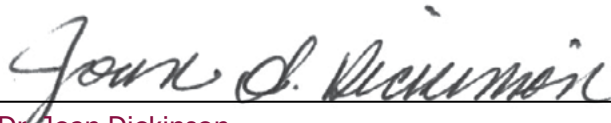




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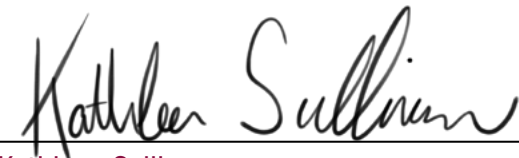
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Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of Radford University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Design Thinking

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Abstract

The concept of community manifests from a location's collective history, geography, culture, economy, and the perceptions of the people who contribute to these systems. These shared experiences result in community identity. Conversely, the dissociation of one's community may lead to identity decline, or a diminished sense of community identity (Howard-Grenville, Metzger, & Meyer, 2013). Drawing upon design-thinking strategies, the purpose of this research was to explore how design thinking integrates and supports the process of community identification by way of a community development initiative within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania. A secondary purpose recorded the influence of design thinking on the creation of social capital and its influence on community dissociation, identity decline, and public perception. Due to its human-centered focus, design thinking is uniquely qualified to engage with community members and explore the unique qualities of the community and the shared perceptions of its citizenry. Yet, there is minimal research detailing the deliberate use of design-thinking methodologies in support of community identification and development and no recorded instance of such techniques having been used in Bellevue. This research follows a purposive sample of 20 stakeholders and their engagement with this research. It records their perceptions, their experiences, and the influence they had in the creation of social capital, the articulation of community identity, and the inspiration behind community development initiatives. Results culminated in three concept posters advocating graphic rebranding via signage, consistency in code reinforcement, and mini-murals enhancing walkability within the Bellevue community. While this research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of design thinking, community identity, and development initiatives within small communities, the solution phase did not produce innovative solutions typically associated with design thinking and needs further exploration.

Keywords: Bellevue, community development, community identity, design thinking, participatory design, social capital, community dissociation, identity decline

Donald Kent Kerr, MFA

Department of Design Thinking, 2020

Radford University

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“No man is an island entire of itself...” - John Donne

And I am no exception. Any successful and meaningful project requires the support of friends, the love of family, and the dedication of those willing to donate their time, insight, passion, and patience to solve the wicked problems of the world. Here are a few that I would like to highlight:

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Introduction

Bellevue Believes

This research study focused on the implementation of a design-thinking research model in a design-focused community development project in Bellevue, Pennsylvania. Titled Bellevue Believes and utilizing a customized research model catering to the unique needs of this community, it sought to explore how design thinking integrates with and supports the process of establishing community identity and branding, communications platforms, and developmental efforts, as well as what unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, it sought to observe the influence of design thinking on the creation of social

capital and any potential exposure and impact on community dissociation, identity decline, and misaligned public perception within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

Concerning Community

Community development, here used synonymously with community building, refers to transformative design within a community space. Transformative design uses designer-led strategies to facilitate change by identifying actionable, iterative strategies and building capacity for radical transformation within both organizations and communities. Because of the limited research done on the conditions



FIGURE 1. Bellevue, Pennsylvania, gateway signage

necessary for such strategies to have a desired impact, the process of community development is often varied, multilayered, and multidisciplinary, encouraging numerous parties to actively collaborate with government or community officials to improve their economic, social, and cultural well-being (Yee & White, 2016; Zwycart, Plattet, & Spini, 2018). To facilitate this process, it is necessary to understand the nature and nuance of the community in development, including potential strengths and weaknesses within its socioeconomic structure, citizenry, or public image.

While similar, the concepts of *community identity* and *community branding* are not interchangeable. Community branding—or city branding—is meant to manage or market a community’s image and strengthen local identity, while community identity refers to the community’s shared perception of self (Castillo-Villar, 2018; Melović, Mitrović, & Djokaj, 2017).



FIGURE 2. Lincoln Avenue, Bellevue, Pennsylvania



FIGURE 3. Bellevue, Pennsylvania Skate Plaza

Moreover, neither term is synonymous with the development or promotion of tourism, which “is influenced by many other factors and actors (political factors, infrastructure, traffic, economic, and factors in terms of the environment, spatial planning, development and the like)” (Melović et al., 2017, p. 57).

Conversely, the concept of community is uniquely self-defining, manifesting from a location’s collective history, geography, culture, economy, and most importantly, the perceptions and feelings of the people who live, work, and contribute to these systems. These feelings originate from individuals’ personal shared sense of community (PSOC), which in turn informs a sense of community identity (SOC), inferring that community members, above any other elements, most heavily contribute to a sense of shared identity (Puddifoot, 2003). Therefore, effective community identification, branding, and development are predicated on

an understanding of a specific community's people. Moreover, because every citizenry is unique, developing a standardized community development model becomes difficult or problematic, potentially resulting in community misidentification or inappropriate branding and development solutions.

The Equity of Identity

Despite these difficulties, community identity and community branding are both important to the growth and curation of social capital, be it through the development of community image or brand equity. Crawford, Kotval, Rauhe, and Kotval (2008) defined social capital as "something that encourages meaningful involvement that strengthens community ties and enables positive change" (p. 533). This is facilitated by stakeholder involvement during the creative process, commonly referred to as participatory research and participatory design. While an insider perspective is beneficial to the researchers, participants also benefit from their own efforts with an earned and shared sense of ownership and pride for what has been created. It is the inclusion of community members in the creative process that enables the building of social capital (Crawford et al., 2008). As awareness, loyalty, pride, association, and perceived quality increase, the community's identity gains value. Because

it has value and the potential to create positive change, community identity can be considered a form of social capital. Furthermore, as image is often a prerequisite to the development of a brand, the equity of a community image may also allude to a community's belief in the inherent value of its brand (Gómez, Fernández, Molina, & Aranda, 2018).

Participatory Research and Design Thinking

As identity is derived from citizen stakeholders, cynicism and dissociation among one's community may lead to identity decline, or a diminished sense of community identity (Howard-Grenville, Metzger, & Meyer, 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to create and maintain an environment in which citizens feel connected and influential to their community identity. In participatory design practices, citizens are viewed as "agents," playing an active role in the creation of social capital, brand equity, and developmental initiatives (Yee & White, 2016). As the quality and capacity of such efforts are directly influenced by stakeholder participation in the design process, design-thinking methodologies—being multidisciplinary by nature and heavily influenced by participatory design—provide an ideal toolkit for optimizing stakeholder engagement. By providing an idyllic environment in which to promote community engagement and a subsequent sense of

ownership and inclusivity, identity decline can be mitigated, the quality of social capital improved, and more meaningful community development solutions created.

Bellevue, Pennsylvania

Bellevue, Pennsylvania, is a small borough located in Allegheny County along the Ohio River and adjoining Pittsburgh. Having seen its most substantial growth during a real estate boom in the 1860s and 1870s, it was viewed by many Pittsburghers as a more livable suburban alternative to the then heavily polluted Pittsburgh. While Bellevue would continue to grow over the next 60 years, any significant



FIGURE 4. Revival on Lincoln restaurant



FIGURE 5. Lincoln Avenue Brewery

expansion ended in 1929 with the start of the Great Depression. Today, Bellevue boasts a modest size of 1.1 square miles and a population of approximately 8,285 residents, allowing it to maintain a walking-accessible, old-fashioned business district ("History of Bellevue," 2019).

Bona Fide Bellevue, Bellevue's community development corporation (CDC), is chaired by a board of approximately 13 directors dedicated to bringing growth and revitalization to Bellevue ("Bona Fide Bellevue," 2019). Until recently, Bellevue had been economically stagnant, seeing little growth amidst an aging population. Having recently passed a 2015 resolution to approve liquor sales in the previously "dry" community, Bellevue has seen the founding of several new business ventures eager to capitalize

on this new source of revenue. As part of this revival narrative, new businesses like Revival on Lincoln restaurant and Lincoln Brewery are renovating long-standing, long-vacant properties in hopes of attracting a younger clientele who would have previously taken their business to neighboring boroughs (“Voters approve liquor sales,” 2015).

The decision of entrepreneurs to renovate rather than build is as symbolic as it is practical. In an interview with *NEXTpittsburgh*, Chris Driscoll—proprietor of Revival on Lincoln—likened reviving the building to reviving the community. He also noted the enthusiasm of the community and believes it to be contagious, citing at least 10 newly opened businesses (Locklin, 2018, para. 12). Likewise, Lincoln Brewery founder Grant Saylor noted the rate at which revitalization is occurring, stating that “Bellevue is experiencing a renewal of community spirit” and that the “business district is seeing new businesses open and houses are being renovated at a record pace” (Locklin, 2018, para. 13).

While these revitalization efforts have generated newfound interest and growth in Bellevue, they have also raised concerns regarding the potential for gentrification. In an interview with *NEXTpittsburgh*, Seth Zimmerman—local activist and chair of the

Bellevue Initiative for Growth and Revitalization (BIGr)—emphasized the importance of revitalization and growth while remaining hospitable to people who can only afford to rent, not own, a home (Conway, 2017, para. 13).

Despite revitalization efforts, newfound interest, recent growth, and mindful oversight, Bellevue continues to lack any borough-recognized community identity or branding under which to unify or recognize these efforts.

Plus Public and Community Development

In 2018, Donald Kent Kerr, along with fellow designer and academic Robert “RJ” Thompson, formalized Plus Public LLC., a B Corporation founded with the expressed intention of helping reimagine, rebrand, and reinvigorate communities in revival. Operating under the premise that any meaningful change requires the involvement of a community’s citizenry, Plus Public is uniquely situated to incorporate and gauge the effectiveness of various research practices, including design-thinking methodologies. Therefore, the use of design thinking in a community development project not only seeks to answer how well design thinking integrates into community identity and developmental projects, but also how this research-and-development model might be replicated and integrated into other communities facing similar challenges.

Summary

There exists a wealth of literature regarding the culture of community, the etymology of identity, the variety of design methodologies, the importance of community development, and the value of participatory design, including referential and ideological crossovers among these concepts. However, there is minimal data detailing the deliberate use of design-thinking methodologies to support community identification, branding, and development projects. There is also little data addressing the process being used explicitly as the catalyst for small community revitalization. Furthermore, no

recorded information shows that these methods have been used in the Bellevue, Pennsylvania, community, either by its governing body or its CDC, Bona Fide Bellevue. The purpose of this research was to explore how design thinking integrates and supports the process of community identification by way of community development initiatives within the borough of Bellevue. Furthermore, this study sought to observe and record the influence of design thinking on the creation of any social capital and its influence on community dissociation, identity decline, and public perception.

Terminology

Abstract Laddering: a way of reconsidering a problem statement by broadening or narrowing its focus (LUMA, 2012)

Affinity Clustering: a graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity (LUMA, 2012)

Bull's-eye Diagramming: a way of ranking items in order of importance using a target diagram (LUMA, 2012)

Communications platform: a centralized location or service with which community members can share information or engage in civil discourse

Community: referring to a group of people living in the same place or sharing a common characteristic

Community branding: a façade meant to represent or market a community's image (Castillo-Villar, 2018)

Community development: a process through which community members take collective action to generate solutions to common problems (Zwyart, Plattet, & Spini, 2018)

Community dissociation: a sense of being detached from one's community

Community identity: a set of feelings held by citizen stakeholders regarding their community (Cheshmehzangi & Ormsby, 2018)

- Concept Mapping:** a way of depicting the relationships between various concepts in a given topic area (LUMA, 2012)
- Concept Poster:** a presentation format illustrating the main points of a new idea (LUMA, 2012)
- Contextual Inquiry:** an approach to interviewing and observing people in their own environment (LUMA, 2012)
- Creativity Matrix:** a format for sparking new ideas at the intersections of distinct categories (LUMA, 2012)
- Critique:** a forum for people to give and receive constructive feedback (LUMA, 2012)
- Design thinking:** human-centric, solution-based design methodology
- Experience Diagramming:** a way of mapping a person's journey through a set of circumstances or tasks (LUMA, 2012)
- Identity decline:** a condition that occurs when identity claims and understandings lose salience (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013)
- Identity drift:** refers to identity change due to the gradual misalignment of an existing identity with new understandings, beliefs, or practice (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013)
- Interviewing:** a technique for gathering information through direct dialog (LUMA, 2012)
- Participatory research:** research that actively involves stakeholders
- Prototyping:** a rapidly built model of a new idea that approximates its appearance and behavior (LUMA, 2012)
- Rose, Thorn, Bud:** a technique for identifying things as positive, negative, or having potential (LUMA, 2012)
- Schematic Diagramming:** an outline of the structure and essential components of a system (LUMA, 2012)
- Social capital:** resources or relationships that provide public benefit for a communal good (Crawford et al., 2008)
- Stakeholders:** individuals with a vested interest in a system (e.g., employees, partners, customers, citizens, end-users, etc.)
- Stakeholder Mapping:** a way of diagramming the network of people who have a stake in a given system (LUMA, 2012)
- Statement Starters:** an approach to phrasing problem statements that invites broad exploration (LUMA, 2012)
- Visualize the Vote:** a quick poll of collaborators to reveal preferences and opinions (LUMA, 2012)

Literature Review

Community Identity: The Personality

The discovery, identification, or reclamation of community identity is a reoccurring concept within the available literature. While definitions vary in the details, the core concept of the idea remains largely consistent: a shared identity at the group level internalized by individual members who depersonalize their individual identity; a shared sense of place and a shared understanding of values, community narrative, and underlying history (Black & Veloutsou, 2017; Cottrell, 2017; Puddifoot, 2003). The differences then lie in the purpose of cultivating and maintaining community identity.

Puddifoot (2003) defined community identity as a sense of shared perception, writing that a sense of community identity "implies that psychologic orientation to one's community is more than a simple and individualistic phenomenon, and in fact, takes into account the context provided by the views of others" (p. 87). To this point, it is offered that "personal" and "shared" perceptions, labeled as personal shared sense of community and sense of community identity are symbiotic, both working mutualistically to facilitate greater community perception (Puddifoot, 2003).

Zwygart (2018) suggests that geographical location and permanent community spaces like

parks and landmarks have a significant impact on the creation and perception of community identity. This is most noticeable among the older citizenry, as permanent spaces reinforce a sense of belonging, familiarity, and heritage, providing objects or places that can clearly and easily be identified from outside of the community (p. 7). Furthermore, a singular defining location is often cited as a nexus for revitalizing community identity, as feelings of attachment to a familiar landmark were found to strengthen emotional bonds to a location and, by extension, its people (Liebl Keil & Kistmann, 2016).

The Lantz and Barre (2018) analysis on communities in Vietnam stated, "The greater the unity within the group...the greater the group identity will be," signifying community identity is partially derived from a sense of community unity and heritage, creating a strong sense of support in one's own community unit over outside interests (p. 3). Thus, a strong community identity facilitates a sort of brand loyalty, a precursor to brand equity (Gómez et al., 2018), wherein citizen support of local goods and services is proportionate to the strength of their community's shared identity. Moreover, a loss of community unity is seen as tantamount to a loss of community identity and must therefore be maintained for the social

and cultural health of the community (Stephens & Tiwari, 2015). Cheshmehzangi and Ormsby (2018) similarly defined community identity as relating to the distinctiveness of “a city’s history and circumstances,” or heritage, and “community image” as relating to “the summation of the impressions that people have of a city” (p. 195). This subdivision, more than creating distinction, emphasizes the similarities and interdependency of these concepts.

“The loss of cultural heritage is linked to a loss of identity” (Stephens & Tiwari, 2015, p. 100). When community identity is poorly cultivated, identity decline and identity drift can occur. Identity decline happens when identity understanding begins to lose salience through lack of active assertion or experience, while identity drift refers to identity change due to the gradual misalignment of an existing identity with new understandings, beliefs, or practices (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013, p. 116). This loss of agency creates a sense of powerlessness, which can result in cynicism or community dissociation. It is therefore important for community leaders, stakeholders, and citizens to actively and continuously cultivate community identity, as even the most pronounced community identity is susceptible to identity decline resulting from complacency. Eugene, Oregon, is one such city, inexplicably falling into decline despite its strong social structures

and distinctive features (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013). Having earned the nickname of “Track Town” for its legendary track and field programs, Eugene’s community identity had become defined by and reliant upon the resulting culture. However, once community interest in these programs began to wane, Eugene began to experience identity decline, having failed to cultivate its community identity during its period of prosperity, thus emphasizing the need for identities to be periodically, or even continuously, refueled (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013).

Activities or values that necessitate competition with differing communities can be a means to continuously refuel identity. When researching Haitian communities in the Dominican Republic, Wise and Harris (2016) suggest that identities are staged and performed, noting the importance of soccer not only as part of a community’s identity, but also as creating a sense of place in relation to other communities and cultures (p. 614). Through active involvement and experiences such as these, identity continuity can be managed and maintained while mitigating identity decline.

Conversely, while it is important that a community not become too isolated, as interaction with other communities may help contextualize one’s own community identity, some communities see environmental

separation as part of their social identity. Jana Raadik Cottrell (2017) pointed out that the permanent residents of Saaremaa Island, Estonia, view isolation as critical to their cultural identity, suggesting that threats to territorial continuity or environmental change might reinforce place attachment (p. 172). Therefore, it is critical to explore individual community repertoires to form an accurate picture of the identity in question.

Community Branding: The Façade

Castillo-Villar (2018) defined community branding as a theory of social representation that enables the conceptualization of a city's image as a social construct. It is this difference in perspective regarding a location's image that positions residents as the target audience of city branding and the key element in contextualizing and strengthening local identity (p. 31). The outward projection of local identity formed by the collective experiences and perceptions of shared local culture creates the impetus for effective and appropriate community branding. Cozmiuc (2011) explained, "...the purpose of marketing the city isn't the city itself, but its image, which in turn is the starting point for brand development of the city" (p. 437). Furthermore, it is important to make the distinction between the internal community and the outsider perspective, as misalignment between the two can often lead to inaccurate,

stereotyping, or normative observations (Cottrell, 2017).

It should be noted that the promotion of cities, despite dating to the 19th century, is relatively new in the academic world (Gómez et al., 2018). Thus, much of the available research on the subject is provided via shared ideas and similarities by means of individual case studies, rather than comprehensive evaluations on the concept or process.

A prominent reoccurring theme in community branding (and community development) is community actor participation, or participatory research and design. Black and Veloutsou (2017) credited community participation as pivotal to the success of Yes, Scotland, a successful marketing campaign supporting Scottish independence and national identity. This shared social identity campaign, born from an alliance negotiated between the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Greens, the Scottish Socialist Party, and individuals with no party allegiance willing to "depersonalize their individual identities," created a sense of community brand ownership, thus engraining a deep sense of pride for the brand (p. 417). By promoting participatory research and encouraging participatory design strategies within the community, the Yes, Scotland concept co-created a successful community brand alongside a reinvigorated sense of community

identity. A similar design approach can be observed in Act-Belong-Commit, an Australian-based mental wellness campaign designed to encourage people to play an active role in their mental health and well-being. For this campaign, community members were asked to vote on six campaign logos, each created by a local visual designer. Unique to this community were the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who lived and/or worked in Roebourne, for whom special considerations were made to encourage their inclusion. As a result, the winning logo represented the whole of the community, an act that enabled the second author of the study to engage further with the community, which ultimately led to the creation and launch of the "Standing Strong Together in Roebourne" logo (Donovan, Murray, Hicks, Nicholas, & Anwar-McHenry, 2018). The success of both endeavors is the direct result of the author's respect for the community of Roebourne, namely building meaningful connections and including community members in the design process. Concerning the effectiveness of participatory design, Black and Veloutsou (2017) wrote:

"The findings suggest that when consumers interact with brands, they do not just co-create brand production; they also create the brand identity, contribute to brand reputation, and express their identity through their active support of the branded

offer. Extensive borrowing of identities takes place among the brand, the individual, and the brand community" (p. 426).

For larger communities, participatory design is often encouraged through the formation of local partnerships, the results of which have seen success in cities like New York, London, and Santiago. Partnerships of this nature function as community intermediaries, combining designers' and researchers' skills with existing local actors, resources, and knowledge. This connectivity of shared interests and actors streamlines the process, which might otherwise be too complicated to navigate (Del Gaudio, Franzato, & de Oliveira, 2016).

Ultimately, place branding is an economic activity, as it adds value to a community's image and creates a source of local wealth (Cozmiuc, 2011). The assets created from these efforts can then be considered among a community's social capital, inexorably intertwined with communication characteristics and the tradition of the local population, cultural, socioeconomic and social relations of that place (Melović et al., 2017).

Community Development

In their study, Zwyart et. al. (2018) described community development as "a set of processes by which a group of citizens actively collaborates with governments to improve their economic,

social and cultural well-being," the process of which strengthens the local community (p. 3). Such processes are explored within their research, including the positive impact of community volunteer work, either leisurely or developmental, which empowers aging citizens to remain active and engaged despite the limitations or restrictions of their living environment. The addition of shared permanent spaces and the utilization of a common language further promote familiarity, inclusivity, and solidarity among age-diverse populations.

Community development is discussed within the existing literature largely by individual case studies looking at specific efforts on a per-project basis. One such study advocates the creation of "pocket" parks, or "mini" parks, to promote relaxation, exercise, and socializing within the community while also combating suburban sprawl. By increasing the number of public spaces and limiting the size and number of individual backyards, neighborhoods are being developed with more public spaces and less private property, thus tailoring neighborhood perceptions to be more community-minded (Gibson & Canfield, 2016). This idea of shared spaces as developmental hubs reinforces the idea of 'ownership through involvement' as defined in participatory design. By necessitating community feedback, encouraging participation, and promoting continued engagement, a sense

of ownership and pride is cultivated between the involved population, the community brand identity, and community development solutions.

In more contemporary settings, participatory research and design can be witnessed in digital wayfinding, urban screening, and augmented localities, as it requires the direct involvement and feedback from an end-user in order to be successfully measured. For example, urban screening, as referred to in a Cheshmehzangi and Ornsby (2018) study, is the strategic installation and utilization of screens to display information relating to or promoting the unique identity of a place. The implementation of technology in this fashion is meant to "enhance" a locality, providing new opportunities for communication and interconnectivity between community actors (p. 198). Such enhancement initiatives can be used to reinvigorate existing or aging solutions, making them feel new or relevant, or provide quick and easy feedback in the case of interactive works.

In a more traditional setting, initiatives often utilize, and subsequently modernize, a shared or historical narrative as the catalyst for developmental projects. "The Voices of Britannia: The People, the Stories and the Future" sought to reveal the collective history of the City of Richmond, Canada, through three community collaboration projects centered around the preservation and restoration of

the Britannia Shipyards. These three projects—the *Silver Ann* boat restoration, the Salmon Row theater production, and the Voices of Britannia community engagement exhibit—were chosen to encourage active participation in the community in different ways. The boat restoration encouraged individuals to observe and ask questions, positioning Britannia as a community that engages with activities, while the theater production was designed to make the location's history feel alive and relevant. Lastly, the community engagement exhibit sought to reveal the collective community voice and its connection to the Britannia Shipyards (Baker, 2014).

For any such product to be envisioned and brought to fruition requires the involvement, application, and collaboration of many moving parts. Yee and White (2016) referred to such perfect conditions as the “Goldilocks Conundrum,” or a set of three “just right” conditions—namely community building, capacity, and leadership—necessary for “design to achieve the desired impact in the context of public and third sectors” (p. 8). While they fail to provide a framework by which these perfect conditions can be replicated, they do provide a set of suggestions and concepts by which these three components can be cultivated. Amidst these numerous proposals, the idea that a given solution must be multidisciplinary

in nature speaks the loudest, as adaptability to local needs and resources helps tailor solutions to community-specific requirements, skills, and dynamics (Yee & White, 2016).

This need for a malleable, multidisciplinary approach is reaffirmed and referenced by Yee and White (2016) in six different case studies that each required prior knowledge of a unique skill set or area of study. While each case study employed some variation of design-focused research, they all sought to fulfill three codependent conditions for meaningful impact: community building, capacity, and leadership, the first of which being cited as the most important of these conditions due to the inclusivity and trust it fosters within team and community members (Yee & White, 2016, p. 20–23).

Design-Thinking Methodology

Design thinking is a methodology used to develop and evaluate novel concepts for systems or “wicked problems” (Eckman, Gorski, & Mehta, 2016). Originally developed to serve a traditional developmental role in design fields, the potential of design thinking as a social tool has led to an evolution and more versatile understanding of the concept. At its core, design thinking is human-centered, having roots in participatory design and focusing on the needs of the end-user. The inclusion of end-user perspectives and the involvement

of multidisciplinary teams provide multiple perspectives and a richer understanding of issues in question, thus providing more relevant and nuanced solutions (Eckman et al., 2016; Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016). While not providing a comprehensive or universal approach to community development, these methodologies are built upon many of the philosophies and properties considered necessary in successful community development, such as participant involvement in the research process and iterative problem-solving.

Design thinking is distinct for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is a lack of a single emergent definition as to “what constitutes design thinking” (Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016, p. 329). Rather, it is often defined by the philosophy and purpose behind the methodology. As a result, various schools of design thinking have emerged with their own unique take on the design-thinking process. Tim Brown’s IDEO employs an iterative, five-step process: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test (IDEO, 2019). Alternatively, the LUMA Institute uses a cyclical, three-step program: Looking, Understanding, and Making (LUMA, 2012).

Regardless of the originating studio and complexity of the methodology, design thinking is considered distinct within research methodology because of its nonlinear nature,

often involving multiple iterations of their various steps (Zarzosa, 2018). Moreover, design thinking does not start with a presumption of a known answer (or even a well-defined problem); instead, it guides the research in a way that allows these questions to be uncovered organically through user participation (Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016). The hypothetical benefit of this nonlinearity enables the methodology to be started or altered at any point, focusing on input-oriented legitimacy and democratic participation. However, this does raise questions regarding the representativeness of the input, as it is not immediately clear who participates in the design-thinking process and to what degree (Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016).

Design Thinking in Systems, Lacking Literature, and Potential Solutions

Beyond citing a specific precedent of success within a given community or a general sense of participatory research used in specific case studies, data detailing the explicit use of design thinking in community identification and development is minimal or ambiguous. This is not to say that the use or effectiveness of design thinking in community engagement has not been reported or studied. Likewise, it is important to note there are thematic similarities between participant-driven community development and similar closed systems,

even when design-thinking methods are not specifically credited or conducted under different labels.

Rusk, Poncini, and McGowan (2011) observed two unrelated case studies, one from Northern Ireland and the other from Northern Italy, in which design thinking was approached from different innovative practices. The first case reported on Design Direction, a community-building initiative from the University of Ulster that would harness the role of design as a “metaskill” (Rusk et al., 2011, p. 117). The goal of Design Direction was to use “the interplay between design thinking and innovative practices” (Rusk et al., 2011, p. 118) to build a new sense of community based on regeneration. By facilitating the flow of design management knowledge and the exchange of creative business expertise, the ethos and dynamic of the resulting community would stand in stark contrast to the “pre-existing community” (Rusk et al., 2011, p. 117) or communities emerging from similar conditions. The second case, called “Communication, Knowledge Creation, and Communities: A View from Northern Italy,” observed how different notions of community were considered while investigating communications at an international wine industry event (Rusk et al., 2011). Here, more traditional research-oriented design-thinking methodologies were applied

to develop a greater awareness of the wider social, historical, economic context of the event rather than the more commercial aspects of wine, viticulture, and associated legislation and tradition. The resulting “thinking outside the wine glass” concept was developed in response to this research effort, seeing a less technical and more informal approach to the wine festival and surrounding culture.

Community development is not defined by the size of the community. Smaller, more intimate communities or subcommunities often exist around a shared interest, characteristic, or system. Eckman et al. (2016) used design-thinking methods to provide a deeper perspective on the decision-making framework that people in the community use when interacting with a proposed mobile healthcare system. Herein, stakeholders and entrepreneurs served as community representatives, each interviewing 20 people within their respective group before a given meeting; the results of which were recorded and used to guide future lines of inquiry. Team members gained valuable perspective, allowing them to refine their business model, identify actionable questions needing validation, and inform future design-thinking sessions. It is also noted that by using a representative system, the risk for a stakeholder to misrepresent his or her community through personal bias or agenda is a concern. However,

should such a problem occur, the decision to limit each representative to 20 interviewees also lessens data contamination while ensuring enough representation in the data collected (Eckman et al., 2016).

While these examples provide a conceptual framework for individual communities or case studies, they are specifically catered to the unique qualities of their respective environments. Therefore, they do not provide a universally applicable solution to community development. In what is perhaps the closest, most accessible, and most cited instance of an existing universal framework, the Comprehensive Participatory Planning Evaluation (CPPE) attempts to provide "a set of guidelines and tools for flexible, process-oriented comprehensive and participatory project planning and evaluation" (Lefevre, Kolsteren, De Wael, Byekwaso, & Beghin, 2000, p. 33). Focusing exclusively on participatory planning and evaluation, the CPPE seeks to ensure that "objectives, planning, and evaluation are viewed as a continuum and form a fully integrated, flexible process, specifically designed to help overcome difficulties in planning and evaluating" (Lefevre et. al., 2000, p. 1). Despite delivering in this capacity, it unfortunately fails to provide solutions based upon what is initially promised, leaving its applicable merits to the discretion of those conducting and interpreting the results of the evaluation. Incidentally, it

may also be the lack of an adequate metric by which to measure the effectiveness of participatory design causing a lack of proposed solutions. "The testing of participation theory is currently underdeveloped; contributing to this underdevelopment is the challenge of deciding how to measure key elements of participation in an appropriate manner" (Segalowitz & Chamorro-Koc, 2017, p. 201).

Similar claims have been made regarding the overall influence of local partnerships, describing a lack of detail regarding partnerships' overall influence on the design process (Del Gaudio et al., 2016), as well as the benefits and effectiveness of brand equity, pointing to lack of instrumentality by which to measure the client perspective (Gómez et al., 2018). After all, it is how a client interacts with, patronizes, or believes in a brand that ultimately determines the brand's value. While different studies prioritize different components of brand equity, these feelings are no less intangible by nature, making them difficult, if not impossible, to measure with accuracy or objectivity. Efforts like Design Direction have undoubtedly shown the importance of design practice in relation to entrepreneurial or community development, but what is less understood is how these relationships will evolve over time in dynamic, complex environments (Rusk et al., 2011).

Proposed Solution

There are many models and methods associated with the various disciplines of community development; however, there is no predominantly effective, cross-disciplinary community development model that is universally recognized and accepted as a standard. It is, therefore, necessary to research and develop on a community basis, as each community is unique, dynamic, and complex.

The need for a custom-designed solution partially informed the founding of Plus Public, a new research and development model that seeks to create custom solutions based on a community's unique needs. Focused specifically on economically challenged communities in revival, the goal of this model is to facilitate community involvement to create transformative solutions that aid in the revitalization and economic development of these communities.

The Plus Public model is designed around a six-step sequence: research and development, brand identity design, graphic and interactive design, multimedia storytelling, space activation and placemaking, and community and economic development. Whereas each step of this sequence is custom-tailored for the community and multidisciplinary in approach, the Plus Public model places special emphasis on research and development to ensure unbiased, data-driven solutions. Furthermore, each step is designed

to be adaptive and responsive, allowing for process alteration and deviation based on the feedback and participation of the community, thus ensuring the creation and cultivation of meaningful social capital.

Using design-thinking and participatory-design methodologies as the primary means for generating qualitative data ensures that any proposed solutions reflect participant-influenced data collected through community analysis, participatory research, and the assistance of local partnerships. To this end, Plus Public aims to serve as an impartial third party, eliminating much of the biases associated with local efforts and removing systemic barriers preventing citizen involvement, such as lacking procedure and precedent, proposal cost, and lacking technical skill. As Gooch et al. (2018) wrote: "... without action from a third party, the citizen's contribution is wasted. Such an argument is supported by our data, which highlights a number of barriers preventing citizens from actioning their ideas by themselves" (p. 223).

Subsequent steps exist in response to the quality of this newly created participatory research. Graphic and interactive design deals in the creation of visual assets relevant to community feedback and brand identity standards. Space activation and placemaking focuses on the use and revitalization of permanent spaces within a community, adding

a sense of shared social space and community ownership. Lastly, community and economic development explores the adaptive use and marketing of all social capital, brand equity, community partnerships, and utilized local talent and services. These are anticipated next steps that, while likely to happen, fall outside the purview of this study.

By capitalizing on the interactivity and fluidity of these sequences, Plus Public establishes the goal of addressing the gaps in the available

literature that fail to link participatory research, visual design, and community and economic development in a comprehensive and replicable way. Furthermore, Plus Public seeks to propose a solution that focuses on utilizing design thinking as a catalyst for community identity, brand design, and community and economic development, ultimately allowing communities to capitalize and profit from a newly reinvigorated sense of identity.

Methodology

This study focused on how design-thinking methodologies integrate into the process of community identification and development, while also exploring the unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, the study was conducted to observe the influence of design thinking on the creation of social capital and its influence on community dissociation, identity decline, and public perception.

Design thinking is a human-centered, solution-based design methodology that focuses on people above other factors (“LUMA Institute,” 2019). Design thinking is distinct due to the nonlinear nature (see *Figure 6*) of its various steps and methodologies (Zarzosa, 2018). Moreover, these processes may be conducted simultaneously or developed in tandem, allowing progress to inform next steps and provide multiple avenues of feedback (Maher,

Maher, & McAlpine, 2018). This unpredictability necessitates a level of researcher involvement to effectively conduct research sessions, manage participants, navigate data, analyze results, and determine appropriate next steps. Consequently, flexibility and adaptability during these sessions is expected and considered a necessary part of design thinking and the overall design research strategy.

Population

Bellevue, Pennsylvania, has a population of approximately 8,285 people—85.8% White, 10.3% Black, and 1.86% two+ (multiracial)—and a median age of 38 years old (“Bellevue, PA,” 2019). For the purposes of this study, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation were all extraneous variables therefore not factored into the collected data analysis. Only participants over the age of 18 were eligible for participation in these methodologies.

Instrument and Procedure

Design-thinking research utilizes non-sequential explanatory models designed to form and build upon data gathered during previous methodology sessions, charrettes, or exercises (see *Figure 7*). This study employed a series of design-thinking techniques focusing on four distinct stages of research development—

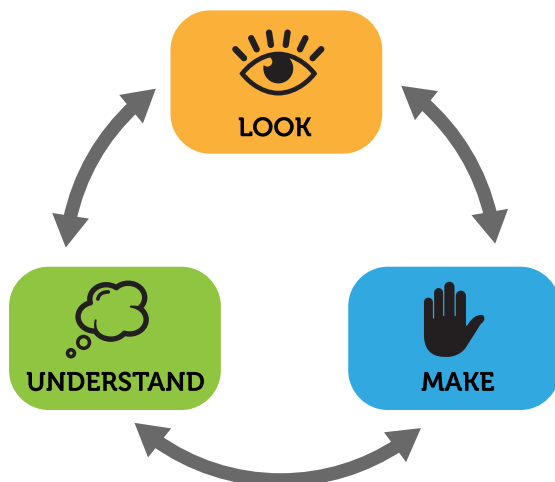


FIGURE 6. Example of a non-linear design-thinking process

narrative development, conceptual development, prototyping and production, post-research conclusions—which were derived from the structure of the design-thinking process as proposed by IDEO LLC.: discovery, interpretation, ideation, experimentation, and evolution (IDEO, 2019). Ten design-thinking methods were divided

between these stages (see *Figure 8*). These methods were modeled after those developed by the LUMA Institute school of design thinking (LUMA, 2012). The proposed research model took approximately six months from proposal to final analysis (see *Appendix A*). These methods were conducted over the course of four sessions.

Explanatory Research Model/Design-Thinking Methodology	
<i>Narrative Development (Discovery)</i>	
Session One: Stakeholder Mapping	<i>Community stakeholders identified participants for participation in future methodologies.</i>
Session Two: Contextual Inquiry/ Interviewing	<i>Deepen community narrative and empathy, build credibility with stakeholder participants, encourage involvement.</i>
Affinity Clustering	<i>Codify information for analysis and future use.</i>
<i>Conceptual Development (Interpretation, Ideation)</i>	
Session Three: Bull’s-eye Diagramming	<i>Participants identify and prioritize concepts and themes.</i>
Session Three: Statement Starters	<i>Determine “what’s important” to community members.</i>
Session Three: Creative Matrix	<i>Concept refinement and additional development or generate additional concepts and promote divergent thinking.</i>
Session Three: Visualize the Vote	<i>Determine which concepts are most popular.</i>
<i>Prototyping and Production (Experimentation)</i>	
Concept Poster/Schematic Diagramming/Prototyping	<i>Develop concept, thumbnails, schematics, planning, infographics, etc.</i>
Critique	<i>Stakeholder feedback; focus-group concept refinement and additional development.</i>
ITERATION Concept Poster/Schematic Diagramming/Prototyping	<i>Develop concept, thumbnails, schematics, planning, infographics, etc. Revisions made based upon community feedback.</i>
<i>Post-research Conclusions (Evolution)</i>	
Session Four: Experience Diagramming	<i>Record experiences and timeline of the methodology process.</i>
Session Four: Rose, Thorn, Bud	<i>Identify positive, negative, and potential components of the experience.</i>

(“IDEO”, 2019; LUMA, 2012)

FIGURE 7. Explanatory Research Model/Design-Thinking Methodology

Explanatory Research Model/Design-Thinking Methodology

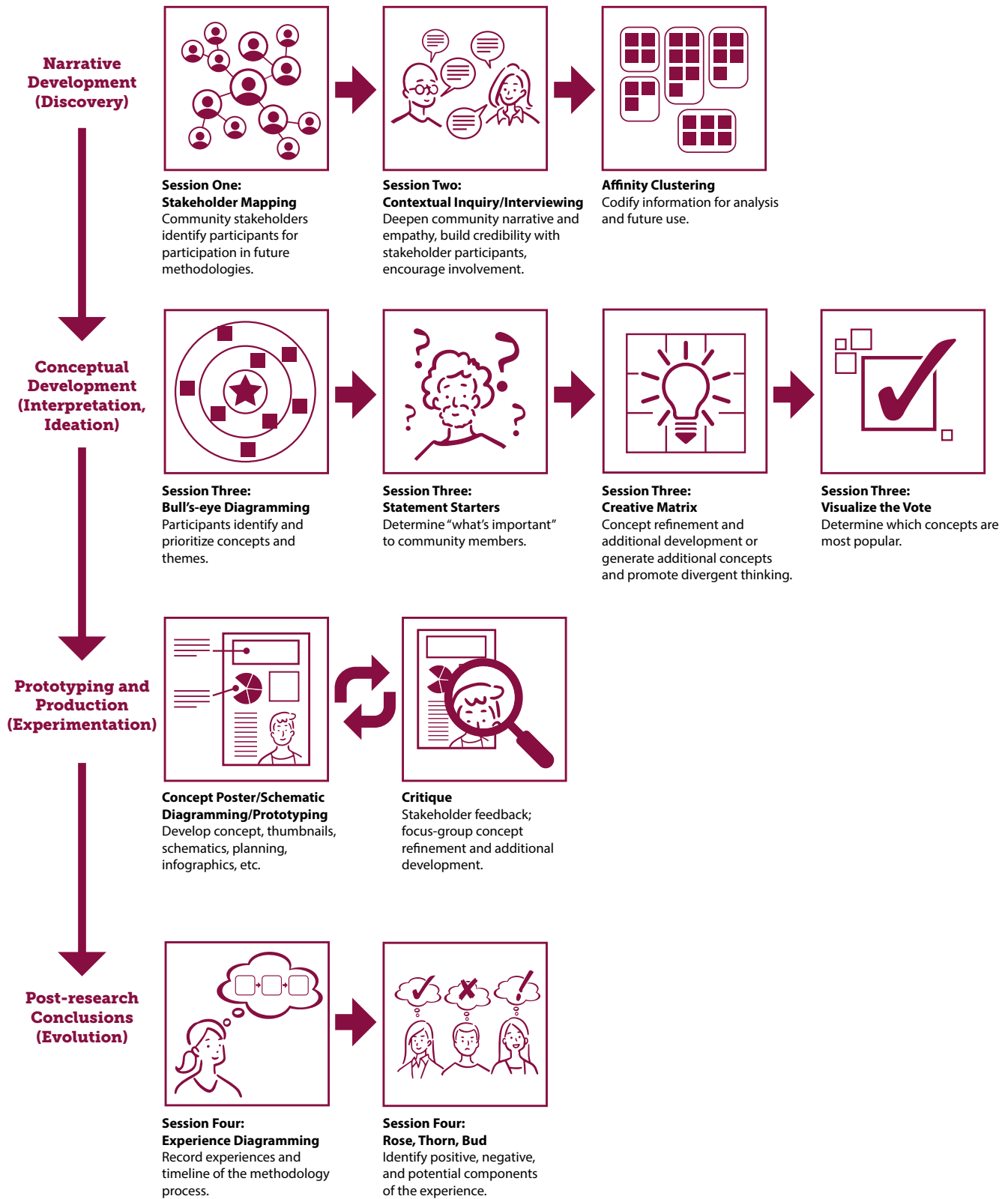


FIGURE 8. Explanatory Research Model/Design-Thinking Methodology Visualization

Prior to beginning any session, the researcher explained the study, methodology, directions, and expectations of the workshop to participants. Consent and release forms were provided (see *Appendices B–E*) and participants were given adequate time to read the forms, ask questions, and either sign their consent or decline participation. After all necessary consent and release forms were signed, the session began.

Recruitment occurred in a face-to-face manner, as the student researcher had established contacts in the community. An initial group of 11 Bellevue stakeholders were asked to serve as community liaisons for the duration of this research model, most of whom participated in each research session. Continuous participant involvement sought to ensure consistent community feedback and protection against

researcher bias. Additional recruitment occurred via emailed letter of recruitment (see *Appendix F*). This letter of recruitment was initially distributed to a list of community contacts provided by members of Bona Fide Bellevue.

Methodology sessions were conducted in a conference room at the Andrew Bayne Memorial Library in Bellevue, Pennsylvania. A letter of support was secured from the library director authorizing the utilization of these facilities (see *Appendix G*).

Narrative Development

The narrative development portion was designed to identify and interview community stakeholders, develop an understanding of the outlook and perception of the community, and identify action items and priorities. The



FIGURE 9. Andrew Bayne Memorial Library, Bellevue

employed methodologies were used to strengthen the community narrative and begin developing a sense of community identity. Based on participant availability and accessibility, iterative sessions were necessary for several of the utilized techniques.



Session One: Stakeholder Mapping:

Stakeholder Mapping is a design-thinking method intended to identify relevant stakeholders and potential participants with a specified topic or study. This method utilized a purposive sample of local stakeholders (community members, entrepreneurs, policymakers, CDC members) and was conducted in person at the Andrew Bayne Memorial Library. An initial stakeholder session involving 11 resident liaisons formed the initial stakeholder map. Participants were prompted with the following questions during the session:

1. Who is involved in community development and identity in Bellevue, Pennsylvania?
2. What individuals have an influence on community development and identity in Bellevue, Pennsylvania?

3. Who cares about community development and identity in Bellevue, Pennsylvania?

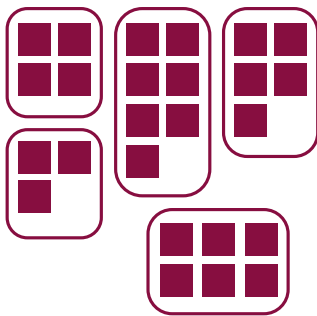
After additional stakeholders were determined, another stakeholder mapping session was conducted, which attracted nine additional participants. These sessions were intended to identify community stakeholders to participate in future research sessions and interviews. Each stakeholder mapping session lasted approximately 90 minutes.



Session Two: Contextual Inquiry/ Interviewing: A purposive sample of 16 community stakeholders—identified through stakeholder mapping—served as participants in a combination Contextual Inquiry and Interviewing method. Contextual inquiries were conducted at places of work and other locations determined or necessitated by the interviewee, while interviews were conducted at Andrew Bayne Memorial Library. Contextual Inquiry and Interviewing, as design-thinking methods and ethnographic research techniques, are structured as discussions tailored to the interviewee's experiences in relation to the study.

Both methods utilized a series of predetermined questions designed to serve as an informational baseline for gathered data (see *Appendix H*).

Depending upon the answers provided, participant interviews lasted between 20 and 60 minutes. Sessions were audio recorded for later transcription and analysis. Participant identities were omitted from the reported data.

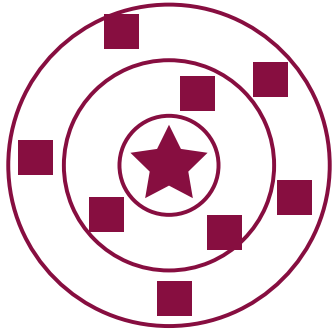


Affinity Clustering: Affinity Clustering is a design-thinking method intended to consolidate, sort, and codify collected data into thematic groupings and patterns. Information gathered from the contextual inquiries and interviews served as the data set for this method. The research committee, consisting of the primary researcher and two impartial research committee members, listened to the interview data three times and used affinity clustering to identify common themes and patterns. The themes generated via affinity clustering provided the preliminary data used for the conceptual development phase of the study and Session Three.

Conceptual Development

The conceptual development portion was designed to develop new ideas and action items, determine which concepts were viable, and gather feedback for proposed solutions. The employed methodologies were used to encourage new avenues of creativity while ensuring any proposed solutions would resonate with the stakeholders' sense of community identity and community branding, respectively. This session was conducted in person on two different evenings, providing additional accessibility for walk-ins and greater availability for cancellations and schedule conflicts.

Session Three: Bull's-eye Diagramming, Statement Starters, Creative Matrix, and Visualize the Vote: A purposive sample of 12 community stakeholders—identified through stakeholder mapping and interviews—served as participants in this session. The session was offered on two separate evenings at the Center of Bellevue conference hall. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes from introduction to conclusion.



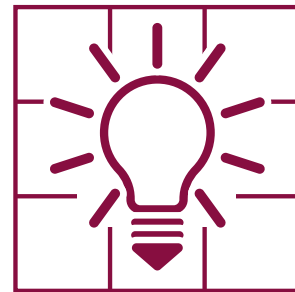
Bull's-eye Diagramming is a design-thinking method designed to prioritize items within a data set by challenging participants to deliberate about project essentials before producing anything (LUMA, 2012). Bull's-eye diagrams consist of three concentric circles, either drawn on a whiteboard or a sheet of poster board, resembling a bull's-eye. Each circle is labeled from the inside-circle-outward as Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. Using slips of paper preprinted with information codified from the interview session, participants were asked to plot these items on the bull's-eye based on priority.



Upon completion of the bull's-eye diagram, participants used Statement Starters to encourage restating problems as invitations for exploration (LUMA, 2012). Utilizing prioritized

problems and opportunities from the previous bull's-eye diagram and a sheet of poster board, participants were encouraged to develop starter questions, or questions designed to be open-ended and actionable. Participants were guided with language like "How might we...," or "In what ways might we...," or "How to...," ensuring that proposed questions did not presuppose an answer.

Once the statement starters were finished, the group was given a 15-minute break. During this time, the researcher used the results from the previous steps to generate a creativity matrix.



A Creativity Matrix is a design-thinking method intended to generate a wide range of ideas in a short amount of time. The rows and columns of a large grid were labeled with priorities identified during implementation of the statement starter approach. Participants were encouraged to populate the intersections of these rows and columns with new, unusual, or divergent ideas. Participants were each supplied with markers and a stack of sticky notes necessary for participating in the activity.

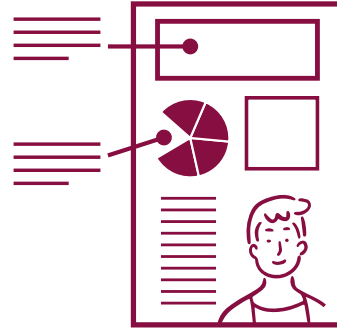


Once the creativity matrix was finished, participants were asked to Visualize the Vote, a design-thinking method intended to allow participants to vote upon proposed ideas or solutions. By democratizing the decision-making process, this method ensures that no single idea or voice takes precedence over another (LUMA, 2012). Participants were given a set number of votes—determined by the number of choices on each creativity matrix—and a criterion for casting votes. Individual concepts were elaborated upon before the voting process began. After the group voting session, the results were tallied. A follow-up discussion was then held concerning the popular votes and potential next steps. The ideas that received the most votes determined which ideas moved forward to the next session in the research sequence.

Prototyping and Production

The prototyping and production portion was designed as a testing platform on which to develop concepts, schematics, or any other actionable solution necessary. The employed methodologies were also used to observe stakeholder interactions and reactions while

gathering experiential data. This process utilized online and in-person iterations options based on participant availability and accessibility.



Concept Poster/Schematic Diagramming/Prototyping: Concept Posters represent how a concept or solution might be visualized, marketed, or implemented. Schematic Diagramming provides a basis for how an end-user might engage with an interactive system. Prototyping provides a physical representation of a potential product that users can interactive with and provide feedback.

These methods represent creative processes inherent in many design disciplines, including graphic and interactive design. These methods were informed by the most highly voted topics from the visualize the vote sessions and developed by the researcher. The resulting processes produced three concept posters. Because these processes were not limited by participant interaction or time restraint, they took approximately one to three days to complete, depending on the complexity of the idea and the intricacy of the poster.



Critique: A Critique provides a forum for end-users, stakeholders, and participants to give and receive constructive feedback. The critique allowed the researchers to collect and gauge community feedback on the solutions generated during the Concept Poster/Schematic Diagramming/Prototyping session. These conceptual works were posted and made available for viewing and providing feedback in person at Andrew Bayne Memorial Library and online via Bona Fide Bellevue's website. On-site feedback was collected anonymously using a suggestion box, and online feedback was collected anonymously via online form.

The concept posters were made available for critique for 2 weeks to encourage engagement, exposure, and response diversity. At the conclusion of the 2-week showing, responses were collected, counted, and considered for implementation.

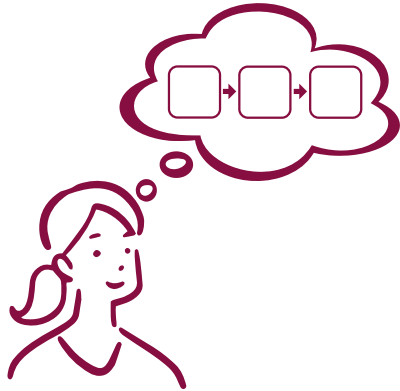
Planned to take place after the critique period was an iterative concept poster session in which any concept posters, schematic diagrams,

or prototypes would be refined based upon community feedback. The iterative process is not limited by participant interaction and was expected to take the researcher approximately three days to complete. However, due to the limited feedback and the neutral nature of the received responses, this step was removed and the session ended after the first critique was concluded.

Post-research Conclusions

The post-research conclusions portion of the research was designed to analyze and document the participant experience of engaging with design-thinking methodologies to promote community identity and community development initiatives. Moreover, it asked participants—most notably the stakeholders who had participated in every aspect of the research—to reflect upon the different aspects of the experience, how they related to each other, and the efficacy of the completed methodology.

Session Four: Experience Diagramming and Rose, Bud, Thorn: This process was conducted by a group of five community participants who had been involved in every step of this research methodology. It includes insights and analyses on their various experiences interacting with the research and methodologies involved in the Bellevue Believes research project.



Experience Diagramming provides a design-thinking method by which a person's experiences are recorded through a set of circumstances or tasks. For Bellevue Believes, the resulting diagram sought to provide an experiential framework for future community development initiatives.

In preparation for this session, participants were given one week to consider and document their personal experiences with this study and the research sessions. Participants were then provided a link to an online template in which they were asked to record their individual collected experiential data. It is estimated that this session took 20 to 60 minutes per participant, based upon their recorded experiences and thoroughness. The online experiential diagram was available for 2 weeks.

Once the experience diagrams were finished, the data was collected and used to generate topics for the next and final session: Rose, Thorn, Bud.



Rose, Thorn, Bud is a design-thinking method for identifying ideas, solutions, or experiences as positive, negative, or having potential (LUMA, 2012). Using the results from the experience diagram as a reference, participants were provided with topics relating to their shared experiences. Participants were then encouraged to identify and label aspects of these experiences as positive, negative, or as having potential. This process was intended to provide insight as to how design-thinking methods integrate into and support the process of informing community identity and the creation of social capital, as well as determine what unique challenges these methods create or solve. A poster board with a four-square diagram labeled with the four sessions of the research methodology was prepared prior to this session. Participants were supplied with markers and sticky notes necessary to populate the diagram with their responses.

Internal Validity and Limitations

Low engagement, or lack of participation within the community during research sessions, was an anticipated limitation. To help circumvent this restriction and maintain a standard of community involvement, participants were asked to serve as community liaisons, participating in each step of the research methodology.

All methodologies were presented and recorded in English, thus creating a potential limitation for non-English-speaking or illiterate participants. Because the population and participants in this study are residents of Bellevue, Pennsylvania, this limitation was minimized, as the majority population speaks English. Additionally, the researcher presented all information audibly for participants who may struggle with literacy or visual impairment. Were this study to be repeated in communities dissimilar to Bellevue, additional spoken language options or literary options may become necessary.

Design-thinking methodologies are participant-driven, relying on individual perspectives and experiences. Participant biases, speculation, and oversight are potential limitations of the research model. Making methodology sessions available to a variety of community participants helps alleviate this limitation, ensuring that no single voice or

opinion carries disproportionate influence or weight.

Stakeholder mapping within a given community is limited to the participants' knowledge, network, and available time to participate. It would fail to represent all potential participants within a given community, regardless of the outcome. Additionally, participant biases or personal relationships may contribute to participant willingness or hesitation to provide certain names or references.

Participant experience during contextual inquiries and interviewing may have varied or have been influenced by the interviewer and the environment, potentially creating a consistency limitation within the study. Additionally, any eligible participants suffering from sickness, infirmity, or mental illness may have created data limitations by submitting content that was inadmissible or incomprehensible.

Potential limitations during affinity clustering could have resulted from the researchers' lack of knowledge or inexperience in the area of study, leading to misinterpretation or overlooked information. The inclusion of a secondary researcher provided valuable complementary opinions and academic insights, reducing the potential for limitations due to individual researcher oversight and unintentional speculation or personal bias.

Research Conclusions and Discussion

The focus of this research project was the impact and effectiveness of design thinking on the process of community identity and development. Design thinking, as a human-centric, solution-based method of research, necessitates stakeholder participation at various stages of any proposed methodology. Likewise, effective community identification necessitates the ongoing involvement of the community in question. It was with this expectation and mindset that the Bellevue Believes methodology was conceived and implemented in the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

Categorized into four developmental phases—narrative development, conceptual development, prototyping and production, and post-research conclusions—and consisting of several in-person and remote sessions, the resulting data, and discussions presented herein, explores the details and experiences of the completed research methodology. Additionally, the effectiveness of the design-thinking process is discussed, as are any unforeseen alterations or considerations made to the methodology and the ways in which the process could be improved or otherwise modified if replicated outside of Bellevue.

Narrative Development

The narrative developmental phase was written with discovery in mind. The first participatory research session, Session One, was conceived as a Stakeholder Mapping exercise, a design-thinking technique used to identify project stakeholders. In the interests of community identity and community development within Bellevue, this meant a focus on participants involved in community betterment, local business, events planning, and local politics. To begin, an initial list of approximately 60 stakeholders was supplied by members of Bellevue's CDC, Bona Fide Bellevue. Individuals from this list were contacted via email, wherein the research project was introduced and briefly explained. These emails were followed by a Google Calendar invite, allowing stakeholders to confirm or decline



FIGURE 10. Session One early arrivals

participation. The first stakeholder mapping session was held on the morning of Saturday, July 20, 2019, at Bayne Andrews Public Library.

Prior to beginning the session, presentation boards were hung on the wall while notepads, markers, and release forms were placed on the chairs. Recording equipment, including cameras and audio recorders, were placed around the room in advance of the session. Chairs were set up in a semicircle to accommodate attendees and encourage interaction. Coffee and donuts were supplied to encourage socialization and ease any tensions (see *Figure 11*). Informational and directional signs were placed at the entrances and throughout the library, directing would-be participants to the conference space and encouraging other library patrons to attend if interested.

A group of 11 Bellevue stakeholders—CDC members, community-involved citizens, academics, politicians, and business owners—attended the first of two stakeholder mapping sessions for Bellevue Believes. Despite invitations having been placed throughout the library space, no walk-in participants joined the session. The research study was introduced and explained, followed immediately by the recital and acquisition of participant informed consent (see *Figure 12*).

During this process, it was observed that reading the informed consent forms aloud was tiresome and intimidating for the participants, many of whom grew noticeably impatient. The process was described by some as too much legalese, as much of what was disclosed was confusing or inconsequential. It was suggested



FIGURE 11. Refreshments provided for research participants

by several participants after the fact that an alternative means to familiarize themselves with the information prior to attending future sessions would have been appreciated.

The efficacy of design thinking lies in human-centered methodologies, which necessitate a level of empathy regarding participant interaction and perceptions. Likewise, participatory research necessitates a certain level of trust between the participant and the researcher. Although everyone appeared willing to work past the initial intimidation and impatience felt by the lengthy research protocol and continue with the session activities, for some it is suspected to have caused a negative first impression regarding empathy and trust. Whether or not this affected turnout or involvement in subsequent sessions is unknown, as participants were never asked to provide direct feedback on a reason for declining an invitation. Regardless, these negative perceptions were indicative of a potential conflict between the formality of academic research and the informality of human-centered design. While it is not to say that research necessities and design-thinking methodologies are incompatible, it does suggest a need to provide a more comfortable, less intimidating way for participants to understand research protocol without casting doubt on the integrity of the research.

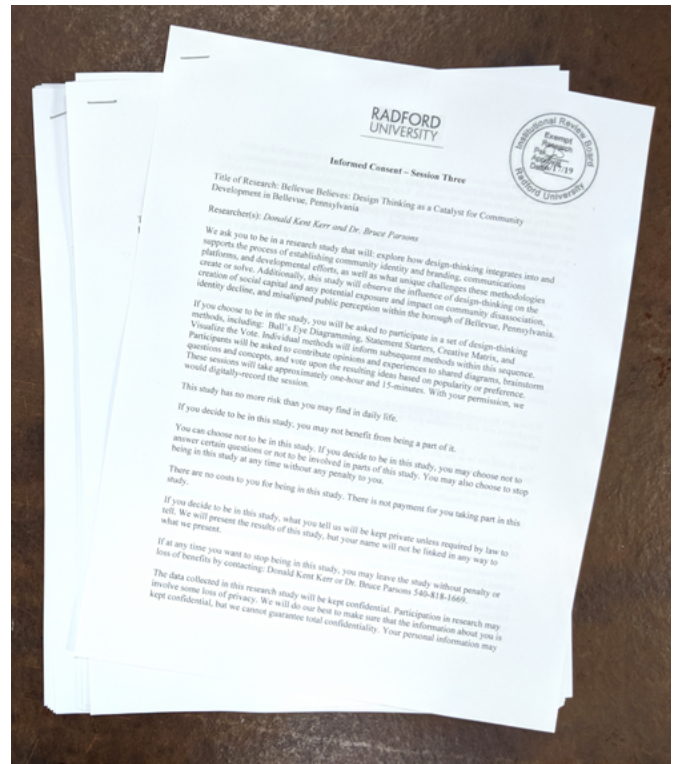


FIGURE 12. Participant informed consent forms

Once informed consent was received from all in attendance, the cameras and recorders were turned on and the session started. For the first portion of the exercise, participants were provided a large sheet of poster paper and asked to write their name or draw themselves, leaving room for everyone else to do the same. When doing this, participants were asked to also consider those who had already identified themselves on the board. If two participants knew each other, they were asked to signify that connection by drawing a line connecting their names. Finally, participants were then asked to identify and add additional stakeholders to the diagram who might be interested in participating



FIGURE 14. During Session One, participants were asked to think of words that described their community.

as Affinity Clustering and is designed to reveal patterns and themes in seemingly unrelated data. These themes were then used by the researcher to create a concept map for Bellevue. Represented as a hub-and-spoke diagram, this diagram depicts the borough of Bellevue as the center “hub” and the themes revealed via the affinity clustering as “spokes.” The purpose of this type of diagram is to visualize the key characteristics that help to define the subject in question (see *Figure 16*).

While not part of the original methodology, the additional exercise was valuable in creating and maintaining participant interest. Both additional exercises were well-received, allowing those in attendance to see their contributions and ideas visualized and recontextualized into something new. It also seemed to have a unifying effect, as casual conversation and

collaboration between participants increased over the course of the extended session. The concept map in particular, having been created from the shared perspectives and efforts of those in attendance, provided a powerful visual metaphor for the process of participatory design and the concept of community identity.

To allow any additional stakeholders identified during the first stakeholder mapping session a chance to participate, a repeat assembly was held the following weekend. On Saturday, July 27, 2019, 10 new participants attended the second stakeholder mapping session at Bayne Library. Similar amenities and refreshments were provided, ensuring an experience comparable to that of the previous group. The research project, session agenda, and



FIGURE 15. Participants’ descriptors were sorted into groups based on common theme or affinities.

informed consent were once again provided and reviewed. However, unlike the first session, participants were emailed consent forms, giving them an opportunity to review the copy before the session, significantly reducing the amount of preliminary exposition. This had the desired effect of easing tensions and confusion concerning issues of anonymity and consent. Aside from this minor change in process, the process and pace of the second stakeholder mapping session was nearly identical to the first. Again, the process provided valuable context for the attendees, while newly identified stakeholders were added to the list of invitees. However, having originated from a different group of stakeholders, the stakeholder map, nouns, adjectives, verbs, and concept map produced different results.

Unlike the 12 themes of the previous group, the second group produced seven themes: dynamic, socially invested, future (environmental), family-oriented, welcoming, walkable, and character. While themes like ‘welcoming’ and ‘neighborly’ were contextually similar, ‘walkable’ was the only identical theme shared between both concept maps. This was unsurprising after participants’ discussion of their community. The unique walkability of Bellevue stood out as a favorite feature and a mark of pride between both groups of residents. However, it was surprising to see such a range



FIGURE 16. Common themes and descriptors were used to create concept maps, visualizing how participants view their community.

of qualities and features expressed between two relatively small groups of participants. Bellevue residents had a lot to say about their community, and these early design-thinking exercises provided an effective first step in allowing

participants to express these thoughts (see *Appendices I–L*).

At the conclusion of each stakeholder mapping session, participants were briefed on Session Two, which involved one-on-one interviews, or contextual inquiries. Participants who were planning on taking part in Session Two were encouraged to schedule their interviews before departing. Eight individuals scheduled dates and times before leaving. Another eight scheduled later via email. Location suggestions varied for each interviewee, and these were agreed upon under the condition that they were public locations within Bellevue.

Whereas Session One focused on identifying stakeholders and gaining shared insights, Session Two focused on getting to know Bellevue stakeholders as individuals. Contextual Inquiries and Interviewing are design-thinking methods that allow researchers to learn about individuals and their relationship to a topic of study (LUMA, 2012). For Bellevue Believes, this meant interviewees needed have lived, worked, or been otherwise involved in the borough of Bellevue. Moreover, it meant asking questions that encouraged stakeholders to think critically about their community and reflect upon their experiences.

The duration of Session Two was dependent upon the number of stakeholders scheduled and the duration of each interview, with a desired

outcome of 12 to 15 interviews at an estimated 30 to 45 minutes. Ultimately, 16 stakeholders agreed to be interviewed over the duration of Session Two. Before each interview, the researcher introduced himself, the project, and the nature of the research. Interviewees were also asked to sign a letter of consent permitting the use of audio recording during the session. While the interview transcripts would not be reported in their entirety and names would be omitted, audio recording was necessary for study, reference, and analysis, as relevant data would be extracted, codified, and utilized in the preparation of other design-thinking methods.

Prior to beginning each interview, interviewees were provided a list of the same 15 questions that would be asked during the discussion (see *Appendix H*). Depending on the answers received, interviewees were sometimes asked follow-up questions or encouraged to elaborate on their initial responses. The length of each interview was dependent upon the length of the answers provided and the surrounding conversation, resulting in sessions that lasted between 20 and 60 minutes.

Unlike group research sessions, which necessitated the coordination of many stakeholder schedules, the Session Two interviews encouraged participants to pick interview times and locations based on their comfort and convenience. Locations were

determined via conversations between the stakeholder and researcher, wherein final venues and interview dates were finalized. In addition to Bayne Library, local coffee shops, restaurants, and community parks were chosen as popular interview locations. These mutually agreeable locations, with the addition of coffee, fresh air, and background noise, made for more comfortable, less formal environments for several of the interviewees. While this had little impact on the interview process, it was necessary to employ two-way noise-canceling microphones in noisier environments to ensure clear, high-fidelity recordings (see *Figures 17 and 18*).

During the interview process, questions pertaining to Bellevue's image yielded answers like those collected during the noun, adjective, and verb exercise of Session One. Diverse, quirky,



FIGURE 17. Pavilion at Bayne Park, Bellevue



FIGURE 18. Muddy Cup Coffee House on Lincoln Avenue

transitional, friendly, and community-focused were among the positive perceptions shared by the stakeholders. Interviewees also seemed to exhibit general inclinations based on their relation to the community. For example, young families appreciated the affordable housing and walkable community, parents appreciated the parks for their kids, and business owners appreciated the local culture and the growing local economy. However, it is possible these trends were circumstantial and subject to change. Recent economic growth has generated a sense of excitement offset by vulnerability, creating a sense of "cautious optimism." As one interviewee stated, "It's like starting a fire in the rain—flickering to life and hoping it takes."

Likewise, negative perceptions appeared to reveal additional biases based on individual

investment in the community. Business owners tended to comment on higher-than-average taxes and empty storefronts. Residents involved in realty commented on the lack of consistent code enforcement for residential properties, leading to disrepair and blight. Parents commented on the negative perceptions tied to the local schools and the continued impact those perceptions had on the community.

While it is reasonable for individual priorities to focus inward, it should be noted that interviewee concerns remained relevant to the community as a whole, thus contributing to a shared public perception. Nobody appeared to experience community dissociation, instead recognizing these concerns as within their sphere of influence. Rather, it seemed more a matter of visibility and the absence of an agreed upon "vision" for Bellevue. When Bellevue "runs together with neighboring communities," how do you make your community stand out?

Despite differences in priorities, there were also shared themes of negativity between stakeholders. After a discussion of myriad nonprofit entities and community development groups currently active in Bellevue, it was widely agreed upon that a duplication of effort was a persistent problem, leading to a lack of unified vision in leadership. Moreover, this led to an internal struggle for identity. With interviewees producing an eclectic range of descriptors, there

appeared to be a lack of a unified vision of the community, making it unclear as to how they would describe, or market, Bellevue. This has led to political infighting or, as one interviewer described it, "old politics." When interviewees were asked to elaborate on this point, it was observed that certain prominent individuals had failed to participate in this research project, likely due in part to spiteful or contentious behavior. Unfortunately, despite repeated invitations, the involvement of the CDC, and the growing visibility of Bellevue Believes, the individuals in question continued to decline communication or participation in this research project.

As a design-thinking technique, stakeholder interviews support the process of community identification and development. Giving voice to community members and documenting their perspectives ensures their views and experiences are heard and considered, thus contributing to the shared perception emblematic of the concept of community identity.

The final step of the narrative development phase was to sort and codify the wealth of information derived from the individual stakeholder interviews. To avoid observer bias and help ensure impartiality, the audio recordings for the 16 interviews, each ranging from 20 to 60 minutes in length, were analyzed by three independent design-thinking researchers. Keywords, concepts, and phrases

were extracted and added to a MURAL, a shared virtual whiteboard (see *Appendices M–N*). These data points were initially grouped under the 15 initial interview questions asked of each interviewee. They were then grouped into thematically similar categories using the Affinity Clustering method. Repeated or similar data points were merged, further condensing the collected data and reducing redundancy. Once data compilation was completed, it was planned that the resulting themes would inform the conceptual development phase and form the basis of the Bull's-eye Diagramming method.

However, the resulting data proved too abundant to easily prioritize. After an attempt to consolidate the gathered information further, it was observed that the various data points could be divided into two overarching topics: image and development. Therefore, it was decided that the most effective course of action would be to divide Session Three methods into two categories: community identity and community development. This decision was supported by the purpose statement of this research, which focuses on design thinking as it pertains to community identity and community development in Bellevue.

Conceptual Development

The conceptual developmental phase was written to encourage the growth of new



FIGURE 19. The Center of Bellevue on Lincoln Avenue

ideas and actionable items while determining conceptual viability through gathered feedback. The methodologies employed during the conceptual development stage made up the third stakeholder engagement session: Session Three. Consisting of four design-thinking methods—Bull's-eye Diagramming, Statement Starters, Creativity Matrix, and Visualize the Vote—this session was run on two separate evenings to accommodate participant availability (LUMA, 2012). However, unlike Session One, the dates were decided upon with the help of stakeholder input. Prior to scheduling session dates, an email was sent to would-be participants asking which dates and times would allow for the highest attendance. It was determined that Bellevue residents were most available Wednesday evenings, which presented a logistical problem with Bayne Library.

Due to Bayne Library's limited hours, an additional public venue was conscripted to accommodate the session and ensure adequate turnout. The Center of Bellevue, a converted church and academy-hall-turned-public-forum, was suggested as a universally accepted and beloved staple of the community (see *Figure 19*). The owner of the property agreed to allow the researchers free use of the hall, assuming it was available. After a letter of support was procured, the hall was scheduled for two separate evenings, allowing participants to choose the night that best suited their schedule (see *Appendix O*).

On October 30, 2019, a group of five Bellevue stakeholders joined the researchers at the Center of Bellevue for the first iteration of Session Three. The second iteration of

Session Three was held the following week, on November 6, 2019. Unlike Session One, participants were emailed digital consent forms prior to Session Three. Having been encouraged to read and sign the consent forms prior to attending, participants had fewer initial questions regarding how their data would be represented in the research. After collecting everyone's consent, the evening agenda was explained, recording devices were turned on, and the session began.

The first design-thinking method was Bull's-eye Diagramming, a technique designed to prioritize elements and visualize importance. As circles become smaller nearing the center of the bull's-eye, priorities increase. Because the center is limited in size, only accommodating

FIGURE 20. Participatory research supplies for Session Three





FIGURE 21. Session Three participants

a small amount of data, participants are forced to prioritize certain elements over others. Two separate diagrams were created for this exercise, one titled Community Identity and the other Community Development. Points from the codified interview data were printed on movable labels and affixed next to the appropriate diagram. Participants were divided into two groups, and each group was assigned to one of the two diagrams. Groups were then asked to move the labels containing the data points into the bull's-eye portion of the diagram according to priority. After each group had finishing moving and rearranging the labels on their diagram, its members were then asked to trade places and make adjustments to the other group's diagram. The most highly prioritized topics, those which remained in the center of the bull's-eye, informed the next step in the session (see *Figures 21–23*).

Participants responded well to this experience. It encouraged collaboration and



FIGURE 22. Researcher reviewing the results from the Bull's-eye Diagramming method

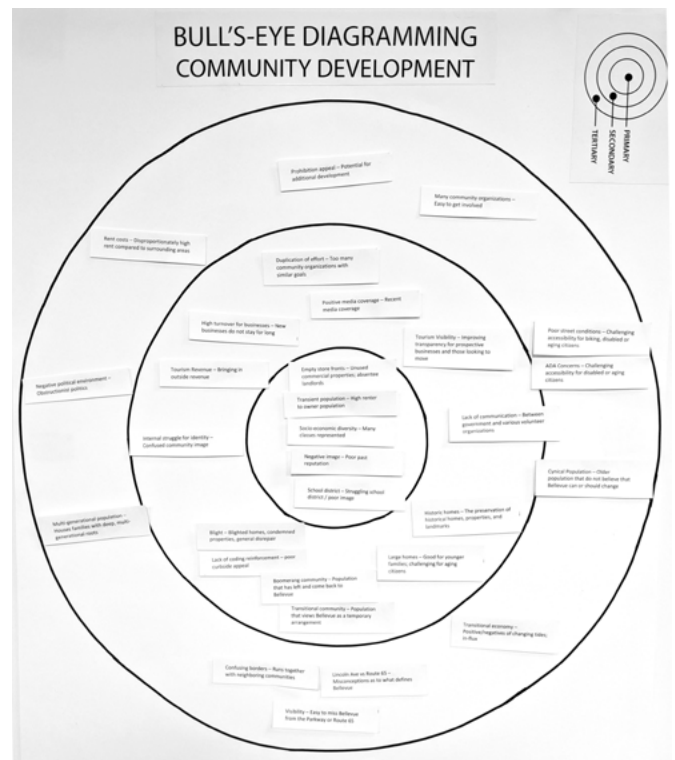


FIGURE 23. Example of Bull's-eye Diagramming results

meaningful debate about importance and priority. The limited number of labels ensured everyone remained on topic and carefully considered their choices. The few questions that were asked seemed to pertain to the language or meaning of the topics. The researcher only needed to get involved to encourage participants to refocus their efforts or to keep on schedule. While many worked at a steady pace, the more perfectionist and analytical participants of the group struggled in an attempt to make the diagram “perfect.” It was helpful to remind everyone that the goal was meaningful collaboration rather than finding definitive solutions. Beyond these minor directorial cues, participants were encouraged to engage with their peers and approach the challenge in the manner they deemed most effective.

Once finished, participants had sorted their top priorities for Bellevue’s community identity and community development into the center circle of the bull’s-eye diagram (see *Appendices P–Q*).

In consideration of Bellevue’s community identity, the most prioritized topics were:

- An internal struggle for identity: Uncertainty in what defines Bellevue’s identity.
- Neighborly: A community of neighbors willing to help each other.
- Authentic: “Real” people; not trying to be someone they’re not.

- Architecture: Unique architecture and historic homes.
- Family-oriented: Community as ideal for raising a family.
- Walkable (walkability): Everything in the community is accessible via walking.
- Welcoming and inclusive: Welcoming to outsiders and transplants.
- Location: Proximity to Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh International Airport, etc.
- Community-oriented: Population dedicated to the community.
- “The Next Big Thing”: The community on the verge of a boom.

In consideration of community development in Bellevue, the most prioritized topics were:

- Transient population: High renter-to-owner population.
- Negative image: Poor past representation.
- School district: Struggling school district/ poor image.
- Many community organizations: Easy to get involved.
- Socioeconomic: Many classes represented.
- Empty storefronts: Unused commercial properties; absentee landlords.
- Blight: Blighted homes, condemned properties, and general disrepair.

After identifying their primary concerns, participants were then asked to write statement starter questions based on these topics.

Statement Starters are open-ended questions beginning with phrases like “How might we...” or “In what ways might we....” They are meant to allow stakeholders to create actionable questions for a given topic by looking at past assumptions or foregone conclusions. An effective statement starter does not presume or suggest a solution.

During this step, participants were asked to consider the top priorities revealed in the bull’s-eye diagrams, for which there were approximately five per diagram, and think of a single statement starter for each. Two additional sheets of poster board, one labeled Community Identity and the other labeled Community Development, were provided to list the statement starter questions. As participants thought of questions, the researcher wrote them in the statement starter format on the appropriate poster board, engaged participants by helping them articulate questions, and helped to clarify unique perspectives. Participants also enjoyed talking between themselves, discussing their shared perceptions and experiences. This exchange of ideas resulted in a list of actionable questions uniquely relevant to the borough of Bellevue (see *Appendices P–Q*).

Statement starters from the Community Identity boards were as follows:

- How could we focus on a unified identity?

- How can we capitalize on the “neighborly vibe”?
- How can we best preserve/protect/promote our unique architecture?
- In what ways can we improve walkability?
- In what ways can we promote visibility?
- How can we be more inviting?
- How can we share Bellevue’s stories and authenticity?
- How can we make family life more enriching?
- In what ways can we facilitate “connectiveness”?
- In what ways can we leverage our neighborliness?
- How can we make [new] people/businesses feel welcome?
- How might we leverage/communicate our location advantage?
- How can we find/identify our shared [community] values?
- In what ways can we encourage involvement in civic activities?
- How do we envision a future for Bellevue’s growth?

Statement starters from the Community Development boards followed a similar format.

They were:

- How can we best attract/retain renters and businesses?

- How can we best encourage long-term residents?
- How can we engage a diverse population?
- How can we best improve Bellevue's reputation?
- In what ways can we improve Northgate schools' reputation?
- How do we best promote community involvement?
- In what ways can we capitalize on the benefits of socioeconomic diversity?
- In what ways can we encourage redevelopment/turn blight into possibility?
- How can we get citizens to take pride in their community?
- How can we educate citizens on the problems of blight and what can be done to combat it?
- How can the borough best communicate expectations and standards?
- How can we best hold local leaders accountable and empower adherence to community standards?

These questions were then used to inform two creativity matrices, the centerpiece of the next design-thinking method in Session Three.

A Creativity Matrix is a diagram that encourages participants to brainstorm ideas at the intersection of various topics. Like the bull's-eye diagrams and the statement starters, two different matrix diagrams were created, one

for Community Development and the other for Community Identity. The rows, columns, and list items used for these diagrams were derived from the statement starter questions. List one, populating the rows, consisted of items dealing with challenges or community features in need of attention. List two, populating the columns, consisted of items referring to what community assets would be affected. Thus, with the help of participant feedback, the researcher populated the rows and columns of the creativity matrices, a process that revealed several potential limitations.

There seemed to be a sense of concern among the participants about the potential limitations of the diagrams, as there was only room for four different features or assets per diagram. As stakeholders, the participants were undoubtedly familiar with the issues facing their community and increasingly unclear as to how these methods would address them all. It was explained that these methods were intentionally limited to the topics revealed during this session and by the overall scope of the research methodology. Participants were also reminded that this process, if proven beneficial, could be utilized during future sessions to address any number of additional issues. Having reached a mutual understanding, the rows and columns were filled in on the creative matrices. Participants were then given markers, sticky

notes, and instructions on how to complete the creativity matrices.

Participants were asked to consider the various items on matrix diagrams, find where different rows and columns intersected, and brainstorm novel and interesting ideas that encouraged community development and community identity by combining these two attributes. They were then asked to write these ideas on sticky notes and place them on the corresponding intersections of the appropriate matrix diagram. The researcher posted the first idea using a speaking point that was discussed in an earlier method, providing an object lesson for contributing to the creativity matrix (see *Figure 24*).

However, this proved challenging for those with experience dealing with city governance, as they were familiar with the many hurdles and restrictions associated with developing or planning community initiatives. However, because grand, novel, or outlandish ideas often contain smaller, actionable elements, participants were encouraged to be as adventurous and ambitious as possible with their ideas, regardless of any anticipated bureaucratic difficulties, fiscal limitations, or seemingly unrealistic goals.

After a few participants posted their own ideas, the rest of the group settled into a productive rhythm. When ideas for one matrix tapered off or became stagnant, participants were encouraged to ideate for the other matrix.



FIGURE 24. Participants engaged in the Creativity Matrix method

This method lasted approximately 30 minutes, as participants alternated between quiet consideration and excited collaboration.

The ideas proposed on the creativity matrix ran the gamut from practical to fanciful. For example, an idea was added to the Community Identity diagram, at the intersection of Walkable and Place, for the construction of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curbs. Similar suggestions were made in different intersections for the establishment of a walking club, home tours, wayfinding signage, and other ideas designed to encourage visibility, navigation, and beautification, while codifying the perception of Bellevue as a “walkable community.” More novel or challenging ideas included incentives for property restoration, robotic garbage cans, the adoption of a town mascot, and an “ugly house tour” designed to raise awareness to struggling properties (see *Appendices R–S*).

As ideas began to slow and participant engagement waned, participants were asked to post their final ideas before the method was concluded. While participants were finishing up, small adhesive dots were distributed in anticipation for the last method of Session Three.

Visualize the Vote is a simple design-thinking technique intended to allow participants to vote upon proposed ideas or solutions. For the final research method of Session Three,



FIGURE 25. Creativity matrices with voting results

participants were asked to vote on the ideas posted to the creativity matrices, thereby democratically determining which ideas would inform the next research method in the Bellevue Believes methodology. To visualize this process, votes were represented by small orange adhesive dots, which participants stuck to the ideas they felt were most important or had the most potential. Each participant was allowed five votes per creative matrix (see *Figure 25*).

Having already read or discussed many of

the ideas presented on the creativity matrix, participants needed little time voting. Over the course of roughly 10 minutes, everyone had expended their votes, thus providing a visual indicator of the most voted upon ideas. Once voting had concluded, the researcher addressed the group by announcing the ideas that received more than four individual votes, which included, among others, the creation of murals, the establishing of a historical society, and a concerted effort to address the vacant store fronts on Lincoln Avenue. Other popular topics were divided between various ideas for code enforcement and community signage.

After the voting results were discussed, the room was opened for discussion. However, having been the last method of a lengthy session, few questions were asked beyond those of next steps. Therefore, after a quick debriefing, Session Three was concluded and the group stakeholders excused. Despite the session running a bit long, participants remained engaged and interested throughout the duration of the session. Points of confusion or inefficacy in the presentation were noted, as this session would be repeated one week later.

The second iteration of Session Three progressed largely the same as the first, aside from a new group of participants and the subsequent new results from the design-thinking methods. The researcher also

modified this session based on the previous week's experiences, focusing on clarifying participant expectations and providing a more comprehensive explanation of what was hoped to be achieved through their involvement. While this undoubtedly put many at ease, changing the amount of expository information provided to stakeholders risks altering how participants interact with design-thinking methodologies. Too much information can create participant bias, while too little information can create confusion. Either concern can influence results.

Despite these concerns, the additional elucidation did not appear to negatively influence participant engagement. The second iteration of Session Three proceeded as planned and was concluded in much the same way as the first. Aside from the added ease in which participants were able to engage with the activities, there was no noticeable change in participant behavior or influence on the resulting data. Voting results once again gravitated toward code enforcement and image revitalization, with a heavier emphasis on community gatherings and hosted events.

At the conclusion of each iteration of Session Three, it was explained that the total votes for each session would be added together, with the winning topics informing the next stage of the research method—prototyping and production. After counting and adding the votes, three subjects were in the majority: consistent

code enforcement, murals, and branding and signage (see *Appendices R–S*).

...

On November 16, 2019, Bona Fide Bellevue hosted a public meeting at the Bellevue Elementary School auditorium. The event featured speakers from local developmental groups and nonprofits, including the local YMCA and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce. Bellevue residents were given the opportunity to observe what was happening in their community, ask questions, and/or get involved. Having been a presence in Bellevue for about four months, Plus Public was invited to speak about Bellevue Believes, explaining the research, providing updates, and reporting initial findings. Plus Public was the last scheduled talk for the

day and had no prior knowledge of what would be discussed by other groups (see *Figure 26*).

Interestingly, many of the efforts discussed by other organizations were alluded to or supported by the codified research data of Bellevue interviewees. Discussions on how to promote commercial and residential visibility, a main street analysis plan, and efforts to support the local school district were among the various speaking points. However, the biggest news came from the first speakers, where it was revealed that Bona Fide Bellevue and the Chamber of Commerce would be merging.

Considering the scale and time required for such an undertaking, it is unlikely that the interviews and research methods would have had any direct influence in the merger decision.



FIGURE 26. Bellevue Elementary auditorium the day of the Bellevue Public Meeting

However, they could be viewed as an affirmation of support via shared public perception. In the weeks leading up to the summit, many stakeholders and interviewees had identified the duplication of effort between community development organizations as a negative feature within Bellevue. Not only had the research methodology correctly identified this problem, it also supported the solution: a reduction in duplicated efforts between two similar groups operating in Bellevue.

Plus Public was similarly surprised when the results of Session Three revealed a collective desire to see the development and implementation of murals, signage, and marketing. In the months before Bellevue Believes, Plus Public had been involved in early discussions regarding beautification and wayfinding signage. The researchers had also written and were awarded a grant to produce two original murals within the borough of Bellevue.

While several CDC members were present during both Session Three meetings, most of the participants were not aware of or involved in these discussions, adding further validity to the results and revealing a genuine and perceptible interest from Bellevue residents. Several even asked where the murals would be placed, suggested additional locations, and asked if they could donate to the project. To this end, design

thinking had proven effective at communicating the viability of the mural project, acting as an interactive marketing incentive for additional involvement and donations.

In response to this news, the Bellevue Believes presentation was quickly modified to comment on this new development. Unfortunately, even with this new data, the Bellevue Believes presentation was met with a lukewarm response. While the newly added information provided valuable context and a general overview for the Bellevue Believes stakeholders, it failed to garner any noticeable interest from the general audience. Non-participant attendees lacked the context of the experience, while the forum left insufficient time for a comprehensive overview. Moreover, at this stage in the research methodology, the collected information was focused primarily on codified data and early observations. The result was a confusing narrative combined with an overly dense, data-heavy presentation. A brief explanation of the design-thinking process did appear to help people understand the validity and potential of the data, but it ultimately failed to attract additional participants.

In response to this presentation, a previous participant in the research commented that they would have liked to see something more substantive come from the research. Another commented that the information presented

was too dense, suggesting that it would be better presented simplified or bulleted. It was necessary to explain that the qualitative and experiential data were the intended deliverables of the research—a resource from which future developmental projects could draw information and inspiration. And while the purpose statement and research methodology did not include such a product or solution, it also did not preclude one.

Prototyping and Production

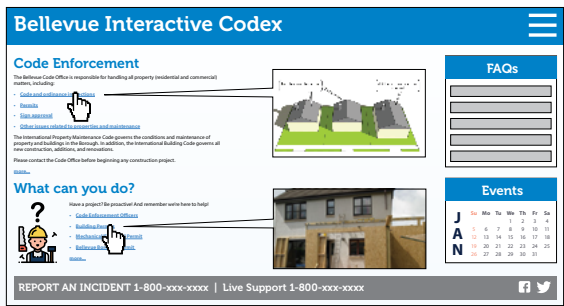
The prototyping-and-production phase was written as a testing platform on which to develop and visualize novel concepts and actionable solutions based upon data gathered from Session Three. This phase consisted of two design-thinking methods—Concept Posters and Critique—and an iterative revision to the Concept Poster method. This phase was planned to be implemented and concluded over the course of one month.

Concept Posters are a design-thinking method used to visualize complex ideas and facilitate conversation. Thus, the researcher developed three concept posters detailing ideas that would service, solve, or address each of the three most highly voted topics from the Visualize the Vote method in Session Three. These concepts included the Bellevue Interactive Codex, an interactive, online resource meant to encourage consistent code enforcement

by allowing individuals to easily understand property coding (see *Figure 27*); the creation of Mini-Murals, or small murals designed to create memorable locations within the community (see *Figure 28*); and a Branding & Signage package designed to create a unique sense of place and visual identity with Bellevue (see *Figure 29*).

Each poster included a bulleted list of features accompanied by a visual mock-up of the proposed solution. The resulting posters were made available for viewing and feedback online at the Bona Fide Bellevue website

Bellevue Believes Research Results Proposal #1: Consistent Code Enforcement



FAQs

1

2

3

4

5

Events

J	M	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

An interactive, online code index, tentatively called the **Bellevue Interactive Codex**, will:

- Allow individuals to easily understand the expectations of the property code.
- Encourage preemptive individual action, lessening the need for enforcement.
- Ensure that community codes remain current and understood by all parties.
- Provide a means to painlessly submit claims.
- Reduce inquiry and enforcement bandwidth.
- Provide extended zoning hours and accessibility, appealing to varying work schedules.
- Include resources for local talent and support groups to ease individual pressure.
- Provide DIY educational sessions that will provide basic training for home improvement and betterment.
- Promotes positive curbside appeal, safer properties, and overall community well-being.



Consistent and clear code enforcement is a long sought after service within many communities, including Bellevue. Keeping one's property up to code benefits not only the individual, but the community as a whole. A clear, appealing, accessible, and easily referenced website that explains what the codes are and how to resolve them, including a comprehensive FAQ (frequently asked questions) section, calendar of events, DIY (do it yourself) tutorials, and visual aids, will help facilitate this goal.

Your feedback is appreciated!

Enter your recommendations on the supplied cards or online at www.bonafidebellevue.com

These posters are a part of the Bellevue Believes research study. Proposal ideas were informed by research participants and previous research sessions. The ideas presented are hypothetical. Research, ideas, posters, and questions are the creation of graduate researcher Ken Ken, D. Thompson, and J. Public. Learn more about this study at <http://www.phdpublic.org/bellevue/>

FIGURE 27. Concept Poster: Proposal #1



FIGURE 28. Concept Poster: Proposal #2

(bonafidebellevue.com) and in person at the Andrew Bayne Public Library. The posters remained publicly available for 2 weeks, allowing Bellevue residents and stakeholders the opportunity to partake in an anonymous critique, the next design-thinking method in the phase (see *Appendices T–V*).

A Critique is a design-thinking process used to gather constructive feedback on a proposed concept to promote further conversation, development, and refinement. Unlike previous methods, stakeholder participation during



FIGURE 29. Concept Poster: Proposal #3

a critique is reactive instead of proactive, as participants do not actively contribute to the creation of the product. Rather, they provide the impetus for the idea and feedback as to how it could be improved. To facilitate this process, Bellevue residents and stakeholders were asked to fill out and submit critique forms for each poster. On the Bona Fide Bellevue website, this was accomplished using Google Forms; at Bayne Library, this was done with comment cards and a collection box. Once the posters and comment cards were made available to the public, an email

was sent to the stakeholder list with instructions on where and how to view and critique the concept posters. Additionally, promotional language and signage was created for display on the Bona Fide Bellevue website and at Bayne Library, allowing residents and patrons the opportunity to provide feedback (see *Figure 30*). As the end of the 2-week critique window neared, an additional email was sent to the list of stakeholders, reminding them to provide feedback if they had not done so already.

Each poster received approximately 10 responses after two weeks of public availability. Between the online and in-person displays, the online form was more effective in gathering participant feedback, representing approximately

70% of the collected feedback. Community feedback was focused primarily on suggesting additional features, minor revisions to existing features, or location and subject possibilities for signage and murals. First impressions were also included in several of the critiques, revealing predominantly positive impressions of the concept posters.

When submitting feedback for Proposal #1: Bellevue Interactive Codex, participants were asked to consider three questions: How could this idea be improved? What features would encourage you to utilize a service like the Bellevue Interactive Codex? What information would you like to see represented in a service like the Bellevue Interactive Codex?

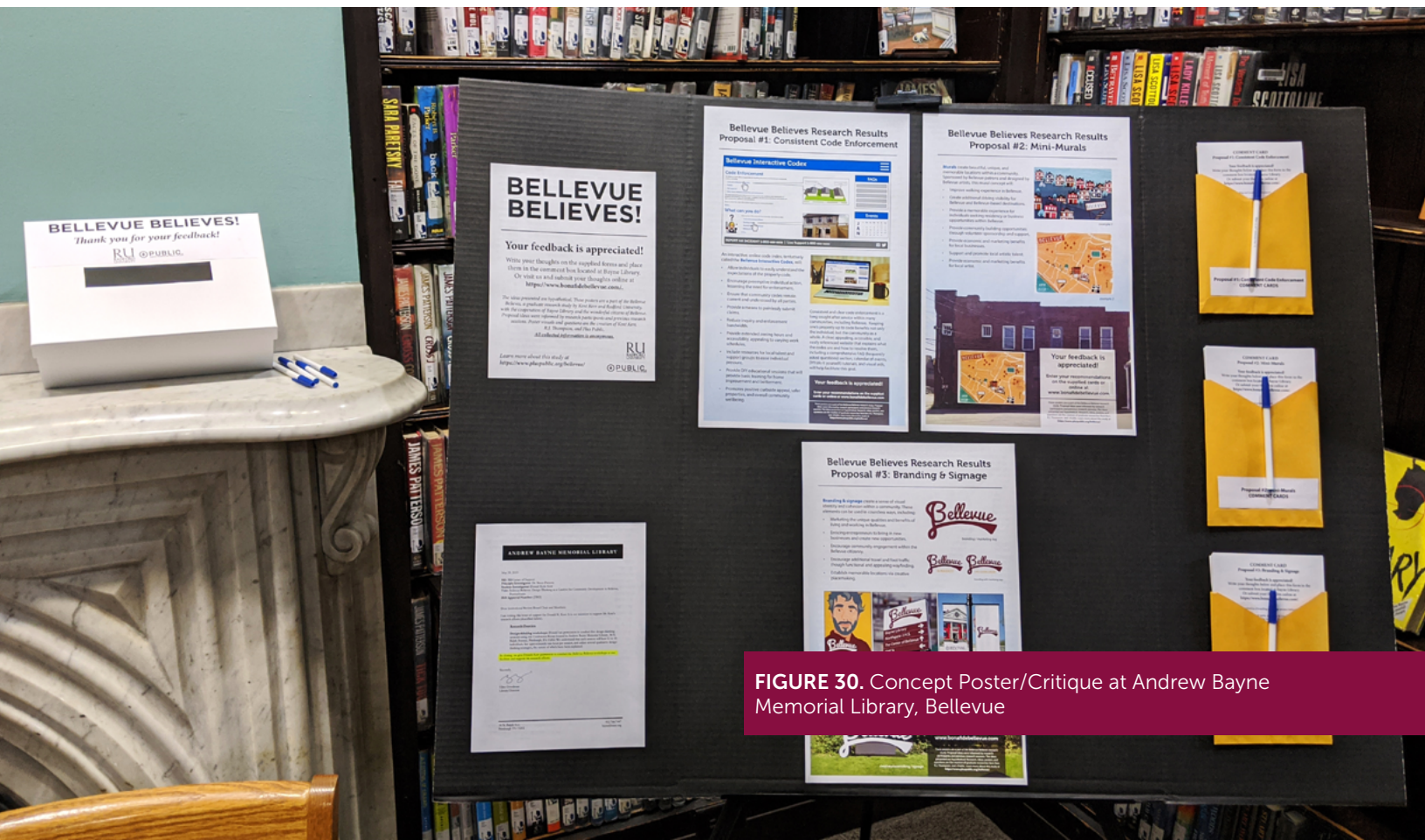


FIGURE 30. Concept Poster/Critique at Andrew Bayne Memorial Library, Bellevue

Participant feedback focused primarily on the implementation of features and the end-user experience, including a follow-up feature for resident inquiries, searchable code documents, and the use of easy-to-understand language. Other comments were more generalized or project adjacent, speaking to future change and broader influence. One such comment called for a code office that “actually enforces the code,” suggesting that such a concept would be ineffective if the codes were not enforced. Another comment called the concept “an excellent first step toward much-needed improvements,” which could also be referring to needed improvements in the code office or to other, unspecified projects that would also benefit from a more comprehensive system of code information and enforcement.

Likewise, when submitting feedback for Proposal #2: Mini-Murals, participants were asked to consider two questions: What themes would you like to see represented in a Bellevue mural? Where else in Bellevue would benefit from the installation of a mural?

Potential themes submitted as feedback included community, history, diversity, and several other descriptors seen in the concept maps from Session One (see *Appendices I–L*). Suggested locations included well-worn borough buildings, high-traffic streets, and even some potential residential buildings.

Lastly, Proposal #3: Branding & Signage asked participants to consider three questions: What qualities would you like to see in a Bellevue branding solution? Where in Bellevue would benefit from placemaking signage like in the provided example? Where in Bellevue would benefit from wayfinding signage like in the provided example?

Comments suggested that a branding solution would need to be “classy, inclusive, simple, and modern,” while maintaining a sense of nostalgia. Street banners, public parks, lampposts, Bayne Library, the Center of Bellevue, and Route 65 were among the suggested locations to receive signage and wayfinding solutions. These are public, frequently trafficked, and walking accessible locations, suggesting that any branding or signage solutions would not only need to be clear and visible, but also promote Bellevue’s image as a walkable, accessible community with an inclusive culture.

Due to the nature of the received feedback, the iterations made to the posters were minimal. While bullet points were added to incorporate some of the suggestions made in the critique, none of the feedback necessitated a conceptual or visual redesign.

The overwhelmingly positive response to the concept posters revealed genuine stakeholder interest. Moreover, as these concepts were derived from stakeholder participation, it

would be reasonable to assume there exists a vested interest in seeing these ideas succeed. While the implementation of such ideas would have extended beyond the proposed scope of this research, the concept posters showed the value of the collected data and the potential for its use in future community development initiatives and community identity curation. Furthermore, positive stakeholder response revealed the benefit of design-thinking within a community, providing a sense of ownership for ideas sourced from the experiences of local citizens. Allowing participants an opportunity to share this experiential data was the focus of the final phase.

Post-research Conclusions

The post-research conclusions phase was written to analyze and document the experience of establishing a community development project, integrating design-thinking methodologies, and reflecting upon the different aspects of the experience, with special consideration given to dissociation, identity decline, and public perception. This phase was planned to take place over one to two weeks, allowing participants time to reflect and record their experiences with the Bellevue Believes research methodology, the design-thinking process, and their collective efforts. During this period, participants engaged

in the fourth and final design-thinking session, Session Four.

Consisting of two design-thinking methods—Experience Diagramming and Rose, Thorn, Bud—this session was scheduled to run on two separate evenings to accommodate participant availability. However, apparent leading up to the final session was that it was an inconvenient time of year for Bellevue residents. Therefore, despite the first session taking place as scheduled, the second was canceled due to a lack of participant availability.

Experience Diagramming is a design-thinking method by which a person's experiences can be recorded through a set of circumstances or tasks. Given the difficulty stakeholders experienced in scheduling this session, the decision was made to digitize the experience diagram, thereby allowing participants to record their thoughts online prior to attending the Session Four workshop. It was believed this would be more convenient and less stressful, as participants could more carefully consider their experiences and record their responses in a more leisurely fashion rather than be put on the spot. The digitization was also done to provide an opportunity for absentee stakeholders to share their experiences. The online experience diagram and instructions were set up using a Google Form. Email invitations containing a

hyperlink to the experiential diagram were sent to every stakeholder who had participated in the Bellevue Believes research. Upon navigating to the form, participants were prompted to note which sessions they had attended and provide a recounting of their experiences. Since it had been some time since the last design-thinking session, a visual timeline was provided to help everyone recall their participation thus far (see *Figure 31*). The memories and experiences revealed through the completion of this method would also provide an effective refresher for the next method: Rose, Thorn, Bud. For this reason,

participants were also asked to complete the online experiential diagram prior to the next method.

On February 26, 2020, a group of five Bellevue stakeholders joined the researchers at the Center of Bellevue for the final method of Session Four: Rose, Thorn, Bud. The goal of this method was to gather the experiential data of Bellevue Believes participants and explore ways in which the now complete research methodology succeeded, failed, or could be improved. Fortunately, despite the small size of the group, most participants present had



FIGURE 31. Example experience diagram showing the progression of design-thinking research methodology

attended each prior session, giving them a complete picture of the process. The agenda for the evening was explained and the last consent forms were collected. The recording devices were turned on and the session began.

Rose, Thorn, Bud is a design-thinking method for identifying aspects of a topic as positive (rose), negative (thorn), or having potential (bud), wherein participants are asked to categorize their thoughts into one of these three categories and group them accordingly. For this session, the topic in question was the participant experience with the Bellevue Believes research study (i.e., what worked, what did not, and what could be improved were the process refined).

Participants were provided with a pen and three different colors of sticky notepad, each corresponding with colors on a diagram labeled

rose, thorn, and bud. The diagram was divided into four sections, each representing one of the four participatory research sessions. Each section was labeled accordingly, followed by a sequential list of design-thinking methods employed during each sitting (see *Figure 32*).

Participants were asked to recall their participation during the different stages of the Bellevue Believes research methodology and identify those experiences as rose (positive), thorn (negative), or bud (having potential). They were then asked to write these experiences on the appropriately colored sticky note and place them on the corresponding section of the diagram. Comments that did not apply exclusively to specific research sessions were positioned between sections, signifying intermediary or transitional experiences. Over

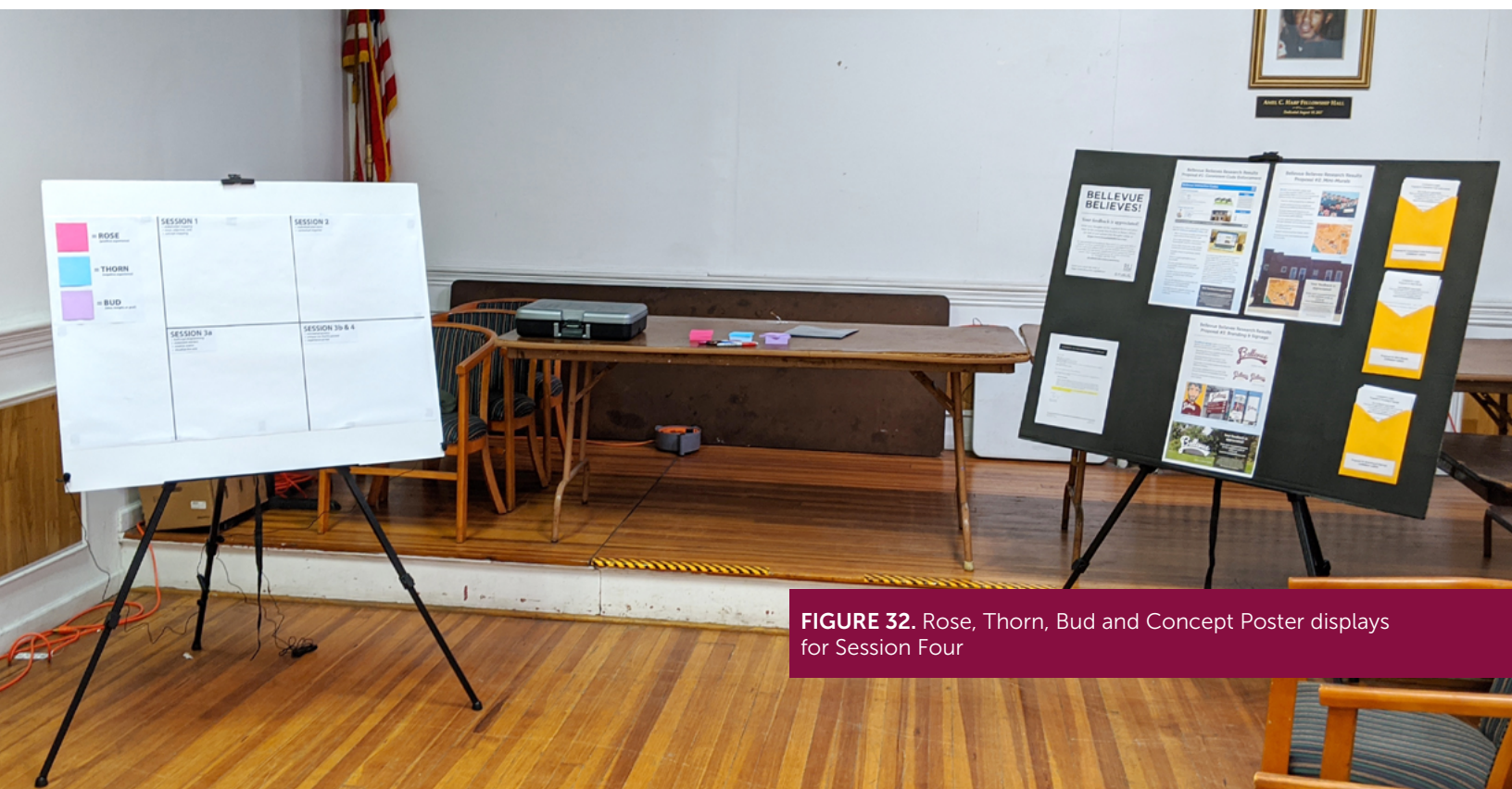


FIGURE 32. Rose, Thorn, Bud and Concept Poster displays for Session Four

the course of approximately 30 minutes, participants populated the diagram in this way. Initial conversations involved questions on what was appropriate or what was beneficial to the diagram. However, this eventually transitioned into later conversations of shared experiences and suggestions on how to improve the process (see *Figure 33*).

One such suggestion for improvement was made by a newcomer who had not attended any of the previous sessions. The individual suggested adding a way for latecomers or those who missed a session to easily get caught up on the research process without feeling left out. The individual also suspected that they had not received all the previous email correspondences, suggesting a flaw in the way that stakeholders were invited to and updated on research activities. Though speculative, this alluded to the possibility that instances of low attendance were, in part, due to a feeling of exclusion, whether from not having received invitations or feeling unable to return to the study after having missed a session. While the data was made available digitally via MURAL and Google Drive, additional steps might be necessary to make the data more accessible, comprehensive, and appealing.

Another such suggestion was made after it was observed that most of the codified data from Session Two and Session Three was missing from the concept posters and

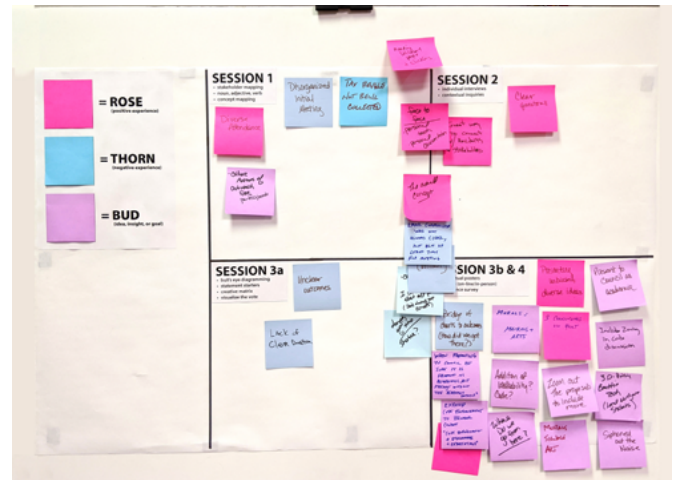


FIGURE 33. Rose, Thorn, Bud results

omitted from the larger discussion. Two other participants suggested many of these data points were, in fact, being serviced by the concept posters if looked at through a wider lens. After encouraging these two participants to further explore this idea, the researcher suggested that abstract laddering could potentially alleviate this concern. Abstract Laddering is a design-thinking technique that recontextualizes a topic by either broadening or narrowing the focus of a subject. This shift in focus provides a fresh perspective on the topic in question, thereby making it easier to develop novel solutions. Were this technique applied to the collected codified data of the study, it might reveal additional connections to the solutions outlined in the concept posters, thus providing an extra layer of data transparency and contextual relevance.

At the conclusion of this final session, stakeholder conversations shifted to an interest in acting upon the many ideas and experiences

voiced during this study, including a suggestion that Plus Public present the findings and proposed solutions to the borough council. This shared stakeholder request revealed a sense of pride in their efforts and an excitement about what could be built from the results of this research methodology. While the results of this study would be made publicly available, such a presentation was not included or reported on in this research response. Final questions were addressed, participants were debriefed, and Session Four was concluded (see *Appendix W*).

Conclusions

At its conclusion, Bellevue Believes represents the culmination of a 6-month research study designed to explore how design-thinking strategies integrated with and supported the process of community identity by way of community development initiatives within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania. It was also meant to observe and record the influence of design thinking on the creation of social capital, community dissociation, identity decline, and public perception.

Due to the communal nature of the methodology, design thinking provides an even platform on which stakeholders' voices can be heard in equal measure. Moreover, it encourages collaboration between participants, favoring shared experiences over individual

opinions and resulting in data that represents the interests of the group rather than personal desires or biases. When these methods were utilized in Bellevue Believes to engage with community stakeholders, it proved an accessible and comprehensive strategy for generating qualitative data about Bellevue and its people, data that could then be used as impetus or inertia for any number of community development projects, including the visualization of community identity via branding.

If community identity is the culmination of a population's shared acuties, then design thinking provides an excellent lens with which to focus that perception. Features and feelings about Bellevue from the noun, adjective, verb exercise populated the concept maps of Session One. Interview results were codified into similar themes through affinity clustering, identifying commonly expressed positive and negative perceptions within Bellevue. The culmination of these perceptions, expressed using design-thinking methodologies, provided a solid foundation on which to build an accurate community image, an image that could be curated, shared, and used in effective and emotionally resonate marketing, including community branding and creative placemaking.

Likewise, design thinking offers an effective complement to community development concerns, providing structure and direction

to a process that might otherwise become disorganized or distracted. Furthermore, because design-thinking strategies often consist of several successive research methods, strategies can be quickly adjusted in response to newly discovered data or a sudden change in plans. Communities are unique and dynamic, each with its own challenges, and Bellevue is no exception. A modified Affinity Clustering and Concept Mapping method was implemented during Session One in response to the behaviors and interactions of the participants during that specific session. Similarly, when participant availability was waning, Session Four was divided between online and in-person sessions to allow for greater ease of engagement, demonstrating how design thinking can be used to better anticipate and accommodate the needs of research participants and community members.



Despite a lack of existing branding or marketing, everyone who participated in this research seemed to possess a personal shared sense of community that informed an overall sense of community identity, as evidenced by the many qualities and characteristics shared during various design-thinking sessions (Puddifoot, 2003). Bellevue as a “walkable community” was one such perception. Shared by nearly every participant in this study, the notion of the “walkable community” functions as both

personal and shared experience. Reinforcing this perception are the unique geographic qualities and public spaces of that help define Bellevue, characteristics believed to have significant impact on the perception of community identity (Zwyart, 2018).

Conversely, as greater unity within a community can create a greater sense of community identity, a lessened sense of unity can contribute to a sense of identity decline (Lantz & Barre, 2018). Anecdotal evidence derived from this research suggests a pervasive culture of old and divisive politics, resulting in a government and citizenry hesitant to enact and adopt change. Bellevue’s small size, intimate community structure, and historical architecture undoubtedly add to these concerns, fueling concerns about runaway growth and loss of salience, ultimately resulting in gentrification and transplanted crime. Such concerns have manifested within the community discourse, from voting against widely supported economic initiatives like prohibition repeal, to objections against borough functions that created temporary inconveniences, such as covering borough signage or increased traffic on Lincoln Avenue. While this complacency may serve to preserve the status quo, the lack of a proactive, assertive cultural identity can lead to identity decline (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013). It is therefore important to continuously cultivate

community identity, a process that necessitates stakeholder involvement and for which design thinking is uniquely suited.



While the process of design thinking offers little for those who fail to participate, it offers those who do an accessible, low-stress platform on which to add their individual experiences to a collective whole, regardless of topic. By abstracting the process of discovery, complex issues are broken down into more generalized components, thereby removing individual attachment and providing valuable emotional distance from potentially sensitive or intimate topics. This provides a neutral platform for all involved and an impartial environment for those who might otherwise be emotionally or politically motivated. Furthermore, by democratizing the process, it ensures that everyone's participation is counted and considered. This was shown effective during Session Three, wherein the top ideas presented on the creative matrices were determined by popular vote, thereby ensuring the ideas used in the concept poster method also represented the popular opinion.

While it has yet to be seen if any of these ideas will be developed further or implemented in the future, there was still value in the process. By engaging in this design-thinking methodology, participants have formed

relationships with their peers and community, while having contributed to the creation and collection of experiential data. These relationships and resources provide public and communal benefit through meaningful community engagement, easily referenced qualitative data, and a growing sense of community identity (Crawford et al., 2008). In every measurable sense, these assets represent a form of social capital while demonstrating the role of design thinking in its creation.



During Plus Public's time in Bellevue, the researchers got to know many of the participants on a personal level. Family members were met, businesses were patronized, and homes were visited. The researchers learned about shared hopes and aspirations for Bellevue. But perhaps the most positive takeaway from Bellevue Believes was the overwhelmingly positive attitude of the research participants. While participation had waned near the end of the study, the enthusiasm felt by those who stuck with it had not. Participants continued to enjoy engaging with the researchers, eager to know when the research would conclude and when the results would be available. Many asked about next steps, specifically how this data could be presented to the city council as incentive and justification for any number of community development initiatives, including many of the

ideas represented in the concept posters. This demonstrates the potential value of the data to the residents of Bellevue and the impact of design thinking on its creation and cultivation. However, the novelty of this process may also represent a limitation within this research.

It is alleged that this research was the first recorded instance of design-thinking methodologies having been utilized in Bellevue, as Bellevue's governing body and CDC have no record of employing such techniques. The lack of exposure to such processes may have resulted in the waning participation observed near the end of the study, as participants were unaccustomed to the involvement, requirements, and often unclear results inherent to the design-thinking process. It may also explain the arguably reserved ideas generated and voted upon during Session Three. Were these limitations anticipated and addressed in future sessions, so too might the stakeholder experience improve, resulting in more adventurous ideas and even more valuable social capital.

Despite these limitations, this study was an undeniable source of inspiration for many who wished to see Bellevue continue to evolve its identity and developmental aspirations. In this respect, design thinking has proven a positive influence against community dissociation and a strong proponent of community development, having provided citizens the means to reengage

and get involved with their community. While a reduced turnout would suggest the need for stronger participant incentives, those in attendance were unquestionably engaged and eager to see the project through to the end. Similarly, while reserved ideas may suggest the need for more aggressive research methodologies elsewhere, what was conceived represents innovative and conceptual growth for Bellevue, especially when considering the novelty of the experience.

Fortunately, the cyclical and evolving nature of design thinking ensures that no single solution represents a definitive conclusion. Problems can always be reevaluated, methodologies can always be improved, data can always be better understood, and solutions can always be more creative. Bellevue does not have a single problem, nor is it the sum of its problems. Bellevue is a community, a living entity. Therefore, it must be continually maintained, curated, and reevaluated, lest it fall into atrophy and disrepair.

...

Plus Public was founded on the idea that design thinking could be an invaluable tool when researching and engaging with communities, specifically those in economic or cultural revival. Bellevue is currently experiencing both, with new businesses emerging and new sources of revenue changing how its citizens interact their

community. It was for this reason that Bellevue was chosen and the Bellevue Believes research model was conceived. And while the resulting methodology was not a perfect research model, it did not have to be.

Design thinking is malleable. When a design-thinking method fails to produce the intended result, a new method can take its place. If a strategy gets off track, it can be altered, adapted, or scaled to better fit the current situation. This research has shown design thinking to be an ideal research method for Bellevue and similar communities seeking to better understand their

unique identities and developmental needs.

It is a powerful tool in the development of social capital and the fight against community disassociation and identity decline.

Moreover, this experience has shown that in spite of internal politics, duplication of effort, or any number of unique problems that a community like Bellevue faces, a community is still defined by its people and their shared sense of identity. And Bellevue's identity is one of local pride, optimism, and a desire to grow. Bellevue believes in Bellevue.



FIGURE 34. Bayne Park, Bellevue

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Appendix A: Timelines

Projected Schedule Overview

TASK	TIME	ESTIMATED DURATION
Present Pre-Proposal	April 2019	~ 2 weeks
Present Proposal to Committee Members	April 2019	~ 2 weeks
Obtain IRB Approval	June 2019	~ 3 weeks
Community Onboarding	April 2019	~ 1 month
General Research & Public Information	June 2019	~ 1 month
Methodology Implementation	July 2019	~ 1 month
Narrative Development	July 2019	~ 2 weeks
Conceptual Development	July 2019	~ 2 weeks
Prototyping and Production	Aug. 2019	~ 2 weeks
Post-research Conclusions	Aug. 2019	~ 2-3 weeks

Completed Project Timeline

TASK	TIME
Pre-Proposal	April 2019
Proposal Presentation	May 2019
IRB Approval	June 2019
Community Onboarding	July 2019
Methodology Implementation	July 2019
Narrative Development	July 2019
Conceptual Development	Nov. 2019
Prototyping and Production	Jan. 2020
Post-research Conclusions	Feb. 2020
Defense	June 2020
Submission	July 2020

Appendix B: Informed Consent – Session One



Informed Consent – Session One

Title of Research: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

Researcher(s): *Donald Kent Kerr and Dr. Bruce Parsons*

We ask you to be in a research study that will: explore how design-thinking integrates into and supports the process of establishing community identity and branding, communications platforms, and developmental efforts, as well as what unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, this study will observe the influence of design-thinking on the creation of social capital and any potential exposure and impact on community disassociation, identity decline, and misaligned public perception within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

If you choose to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a stakeholder mapping. Stakeholder mapping is a design thinking method intended to identify stakeholders and potential participants for a study or topic of interest. Participants will be promoted with a brief list of lead in questions and asked to list potential participants to a whiteboard or poster board. This process will take approximately 30-minutes to 45-minutes to complete. With your permission, we would digitally-record the session.

This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

If you decide to be in this study, you may not benefit from being a part of it.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be involved in parts of this study. You may also choose to stop being in this study at any time without any penalty to you.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is not payment for you taking part in this study.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. We will present the results of this study, but your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may leave the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those



collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews, and photography. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud-based system. Names will be omitted from collected data and substituted for coded names or pseudonyms.

We will request that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group and do not share any other participant's responses outside of the group. However, we cannot guarantee your privacy or confidentiality because there is always the possibility that another member of the group could share what was said. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant, and during the course of the interview and in all notes, you will only be referred to by your pseudonym.

Photographs and audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to codify and report on collected data. The recordings will be kept a minimum of three years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

You should not be in the study if you have any physical or mental illness or weakness that would increase your risk of harm from the study.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

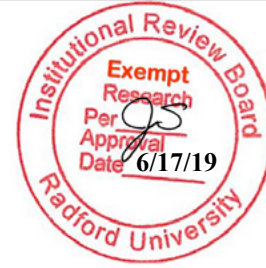
If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If this study raised some issues that you would like to discuss with a professional, you may contact Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Orion Rogers, Interim Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, Radford University, jorogers@radford.edu, 1-540-831-5958.

Appendix C: Informed Consent – Session Two



Informed Consent – Session Two

Title of Research: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

Researcher(s): *Donald Kent Kerr and Dr. Bruce Parsons*

We ask you to be in a research study that will: explore how design-thinking integrates into and supports the process of establishing community identity and branding, communications platforms, and developmental efforts, as well as what unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, this study will observe the influence of design-thinking on the creation of social capital and any potential exposure and impact on community disassociation, identity decline, and misaligned public perception within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

If you choose to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a Contextual Inquiry / Interview. Contextual inquiries and interviews, as a design-thinking method and ethnographic research technique, consist of a question and answer session tailored to the interviewee's experiences in relation to the study. Both session types will include a series of predetermined questions designed to serve as informational baseline for gathered data. Sessions will take approximately 30- to 45-minutes. With your permission, we would digitally-record the session.

This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

If you decide to be in this study, you may not benefit from being a part of it.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be involved in parts of this study. You may also choose to stop being in this study at any time without any penalty to you.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is not payment for you taking part in this study.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. We will present the results of this study, but your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may leave the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those



collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews, and photography. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud-based system. Names will be omitted from collected data and substituted for coded names or pseudonyms.

We will request that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group and do not share any other participant's responses outside of the group. However, we cannot guarantee your privacy or confidentiality because there is always the possibility that another member of the group could share what was said. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant, and during the course of the interview and in all notes, you will only be referred to by your pseudonym.

Photographs and audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to codify and report on collected data. The recordings will be kept a minimum of three years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

You should not be in the study if you have any physical or mental illness or weakness that would increase your risk of harm from the study.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If this study raised some issues that you would like to discuss with a professional, you may contact Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or have complaints about this study, you should contact Dr. Orion Rogers, Interim Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, Radford University, jorogers@radford.edu, 1-540-831-5958.



It is your choice whether or not to be in this study. What you choose will not affect any current or future relationship with Radford University.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

If all of your questions have been answered and you would like to take part in this study, then please sign below.

Signature

Printed Name(s)

Date

I/We have explained the study to the person signing above, have allowed an opportunity for questions, and have answered all of his/her questions. I/We believe that the subject understands this information.

Signature of Researcher(s)

Printed Name(s)

Date

I do or do not give my permission to the investigators to quote me directly in their research.

I do or do not give my permission to the investigators to be photographed.

I do or do not give my permission to the investigators to be audio recorded.

Participant Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Informed Consent – Session Three

RADFORD
UNIVERSITY



Informed Consent – Session Three

Title of Research: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

Researcher(s): *Donald Kent Kerr and Dr. Bruce Parsons*

We ask you to be in a research study that will: explore how design-thinking integrates into and supports the process of establishing community identity and branding, communications platforms, and developmental efforts, as well as what unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, this study will observe the influence of design-thinking on the creation of social capital and any potential exposure and impact on community disassociation, identity decline, and misaligned public perception within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

If you choose to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a set of design-thinking methods, including: Bull's Eye Diagramming, Statement Starters, Creative Matrix, and Visualize the Vote. Individual methods will inform subsequent methods within this sequence. Participants will be asked to contribute opinions and experiences to shared diagrams, brainstorm questions and concepts, and vote upon the resulting ideas based on popularity or preference. These sessions will take approximately one-hour and 15-minutes. With your permission, we would digitally-record the session.

This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

If you decide to be in this study, you may not benefit from being a part of it.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be involved in parts of this study. You may also choose to stop being in this study at any time without any penalty to you.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is not payment for you taking part in this study.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. We will present the results of this study, but your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may leave the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may



be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings, interviews, and photography. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud-based system. Names will be omitted from collected data and substituted for coded names or pseudonyms.

We will request that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group and do not share any other participant's responses outside of the group. However, we cannot guarantee your privacy or confidentiality because there is always the possibility that another member of the group could share what was said. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant, and during the course of the interview and in all notes, you will only be referred to by your pseudonym.

Photographs and audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to codify and report on collected data. The recordings will be kept a minimum of three years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

You should not be in the study if you have any physical or mental illness or weakness that would increase your risk of harm from the study.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If this study raised some issues that you would like to discuss with a professional, you may contact Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

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Appendix E: Informed Consent – Session Four

RADFORD
UNIVERSITY



Informed Consent – Session Four

Title of Research: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

Researcher(s): *Donald Kent Kerr and Dr. Bruce Parsons*

We ask you to be in a research study that will: explore how design-thinking integrates into and supports the process of establishing community identity and branding, communications platforms, and developmental efforts, as well as what unique challenges these methodologies create or solve. Additionally, this study will observe the influence of design-thinking on the creation of social capital and any potential exposure and impact on community disassociation, identity decline, and misaligned public perception within the borough of Bellevue, Pennsylvania.

If you choose to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a set of design-thinking methods, including Experience Diagramming and Rose, Thorn, Bud. Experience diagramming will ask participants to analyze and visualize their collected experiences, research, and methodologies involved in this study. Approximately 1- to 2-weeks will be allotted to compile and diagram the available data, following by an in-person review session. Rose, Thorn, Bud will follow the review of the Experience Diagram, asking participants to offer insights and opinions on the resulting diagrams. The final diagram review session and Rose, Thorn, Bud session will take approximately 2-hours. With your permission, we would digitally-record the session.

This study has no more risk than you may find in daily life.

If you decide to be in this study, you may not benefit from being a part of it.

You can choose not to be in this study. If you decide to be in this study, you may choose not to answer certain questions or not to be involved in parts of this study. You may also choose to stop being in this study at any time without any penalty to you.

There are no costs to you for being in this study. There is not payment for you taking part in this study.

If you decide to be in this study, what you tell us will be kept private unless required by law to tell. We will present the results of this study, but your name will not be linked in any way to what we present.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may leave the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is



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We will collect your information through recordings, interviews, and photography. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud-based system. Names will be omitted from collected data and substituted for coded names or pseudonyms.

We will request that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group and do not share any other participant's responses outside of the group. However, we cannot guarantee your privacy or confidentiality because there is always the possibility that another member of the group could share what was said. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant, and during the course of the interview and in all notes, you will only be referred to by your pseudonym.

Photographs and audio recordings will be collected during this study and used to codify and report on collected data. The recordings will be kept a minimum of three years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

You should not be in the study if you have any physical or mental illness or weakness that would increase your risk of harm from the study.

If at any time you want to stop being in this study, you may stop being in the study without penalty or loss of benefits by contacting: Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If you have questions now about this study, ask before you sign this form.

If you have any questions later, you may talk with Donald Kent Kerr or Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

If this study raised some issues that you would like to discuss with a professional, you may contact Dr. Bruce Parsons 540-818-1669.

This study was approved by the Radford University Committee for the Review of Human Subjects Research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or

Appendix F: Letter of Recruitment



Recruitment E-Mail Letter

Donald Kent Kerr
Radford University
pluspublicdesign@gmail.com

July 7th, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Donald "Kent" Kerr and I am a graduate student from the school of design-thinking at Radford University. I am writing to invite you to participate in "Bellevue Believes," a research study about how design thinking integrates and supports the process of community identification and community development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania. As a Bellevue resident or stakeholder over the age of 18, you are eligible to be in this study. Your contact information was obtained from R.J. Thompson as a person of interest.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked about your experiences and perceptions of Bellevue. You will be asked to participate in interactive design-thinking workshops with other Bellevue stakeholders, brainstorm new and interesting ways your collective experiences might help your community.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. Research sessions will average 45-minutes but may exceed 1-hour and 15-minutes. No personal information will be used or shared in this study. Audio and digital photography will be recorded for researcher reference. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email me at pluspublicdesign@gmail.com.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent Kerr".

Donald "Kent" Kerr

Appendix G: Letter of Support

ANDREW BAYNE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

May 29, 2019

RE: IRB Letter of Support

Principle Investigator: Dr. Bruce Parsons

Student Investigator: Donald Kent Kerr

Title: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

IRB Approval Number: [FY19-111]

Dear Institutional Review Board Chair and Members:

I am writing this letter of support for Donald K. Kerr. It is our intention to support Mr. Kerr's research efforts (described below).

Research Overview

Design-thinking workshops: Donald has permission to conduct five design-thinking sessions using our Conference Room located in Andrew Bayne Memorial Library, 34 N. Balph Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15202. We understand that each session will host 12 to 15 individuals, last approximately one-hour per session, and utilize several qualitative design-thinking strategies, the nature of which have been explained.

In closing, we give Donald Kerr permission to conduct the Bellevue Believes workshops at our facilities and support his research efforts.

Sincerely,

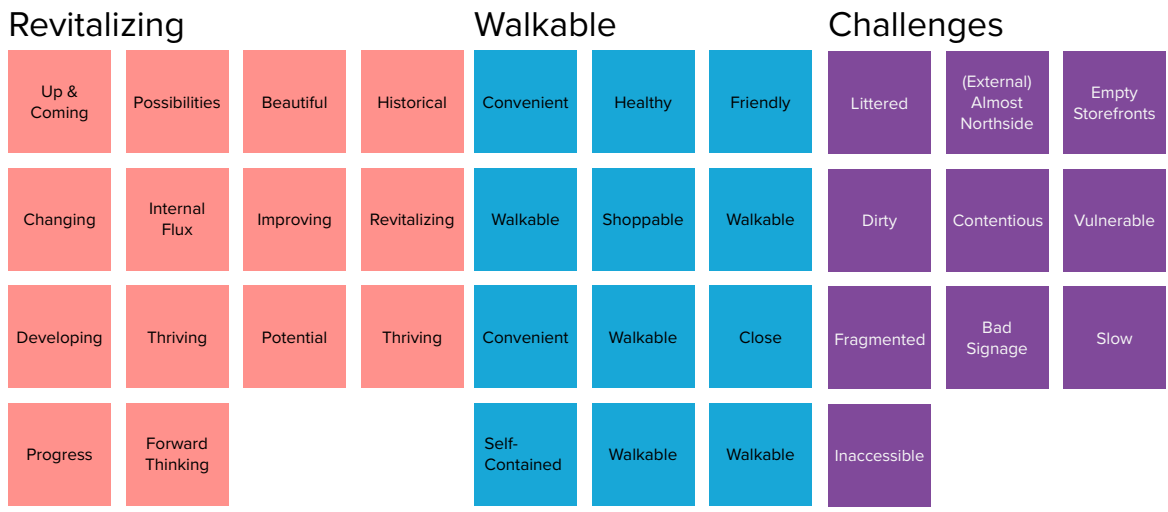
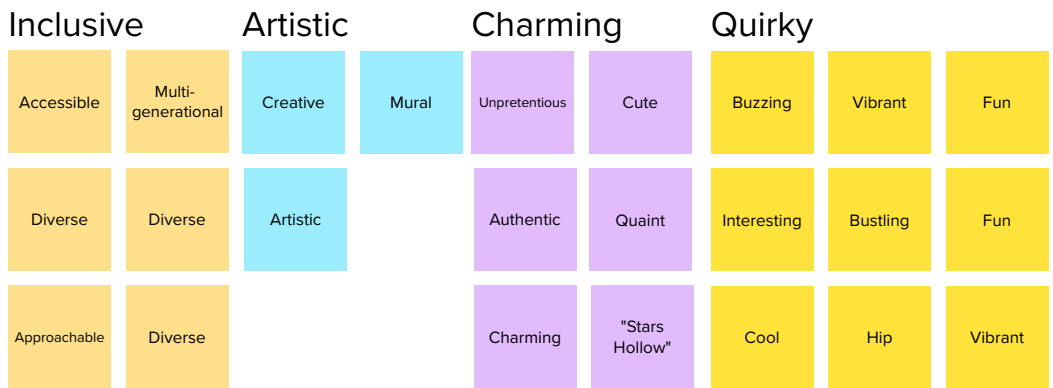
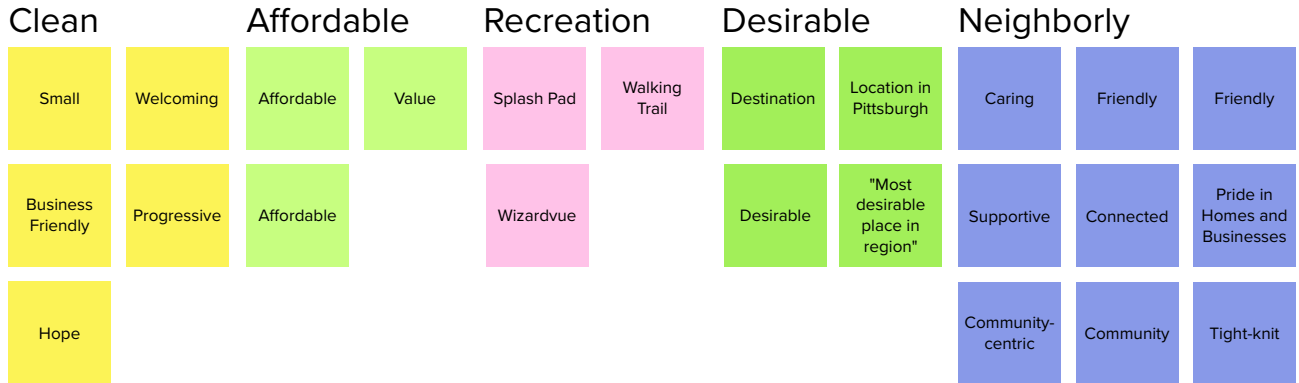


Ellen Goodman
Library Director

Appendix H: Interview Questions

1. How long have lived and/or worked in Bellevue? Do you plan on staying or have any immediate plans to move? Why?
2. How would you describe your involvement in community activities?
3. Have you ever participated in a community development project?
4. What Bellevue-based community improvement programs/organizations are you aware of? Have you had any experience with them? If so, do you find them effective? Why?
5. How would you describe Bellevue?
6. How would you describe Bellevue's image? Why?
7. How do you think people looking to move to Bellevue view the community?
8. How would you describe Bellevue's people? Why?
9. How would you describe Bellevue's current economy?
10. What are three positive aspects of living in Bellevue?
11. What are three negative aspects of living in Bellevue?
12. How important is Bellevue's history to its future?
13. How important is tourism to Bellevue's future?
14. Are you aware of Bellevue's CDC, Bona Fide Bellevue?
15. Bellevue has recently seen several new businesses spring up, including Revival on Lincoln, 202 Tacos, and Lincoln Brewery. How has this recent growth affected public perceptions?

Appendix I: Session One Diagram



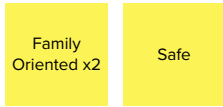
Appendix J: Session One Diagram



SESSION ONE - CONCEPT MAPPING
DATE: 7/20/19
LOCATION: ANDREW BAYNE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Appendix K: Session One Diagram

Family Oriented



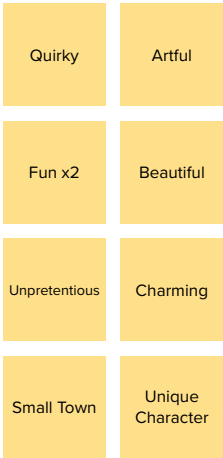
Future (Environmental)



Walkable Community



Character



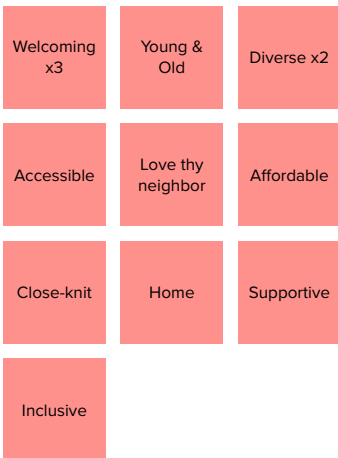
Dynamic



Socially Invested



Welcoming



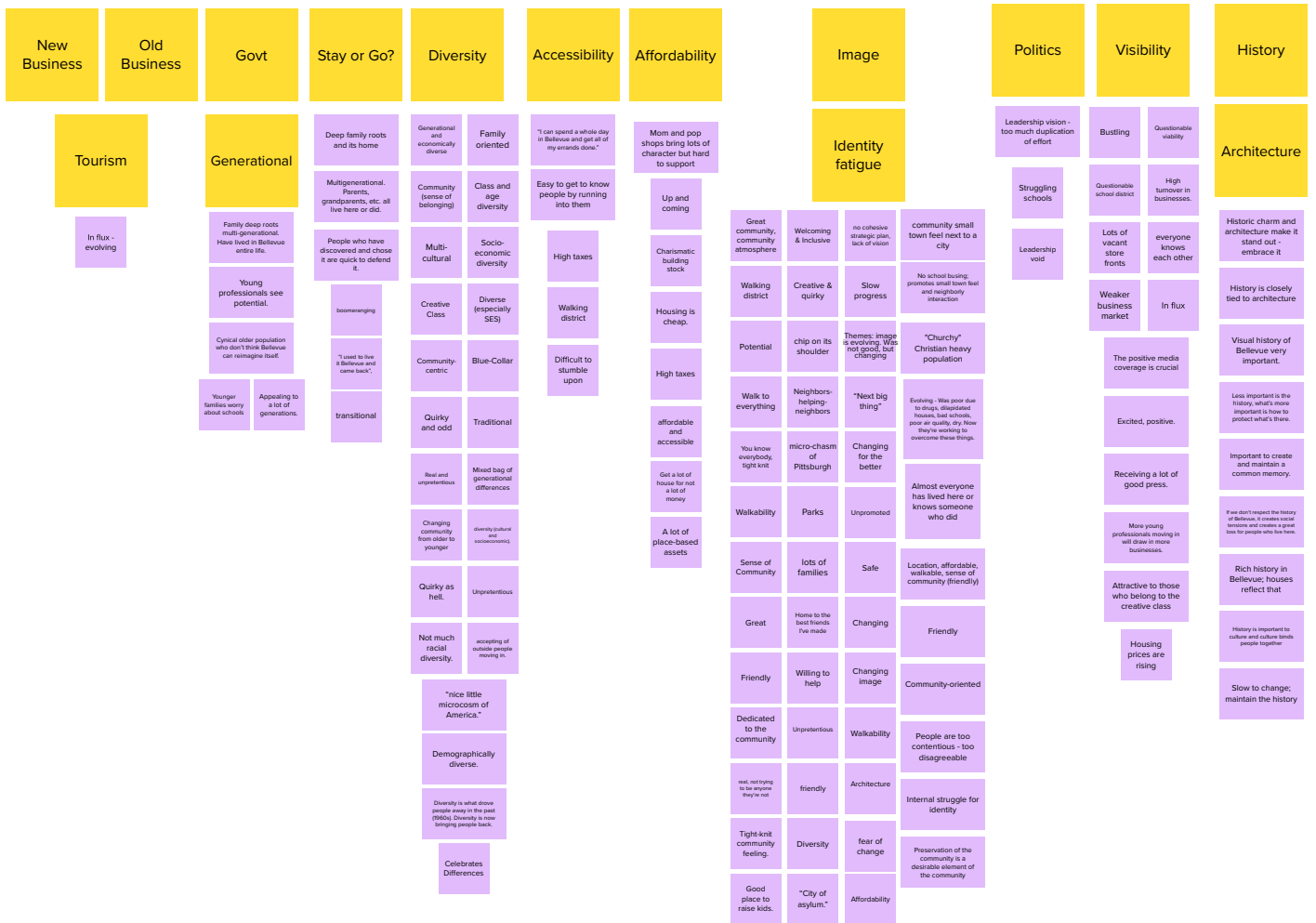
Appendix L: Session One Diagram



SESSION ONE - CONCEPT MAPPING
DATE: 7/27/19
LOCATION: ANDREW BAYNE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Appendix M: Session Two Interview Data

COMMUNITY IDENTITY



INTERVIEW CODIFICATION GROUPING

DATE: N/A

LOCATION: N/A

Appendix O: Letter of Support



March 15, 2020

RE: IRB Letter of Support

Principle Investigator: Dr. Bruce Parsons

Student Investigator: Donald Kent Kerr

Title: Bellevue Believes: Design Thinking as a Catalyst for Community Development in Bellevue, Pennsylvania

IRB Approval Number: [FY19-111]

Dear Institutional Review Board Chair and Members:

I am writing this letter of support for Donald K. Kerr. It is our intention to support Mr. Kerr's research efforts (described below).

Research Overview

Design-thinking workshops: Donald has permission to conduct four design-thinking sessions at The Center of Bellevue located at 2 N Sprague Ave, Bellevue, PA 15202. We understand that each session will host 12 to 15 individuals, last approximately 2-hours per session, and utilize several qualitative design-thinking strategies, the nature of which have been explained.

In closing, we give Donald Kerr permission to conduct the Bellevue Believes workshops at our facilities and support his research efforts.

If you have any further questions or require any additional information please contact me at 412.953.9149. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill Matos".

Jill Matos

Soma International Ministries - Ministry Coordinator

2 N. SPRAGUE AVENUE, BELLEVUE, PA 15202 412.953.9149

Appendix P: Session Three Diagram

**Bull's-eye Diagram
Community Identity**



**Statement Starters
Community Identity**

- How could we focus on a unified identity?
- How can we capitalize on the "neighborly vibe"?
- How can we best preserve/protect/promote our unique architecture?
- In what ways can we improve walkability?
- In what ways can we promote visibility?
- How can we be more inviting?
- How can we share Bellevue's stories and authenticity?
- How can we make family life more enriching?

**Bull's-eye Diagram
Community Development**



**Statement Starters
Community Development**

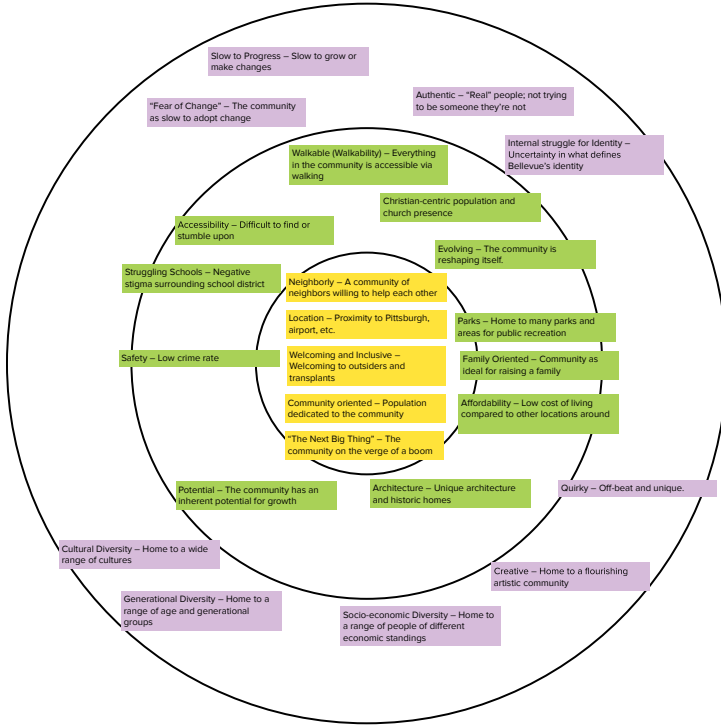
- How can we best attract/retain renters and businesses?
- How can we best encourage long-term residents?
- How can we engage a diverse population?
- How can we best improve Bellevue's reputation?
- In what ways can we improve Northgate schools' reputation?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

**SESSION THREE - PART 1
DATE: 10/30/19
LOCATION: THE CENTER OF BELLEVUE**

Appendix Q: Session Three Diagram

**Bull's-eye Diagram
Community Identity**



**Statement Starters
Community Identity**

- In what ways can we facilitate "connectiveness"?
- In what ways can we leverage our neighborliness?
- How can we make [new] people/businesses feel welcome?
- How might we leverage/communicate our location advantage?
- How can we find/identify our shared [community] values?
- In what ways can we encourage involvement in civic activities?
- How do we envision a future for Bellevue's growth?

**Bull's-eye Diagram
Community Development**



**Statement Starters
Community Development**

- How do we best promote community involvement?
- In what ways can we capitalize on the benefits of socioeconomic diversity?
- In what ways can we encourage redevelopment/turn blight into possibility?
- How can we get citizens to take pride in their community?
- How can we educate citizens on the problems of blight and what can be done to combat it?
- How can the borough best communicate expectations and standards?
- How can we best hold local leaders accountable and empower adherence to community standards?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

**SESSION THREE - PART 1
DATE: 11/3/19
LOCATION: THE CENTER OF BELLEVUE**

Appendix R: Session Three Diagram

**Creativity Matrix
Community Identity**

	People	Place	Culture	Lived Experiences
Unique Architecture	Historical Society	New Businesses in old/repurposed properties Signage & Facades Mainstream/Unity Roadways	Historic Districts Classes	House Tour Participation Incentivization
Walk-ability	Walking Club	ADA Curbs	Education around safe driving in walking district "Take a Walk Tuesday"	Water for Pets
Promote Family Life	Social media communities Halloween Parade	Spray Park Repair Bellevue Memorial Park	Increase Library Funding Indoor Kid Place Space	Bayne Park looks awesome- TELL EVERYONE
Identity	Interview series w/ Bellevue Residents	Zoning Overlay Murals	Dog-walking club Mascot Art Promo "Bellevue is Magic" Facebook frame	Neighborhood Signage Wayfinding Signage Logo/Branding

**Visualize the Vote
Community Identity**

- x5 - Murals
- x3 - Historical Society
- x2 - Signage & Facades
- x2 - Interview series with Bellevue Residents
- x1 - New Businesses in old/repurposed properties
- x1 - Historic Districts
- x1 - Classes
- x1 - Halloween Parade
- x1 - Increase Library Funding
- x1 - Logo/Branding
- x1 - Wayfinding Signage
- x1 - Dog-walking club
- x1 - Art Promo
- x1 - Zoning Overlay

(x number of votes)

**Creativity Matrix
Community Development**

	Housing	Business	Reputation	Population
Bellevue Reputation	Architecture Affordable Homes Historic Homes	Beautification Vacant Storefronts Active Variety mixed signage	Interview series w/ Bellevue residents Signs/Signage	Celebrate/Publicize Success Stories Pop-Up Experience (Art Gallery?) Logo/Branding
Engage Population	House Tour	Light signs Pop-up Business	Neighborhood Engagement Programs (Increased) Code enforcement	Promote cool events happening
Attract / Retain Renters		(Increased) Code enforcement 2nd Story Retail Pursue establishments that are seeking to add locations Implement "1st Friday concept; have specials & entertainment"		Encourage "small shop" movement
Encourage Long-Term Residents	Tax breaks for home owners who convert properties into single family homes	Reduce street wires Shared office spaces (i.e. Nework Beauty Shoppe)	Say good true things about your community	

**Visualize the Vote
Community Development**

- x3 - Vacant storefronts
- x2 - Signs
- x2 - Code enforcement
- x2 - Implement "1st Friday concept; have specials & entertainment"
- x2 - Tax breaks for homeowners who convert properties into single-family homes
- x1 - Interview series w/ Bellevue residents
- x1 - Logo/Branding
- x1 - Encourage "small shop movement"
- x1 - 2nd Story retail
- x1 - Architecture

(x number of votes)

Appendix S: Session Three Diagram

**Creativity Matrix
Community Identity**

	People	Place	Culture	Future
Neighbory / Connectiveness	Block Parties	Periodic Community meet-ups at Park, Center, museums, etc.	Neighborhood Watch Groups	
Location		Market [Bellevue as] Prime Location	Music Venue - Bayne	Shared Services Fire/Police
Values	Spotlight local heroes		"Live, Worship, Shop" "Roll out Red Carpet" for new businesses	Bellevue 2025 strategic plan/ party
Civic / Community Activities	Face-to-Face Invites to participate Art shows w/ local artists	Bands playing Center of Bellevue in the summer Community Recognition/ Banners/ Monuments		Unified Business community

**Visualize the Vote
Community Identity**

- x4 - Periodic Community meet-ups at Park, Center, museums, etc.
- x4 - Market [Bellevue as] Prime Location
- x4 - "Roll out Red Carpet" for new businesses
- x4 - Art shows with local artists
- x3 - Music Venue - Bayne
- x3 - Block Parties
- x3 - Community Recognition/Banners/ Monuments
- x2 - Spotlight local heroes
- x1 - Shared Services Fire/Police
- x1 - Bellevue 2025 strategic plan/party
- x1 - Bands playing Center of Bellevue in the summer

(x number of votes)

**Creativity Matrix
Community Development**

	Business	People	Pride	Reputation
Diversity	Business development committee to market new business	Intergenerational activities	Spotlight local heroes Slogan/ Tagline	Nationality Days
Blight	Tax incentives for new businesses	Blight Tax Acquire Properties from "owners"	Litter Campaign (School, biz, comm)	"Where's the Belle in the Vue?" Celebrate it.
Expectation & Standards	Chamber of Commerce Crappy Property Owner Award	Update to Borough Charter/Smaller Council/Eliminate Wards or at-large Seats Conduct of Elected Officials Historic Home Renovator Network	Awards/ Incentives for Restorations Historic Preservation Ordinance	Code Enforcement Consistency
WILD	Historic Home Renovation Supply Corridor Lincoln Ave. Economic Development Research + Strategy Plan	Eliminate Property Tax for Home makers/ replace with earned income tax [NEW/UPDATED] Parking Meters	Ugly House Tour at Halloween	Borough/Tax Funding for Bonafide Bellevue for Exec. Director of Bus. Development Garbage Cans off Main Street, i.e. North Balph Robotic Garbage Cans

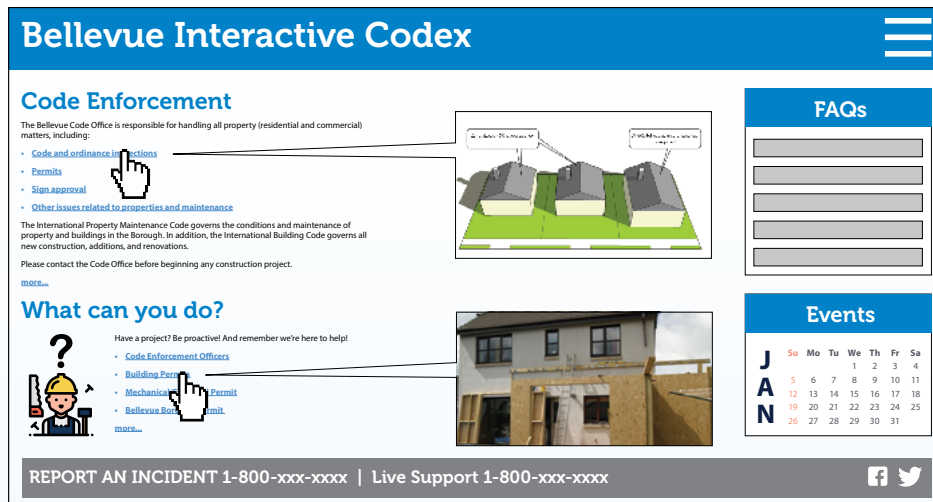
**Visualize the Vote
Community Development**

- x5 - Code Enforcement Consistency
- x4 - Update to Borough Charter/Smaller Council/ Eliminate Wards or at-large Seats
- x3 - [NEW/UPDATED] Parking Meters
- x3 - Lincoln Ave. Economic Development Research + Strategy Plan
- x3 - Acquire Properties from [absentee] "owners"
- x2 - Garbage Cans off Main Street, i.e. N. Balph
- x2 - Borough/Tax Funding for Bonafide Bellevue for Exec. Director of Bus. Development
- x2 - Tax incentives for new businesses
- x2 - Slogan/Tagline
- x1 - Business development committee to market new business
- x1 - Intergenerational activities
- x1 - Ugly House Tour at Halloween
- x1 - Historic Home Renovation Supply Corridor

(x number of votes)

Appendix T: Concept Poster #1

**Bellevue Believes Research Results
Proposal #1: Consistent Code Enforcement**



An interactive, online code index, tentatively called the **Bellevue Interactive Codex**, will:

- Allow individuals to easily understand the expectations of the property code.
- Encourage preemptive individual action, lessening the need for enforcement.
- Ensure that community codes remain current and understood by all parties.
- Provide a means to painlessly submit claims.
- Reduce inquiry and enforcement bandwidth.
- Provide extended zoning hours and accessibility, appealing to varying work schedules.
- Include resources for local talent and support groups to ease individual pressure.
- Provide DIY educational sessions that will provide basic training for home improvement and betterment.
- Promotes positive curbside appeal, safer properties, and overall community well-being.



Consistent and clear code enforcement is a long sought after service within many communities, including Bellevue. Keeping one's property up to code benefits not only the individual, but the community as a whole. A clear, appealing, accessible, and easily referenced website that explains what the codes are and how to resolve them, including a comprehensive FAQ (frequently asked questions) section, calendar of events, DIY (do it yourself) tutorials, and visual aids, will help facilitate this goal.

Your feedback is appreciated!

Enter your recommendations on the supplied cards or online at www.bonafidebellevue.com

These posters are a part of the Bellevue Believes research study. Proposal ideas were informed by research participants and previous research sessions. The ideas presented are hypothetical. Research, ideas, posters, and questions are the creation of graduate researcher Kent Kerr, R.J. Thompson, and +Public. Learn more about this study at <https://www.pluspublic.org/bellevue/>

Appendix U: Concept Poster #2

Bellevue Believes Research Results Proposal #2: Mini-Murals

Murals create beautiful, unique, and memorable locations within a community. Sponsored by Bellevue patrons and designed by Bellevue artists, this mural concept will:

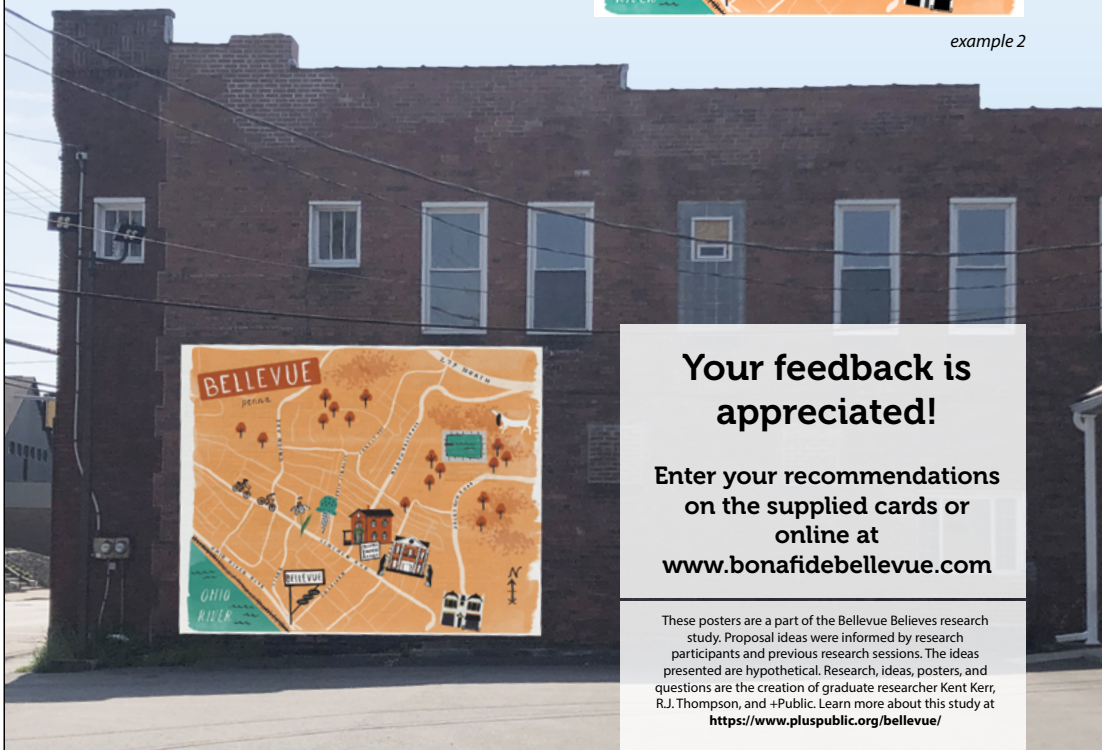
- Improve walking experience in Bellevue.
- Create additional driving visibility for Bellevue and Bellevue-based destinations.
- Provide a memorable experience for individuals seeking residency or business opportunities within Bellevue.
- Provide community building opportunities through volunteer sponsorship and support.
- Provide economic and marketing benefits for local businesses.
- Support and promote local artistic talent.
- Provide economic and marketing benefits for local artist.



example 1



example 2



Your feedback is appreciated!

Enter your recommendations
on the supplied cards or
online at
www.bonafidebellevue.com

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Appendix V: Concept Poster #3

**Bellevue Believes Research Results
Proposal #3: Branding & Signage**

Branding & signage create a sense of visual identity and cohesion within a community. These elements can be used in countless ways, including:

- Marketing the unique qualities and benefits of living and working in Bellevue.
- Enticing entrepreneurs to bring in new businesses and create new opportunities.
- Encourage community engagement within the Bellevue citizenry.
- Encourage additional travel and foot traffic through functional and appealing wayfinding.
- Establish memorable locations via creative placemaking.



posters feat. Bellevue Residents



wayfinding signage



placemaking signage

creative placemaking / signage

Your feedback is appreciated!

Enter your recommendations on the supplied cards or online at www.bonafidebellevue.com

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Appendix W: Session Four Diagram

Rose, Thorn, Bud

- ROSE**
 (positive experience)
- THORN**
 (negative experience)
- BUD**
 (idea, insight, or goal)
- RESEARCHER NOTES**
 (added post-session)

