

I*m*a*g*i*n*a*t*i*o*n Alley

Arts-Based & Community-Led

Report to 3CDC
from the
Storefronts IA Engagement Team



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Arts-based Community-led Design Imagination Alley

Report to 3CDC by the 2020 Storefronts neighborhood cohort of the Miami University Center for Community Engagement

It is with a deep sense of accountability to our Over-the-Rhine neighbors that we submit this report. We have been energized and activated by taking the lead on a community engagement process designed by and for Over-the-Rhine residents and other key stakeholders. One that starts, continues, and circles back to us, as those with deepest lived knowledge and experience of what kinds of spaces make us feel most valued, connected, and alive.

The circling back to us is the part we see now is ***so very important***.

With this report, we pass the baton—from we who engaged with our neighbors, encouraged their ideas, acknowledged the validity of reasons many have for mistrust of a process like this, fanned the tentative flame of their trust, listened, recorded, opened up the circle wider, engaged some more, kept listening, all along using the twin media of relationship and art.

We pass the baton to you, entrusting with you the dreams of our neighbors for a place where ***all*** people can feel a sense of belonging, excited at the prospect that these dreams circle back to us in the form of a design that includes, embraces, empowers, especially those who have fewer spaces where they feel at home.

In this time, when the systemic violence perpetrated against those among us who are Black is being met with a collective rising-up and call for radical transformation, we see this opportunity as one to disrupt business as usual with the beauty and power of design + community.

It is with this vision that we share our report and recommendations.

The Storefronts Team

We are eight people who live in and love Over-the-Rhine. Part of a growing cohort of neighbors who, since 2017, use art to address how our lives, and our Over-the-Rhine places, are impacted by the social and economic forces of our time. Storefronts is a project of the Miami University Center for Community Engagement, located at buddy's place, 13th & Vine. Our projects are done in collaboration with Miami students, who support us through design, fabrication, and promotion.

Ms. Janet Albright-Captain
Teacher in Over-the-Rhine

Ms. June Alexander
Artist, MA Art Education, BFA Children's Theater, former Peaslee Neighborhood Center board member and art teacher

Key Beck
Artist, Facilitator, Trainer, OTRCC Board of Trustees Member

Ms. Elizabeth Burnside
Student Aide, Rothenberg Academy

Tony Drummond
Mentor, MUCCE residency students, father, grandfather

Dionna "DeeDee" Flowers
Artist, non-traditional student and scholarship recipient—Art Academy of Cincinnati

Jeremy Neff
Writer, father of three young girls

Bonnie Neumeier
Community Activist, Co-Founder of Peaslee Neighborhood Center and Over-the Rhine Community Housing,

We make this proposal with our staff:

Mary Clare "MC" Rietz
Storefronts Facilitating Artist, BSW, MFA with a background in community development and community organizing, and an active practice in socially engaged art since 2013.
<http://maryclarerietz.com/work/socially-engaged/>

John Blake
AIA, NCARB, director of the Miami University Center for Community Engagement, 1300 Vine Street. John is faculty in Miami's Department of Architecture and Interior Design, and coordinates design-build and community-design inflected studios.

Neighbors Engaging Neighbors

We designed a process that would have **two phases**—engagement, and recommendation.

The **first phase** used **art and listening** as the means of engagement:

- 4 weeks
- 4 in-person sessions at Imagination Alley
- + informal conversations at the park with current users
- 1 online input session for business folks
- an online survey

At the park, we invited folks to respond to prompts by writing, drawing, or just by talking as we listened and wrote their ideas. We asked, *How do you want to FEEL in the re-imagined Imagination Alley? What do you WANT in the park? What do you NOT want?*



The written survey invited respondents to consider *How do you want to FEEL? What do you want to SEE? HEAR? TASTE? SMELL? How do you want to MOVE through?*

We saw our listening as a profound act of invitation, non-judgment, and welcome, qualities we are eager to see expressed in the park re-design.



We engaged:

63 residents, including
14 young people, plus
7 business folks

70 participants total

Residents—

POAH
OTRCH
Mercer
Republic St.
Trinity Flats
and more...

Business Folks—

Agar/Ghost Baby/The Transept
Cintrifuse/Union Hall
Candle Lab
MORTAR
Quan Hapa
OTR Chamber

The **second phase** was kicked off by SHOWING all the input in the form of an art installation at Imagination Alley. This initiated the **recommendation** phase, which will continue through our report to the Over-the-Rhine Community Council membership on October 26.

We see these next two weeks as a time when all that we took in from our neighbors will continue to simmer... **We make recommendations in this document, but we know that more may form as we consider how best to manifest the values and ideas entrusted to us.** We commit to staying in close communication with 3CDC if/when additional recommendations emerge as we continue to process the input.

WHAT PEOPLE WANT

A few top responses:



- * folks want to feel SAFE... 69 out of 70 participants emphasized this!
- * DIVERSITY is highly valued
- * the park needs more SEATING...
- * ... and LIGHTING
- * keep the ARCH and MOSAICS, add art that complements
- * better MAINTENANCE
- * most like the current curved WALKWAY
- * playground and other activities would serve the many KIDS/FAMILIES who live close
- * regular FLOODING on POAH property needs addressed

Some opposite wants expressed:

- * Programmed activities / no programming
- * Quiet / music, movies, performances
- * Alcohol / no alcohol

This area of opposite interests might be fertile for Walter Hood's idea of designing for the "double-negative," <https://knightfoundation.org/coast-to-coast-episode-10-walter-hood/>. How might the park be designed to meet the needs and interests of folks who want quiet, and those who want an active hub of things going on, for example?

ALL RESPONSES by CATEGORY

Prompt *How do you want to **FEEL** in a re-designed Imagination Alley?*

SAFE—69

LOVE—30
PEACEFUL—28
CONNECTED—24
WELCOME—22
RESPECTED—20
BELONGING—17
ENERGIZED—11
AT HOME—13
RESTED—10
VALUED—9
ENTERTAINED—7
ROOTED—7
ENGAGED—6
FREE of RACISM—5
HAPPY—5

AFFIRMED—5
LEFT ALONE—5
SUPPORTED—5
HEARD—3
COMFORTABLE—3
COUNTED—3
HEALING—4
RELAXED—2
IMPORTANT—2
GROUNDED—2
SUSTAINED BY THE FLORA—1
EMPATHY—1
UNDERSTOOD—1
FREEDOM—1
INSPIRED—1

We heard “SAFE” across the board. This came from residents of the adjacent low-income housing, managers of Union Hall (the business and residential building that also borders the park), along with almost every other resident and business participant.

Inadequate lighting, general maintenance neglect, and illegal activity run by outsiders who come in and use the arch as an easily recognizable pick-up spot, allegedly for drugs and weapons, all contribute to a sense that the park may not be safe, especially after dark.

It’s important to note that there are residents who spend time at the mosaic arch every day. These are not the same people who are understood to be selling drugs and passing weapons.

One respondent who works with person homeless noted, “I’m more concerned that other people will feel comfortable and welcome in the space. I worry that my selection of some of these items [under *How do you want to FEEL?*], such as ‘peaceful,’ ‘solitude,’ or ‘quiet’ will automatically elicit a ‘police’ or ‘security’ response.”

Participant Comments

Safety for children
Want kids to feel safe
Don’t want what’s been here this summer
My park closed because of a bad bunch
Dealing

Drug dealing
Drug dealers and prostitutes
Drug deals
Drinking
Drug sales
Drugs
Drugs
Drugs
Drugs
Loitering
Negative Behavior
Park should be part of the neighborhood, not a weird drug sanctuary
No vandalism
No violence
I want there to be more positive behavior in the park
Drug free/want to be safe
I don't want drugs
I don't want guns
No guns
Just make it safe for kids and the people
The more kids in the park will keep the drug dealers out, the more kids in the park, the more we defend the park from drug dealers
More random ID checks by police because most of our troubles come from outside the neighborhood that don't live down here
We run dealers and addicts out
Put hours on park [have limited hours... it's OK during the daytime, but is dangerous at night]
Visible security, but not always uniformed—landscapers, custodians—some sort of authority
Someone monitoring activities
3CDC Ambassadors
Fence

Prompt *What do you want to **SEE**?*

PEOPLE (& animals)

ADULTS & KIDS—30
DIVERSITY—29
ELDERS—19
A MIX OF NEIGHBORS & VISITORS—19
NEIGHBORS ONLY—8
NO DOGS—4
MORE PEOPLE—1
DOGS—1

PLANTS

GREENERY—38
FLOWERS—27
TREES—25
NATIVE PLANTS—23
ROCK GARDEN—2
VERTICAL GARDENS—1

Participant Comments

Tuck landscaping close to buildings to open the space.

LOTS of plants to create a comfortable energy. Larger if possible.

Put the knockout roses back, we planted. They took them out, (they went from the front all the way to the back).

Boxes rebuilt, plants in them.

Less concrete, more nature, stones, rocks.

LIGHTING

SAFETY LIGHTING—30
AESTHETIC LIGHTING—25

Back area by Republic is dark.

Need lights, lights are out part of the time... [resident who works 3rd shift, indicates that lighting is not adequate and works intermittently, which compromises safety]

In-ground lighting for night walking.

More lighting at night, like patio strings.

Lights in trees.

ART

KEEP THE MOSAICS—42
MORE ART—37
MURALS—29
KIDS' ART—9
SCULPTURE—9
KEEP ARCH—6
ART SHOWS—2
INTERACTIVE ART—3
FLAGS—1
REMOVE MOSAIC PLANTERS—1

Participant Comments

Ongoing art installations led by black curators.

Art that allows ideas/input to be gathered to solve the next community problem or issue

Rotating art installations.

Kids engaged in making art for the park, rotating exhibits, connection to schools.

Artwork from kids

Art from local kids

Kids engaged in making art for the park

Kids making art for the park

Kids making the art that's in the park

Kids art hanging

Kids hand print on wall w/ their names on them

Hands and flowers on walls-painted

Murals as appropriate, but keep simple, as backdrop to hosting temporary installations.

Black Lives Matter mural on the wall

"Imagine Mural" (John Lennon)

Flags hanging between buildings for events? holidays? art?

Interactive art that kids can play with

Do not remove the mosaics

Don't mess with the landmark arch!

UPKEEP

CLEAN/MAINTAINED—49

RECYCLING—17

REMOVE CANS, POAH & UNION HALL—6

NO POOP (dog or human)—5

Participant Comments

Restrict 3CDC from placing their trash here.

Remove trash cans on POAH & CINTRIFUSE properties

People who stay here clean up [participants shared that the people who use the park have maintained it, & will continue to, if park management will support by supplying bags for trash, and equipment to cut back or remove bushes.... And if management does regular maintenance].

Prompt *What do you want to HEAR?*

MUSIC—31

WATER—26

NATURE—19

ELDERS' WISDOM—17

QUIET—16

KIDS—15

CONVERSATIONS—6

DIFFERENCES—2

ENERGY—1

Participant Comments

I do think during the day the space should probably be fairly quiet (i.e. not loud music of any variety) to respect those living, working and shopping nearby on Vine.

No music due to studying, working, and school.
Just quiet, my kids have to do homework.
Nothing loud.

Add a water feature (artistic waterfall, water sculpture), not just sitting water.

Prompt *What do you want to **DO**?*

SIT

BENCHES—27
MORE SEATING—19
STATIONARY tables & chairs—18
BENCHES without DIVIDERS—9
MOVEABLE tables & chairs —6
FLEXIBLE STADIUM SEATING (to fold up against bldg. when not in use)—3
PORCH SWINGS—1
BENCHES and fixtures should NOT CONDONE sleeping/overnight, etc.—1
NO SEATING—1

Participant Comments

What's not working is no chairs, nowhere to sit.

Comfortable seating, not concrete or hard metal.

More seating, especially in the back (Republic Street).

ACTIVITIES, NOT PROGRAMMED

COOL OFF—30
PLAYGROUND—28
SIT/BE QUIET—19
WARM UP (in cold weather)—15
WORK OUT—8
HANG OUT w OTHERS—5
COOKOUTS (grills in park)—6
READ—4
TALK—3
WALK THRU—3
BASKETBALL—2
FREE STRONG WI-FI—1

Participant Comments

We live in apartment buildings, not houses with yards, *this is* our yard.

Restaurant workers want a place to relax/hang out on break.

Places to picnic, grill, host informal outdoor parties, like kids birthday parties.

ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMMED

PERFORMANCES—21
NEIGHBORHOOD-CENTERED HISTORY & STORY-TELLING—19
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES—20
ART/CRAFT SALES—17
MOVIES—12
READING—3
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT—2
ADDICTION SERVICES—1

Participant Comments

Book & magazine racks, game cart, with "librarian" on staff.

I think we would be able to incorporate all at different times/days. Weekday/weekend mornings educational, weekend evenings some music or movies.

Not much programming, Washington Park has this covered.

ACTIVITIES, a hybrid of PROGRAMMED & NOT

GAMES—38
KIDS' ACTIVITIES—8
COMMUNITY GARDEN—2
REMOVE THE MOSAIC GAME TABLES—1

Prompt *What do you want to SMELL?*

NATURE—11
NOT GARBAGE—7

Prompt *What do you want to **TASTE**?*

AFFORDABLE FOOD—18
NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS—14
NO ALCOHOL—13
FOOD TRUCKS—12
BRING OWN FOOD/DRINK—8
PERMANENT FOOD STAND—7
ALCOHOL—8

Participant Comments

Coffee/snack cart... Rotating food carts, cooking classes, grills?

I'm not sure we need Imagination Alley to compete with brick and mortar food businesses in OTR. Visitors can get carryout from a large variety of food options at different price points and then enjoy in the park.

Fresh fruit for kids
Want to eat at reasonable price
Not any more restaurants, not expensive ones
We do not need more over-priced food options
Affordable ice cream

Drink a few beers [that we bring, what we can afford] and socialize with friends, without being harassed by the police.

Prompt *How do you want to **MOVE** through the park?*

KEEP the CURRENT CURVED WALKWAY—23
BARRIERS at Republic St. to keep CARS from coming in—11
DIFFERENT WALKWAY—5

Participant Comments

The existing walkway is fine or something organic like it.

Make a diagonal walkway.

I would like to see bigger entrance that lead to smaller gathering areas; this would make the park more accessible and less intimidating.

Words of affirmation on pathway. Over-the-Rhine history plates.

Open up the space so you can travel as you wish.

Have walking path that doesn't interrupt programming areas, more subtle.

I would love structures that allow for movement, but also has you meander through the park (not just rush through).

We need more of an indication at Republic that this is a park. Perhaps the barriers could double as signage, an open, welcoming gateway.

Who is the park FOR... who DECIDES?

These comments were unsolicited, not in response to any prompt, but were offered with lots of energy:

Primary influence should come from neighbors.

Prioritize those that have created space for themselves there.

I want Black residents and long-time residents to still feel ownership and belonging in park... If it's an important place to gather, it needs to maintain that purpose and not displace people.

Want 3CDC to LISTEN.

If you treat others like humans, they act like humans.

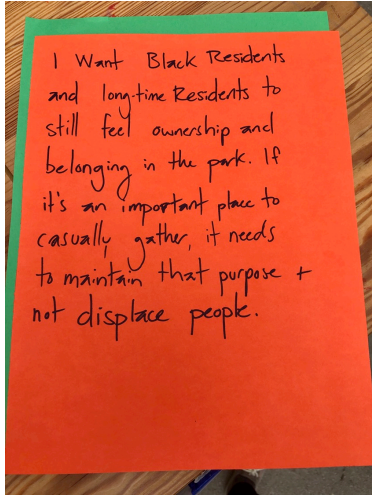
People need place to be outside close to their place.

My Great Grandbabies love this park. People out there at entry were raised in this park.

You can't stop progress...

Storefronts Team Recommendations

This comment by a participant articulates the design challenge in front of us. We believe it can be done! Improving Imagination Alley while maintaining it as a welcome place, prioritizing those who feel their places are disappearing in Over-the-Rhine as changes are made, seems a dream of a design challenge. Let's see what design can do!



WE RECOMMEND:

→ There is a group of neighbors who need the space at the park more than others. We see them as the “priority park users.” They are those who have fewer resources, and for whom the park is one amenity they have to enjoy. This includes current frequent users of the park, and those who would use it—e.g. families with young kids—if safety improved and components were added that meet their needs and interests. The park is their yard. Let’s design for them.

→ Send physical, visual, and experiential SIGNALS that, despite changes, the park is *for these neighbors*. We support one survey respondent’s idea that, “This is a chance to create more spaces that are led and managed by black curators. The feeling is different. Check out an event at Five Points Alley to get a feeling of what true inclusivity can feel like.” Hold a few events up front as precedent—do intentional programming right away when the park opens, and make thoughtful outreach to invite specific groups, e.g. the kids/families in the adjacent POAH building.

→ Imagination Alley can be a space where we meet across difference, if it doesn’t offer things that take resources to use.

→ If the park needs to be closed for safety during construction, close one small section at a time, with access to the arch, and the area where residents sit just outside the POAH side gate, left accessible as long as possible.

→ Create a way to keep in close communication with the people who use the park every day, so they know exactly what is going to happen, and when. Maybe hire a resident to do this.

→ Go beyond just keeping people informed, to engaging the people who currently use the park through the rest of the process, so that there are ways that they feel genuinely part of what is happening. (The Storefronts team would like to think with 3CDC about how this could be done.)

→ As far as the design goes, keep it **simple**: Improve maintenance, add seating, add lighting, make the gardens nicer, address the flooding on POAH's property, change the current practice of restaurants placing their trash/garbage there. If there's going to be programming, keep it quiet, and low key, something people can choose, but that doesn't disrupt the opportunity for folks to use the park as an informal space, to just "be" in whatever way they want.

→ People live in very close proximity on all four sides, and the Cintrifuse and POAH building walls reverberate. Consider the need for quiet for residents and workers.

→ If there is going to be more art added, engage the community in that process.

→ If there is going to be programming, orient it to kids and families. If there are going to be times when activities are staffed, choose staff that look like our "priority park users," the kids/families we want to feel at home at IA.

→ One person out of 70 suggested a fence; gating the park. This would be in direct opposition to making the park welcome to all, especially those who are already systemically excluded. If any barriers are needed, choose natural (e.g. greenery), as opposed to closed, or what might come across as hostile design.

APPENDIX

Online Survey—Responses to “Last thoughts, feelings, questions?”

IA should be transferred to the Parks Department or Parks merged with Recreation.

This is a great space. I look forward to seeing how it will change and become a spot to add to the neighborhood

I want nice warm lighting (not overt blinding lights), place to sit and rest (that are inclusive of all ability levels), some music (but not classical music blaring), Local artist showcase, neighborhood specific events and just keep the space a community space. I don't want it over-policed either.

I'd like to keep the space as a peaceful oasis, a mix of people talking and enjoying events, but please do not overload the spot with a constant barrage of loud music, food trucks, etc. we have plenty of such entertainment venues, allow it to be a park, to sit, talk, and relax with people. Thanks

I want the park to feel natural, welcoming, a place to enjoy without lots of gimmicks.

The space needs to be activated with high quality design and installations

Imagination Alley should be a place that equally compliments the residents, business district (visitors) and offices (employees). Could be magazine/book racks with a coffee cart in the morning (with affordable options) and in the evening, switch to live music and a place where residents/visitors can experience OTR's culture through art/music from local artists, and a pop-up shop from aspiring entrepreneurs.

I don't think 3CDC should also manage this space. This is a chance to create more spaces that are led and managed by black curators. The feeling is different. Check out an event at Five Points Alley to get a feeling of what true inclusivity can feel like.

I like the general feel of the space now. It could be enhanced by more public art/water features/lighting. Definitely a few more aesthetically pleasing options for trash disposal would be nice. Currently I don't believe there are enough trash cans there to keep up with demand so it gets messy from time to time which will irrationally scare some people away. If there is programming it would be nice if it was something that both nearby residents, Union Hall members and Vine St shop patrons would feel comfortable participating in together (I understand that is really hard to accomplish).

Please make this a safe, clean amenity for the neighborhood by programming the space in a way that caters to neighborhood residents and visitors who are supporting the businesses in the area. Currently people do not feel safe walking past or through imagination alley.

From Tony Drummond, Storefronts Team Member

Following are notes on informal conversations that Tony had with folks who hang out at Imagination Alley every day:

Sept. 29, 2020

I went over around 7pm it was 12/15 people in the park, drinking, smoking pot and just hanging out, I talked to about four people and pretty much got the same answer, when I asked them what do they think about making the park better, 3 out of four said it doesn't matter what they think 3cdc gonna do whatever they want anyway, i continues to press them and a couple of people think the reason the city not keeping the park up is they gonna close it anyway, I found no one there that have any trust in the system but I didn't get a chance to talk to a lot of them because it was getting dark, I'm going back over there Thursday, which is the first of the month when most people hang out

Oct. 3, 2020

Good morning Team,

I just want to report my conversations with people in the park this week.

I went over for a couple of hours to catch the people who hung out in the park on a regular basis.

The first person I talked to was Norman Smith, a 64-year-old guy who lives at buddy's place. Norman and a few more older guys come to the park just to hang out, drink a few beers and socialize with friends. Most of them would like to see that they can drink beer in the park without being harassed by the police. They help keep the park clean and in the daytime they run dealers and addicts out. As we talked, another guy around the same age said he use the park because he lives with his daughter and 3 grandkids and the park is his get-away spot, he called himself "Red," no one wanted to give their names or addresses, but all said they lived in OTR.

As we sit there talking it begin to get dark, older people started leaving the park and drug dealers started coming up. A couple of them did talk to me about why they use the park. One guy called himself "TyTy", he don't live downtown, he just comes down here to sell drugs, cocaine, heroin and Marijuana.

Another one of the dealers told me the park was his "hassle spot "(a place to sell drugs). While sitting there I saw people putting paper bags in the garbage cans, I don't know if it was drugs or guns, so then I left.

What I saw was that people hang out in the park during the day to just socialize and chill, but at night it's a dangerous place to be.

Session for Business Owners
Tuesday, October 6, 2020

Facilitators: Storefronts Team Members Key Beck, Ms. June Alexander

Notetaker: Storefronts Facilitating Artist MC Rietz

Present:

Elise, Candle Lab

Josh, Agar

Kelly Adamson, OTR Chamber

Danny Yant, Quan Hapa

Eric Weismann, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Laura Hughes, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Note: prior to this session, Storefronts team member Tony Drummond spoke to Donny, owner of Go(o)d Co., "who said positive things about the people who hung out there," they help his business, that folks who hang out at the park are some of his customers.

Where do you go now when you spend time outside in OtR?

Josh was resident at Mercer, now owns Agar, Transept, GhostBaby (entrance alley on Republic)

When spends time outside goes to Washington Park

IA not kept up, compared to the other 2 parks

Used to see people taking pics at arch, but then they put benches at entrance facing out, they're not there anymore, but that changed the use. Got very loud, radio blaring til 1am, loud people.

Sees families in IA, woman who walks her dogs

Can't exit Agar (in Union Hall) out Republic at night, and that's their business.

Design currently made to flow thru it, the walkway, not designed to stay and enjoy but to pass through, there's not a reason to stay there.

Eric Weismann, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Goes for long walks.

Ziegler Park and Wash Park are open, more expansive

Kelly Adamson, OTR Chamber, has lived in OtR about 10 years.

Spends time in Ziegler Park and Washington Park, for different reasons. Ziegler's more relaxed, walking thru. Wash park more leisure, drink on the Porch. Also walking the

blocks. Likes programming—exercise, music on the Porch. But other times its quiet. Nice to have the ebb and flow btwn these.

Elise, Candle Lab

2 doors down from IA. She can't go outside, running the business
Employees don't feel safe to take trash out, get propositioned by 10-12 people, loud arguments.

Danny Yant, Quan Hapa

Goes to Wash Park. Would like to see sthing similar at IA, so he and employees can have a place to relax on break/hang out.

Laura Hughes, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Ziegler Park on lawn above garage

Wash Park

Not many other places

IA used to be a pleasant place to sit, but in last 1-2 years, not a place to

More seating, resources for community like board games, things for kids after school.

Back to what it used to be, a little more planned.

Friendlier faces, landscaping, cared for, wanted.

Keeping a walkway to get thru is good, but shouldn't be sole reason for the park. Create reasons to *be* there.

What would you like to SEE at a re-designed IA?

Josh, Agar

Add landscaping and artwork to complement existing mosaics.

Minimal landscaping. Flooding now. Open up space, tuck landscaping against the buildings, main center open, maybe grass, rubber pellets like on Wash Park playground
Needs to be maintained at lunch hour, trash picked up.

Unintentionally programmed (not necessarily programmed in some way as the other two parks)

Needs lighting, can it be artistic, lighting between two buildings

Things in air that offers shade, and where lights could be

Laura Hughes, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Agrees with Josh, plus food trucks (she's looked into it, some logistics but can be done)

Lighting—not huge spotlights, but artistic

Ms. June—everybody needs a little Mayberry, so... *How do you want to FEEL at IA?*

Elise, Candle Lab

Wants to feel SAFE and WANTED. Drug dealing totally impedes this.

Kelly Adamson, OTR Chamber

At HOME. Where all can be involved. Also wants OtR visitors to feel welcome.

What do you want to DO at IA?

Kelly

Reading racks, book racks, almost a librarian. This could be for residents, employees, residents. Mercantile Library run.

Transition afternoon/evening to place to sit and eat.

To Laura's idea of ping-pong bringing everyone together—Ambassadors bring out game cart to help facilitate and engage kids and others.

Josh

Has opportunity to be an area that could be busy at lunch, get carry-out, strong wi-fi, grab a coffee, have a mtg..

Seating, tables, chairs.

Eric

On weekends sees residents set up the space as their deck, tables, chairs, family events. Build on that.

Tour guides meet at IA.

Josh

Told story of fire in POAH bldg., so many kids came out, opportunity for morning weekend programming.

How remember past to drive imagination forward? Uniquely OtR story-telling experiences.

Could be a gathering place for the FUTURE of the neighborhood. Could be art that allows ideas/input to be gathered to solve the next community problem or issue

Laura Hughes, Cintrifuse/Union Hall

Used to be kids who played in the park, yes, to Josh's idea, re-introduce kids to park with programming for them.

Ping-pong at Ziegler Park is an example of everyone coming together—business guys, kids, other residents.

Pop-up activity or shop.

Elise

Place to promote local businesses.

Kelly

Pair pop-up shops with brick & mortar businesses

Josh's minimal landscaping idea allows for easy backdrop for artists to show or pop-ups to happen.

Loves story-telling idea. This goes with reading idea, storytelling could be for kids and adults. Many passionate people in OtR who want to share their story.

Was in Bryant Park last year, saw chess tables, artists teaching simple drawing classes

(See more on this from Kelly at end of notes*)

What do you want to HEAR at IA?

Ms. June heard in what Josh said that sound is not a positive. Instead, she suggests sound that draws people in—guitar or symphony orchestra musicians, or...

How might EVERYONE co-exist in this contested space?

Kelly

Get rid of drug dealers

Laura

Yes, step one. Not more policing, but 3CDC Ambassadors.

Josh

Programming it, give it an aesthetic re-make, the drug-dealing problem will fix itself. Intentional invitation, e.g. can't just have kids' programming and expect them to come.

Really good strong wi-fi, this is something EVERYONE can use.

Art is a big piece on how to pull the community in, what it stands for, what's the impression it gives.

Just the arch invites folks, all people.

Kelly

Signage and marketing piece—residents and businesses come together to be strategic about inclusive marketing/signage. Place where all people will see.

Learning emphasis—culture, history, art, reading. This welcomes everyone/all ages.

Local businesses create diverse culture by the different artists they show, same can happen at IA.

Ms. June

Porch Mothers! [A southern tradition of women who sit outside and, in informal ways, offer a guiding presence to neighbors] Just by being there, they will have the effect of drug dealers moving along. They also serve as a bridge between long time residents and newer.

What do you NOT WANT?

Laura

Super loud music.

Josh

LED screens, no screens!

*From Kelly Adamson

So wonderful to meet you this morning and thank you for including myself and some local business owners in this conversation. Please pass along my thanks to Key and Jane as well!

I shared this link in the chat, however attaching some photos from a trip to Bryant park this year, which inspired me with some simple programming which speaks to diverse groups. Which includes the "Reading Room", a station they had set up with magazine and book racks, with a librarian on hand during active hours. They then facilitated storytelling and poetry as well. Other programming included game carts, basic juggling lessons, education on recycling/compost, & even language lessons. This is of course on a much larger scale in NYC, but I think some creative ideas which could be scaled down. <https://bryantpark.org/programs>

Excited to move forward, I unfortunately cannot attend Saturday, but would like to be engaged in the 10/26 meeting. Thank you again, pleasure speaking with you all!

Best,
Kelly

 [Compost.JPG](#)

 [Lighting.JPG](#)

