

**COMMUNICATING** to Cultivate Community

**TECHNOLOGY**, *art*,  
*and a* **PLAYFUL** APPROACH

for getting people **INVOLVED**



Mindy Watts, AICP, NJPP  
Interface Studio LLC

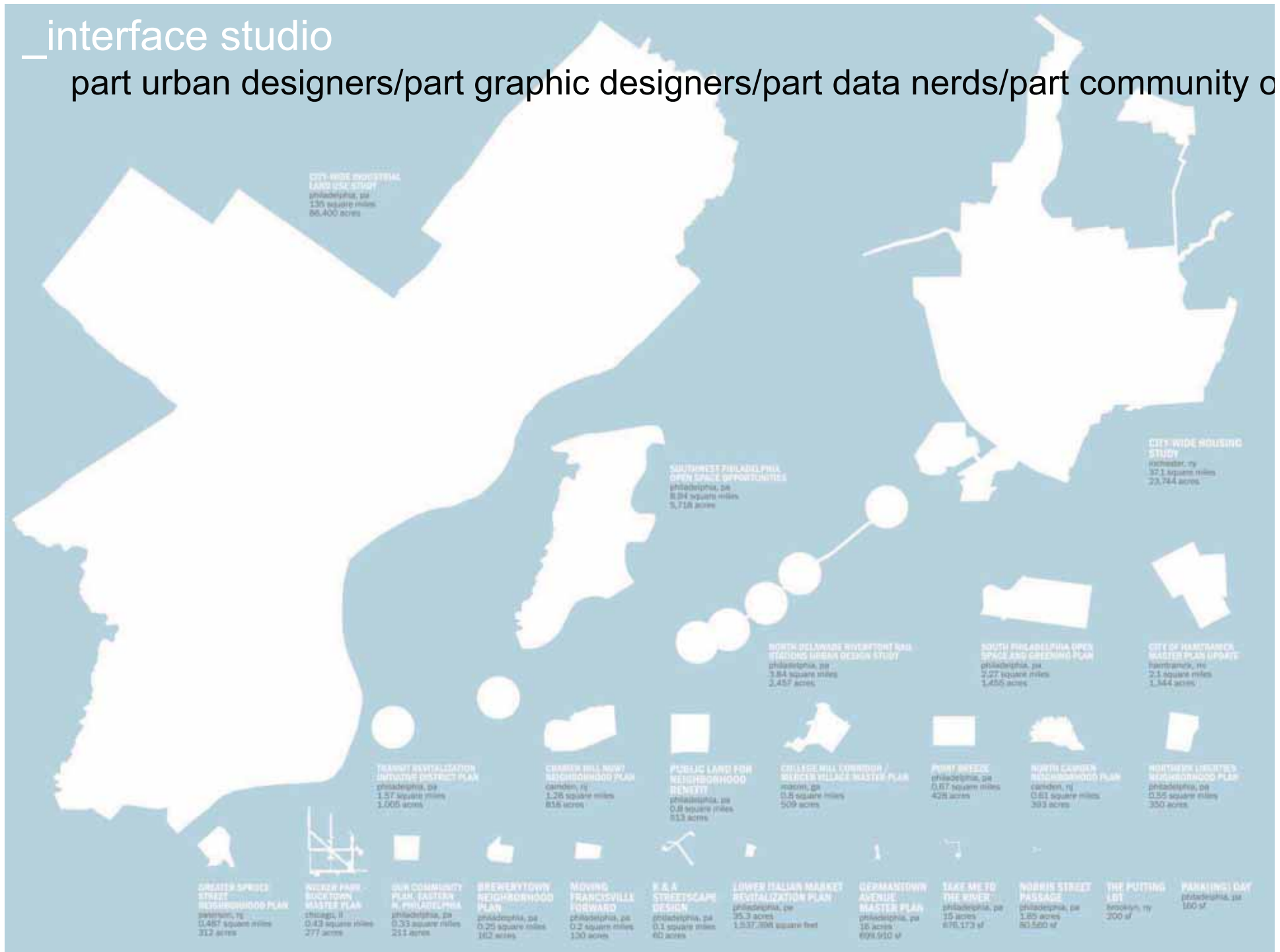
Penelope Giles, Executive Director  
Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation (FNDC)



**2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
cultivating strong communities

# \_interface studio

part urban designers/part graphic designers/part data nerds/part community o



## 2 APA National Planning Excellence Awards

**2009** for a **Grassroots Initiative**

Lower Italian Market Revitalization Project, Philadelphia

**2010** for **Public Outreach**

Wicker Park Bucktown Master Plan,  
Chicago



- Graphic and playful nature of our work
- Interest in “urban incrementalism” or fast, affordable, Do-It-Yourself initiatives

# INNOVATIONS in PUBLIC OUTREACH

- **REFRESH** your public process, **BUILD COMMUNITY**, and **HAVE FUN** while you're at it
- Emphasize the importance of **LISTENING** (and **ECHOING** what you hear)
  - Linking public outreach with IMPLEMENTATION
    - Building awareness
    - Empowering the community by listening to local ideas
    - Recruiting committed volunteers
- Explore emerging best practices in public outreach that harness **NEW, ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY**
  - Using the RIGHT TOOLS to build community among disparate / uninvolved groups



## 2 CASE STUDIES:

- Neighborhood Plan for Francisville in Philadelphia
- Commercial Corridor Plan for a Business Improvement District in Chicago

# FNDC Corporation

# Francisville Neighborhood Development

## FOUNDED

2003 with the aim of creating a community resource for information and communication,

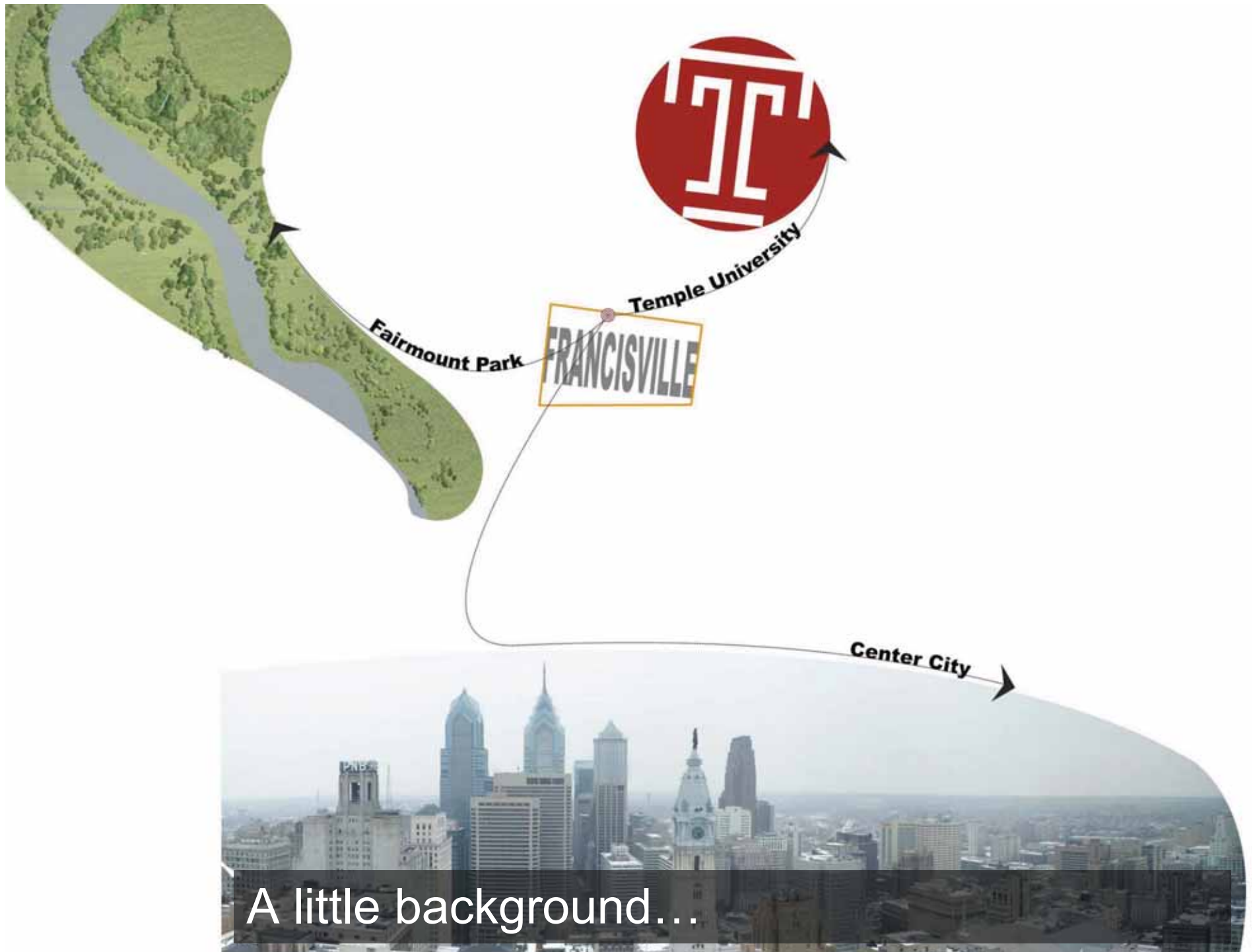
thereby ensuring that all residents could have an active role in the growth and development of their neighborhood.

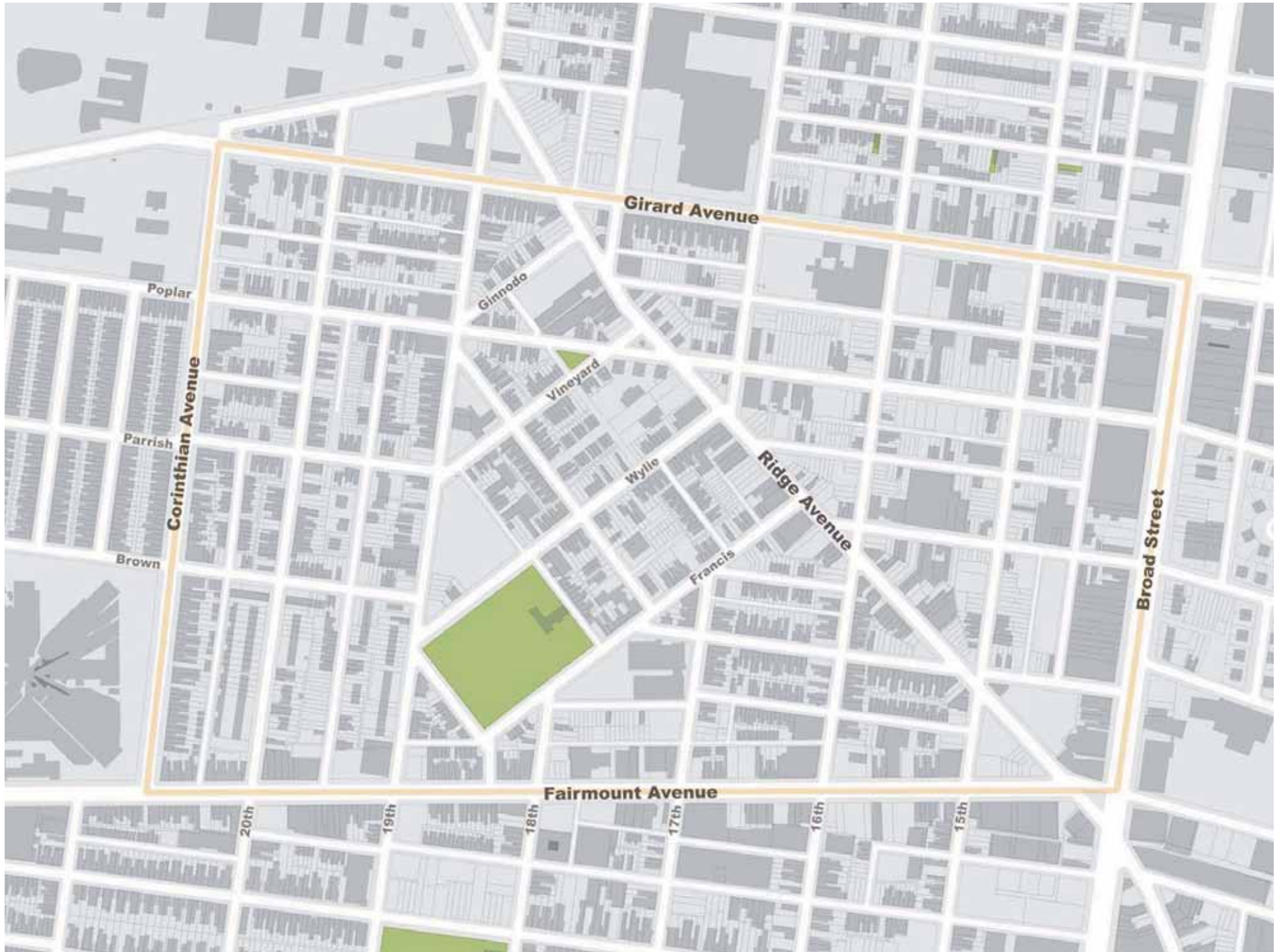
## MISSION

To improve the quality of life in the Francisville community through Commercial and Residential Equitable Development and to implement programs designed to develop the youth, aid senior citizens, and generally invest in the people of Francisville.

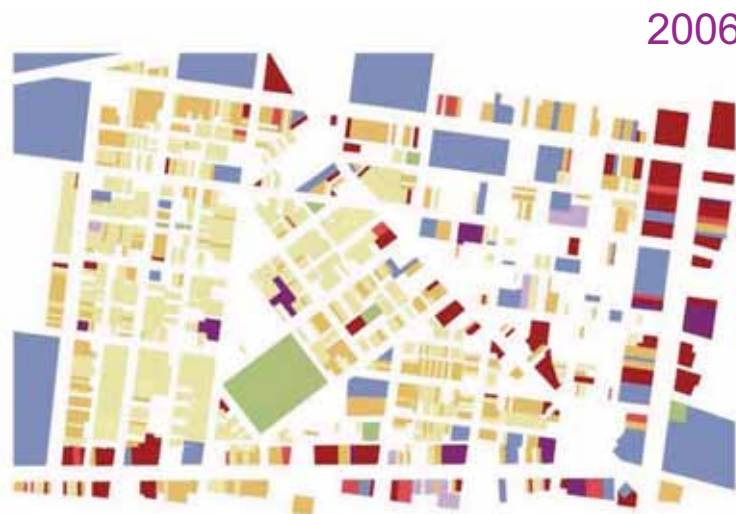








## ...and history



Single-Family Home  
Institutional

Apartments

Commercial

Industrial



In 2006:



Historic neighborhood with great bones... but a fragmented physical fabric... a struggling commercial corridor... and some conflict between community groups...







And to complicate matters, market pressure was on the rise.

Between 2000 and 2006,

**280** new and rehabilitated units had been completed or proposed (16% growth)





WACHOVIA  
REGIONAL FOUNDATION

The background features a large, vertical, semi-circular architectural detail made of reddish-brown bricks, likely a vaulted ceiling or archway. This is overlaid with several semi-transparent rectangular blocks in shades of orange and brown. To the right of the brickwork, there is a small, abstract, colorful graphic element with green, blue, and brown tones, resembling a stylized landscape or foliage.

# Moving Francisville Forward:

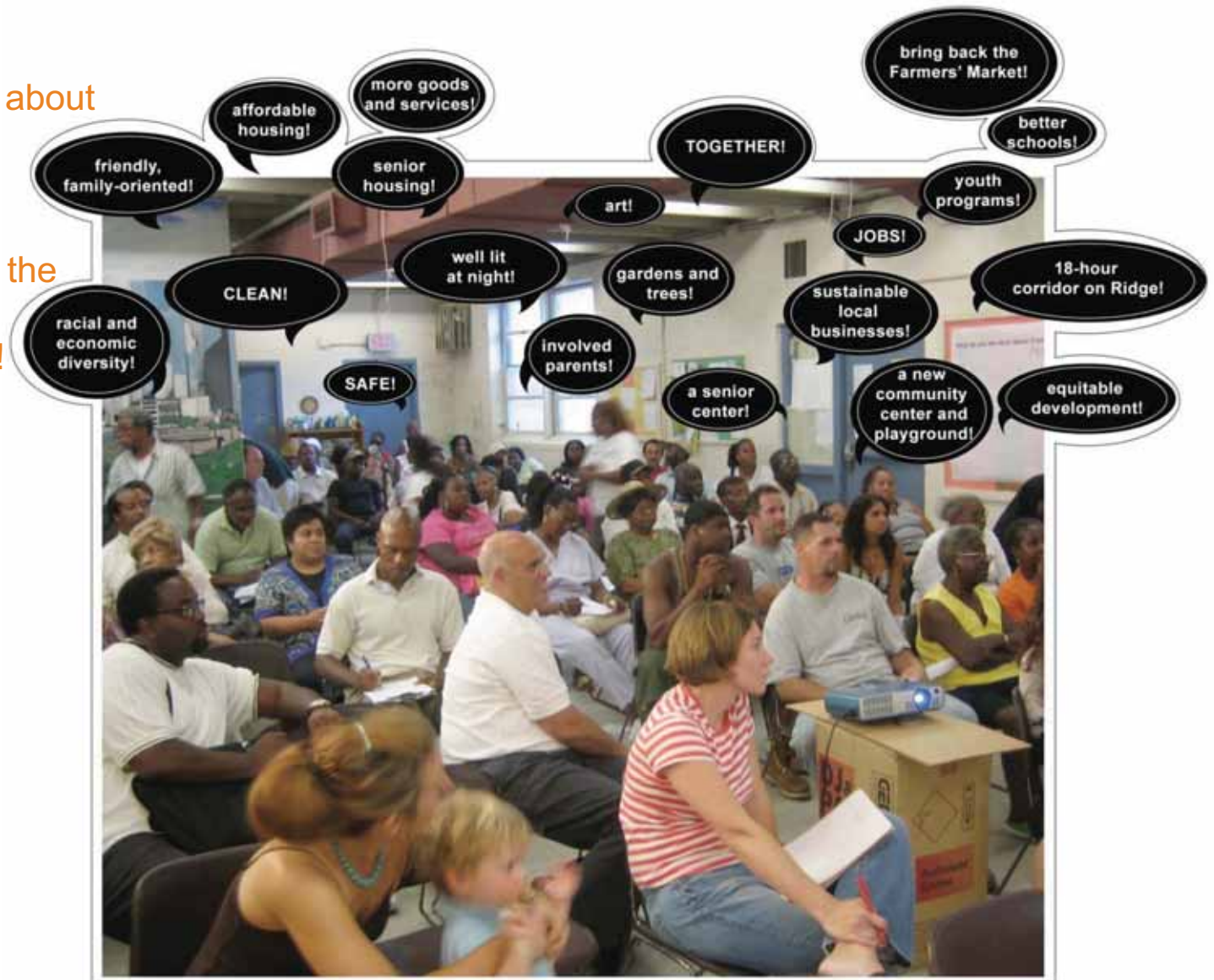
a blueprint for the future

Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation  
People For People, Inc.

INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

# Our Public Outreach Goals

- Build Awareness of FNDC and Plan
- Calm Fears about Gentrification
- Educate Neighbors about benefits of Mixed Income Communities
- Hear their Ideas for the Future
- Recruit Volunteers!!

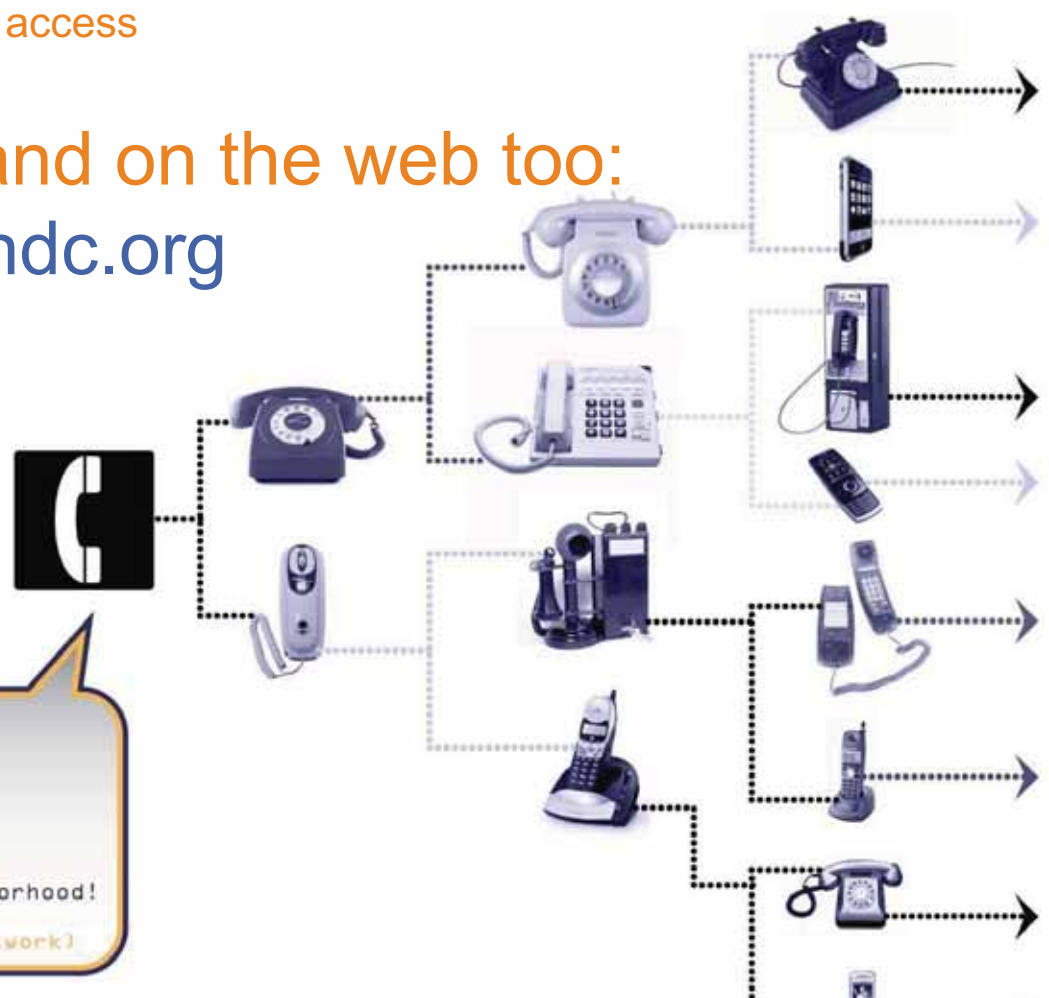


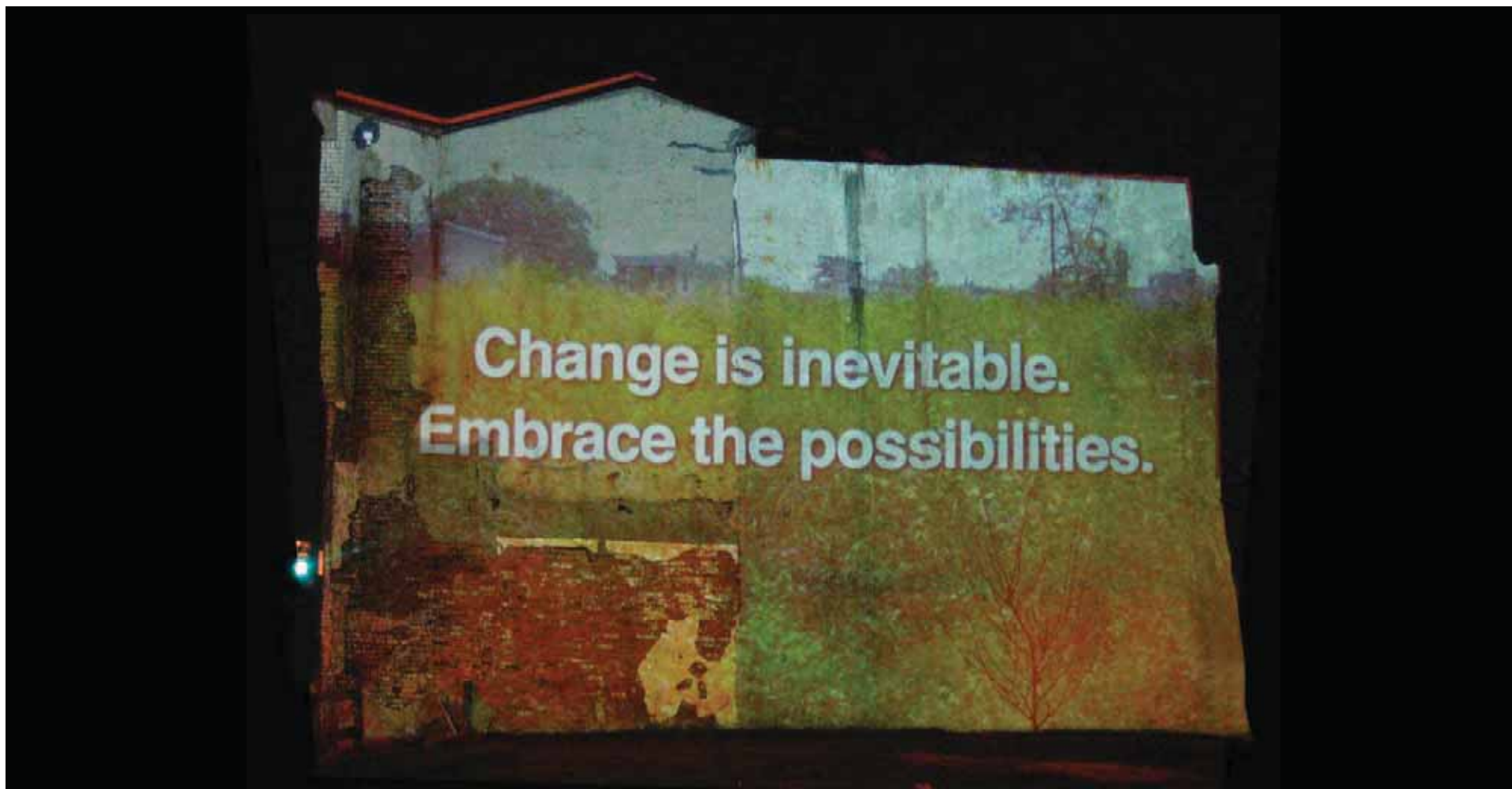


# FIN Francisville Information Network

- Our take on the traditional phone tree
- Affordable & EASY automated messaging service
- Neighbors sign up to receive FREE updates and announcements
- Great for people without internet access

Now  and on the web too:  
[www.francisvillendc.org](http://www.francisvillendc.org)





# Our Plan was a grassroots effort

# The lasting value of our public outreach is

# immeasureable

## Suitable

## Ready to roll up their sleeves

And help maintain momentum after the planning process was

completed

## A few of our volunteer-driven successes:







Greening – putting Francisville back on the map...  
(and on the Mayor's radar!)



FYC3

Francisville Youth Community

Caretakers Club

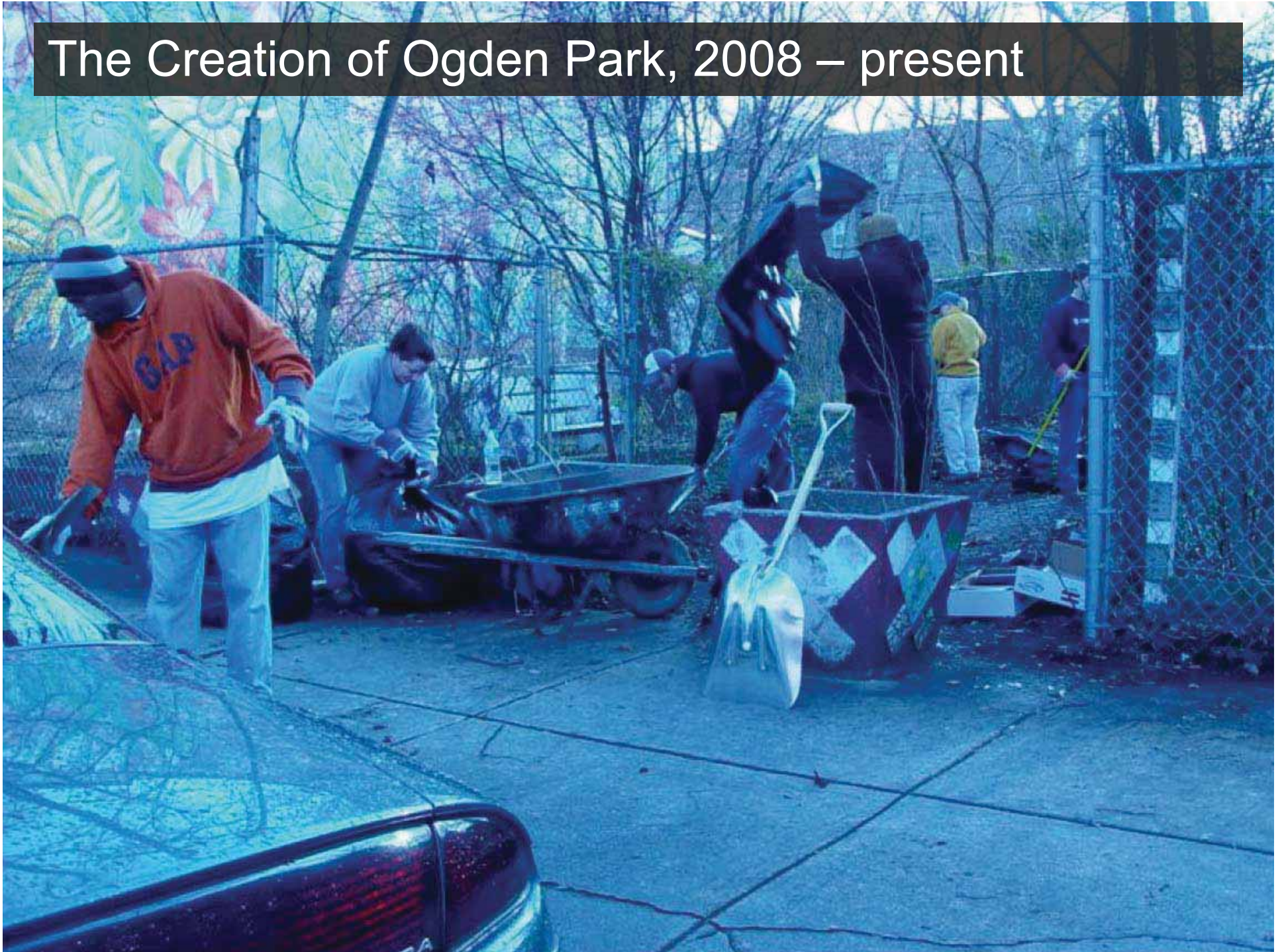






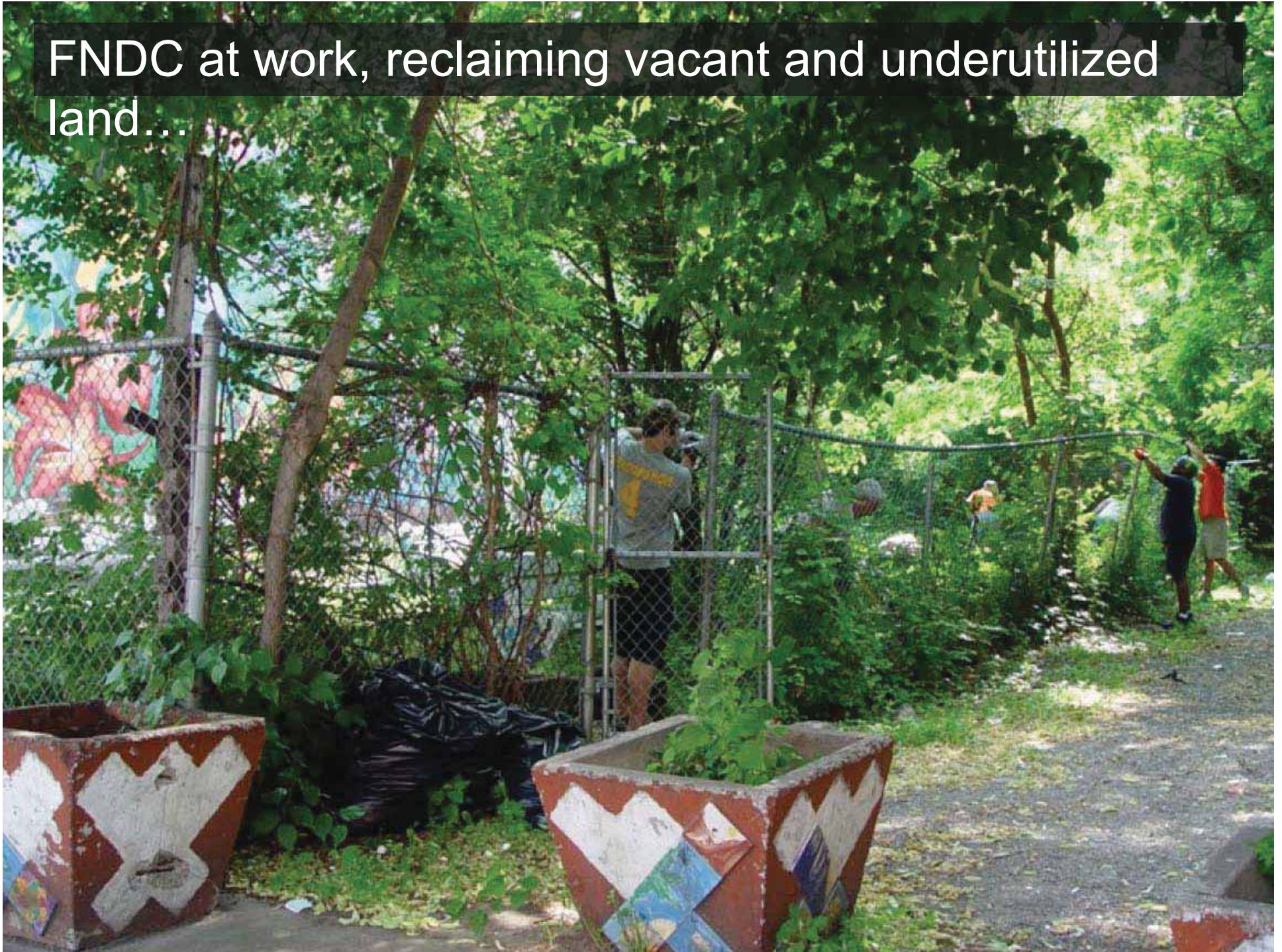


# The Creation of Ogden Park, 2008 – present





FNDC at work, reclaiming vacant and underutilized land...

















2006



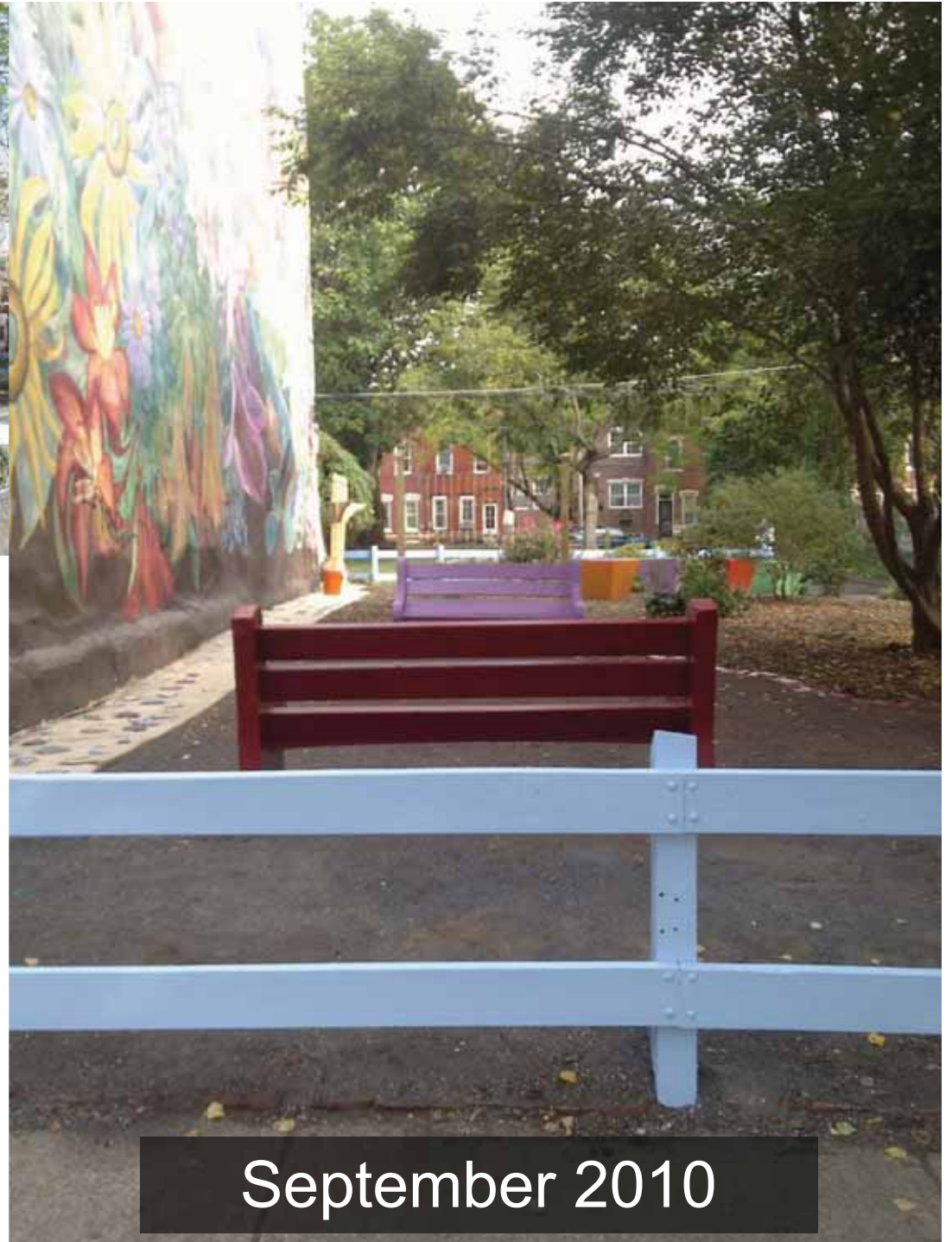
March 2008  
Francisville Clean &  
Green Volunteer Team  
in Action







We opened up the whole area, and it's no longer a scary place to walk through!



September 2010



And now, we've moved on to the Francisville Orchard at 815 Perkiomen Street







Before and After, April 2010





Ridge Avenue, February 2007

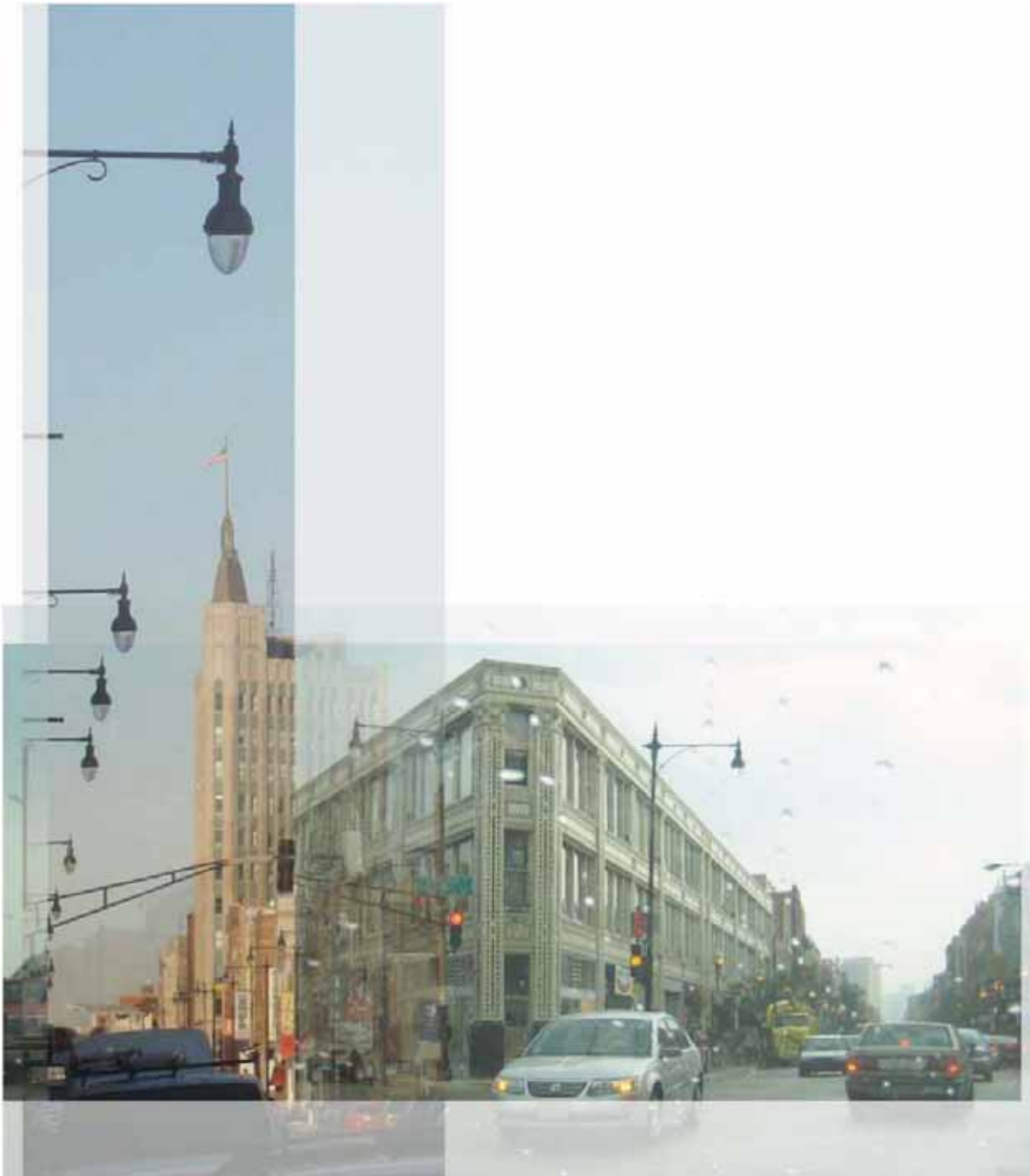


Conceptual Sketch for Entrance





From Concept to Reality, September 2010



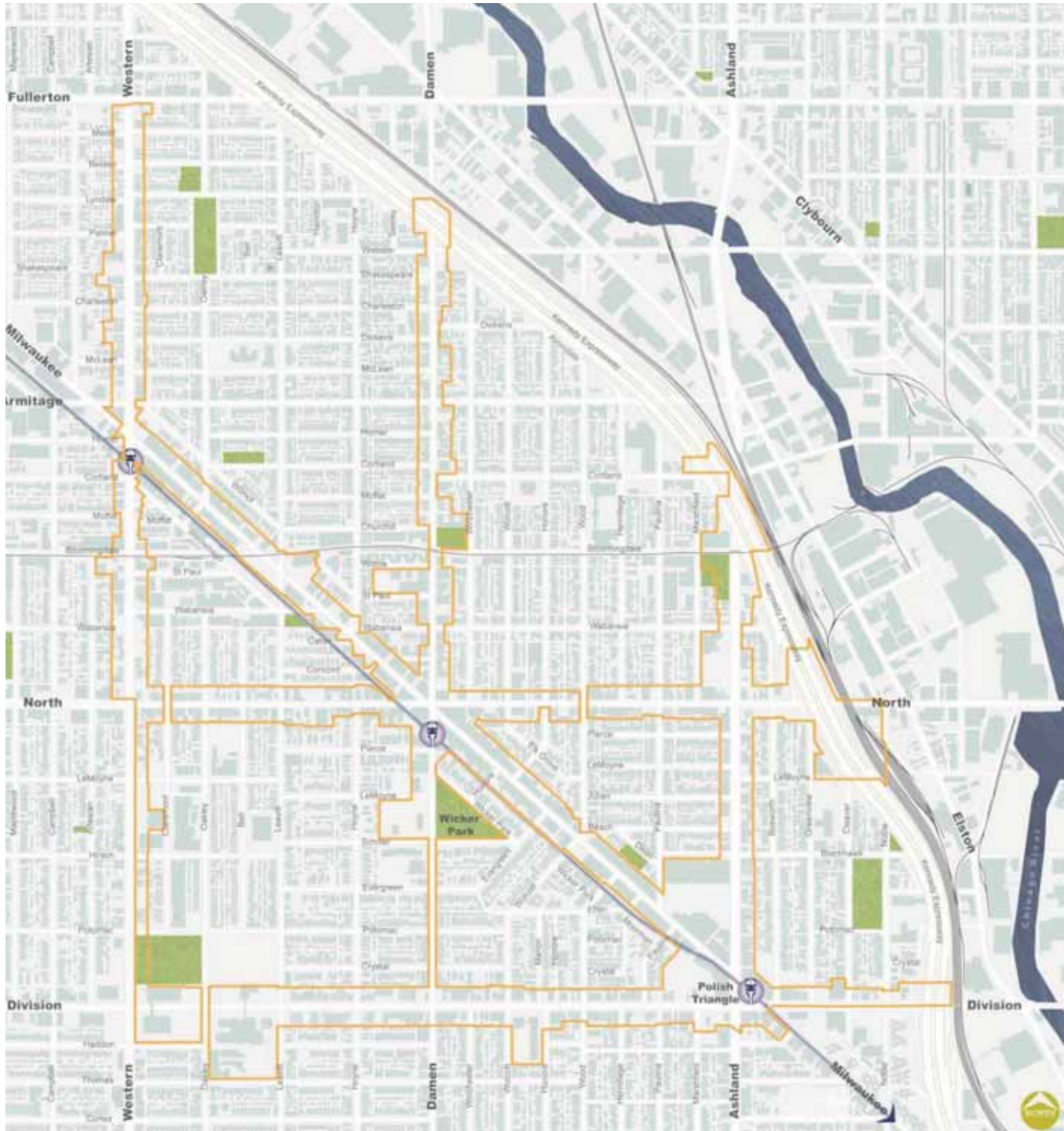
\_Interface Studio LLC  
**LAND STRATEGIES, INC.**  
**CIVIC ECONOMICS**



## Wicker Park / Bucktown Special Service Area (WPB SSA)



WPB SSA is a public body funded by property owners along the commercial streets in Wicker Park and Bucktown.



**6 commercial corridors:**

Ashland, Damen, Division,  
Milwaukee, North,  
Western

**13 miles of sidewalk**

**734 businesses**

**2,750 homes**





The mission of WPB SSA is to:

**sustain** and **promote** the **prosperity** and **unique qualities** of life in WPB's neighborhood and commercial district

whilst

**preserving** its **diverse character** for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses

through the

wise and discerning **investment** of **resources** to **enhance our public ways**







Re-activating a Vacant  
Storefront





# open house activities

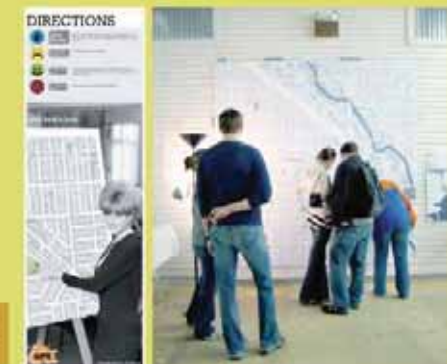


video storytelling booth



d.i.y. budget

interactive map



community photo exhibit

photo suggestion booth



postcards from the future



proMOTIONal installation





***"Bucktown could become the model community for wig recycling."***

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening.  
The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 29th,  
April 5th & April 12th. 10am - 4pm 1275 North Milwaukee

[wickerparkbucktown.org](http://wickerparkbucktown.org)



***"Cat Parks. That's how you improve Wicker Park."***

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening.  
The WPB Community Open House. Saturdays - March 29th,  
April 5th & April 12th. 10am - 4pm 1275 North Milwaukee

[wickerparkbucktown.org](http://wickerparkbucktown.org)



***"Nothing would bring Wicker Park together more than an adult bookstore."***

You have suggestions. Wicker Park Bucktown is listening.  
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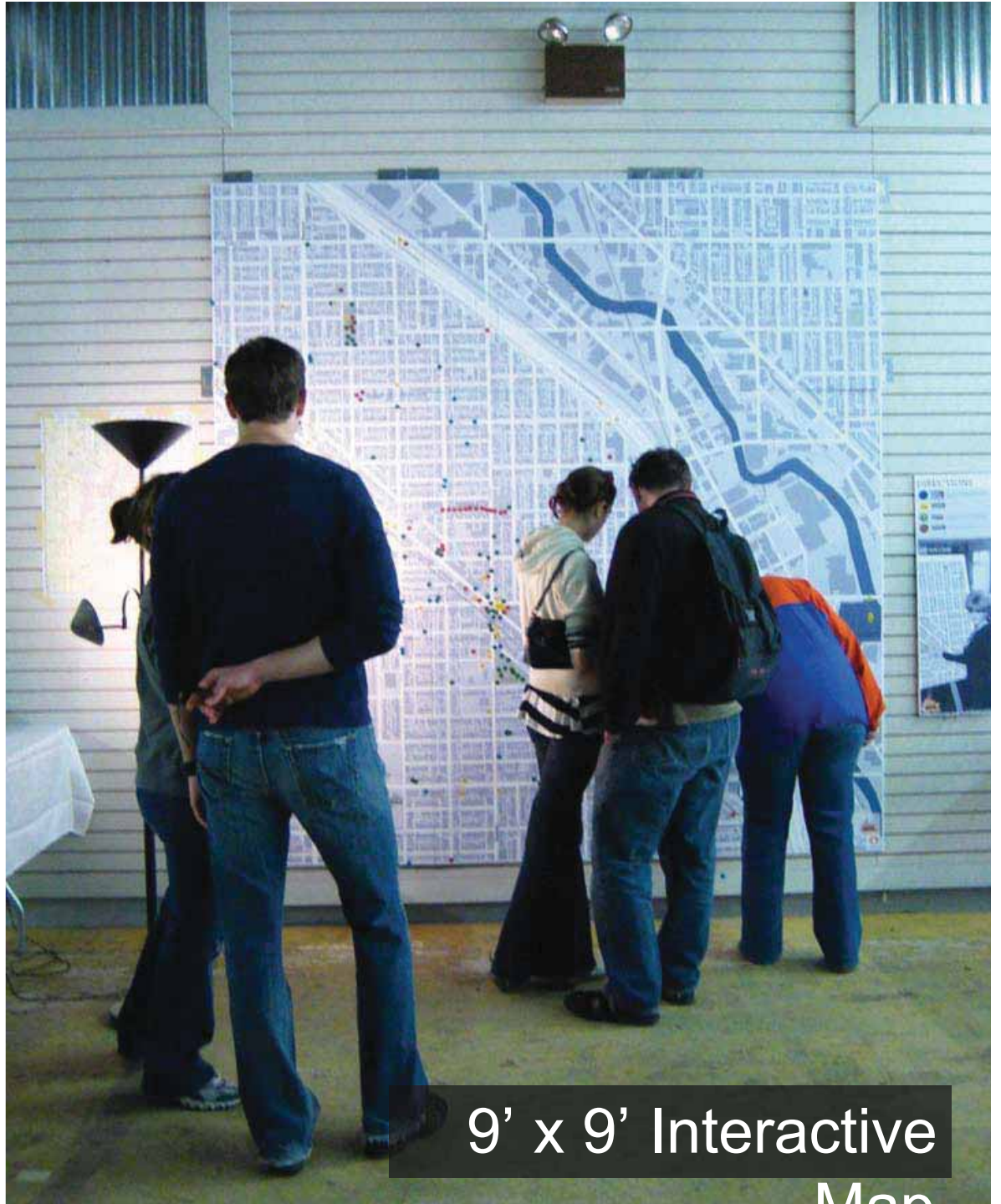












9' x 9' Interactive  
Map

# Postcards from the Future



in 2028...

much to everyone's surprise, the flat iron building still is all **art studios** and inhabited by artists of all kinds. in fact, now the little banking offices that bank of america built and are always empty now always have **art shows** hanging from floor to ceiling...this intersection is a real hub now! there are lots of **free shuttle buses** to the lake! to old town, to metra (now called the bucktown station), to the clybourn & elston corridors, to humboldt park...just everywhere! i **don't need a car** all weekend! was really impressed with the amsterdam-style **bike lanes**, rather than having the bike lanes between traffic and parked cars, the lanes are between the sidewalk and parked cars. i was also impressed to see how **green/sustainable** it was...found **parking** on hoyne between the hours of 6-9pm, and the **valet** parkers parked guest cars somewhere that did not affect residents trying to come home from a long day at work...was impressed to learn that if a retail storefront is empty more than a month the owner is required to pay for **posters** that **cover the windows** that have random wicker park bucktown neighborhood facts. very cool!...noticed that the **feeling of community** still lives on, north avenue was alive with many **unique shops** and pleasant places to stop and grab a **quick bite** the **moving sidewalks** also helped getting us around and allowed us to see much more of the community...was here to see all the **fabulous artwork** at "around the coyote." it is fantastic the way they have upgraded the flat iron building, twenty years ago it was looking really shabby! now there are **artists studios/residences** on the second and third floors and a fantastic **rooftop patio** for **outdoor exhibits**, the main floor is strictly **retail**-that is, artists' work on display and for sale (year round), rents are extremely low due to a subsidy from the city, the building looks fantastic and is truly the **gateway** to the wptb area! visited several world-class

**art galleries**, then went to dinner in a great (one-of-a-kind) **restaurant** after that i attended a **live music** production, it was a great experience...love all the **old buildings** that have been in the neighborhood forever, it's amazing how the **diversity** of people has remained in the neighborhood and the **eclecticism** that has always characterized wicker park...hung out at the concord court plaza **beer garden**, our hotel is off the plaza in a warren of alleys between milwaukee ave and damen, we rode the **late night trolley** from bars on damen down to division; i drank too much, we rode the bloomingdale trail over to the new **riverfront park**, where **high rises** step over the freeway and terrace down to a **waterfront promenade**...was happy to park in the new **parking garage** on ashland just north of milwaukee/ division in the old k-mart/jewel area, the main story **retail mall** has just opened with parking above, i especially like the central **indoor courtyard** where young artists (on a rotating basis) are allowed to display and sell their artwork, on the upper levels, above the garage is the new **theatre, music and dance auditorium** with a seating capacity of 25,000...love the place, it's a **friendly** place to live, and **fun** at the same time, my girlfriend and i went to have coffee at one of the **small parks** located on milwaukee ave, had a cup of coffee and enjoyed a concert there, we walked along division st where we spent some time at borders, and then we watched a movie at the **independent film center** located right behind the mb bank building...i love living here! it has **everything** you'd want **within a short walk** the people are **young, hip, and engaging** this place keeps me young! i'm glad i decided to retire here...



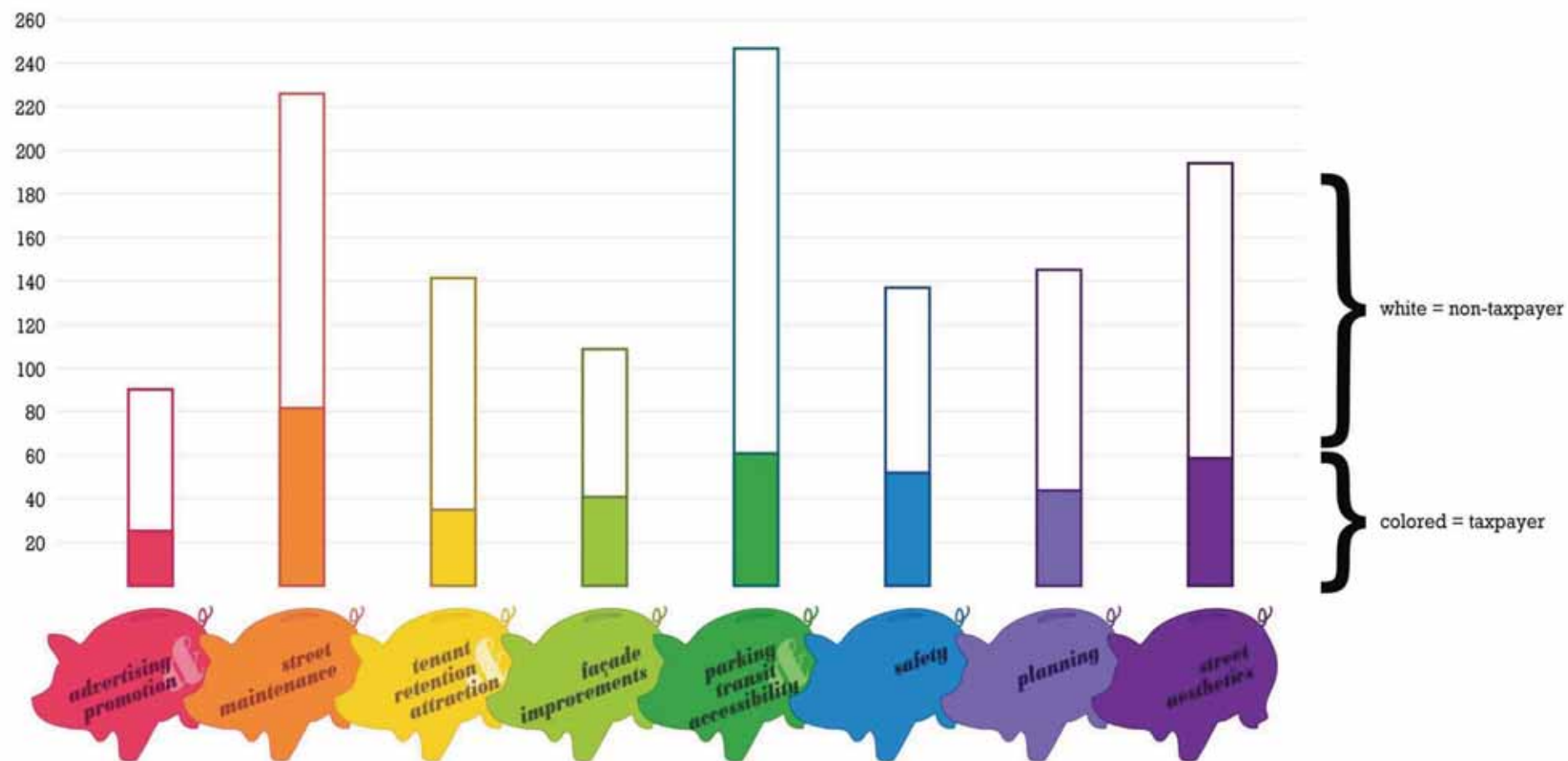
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1,000s of views on  
flickr.com

Photo Suggestion Booth



## DIY Budgeting Exercise



show us the money.

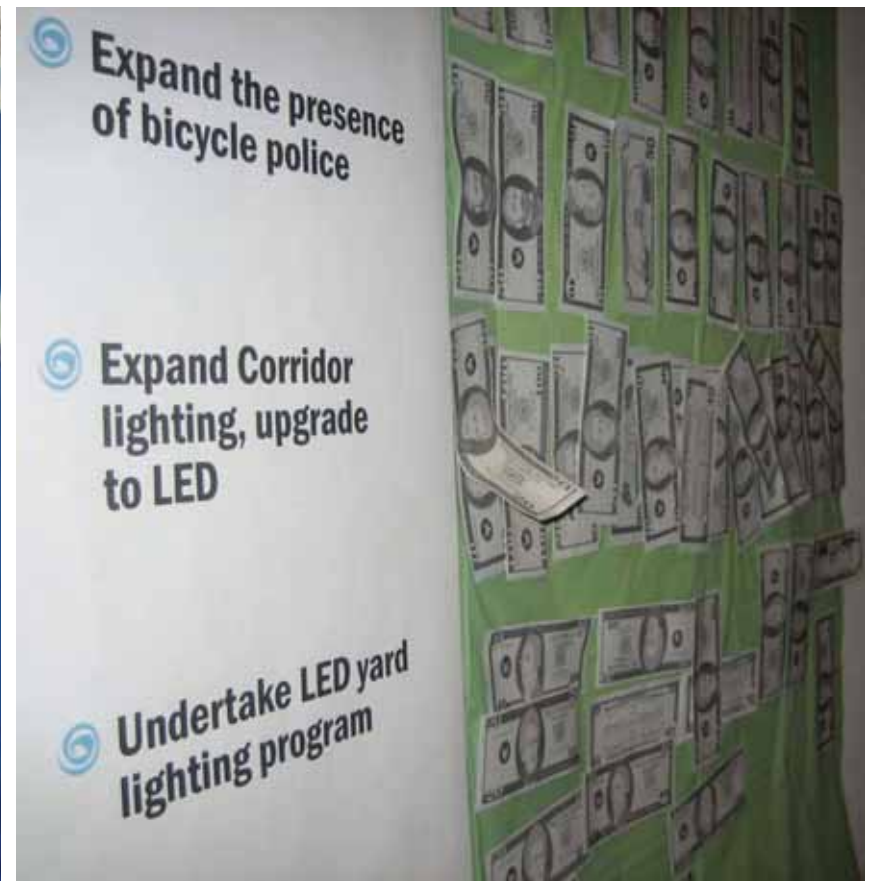


If you had

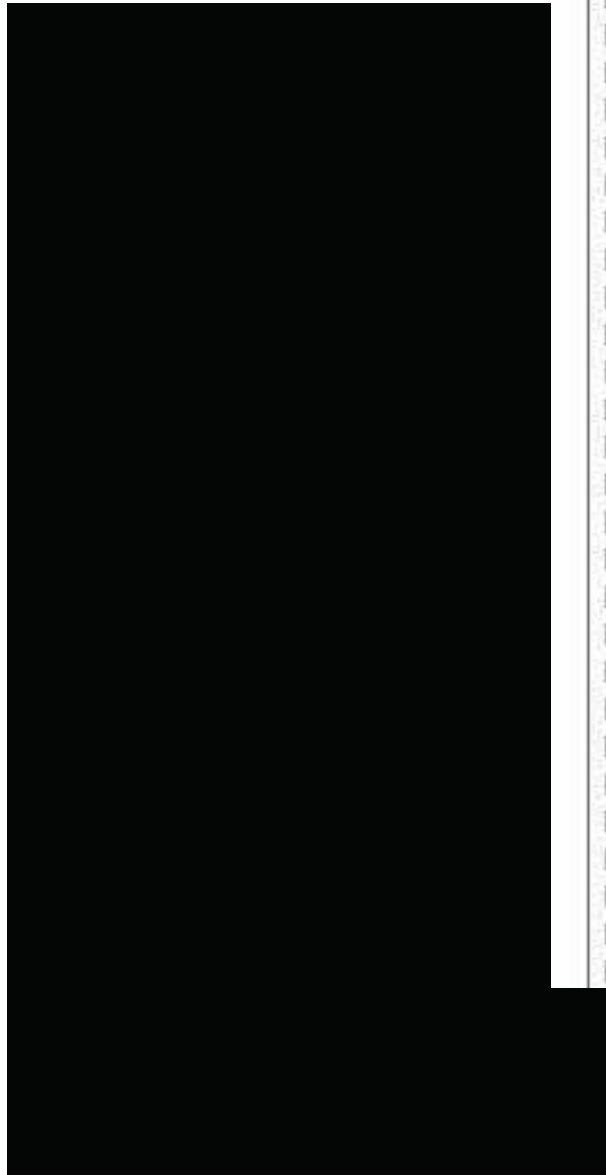


how would you spend it  
to **improve**

**Cramer Hill?**



# Video “Confessionals” Storytelling Booth





...and for the WPB Baby Boom







# What is this screen?



- live Bus Tracker info
- upcoming WPB events and community info

**route # and direction**  
destination



**arrival time**  
bus stop location







# MAKE

REACTIVATING VACANT SPACES IN WPB

# BELIEVE

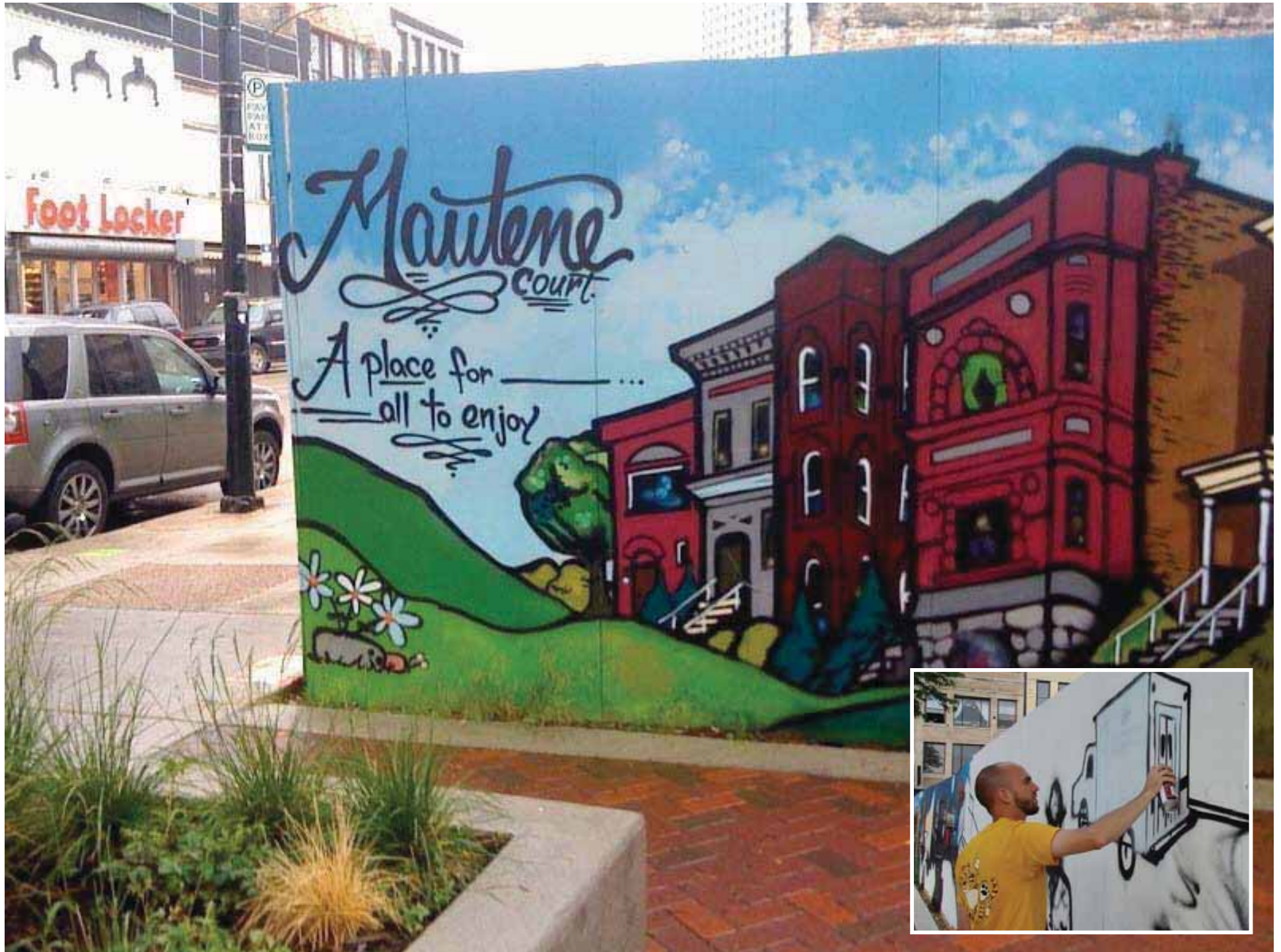
VOTE NOW FOR YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST

[MAKEBELIEVE.WEGOTITINWPB.COM](http://MAKEBELIEVE.WEGOTITINWPB.COM)

JULY 15<sup>TH</sup> → OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup>







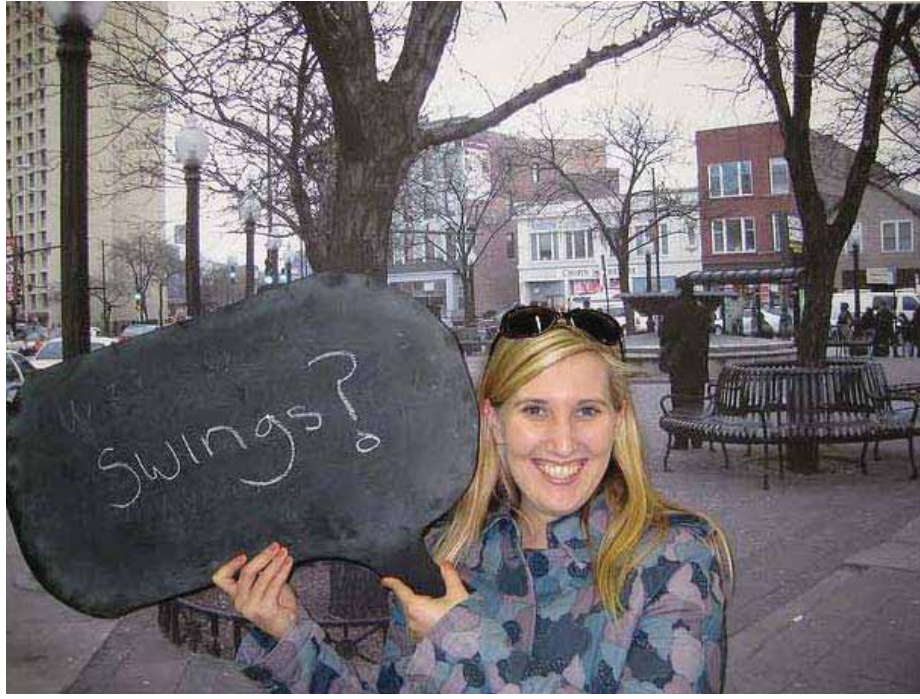
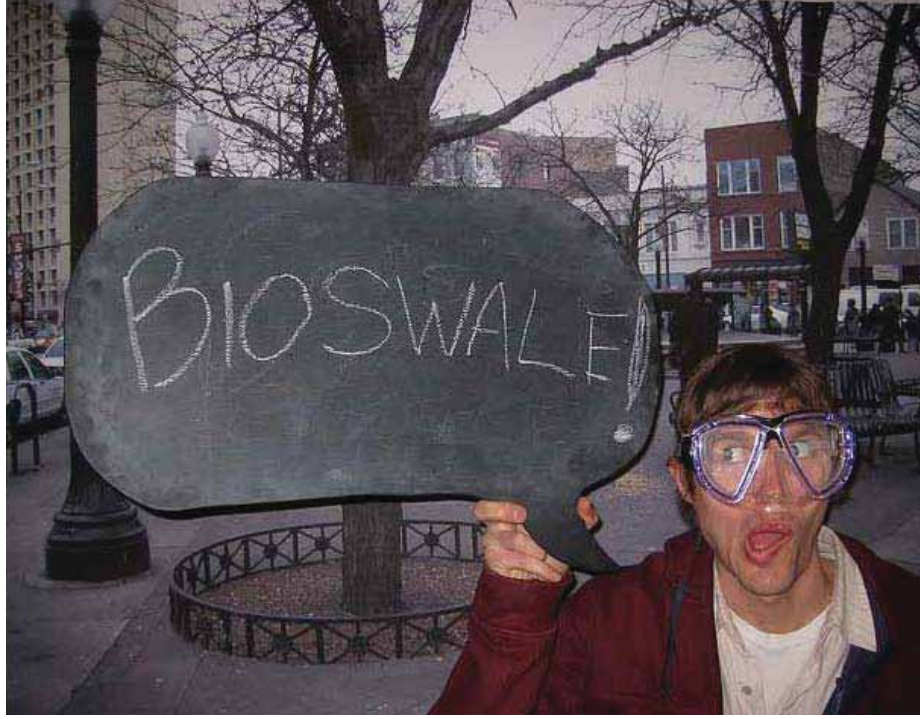






# WPB OPEN HOUSES: take

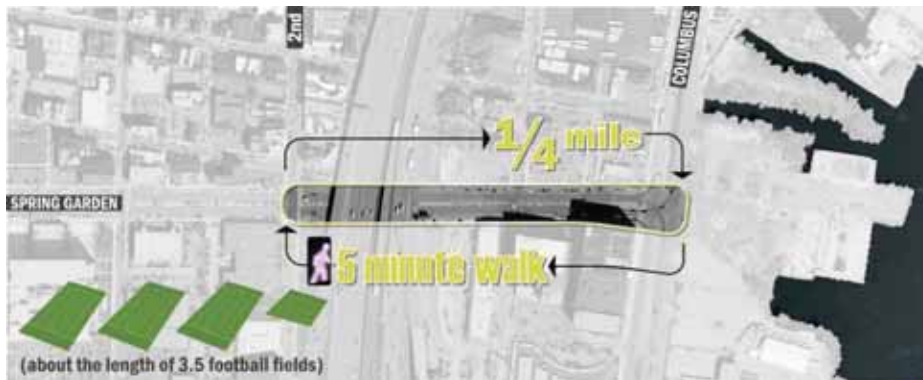
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# BACK TO PHILADELPHIA, JUST BRIEFLY

Northern Liberties



Yorktown



# Northern Liberties ONLINE Collaborative Map (instructions)



the online collaborative map has been viewed **5,400+** times...

**77** comments and ideas have been added to the map...

**39** people have completed the online survey...

**...and counting!**



"this spot always collects litter!"  
 "there's a dangerous sidewalk crack here!"  
 "i think this underpass is REALLY ugly!"  
*"someone needs to do something about the illegal parking here!"*  
 "this crossing signal is too fast!"  
 "my kids like dough boy park but there is nowhere to sit!"  
 "people are doing bad things in this vacant lot!"

# HAVE SOMETHING to SAY ABOUT SPRING GARDEN?

now's your chance! use the  
 numbered **YELLOW** sticker  
 to indicate the location on the  
 map or streetscape photo and  
 write your thoughts on  
 the card with the  
 corresponding number.



trees benches  
 food trucks lighting  
 solar trash cans  
 flower beds bus shelters  
 rain gardens murals  
 decorative pavers  
 public art dog park

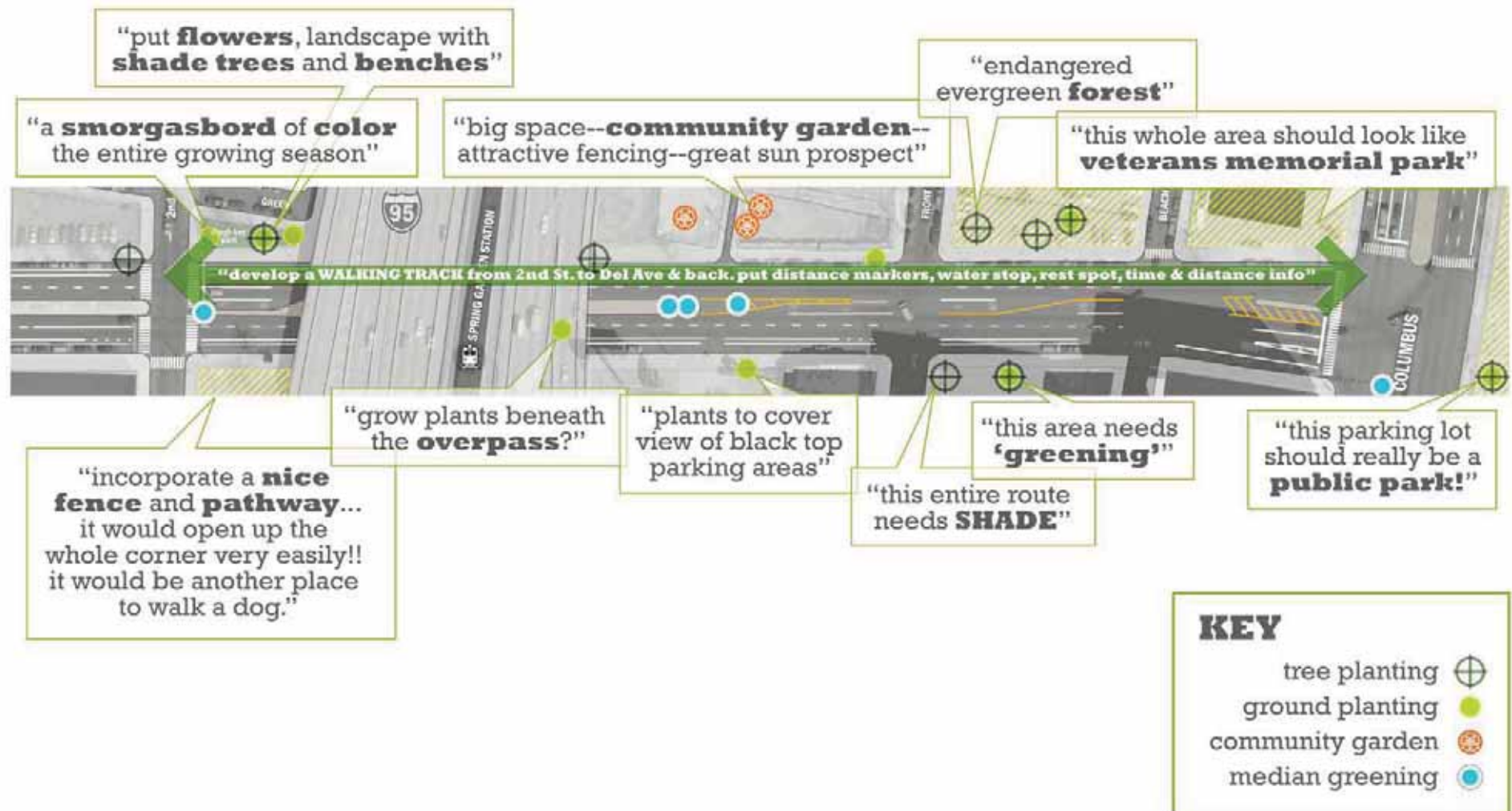
# HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT HOW to IMPROVE SPRING GARDEN?

please tell us! use the  
 numbered **ORANGE** sticker  
 to indicate the location on the  
 map or streetscape photo and  
 write your idea on the card  
 with the corresponding  
 number.



# place-specific greening ideas

YOU SAID...





An aerial photograph of a city street intersection. A multi-lane highway, marked with a shield icon containing the number 95, runs vertically through the center. To the left of the highway, a street is labeled '2nd'. To the right, a street is labeled 'COLUMBUS'. Further right, another street is labeled 'FRONT'. The image has a greenish tint. Text overlays are present: 'although it covers only about' in white on a dark green background at the top left; '21%' in large white font with a curly brace underneath it in the center; and 'of the distance between 2nd St and Columbus Blvd...' in white on a dark green background at the bottom right. A long white curly brace spans the width of the image, positioned below the '21%' and above the bottom text.

although it covers  
only about

**21%**

of the distance between 2nd St  
and Columbus Blvd...



A photograph of a concrete underpass or tunnel. The walls are made of rough concrete with some graffiti. There are windows on the upper level. A person is visible in the distance near a staircase. Large white text is overlaid on the image.

47%

...of the comments and ideas addressed the **UNDERPASS.**



# mural ideas

"**metal shapes** coated with **phosphorescent** paint & **reflective** glass beads, which hold the light of the cars driving by to work with Arup lighting."

"**signage** that there is an entrance to the El located on south side of the underpass would **help people looking for the station.**"

"the upgrades and 'mural' should reflect the **linear, transitory nature** of the space. It is a temporary space for thousands of people each day, and **not a destination.**"

"make sure the 'mural' is also **graffiti-proof** or/and that it can be cleaned."



"i suggest a **permanent resurfacing** in a lighter color instead of some silly trendy **painted mural** that **will peel off** in 2 years"

"**motion activated lighting** (by pedestrians), random/ traffic-activated at other times"

"whatever 'mural' element...is on the walls should be **reflected in the median structure** of the overpass. the '**trunks**' can be **part of the effect.**"

"i was in Taipei & Hsin Chu Taiwan... and I recall on a certain highway, they had these **colorful panels** that were wavy that **masked the underside of the highway**. perhaps some like these could be installed and used to feed the water that drips down to the side."

"how about some **funky lighting** under I-95 and EL...imagine the walls **shimmering with mirror shards**. How about a **funky welcome to Northern Liberties sign** painted on the East side of the I-95 overpass."



# Yorktown **CHATTER BOX**





"The community is basically part of our heritage, and everyone who lives here doesn't want to leave, because there is no other neighborhood like ours."

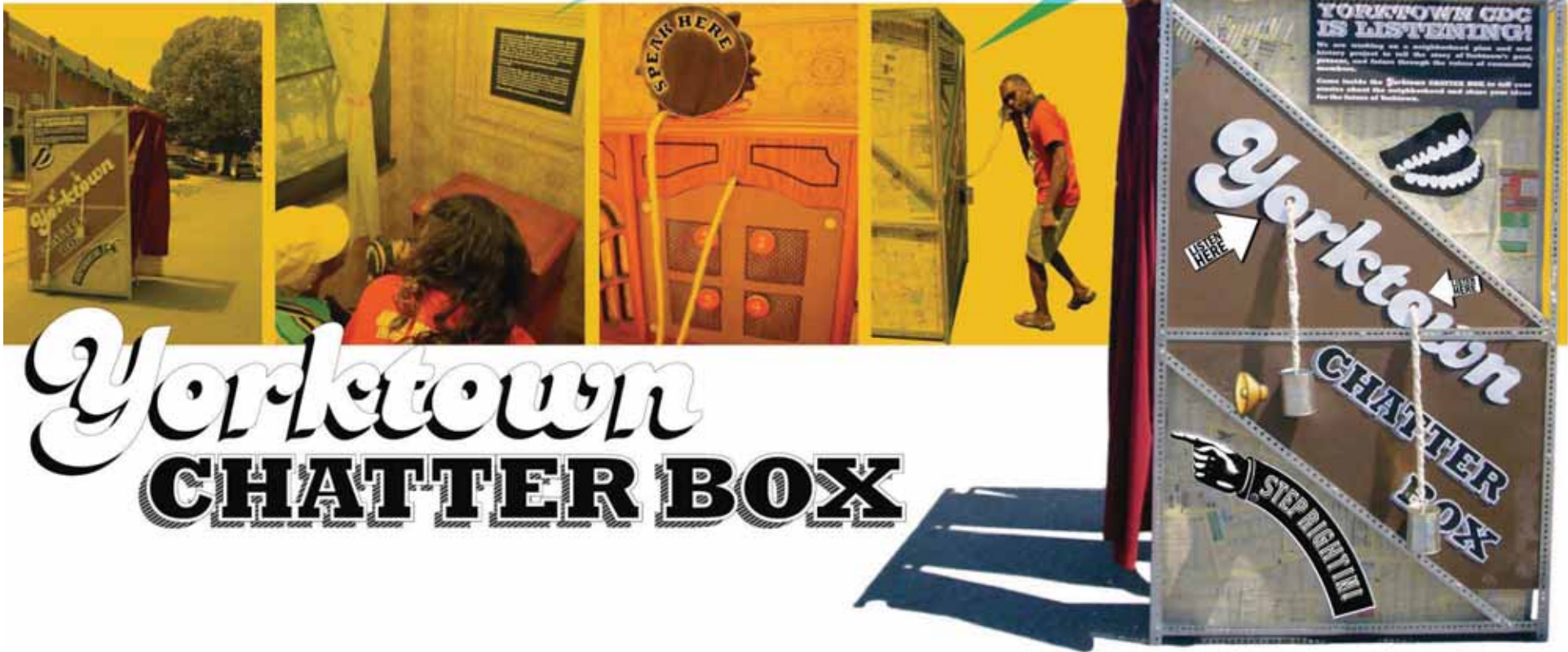


"Yorktown stands as a symbol for the continuing rise of the African-American family in America."

"I DON'T REALLY KNOW, EVEN THOUGH IT IS THE FUNNEST!"

"It's a great neighborhood, and it will continue to be great if we let our grandchildren stay here and rebuild."

"Look at all that beauty out there, isn't it nice? And to sustain it for 50 years! I want it to keep growing."



# Yorktown CHATTER BOX

## so in CONCLUSION

- + ever-growing range of tools (hi-tech and low-tech) at our disposal
- + growing interest in cities
- + increasing access to information

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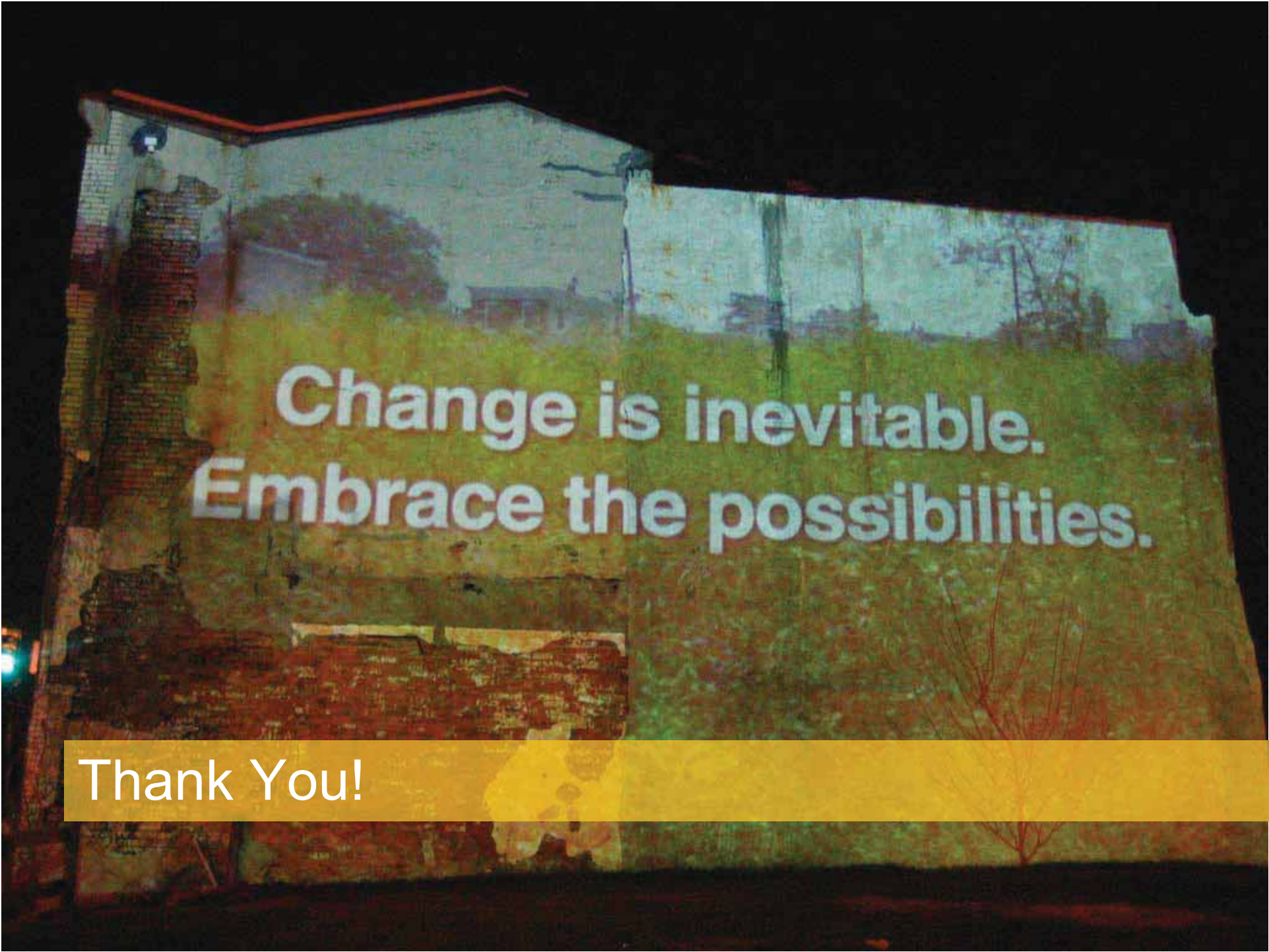
= communities we work in are **FULL** of people who are excited about planning and ready to talk and share ideas



### Our job is to:

- \* use the tools we have or **INNOVATE** new ones (artful, playful, interactive)
- \* select the tools that **BEST FIT** each community
- \* view public outreach as **CENTRAL** to the process
- \* collect community ideas, organize them, weigh them, add our own, and package them





**Change is inevitable.  
Embrace the possibilities.**

**Thank You!**

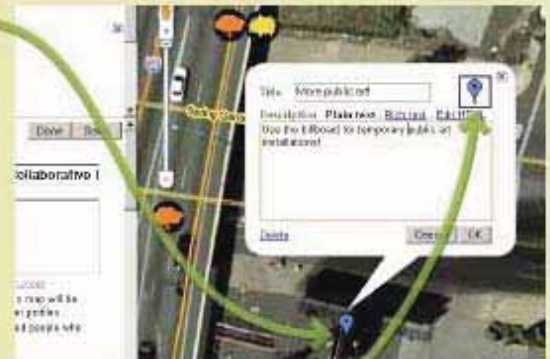
once you are logged in to your Google account and viewing the Spring Garden Greenway Collaborative Map on the Google Maps page, click on "Edit" in the upper right corner of the scroll bar area to the left of the map.



To add a comment or idea to the map, click on the "Add a Placemark" tool.



This will turn your mouse cursor into a blue placemaker. Click anywhere on the map, and your placemaker will be fixed to that spot. A speech bubble dialog box will appear and prompt you to give your comment or idea a title, as well as add description text. You will notice that other comments and ideas are titled in a particular way—"Comment 508," "Idea 3," etc. These titles correspond to serial numbers on stickers used to collect public input at community meetings—feel free to give your placemaker any title you like!



When you're done entering your title and description text, you can change the default blue icon to the yellow "comment" or orange "idea" icon by clicking on the blue marker here.



To select the custom icon, click on "My Icons" and then choose either the yellow "comment" icon or the orange "idea" icon by clicking on the desired icon.



# VOILA!

That's it! If you have any trouble, shoot an email to [leah@interface-studio.com](mailto:leah@interface-studio.com) and we'll get you back on track.