

ReMix Project: Juxtaposition Arts

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CURA Final Report

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As Janice Perlman, of the Mega Cities Project writes, “The very words ‘citizen’, ‘development’, ‘city planning’, and ‘participation’, raise questions about inclusion/exclusion, about who sets the rules and reward system, who the city is for, and who does planning on whose behalf?” Juxtaposition Arts is raising these questions as we strengthen our efforts to insert ourselves into the city planning process. Our observation has been that the North Side has traditionally been ignored by city planners and developers, and despite current efforts to put resources and energy into developing our side of the city, only a small fraction of community stakeholders are involved in the process. Thus far, the city’s planning process has only brought community leaders and citizens that are already attached to the limited organizational structure of the North Side to the table. While we recognize and appreciate efforts to bring these folk into the process, we are interested in widening the scope of the city’s citizen participation efforts to include representatives of the majority of the North Side stakeholders who are not already ‘plugged in’ to the organizational structure of the city.

We have found that there is a relatively standard and routinized line about the needs of the North Side that has been developed within most of these organizational contexts. That standard story includes, among other things, a desire for greater police presence, for more relatively upscale dining and shopping outlets, and for increased home ownership. What we know, though, is that the North Side population is dominated by young people. In fact as much as 50% of the total Near North population is under 18 years old, the largest concentration of youth in the city. Further, we know from our experience that it is the older minority of North Side residents who tend to show up to the planning table. So the young majority in our community is basically voiceless when it comes to the planning process. We have started, what we think is an innovative, courageous, and ambitious effort to allow our young people and others who are not plugged in the chance to challenge the standard, stagnated dialogue about what the north side needs, by inserting their voices into the planning and development conversation.

This past winter, on two cold evenings in February 2006, youth and artists from Juxtaposition Arts set up shop on the corner of West Broadway and Emerson Avenue. We gave away cocoa, tea and balloons and asked people waiting for the bus or passing through the neighborhood to speak their mind. Our goal was to bring a

community meeting to the people of the neighborhood and find out what they care about, value, fear, and envision for North Minneapolis. We created a documentary based on our interviews with North Side stakeholders.

One of our major findings is that people want youth programming. Period. They want places to go, things to do, fun to have—in their own neighborhood. Young people also see crime, they are afraid sometimes too. But the majority say they do not simply want more police. One of the solutions they envision is more positive and fun activities for them to do. Moreover, we found that the people we talked to are very concerned with their physical environment. They are tired of seeing run-down buildings, dirty bus stops, and a generally dull and ugly landscape. They want to see renovation and beautifying efforts. But, they know that all of this takes money and are pessimistic about the city's commitment to providing it.

In August, we were invited to share our findings at the first West Broadway Alive community meeting. We agreed to show our documentary at the meeting. The city representative wanted to see the video before we showed it. We were told that our finding, represented by the voices of the people, that a greater police presence is not a viable solution to high crime rates, could potentially erode some of the support the city has for its development efforts on the north side—so we couldn't show it. Instead they showed a video about friendships across difference, invoking disempowering language and imagery of diversity and multiculturalism in its most diluted form. But we are not discouraged. We are committed to ensuring that all of our voices are heard as the city works to realize its Master Plan for our side of town.

Over the summer we created a plan, sought funding, and developed partnerships to continue our street interview project, which we are calling "Speak Your Mind." The Speak Your Mind campaign is a part of Juxtaposition Arts' larger North Side ReMix project, a grassroots redevelopment and city beautification program, which is adding public art to the north side piece by piece. The plan was developed with the assistance of a Ph.D. candidate in sociology who is an expert in social movements and grassroots community organizing, and is attached. We have secured a partnership with Asian Media Access so that Juxtaposition students and Asian Media students will work together to produce a longer, more in-depth documentary reporting the desires of North Side residents interviewed on the streets. We envision this project as a form of multicultural community organizing, bringing together Black, White, and Asian students to work on a project towards community change. We have started the process of securing funding for the project as well, and are moving forward. The

Ford Foundation, the Phillips Family Foundation and Minneapolis CPED have indicated strong interest in putting funding support behind Speak Your Mind. We are now developing a plan for disseminating the information we find and are being considered for a grant from TPT-MN Channel, a potential broadcasting outlet.

We are disheartened, but not dissuaded by our start and stop relationship with the City around our community engagement work. We realize that even through our approaches and philosophies differ, the community's goals and those of the city are actually quite similar. Juxtaposition has a unique ability to bridge the differences between formal and informal processes, insiders and outsiders – the arts can be a connector that sparks dialogue, compromise and equitable community improvements. We are convinced that we have role to play as the city plans for the North Side and remain committed to “ReMixing” our neighborhood.

JUXTAPOSITION REMIX PROJECT: SPEAK YOUR MIND

Viewing Party of First Street Interview Sessions/Kickoff of Second Round

September

Goals: To spark off the second round of the project, get the community interested in this citizen participation initiative, gain publicity for the project, report results to the community, start next interview process, visibility.

Elements: Outdoor Screening of the video

Find a way to have a projection screen outdoors

Satoko mentioned TV Screens through Juxta Windows

What about the lot across the street—anyway to set something up over there?

Speak Your Mind Video Booth

There would be some sort of structure where people could go in and 'sound off' on the North Side. Like a photo booth—not sure how to do this, but it would be self run—no person behind the camera—this would be used in the next video.

Give-aways

Introduction of the Northsider T-shirt and Naomi's Speak Your Mind design item (button, tattoo, sticker, magnet...)

Needs: equipment for screening

Booth situation—need to figure out how/if this can be done
T-shirts [design, order transfers, shirts, press shirts, or order to be printed]

Speak your mind item--Naomi

Refreshments—what do we want to do here?

Street Interviews

September/October/Summer 2007

Goals: To get the opinions and thoughts of north side residents on the state of West Broadway and include people who are not normally included in the planning process. To reach a significant number of people. To recruit people for focus groups.

Elements: Youth Interviewers

Recruitment: Juxta Students/ex students

3 interviewers per session/preferably same students for each session

Youth Video Documenters

Recruitment: Asian Media Access students
5 videographers per session/preferably same students
for each session
3 students to go with each interviewer to
interview
2 roaming cameras to tape process

Youth Photographers

Recruitment: Juxta Students and Asian Media Access Students
5 Photographers
3 students to be with each interview team
2 roaming photographers to record process

Street Team Training

To be prepared by Joyce Bell. Intended to provide basic training in interviewing, tips on working together, safety, implement a communication plan -way to stay in touch on interview days and communicate concerns/ideas between sessions.

Needs:

Interviews

5 Video cameras
5 Still cameras
3 clip boards
print outs of interview questions
sign up sheet for focus groups (name, phone number, pick date they could come)
Appointment reminder card/half sheet for focus group day
One tent for home base,
cold drinks
one or two bodies to man the tent (Joyce and ??)
T-shirts
Speak your mind item

Training

Training plan
Refreshments—just like cookies and drinks

Interview Procedure

There will be three teams of interviewers focused on 3 different intersections on West Broadway. Each team will consist of 3 students—one interviewer, a videographer, and a photographer. There will also be 2 roaming videographers and and photographers who will walk between the 3 interview points and document the process. They will approach people and ask them if they would be willing to talk to them for a few minutes about West Broadway. We'll have to brainstorm approaches and make some decisions about questions—how many, and what to ask. They will need to be brief though—3-4 questions max. They'll go into asking the questions. Each

team will identify 7 (21 total) people to invite to participate in the focus groups. This will double the maximum participants we want (10 in each session). The people who are invited should be people who seem to have a lot to say or are really interested in the project.

Training Procedure

The Juxta students and Asian Media students will be asked to come in for a relatively short (1-2 hours) training session the couple days before the interviews are to take place. They will be given the rundown on how the day should go and some tips on interviewing. The training will try to balance providing some basic strategies for interviewing with encouraging the students to do it their own way so that each person's individual style can come through in the interviews. Some topics will include: the goals of the project, what kind of information we're looking for, the approach, how to phrase questions, how to follow up on interesting or vague answers, how to identify people for focus group invitations, the process for inviting someone, how to stay safe, and working as a team.

Focus Groups

October/Summer 2007

Goals: The overall goal is to invite, to the planning table, north side residents who are not normally included in city planning processes. The focus groups will include both traditional and more creative means of gathering information about the opinions of stakeholders.

Elements: The focus groups will last for 2 hours and include 3 elements

Snowball exercise—Facilitator asks 2 main questions. 1: when you think about the northside what comes to mind? Participants throw out words and the facilitator writes them down on sheets of paper and hangs them up around the room; 2: When you think of how you wish the northside was, what comes to mind? After each question and putting up the words, the facilitator promotes a discussion on all of the ideas that came up.

This exercise is intended to get people talking about the northside and allows everyone to engage with things they may not have thought of by responding to other people's ideas. It also gets people talking because they only have to think of individual words. The conversation to follow, then, goes more in-depth with the ideas produced. The facilitator uses those words to get into other questions. For example, if someone says "run down buildings." The facilitator can say "someone put run down buildings up here, do you all see that as a problem and why?" This way the participants have some stake in answering the questions since they brought up the topics. The facilitator will already have some questions prepared, but the words will inform even those.

Reactions of Master Plan elements—Facilitator presents participants with 2-3 ideas from the city's master plan for

discussion. For each item, questions could include: What would this mean on West Broadway? What would it mean for the north side? Is this a good idea? Why/why not? This idea was intended to fix X or provide Y. Do you think this is a good way to fix or provide X or Y? Why or why not? How else could you take care of X or Y?

Creative Imaging—There are 2 plans here—need to work through. One is *Creative Visualization*. Here you actually ask participants to close their eyes and envision what they would want west Broadway to look like 10 years from now. What specific things would need to change and how? What do you see? Buildings? Streets? Public art? Transportation? Who do you see? What are they doing? What kinds of businesses are around? Then you ask them to write that down, draw it out, or they could work with Juxta artists—good drawers—to describe their plan and have them draw it out. They could collage. Lot's of options here. The other is *Community Image making*. You have them work in 2 groups and come up with a project of some sort on what the northside or west Broadway should look like and they work as a team to create an image.

I'd also like to incorporate asking them about the street banners that are up and maybe some pictures of Juxta murals. What would they like to see on the banners/ bus shelters, for murals etc?

What else?

Needs:

- Prepared Questions
- Elements of the Master Plan from Tom
- More defined creative imaging idea
- Good microphone and recorder (although, if the camera is there the whole time we could get away with just a camera.
- Videographer
- Refreshments (just snacks, not a meal)
- Materials for whatever imaging project we do
- Paper
- Tape
- Payments for participants
- Sign in sheet
- Payment verification sheet
- Consent Forms
- Release forms (words and image)

Focus Group Procedure:

Focus group participants are recruited through the street interviews. We would pay each participant \$25 for the 2 hour focus group. We will also provide refreshments. They would come in, sign in, sign consent and release forms, get some food, and come to the table. We would all sit

around a table. There will be one facilitator and one videographer. Once everyone is sitting the focus group starts with an introduction and the three exercises. At the end, each person signs the sheet saying that they got money and are given a \$25 money order or cash.