reason, his appearance in the film helped to more meaningfully connect Duwamish place-stories with those of the Wallingford residents. Meanwhile, Simone's relentless optimism and perceptual awareness similarly indicated a sense

of groundedness in the immediate environment, offering hope to residents as the built environment changes form. The Guild's presence in the film elicited strong emotional reactions from some of the viewers. While some argued that it over-sensationalized a derelict building, others appreciated the opportunity to honor its presence and then consider how to move forward. Ultimately, the discussion that resulted helped participants and institutions to begin hybridizing their own discourses of groundedness, oscillating between collaboration and contestation, illuminating a core tension in Wallingford.

This pendular swing is not unique to Wallingford, but instead represents the understanding that, in the words of public affairs scholars, "local [organizing] work *needs* to maintain conflict at the core of its activity," (DeFilippis et al., 2016, p. 686; emphasis added). Political scientists have similarly described the necessity of an agonistic pluralism for a functioning democracy (Mouffe, 1999; see Ch. 2), and education researchers have emphasized how contradictions in activity systems can lead to "collaborative envisioning and a deliberate collective change effort" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). However, despite this interdisciplinary understanding that sustained local collaborations seem to require an ongoing way of articulating conflict, there has been a lack of interdisciplinary collaboration around substantively theorizing this issue. This is especially urgent for addressing local, citywide, and regional disturbances as we continue to see ecological and demographic shifts associated with the climate crisis (Lustgarten, 2024). With this in mind, this analysis responds to a call for planners and social scientists to work together, "to help understand who gets involved in neighborhood change and planning efforts and why, as well as why people resist or support change efforts" (Manzo & Perkins, 2006, p. 347).

Visions of Wallingford provided opportunities for a predominantly white neighborhood to interrogate how it is grounding its identity. The film acted as a motivating force for bringing together different discourses of groundedness, along with the people expressing them, who occupy a variety of professional and institutional identities (including planners and social scientists). In the previous chapter, we saw how this motivating force physically juxtaposed participants during the walking tours. In this chapter, we saw how the film also acted as a semiotic aggregate, juxtaposing these discourses in a way that elicited deep, emotional engagement for many of those involved. Participants sought to variously build and contest community, sometimes oscillating between these orientations as they developed a story about their neighborhood. In the final chapter, I clarify some of the implications of this work, including a set of design principles to help learning scientists, planners, and other scholars and practitioners working within and across local community settings.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

The goals of this project have been twofold: to contribute to scholarship around education, planning, and civic media; and to contribute to my neighborhood and city. In both instances, my motivation has been to break down barriers and stimulate creative collaboration. With Wallingford residents, we have created a series of walking tours and a movie, all of which are helping us have better conversations about our neighborhood's past, present, and future. With this manuscript, I hope to spark dialogue across disciplines, centering learning and teaching to reveal how inhabitants might adapt our practices to better meet the needs of our rapidly changing landscape.

For both of these goals – the local and scholarly contributions – the emphasis on creative collaboration comes from an accounting of our social, political, and ecological quagmires. As discussed in Ch. 1, our neighborhoods have been designed to physically segregate people from each other and from the natural world. Our civic infrastructure has followed suit, often insidiously perpetuating the same dominant narratives. Even the “single-family” houses dotting our cities and suburbs have been designed to reinforce the ideal of a nuclear family, all while keeping Americans invested in our deleterious economic system (Rothstein, 2017). Meanwhile, academic disciplines are similarly siloed, too often conferring subject matter expertise at the expense of partnership building, even as the need for truly public scholarship continues to grow. Despite these structural challenges, I contend that people want to meaningfully contribute to their communities, and, given the right scaffolds, we could be oriented toward more holistic conceptions of shared well-being. This participatory design study has been one attempt to help move our residential and scholarly communities in this direction.

To better understand the extent to which this study has accomplished these goals, in this final chapter, I will first briefly summarize some of the key findings from my analysis in relation to my research questions. Then I will articulate some of the theoretical and methodological contributions which follow from this analysis, suggesting areas of future research. Finally, I will propose a set of design principles which I hope will help others to facilitate civic learning through their own place-storying projects. As some have noted, all education is civic education (Mirra & Garcia, 2023); and ordinary life is replete with educational moments and opportunities (Sandlin et al., 2009). Therefore, I hope these design principles, as well as this manuscript more generally, will be useful to a wide range of people working in a wide range of settings. We certainly need a wide range of people aligning their work in order to meet some of our most pressing societal challenges.

Summary of key findings

The first research question asks: What discourses emerge over the course of a collaborative filmmaking project about urban planning in a densifying, predominantly white Seattle neighborhood? The answer that is perhaps most accurate, though somewhat flippant, is that many discourses emerged over this project, which involved the participation of hundreds of people over many months of data collection. If we understand discourse as a general mode of semiosis (Blommaert, 2005) or as a “kit” for ways of being (Gee, 2011), it becomes clear that a plurality of discourses will inevitably pervade social environments. With that said, in this manuscript I have focused on three Conversations (Gee, 2011) which proved to be particularly pervasive and consequential; and I have described the social languages (Bakhtin, 1981) participants took up in relation to these Conversations, insofar as they became relevant to the analysis.

In Ch. 4, I described how discourses of care became a central concern for participants in the plant tour and the first ART meeting. They took up the social languages of parents, seasoned volunteers, and legalists, all in order to care for each other or to make a claim about what care should look like in the neighborhood. In Ch. 5, I focused on discourses of accessibility. This analysis highlighted the social languages of urbanists and neighborhood defenders (Einstein et al., 2020), as participants on the housing tour advocated for particular visions of the built environment. Finally, in Ch. 6, we saw how discourses of groundedness emerged during the second ART meeting, the film, and then in participants' responses to the film. The social languages of filmmakers and storytellers came into contact with those of various registers of land use activism, ranging from decolonizing to historic preservation – and sometimes blurring the boundaries therein. Collectively, each of these chapters offers a glimpse at the complexities associated with “neighborhood change” and “community” – two meta-discourses, which themselves are rife with emotional and political valances.

The second research question asks: How are the discourses expressed during the walking tours, the ART meetings, within the film, and in response to viewing the film? As described in Ch. 2, I understand the aforementioned discourses as informing the ways participants express themselves, and I have chosen to focus on listening, talking and moving as three focal modes of expression in this project. In Ch. 4, we saw how plant tour participants embodied care at the cherry tree as they excitedly shared fruit and kept each other safe by listening for cars. Then during the first ART meeting, participants listened to Barb for several minutes as she critiqued the parents on the plant tour, who encouraged their kids to pick cherries without acknowledging those who cared for the cherry tree. This monologue organically transitioned into a community dialogue, in which the ART members discussed what care should look like in Wallingford. Then,

during the second ART meeting, Barb materialized care by baking cherry pie, which provided a substrate (Goodwin, 2018) for Barb and Tara to more deeply listen to each other.

Chapter 5 took place exclusively during the housing tour, and movement was integral to how participants expressed discourses of accessibility. Kelli physically brought participants to her DADU, which helped to establish her vision of geographic accessibility. Then the group made their way to a parking strip for a discussion, which enabled the adjacent homeowner to join the group, bringing in his expertise as an architect. His comments worked in tandem with those of Edith, a longtime resident, bringing into relief an apparent tension between discourses of geographic, financial, and transit accessibility. Later on, as the group visited a mixed-use building, Sagar depicted their movement through the neighborhood as evidence of the benefits of pedestrian accessibility for a vibrant business district. After this discussion, as the group once again began walking, Edith and Rick's discourses of accessibility began to tentatively align, along with their physical movement.

Chapter 6 looked at expressions of groundedness within the film and in response to viewing it. Initially, ART members reviewed a rough cut during their second meeting. Much like the discussion of care in Ch. 4, this too involved extended deliberation. Participants talked and listened to each other as they expressed desires to ground their neighborhood in community-building efforts. However, they also acknowledged that improving the community would involve grounding both the film and the neighborhood in a core tension. The (initial) "final" cut of the film – which was shown at the first several screenings – expressed a range of groundedness discourses, which involved both collaboration and conflict, as well as more specific anchors, including landmark buildings, the immediate perceptual environment, and the ground itself. To express these varied discourses, I drew on a range of filmic modalities, including music, camera

movement and positioning, juxtaposition of shots, etc. (Bateman & Schmidt, 2013). Then, during the screenings, participants extended these discourses of groundedness in their visioning packets, on post-its during the gallery walk, in small group discussions, and via email. The content of their responses was as varied as their modes, as viewers advocated to ground the neighborhood in a particular way. I was particularly struck by criticism that the film glossed over important tensions to emphasize collaboration, which could effectively preserve the status quo. In response to this critique, I edited the film to emphasize the core tension of attempting to ground one's identity in a neighborhood that benefits from ongoing inequities.

The third research question asks: How are inhabitants' expressions laminated within and across the phases of the study? To answer this question, we need to examine how the discourses of care, accessibility, and groundedness became resemiotized (Iedema, 2001) through the processes of place-storying (Blood et al., 2012) and infrastructuring (Penuel, 2019). Rather than describing this progression across media and interactions, which I alluded to in the previous paragraphs and detailed in the previous chapters, here I call attention to the semiotic aggregates (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) which participants drew on as they innovated new place-stories and infrastructures. In Ch. 4, a particular cherry tree in a traffic circle became a common reference point that participants indexed as they sought to make sense of care in their community. The cherry tree became emblematic of shared experiences among the plant tour participants, which were later contested during the ART meeting. Several participants – from Gema and Jordan, to Tara, Barb, Margaret, and Jen – were able to begin connecting their individual place-stories together by establishing the cherry tree as a particular instantiation of community care, even as they continued to debate the meanings of this instantiation.

Whereas Ch. 4 followed a single semiotic aggregate across different project phases, Ch. 5 introduced multiple semiotic aggregates across a single phase. We saw how Kelli's DADU, single-family houses, and the neighborhood's street network all functioned as aggregates or centrifugal forces, convening discourses of accessibility as participants convened their bodies during the housing tour. For much of the tour, there was an apparent impasse between accessibility discourses, represented by Kelli's impassioned optimism for DADUs and public transit; and Edith's incessant concern for preserving single-family houses and parking. Then later on, some of the participants taking up the social languages of urbanists and neighborhood defenders physically and discursively came together, walking and talking through the streets and sidewalks of Wallingford. As their place-stories began to tentatively intersect, so too did possibilities for infrastructuring via institutional collaboration; members of Historic Wallingford (HW) and the Wallingford Community Council (WCC) engaged in unprecedented dialogue with members of Wallingford for All (W4A).

These infrastructuring possibilities were both stunted and extended in Ch. 6 in response to the film, which itself had become a semiotic aggregate. Initially, some of the W4A members suspended participation in the discussion because they felt that the place-stories convened in the film were colorblind and harmful, emphasizing the desire of existing residents to ground their neighborhood identity in the defunct The Guild theater. Laura, in particular, used this opportunity to galvanize W4A members around a shared vision of housing justice. Kelli and others began to more clearly articulate what this vision looks like, which included a desire for ongoing place-storying efforts. Meanwhile, other participants like Kathy experienced the film's semiotic aggregation in a highly emotional way, acknowledging grief associated with the loss of The Guild, as well as a need for the neighborhood to evolve and meet the needs of its growing

population. Ultimately, members of HW and the WCC joined a W4A meeting, planting the seeds for further collaboration.

Contributions and future research

The social sciences, as a Western, colonial enterprise, have tended to carve up nature and culture into two mutually distinct categories (Ingold, 2000; Bang & Marin, 2015)²⁷. In addition to the material harm this inflicts on living beings, it is also conceptually quite harmful to scholars, obscuring the ecological contexts which are always relevant in our research (e.g. Marin et al., 2023). Through this project, I have attempted to open up the conversation on “land use” (itself a term which implies objectification and extraction). The diversity of walking tour themes, for example, signals my goal in bringing together a diversity of discussions which are too often disconnected in both scientific theories and more casual conversations: housing, waterways, plants, art, commerce. All of these subjects indicate relevant contexts for understanding our changing neighborhoods, cities, and planet. My hope is that by thinking expansively about our relationships with lands and waters, this might encourage planners, education researchers, and other scholars to likewise consider how our work sits at the nexus of this complexity.

Conceptually, I offer place-storying and infrastructuring as two modes of relation which could be useful in this endeavor. They signify the kind of learning that we inhabitants need to engage in, in order to live better together.²⁸ The relationship between these two modes, as detailed in the findings, shows how elements of the built environment and the natural world may be mobilized to ground present understandings and plan for the future. In particular, I have

²⁷ The idea of “social sciences” – in contrast to the “natural sciences” – reinforces this binary.

²⁸ Place-storying and infrastructuring efforts are not intrinsically moral/immoral or just/unjust. Rather, as modes of relation, they are co-operative forms of activity (Goodwin, 2018) which could help further particular political ends. My view is that these political ends should be the subject of scrutiny, whereas the modes of relation signal the learning that is involved in this scrutiny.

shown how these modes of relation are put into practice as inhabitants' expressions are laminated across interactions and media, from tour stop to tour stop, to the ART meetings, to the film itself, etc. In this way, I have theorized civic learning as a semiotic process, or a *civic semiotics*. This is an area that is understudied and much-needed, especially given the increasingly connected environment in which contemporary civic learning takes place (Ito et al., 2015). We inhabitants draw on a variety of expressive modalities to learn about and, indeed, create the places we call home. This analysis contributes a framework for beginning to understand civic learning beyond the confines of a classroom (Leander et al., 2010), a discipline (Mirra & Garcia, 2023), or a speech event (Wortham & Reyes, 2015), embracing the relationships among important dualities, without collapsing them into artificial binaries: cityscapes and landscapes, naturalistic and designed learning environments, analog and digital media, physical and social infrastructure. I invite other researchers to further study these relationships in their own research settings, perhaps considering the additional modes of expression and relation that become relevant, or adding nuance to the ones I have focused on in this manuscript.

The analytic approach I have implemented within this project might be helpful for scholars working at similar intersections. This approach builds off of a growing "movement" within the learning sciences that recognizes the importance of movement as both the process and content of learning (Marin et al., 2020). Scholars embarking along this trajectory have innovated formative techniques for studying a variety of related phenomena: ambulation patterns across family forest walks (Marin, 2020); digital literacies as young people read and write their city (Taylor, 2017); and digital spatial storylines as pre-service teachers create public history (Hall et al., 2020). Within this study, I have drawn on these to develop a *place-storying analysis*, which considers how cultural discourses inform local inhabitants' embodied expressions; how these

expressions are laminated into socio-ecological relations; and how these relations may circle back to inform discourses. The unit of this analysis, the semiotic aggregate, is borrowed directly from Scollon & Scollon's geosemiotics (2003). It involves the complex convergence of a given interaction order (Goffman, 1983) with its corresponding visual semiotic system (Kress & Van Leeuwen), and "place semiotics" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Within a place-storying analysis, relevant semiotic aggregates emerge as inhabitants consider the past, present, and future of the places in which they dwell. The analyst considers how these semiotic aggregates are indexed and transformed across encounters (Agha, 2005; Wortham & Reyes, 2015) and media (Iedema, 2001). This discursive-material transformation becomes a way of describing public sensemaking across people, institutions, the built environment, and the rest of the natural world.

Beyond these theoretical and analytic contributions, I also hope some of the methodological techniques I have employed will be useful to planners, civic media creators, and activists working at the intersection of racial justice, housing justice, and environmental justice. In particular, I have demonstrated how resident-led walking tours can be used in conjunction with filmmaking to surface and extend important conversations about neighborhood change, community building, and spatialized inequities. This technique builds off of the efforts of planners (Sandercock & Attili, 2010) and education researchers (Tobin et al., 1989; Silvis, 2019) who have taken a dialogic approach to their work, recognizing that video can be a powerfully affective – and even therapeutic (Sandercock & Attili, 2014) – tool for growth and transformation. Focusing on walking tours helps to move a documentary away from "talking heads" and b-roll, and into the shoes of protagonists who can convey a place-story by physically and discursively bringing the audience with them on an emotional journey (Pink, 2007). Moreover, in this study, the auspices of a filmmaking project became, in the words of filmmaker Vincent Moon, a

“pretext” to “meet people and talk with them” (as cited in Cameron, 2010). In this way, a variety of unlikely people, institutions, and discourses came into contact, transforming staid narratives about housing and land use into lively conversations that resonated deeply with many viewers.

While the present study resulted in a feature-length documentary film, my intention has never been to position this film as the end product or a definitive narrative of its focal neighborhood. The film-as-artifact, rather, represents one point in an ongoing conversation. To illustrate this, in the previous chapter, I analyzed how criticism of the film actually helped to improve it for subsequent screenings. In this way, the film and the discourses surrounding it dialectically inform each other. Future research could provide additional feedback loops which make it easier for participants to build on (or contradict) the perspectives presented in the developing place-story. For example, instead of creating a film, another project might involve creating shorter videos to be shared, commented on, and remixed via various social media. Extant scholarship has outlined how similar efforts have offered tremendous promise for mobilizing new publics, and particularly young people (Soep, 2014). Building on these efforts, future place-storying projects could help carve out civic learning trajectories that span a variety of sectors, communities, and media. In the final section, I offer design principles to help structure such a project.

Design principles for place-storying projects

The collaborative filmmaking project presented in this study is one example of a place-storying project (PSP), in which inhabitants use various forms of digital and/or analog media to tell a story with, about, and from a place of mutual interest and concern. In this section, drawing on my experience with the present study, as well as aligned efforts (e.g. Gordon & Mugar, 2018),

I present PSP design principles which could be used by planners, civic media makers, educators, learning scientists, and participatory designers.

The purpose of engaging in a PSP might vary, with goals including exploration, conflict transformation, decision making, and/or collaborative action (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, 2005). These goals should be made explicit throughout the project, as they will affect how the design principles are enacted within a theory of change. Keep in mind that the function of the PSP is not simply to create a place-story artifact, like a film. Rather, it is for inhabitants to form stronger relationships with each other, critically considering their histories and planning for their futures. In order for a place-storying project to become consequential, the narrative arc of the artifact(s) created – whether a documentary film, short social media videos, a podcast series, etc. – should develop in tandem with the infrastructures that are used to support the place-storying process. The design principles presented below can help to develop these artifacts and infrastructures, which collectively, we could call the *narrative architecture of civic engagement*.

Connect institutions. Use the PSP as a catalyst to connect institutions working across disciplines and sectors, making it easy and enticing for these institutions to collaborate. In order for them to adopt the PSP, it must be directly relevant to their ongoing efforts; participation should offer tangible, short-term benefits to participants, as well as longer-term benefits that tie into the mission of the institutions. In this way, the artifact you create becomes a boundary object for joint work, and the place-storying process becomes a reason for sustained engagement. By working at the institutional level, rather than the individual level, you will be better positioned to distribute ownership and responsibilities; and more likely to support learning at larger scales. At

the same time, consider whether there are important perspectives that may not be represented by established institutions. How might this project help spur new institutional development or transformation?

Embrace the core tension. Orient the PSP around a core tension that needs to be resolved. The project may not be able to fully resolve it, but the pursuit of articulating the tension and working towards its resolution should be a motivating force. Create opportunities for participants to express this tension from their unique perspectives, offering a layer of nuance that might otherwise be missing from ongoing conversations about the focal issue. Through this process, the PSP should help participants to clarify how they are (mis)understanding each other, finding commonalities across differences, and differences across commonalities. Within the place-story's narrative architecture, include "rising actions" which increase tension by problematizing the status quo, and "falling actions" which decrease tension by finding common ground and illuminating possible solutions.²⁹ Every segment of the narrative arc should contribute to the building of tension or its release. Carefully consider when, how, and with whom these tensions are likely to flare, attending to power dynamics and taking care to prevent harm. When might it be beneficial to emphasize the core tension, or to instead emphasize shared values?

Keep it moving! There is something to be said for stillness. Pauses at key moments can aid contemplation and discussion. But given the sedentary bias of normative civic efforts, opt for place-storying while on-the-move, when possible. Physical movement gets the blood flowing, oxygenating the brain and stimulating creativity. It also creates more dynamic interactional

²⁹ The terms "rising action" and "falling action" come from the five-part narrative structure originally described by the German playwright, Gustav Freytag (1895).

arrangements, enabling participants to relate to their environment in new ways. Consider how a variety of indoor and outdoor locations might be relevant. Your route might be determined ahead of time, or it might be more emergent. It might be led by one community member, or by pairing leaders from different institutions. Either way, encourage participants to respond to what's directly in front of them: the built environment, the natural world, each other. Advance the conversation in response to the shifting terrain. The purpose is to create a shared perceptual space in the here-and-now, which progresses as you move toward a shared future. How might participants' physical movement relate to emotional and narrative movement?

Show your work. Over the course of developing a PSP, you will likely work with many people with a variety of interests and motivations. It can get messy. Creative choices may be borne out of conflict, collaboration, and contingency. When presenting your artifact, be transparent about the people and the process involved in creating it. This includes extending gratitude to participants for their labor, as well as taking responsibility for the decisions you all made. In particular, describe how you navigated political dynamics and multiple histories coalescing over the project's lifecycle. Your transparency should help others understand the limitations of your process, as well as the inherent fallibility and incompleteness of the artifact you create. How might you turn the challenges you encounter into an opportunity for dialogue and understanding?

Implicate the audience. The artifacts created from the place-storying process should serve an expressive function as well as a consequential function. The expressive function is about how the artifact – as a piece of art – offers potential for emotional resonance as inhabitants make sense of their place together. The consequential function is about how this resonance reverberates within the broader narrative architecture, the project goals, and a theory of change. For a PSP to

stimulate this kind of consequential learning (Jurow & Shea, 2015), the artifact and/or its presentational context should contain some call-to-action, which implicates the audience members as characters in the emerging place-story. Align the expressive and consequential functions for a given audience, so that as they connect the story with their own personal experiences, and they are able to respond to it or extend it in a meaningful way. How might you consider a variety of artifacts, presentational contexts, and/or audiences over the course of the project?

Conclusion

This design study emphasizes the role of creative collaboration among social scientists, planners, and other stakeholders so that our work may become more consequentially integrated within community-based environments. The learning sciences have been moving in a promising direction, with a groundswell of scholars rising in the field who are focused on learning across settings, intergenerational learning, and learning with lands and waters. These orientations are crucial for overcoming the socio-ecological crises that are plaguing life at every scale of space and sociality. This dissertation suggests that neighborhood and local community contexts are fruitful sites for investigation, a middle-ground between the isolation of individual learners and the apparent sociopolitical impasse happening at the state and national levels. Much of the thinking that guides this project has been rooted in the ongoing efforts of researchers and storytellers who have been making sense of civic learning for decades and land-based learning for millenia. Building on these traditions, I hope this study helps to clarify how through collaborative storytelling, the segregation and contention dividing our neighborhoods might transform, to create space for deeper connection and understanding.

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APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The transcription conventions used in this manuscript are adapted from Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1978).

((paralinguistic actions))

(elapsed time, in seconds) or (uncertain transcription)

(inaud) inaudible

(.) brief pause

[overlapping talk or other actions

=no pause in between talk or other actions

elo::ngated vowels (number of :s corresponds to duration)

? rising intonation

emphatically

°quietly°

APPENDIX B

Tour Leader Guide

Visions of Wallingford



The purpose of the walking tours is to explore an aspect or layer of Wallingford as it relates to our personal experiences. These tours are part of a collaborative filmmaking project which is examining different ways of understanding local assets and challenges as we plan for the future of our neighborhood and the larger region.

This tour will be put in conversation with other tours, as footage is compiled into a documentary film. The film will serve as an impetus for deliberation during a community screening event. It will also be submitted to local government as part of the City of Seattle's community engagement efforts for the update to our Comprehensive Plan, which guides policies related to land use, transit, and capital expenditures.

Goals & Roles

Visions of Wallingford is designed to build community and help us have better conversations about our relationships with each other and the land we inhabit. To get a sense of the project goals, [take a look at the evaluation form](#), which will be sent out to participants following the tour.

Through these tours, participants will be able to:

- share meaningful experiences with a group around a common interest
- engage with diverse perspectives
- consider our positions in the broader social and ecological landscape

To accomplish these goals, participants will be encouraged to:

- notice what is happening in the present with all of our senses
- listen creatively – How do others respond when we are fully engaged?
- embrace tensions as they arise, responding with curiosity

As a tour leader, your role is to:

- develop a route that is likely to showcase the particular layer of interest
- lead attendees on that route, working with words, your body, and the environment to tell your personal story, and to co-create a story as a group that relates to your common interest

Key Questions

Here are some questions to consider as you lead the tour. You don't need to answer these explicitly. (These are not easy questions to answer!) Just consider them as you reflect on your own experiences in the neighborhood.

- In what ways do you feel connected to the neighborhood?
- How does our neighborhood constrain or encourage opportunities to work towards social justice and environmental justice? What does justice look like on a local level?
- How are we connected to global challenges like wealth and racial inequalities, climate change, and colonialism?
- How might our common interests and identities be a resource for addressing these challenges? How about our diversity of interests and identities?

Run of Show

Preparation

- Be ready to walk and talk for two hours. Eat, hydrate, sunblock, use the facilities ahead of time
- Wear clothing with pockets, to hold your microphone transmitter
- Show up at least half an hour before the scheduled tour time
- Greet attendees as they arrive, introduce them to each other, and help them feel comfortable

Introduction

- You'll get the go-ahead from the production team that we're ready to start
- Gather everyone up in a circle. Set the scene by introducing yourself and explain why you are leading this tour. Describe how this tour fits into the *Visions of Wallingford* project
- Invite everyone to introduce themselves, sharing what they brought with them and what they hope to take away.

Sequences of movement

- Begin the route! Along the way, a cadence will develop as you alternate between movement and stillness, talking and listening, observing and interacting.
- Keep the attendees out of the way of cars, cyclists, and others trying to pass through
- Invite passerbys into the conversation as appropriate

Conclusion

- When you reach the end of the route (about 90. min in), gather into a circle
- Invite everyone to reflect on their experience and share with the group
- Share your own reflections and some closing remarks

APPENDIX C

Visioning Packet

Thanks for coming! Tonight you're invited to put on your visioning goggles and imagine how you would like your neighborhood to look in the future.

Your responses may be shared with others, including researchers and elected representatives. If you'd prefer to keep your real name private, you can make up a pseudonym in the space below, and on your nametag.

Before watching the film

Name (*print clearly*)

Pseudonym (*optional*)

Email (*print clearly*)

Where do you live?

Describe your connection to Wallingford.

When you think of Wallingford, what are 5-7 things that come to mind?

What are you interested in learning about tonight?

Before watching the film

Scattered around the room are posters with themes related to neighborhood life. Choose 2–3 posters to visit, as time permits. View the prompts on the posters, chat with others, and write responses on this page.

Houses

Commerce

Plants & animals

Food

Transportation

Public spaces

Immediately after watching the film

You can write words and/or draw pictures to respond to these prompts.

What thoughts came up while watching the film?

Describe one perspective in the film that you agreed with, disagreed with, and/or want to learn more about.

What's missing from the film?

At the end of the event

What (if anything) did this event/project make you think more about?

What new questions do you have as a result of participating?

Would you like to become more locally involved? If no, why not? If yes, how?
And what is a concrete step you will take to move in that direction?

I'd just like to say...