



1st community engagement festival in Ames, Iowa

September 25, 2021

FINAL REPORT



Course: CRP 455/555 Smart and Sustainable Cities, Fall 2021

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Team leaders: Stella Schroeder, Natalie M. Jacobson, Fatema Nourin, Vishnu Priya Sairamesh

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alenka Poplin

Funding: City of Ames and Community and Regional Planning Department Collaborative Interdisciplinary Fund, College of Design, Iowa State University

Dear readers,

It is our pleasure to be able to present this report to you. It summarizes our experience organizing the first community engagement festival **Play Ames: Imagine your City**. The festival was organized on September 25, 2021 in the City of Ames. It was the result of the collaboration between the City of Ames and the Community and Regional Planning Department, College of Design at Iowa State University. In January 2020, the City of Ames and Iowa State University agreed on a collaboration which was summarized in the document titled Request for Assistance (RFA). The City of Ames is represented by Steve Schainker, City Manager, and Dr. Gloria Betcher, City Counselor. The Community and Regional Planning Department (CRP), Iowa State University (ISU) is represented by Dr. Alenka Poplin. Play Ames: Imagine your City community festival was developed as an idea based on the work accomplished by the previous classes:

- Spring 2020, DSN564 Interdisciplinary Option Studio. Report: Sustainable Mobility for Smart Cities: Studies of Ames, Iowa
- Fall 2020, CRP532/432 Community Planning Studio. Report: Engaging Residents in Urban Planning: Focus on Ames, Iowa

The main ideas of the festival were to:

- Create a series of playful learning engagement methods and techniques to engage residents and that may engage underrepresented and marginalized communities
- Bring engagement into the neighborhoods
- Evaluate the implemented engagement methods and techniques

The festival was organized at four different locations in the City of Ames. For each of these locations a student team leader was responsible for the generation of ideas, organization and implementation of the engagement activities. They worked closely together with **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alenka Poplin**, ISU instructor. The team leaders for the respective locations were:

- **Reliable street:** Stella Schroeder, a PhD candidate and specialist in place-making at the PhD candidate at University del Bío-Bío, Concepción, Chile
- **Franklin park:** Vishnu Priya Sairamesh (graduate student). Sensory urbanism as an engagement method
- **East 7th Street:** Fatema Nourin (graduate student). Engaging residents with spatial thinking and mapping
- **5th Street and Burnett:** Natalie M. Jacobson (undergraduate student). Engaging residents with creative painting and learning about painting techniques

This festival would not have been possible without their dedication, hard work, inspiration and positive spirit! Thank you to all!

An event like that cannot be organized without an amazing support from many people who we thank for their dedicated work, inspiration, generation of ideas, and financial support. The students enrolled in the Fall 2021 CRP455/555 course Smart and Sustainable Cities were amazing. All thanks goes to them for the excellent implementation of these ideas.

The inspiring students that significantly contributed to the success of the festival were: **Shiva Afshari, Jacob Bolten, Max Gula, Jake Hall, Hailey Holder, Zachary Huggins, Thomas Kosacz, Anna Mullen, Robert Pechman, Marco Perla, Brock Radke, Emily Rizvic, Andrew Snyder, Jeev Sodhi, Kaleb Stevens, Madison Stolen, Daunte Thompson, Spencer Thompson, Timothy Tobin, Sarah Walker, Noah Watson, Eli Wilson, Amber Wittrock, Benjamin Woeber, and Nicole Yi Wen Yap.**

Climate Change Action Theater and **ISU FLEx Forward Learning Experience** mobile STEM program were amazing collaborators. Thank you to **Vivian M. Cook** for her passion for climate change and theater and to **Peter Evans** and **Yamille X. Perez** for their dedication to virtual reality, STEM education and women in science.

Special thanks go to the students engaged in the **CRP Undergraduate Club** including **Joshua Stephens, Michael Blank, Matthew Smith, and Christopher Craig.** Their help was essential for the success of the festival. Two additional wonderful and very helpful volunteers at the festival were two students enrolled in the CRP251 Fundamentals of GIS, **Keegan Haines** and **Imran Maszeri.** Thank you to **Maria Freeman** for the language improvements of this text. ISU Alumni, **Kishor Kumar Sridhar,** contributed great pictures – thank you!

Thank you also to **Prof. Dr. Francis Owusu** for his continuing support. With his help, the festival was funded by the CRP Collaborative Interdisciplinary Fund which combined with the funds from our RFA provided by the City of Ames made this festival possible.

Our immense thanks go to the representatives of the City of Ames. **Steve Schainker,** the city manager, and **Dr. Gloria Betcher,** city councilor, were our amazing collaborators and were very inspiring and supportive. They provided the needed information regarding the city and its needs and regularly met with us to provide the information and support needed for the success of this project! Thank you also to the mayor of Ames, **John Haila,** for his enthusiasm about the project and genuine interest in its success.

Lastly, thank you to the residents – end specially to the kids - of the City of Ames for your courage to participate and your interest in sharing your experience, visions, and ideas with us. You were our inspiration! Thank you for the opportunity!

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alenka Poplin

Community and Regional Planning Department
Iowa State University

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***PS:** All pictures included in this report were taken by ISU students. They were taken at Play Ames: Imagine community engagement festival. The pictures should not be shared or reproduced. They can only be used for the internal report and cannot be published in any other publication without the participants' consent.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COLLABORATION: THE CITY OF AMES AND IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY (ISU)

In January 2020 the City of Ames and Iowa State University agreed on a collaboration which was summarized in the document titled Request for Assistance (RFA) as follows: “describes a mutually beneficial relationship between the City of Ames and classes taught by the Iowa State University Department of Community and Regional Planning and the College of Design. The circumstances of the RFA will enable the City of Ames to enhance its community engagement strategies to better solicit the involvement of residents while the students and faculty of the College of Design participate in a living lab experience in the City of Ames that will enhance learning and research opportunities.” The City of Ames is represented by Steve Schainker, City Manager, and Dr. Gloria Betcher, City Counselor. Iowa State University is represented by Dr. Alenka Poplin.

The main focus of this collaboration is on developing, implementing, testing and evaluating community engagement methods, strategies, and technologies. The main goals of this collaboration can be summarized as follows:

- Explore methods, strategies, and technologies of engagement with the community
- **Focus on underrepresented and marginalized** groups
- **Develop** novel methods, strategies, and technologies of community engagement
- **Test and evaluate** methods, strategies, and technologies of engagement
- Give feedback to the City of Ames about successful engagement methods, strategies, and technologies

The work accomplished so far in two previous ISU studio courses was summarized in the following reports shared with the City of Ames:

- Spring 2020, DSN564 Interdisciplinary Option Studio. Report titled: Sustainable Mobility for Smart Cities: Studies of Ames, Iowa
- Fall 2020, CRP532/432 Community Planning Studio. Report titled: Engaging Residents in Urban Planning: Focus on Ames, Iowa

The work planned for the **Fall 2021 semester** was accomplished within the **CRP 455/555 Smart Cities course** and three additional Independent Studies. The three Independent Studies were completed by the following students in Community and Regional Planning:

- Natalie M. Jacobson (undergraduate). Engaging residents with creative painting and learning about painting techniques
- Fatema Nourin (graduate). Engaging residents with spatial thinking and mapping
- Vishnu Priya Sairamesh (graduate). Engaging residents with sensory urbanism and sensory path methods

Additionally, **Stella Schroeder**, a PhD candidate and specialist in place-making at the PhD candidate at University del Bío-Bío, Concepción, Chile joined the team in the phases of project preparation and implementation.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The main objectives were to:

- Develop engagement methods, strategies, and technologies which may attract and engage underrepresented or marginalized communities to participate in the discussions about their city and urban planning activities
- Test the developed and implemented engagement methods, strategies, and technologies in the selected neighborhoods
- Develop criteria for the evaluation of the implemented engagement methods, strategies, and technologies
- Evaluate the engagement methods in order to provide feedback to the City of Ames about the most promising and successful engagement methods, strategies, and technologies they can use in the future
- Target neighborhoods specifically with underrepresented or marginalized groups of residents. In the previous work these groups were identified as follows:

LGBTQ, Senior citizens, Racial minorities, Cultural minorities, Gamblers, Substance abusers, Youth, Kids, Persons living in poverty, Previously incarcerated people, People with disabilities, Rural communities, Homeless, College students, Renters, Domestic abuse survivors, and Indigenous

1 Developing method

2 Testing method

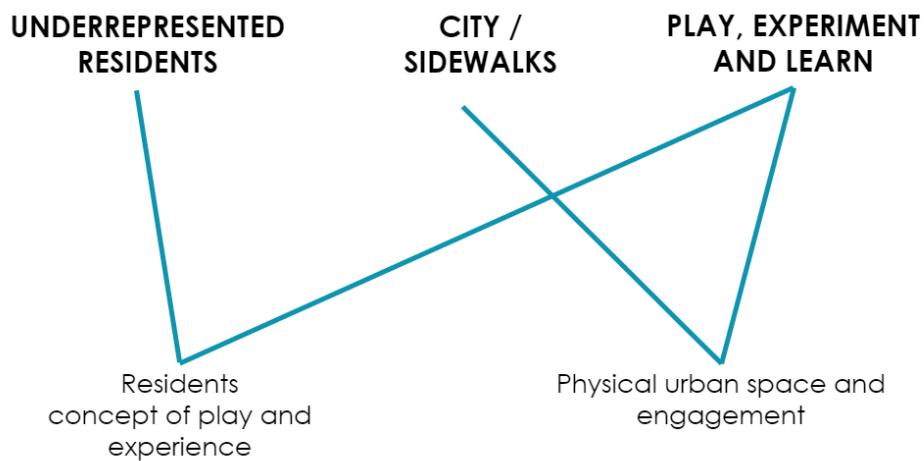
3 Evaluating method

Indicador [¿qué se midió?]	Indicador [¿qué se midió?]	Definición Indicador
Medio de impacto de la intervención en el uso del espacio público. (¿en qué medida se mencionó que los usuarios están usando este espacio por fuera de los horarios, días o espacios permitidos para la intervención?)	Cantidad de Usuarios Por Día	Número de usuarios que usan la parcela en horarios de 10 minutos
Medio de impacto de la intervención en la población del área	Participación de Tiempo de espera	Minutos de espera percibidos de la localidad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción que pesan por el área	Cantidad de personas que interactúan por el área
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Incremento de Transacciones en Comercio	Cantidad de Transacciones por negocio
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción contra el tráfico	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de tránsito
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Seguridad en los Espacios Públicos	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad del área
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción Contra Espacios Públicos Desagradables	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Seguridad para Comercio	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Seguridad de Permanencia	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Un Lugar Abierto Seguro	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Posibilidad de Usar	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Oportunidad de Comercio	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción contra el ruido	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción contra el tráfico	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Percepción de Desconocimiento	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Percepción del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Años Esperanza Esperanza	Percepción de seguridad de seguridad de seguridad
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Número de comentarios	Cantidad de métodos de respuesta en el área
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Metro de Ames	Método de Ames
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Asientos	Número de Asientos con disponibilidad
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Auto de Desarra de tránsito	Tránsito al centro que tienen las personas para pasar por la parcela
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Auto de Desarra de tránsito	Tránsito al centro que tienen las personas para pasar por la parcela
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Cantidad de Rangos de accesibilidad en el espacio	Cantidad de Rangos de accesibilidad en el espacio
Adaptación del espacio público (¿cuál es la percepción de la intervención? ¿cómo se percibe el espacio público?)	Cantidad de Rangos de accesibilidad en el espacio	Cantidad de Rangos de accesibilidad en el espacio

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research concentrates around three main research questions:

- What is the most adequate method, strategy, and/or technology for engaging underrepresented or marginalized residents in urban planning?
- How well are the playful engagement methods, strategies, and technologies accepted by the residents? Do they feel attracted to participate? Who participates? For how long? Which activities are the most interesting for the residents?
- How can the implemented engagement methods, strategies, and technologies be evaluated? According to what criteria? How can success be defined and measured? Can technologies, such as Photovoice, be used as an evaluation tool?



INNOVATION IN THE SUGGESTED APPROACH

The main idea is to engage residents in a playful way following the idea suggested by Poplin (2012) in her journal publication titled Playful Public Participation. The engagement strategies suggested for the Play Ames community engagement festival aim to bring joy, fun, and enjoyment to the residents. Through the playfulness, trust and connections are established, and one can also talk and discuss more serious topics after or during the playful activities which are designed to engage all residents. We suggest organizing a festival to implement and test a set of engagement methods, strategies, and technologies at the selected locations in the City of Ames. An important component in all the activities is playful learning.

PLAN FOR THE FALL SEMESTER 2021 | PLAY AMES: IMAGINE YOUR CITY FESTIVAL

The main idea for the Fall 2021 semester was to organize a city festival on **September 25, 2021** titled **Play Ames: Imagine your City**. The festival targeted **underrepresented and marginalized populations** in the City of Ames. It concentrated on a set of experimental activities at four selected locations. The locations and planned experiments are listed below and described in more detail within this document.

IMPLEMENTED PLAYFUL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WITH LEARNING COMPONENTS

Location 1: RELIABLE STREET

Guerilla gardens. Creating green cities

-> Learn about gardening, seeds, plants, and perennials

Origami. Wishes and ideas for your city

-> Learn about engagement, planning, and the city
-> Share visions for further development of the city

Urban planning board games. Playful learning

-> Learn about urban planning

Location 2: FRANKLIN PARK

Breathing game. Sense the city, sense yourself

-> Learn how to breath and learn about yoga
-> Learn about meditations and expressing emotions

Barefoot path. Sensory exploration

-> Learn about different senses
-> Experiment with senses

Supporting activities: Yoga program, Climate Change Action Theater

Yoga. Practice mindfulness

-> Learn about meditation, breathing
-> Learn about basic yoga poses

Location 3: EAST 7TH STREET

Digital mapping. Benches

-> Learn about scale and resolution
-> Learn how to map with mobile devices
-> Learn how to think spatially

Paper mapping. Unsafe places

-> Learn about maps and how to map
-> Map places that evoke images, memories and emotions

Supporting activities: Pop-up van with virtual reality

Pop-Up van. Virtual reality

-> Learn about novel technologies

Location 4: 5th STREET AND BURNETT AVENUE

Art Alley. Paint by number mural

-> Learn about colors and painting

Smart City talks. City officials and urban planners were present at the first three locations which targeted underrepresented and marginalized populations. Residents were able to talk with them, ask questions, communicate with them, get to know them and express their wishes for future changes in the city.

SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION RESULTS

An important goal of the festival and the planned experiments was to test the implemented engagement methods, strategies, and technologies. Two main evaluation methods were developed for this purpose: Photo ethnography, Engagement survey. Additionally, a Kids-friendly survey was added to gain some responses from the kids. They were applied across all engagement methods, strategies, and technologies. The main idea was to apply the same evaluation methods to all engagement activities.

This report summarizes the main results gained by organizing Play Ames: Imagine your City, the first community engagement festival in Ames. Below is a very short summary of the experience.

The key-findings:

- The festival brought positive atmosphere, engagement, and playful learning opportunities to the residents
- Residents that participated enjoyed the engagement activities
- The most successful engagement activities were activities that were creative and enabled the participants to see the results of their creation: painting mural, painting stones, and origami
- Experiential activities were also very successful as they enabled participants to gain new experiences: barefoot path, paper-mapping, digital-mapping, Spot-the-Differences game, and yoga
- The locations that were smaller, and locations placed into the neighborhood (rather than into the “outskirts”), attracted more underrepresented and marginalized communities to join the festival
- Neighborhoods we visited more often in person before the festival, and in which we invited the resident to join us at the festival in person, attracted more local resident
- The ISU students felt more integrated with the city, gained lots of new knowledge, and were fully present at the festival

ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION OF

- City of Ames
- Community and Regional Planning Department, College of Design, Iowa State University
- Community Engagement Living Lab

Guests and collaborating partners: Climate Change Action Theater, ISU extension STEM program FLEX Forward Learning Experience, and Yoga teacher Michelle Flattery

BUDGET

Dr. Poplin acquired \$5,000 from the CRP Collaborative Interdisciplinary Fund. There was also approximately \$1,000 left over from the agreement (RFA) with the City of Ames. This money was spent on the visit of Stella Schroeder and the materials needed for Play Ames: Imagine your City festival.

ADVERTISING

Advertising was very important. We created a website, a dedicated Facebook and Instagram page, print flyers, announcements in Iowa State Daily about our activities, and organized festival T-Shirts and stickers. The poster below was created by Stella Schroeder.

Please check out our new website at: <https://www.communityengagementll.net/>



Play Ames
IMAGINE YOUR CITY

09/25²⁰₂₁
12-5pm

RELIABLE STREET Guerilla gardening Origami of dreams Playing board games	EAST 7th STREET Digital mapping Mapping of places Pop-up van with virtual reality
FRANKLIN PARK Breathing game and Yoga Sensory path Climate Change Theatre Action The Art of Climate Planning*	5th ST. & BURNETT Mural painting Live music

free entrance. at all locations: meet your city officials and planners, competitions & special gifts

**1st community engagement festival
grand opening at 10am. 5th STREET & BURNETT**

Contact
Alenka Poplin
Iowa State University
apoplin@iastate.edu

Collaborating partners

Community Engagement Living Lab | GAMEWORK | GeoGames Lab | City of Ames | IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Department of Music and Theatre TheEcoTheatreLab

*Funded by a City of Ames Small Art Grant

1. PLAY AMES: IMAGINE YOUR CITY | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FESTIVAL

Four different locations in the City of Ames were selected for Play Ames: Imagine your City, the first community engagement festival in Ames. Several engagement activities were implemented, tested, and evaluated at each of the selected locations. They are described more in detail in the rest of this document. The four selected locations were: Reliable Street, Franklin Park, East 7th Street and Downtown Ames.

1.1. Location 1: RELIABLE STREET

Led by **Stella Schroeder**, PhD candidate at University del Bío-Bío, Concepción, Chile

Email: stella.schroeder@gmx.de

Engagement activities and students involved:

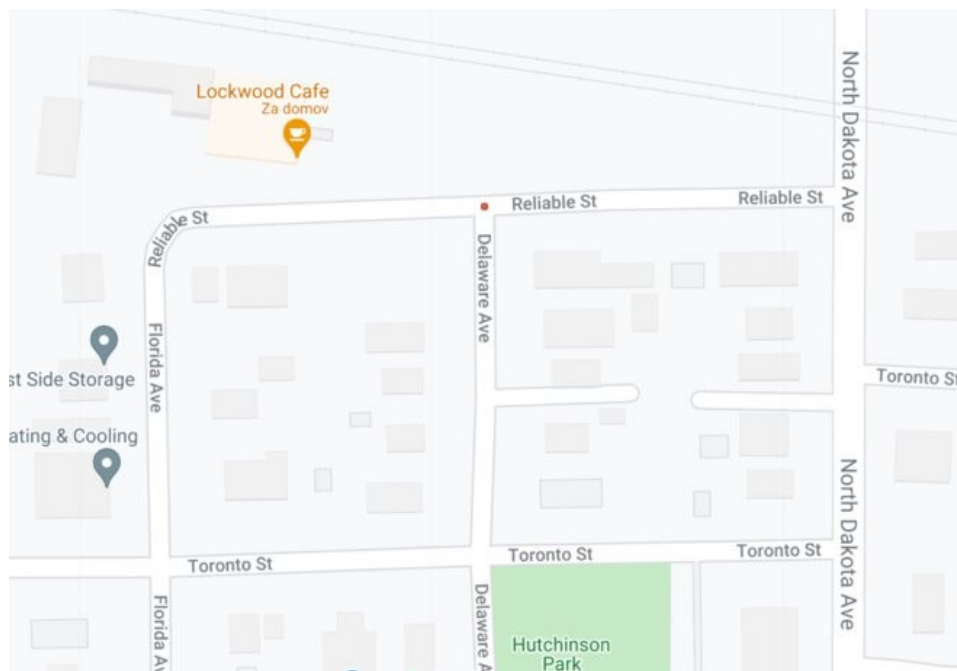
- Guerilla gardens (Jacob Bolten, Amber Wittrock)
- Origami (Madison Stolen and Nicole Yi Wen Yap)
- Urban planning games (Zachary Huggins and Brock Radke)

Evaluation:

- Photo ethnography, Engagement survey, Kids-friendly survey

Present at the site:

- City officials and urban planners



GUERRILLA GARDENS. CREATING GREEN CITIES

OBJECTIVE

Guerrilla gardens aim to green up drab spaces in local environment, engaging neighbors and inhabitants of the city by improving urban environment. Heightening the importance of urban green.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

Location: Reliable Street, Lockwood Café. Part of the sidewalk of the café was transformed into a small garden area. The goal was to improve the sidewalk and the existing green area around the café.



WHAT

Urban gardening with native and winter-resistant plants. Activity included explanation on how to plant perennial plants and how to take care of them.

HOW

A small area for the garden activity was prepared and resident could participate in planting bulbs. The bulbs selected for planting were daffodils and crocuses. The activity was designed in such a way which enabled participants of all ages to take part. The student expert explained how to plant these bulbs and encouraged the participants to plant their own bulbs.

A second activity was connected to the gardening. This activity focused on painting stones. The participants could choose a white stone and paint it the way they wanted. These stones were then placed on the top of the planted bulbs to indicate the bulb they planted themselves. In this way they will be able to find their flower in spring. They also made the planted garden very attractive and beautiful.

LEARNING COMPONENT

Residents learned about plants, urban planning, green spaces, and planting in general. They could adopt a plant which encouraged them to take care of the plant after the activity. It was a group activity and the residents share a certain space of the garden. It may also inspire them to make them feel like part of the city and to take responsibility for the urban green spaces. Additional informative material was provided to inform people about local plants.

TIME NEEDED

The preparation time took about four hours. We had to till the ground and get it ready for planting. We did it before the festival so the ground was prepared for planting during the festival.

PREPARATION

Included selection of the urban gardening area and preparation of the area, organization of materials and plants, design of the instructions, and printing information with pictures of the plants.

PERMISSIONS

No permission on the part of the city was needed. Coordinated with Lockwood Café and neighbors regarding planting on their property.

MATERIAL

- Table and small plates
- Bulbs and clay
- Water
- Gardening tools
- Stones, colors, and brushes

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

City officials and urban planners were present on the site during the duration of this activity.

In the future: This activity can be combined with information about urban parks/urban green spaces organized by the city. This may include an information table, a desk with maps, and an active presence of city officials and urban planners. It can also be combined with a mapping activity asking about the places where residents feel positive emotions, places they like in Ames, places they would like to visit more often, and what the characteristics of such places are.

ORIGAMI. WISHES AND IDEAS FOR THE CITY

OBJECTIVE

Origami aims to engage neighbors and the residents of Ames by expressing the changes needed and the desired implementation of these changes for the city. Increases sensitivity of issues related to urban planning.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

Location: Reliable Street, Lockwood Café. An area was needed for a table and some working space for the origami activity. The gardening area was reserved for the finished origami flowers which we displayed placing them into the soil.



WHAT

The residents contributed their ideas about the City of Ames. These ideas were written on the colored papers and folded into an origami. Four folded papers formed an origami flower that was then placed in the planted garden. They created a garden of dreams, visions and ideas that can later be given to the city officials and urban planners.

HOW

Collection of ideas: A set of three questions were selected, each using paper in a different color. The questions were as follows:

- What is your favorite place within the city?
- What can be improved in the city?
- What is your vision for the city of Ames?

Origami sidewalk of dreams. Through this origami exercise, the colored pages with the testimonies were folded into paper flowers. The installation of a colorful paper flower garden showcases all the ideas collected during the process.

LEARNING COMPONENT

Residents learned about creativity, urban planning, and could reflect upon their city. In the discussions with other participants, they could learn about their collective experience. They could reflect upon places in their cities, what they need, and how they want to live in the city. The goal was to involve everyone – children, adolescents, and adults – in a collective reflection about the opportunities and possibilities in the City of Ames.

TIME NEEDED

Time needed for task (write idea and fold origami): 10 minutes.

PREPARATION

- Coordinated with Lockwood café and identification of local institutions.
- Prepared origami exercise
- Learned about origami (shapes)
- Printed colored paper with different themes

PERMISSIONS

We got all the needed permissions needed by Lockwood Café.

MATERIAL

- Paper (120g) different colors
- Pens and markers
- Wooden sticks
- Tape, glue, tables and chairs

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

City officials and urban planners were present on the site during the duration of this activity.

Future ideas: City officials and urban planners may organize sessions titled “Meet your city planners.” City planners from the City of Ames can be part of the origami creation process and can meet the residents, introduce themselves to them, and encourage them to share their ideas and concerns about the city and its developments. This is a wonderful, creative activity that can serve as a tool for the discussions about the city and also engages in a creative process creating beautiful origami displays.

URBAN PLANNING BOARD GAMES. PLAYFUL LEARNING

OBJECTIVE

Urban planning games can bring urban planning and development challenges together in a fun, enjoyable and interactive way. Playing games connects and encourages people to spend time together and get to know one another. Playing urban planning games can teach them about the principles of urban planning.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

Area at Lockwood Café with tables and chairs. The wooden structure combined with a table served well for the purpose of playing urban planning board games.



WHAT

People were invited to use the board games and play together. The leaders of this activity, ISU students, assisted and explained the rules of the games. Participants were able to gather in small or large groups without a time limit.

TIME NEEDED

Each board game has a duration of around 45-60 minutes.

COMMENTS

The team leaders had to learn how to play the game. They tested the game play and the way they need to instruct participants while playing. Outside spaces are not the most optimal places for board games. In the future it would be better to choose a place inside. It was very windy and some of the game pieces can easily get lost under such conditions.



RELIABLE STREET: HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by Stella Schroeder

The engagement activities planned at Reliable Street worked well together and complemented each other. There was a great atmosphere created by having these activities combined at the site. Residents of all age groups participated.

Stone painting was a definite highlight. The participants liked seeing the immediate results. Kids and adults painted rocks and put them into the garden close to their bulbs. Residents got engaged very quickly, it was an easy activity, and it was easy to quickly see results. Similarly, the colorful flowers of the origami activity had a nice effect in the garden. Participants enjoyed the fact that their ideas will be given to the city after the festival.

Because of the autumn season, bulbs were used and were not visible immediately. Fall is not the best season for participatory and community engaged gardening. The ground needs to be well prepared otherwise planting is very hard. We recommend preparing a choice of different flowers and trees. It is important have a good mix, and that people can see the immediate results of their community engagement activity.

Regarding origami, on the one hand, the questions about favorite places in the city were easily answered by everybody. On the other hand, kids usually do not have specific ideas about what to change or visions for future developments of the city. More adults responded to these two questions. For future activities, we recommend choosing origami figures that can be created with only one paper, instead of four. The questions on the origami papers should be more concretely related to what the residents would like to change in their city.

We also learned an important lesson about playing board games outside. The activity of playing board games seems to be too long for the participants as there is a substantial time that needs to be invested when learning how to play the game. It does not seem adequate for an outdoor community engagement festival. Participants prefer shorter activities and seeing immediate results of their creativity.

We also highly recommend involving the local residents before the festival to strengthen their interest in the activities. It is important to have a very visible location for the activities. The best option would be to choose locations inside the neighborhood, or in a park, or a street that are located inside the targeted neighborhood.

Highlights

Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone painting was the highlight. The people like to see immediate results. • Kids and adults painted rocks and put them into the garden close to their bulbs.
Origami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have flowers with four leaves and put them into the garden. Participants enjoyed the fact that their ideas will be given to the city after the festival.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorful flowers had a nice effect in the garden. Good color choices were used (yellow, red, and blue). • Participants got engaged very quickly, it was an easy activity, easy to see the results. • Activity for everybody, both kids and adults.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Origami and Gardening complemented each other. • Great atmosphere to have the activities together and not separated. • Nice, cozy area, and quiet area. The area invited people to participate in the activities. • Participants from all age groups.

Observations

Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulbs are not visible immediately. • Ground was very hard, not easy to plant. The activity needs to be well prepared. • Fall is not a good season for gardening.
Origami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about favorite place in the city were easy for everybody to answer. • Kids did not have ideas about what to change or a general vision for the city, more adults responded to these two questions. • Not all kids knew how to write. • The prepared description on how to create an origami flower did not work well; it was better to explain how to fold the paper. • 4 leaves are too many, people would like to see an immediate result. • It was not easy to glue leaves together with a tape, another solution would have been better. • 4 leaves were needed for a flower, but only three questions and three different paper colors were prepared.
Planning board games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long. People do not want to stay for such a long time and play a game. They prefer shorter activities. • Too windy, did not work well outside in the sun and wind.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a lot of interaction with neighborhood. The last row of houses faces away from location and built a barrier between neighborhood and location of the event. • Few participants were from the neighborhood. • Residents that participated came from other parts of the city or visited the Café. • The Café is not connected with the neighborhood; it is somewhat isolated and offers activities that attract people who do not live in the area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the other side of the location is a railway track, building a barrier as well (city ends). • Short and quick activities work well. • After 3:30pm, only few participants joined the festival. Lockwood café closes at 3pm.
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What could we do differently?

Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have different flowers and trees. It is important to have a good mix, so that people can see the immediate results of their activities.
Origami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowers could be bigger. It would be great to have flowers which can be folded with only one paper to see quick results. • Bigger sticks and figure out a better way of piecing papers together and on the stick. • Questions on the origami papers could be more concrete; for example, what would residents would like to see changed?
Planning board games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs an area which is protected with shade and good furniture. • Needs more advertising.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always need a minimum of two leaders per activity. It's important to work as a group, not as separated activities. • Have shade. • Not depend on café or local businesses to attract participants. • Be located more inside neighborhoods, at a more visible location. • Instead of all activities at one location have more activities around the same neighborhood.

Visions for the future

Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening is better in the spring. • Seed Bombs: seed bombs can be prepared and people can "bomb" the city. • Creation of community gardens that benefit the whole community. Fruit trees can be included.
Origami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of origami garden at night and put lights on. • Different origamis and different questions. • Have some of the origamis done before the event with the local community that can help motivate neighbors to come to the event and works as advertising.
Planning board games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more simple short games, games that do not take so long to play and to learn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More playful and more participatory games. Maybe a mapping activity or games on the ground would be more successful.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another location more integrated in the neighborhood could work better in attracting more underrepresented and marginalized communities. • An active and strong advertising of the planned activities before the festival within the neighborhood is important. Personal conversations and invitations work very well. Think about going to local school or local sports clubs, churches, or other organizations. • Neighbors do not come to us; we have to go to their neighborhoods. Activities in a more central and visible location aid in this endeavor. • Organize a neighborhood-focused festivals and the focused neighborhoods can change each year. • Start coordinating with the community early on to understand their needs and understand the people in the community. • Festival for kids might work very well and can potentially bring lots of parents and families to the festival.



1.2. Location 2: FRANKLIN PARK

Led by Vishnu Priya Sairamesh, ISU Community and Regional Planning graduate student

Email: svpa@iastate.edu

Engagement activities and students involved:

- Breathing game (Anna Mullen, Marco Perla)
- Barefoot path (Eli Wilson, Jack Hall)

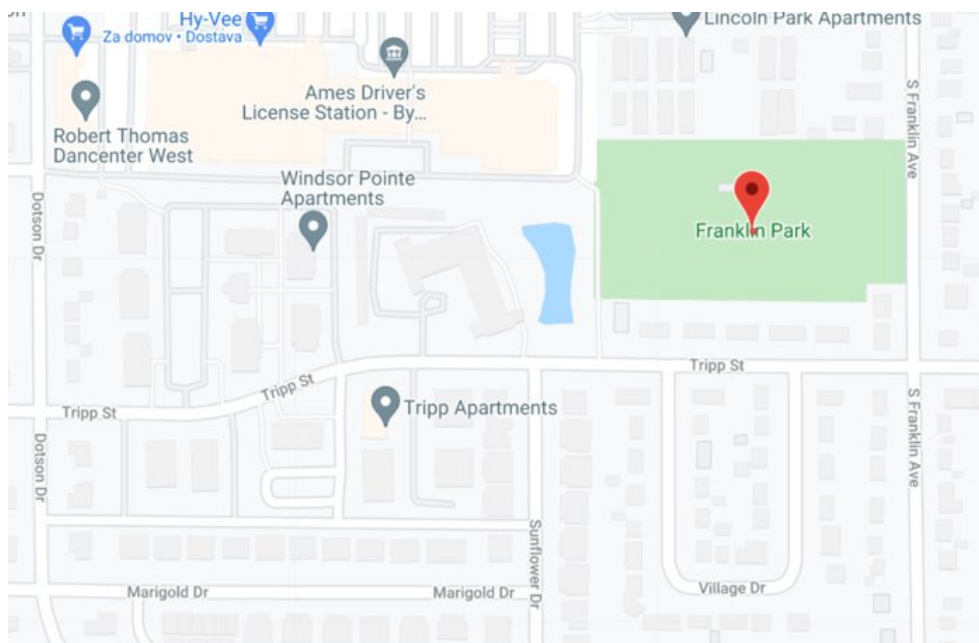
Supporting activities: Yoga program, Climate Change Theater Action

Evaluation:

- Photo ethnography, Engagement survey, Kids-friendly survey

Present at the site:

- City officials and urban planners



BREATHING GAME. SENSE THE CITY, SENSE YOURSELF

OBJECTIVE

The objective was to explore the senses, the breathing, and the body. Sensing the body while exercising different breathing techniques. Feeling the body. Different stops on the game path encouraged participants to engage in a variety of activities.

1

RELAX & MEDITATE !! :D

Take a seat!
Breathe in through your Nose for 2 seconds &
Breathe out through your mouth for 4 seconds.
(Do this 3 times !!)



FUN FACTS !!
This breathing exercise , allows your body & mind to calm down, sometimes, even hear/feel your heartbeat! (fact connecting breathing & the city?)



Franklin Park | Breathing Game | Sep 25 2021

6

PAINT YOUR SURROUNDING !! :D

GO AROUND & BRING WHATEVER YOU FIND IN THE PARK & PRINT IT WITH PAINT
ON ONE HALF OF THE SHEET OF PAPER
(as shown below & minimum=6 materials)
Feel free to draw what you see around you that can't be imprinted on paper)



FUN FACTS !!
This makes you understand the different texture of materials surrounding the park. You may find leaves, twig, crushed bottle, or people (good/bad). Whatever that you see immediately put it on the paper!



Franklin Park | Breathing Game | Sep 25 2021

LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

We needed a space for the game experience and a separate space for the yoga experience.





WHAT

Participants were encouraged to learn, practice, and implement deep breathing and explore its effects on their bodies. The breathing game included some fun activities as well. The breathing game was combined with yoga exercise and experiences. Yoga was led by the yoga teacher Michelle Flatter. The program for yoga was as follows:

- 12:30 pm Body scan
- 1:00 pm Walking meditation
- 2:00 pm Mindfulness eating
- 2:30 pm Gratitude meditation
- 3:00 pm Kids meditation

HOW

The Breathing game was designed as a combination of 10 activities. Each activity encouraged the participant to understand their Breathing pattern through an exercise, to connect their breathing and the sense of self with the sense about the city. The activities were:

1. Sit, relax, and meditate
2. Jumping Jacks (increased the heartbeat)
3. Sitting or standing, the participant had to close their eyes and report what they heard around them (encouraged the participant to sense what they don't see but rather hear or feel)
4. Spin Clockwise and Anti Clockwise, each 5 times

5. Walk on or balance oneself on a wooden beam to reach the next activity (this tested the sense of 'balance')
6. Go around the park and find materials that they could imprint on a piece of paper with paint, they could also draw what they see (this is for the participant to realize their surroundings)
7. Write on a piece of paper what their favorite and least favorite place in Ames were
8. Showcasing a set of images of the city, participants were asked what they felt when they saw a specific picture
9. Skipping or Blowing balloons (this is to again increase the heartbeat)
10. Finally there was a swing for kids and 1 for adults (this is for the participants to float, their feet not touching the ground, where they can hear their own heartbeat because of the exercise they performed previously)

LEARNING COMPONENT

This experiment was created to bring awareness of breathing, sensing the self and one's surroundings.

TIME NEEDED

20-30 minutes to complete the whole cycle. Sometimes people may take more time to find materials or would like to paint more than one picture.

PREPARATION

We needed to design the activity, purchase materials, chose pictures to be displayed and get them printed along with preparing the posters elaborately explaining the process, with images of each activity.

PERMISSIONS

No specific permissions were needed.

MATERIAL

- Posters explaining each activity in the game
- Wooden Beam
- Paint, Brushes, Paper
- We need to select and print the pictures
- Board to pin up the pictures
- Sticky notes for people to write upon
- Swings, skipping rope
- Tables, chaires, beverages

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

City officials and urban planners were present at the location. The mayor of the City of Ames visited our location as well.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION THEATER

Vivian M Cook, Graduate student in CRP and Sustainable Agriculture coordinated the activities organized by Climate Change Action Theater. They performed twice at the site and attracted great audience. Vivian works as a member of The EcoTheatre Lab and the Ames Climate Action Team. She is also a co-producer of Focal Theatre Lab and ISU's One Day Plays, and volunteer for The Community Academy.

Charissa Menefee, professor of English and theatre and the production's director this year, cast and ensemble of Iowa State students and alumni. During early rehearsals, the team reflected on skills, stories and experiences they can contribute to the international Climate Change Theater Action initiative and how to engage the community in contributing those same types of resources to local climate action planning.



BAREFOOT PATH. SENSORY EXPLORATIONS

OBJECTIVE

Sensory Urbanism calls for greater exposure of residents to their senses. They can observe how the city looks and experience how it feels, smells, and sounds. In the end, sensory urbanism is about delving deeper into what makes up a "city's texture." Different cities might look increasingly similar but feel different as the residents experience them by walking, cycling, or driving through them. In this experiment, the residents were asked to walk through a barefoot

sensory path filled with different materials and textures (from our city) for the touch, feel and sense - pictures, pebbles, water of varied temperatures, grass, pavement, etc. along with activities to be done separately or together with other participants.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

A neighborhood with underserved or marginalized community populations.



WHAT

In this activity, residents were involved through the use of a sensory experiment of Touch. They were instructed to walk on a set of pre-selected materials and then asked a series of questions to help them identify the materials and recall memories associated with them.

HOW

We first evaluated and selected the materials that symbolized various textures of the city we encounter on a daily basis. They ranged from Industrial and Playful (bubble wrap) to Construction (brick, rubber mulch), Farmland (hay, grass), Nature (sand, a combination of pebble and water), and a box of Playful material for the conclusion (Orbeez/water beads).

LEARNING COMPONENT

The barefoot path concentrated on exploring experiences in a city through many different senses. We asked questions related to the memories connected with the materials and the feelings about the experienced materials. The learning component was related to learning more about the perception of the city by the participants and also about the materials used and their likability. We also asked the participants about their experience in the City of Ames, what they like about Ames, and what they would like to be improved.

TIME NEEDED

Time taken per individual was roughly 10 - 20 min.

PREPARATION

Selection of the materials and design of the order of the materials. Purchase of the Barefoot path materials. Preparation of the barefoot path at the site. Set up the site with tables, chairs, and beverages.

PERMISSIONS

No city permissions were needed.

MATERIAL

- Bubble Wrap
- Stone Brick
- Rubber Mulch
- Hay
- Sand
- Pebble and water
- Orbeez
- Wet towels

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

The activities can be used to inform people of the various public services within the city. To educate and attain views on how the city could be designed to be more efficient.

FRANKLIN PARK: HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by Vishnu Priya Sairamesh

Highlights

Barefoot path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids loved the Barefoot path, many tried going in more than 3 times. • The transition of textures in the game worked well. • There were many playful suggestions for varied textures that people wanted to try out in the future.
Breathing game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting with the textures of the space was a hit. Participants explored the park with different materials and were very excited to make something colorful that they could take back home.
Talk with your city planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 3 city officials at the site. They were very approachable and helpful.
Yoga for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle was amazing! There was detox / destress yoga, kids yoga, stretching, meditation, etc. Participants explained how refreshed they felt after finishing with a session and many said they would be happy to sit again for more if they had enough time.
Virtual Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone enjoyed VR! It was truly FUN! Even though it was a small set up, it gave the chance for participants to explore the technology.
Climate Change Action Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very educational and creative. The talented group did 3 sets of performances. They talked about climate change and how we as the public need to understand the importance of it and can act upon it. A petition was requested to be signed by all interested in the support of the climate action plan. During their break, they also happily participated and explored the other activities.

Observations

Barefoot path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult participants as well seemed to enjoy the path, but not so much / as playful that they would do it again. There was more excitement and suggestions from kids than from adult participants. The majority of the participants enjoyed the Bubble Wrap and Orbeez the most.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many adult participants did not want to take their shoes off and try the barefoot path.
Breathing game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire breathing game from step 1 till the swing was tried out completely by 7/10 participants, others went directly to the painting or the swing. • Many enjoyed exploring the park, finding something to sketch with paint on a piece of paper. Many suggested their favorite place to be parks, which tells us how important Franklin Park was for the community even though it was not crowded most of the time. • At times, it seemed that the game did not attract many participants. The instructions were written on the posters. We would need a few people being engaged in entertaining the participants and showing them different postures. This would attract more people to try the prepared exercise.
Talk with your city planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did not recognize if the people who visited benefitted from this. This was an excellent idea to have them on site. But it felt like there needed to be an icebreaker.
Yoga for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity was very refreshing. Participants surely seemed to enjoy it. I got feedback saying how some participants feel content after the session.
Virtual Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone enjoyed VR! Even though it was a small set up, it gave the chance for participants to explore the technology. • At times the station seemed to be empty. More energy needs to be created around a small setting like that. Big posters or a more entertaining approach so that the participants can see the benefit of trying the equipment.
Climate Change Action Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I felt the theatre group or the public in general would have been even more benefitted if we were able to get more locals to participate in the event.

What would you do differently?

Barefoot path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I guess what was planned worked well, but to make it more interesting, I would probably redesign the activity, add more playful textures that people can touch with their hands, that they could taste, etc. • And have a board where people could use a sticky notes or draw their vision for the space (in this case Franklin Park).
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Breathing game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The questionnaires need to be taken more seriously when asked. The painting, breathing game, and swing were all good and people enjoyed it, but some skipped the questions regarding the city. How can we improve the game such that people are more aware of their breathing? Maybe having just yoga & painting would have sufficed? This needs to be re-evaluating and testing of these activities beforehand.
Talk with your city planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maybe request a set of city planners to walk around and merge with the population while also asking them questions.
Yoga for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the locals more informed so that they can definitely benefit from this.
Virtual Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maybe try having a VR of different parts of the city and asking people questions related to the future development of a space. Reaching out more to the locals and including the VR in advertising, whether it was a small or large set up. It is important to acknowledge the efforts of the people in charge and the amenity.
Climate Change Action Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise beforehand, reaching out and inviting people. Having a discussion or feedback on climate change following each session.

Many local residents noticed the activities but were not aware that they were “welcome” to the event. We were trying to meet with the local community leaders (if any) and people in the community personally. Creating awareness of the initiative beforehand may help local residents understand and participate more.

Visions for the future

Barefoot path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue making residents more aware of the city's textures, as well as how these ideas interact and are beneficial. Using the experiment to raise awareness while also asking participants questions about the city.
Breathing game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity builds healthy habits in people's lives. The breathing game and Yoga for all was supposed to make people more aware of their breathing patterns of self and the relation of breathing to a space.
Talk with your city planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to understand and concentrate on one major goal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create meaning, ask questions, and discuss the future development of a space (Franklin Park). We could have 8-10 people gather and have a discussion together.
Yoga for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to the locals beforehand. • Creating a good habit through such engagement strategies would be truly fruitful for the public and for organizations that teach or represent the same habits.
Virtual Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the technology to showcase issues and ask or plant questions in people's minds regarding the future development of the space and its relation to their lives.
Climate Change Action Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating awareness on climate change and the importance of shifting to sustainable and renewable strategies in daily life – solar roofs, vegetable gardens at home, etc. • Awareness on city level and house level of climate problems and possible solutions would be very educational and useful. Having a small discussion session with the city officials regarding the Climate Action Plan of the city would also be good.



1.3. Location 3: EAST 7TH STREET

Led by Fatema Nourin, ISU Community and Regional Planning Graduate Student
Email: fnourin@iastate.edu

Engagement activities and students involved:

- Digital mapping of benches (Timothy Tobin and Jimmy Pechman)
- Paper-mapping of unsafe places (Thomas Kosacz and Max Gula)

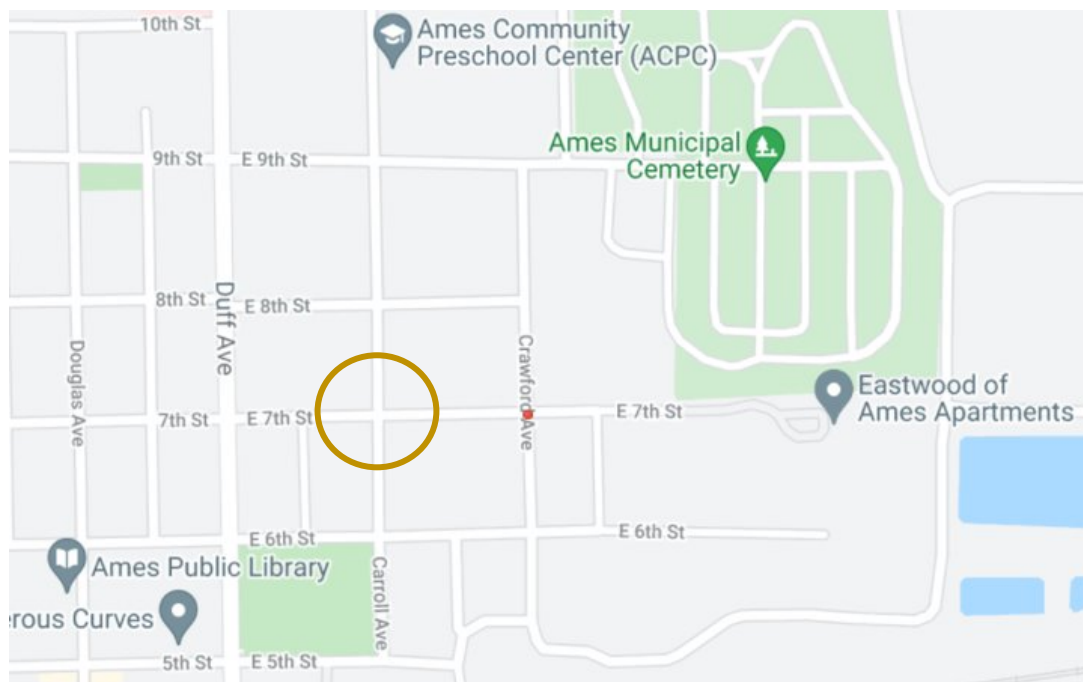
Collaborators: ISU Pop-up van with Virtual Reality equipment

Evaluation:

- Photo ethnography, Engagement survey, Kids-friendly survey

Present at the site:

- City officials and urban planners





DIGITAL MAPPING. BENCHES

OBJECTIVE

The main objective was to engage the residents of East 7th Street to learn about geographic information systems, the possibility to use an online application for data collection, and to learn how to map benches through digital mapping. Additionally, the objective was to explore spatial thinking together with the citizens and teach about different visualizations, scales and map representations.

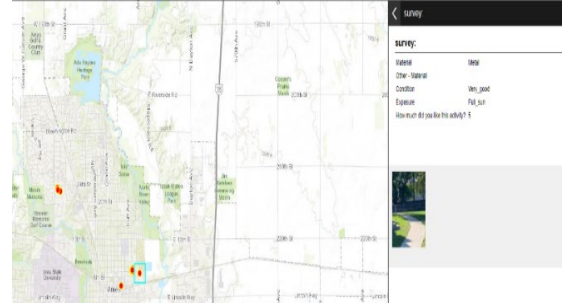


LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

The dedicated location is at East 7th Street, Ames, Iowa. Specifically, we were located at the intersection of the East 7th Street and Carrol Street to be visible to the residents.

It is important to be seen by the residents so that it was “on the fly” engagement with the community. All the space we needed for the activity was one table, where we created our mini

“prep station” with the Spot-the-Differences game and the QR code for the Mapping. Also, we needed a few chairs for some of our elderly participants.



WHAT

We used a table as a “prep station” where we initiated the paper mapping task with the Spot-the-Differences game. We used three versions of the game: 1. different representation of the same location, 2. different scales for the same area, and 3. different layers. We showed the pictures as part of the preparation for the digital mapping activity and then lead the discussion towards representation, scale, and accuracy. In the last picture, showing two layers vs. one layer, we discussed that in the next step, we are going to create a layer of benches. Then, we passed around the QR code used to access the digital mapping tool. We provided a short demonstration about how to deal with the mapping component and the questionnaire component. The participants then walked to the bench, mapped the location into the digital map and inserted the attributes into their mobile device. At the end as a reward for the completion of the task, we offered candies, fruits, balloons, and inflatable globes to the participants, depending on the age of the participant.

HOW

1. Explaining spatial scale: We prepared two paper maps. One with a scale of 1:100,000 and another with a scale of 1:10,000. The participants had the task to observe on which map they could see more detail and why.
2. Explaining spatial accuracy: What is the meaning of accuracy and why it varies.
3. Teach them about ArcGIS Survey 123.
4. Teach them how to use ArcGIS Survey 123; how just one tap can demarcate a bench location and how they can take a picture so that they can contribute to creating the inventory whenever they have time.
5. Take them around the neighborhood to map the benches.

LEARNING COMPONENT

In the Play Ames festival, the residents perceived the digital mapping as learning opportunity. So the parents wanted their kids to participate and learn about scale and accuracy. We also observed that some participants were intimidated by the learning component, so they explored the other activities on the East 7th Street instead.

The participants knew their favorite places in the neighborhood, where they liked to spend time with their friends and family, and where they think needs some improvements. They can use their outdoor time by contributing to the neighborhood resource inventory through digital mapping.

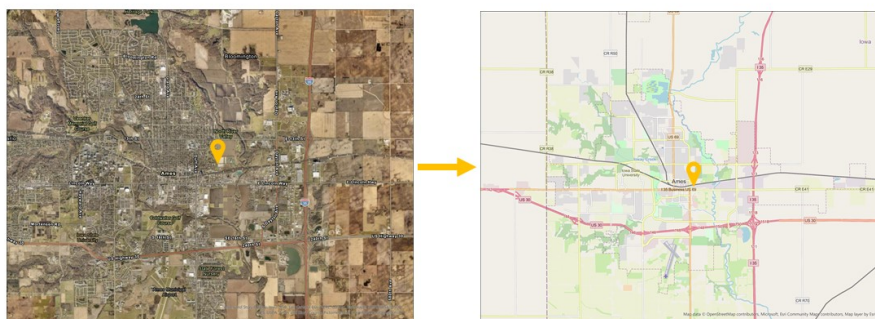
TIME NEEDED

We conducted the activity on September 25th as an ongoing activity from 1:00 PM to 4:45 PM instead of conducting the activity in cycles as the scale of the event was small. But for the future, the recommended time would be about three hours at the duration of this activity at a festival. Time needed for one cycle of the tasks (teaching about scale, accuracy and how to take pictures of a bench): around 10 minutes, but if we walk a bit more around the neighborhood, it will take longer. Also, it is recommended to conduct this activity with a small group of people instead of conducting it with individuals for increased efficiency.

PREPARATION

Fatema Tuz Johra Nourin, Timothy Tobin, Robert Pechman put together six GIS maps as pictures for the Spot-the-Differences game. The ArcGIS Survey123 was prepared online so that the participants could access it on their mobile devices. They were able to access it through the QR code given to them. 100 copies of QR codes were printed and given to the participants. Also, the graphical steps were printed in paper to be able to show them to the participants.

Can You Spot The Differences And Similarities?



How Many Trees Can You See?



How Many Trees Can You See?



Can You Spot The Differences And Similarities?



PERMISSIONS

We needed the permission and help of the city of Ames to close the intersection for our engagement activities.

MATERIAL

- Paper maps represented as the Spot-the-Differences game.
- Pen and paper for a tally of the participants.
- Smartphones, both ours' and the participants'.
- QR codes to access the digital mapping tool.

- A ready digital map to collect records entered by the residents.

QR Code for Digital Mapping



COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

Digital mapping can help city planning in many ways:

- A festival can act as preparation to teach the residents how to participate in a digital mapping activity. These residents can help the city to create inventory of roadside resources of benches, poles etc.
- Electronic inventory can help to indicate which resources require maintenance.
- Updated inventory can help the help the city to plan ahead which resources to repair

PAPER MAPPING. UNSAFE PLACES

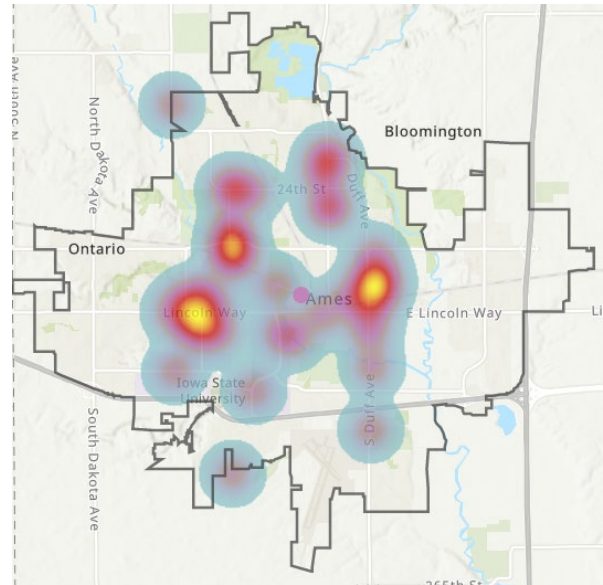
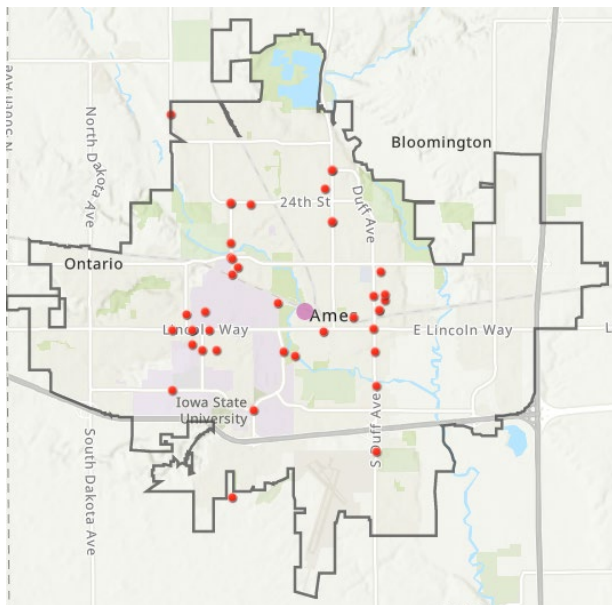
OBJECTIVE

The objective was to collect the locations and descriptions of unsafe places; places at which the residents do not feel safe. We concentrated on the City of Ames.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

The location identified for this activity was East 7th Street. We needed a table and some chairs for this activity.



WHAT

The idea was to invite the residents to share their personal experiences with places in Ames. We were particularly interested in places they consider unsafe. Additionally, we asked them to describe these places and also select the emotions they feel at these places from a list of emotions.

HOW

We used a big paper map covered with a transparent layer that allowed it to be written on. Additionally, there were paper questionnaires available to be filled out. Each questionnaire was associated with a number and the same number was given to the selected unsafe places indicated on the map. This data was then be inserted into a GIS database in order for the team to be able to visualize the gathered results in a GIS map. The pictures above show the locations of unsafe places in Ames (left) and the high concentration of such places indicated with yellow and red colors. We collected 46 places and intend to continue with the experiment in order for us to gather some more data and be able to start noticing some patterns.

LEARNING COMPONENT

The residents learned how to use a paper map and how to navigate and search for places on a paper map. They could also share their experience and learn about other residents' experiences with safety in the city in which they live. They learnt to orient and navigate in their imagination

with the help of a paper map. They learned basics of spatial thinking and could also share their emotions and affects related to their selected unsafe places.

TIME NEEDED

The activity took about 30 minutes for the participant to engage with the paper map and fill out the questionnaire.

PREPARATION

- Printed a paper map
- Bought a transparency and pens to write on it
- Designed a questionnaire
- Printed paper questionnaires
- Selected the location for the festival/activity
- Organized a desk and chairs
- Organized little giveaways for the participants

PERMISSIONS

The city had to allow us to organize this activity in the middle of an intersection.

MATERIAL

- Printed paper map
- Transparency and pens to write on it
- Printed questionnaires
- Pens and pencils

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

A city councilor was present at the site with a painted bike. She gave rides to the participants, and it was fun and enjoyable. Several city officials and urban planners joined the site. Also, there was a police officer/chief at the site. The topic of safety engaged many participants and residents of the neighborhood, and it was nice to see them in a conversation with the police officer and city officials. This is a good topic and may open up doors for collaboration, discussion and sharing. It is important to everyone to feel safe and appreciated in their own city.

The activity can also encourage discussions about places the residents really like, things they really like in the City of Ames and perhaps talk about the opposite; the issues and problems they see.

POP-UP VAN. VIRTUAL REALITY

OBJECTIVE

- Demonstrate the new, virtual reality technologies.
- Talk about planning and novel technologies.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

The initial location was at East 7th Street, Ames, Iowa. However, any location with a possibility to park a van, enabling access to the van by the residents, would be appropriate.



WHAT

Flex Forward Learning Experience. FLEx is a mobile learning program for advanced design technology benefitting 3rd through 12th grade students and beyond in a 21st century paradigm. Structured around STEM, design thinking, 21st Century skills, and University Constructs (4 C's), this environment extends distant educational offerings by delivering full-scale augmented and virtual visualization, digital to real prototyping, circuit bending and visual programming. As an Iowa State University design outreach program for lowans, FLEx can visit classrooms, schools, libraries, science and art centers, educational conferences and other community events

throughout the state. Programs can be offered inside or outside, weather permitting, to best complement the learning environment and event.

HOW

By using the pop-up van with the equipment allowing the residents to test, explore and learn about virtual and augmented reality.

LEARNING COMPONENT

- Learn about novel virtual reality
- Test virtual reality equipment
- Optional: Play an online game
- Optional: Learn about urban planning

TIME NEEDED

Participants can stay as long as they wish, but should also be aware of other and give them the opportunity to participate in the activity.

PREPARATION

Contacted Assist. Prof. Pete Evans (<https://www.design.iastate.edu/faculty/pmevans/>), Coordinator for FLEx (Forward Learning Experience) – a mobile design & STEM outreach program. Coordinated with Yamille X. Perez, program specialist, to arrange for their presence at the site.

PERMISSIONS

Permissions to park the van needed by the City of Ames.

MATERIAL

FLEx program opportunities:

- Interactive Virtual Reality
- 3D Printing
- Augmented Reality
- Immersive visualization with Oculus Rift
- Circuit Bending with Little Bits

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

Connect with mapping experience and talk about places in Ames. Combine with a questionnaire.

EAST 7TH STREET: HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by Fatema Nourin

Highlights

- Getting participants from the Eastwood apartments to attend. In person invitations were effective.
- Getting participants from all age groups.
- Both younger and older participants were fascinated by the virtual reality.
- More younger participants participated in the digital mapping and the Spot-the-Differences game.
- A major number of participants mentioned “Stange Road” as one of the dangerous paces for biking.
- The giveaways - balloons, candies, fruits, inflatable globes - worked well as a reward for participation.

Observations

- Some older people were intimidated by the “digital mapping,” so they let their younger family members participate. They were perceiving digital mapping as a learning tool for their younger family members.
- In general, people did not seem to be very interested in creating a data inventory of the city and helping collect data.
- Generally, they were rather interested in knowing how they can be benefitted from this activity in the future.
- People like to know that “we care” about them rather than getting another task that they should care for or about (for example, building a bench inventory).
- They perceived the paper mapping of “unsafe places” as a notion that we care about their safety.
- Being on the street made us “seen” and approachable, which could be one of reasons for better turnout at this location.

What would you do differently?

- I believe, instead of hosting events in 4 different parts of the city, the festival could have benefitted if located in the same vicinity (at least in the nearby blocks) by the laissez-faire effect.

- We got a suggestion from one of our participants that some fun transport like the man pulled cart that the city of Ames provided (even paid), would be a fun way to transport people from one activity booth to another activity booth.
- The 5-hour long activity was very tiring. I recommend preparing people in groups for maximum 2-3 hour to be on the site.
- A large digital display (easily visible) of the live digital mapping (through a laptop or projector or any digital displayer), would make the task less intimidating and more interesting and inspiring for the participants.

Visions for the future

- Hosting this festival “yearly” as people like to use opportunities like this to express their opinions about the city and where they want to see changes - for example, many people mentioned that they feel unsafe on Stange Road.
- Each year, there could be a different location with a different theme.



1.4. Location 4: 5th STREET AND BURNETT AVENUE

Led by **Natalie M. Jacobson**, ISU community and regional planning undergraduate student
Email: nmjake@iastate.edu

Engagement activities and students involved:

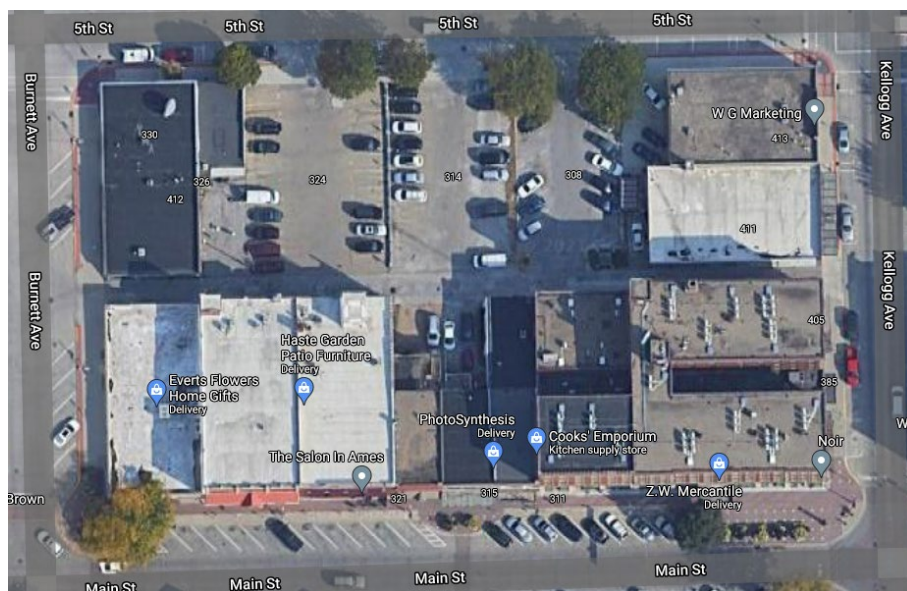
- Art Ally (Jeev Sodhi, Kaleb Stevens, Hailey Holder)

Supporting activities

- Local Artist Siricasso

Evaluation

- Photo ethnography, Engagement survey, Kids-friendly survey



ART ALLEY. PAINT BY NUMBER MURAL

OBJECTIVE

The main objective was to bring the residents together in a collaborative painting activity. This location consisted of an interactive paint by number mural the residents of Ames filled in. The usage of collaborative art in this setting gave insight to the unifying front art can bring to communities. This was an exercise in place making and the power of art to bring people of all ages together in one space. This location also provided an educational experience for all involved.

Participants were instructed to paint and fill in the number areas with the corresponding number of the paint colors.



LOCATION AND SPACE NEEDED

The location selected was in the downtown of the City of Ames on the east side of the buildings on 5th Street and Burnett Ave. Since it was on private property, the business owner worked closely with the team to strategize and alleviate any potential hazards of the working site. The building owner gave us permission to design and execute the mural.



WHAT

The main idea was to establish an art alley concept for the City of Ames. Different locations around the city can be given to artists students to organize collaborative paintings and engage residents in this exciting and creative endeavor.

Inspiring examples of other cities:

- Rapid City: <https://www.artalleyrc.com/>

- Kansas City: <https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/art-alley-kansas-citys-street-art-museum>
- South Dakota: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/art-alley>
- San Francisco: <https://www.sftravel.com/article/guide-san-francisco%E2%80%99s-mission-district-murals>

HOW

For the first experiment in Ames:

1. The base coat needed to be painted ahead of the festival as well as the outlining and numbering of the design in sharpie.
2. A color sheet was presented so participants knew which color corresponded with each number.
3. Participants were able to select the color of their choosing and a worker would fill their cup with a small amount of paint.
4. Brushes and aprons were set out for participants to use.

LEARNING COMPONENT

By actively participating, the residents received hands on experience in painting a mural. When they finished, they understood the process and skill level needed to paint and were able to feel accomplished when they saw the finished product. During this time, students and artists were available to answer questions and provide information about murals, paintings, color theory, and different art styles.

TIME NEEDED

The time it takes to complete the mural depended on the number of participants and their engagement in painting. It also depends on the size of the mural. We started the event at noon and were finished with the majority of the painting by 2:30 pm. The finishing touches were then applied and the mural was completed by 4:30 pm that same day.

PREPARATION

Included:

- Purchasing paint and equipment
- Securing mural location
- Priming the wall
- Preparing the outlining and numbering of the mural design

PERMISSIONS

Permission of the owner of the building was needed.

COMBINATION WITH CITY PLANNING

This time, city officials and urban planners were not present at the site throughout the activity. They did stop by briefly to watch the process and see the final result.

Possible topics for the next time: Talk about beauty, colors, things they like and enjoy. What do the residents like? Which places do they like? Why? Where do they like going in Ames? Where would they never go? How can we, together, create an Art Alley in the City of Ames?

5th STREET AND BURNETT AVE: HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by Natalie Jacobson

Highlights

Following the day of the event, seeing everyone, regardless of age, smiling and participating in painting the mural was honestly very fulfilling. We received a lot of compliments about how much fun and how accessible the event was. By far my favorite comment that we got was “Thank you so much for doing this. You made it very accessible and not intimidating to be a part of. You all were so welcoming and engaging.” Which made every single obstacle my team and I had to work through all worth it. At times, this project was stressful and had its bumps in the road; however, seeing my team members being excited and really working towards making this event the best we possibly could was a rewarding highlight all in its own.

Observations

- A great atmosphere, everybody seemed to be in a good mood, good music
- Very enjoyable collaborative activity
- Lots of participants from Farmers Market
 - Handed out flyers during set up hours (11:00-12:00)
 - Some didn't even know and were just walking through to get to their cars
- Great place making and opportunity for conversations
 - Some of the people did not want to participate but their friends did, yet even as they were sitting there was always conversations being held
 - Some with strangers who were sitting on the chairs nearby just watching the process
 - Some were sitting with our team members
- The flow of participants seemed chaotic at times
- People were in and out in 15 minutes, so a short turnaround time

What would you do differently?

If I were to go back and do this project again, I would first take more time explaining to the students what exactly it is we are doing and what we are trying to accomplish. I just jumped into the event and planning because I assumed they had gotten a clear picture of the festival when that was not

the case. Secondly, I would spend more time, overall, laying out logistics. Some things fell apart as we got closer to the start and finish time and there was a lot of confusion on whose role was what. Where does this go? How should we set this up/layout the event? Who is picking up what? When are they going to be here to do so? When my team asked me these questions, I had no clue what to say. So personally, having a better game plan and clear timeline is essential to a successful and well put together event. With the timeline, I would also make sure that the marketed events can be realistically implemented in the time frame, and if not voicing the time concerns and how that will not fit into the scope of the project. Live music was a great idea; however, with no money to pay the bands not many people were willing to come and play. On top of that we did not give them enough notice as many bands and people like to have a month or so to prep and pull together a set list before performing. Thirdly, having more activities at the site to enable participants to hang around a little longer would be beneficial. Like I noted in my observations there was a quick turnaround time and so while they were having good conversations.

Visions for the future

With the positive feedback we received, I think this has potential to be very useful in gathering people for quick information checks. Participants did not hang around all that long, so having more there for participants to do would increase time for conversations and civic engagement. Whether that be live music, an open mic where residents can just walk up and showcase their talents, smaller side crafts, or even more artists out there creating and showcasing their work, all would be very beneficial to the overall turnout of the event. I would love to see this being done in other cities. I feel it is a great way for the public to feel connected to their community. Residents drive by and point out “hey I helped make that” and feel like they have made their mark on the city they call home.



2. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTED ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Evaluation of the methods used is a fundamental part of this festival. The goal was to establish evaluation methods that may help identify which engagement methods work for which activities, locations tasks and residents. We decided to experiment with Photo ethnography and an Engagement survey to get feedback about the engagement methods and their acceptance by the residents of the City of Ames. Additionally, a kids-friendly survey was developed for the kids to be able to express their preferences and share their experience with us.

- **PHOTO ETNOGRAPHY**

A research group of four students explored the method of taking pictures and studying them for the purpose of engagement and involvement of the residents into the activities presented to them at each location.

- **ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

A research group of four students designed an engagement survey and surveyed participants at the four locations. The survey consisted of a set of questions related to the likability and playfulness of each of the engagement activities.

- **KIDS-FRIENDLY SURVEY**

Additionally, a kids-friendly survey was designed with the aim to ask kids about their preferences and their experience of the engagement activities.



2.1. PHOTO ETNOGRAPHY

By Ben Woeber, Andrew Snyder, Noah Watson, Sarah Walker

The main goal of our research was to better understand the demographics of the members of the community who participated in the Play Ames community engagement festival. By taking pictures of participants throughout the festival we were able to identify the demographics of those at the different festival locations and those partaking in the various activities. We hope future community engagement events in Ames can use our data to make more informed decisions about where sites should be located throughout the city and which activities should take place to better attract a more diverse segment of the population or targeted groups. To achieve our goal, we took photos of community members participating in different activities throughout the event and developed a spreadsheet with a set of categories participants would be divided into to see which categories are the least or most representative of the overall group of participants in the festival.

The categories we divided participants into included their age range, gender, race, whether they came to the event with family members, their level of engagement in the activities, which activity they were participating in at the time of the photo, the type of apparel they are wearing such as casual, dress up, or athletic wear, and if they interacted with the planner on site. Some of these areas of evaluation allow for more confidence in the accuracy of the data than others. For example, age can be difficult to gauge from a photo. To try to solve this problem age was divided into broad categories but some degree of inaccuracy still exists. Other areas such as gender, race, and apparel type are easier to be sure of but can still contain misidentifications. For example, those who are not gender binary, of mixed races, and wore a combination of apparel types. Additionally, family members and planners may be standing away from an activity which is being photographed making it difficult to tell if individuals are part of a family or if they interacted with a planner.

Reliable street: by Noah Watson

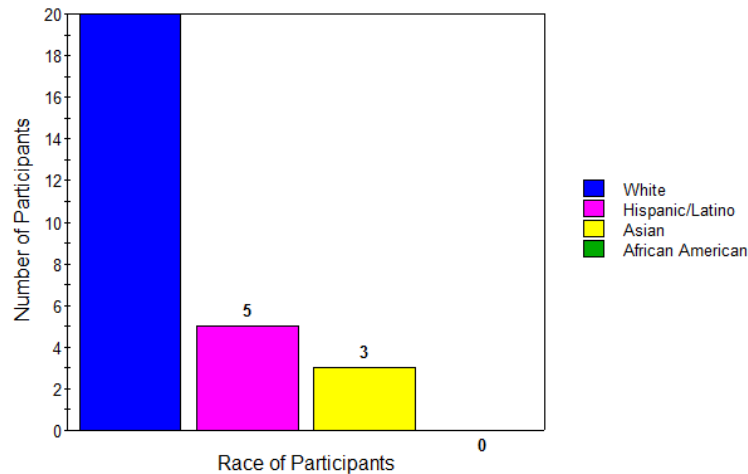
At Reliable Street, I received little backlash on involvement in photos and it was a pleasant experience overall. There was a family that preferred no photos and a couple of families that preferred to have the photos remain purely analytical, but mostly participants were eager to offer up photos of their engagement.

In the following analysis of Reliable Street, I will cover the basic attendance, demographics, and engagement of participants located at the site. I will provide a few photos for reference as well as some charts to give visual comparisons of the data collected.



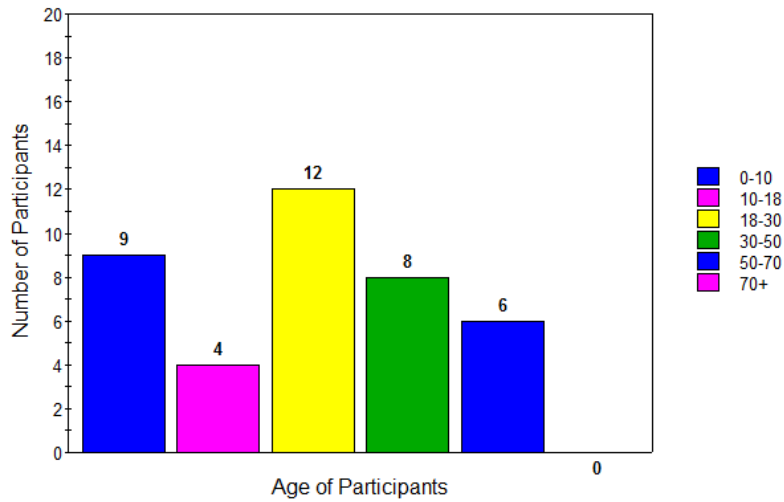
Reliable Street had a successful turnout of about 39 people throughout the day. This was great considering the location was quite far away from the other sites. Within these 39 people, we saw a variety of ages, genders, and engagement, but not a lot of variation in race, with participants being predominantly white/Caucasian. In the graph below, you can see the divide between races amongst the participants.

Race of Participants

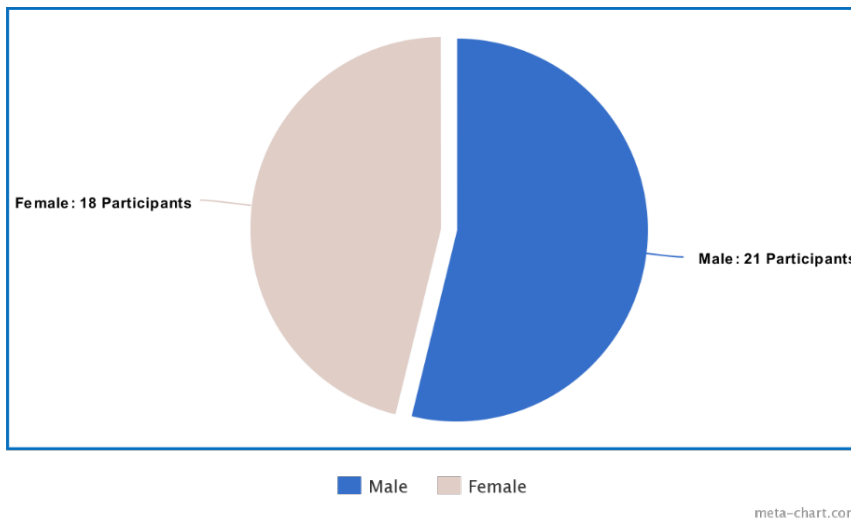


In terms of participation, 31 of the 39 total participants were white. This was very disappointing to see since the goal of this festival was to engage people from all ranges of backgrounds. When we take a minute to look at age and gender, we can see a little more variation. In the following graphs, you will see age ranges of participants as well as the gender distribution.

Age of Participants



Gender of Participants
Photo Analysis of Reliable Street



As you could see in the previous graphs, the ages varied relatively evenly across the board except for those who were 70+ years old. More people aged 18–30-year participated than any other group, which was perfect for our activities. The goal of the origami activity was to gather feedback for the future planning of the city, and individuals falling into this age range can sometimes be the hardest to reach. When looking at gender distribution, you can see that there was only a 3-person difference between male and female participants which was exciting to see. Overall, our site had diversity except when it came to the race of participants.

When collecting this data, I initially attempted to do a 15-minute round to each activity, but this strategy was quickly abandoned for a different one. Instead, as people would make rounds to activities, I would simply follow and capture their involvement. As new participants showed up, I

would switch to them and ensure I captured a photo of their engagement. Thankfully, all activities used the most at Reliable Street took some time and allowed me to run between them with ease.



Two of the three activities located at Reliable Street received a lot of attention and those were origami and gorilla gardening. The board games, on the other hand, received little love except for one family (pictured below) that decided to sit down and learn. Volunteers at the site concluded that it would be best to switch this activity next time in favor of a more hands-on and creative activity.



By the end of the festival, every volunteer at Reliable Street seemed happy with the result. We did not receive the diversity that we were hoping for, but for the debut of the event there was a good

turnout. Many of the participants who came were actively conversing with the students, planners, and each other, which displayed to me the genuine interest they took in this event. Those who chose to come participate left with smiles on their faces and a new perspective on the city of Ames. The photos captured during the event will provide a good insight into what has been done right and what can be improved upon for the future events and I am excited to see what comes next.

Franklin Park: by Andrew Snyder

Franklin Park attendees were very open and engaged when participating in the activities at the location. Although there weren't as many participants as we were hoping for, those that did come were all relatively open to being photographed and surveyed. When photographing participants, I tried to ensure that it attempted to capture the categories for analysis. Some pictures however weren't able to answer these things, such as if they interacted with the planner at each site or their level of engagement in the activities. There were many pictures that were able to help us better understand who was attending the festival and whether or not they were enjoying their time at the festival.

I will highlight five photos that encompass the feelings and attitudes of the festival goers thoroughly. The first photo shows what looks to be two children participating in the sensory walking path attending the festival with what looks to be their parents or grandparents. The kids look to be between the ages of 7-10 and their guardians look to be between the ages of 40-60. The kids look to be very engaged in the activity while the parents are standing to the side, which seemed to be a trend throughout the whole day. The man has his hands in his pockets indicating that he is unsure or hesitant about something, possibly participating in the activity.



In the second photo we see a presumably teenage girl also participating in the walking path activity. This photo captures many different people who appear to be of a variety of different races, which

is what the festival intended to achieve. The girl participating in the walking path appears to be either Asian or Latina, hard to tell because she is not facing the camera. There is what looks to be 2 Indian men on the left side of the photo. The two individuals on the far left of the photo are showing no engagement in the activity, which seemed to be a trend at the walking path and breathing game. Only children and teenagers seemed to have an interest in participating in those events.



In the third photo we see a presumably teenage Latino male participating in the breathing game activity. The painting portion of the breathing game seemed to be the most popular section of Franklin Park, but most participants skipped the remaining portions of the activity. This individual specifically was one of the only festival attendees that was a person walking by that decided to participate. Many of the festival goers seemed to have some prior knowledge of the festival, because most people who attended drove there rather than stumbled upon it just walking by. The main goal of the festival was to attract people from these neighborhoods, and I am not sure if there were many participants from the Franklin Park neighborhood.





In the picture above we see two children who are participating in the painting. In this activity, participants were tasked to paint with objects found in the park, so the boy in the picture is seen with what looks to be a pinecone. There is also a person in the background of the photo who appears to be holding several previous paintings, showing that these children had made multiple paintings already. This activity seemed to appeal very much to children because it let them express themselves through colors and objects from the park.

The last photo I will assess is of festival attendees watching the climate change action theater show. This show ran twice during the festival and took a lot of attendees' attentions away from the other activities. Everyone in the photo is very engaged with the show, and there is no one in the background participating in the other festival activities. The two times the show ran, there was no engagement in the other festival activities which was an issue that was not prepared for. Although the theater actors also participated in the festival activities between shows it was hard to tell who was there from the theater crew and who came to the festival out of their own will.



An additional photo I included just because it captured enjoyment of the festival activities. Although there were not as many people as some expected, the people who did attend seemed to really enjoy the activities that we had.



Overall, the festival was a success because it was intended to draw in minorities from underrepresented communities. Although I'm not sure how many of the people that attended the festival at Franklin Park were from the neighborhood, there were a lot of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It felt like there were people of all different social classes and income brackets. There were also a lot of encouraging words from people who attended saying that they really enjoyed the festival activities, which was very encouraging.

Some things that could be improved are that the activities could appeal to both children and adults. It seemed like most of the parents of the children did not want to join or did not see the point of the activities. I'm not sure exactly why that was, but one possibility was the fact that in most activities you had to go barefoot. From what I remember, only one parent participated in the sensory path activity, and that is likely due to them not wanting to take their shoes off. I also noticed that the VR station at Franklin Park didn't get much usage, which surprised me because it is a popular technology that appeals to most people.

A few things that I would do next time to improve the overall experience and quality of the festival would be to place it close to a major road or walking path. The issue with our location is that it was too secluded from any road, so we were not able to attract many people passing by. There were only a couple people that came up who had no prior knowledge of the festival, and they were there at the park to play basketball. I also wouldn't have the theater section next time because I felt like it took away from the engagement of other festival activities. I remember one specific instance where I was trying to encourage someone to participate in the breathing game and she told me she

was only there to watch the climate change theater. Lastly, I think one location rather than four separate locations would be beneficial to attract more people overall. I'm not sure about every other site, but Franklin Park did not have that many people attend, which was because of multiple reasons, but one being that there were three other locations with a variety of different activities.

I liked my role in the group, but I feel like the survey and photovoice groups should have been one large group from the start. There was much communication between the groups before the festival, and Spencer (from the survey group) and I found out that there was a lot of overlap between the two groups' work. Overall, the festival was an immense success and I think with a few changes it can continue to grow and be highly successful in the future.

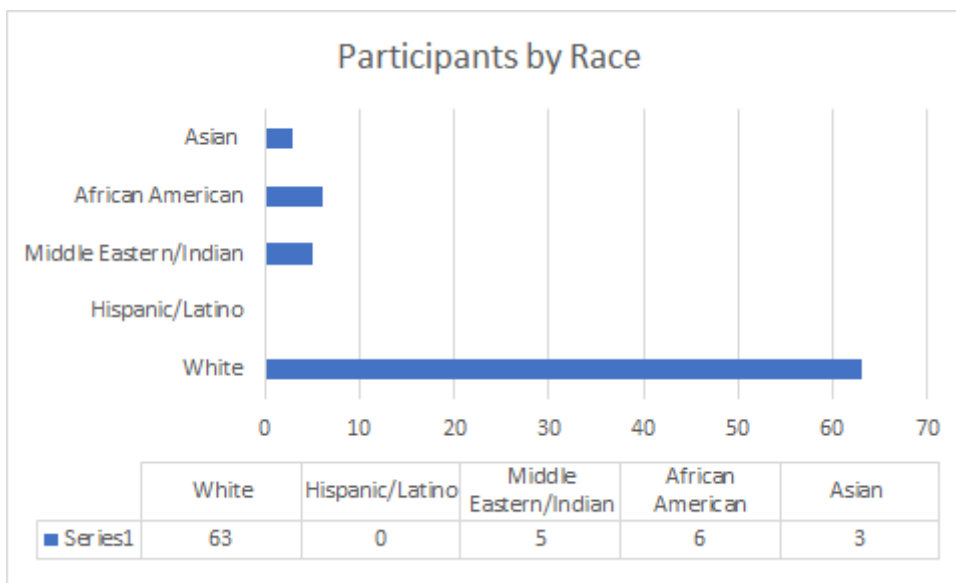
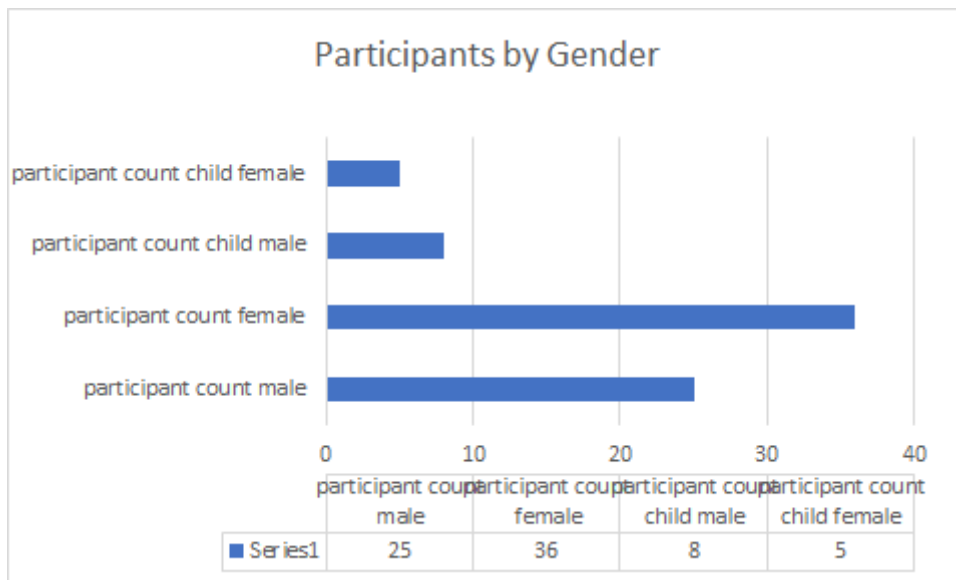
East 7th Street: by Sarah Walker

At the East 7th Street location, the activities revolved around GIS mapping and technology. There was a surprise activity brought by one of the Ames City councilors that was a bicycle with a rickshaw type seat. This activity was popular with both children and adults who came to the site.



The other activities at the East 7th Street site were divided in appeal between adults and children. The mapping activities were predominately completed by adults while the virtual reality and 3D printing were the activities the children were interested in. With the exception of 2 white men both over the age of 50, 2 white women both over the age of 50, and 2 African American women both between the ages of 18-30, all adult participants engaged in all of the activities provided at the East 7th Street location. Of those who did not participate in all activities, 1 of the men only participated in taking the engagement survey and the virtual reality simulation. He did however watch his wife participate in all of the activities. The other man who did not do all the

activities only did the virtual reality simulation. Both the 2 white women and the 2 African American women only did the safety map activity. Of the children who participated, 2 white male children participated in the safety map activity, but no female children participated. For the GIS simulation activity, 6 white male children, 1 African American male child, and 1 Asian male child as well as 2 white female children, and 1 Asian female child participated. Demographically, more women participated in the site activities and the overwhelming majority of participants were white.



While there was a good turnout at the site, the length of the activities allowed me to photograph each participant at each activity. This created multiple photos of the same participants making analysis of data difficult to code. The planned methodology was to rotate every 15 minutes between activities. However, the setup of the site resulted in all the activities being very close together or sharing a table space. As a result, I did not have to move around to see all the activities and could

photograph each participant at each activity. The setup was at an intersection with tables on 3 of the 4 sides. The engagement survey and the city planners were at a table directly perpendicular with the table for the safety map and GIS similarity map activities. Across the intersection was the virtual reality van and 3D printer table. This setup was conducive for the participants to talk with the city planners since the planners were there striking up conversations with the participants as they waited to do an activity or as the next progression in the line of activities for the participants to complete.

While the setup at the site was well designed to accomplish discussions with the city planners and had a good flow to direct participants to each activity, the location was somewhat out of the way. It was not easily seen by passing motorists or pedestrians who were not already on the street of the location. It was suggested to me by some of the participants I spoke with that food trucks or music would improve the site's appeal for participants. There were also multiple comments about 2 sites that had virtual reality activities being located too far apart and the desire to not want to drive that far to participate in the activities.

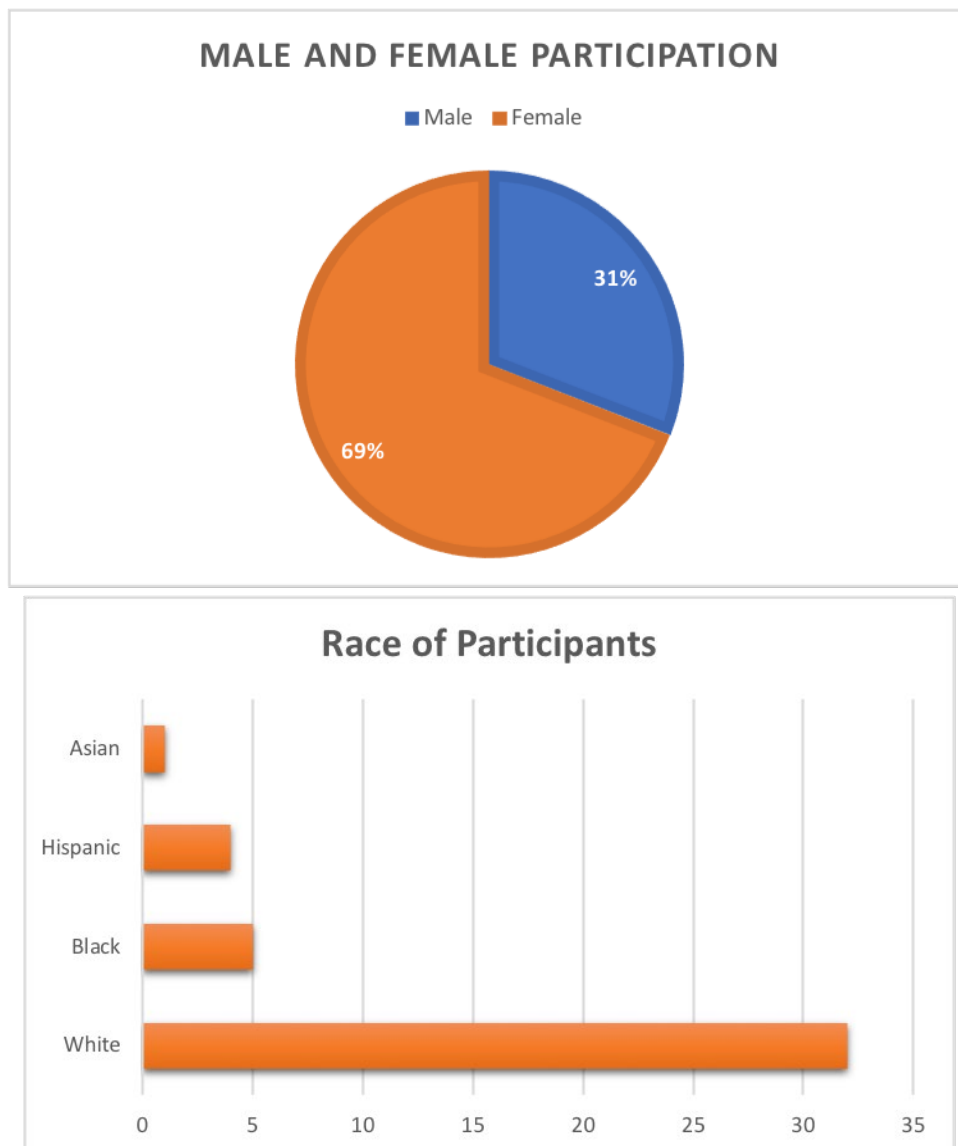
5th Street and Burnett Avenue: by Ben Woeber

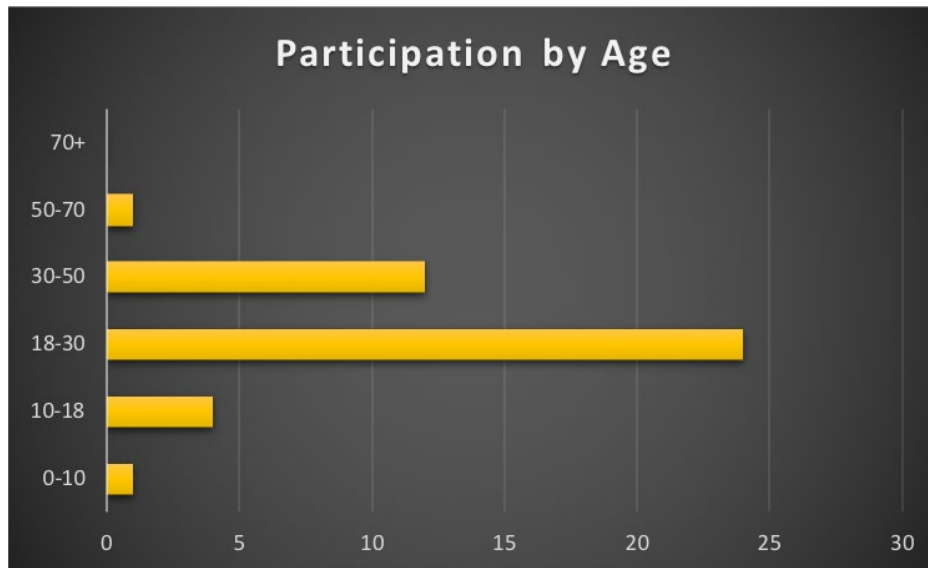
At the mural painting located near the intersection of 5th St. and Burnett St. in downtown Ames, it was difficult to take pictures of participants that would yield the most helpful data since they were turned toward the wall and had their backs to the camera. Determining which age category the participants fell into was especially difficult when they were facing away from the camera. To mitigate this, I tried to take pictures of participants as they walked to and from the mural and when they were getting painting supplies.



When looking at the pie chart below, which shows the gender makeup of participants at the 5th Street and Burnett Street mural, we can see the majority of participants are female at 69% compared to 31% which are male. This is perhaps due to the proximity to the Ames Farmers Market where two groups of college females had come from previously as well as the pervading sentiment that painting and art in general are more feminine activities, which I don't agree with but unfortunately is a viewpoint I know exists.

The race of participants who painted a section of the mural, shown below, was overwhelmingly White/Caucasian with 32 of the 42 people photographed being white. The rest of the racial groups do not exceed five participants.





The chart above represents the broad age ranges of those who participated in painting the mural. It shows that two age groups, those aged between 18-30 and those between 30-50, were the most represented at the location. Perhaps this is also representative of the same age ranges who attended the farmers market or are likely to shop downtown?

The other categories were much more homogenous in terms of the results. For example, at the mural location the planner was not present for very long so almost no participants interacted with her. The participants who painted a section of the mural were generally enthusiastic about the painting while those who were not were not photographed as much since they were not participating in the event. However, it can be difficult to determine enthusiasm from pictures as well. Only one family participated in the mural painting. Additionally, most participants had casual clothing on, with a few participants wearing athletic apparel, and none in business clothing.

Overall, the participants at the mural painting near 5th St. and Burnett St. were mostly female, white, and between the ages of 18-50. The 18-30 age category was higher than it otherwise might have been due to classmates inviting their friends to participate in painting the mural. Those who participated in painting a section of the mural were enthusiastic and enjoyed it. By dividing the mural into sections, it made it very accessible to people of all skill levels, which made people feel more comfortable and willing to participate. A longer more horizontal mural also allowed multiple participants to paint at once. The music being played at the site was helpful at getting people to come and check out the mural, especially since it was not in the most visible location.

In the future, time lapse photography may be useful in gathering images of participants in events. This would be less labor intensive and allow an additional person to engage with participants as opposed to being on the side taking pictures. Getting closer to the wall and taking more side view photos would also have been helpful in being able to better identify participants' characteristics. This may however require more participants to sign photo consent forms since their faces would be

more visible. Filling out forms would also take time away from the photographer and add to the amount of forms/questionnaires participants are asked to fill out.

I really enjoyed my role in the group. I liked making graphs and charts from the excel spreadsheet I made with the data about individual participants. I also like how the graphs were able to show visually the disparities between groups of participants and show what can be improved upon in the future. By making graphs and charts using the data I collected on individual participants I was made more aware of the disparities that exist in the groups of participants and it helped me notice things I did not while at the festival.

2.2. ENGAGEMENT SURVEY: METHODOLOGY

by Emily Rizvic, Shiva Afshari, Daunte Thompson and Spencer Thompson

2.2.1. Introduction

The Play Ames: Imagine your City festival represented an opportunity for the City of Ames to connect more deeply and closely with the city's neighborhoods. Our research aimed opinions and perspectives of participants about the festival and the engagement activities. The original purpose of the Play Ames idea was to engage underrepresented communities in Ames and to get them to feel more comfortable vocalizing their opinions to community leaders. Without formally collecting data, it becomes almost impossible to try and evaluate the success of the festival. That is why an engagement survey is so necessary to this sort of project. Using the data that we collected, we were able to access the opinions the participants expressed about the festival. Their feedback will be helpful to the future festivals in Ames or in other places.



2.2.2. Methodology

The research methodology consisted of the following parts:

1. Developing a standardized paper questionnaire which utilized Likert scale questions and open-ended questions
2. Developing a kids-friendly, picturized survey which was utilized to provide responses to activity enjoyment and focused on kids
3. Surveying participants at all four locations with the help of a dedicated team-member
4. Evaluating and analyzing the results
5. Summarizing the results in a report

Additionally, we developed a Kids-Friendly survey that targeted the young participants of the festival. Participants were asked to respond to a survey at each festival location. The survey was developed to capture the participants' demographic information, their interactions with city officials, and their overall experience, engagement, and learning from the activities. With their responses, our group could analyze participation by different age ranges and different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, responses allowed to analyze participant enjoyment and engagement with the activities and their interactions with city officials.

With the demographic information, we could evaluate the overall participation in the festival activities by analyzing the number of participants from each demographic group and their percentage of the total number of participants. In order to evaluate the engagement and enjoyment of each activity, analyzed the scoring of each activity by the participants using the Likert scale. This report compiles all the Likert scale responses for each activity and reports the number of participants who fell into each section on the Likert scale, providing an overview of the activity. We also evaluated the engagement of each participant with city officials by providing the number of participants who indicated they spoke with at least one city official present at their festival location.

- **Paper questionnaire**

The one (1) page, front and back, paper questionnaire was provided to participants at all four locations to those who were willing to take the survey. A total of fifty-six (56) paper questionnaires were received. A copy of the paper questionnaire is provided in Appendix B. The form included questions regarding the following topics:

1. Level of engagement and enjoyment of activities provided at the festival locations
2. Interactions between participants and City of Ames staff members and councilmembers
3. Demographic information of participants
4. How close participants lived to the festival location
5. Festival highlights

Participants were more willing to fill out the survey after an activity or after conversing with other participants. Additionally, participants were more likely to talk to City of Ames staff and council

members after encountering Question #2 “Did you talk to City Officials? How was that experience?” as at this point, participants were likely to ask the surveyor where the city staff members were located.

- **Kids-Friendly Survey**

The picturized survey allowed kids to indicate their enjoyment of the festival's activities. There were four different attitudes represented and they could place a sticker in the box for each activity indicating how they felt. Similarly, if they did not participate in an activity, they could indicate that by placing a sticker in a “Did not participate” box. The point of this survey was to implement an alternative method to a paper survey, which may not be accessible to all persons, particularly children. Each of the locations had the activities listed in the survey and the level of likability of the activity indicated with the emoticons in different colors. Below is an example developed for Franklin Park.

	 I didn't enjoy this activity	 I sort of didn't like this activity	 I sort of liked this activity	 I really liked this activity	 I did not participate in this activity
Breathing Game 					
Sensory Path 					
Vibe in Flow Yoga 					
Climate Change Theater 					

2.3. ENGAGEMENT SURVEY: RESULTS

Reliable Street

Of the eight (8) paper survey respondents from the Reliable Street location, a majority indicated that they “sort of” enjoyed the activities or “really” enjoyed the activities. Respondents indicated that they enjoyed the Origami and painting a rock for the Guerilla Gardening activity. Figure below shows two younger participants of the event creating origami at the Origami Sidewalk of Dreams

table. Participants in the festival ranged from younger populations such as two (2) and up to participants over the age of sixty-five (65). Participants of all ages indicated in the survey that they had enjoyed the activities that were present at the festival.

Participants were given the following statements and asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements:

“I felt engaged”

“I enjoyed the activity”

“I learned something new”

Respondents were given a scale between one (1) and four (4). Respondents also were able to indicate if they did not participate in the activity. It should be noted that board game activities were cancelled due to the wind.

Reliable Street Activity Assessment						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Did not Participate
Guerilla Gardening	I felt engaged	0	0	2	3	3
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	2	4	3
	I learned something new	1	1	2	1	3
Origami Sidewalk of Dreams	I felt engaged	0	1	1	4	2
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	1	5	2
	I learned something new	0	1	0	5	2
Board Games	I felt engaged	0	0	1	1	6
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	1	1	6
	I learned something new	0	0	1	1	6

Participant Interactions with the City of Ames

Of the eight (8) paper survey respondents from the Reliable Street location, only two (2) indicated that they had met with and spoken to a representative of the City of Ames. These two responses indicated that the experience was good and that they learned something interesting. One (1) participant specifically stated that they met with councilwoman Rachel Junck.

At Reliable Street, councilmembers and City of Ames staff were provided a table with four (4) chairs and some brochures. Visibility for the City of Ames at the event could possibly be improved by bringing tablecloths with the City's logo or having a standing poster. Interactions between participants and the City of Ames could be boosted by having a potential activity involving council members and staff from the City moderating those activities. This might encourage conversations to organically form between residents of Ames and City Officials.



Franklin Park

The Franklin Park location for the Play Ames festival was in a public park located rather deep within a neighborhood. The overall theme of the location was to engage participants in playing with their senses and to get them to get in touch with their environment. The primary events were: a 10-step breathing game, a barefoot sensory path, climate change action theater, and yoga. There was not a large number of people who volunteered to take the survey, but those who did complete the survey overall seemed to quite like the activities. Residents who participated in the activities really seemed to enjoy them.

Franklin Park Activity Assessment						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Did not Participate
Breathing Game	I felt engaged	0	0	1	2	0
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	1	2	0
	I learned something new	0	1	1	1	0
Sensory Path	I felt engaged	0	0	0	1	2
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	0	3	2
	I learned something new	0	0	0	1	2
Vibe in Flow Yoga	I felt engaged	0	0	0	1	2
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	0	2	2
	I learned something new	0	0	1	0	2
Climate Change Action Theater	I felt engaged	0	0	1	0	2
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	1	1	2
	I learned something new	0	1	0	0	2

Participant Engagement

Overall, at Franklin Park, we faced a unique challenge that most of the other locations did not have to deal with as much, which was a lack of overall activity participation. We decided to make the threshold for surveying to either approach someone who had completed one full activity all the way through, or someone who had partially participated in multiple activities. With this bare minimum set, that actually quite limited the amount of people we could actually complete the survey (less than 15). On top of this low number of qualifications, we had multiple people say no to filling out

the survey and those who did volunteer only filled out minimal details about the festival. Only 3 surveys were fully filled out and the data collection from them was quite limited.

However, the one area that excelled at with surveying at the Franklin Park location was the kids-friendly survey. Due to the way the events were set up, we placed the sticker-based survey next to the art station in the breathing game. This section of the breathing game was VERY popular with children and, just by chance, we think the location ended up inviting the children into taking the survey. The event set them in a very arts-and-crafts mood and the survey followed that vibe so the children were much more willing to participate, granted unknowingly, in a formal survey about their opinions of the festival.



East 7th Street

This festival was located on East 7th street. This location can be described as a neighborhood surrounded by residential homes. Although some participants heard about the activities through friends, social media, and posters, many had joined the event after noticing it on their routine walk through the neighborhood. There were three activities in East 7th Street, which included: 1) Digital Mapping; 2) Paper Mapping; and 3) Virtual Reality.

For the digital mapping activity, a combination of participants' phones and correlated paper maps to get participants acquainted with the GIS and Mapping activities was used. The non-digital mapping activity included a large printed map accompanied with a printed questionnaire. The focus was on mapping unsafe places. The virtual reality and 3D printing activities were provided through a pop-up van.

Participant Engagement

The East 7th Street location had more than fifty (50) participants and twenty-six (26) paper surveys were collected. The majority of responses indicated that the activities were enjoyable, engaging, and informative. Children who participated in this location indicated that they were primarily interested in the virtual reality and digital mapping activities.

21 of the 26 surveyed participants indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” that they were engaged by and enjoyed the Digital Mapping activity. It is noticeable that the other 5 people indicated that they didn’t participate in this activity which means that “all” the people who participated and filled out the paper survey enjoyed and were engaged by the digital mapping. For the part of learning something new from this activity, 18 of the 26 “agreed” that they learned something, 3 participants “disagreed” or “somewhat disagreed,” and 5 people didn’t participate.

For the activity of Mapping, similarly, 21 of 26 surveys “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the enjoyment of and engagement by the Mapping activity. Regarding learning something new, 20 participants said they “agreed” or “somewhat agreed,” which matched the digital mapping activity assessment based on participant rate but was more informative in the distribution of responses.

Lastly, for virtual reality, 14 of the 26 surveys indicated that the participants “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” that they were engaged, enjoyed the activity, and learned something new. The other 12 survey participants did not actually participate in this activity. Compared to other activities, it showed lower participation rates, but all of the participants rated it as enjoyable, engaging and informative.



East 7th Street Activity Assessment						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Did not Participate
Digital mapping	I felt engaged	0	0	3	18	5
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	3	18	5
	I learned something new	1	2	7	11	5
Paper mapping	I felt engaged	0	0	2	19	5
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	6	15	5
	I learned something new	0	1	6	14	5
Virtual Reality	I felt engaged	0	0	1	13	12
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	3	11	12
	I learned something new	0	0	4	10	12

Overall, at this location, there was a great participation and communication of participants with city officials and students



5th Street and Burnett Avenue

This festival was located in downtown Ames on the wall of a business located at 5th Street and Burnett Ave. A block over from this location, the Ames Farmers Market was taking place at the same time. The group at this location handed out flyers for the festival while the farmers market was happening, which resulted in the people leaving the farmers market and those who received the flyers to stop by to participate. This location was advertised to have three activities: 1) Mural painting by number; 2) Live music from local artists; and 3) Artists meet and greet.

Participant Engagement

All 20 surveyed participants of the mural at this festival indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to enjoying the activity. They all indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to being engaged with the mural, and 14 of the surveyed participants “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to having learned something new. 16 of the 20 surveyed participants indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to enjoying the activity for the music part of this festival location. Of the 20 total surveyed, 16 of them “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” that it was engaging, and 16 of the surveyed participants “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” that they learned something new. Lastly, 19 of the 20 surveyed participants indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to having enjoyed the activity. Those same 19 also indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to finding this activity engaging, and the same portion indicated they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” to having learned something after participating.

Overall, this location seemed to be well received by all participants. This festival location benefitted from occurring at the same time and in proximity to the farmers market happening that morning. However, this resulted in the mural being finished in the first few hours of the festival, bringing another suggestion to make the mural larger. It should also be noted that this festival location had no city officials present after the festival's grand opening and that there was not a sticker and picture survey offered.



5th Street & Burnett Ave Activity Assessment						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Did not Participate
Mural painting	I felt engaged	0	0	0	20	0
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	0	20	0
	I learned something new	0	0	6	14	0
Live music	I felt engaged	0	2	3	13	2
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	2	16	2
	I learned something new	0	2	6	10	2
Artists meet and greet	I felt engaged	0	0	3	16	1
	I enjoyed the activity	0	0	2	17	1
	I learned something new	0	0	4	15	1



2.4. KIDS-FRIENDLY SURVEY

The following is the complete results for the kids-friendly survey. The data was not collected for 5th Street and Burnett Ave festival site.

Reliable Street					
	Didn't Enjoy this Activity	Sort of Didn't Enjoy this Activity	Sort of Liked this Activity	I Really Liked this Activity	Did not Participate
Guerilla Gardening	0	0	0	7	0
Origami	0	0	1	5	1
Urban planning games	0	0	1	1	3
Franklin Park					
Breathing game	0	0	0	7	0
Barefoot path	0	0	0	2	0
Yoga	0	0	0	1	0
Climate Change Action Theater	0	0	0	0	0
East 7th Street					
Digital mapping	0	0	1	3	0
Paper mapping	0	0	1	0	0
Virtual Reality	0	0	0	4	0

2.5. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FESTIVAL AS PERCEIVED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Question 4. Participants of the festival were asked what the highlight of the festival was for them and if they would attend the festival again in the future. The following are full written responses from participants:

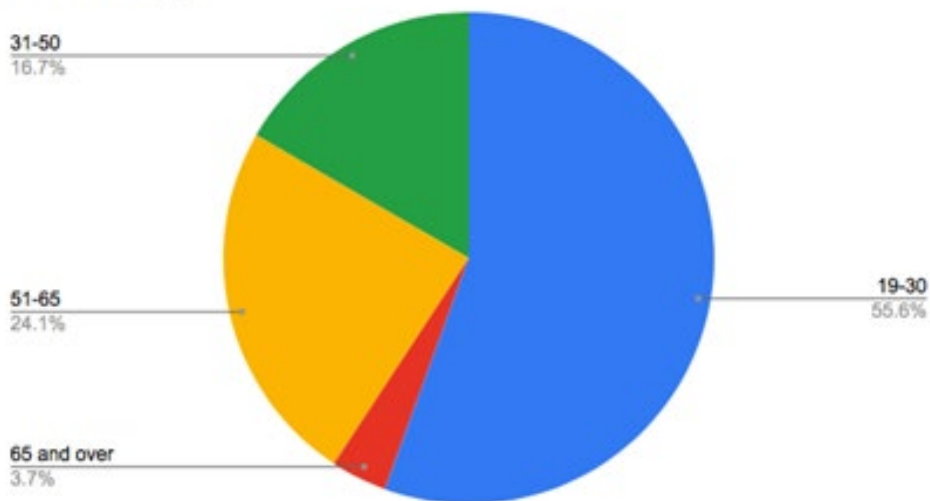
1. There was a lost dog, very relaxed event, I didn't want to take my shoes off for activities
2. Loved the creativity. I would come to a festival like this in the future
3. Painting rocks and talking to Zach (Volunteer)
4. Enjoyed the origami craft & chatting with folks
5. Talking to everyone about why they are here & learning the cause - Yes i'd come back!
6. The guerilla art was cool, would love to come again
7. I liked my friends being involved in the program which is why I attended
8. I enjoyed seeing people of all ages interacting and participating in civic art on a sunny day
9. Yes - I enjoy participating in city activities. It is especially nice to have something happening in West Ames as there aren't many activities, etc. in this area which can be very frustrating and isolating
10. Yes - It was fun and relaxing. Good vibes!
11. People were friendly and engaging. The paint by numbers was simple and still fun. I would come to something like this again
12. So engaging
13. Enjoyable and come again
14. Engaging
15. I like GIS mapping
16. I love it. way to highlight the concepts of city planning
17. great outdoor activity
18. I love virtual reality
22. I loved the mural!! I would absolutely come to another festival like this in the future. Thank you for doing this! :)
23. Loved meeting the students, painting and meeting other residents of Ames.
24. The local art
25. Fun activity for a weekend, enjoyed painting with friends and meeting others. Yes, I would come to a festival like this in the future. It was very engaging and a good way to meet people in the community.
26. Loved the local artist. YES!
27. Very fun! Would love to come paint again =)
28. Yes! -outdoors + paint = a really good time
29. Learning the culture of different states
30. Yes, would come again. Friendliness of painting/activity.
31. So fun! It will be cool to drive by and see it! Yes!
32. Yes! It was so sweet to feel like I got to engage with my community and contribute to my home!
33. Socializing
34. Live music, food, art
35. The mural painting and live music was very fun! I would come again.
36. So engaging
37. I love virtual reality
38. So engaging
39. Integration of isu with the community is great
40. Proud of the City
41. Had fun
42. VR was a big interest
43. Good student communication
44. VR and mapping were great

- 19. So engaging
- 20. Learning new stuff
- 21. Kids were active and I love the local

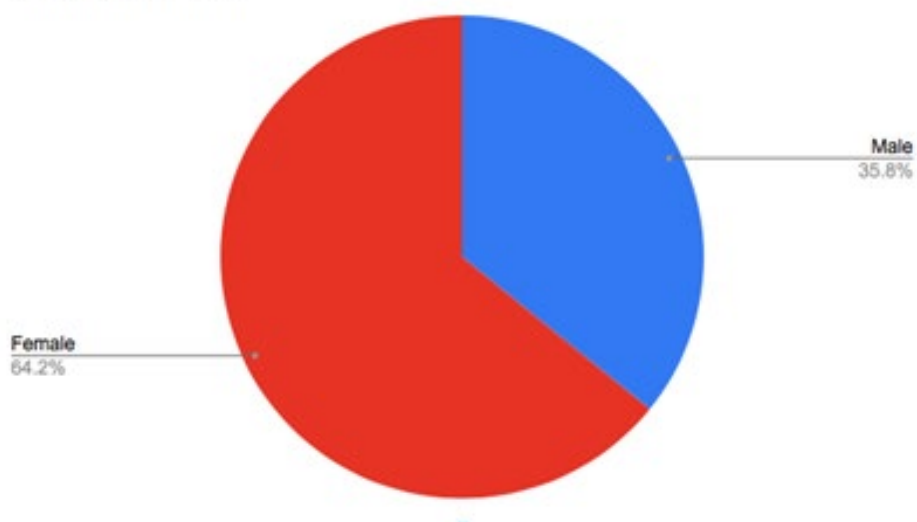
2.6. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

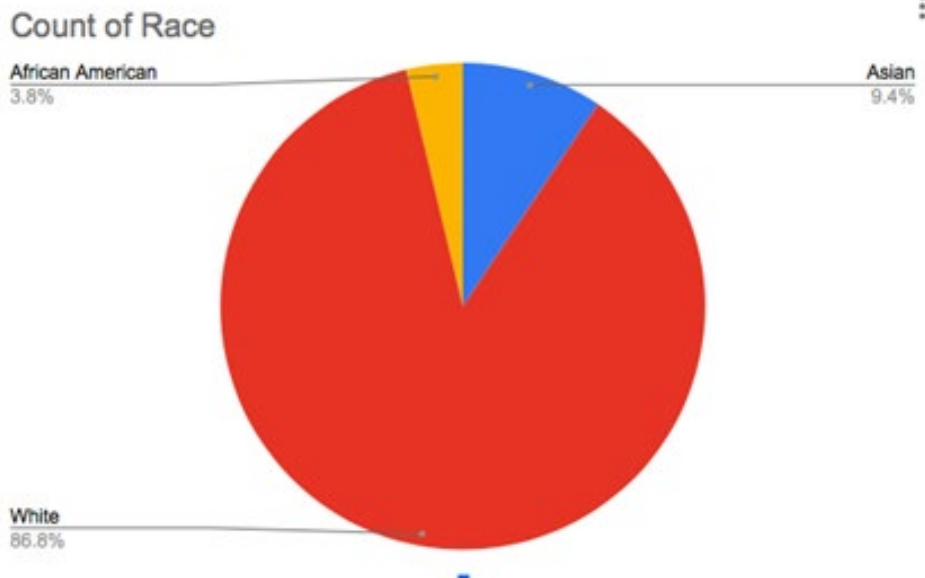
The graphs below summarize the demographics of the participants of Play Ames: Imagine your City community engagement festival.

Count of Age



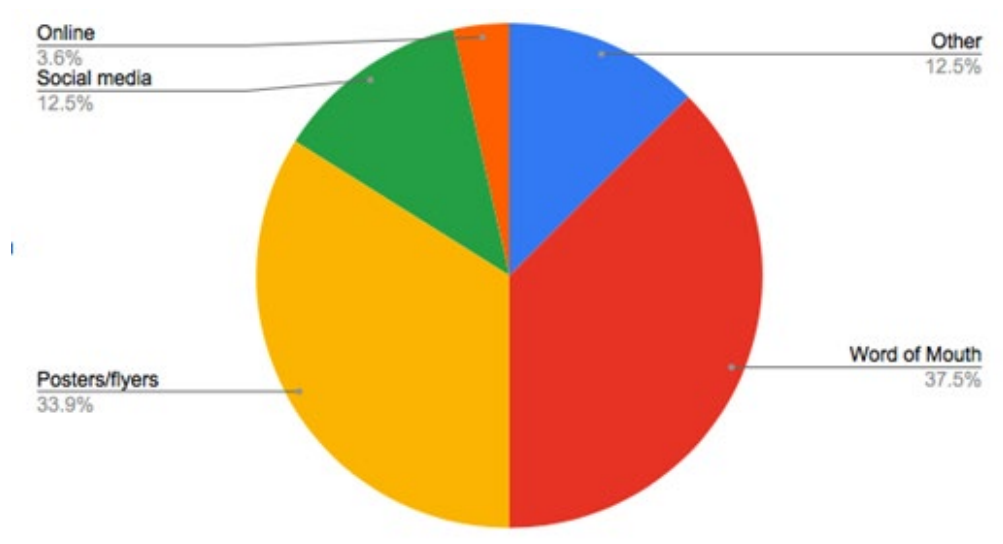
Count of Gender





How did you find out about the festival?

Question 3. Participants were asked how they found out about the festival. A majority indicated that they found out about the festival from word-of-mouth techniques (e.g. friends, family, or volunteers of the event). Posters and flyers used to market the event were the second highest indication of how individuals learned about the festival.



2.7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Comparing the four locations illustrate that there was greater participation at the East 7th Street and 5th Street locations compared to the Franklin Park and Reliable Street locations. This may be attributed to nearby activities that were already taking place, such as the Downtown Ames Farmers Market near 5th Street. Another example includes that Reliable Street was located outside of Lockwood Café, so those making purchases at the café had noticed the event taking place.

Based on survey results, it can be concluded that overall the activities present at the festivals were enjoyable and engaging. In contrast, survey results were mixed on whether or not participants were learning something new. For example, the Origami Street of Dreams activity received more feedback that participants had learned something new whereas those participating in the Guerilla Gardening activity did not feel the same way.

Overall, it seemed that participants enjoyed the festival and that they would participate in such a festival again. Group members collected a few recommendations for future execution of similar events that may improve the experience generally or may specifically improve the surveying portion of the event.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations that our group puts forward which may improve survey engagement and response collection or may improve overall participation in the festival activities:

1. Develop a surveying methodology that breaks away from standardized survey taking and is more playful and fun, similar to the Origami Street of Dreams. Alternative surveying methods may look like having a large surface area where participants can write down an idea or thought.
2. Focus on having one festival location with designated times and plan to move the locations to the targeted neighborhoods throughout the day or week.
3. Encourage more activities and events within West Ames.
4. Ensure visibility of the City of Ames city council members and staff during the event. This may look like setting them up with a specific activity or having dedicated signage. This might also include having a tablecloth with the City of Ames logo.
5. Consider having City Officials assist in moderating activities to encourage organic conversation to occur between participants and the city officials.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

by Alenka Poplin

3.1. Engagement activities

3.1.1. Creative engagement activities

Creative activities were activities that engaged the residents by creating something which resulted in a visible product. These activities were very attractive for many of the participants. They included:

- Painting stones
- Creating origami
- Paintings with the help of local materials from nature
- Collaborative mural painting

These activities were very beloved. The participants felt a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in seeing their creativity. Some also resulted in a product that could be taken home with them and keep as a memory. Creating their own products brought a sense of achievement, a sense of satisfaction upon seeing a stone you painted on your own, a beautiful piece of origami, a picture made with the help of leaves and materials from the local park. The activity that asked participants to go to the park and find materials with which they could paint was particularly well received. Collaborative painting while enjoying the sun and good music was found to be very enjoyable. The atmosphere at these locations was amazing and residents felt naturally attracted to join the activity.



Observing participants:

"A little girl painting the stones for her mom as her mom couldn't join the festival"

Another participant is sharing with us:

"Look what I did. I created this picture right here at the festival. What do you think?"



Gardening had the potential to be one of these activities but planting the bulbs did not result in a visible change of the environment. A visible change from planting leafy plants or trees would result in even more happiness for the residents. Planting plants or trees would be a more effective activity in the spring than in the autumn.

3.1.2. Experiential engagement activities

Experiential engagement activities are those that enable participants to gain some specific experience, try something, experience it. These engagement activities included:

- Barefoot path
- Yoga, breathing and mindfulness
- Spot-the-Differences game
- Virtual reality
- Digital or paper mapping



Participants were immersed into trying out different materials and feeling them on their feet (barefoot path), experiencing mindfulness under the guidance of a yoga teacher, were immersed in a roller coaster in the virtual reality pop-up van, experienced spatial thinking experiments in Spot-the-Differences game, and engaged in digital or paper mapping. All these activities were very well accepted by the participants.



3.1.3. Technology enhanced engagement activities

Engagement activities based on technologies attracted participants that were open to novel technologies. They included the following two engagement activities:

- Digital mapping
- Virtual reality

Most of the families suggested to their younger members to engage with these activities. These activities can be used to target younger populations of residents and those that are curious to try something new. Generally, they should be combined with non-digital methods to be able to engage all participants that visit the site. Using just technology-based engagement activities would exclude many potential participants.



3.1.4 Engagement activities focused on participants' perception

These were engagement activities that were designed to inquire about participants' opinions, perceptions and ideas. These activities included:

- Origami
- Paper-mapping experiment with unsafe places



The origami activity asked participants the following three questions: What is your favorite place within the city?; What can be improved in the city?; What is your vision for the city of Ames? The participants were happily answering these questions about the city and were very engaged in

creating origami. Next time, the origami task should be designed in a way that one origami represents a final product already instead of four leaves forming a flower. In this way the participants will see an immediate result. Mapping unsafe places was also very inspiring. Participants enjoyed sharing their experiences of the city, the places they felt to be unsafe and how they perceive places in Ames. Sometimes the paper-map is just a tool that helps to initiate a discussion and involves participants in thinking about the city. More such engagement activities should be developed in the future and connected with the real-world issues city officials and planners are facing at that moment.



3.1.5. General observations about engagement activities

- Engagement activities need to be **short, active and well displayed and presented**.
- Engagement activities should be **easy to grasp and learn**. Those that take too much time to learn and master do not work best for a community engagement festival. Board games were not successful as they would have taken time to learn how to play the game and then also taken time to actually play. Next time, the games should be designed in a simple and easy to learn way.
- Engagement activities need to be **simple and creative**. Too complicated activities did not attract big audience. Those with a steep learning curve require more time and attention for them to be executed. Breathing games involved too complicated instructions, not enough clarity, too many steps and not enough guidance by the leaders. **More assistants should be assigned to engagement activities with more steps to accomplish**. Board games require a longer investment into learning and most of the participants prefer to move to the next activity fairly quickly.
- **Some engagement activities can be better performed outside and some others inside**. Playing board games is easier inside; inside spaces are quieter and allow for more concentration and an exchange among the actors. Strong winds can also prevent participants

from playing. Some parts of board games may get lost in an outdoor space. Mural painting, on the contrary worked well, but also because of the wonderful weather.

3.2. Engaging underrepresented/marginalized residents

A one-time festival cannot result in a miracle. It represented a first step towards establishing more connection and trust with residents. It is a first step on a longer path towards co-creation and collaboration. No relationship was established by meeting just once; one has to continue meeting to get to know the other person/party/organization. Long-term planning and continuity is needed to declare this process successful. We are making baby steps and this was one of our first steps. This baby needs nourishing, care and continuing communication.



We experienced many interesting participants, but not necessarily from the targeted neighborhoods. The set-up of the locations had an immense impact on the success of attracting local underrepresented and marginalized communities. The most successful location in this respect was East 7th Street which managed to attract many local residents. It was located at the entrance to the street, very centrally in the neighborhood. We visited the location several times, posted postcards several times, and also talked to the local residents and gave them the cards in person. This was very successful. The site at the festival was relatively small, concentrated, and well-advertised with posters and fliers placed all around the site. Franklin Park was a big site and not easily accessible. The festival was organized in the middle of the park and most visitors did not feel invited to join. There was a certain disconnect to the neighborhood. The same happened with the Reliable Street location.

The most valuable lessons and take-aways gained from the 1st community engagement festival in Ames:

- Personal visits to the neighborhoods and personal talks with the residents before the festival were very helpful. All whom we met in person in their neighborhoods came and joined the festival. They felt appreciated and invited. Additional visits to the targeted neighborhood before the festival are highly recommended for a stronger presence of the local residents at the festival and therefore greater success in engaging underrepresented and marginalized residents.
- Developing activities together with the neighborhoods would be a wonderful idea. Getting them involved in the festival as organizers or co-creators could be something interesting to try.
- Work closer with the neighborhoods after the festival. Develop action projects together with the neighbors and help them beautify and improve their neighborhoods. Help them clean it, plant flowers, plant edible plants or trees, paint walls, create playgrounds for children, draw games on side-walks, etc.
- Develop place-making ideas together with the residents of the targeted neighborhoods. Prepare a plan to engage them. Select targeted neighborhoods and work with them over a longer period of time.
- Think about establishing infrastructure for representing the neighborhoods: leaders of the neighborhoods. Leaders of the neighborhoods are trustworthy and respected residents that talk with their neighbors and represent their wishes and opinions. They are the link between the residents and city officials and urban planners. They can get connected in a network, a grid across the city, and exchange ideas in their meetings. Perhaps a beginning of the direct democracy for the city.
- Options of direct democracy and successful case studies – such as examples seen in Switzerland – need to be studied in more detail to be able to understand what worked well for them and what could potentially be implemented in our cities as well.
- Work with the neighborhoods longer, more intensely, and much earlier in the process in the weeks leading up to the festival. Small events can be organized in the neighborhoods, a pop-up van may visit the neighborhoods several times before the festival so everyone feels invited, heard, and respected.
- More work needs to be done on a continuing basis to establish the trust of and work with the neighborhoods.

3.3. Selected locations

There was something special about this festival. All locations were very alive, engaging, and the students involved were very optimistic and contributed beautifully to the festival. This is something to think about for the next festival. A festival like that could also be solely organized by the students

in a collaboration of the Undergraduate and Graduate Urban Planning Students' Clubs. This could be a fantastic opportunity for the students to get more integrated with the City of Ames.

Observations:

- All locations were alive. The students were present and in a good mood.
- The students generated a lot of positive energy around the festival.
- The grand opening worked very well. It created a wonderful start and motivation for the festival. The invited speakers were very encouraging and gave a broader perspective to this collaboration which additionally motivated students in their work at the festival. Coffee and cookies were a good idea as well and the sunny weather was very helpful.
- Everybody made a great/huge effort to make this work. It is because of the dedicated work of all the students that this festival was so successful.
- All locations were wonderful in their own way! Everything planned was also executed in a practical way. It was wonderful to see it in reality.
- The students created enthusiasm, positive energy, and great opportunities to meet, mingle, talk, and exchange ideas.

Specifics about the locations:

- Locations placed in the neighborhoods enabled an easier access to the underrepresented and marginalized populations (East 7th Street). The closer a location is to the heart of the neighborhood, the more the residents felt invited to take part in the engagement activities.
- Locations which we visited more often and met some people in person prior to the event attracted more underrepresented and marginalized populations from that neighborhood (East 7th Street).
- Locations distant from the actual neighbors (with natural or artificial barriers) did not attract as many participants from the neighborhoods (Reliable Street and Franklin Park). The festival was organized in the middle of the park and not close to an entrance or a street. This created a certain invisible barrier and was not close to the neighborhood. The Reliable Street event was organized in front of the Lockwood Café. The café seems to be more like an isolated island in the neighborhood and the local residents do not seem to visit it very often. The population gathering there seemed to be more ISU staff and students rather than local underrepresented residents with families.
- Big locations (Franklin Park) may be just too big and the residents may not feel invited to be part of it or dare to come closer. Smaller and more contained locations (East 7th Street and Reliable Street) worked better as they were more connected and integrated. Activities that are closer are easier to accomplish by the residents, they give the feeling of connectivity, integration, and ability for the participants to mingle, talk, and exchange idea in a smaller, contained space.

- Parks can work well if they are not too big. It is also important to think about placing activities close to the entrance or the street. This enables an easier access to the site for the underrepresented and marginalized groups of participants.

Thinking about locations is fundamental for the success of a community engagement festival. The preparatory work in advance and placing the activities directly into the neighborhoods seem crucial for the success of a festival like this, especially when targeting underrepresented and marginalized communities.

3.4. Children and families

Two groups seemed to particularly enjoy the activities: families with children and students. Children were quickly immersed into the creative and experimental activities. They loved all of them and were very enthusiastic about them. Students brought their optimism, ideas, and positive energy and were very involved in the preparation and implementation of the activities. This brought good feelings and atmosphere to the locations as one could feel the enthusiasm and immersion of the kids in the activities. The children felt safe and engaged which also gave parents time to chat with other participants, urban planners and officials, and the organizing students. The organizers may think about the next festival being dedicated specifically for families with children.



Observations:

- Children really enjoyed the engagement activities, mostly the creative engagement activities and the experiential engagement activities. The barefoot path was a highlight. Several of them were very willing to share during kids-yoga experience. They got immersed in gardening, painting stones, and painting with the help of the local materials such as flowers and leaves. It was a pleasure to observe them getting so enthusiastic about all these activities.

- The City of Ames is asking how to engage underrepresented and marginalized populations. Students represent almost half of the population in Ames. A festival like this is an opportunity for the City of Ames and the students to collaborate and jointly work towards common goals. Together, they can work towards integrating the residents, preparing, executing and implementing activities. Ames can become a very vibrant integrated and connected community.

3.5. Involving city officials and urban planners

City officials/councilors and urban planners had a strong presence at three of the locations: Reliable Street, Franklin Park and East 7th Street. They were very visible, open and ready to talk with the participants of the festival and the organizing students. One of the council members brought a colorfully painted bike-ricksha to the East 7th Street location and drove participants around the site. This was a very fun way of promoting the work of the city council and many participants really enjoyed it. Also other city officials were very engaged and showed lots of interest for the festival and contributed to its success. We have to mention the very active support of the City Manager Steve Schainker who helped organize the closing of the streets leading to the East 7th Street location and was present and visible at several locations. City Councilor Dr. Gloria Betcher not only supported the process of organizing of the festival, but also actively contributed to the success of the festival by being present at all locations and available to talk with the residents and organizing students. The Mayor of the City of Ames, John Haila, was enthusiastic about the opportunities this festival can offer to the residents, students and to the city. He visited all locations of the festival and actively talked with the students, residents, other city officials and urban planners. It was nice to see his enthusiasm and experience his positive energy.

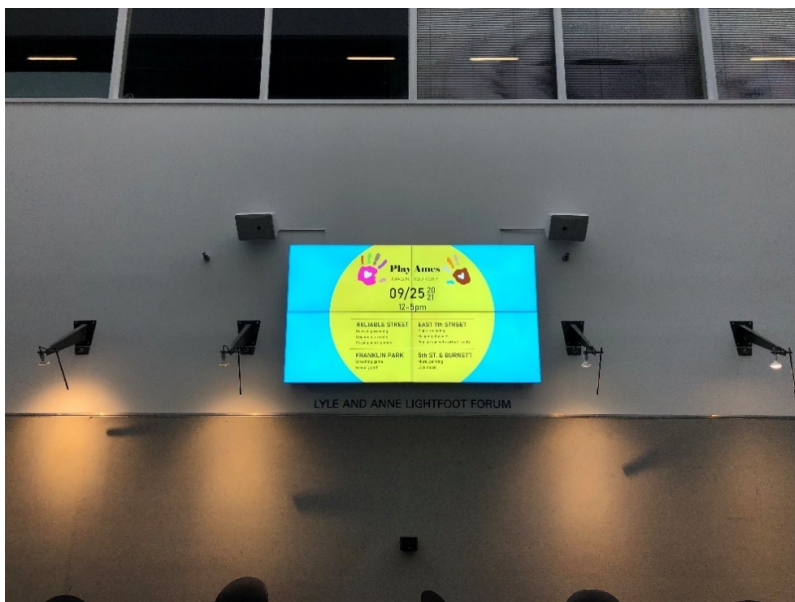


Recommendations:

- Better integrate city representatives with the engagement activities.
- Design engagement activities with the goal to help with topics of interest to city officials and urban planners.
- Design engagement activities with the goal to help with topics of interest to the residents. Conduct activities in the neighborhoods before the festival to identify those together with the residents. Develop a common plan, in collaboration with city officials and urban planners, of the topics of interest and engagement activities planned to engage underrepresented and marginalized communities in Ames.

3.6. Advertising

We advertised in many different ways. Here just some examples: a digital screen at the College of Design and a poster created for the neighborhood advertising.



In a very short time, we created the following:

- A logo for Play Ames: Imagine your City
- Community Engagement Living Lab and its logo
- Website for the project Play Ames: Imagine your City and the Community Engagement Living Lab. The website can be viewed here: <https://www.communityengagementll.net/>
- We selected the color identity and presence with bright and vivid colors.
- We organized a Facebook pages for Play Ames: Imagine your City and for the Community Engagement Living Lab and actively advertised on these platforms
- We got connected with the Climate Change Action Theater group
- Designed postcards and distributed them in the selected neighborhoods and at ISU

- Designed posters and fliers and distributed them in the selected neighborhoods and at ISU
- We got connected with event organizers at ISU and distributed the information through the channels of ISU
- City of Ames placed the event in their event calendar and advertised it on their website
- Iowa Stat Daily and Ames Tribune prepared articles before the festival and after the festival
- We placed advertising posters around all neighborhoods

3.7. Critical reflection

A community engagement festival is a good start in building trust and connection with the residents. It would be more helpful when and if it becomes a tradition. In this case the residents will get used to it, will be more open to come and better informed. A word of mouth will spread around and there will be more knowledge about it available in the community. It will build on the experience from the previous years.

Things we could do differently next time:

- One could think of fewer locations at one time. This would give the students the opportunity to enjoy all locations as well, see them, try them and enjoy them. It would be easier to organize. It all depends on the budget for the festival and staff dedicated to it.
- An interesting approach would be to have these activities spread around the same neighborhood. This may work very well; to concentrate on one neighborhood with several “stations” of activities in the same neighborhood, located not too far away from each other.
- More concentrated on one, max two locations at a time may work better.
- Advertise earlier and more extensively.
- Use more of social media for advertising.
- Create specific street posters that can be re-used for several years, but big and visible to everyone
- Prepare an IRB and conduct some useful research to be published
- Combination with the class dedicated to another topic was not optimal. Students were stressed in the phase of preparation. A whole class needs to be dedicated to place-making and the festival. A studio class would also be a good option which will give more time to everyone to be able to develop the activities and their connection with the selected sites. At the end all worked well and it seems that the students learned a lot and enjoyed the festival as well.
- Possibly create a dedicated course/ studio for the festival and place-making and engagement. Offer it in spring to support the festival in spring.
- Get a more substantial funding for the festival and hire staff that can help with the logistics of the festival. There is a substantial logistic involved in the organization of a festival like that. Also, there is cost connected to it. The cost is mostly the cost of the materials needed for the engagement activities.
- Involve schools and other organizations and form partnerships with them.

Advertising:

- Start advertising earlier
- Organize a more aggressive advertising campaign
- Visit neighborhoods more often and earlier in the process and talk with the neighbors in person inviting them in a personal conversation
- Grow our social media presence intentionally and gain more subscribers on our social media platform
- Record more videos, live streaming on youtube, social media and Instagram, or other selected platforms

4. VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

by Alenka Poplin

The festival was an inspiration for many people. We believe it should continue, get refined and repeated in the improved version of it. There are a few things that come to mind when thinking about the future of community engagement in Ames and in particular to the expansion of the idea of a community engagement festival. Below is some food for thought, a list of ideas about how this festival could look like in the future.

4.1. Mobile pop-up van community engagement festival

A mobile version of a community engagement festival could be developed. The way we envision it would be with the help of a well-equipped pop-up van. We call it a Mobile Community Engagement Festival. The pop-up van could be equipped with simple equipment such as colored paint, stones, pencils, origami, plants to be planted, etc. These materials will help to get the residents engaged in specific, dedicated topics. It could additionally involve high-tech equipment for quick visualizations, rapid design of the alternative developments for residents and teach them how to use this equipment for the benefits of experimenting with alternative designs of their neighborhoods for the future. This pop-up van could then visit different neighborhoods at different days and park directly in the neighborhood.

A combination with a food and coffee truck may be of interest as well and would additionally bring some services to neighborhoods that have no or very little services on their own. The same activity can be repeated in several neighborhoods. The engagement activities can be specifically designed around specific topics of interest to the City of Ames. Additionally, this would give the residents the opportunity to share their concerns, issues, and inspirations. It could be a fantastic way of regular communication of the City of Ames with the residents of the city.



4.2. Topical festivals

The festivals could branch into more topical festivals, dedicated to one particular group of unrepresented and marginalized residents or dedicated to a particular topic of interest. We could envision a festival dedicated to families with children: Ames Family Festival or Ames Children Festival. This would be a wonderful opportunity to envision or declare Ames to be “family-friendly” city and dedicate a festival to promoting this message.

Other possible topics that could be selected as a topic of the yearly festival could be:

- Sidewalks
- Climate change
- Sustainability, etc..

A similar topical festival is organized yearly in Munich, Germany. Their main topic is sustainability and vendors come from across the whole state to share sustainability ideas. More research can be invested in other similar examples of such festivals. Similarly, the City of Ames could select a specific topic for each year and dedicate the whole festival to this specific topic. The topics could be related to the city plan, transportation plan, climate change action program, or other topics of interest to the City of Ames.

4.3. Families, kids, and students friendly Ames

Declaring Ames as a family and student friendly city could be one of the strategies the leadership may consider. It seems natural to advertise and promote it this way. We strongly believe in the success of a festival like Play Ames: Imagine your City geared for families and children. Organized by the students of ISU, it could lead to a better integration of these groups of residents. We envision

this wonderful flow of knowledge and experience from students to the kids and families. And flowing back from the families and kids to the students and consequently to the City of Ames public officials and urban planners. There are many exciting ways in which kids can be involved. As well there are many exciting ways in which these activities could be prepared by the students in collaboration with the city officials and urban planners.

4.4. Students for the city and with the city

A festival like this could also be solely organized by the students in a collaboration of the Undergraduate and Graduate Urban Planning Students' Clubs or even in a collaboration with other student organizations or clubs. This could be a fantastic opportunity for the students to get more integrated with the City of Ames and showcase what they know and have learned at ISU. It could be a great opportunity for an exchange and a lively celebration of accomplishments. It can be very rewarding for the students, residents, and the public officials and planners.

Supporting classes could also be organized that enable students to develop and implement ideas related to place-making and tactical urbanism. Alternatively, studio options may be designed specifically to support the collaboration of ISU with the City of Ames. One could think of formalizing these ideas in a form of a continuing collaboration, perhaps a 5-year plan of collaboration with a bigger budget that would help to develop additional activities and would be predictable for both involved parties.

Similar community engagement festivals can be implemented in other cities. The City of Ames can serve as an example of successful implementation.

Additional research in different engagement strategies, methods and technologies should be dedicated into festival evaluations. Grants for such research can come from a variety of foundations or even National Science Foundation (NSF).

4.5. An organization and a budget dedicated to the festival

Similar to the Octagon Art Festival, one could think of establishing an organization that would organize an annual festival like that around city planning. To be successful and professionally organized, one could think of enabling such an organization to hire staff and be able to pay for organizational and logistic services. Hiring a festival coordinator seems like a wonderful idea and a necessary step if the city decides to follow up with the idea of an annual festival.

A dedicated budget would be helpful in terms of assuring the continuation of the project. This is just another option which could be developed as a vision for the expansion of community engagement in the City of Ames.

4.6. Strategic plan

Strategic plan and strategic decisions would be helpful in providing consistency for the City of Ames, its residents, students, and ISU staff. A collaboration on the topic of community engagement seems

like a wonderful idea. A strategic plan may define levels and topics of collaboration. Clearly defined goals of engagement and also the festival are crucial for its success. Further development of this vision and the vision of the festival may involve additional local partners such as other ISU departments, schools, and perhaps even food trucks. The collaboration and involvement of City of Ames staff and urban planners should be prepared ahead of time and well in advance. We recommend a very food integrations with other activities.



5. CONCLUSIONS

Overall Play Ames: Imagine your City was a great success. It inspired students, residents and city officials and urban planner. It expanded the idea of community engagement and created playful, learning, experimental, and creative opportunities for all residents. The opportunity for everyone involved is to build on the existing ideas and develop a more comprehensive plan of community engagement in the City of Ames. The City of Ames can become an exemplary city and serve as a role-model for community engagement across the US.

It is our pleasure and honor to be able to create this opportunity for everyone. We hope that this report can inspire future implementations of a festival like that.

Many people helped us to make this festival happen. The location leaders – Stella, Vishnu, Fatema, and Natalie – were very dedicated to make this festival a successful story. They were not only involved in preparing the ideas and designing the festival engagement activities – they also practiced their leadership skills. They coordinated the implementation of the ideas and led groups of students

from the CRP455/555 class, instructing them how to implement these ideas. This festival would not have been possible without their dedication, focus, hard work and inspirations they brought to the team.

Thank you to all who supported the festival and thank you to all students who invested their time and creativity in making this festival happen. They brought their positive spirit, their innovative ideas, and very good energy and substantially contributed to the success of this festival!

Thank you for this wonderful experience, that we created!

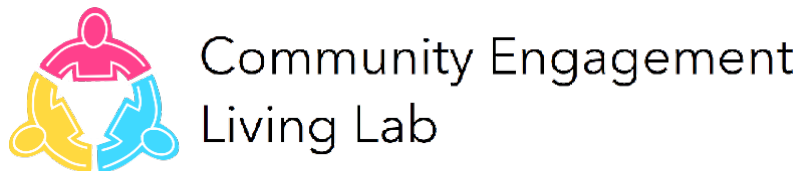


Appendix A: Advertising materials

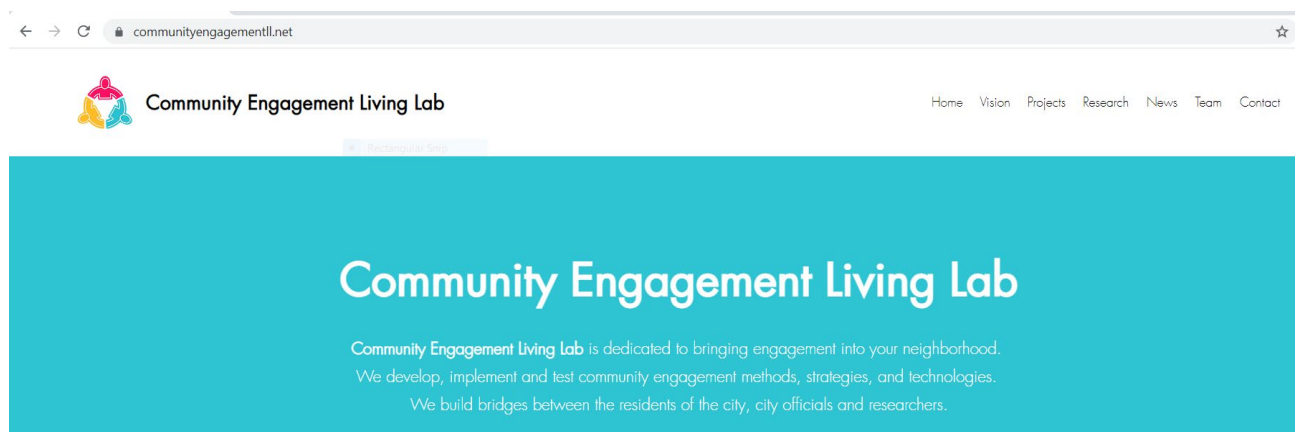
Play Ames: Imagine your City Logo: all credits for the design and implementation to Natalie Jacobson, and help with generation of ideas to Vishnu



Community Engagement Living Lab logo: all credits for the design and implementation go to Natalie Jacobson



Community Engagement Living Lab website: all credits for the design and implementation go to Fatema Nourin, and help with the initial set up to Vishnu Priya Sairamesh: <https://www.communityengagementll.net/>



Postcards and posters were designed by Stella Schroeder

<https://www.communityengagementll.net/>



Play Ames
IMAGINE YOUR CITY
09/25²⁰₂₁
12-5pm

free entrance

at all locations: meet your city officials and planners, competitions & special gifts

<p>RELIABLE STREET</p> <p>Guerilla gardening Learn how to plant: starts 12pm every hour until 4pm Planned is also: Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management & Horticulture</p> <p>Origami of dreams from 12-5pm Playful origami flowers Installation of origami garden: 4:30pm</p> <p>Playing board games from 12-5pm Guided game-play: 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm</p>	<p>EAST 7th STREET</p> <p>Digital mapping Spot the differences game: starts 12:30pm every 30 min. until 4pm Walk-in Introduction to mobile mapping: starts 12:45pm every 30 min. until 3:15pm Mobile mapping session: starts 1pm every 30 min. until 4:30pm</p> <p>Mapping of places from 12-5pm Mapping unsafe places</p> <p>Immersive virtual reality from 12-5pm 3D printing & Augmented reality</p>
<p>FRANKLIN PARK</p> <p>Breathing game from 12-5pm Explore your breathing patterns</p> <p>Sensory path from 12-5pm Walk through various materials</p> <p>Climate Change Theatre Action. The Art of Climate Planning* Performances: 2pm, 3pm, 4pm</p> <p>"Vibe in Flow - Yoga for ALL" by Michelle Flattery</p>	<p>5th ST. & BURNETT</p> <p>Mural painting from 12-5pm Participate in a public paint by number</p> <p>Live music Come and listen to local artists</p> <p>Artists meet and greet</p>

1st community engagement festival
grand opening at 10am. 5th STREET & BURNETT

Funded by  **IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**
Department of Community and Regional Planning
CRP Collaborative Interdisciplinary Fund

 **ames**

*Funded by a City of Ames Small Art Grant

Appendix B: Example of the Engagement Survey

Play Ames: Community Anonymous Survey – Reliable Street

Activity	Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Participate
Guerilla Gardening						
	I felt engaged	1	2	3	4	*
	I enjoyed the activity	1	2	3	4	*
Origami of Dreams	I learned something new	1	2	3	4	*
	I felt engaged	1	2	3	4	*
Board Games	I enjoyed the activity	1	2	3	4	*
	I learned something new	1	2	3	4	*

Question #1: Did you visit any other of the Play Ames Locations? If so, where did you go?

Answer: _____

Question #2: Did you talk to City Officials? How was that experience?

Answer: _____

Question #3: How did you find out about the festival? (Circle one)

- Social Media
- Posters/flyer
- Through friends
- Online
- Other

Participant Information (all voluntary)

Age(Circle One):

- Under 18
- 19-30
- 31-50
- 51-65
- 65 and over

Gender(Circle One):

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Trans
- Other

Race(Circle One):

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Pacific Islander

Did you come with anyone?

- Friends
- Family
- Alone
- Other

If you did, how many people did you come with?: _____

What street do you reside on? _____

Additional Notes

What were the highlights of the festival? Would you come to a festival like this in the future? Why/or why not?

Appendix C: Example of the Kids-Friendly Survey

Play Ames: Activity Overview – Franklin Park

Which Activity did you like the best?

	 I didn't enjoy this activity	 I sort of didn't like this activity	 I sort of liked this activity	 I really liked this activity	 I did not participate in this activity
Breathing Game 					
Sensory Path 					
Vibe in Flow Yoga 					
Climate Change Theater 					

Appendix D: Barefoot Path Questionnaire



Franklin Park | **Barefoot Path** | Sep 25 2021

Male/ Female :

Age (Roughly):

What do you think this material is? What does it remind you of / an experience associated with it ?

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

5.

Which material did you 'enjoy' the most? Why? Would you like to see that in public spaces to play with?

What materials would you like to see next ?

What development do you see for Franklin Park in future?

List of Materials Used

1. Bubble Wrap
2. Stone Brick
3. Rubber Mulch
4. Hay
5. Sand
6. Pebble and water
7. Orbeez
8. Wet Towel

Appendix E: Examples of Instructions/Posters: Breathing Game

1

RELAX & MEDITATE !! :D

Take a seat!

**Breathe in through your Nose for 2 seconds &
Breathe out through your mouth for 4 seconds.
(Do this 3 times !!)**



FUN FACTS !!

This breathing exercise , allows your body & mind to calm down, sometimes, even hear/feel your heartbeat! (fact connecting breathing & the city?)

3

WHAT DO YOU HEAR !??!! :D

Close your eyes, BREATH IN & OUT (3 Times)

Now,

TELL US WHAT DO YOU HEAR ??

(USE THE STICKY NOTES to write it down & stick it on the board)



FUN FACTS !!

Because of the Jumping Jacks exercise, you may be able to hear your heartbeat. You may also be able to hear anything around you, such as the swish of wind, people talking, and so on. This is a texture of a city or its surroundings. Similarly, certain sounds can be heard when you are on a beach, in a game, in a park, or even the honking car sounds for example.

6

PAINT YOUR SURROUNDING !! :D

**GO AROUND & BRING WHATEVER YOU FIND IN THE PARK & PRINT IT WITH PAINT
ON ONE HALF OF THE SHEET OF PAPER
(as shown below & minimum=6 materials)**

Feel free to draw what you see around you that can't be imprinted on paper)



FUN FACTS !!

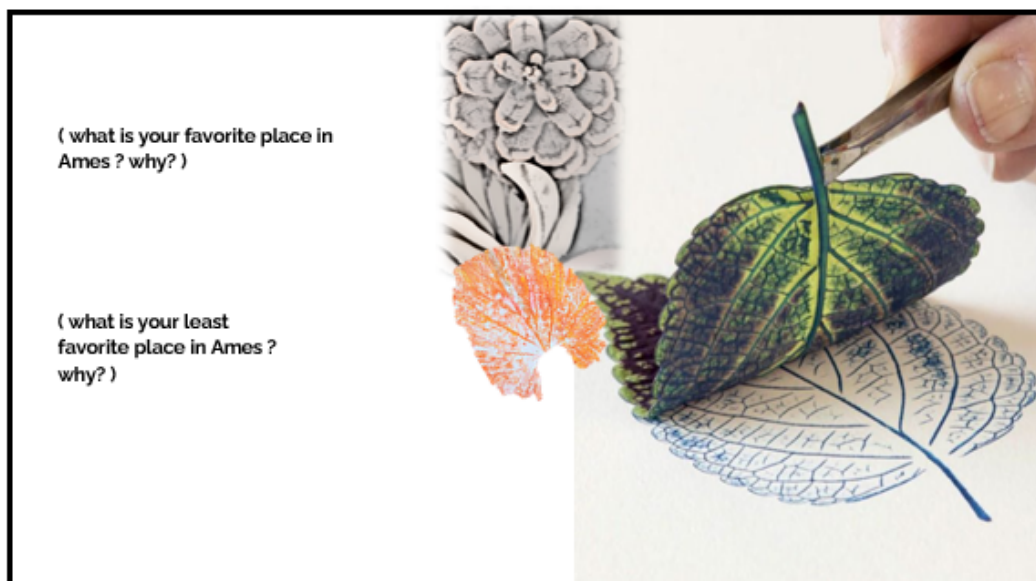
This makes you understand the different texture of materials surrounding the park. You may find leaves, twig, crushed bottle, or people (good/bad). Whatever that you see immediately put it on the paper!

7

SHARE !! :D

Now write on the other half of the paper:

WHAT IS YOUR FAV PLACE IN AMES ? WHY?
&
WHICH PLACE IS YOUR LEAST FAV & WHY?



10

RELAX & SWING!! :D

NOW RELAXXXXXXXXXX ON THE SWING :)))))

Float in the air , removing your body from contact of the ground & Listening to your heartbeat or watching what's happening around is all a way of observation & therefore awareness !

