

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE PATHWAY TO REVITALIZATION:
*TRANSFORMING A HIGHWAY IN WEST
BALTIMORE*

Ty'Jae English, Master of Architecture, 2026

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Urban renewal in mid-twentieth-century America dramatically altered cities, frequently destroying established communities. Large-scale infrastructure projects, especially highways, displaced residents and severed neighborhood ties. This study argues that architecture and urban design can help repair these fragmented communities, enabling them to reclaim space, restore identity, and envision new futures.

This research explores the physical, social, and cultural impacts of urban renewal in Baltimore. A striking example is the “Highway to Nowhere,” a 1.4-mile stretch of U.S. Route 40 meant to connect major interstates. The highway displaced over a thousand residents from minority neighborhoods before community opposition stopped its completion, leaving an incomplete expressway. Today, it stands as an urban scar, dividing the community and fostering resentment. Alongside the highway, boarded-up homes, lack of green space, and few gathering places remain. Architecture and urban design can act as catalysts for healing, helping to rebuild spaces of belonging and resilience in West Baltimore.

THE PATHWAY TO REVITALIZATION: *TRANSFORMING A HIGHWAY IN
WEST BALTIMORE*

by

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Preface

This thesis emerges from a desire to understand the relationship between architecture, infrastructure, and community in the city of Baltimore. Growing up around the realities of urban inequality and disinvestment, I became increasingly interested in how the built environment can either strengthen or sever the connections between communities. The “Highway to Nowhere” in West Baltimore is a physical reminder of planning decisions that displaced communities, disrupted social networks, and left lasting scars on the urban fabric. I aimed to create an urban design and architectural solution that not only “repairs” the scar but also allows the community to reclaim displaced space and create a new sense of memory and belonging.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the communities of West Baltimore whose resilience, history, and identity continue to endure despite decades of displacement and disinvestment.

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I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis chair and committee members for their invaluable guidance, feedback, and support throughout this process. I am also deeply grateful to my family, friends, peers, mentors, and all who encouraged and supported me during my academic journey. Your patience, motivation, and belief in me were instrumental in transforming this thesis from an initial idea to its final realization. I could not have completed this work without your support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Area

The West Franklin Street and West Mulberry Street corridor in West Baltimore is one of the most powerful examples of how mid-twentieth-century planning decisions displaced Black urban neighborhoods. What is now known as the “Highway to Nowhere” began as part of a national vision that aimed to modernize cities through large-scale highway construction. Rather than improving conditions for existing communities, this vision produced deep physical and social scars whose effects continue to structure everyday life. The sunken trench that cuts through West Baltimore today is the material evidence of political choices that prioritized mobility for some at the expense of others.

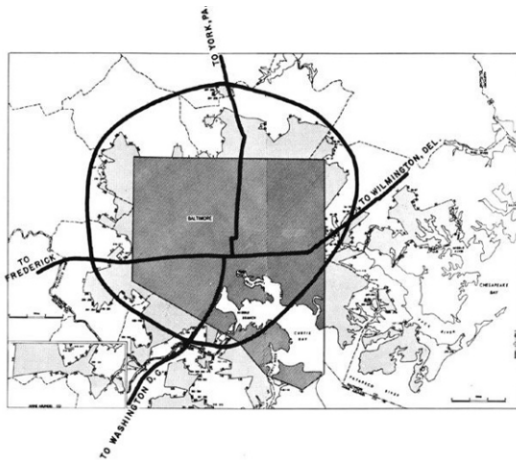


Figure 1: Original interstate highway plan for Baltimore City

The foundation for this urban scar was laid as early as the 1950s, when the federal Bureau of Public Roads produced a planning document known as the Yellow Book. This document mapped proposed routes for the future interstate system within major American cities. Although it mapped out affected neighborhoods, it deliberately

avoided showing exact street paths. As a result, these routes frequently aligned with areas that had already been marked as expendable through redlining, discriminatory lending practices, and earlier forms of segregationist planning. By directing proposed highway corridors through districts labeled as declining or undesirable, the Yellow Book embedded a logic of racial and economic sacrifice into the very blueprint of the interstate system.

This early mapping directly shaped the policies that followed. The 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act provided funding and authority to carry out the interstate system, and cities across the country began preparing local alignments that mirrored the patterns first outlined in the Yellow Book. In Baltimore, the neighborhoods surrounding the West Franklin Street and West Mulberry Street corridor had already been redlined decades earlier, making them more vulnerable to clearance. When city planners drew the route for the proposed expressway, they placed it directly through these predominantly Black residential blocks. This decision reflected a national pattern in which government agencies repeatedly chose to place highways in neighborhoods that had been structurally disinvested, socially marginalized, and politically excluded from decision-making processes.

The consequences of these government decisions were immediate and profound. The families who had lived in the area for generations were scattered, and over a thousand homes were displaced by the project. Businesses closed, longstanding social networks were erased, and the neighborhood's daily rhythms were disrupted. Construction of the expressway was eventually halted due to overwhelming community opposition, leaving West Baltimore with a bleak landscape. This trench

still divides the north-south and east-west relationships of the surrounding neighborhoods, shaping patterns of movement, access, safety, and perception.

Problem Statement: Thesis Question

This thesis arises from a sustained examination of the historical, spatial, and social forces that shaped the corridor. The history of the site clearly reveals how government action, urban renewal agendas, and transportation policies converged to create a landscape defined by loss. Today, the trench continues to serve as both a physical barrier and a visible reminder of what was removed. Residents regularly use the space simply as a way to pass through, and not a space to gather. This unresolved condition frames a powerful opportunity to confront the legacy of harm and imagine a future in which the site becomes a place of reconnection, presence, and collective memory.



Figure 2: Figure Ground map of Baltimore City

This context leads to the central thesis question: How can architecture and urban design repair neighborhoods fractured by urban renewal, while simultaneously empowering communities to reclaim displaced spaces, reassert cultural identity, and cultivate collective memory and belonging? This question acknowledges that the challenge extends beyond the presence of a failed piece of infrastructure. The disruption is woven into the neighborhood's social fabric, and any meaningful response must address those deeper conditions. Reconnection depends on confronting the history that created it, recognizing residents lived experiences today, and shaping new environments that foster belonging, support everyday relationships, and reestablish continuity across the site.

Possible Built Environment Response

The proposed built environment response is to create a platform over the highway that supports both a civic building and a public park. This platform would restore the street grid by bridging the void, while providing new social and cultural spaces for local residents. The building could host community programs, exhibitions, archives, workshops, and flexible gathering rooms. The surrounding park could offer gardens, paths, and open spaces for recreation and daily use. Together, these components form a hybrid environment that reconnects the neighborhood, supports cultural expression, and creates a place for healing and a sense of community. This intervention is not intended to cover the history of displacement but to acknowledge and transform it into a form of community resilience. The platform can become a site where memory and future possibilities coexist. It restores continuity while creating opportunities for new patterns of movement, gathering, and shared experience.

Through this design response, the thesis positions architecture as a tool for repair, reconnection, and collective agency.

Conclusion

In closing, the history of the West Franklin Street and West Mulberry Street corridor, the policies that shaped its transformation, and the community conditions that persist today establish the foundation for the design inquiry at the center of this thesis. The Highway to Nowhere is not an isolated anomaly but the outcome of a broader national pattern in which planning tools, federal maps, and discriminatory decision-making produced long-lasting spatial inequities. Understanding this context is essential before proposing any form of intervention. This has framed the problem area, identified the thesis question, and outlined a potential built environment response that seeks to repair and reconnect. The next chapter turns to the literature that informs this work, examining key theories of displacement, memory, community agency, and urban reinvestment. These texts provide the conceptual grounding to understand how design can respond not only to the physical disruption of the site but also to its economic, social, cultural, and historical dimensions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Urban renewal policies and mid-20th-century infrastructure projects reshaped American cities with enduring consequences. They produced urban scars, mass displacement, concentrated environmental burdens, and the erasure of place-based cultural life. The “Highway to Nowhere” in Baltimore is just one of many examples that illustrate how infrastructure intended to connect areas instead fractures communities and diminishes opportunities for neighborhood life. This literature review situates the present study at the intersection of three debates/subthemes central to architecture and urban design: (1) the political and spatial history of urban renewal and transportation policy that produce displacement; (2) the social, cultural, and health consequences of urban renewal, displacement and neighborhood fragmentation; and (3) emerging design and governance strategies that range from community-driven placemaking to reparative and participatory design methods that aim to rebuild the social fabric and re-root cultural memory in an altered urban context.

The scholarship analyzed here provides a coherent set of insights. Historical and policy studies trace the mechanisms through which planning and transportation decisions perpetuate inequality, while sociological and public health literature document the trauma and material risk that accompany forced displacement. Research on place-making and participatory practice provides models for community coproduction. Building on this body of work, this thesis argues that architecture and

urban design can serve as not only technical interventions but as intentional reparative practices when combined with the acknowledgement of history, community coproduction, and place-based strategies that reconnect the urban fabric, restore cultural identity to a place, and produce measurable social benefits. This review synthesizes evidence and methods from history, policy, health, and design to develop a framework for reparative interventions. Additionally, it aims to identify metrics, precedents, and processes that can guide practice in similarly fractured urban contexts such as Baltimore.

Reparative Architecture and Urban Design in Post-Urban Renewal Cities

Historical and Structural Roots of Displacement

The structural roots of displacement in American cities are embedded in the policies and planning ideologies that defined mid-twentieth-century urban renewal and highway development. In *Highway to Inequity*, David Karas examines the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and the resulting Interstate Highway System as one of the most significant public works programs in United States history¹. He explains that although the program was promoted as a national project for economic growth and connectivity, its local impacts were deeply destructive for many urban neighborhoods. Karas notes that highway construction often cuts through established residential areas, removing residents and businesses while disproportionately harming poor and minority communities. He emphasizes that the design of the highway system reinforced

¹ David Karas, "Highway to Inequity: The Disparate Impact of the Interstate Highway System on Poor and Minority Communities in American Cities," *New Visions for Public Affairs* 7, no. April (2015): 9–21.

existing social and racial divisions, embedding segregation into the physical layout of cities. Karas also observes a contemporary movement among cities to dismantle or redesign expressways as a way of confronting the harm these projects caused. His work reveals that an initiative celebrated for its progress and efficiency was built on a foundation of racial inequity and displacement, transforming the urban landscape in ways that institutionalized social division. This analysis reveals how infrastructure has become both the physical and symbolic foundation of disconnection, rendering contemporary repair and reconnection through design an act of historical redress.

Building on Karas's identification of the highway system as a tool of structural inequality, Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt shift attention to the human experience of displacement in *A Neighborhood a Highway Would Destroy*. Through a sociological study of Boston's West End, they document how residents responded to the demolition of their neighborhood, which was justified by urban renewal and highway expansion plans². Fellman and Brandt describe how working-class families were excluded from the decision-making process and faced the loss of their homes and community with little warning or support. They report that residents experienced deep feelings of grief and anxiety as their neighborhood was targeted for destruction, and that many began organizing petitions and public meetings to oppose the project. The authors interpret the West End demolition as a powerful example of how planning decisions made at the municipal and state levels prioritized modernization and political expediency over the social well-being of existing communities. Their study emphasizes that displacement was not an unintended consequence of urban renewal

² Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt, "A Neighborhood a Highway Would Destroy," *Environment and Behavior* 2, no. 3 (1970): 281

but a reflection of how governments defined progress at the expense of neighborhood stability. The ideas from this source illustrate how the emotional and social ruptures produced by displacement form the collective memory that contemporary design must seek to acknowledge, heal, and reweave.

Laurel M. O'Hare extends this historical understanding in *Concrete Legacy: The Effects of the Interstate Highway System on Black Communities in the U.S.* by examining how highway construction damaged and divided historically Black neighborhoods throughout the country³. O'Hare situates the Interstate Highway System within the broader history of racial segregation and urban renewal, noting that many highways were routed through established Black communities, resulting in widespread property damage and social dislocation. She focuses on cases such as the St. Paul Rondo neighborhood, where hundreds of homes were destroyed, and entire social networks were fractured. O'Hare connects these mid-century projects to current inequities and highlights modern efforts by cities such as St. Paul to pursue restorative planning and reparative development. However, she cautions that simply removing highways or constructing new projects without community input risks repeating patterns of exclusion. Her analysis links the physical destruction caused by the interstate system to enduring social and economic inequality, emphasizing that repair must go beyond design to include justice-centered governance and community control. This perspective frames design as a tool for empowerment and collective agency,

³ Laurel M. O'Hare, "Concrete Legacy: The Effects of the Interstate Highway System on Black Communities in the U.S.," *Tapestries: Interwoven Voices of Local and Global Identities* 13, no. 1 (2024): Article 6.

arguing that repair requires both physical reconnection and the restoration of community ownership over space.

Following O'Hare's analysis of how racialized infrastructure reshaped urban communities, Richard M. Kovak offers a structural explanation for why displacement occurred so frequently in *Urban Renewal Controversies*. In his review of 51 urban renewal cases, Kovak identifies recurring patterns that explain why some projects succeeded with minimal resistance, while others encountered opposition⁴. He finds that renewal agencies operating with strong centralization and political control were able to suppress public dissent and advance their projects efficiently. In contrast, neighborhoods with more organized and resourceful residents were often able to challenge or modify renewal plans. Kovak concludes that the outcomes of renewal were shaped less by the merits of each project and more by the social and class structures that determined who had access to political power. His work demonstrates that displacement was built into the administrative logic of urban renewal programs, which prioritized economic growth and modernization while minimizing public participation. This conclusion emphasizes the need for participatory planning models that redistribute decision-making power, allowing communities historically excluded from development to define their own futures.

Extending the discussion from urban governance to national policy, Deborah N. Archer in *Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities* situates the same processes within the framework of law and public policy⁵. Archer

⁴ Richard M. Kovak, "Urban Renewal Controversies," *Public Administration Review* 32, no. 4 (1972): 359–72

⁵ Deborah N. Archer, "Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities," *Iowa Law Review* 106, no. 5 (2021).

argues that the development of the national transportation system produced a pattern of underdevelopment in Black communities. She shows that transportation policies were designed and implemented in ways that prioritized white mobility and suburban expansion while isolating and disinvesting in Black neighborhoods. According to Archer, policymakers used their social and economic authority to build infrastructure that reinforced segregation and redirected public resources away from Black areas. The result was a physical and economic landscape that limited opportunity and created conditions where Black communities struggled to thrive. Archer emphasizes that these outcomes were not accidental but were products of deliberate policy decisions that sustained inequality. She calls for treating transportation equity as a civil rights issue that requires both legal and structural change. Through this lens, Archer exposes how displacement was perpetuated by governance systems that converted spatial planning into a tool of racial hierarchy. Her argument connects the political and legal dimensions of displacement to the contemporary challenge of designing spaces that restore justice, health, and equity in marginalized communities.

When examined collectively, these five works present a detailed picture of how displacement became a structural feature of urban development in the twentieth century. *Highway to Inequity* and *Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities* trace the relationship between federal infrastructure programs and systemic segregation, illustrating how national mobility projects reinforced racial boundaries. *Urban Renewal Controversies* and *A Neighborhood a Highway Would Destroy* reveal how the concentration of political power and the marginalization of working-class residents allowed local governments to advance destructive renewal

projects with limited accountability. *Concrete Legacy* builds on this foundation by connecting historical patterns of displacement to present-day efforts toward repair and reconciliation, showing how the legacy of the highway system continues to shape urban inequality. Although these authors employ different methods, including policy analysis, sociology, legal critique, and historical research, they converge on a shared conclusion. Displacement in the United States was not an incidental byproduct of modernization but a deliberate outcome of a governance structure that valued growth, control, and mobility over the preservation of community life. Together, they reveal that the physical transformation of cities through renewal and highway construction was inseparable from the structural systems of power that defined who had the right to remain in urban space. This collective insight reinforces the thesis by establishing that contemporary architectural repair must begin with a confrontation of these historical structures, using design as a medium through which fractured communities can reclaim memory, connection, and agency.

The historical and structural mechanisms that produced displacement set the foundation for a wide range of enduring social, cultural, and health consequences that continue to shape urban life. The policies and infrastructures examined in Subtheme 1 reveal not only how entire communities were physically erased but also how this removal fractured social networks, disrupted cultural continuity, and imposed environmental and psychological burdens that persist across generations. The next subtheme builds upon this understanding by shifting focus from the political and structural forces that enabled displacement to the lived experiences and embodied outcomes that followed. By tracing how urban renewal and highway construction

affected collective identity, cultural expression, and public health. Subtheme 2 dives deeper into the human dimensions of loss and resilience that accompany the destruction of place. This transition from policy to lived experience highlights that architectural and urban repair must address both the systemic origins and the human consequences of displacement to create spaces of genuine reconnection and empowerment.

Social, Cultural, and Health Consequences of Urban Renewal

Urban renewal produced far-reaching social, cultural, and health consequences that scholars across urban studies, public health, and critical race scholarship have documented through historical analysis, community discussions, and critique of prevailing scientific paradigms. In *Root Shock*, Mindy Thompson Fullilove situates postwar renewal in a longer tradition of state-led spatial reordering, from Haussmann's Paris to the United States Housing Act of 1949 and the Amendments that cast demolition and reconstruction as civic progress⁶. In this framework, technical goals such as new street grids and modern infrastructure masked the social costs borne by residents whose neighborhoods were treated as interchangeable urban tissue. Fullilove emphasizes that the official language of substandard structures and blight rationalized clearance and displacement as if there were no social losses, while residents experienced upheaval and grief. The book's account of Haussmannization highlights how displacement reorganizes social relations and fuels unrest. This offers a lens for

⁶ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: New Village Press, 2016)

understanding later American policies that also prized aesthetic and commercial order over community continuity.

Fullilove examines the psychological and social effects of displacement resulting from urban renewal. Drawing on the Hill District of Pittsburgh, she foregrounds the everyday social fabric that urban renewal tore apart. Neighbors described dense networks of recognition and mutual care created by shared conditions and close lived proximity. These are elements of a city that foster a strong sense of community. When officials judged the neighborhood as “disorganized” and “replaceable”, they discounted those ties, helping to create the popular reframe “urban renewal in negro removal”. The city’s decision to demolish streets and impose new patterns not only erased block-level relationships but removed the nest of essential interactions, producing what Fullilove terms as “root shock”⁷. She defines root shock as a trauma of place-based severance that reverberates through households and generations. By weaving personal testimonies into broader political history, Fullilove demonstrates how the trauma of removal was not only individual but collective, transforming cities into spaces of instability.

Ron Daniels extends this analysis by naming gentrification the new “Negro Removal Program” in his paper *Displacing Black People and Culture*. In doing so, he treats gentrification as the latest expression of a historical pattern of removing Black people from spaces of economic and cultural life⁸. Daniels catalogs how development

⁷ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: New Village Press, 2016)

⁸ Ron Daniels, “Displacing Black People and Culture, Gentrification: The New ‘Negro Removal’ Program: A Call for an Emergency Summit,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 12, no. 7 (2018): 7_1–7_4

projects route highways through the heart of Black neighborhoods, shatter established business districts, and scatter residents to peripheral areas, thereby weakening institutions, networks, and cultural practices that animate place. He also tracks political effects as demographic replacement diminishes Black political power from neighborhood boards to mayoral offices. In his examples from Washington, Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York, revitalization for newcomers translates into forced movement, rising rents and taxes, and cultural erasure. Daniels documents clashes over long-standing practices, such as communal drumming in Harlem, as emblematic of newcomers' efforts to reframe neighborhood rhythms and norms. In his response, he advances a programmatic call for development without displacement, urging organized policy agendas and convenings to defend communities while improving conditions for current residents. His writing frames gentrification not only as a material process of dislocation, but also as an ideological assault that undermines Black cultural autonomy by imposing external values onto historically rooted traditions.

In her book, *Fatal Invention*, Dorothy Roberts views this topic through the lens of health. She situates the study of asthma as a key example of how urban renewal and housing policies directly shape racial health disparities⁹. She highlights how asthma, the most common chronic disease in children, occurs at much higher rates in Puerto Rican and African American children, with stats reaching 19% and 13% respectively, compared to 8% among white children¹⁰. These disparities are not explained by

⁹ Dorothy Roberts, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: The New Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Dorothy Roberts, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: The New Press, 2011).

genetics, but rather by structural conditions, particularly environmental exposures associated with the placement of highways and other major infrastructure projects. Roberts highlights a New York University study in which children in the South Bronx wore air monitors that recorded levels of diesel exhaust pollution far exceeding EPA standards. These children were also twice as likely to attend schools near highways, revealing how urban planning choices routed traffic and concentrated toxic exposures in communities of color. Roberts argues that these are the predictable outcomes of political decisions that placed highways and polluting industries in Black and Latino neighborhoods while stripping away safe housing and green space. Her critique illustrates how biomedical research that reduces asthma to racial genetics erases the visible imprint of urban planning, deflecting responsibility away from policymakers onto imagined biological deficiencies.

When combined, these pieces make the argument that gentrification and urban renewal are intentional actions that destroy cultural life, separate communities, and create long-lasting health inequities rather than being neutral modernization processes. Fullilove shows how communities were erased in the name of renewal, causing a psychological trauma of displacement that caused entire cities to become destabilized. Daniels demonstrates how the same processes are now at play in modern gentrification, when Black inhabitants are displaced and political power is redistributed due to economic restructuring and cultural erasure. Roberts challenges the biological trend to blame inequalities on genetics rather than systemic injustice and reveals how urban renewal and highway placement directly contribute to racialized health consequences like childhood asthma. All three show how

displacement reconfigures social worlds with generational repercussions, despite their different areas of focus: Fullilove on psychological trauma and historical memory, Daniels on political and cultural resistance, and Roberts on the relationship between health and structural racism. They all emphasize the importance of rethinking development using frameworks that protect cultural identity, maintain community bonds, and address health disparities, as these issues are inextricably linked to the politics of urban space.

The social, cultural, and health consequences of urban renewal reveal that displacement is not only a physical condition but also a psychological and collective one that reshapes how communities experience belonging, identity, and wellness. The loss of neighborhood stability, cultural landmarks, and access to healthy environments created generational trauma that continues to define the urban condition in many historically marginalized places. These effects demonstrate that repair cannot be achieved through policy or infrastructure alone but must also occur through design interventions that restore the human and social fabric of the city. Subtheme 3 builds on this realization by positioning architecture and urban design as essential instruments of restoration and empowerment. It explores how design can serve as a vehicle for reclaiming agency, rebuilding collective memory, and creating spaces that nurture community resilience.

Design as a Tool for Repair and Empowerment

Design in the aftermath of urban renewal emerges not merely as a technical discipline but as a transformative process through which communities reclaim agency,

restore memory, and rebuild the social and spatial bonds fractured by decades of displacement and inequity. Jeffrey Hou and Michael Rios demonstrate how community power can be organized into concrete spatial repair in *Community-Driven Place Making*. They document how the Unity Council in Oakland's Fruitvale district reframed public space as both a physical fabric and a network of relationships, confronting a severe deficit of open space quantified at 0.68 acres per one thousand residents¹¹. In response, the Fruitvale Recreation and Open Space Initiative was formed in 1995 and launched a campaign in 1997 that gathered more than three thousand petition signatures and one hundred organizational letters to dedicate a nine-acre waterfront site, Union Point, as a public park. By early 1998, the Port of Oakland agreed to a partnership, and the Unity Council received support to lead a community design process. Hou and Rios analyze the work through three linked processes that matter for design practice: mobilization across multilevel networks, discourse building that assembles a shared place identity, and political crafting that navigates conflicts and leverages opportunity. They also critique a narrow, procedural version of participatory design that has become bureaucratized and often fails to engage communities as authors of public space. In the Union Point process, these broader practices extended into symbolic work, including public art that foregrounded local women and hybrid identities, illustrating how design can materialize memory as well as access. Together, these findings show design as an organized social practice rather

¹¹ Jeffrey Hou and Michael Rios, "Community-Driven Place Making: The Social Practice of Participatory Design in the Making of Union Point Park," *Journal of Architectural Education* 57, no. 1 (2003): 19–27

than a single event, which directly supports the idea that repair requires coordinated community leadership, identity work, and spatial reconnection.

Tara Page turns toward the ethics and methods that underwrite reparative placemaking in *Placemaking: A New Materialist Theory of Pedagogy*. Page argues that ethical research and design practice is not a procedural compliance exercise but a continual work of care that tends to the mind, the body, and matter¹². She centers the relational space between participants and researchers that she calls withness. In this approach, roles are intentionally fluid and entangled so that making, teaching, and learning occur with participants, not for them. The aim of this approach is to keep attention on the shared space where identities and responsibilities are negotiated in practice. Page details how workshops were organized with familiar, everyday materials and with an explicit commitment to care among facilitators and participants, foregrounding position and accountability as central to the integrity of the work. The practical implication for design is clear: methods that honor withness and care help reconstitute social bonds while shaping environments, asserting that the means of design must themselves enact the repair they seek to build.

Carrying the ethical and organizational threads into neighborhood-scale action, Kenneth Banks and J. Marshall Mangan present a model of grassroots capacity building in *The Company of Neighbours*¹³. They describe an action research project that began in 1992 in Hespeler, Ontario, with three goals that speak to design as social infrastructure: to map informal and formal networks through qualitative research, to

¹² Tara Page, *Placemaking: A New Materialist Theory of Pedagogy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

¹³ C. Kenneth Banks and John Marshall Mangan, *The Company of Neighbours: Revitalizing Community through Action-Research* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999)

help families strengthen indigenous supports within those networks, and to demonstrate a locally led planning approach that improves the use of remaining services¹⁴. The authors situate the project within a history of economic restructuring and infrastructural change that included the construction of Highway 401 in the 1950s. This isolated Hespeler from nearby communities, removed services from the town core, and produced commuting patterns that weakened everyday ties. Their method utilizes exploratory, descriptive, and action-oriented steps that are coproduced with residents. The Hespeler case illustrates how restoring collective memory and networks of mutual support can generate tangible community projects, local institutions, and public spaces that rebuild the social foundations necessary for meaningful design interventions. In this way, Banks and Mangan model the slow work of reweaving community, showing that lasting spatial repair rests on durable social networks and shared authorship.

Diving into the contemporary struggle, Cheryl Rodriguez and Beverly Ward illuminate how design must engage ongoing racialized infrastructure politics in *Making Black Communities Matter: Race, Space, and Resistance in the Urban South*. Their ethnography of Tampa situates present debates about the Tampa Bay Express highway plan within a long memory of displacement, including a historical record that the construction of Interstates 4 and 275 destroyed more than three thousand structures and dislocated hundreds of Black households and dozens of businesses near downtown. In the 2010s, TBX proposed variable priced toll lanes estimated at six to nine billion dollars and spanning a corridor that could extend from 83 to more than

¹⁴ C. Kenneth Banks and John Marshall Mangan, *The Company of Neighbours: Revitalizing Community through Action-Research* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999)

330-miles one way. The authors document how residents criticized the agency's limited alternatives and outreach, noting that more than 40 neighborhood associations could be affected across nearly 90 miles and that East Tampa initially received inaccurate information about whether it fell within the impact zone. They also recount air quality concerns, and the possibility of purchasing 300 to 400 homes and businesses in the right of way. The work centers Black women's leadership in mobilizing forums, protests, and coalitions, showing design's political horizon as communities assert spatial justice. This case demonstrates that design for repair must join legal process, environmental review, and grassroots organization to secure equitable outcomes, directly aligning with the idea that reconnection and empowerment require community-led control over decision making and space.

Bringing these sources together, they converge on a reparative understanding of design that is inseparable from collective organization, ethical practice, and sustained political action, while also differing in focus and scale. Hou and Rios show how a community-based organization translated a quantified open-space deficit into a 9-acre park through mobilization, discourse building, and political crafting. They also caution that participatory design must be more than procedure if it is to produce just places. Page shifts the lens to method, insisting that the everyday ethics of witness and care are not add-ons but the core condition for placemaking that restores relationships as it reshapes environments. Banks and Mangan demonstrate that durability comes from action research and mutual aid that strengthen networks in the wake of infrastructural and economic change, making design possible because community capacity is present and growing. Rodriguez and Ward ground these

practices in a racialized landscape of highways and displacement, quantifying past loss, tracking contemporary costs, and documenting the organizing that seeks spatial justice in the present. Their common ground is the claim that design can repair, only when it is community-led, ethically practiced, and politically engaged. They affirm that architecture and urban design become tools of repair when they rebuild social bonds, honor community memory, and empower residents to author the spaces.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the existing literature establishes a comprehensive foundation for understanding how displacement, renewal, and design interact across historical, social, and spatial dimensions. Collectively, these works contribute to the field by demonstrating that the built environment functions as both a reflection and an instrument of power. They show that urban renewal and highway construction were not neutral projects but structured systems that reinforced racial and economic inequality. At the same time, the literature introduces design as a process of repair capable of restoring community agency, memory, and belonging. This collective body of scholarship broadens architectural discourse by positioning equity and participation as central to design thinking.

The strengths of this literature lie in its interdisciplinary approach and methodological diversity. Historians, legal scholars, social scientists, and designers converge to explain displacement as both a policy failure and a social wound. Case studies such as the West End, Rondo, and Fruitvale reveal how policy decisions translate into lived

experience, while participatory design research demonstrates how local knowledge can guide equitable interventions. These studies collectively advance the understanding of design as a relational and ethical practice that engages communities as collaborators rather than subjects.

However, the literature remains limited in its scope and continuity. Much of the existing research focuses on the mid-twentieth century, offering less analysis of the contemporary forms of displacement produced by gentrification, environmental injustice, and digital planning technologies. Many works emphasize participation but lack evaluation of the long-term outcomes of community-driven projects or how they influence structural policy change. Future research should seek to integrate these social and sensory dimensions, creating frameworks that unite design practice with long-term policy reform. Comparative studies between different cultural and geographic contexts could deepen understanding of how repair operates globally. Above all, future scholarship must continue to explore design as an act of justice that bridges memory and possibility. The literature reveals that repair is both a spatial and ethical project, one that requires architects and planners to reconstruct not only the physical city but also the relationships, narratives, and identities that define it.

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Importance of Research Methods to this Thesis

Research is fundamental to this thesis because the “Highway to Nowhere” is a spatial problem defined by history, policy, social experience, and the physical realities of West Baltimore. Addressing this site requires more than a typical architectural

analysis. It requires an interdisciplinary approach that draws from architecture, planning, urban history, sociology, landscape studies, and community narratives. This approach strengthens the investigation by enabling the research to connect the physical environment to the social and economic forces that formed the corridor. These research methods can provide a framework for transforming observations into insights, and for insights to inform a design response oriented toward healing and restitching the neighborhood's urban fabric. Given the site's complexity and the combined social and physical factors involved, the research must begin with historical and archival research to trace the origins of the corridor's transformation.

Research Methodologies

Historical and Archival Research

Historical and archival research is key to interpreting how the West Franklin Street and West Mulberry Street corridor became the site of an incomplete expressway. Historical documents such as federal highway maps, zoning records, archival photographs, and local newspapers reveal the political and economic thinking that influenced the expressway proposal. Tracing this timeline shows how earlier redlining and discriminatory planning decisions shaped the highway's route and left this neighborhood vulnerable to erasure. This method provides the foundation for the problem area and confirms the necessity of a design response that directly acknowledges the layers of scarring embedded in the site.

Site Analysis and Field Observation

The second major method is site analysis and field observation, which begins with physically engaging with the corridor. I have already completed some on-site studies that involved walking around the site and doing some ground-level sketching, and analytical drawings to document the character of the expressway, the conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods and streets, and changes in elevation. These drawings capture subtle spatial qualities that are not easily visible in a top-down approach. I also extensively photographed the existing conditions, including homes, businesses, vacant lots, and circulation patterns along the corridor. These photographs form a visual record of the present landscape and help identify themes such as isolation and disconnection.

Spatial and Social Observations

Being on the ground revealed how residents move along the edges and across the bridges, how noise affects the site, and how the separation created by the expressway shapes everyday life. These ground-based observations will be expanded upon through computer-based technical analysis that examines the damage from an aerial perspective. This phase will use satellite imagery, layered historical and contemporary maps, and digital measurements to study the trench's geometry, scale, and relationship to the street grid. Combining fieldwork with aerial analysis creates a complete spatial understanding that supports the development of future design strategies.

A related method is behavioral and social observation, which focuses on how the community interacts with the landscape created by the highway trench. Although the highway itself is inaccessible to pedestrians, its edges and bridges remain part of daily life as passageways. Observing these patterns helps identify which connections are used most frequently, which routes feel unsafe or isolated, and where new pathways might naturally support movement and gathering. Understanding these behaviors strengthens the design process by grounding decisions in lived experience.

Community Based Research

Another main strategy is qualitative exploration into community perspectives. The “Highway to Nowhere” is tied to a history of displacement and incomplete infrastructure, so it is important to understand how the corridor is perceived by those who live near it. This research can draw from community testimonies, local planning discussions, public records, and documented reflections from residents and neighborhood organizations. These sources provide insight into how the destruction caused by the highway continues to impact collective memory and neighborhood identity. While this thesis does not yet involve formal interviews, it synthesizes existing perspectives to ensure that the design objectives of restoring presence and acknowledging lived experience are met. In the future, it will also be important to evaluate the planning proposals developed for this site and assess whether their initiatives successfully address the requirements and concerns of the surrounding community.

Precedent Analysis

A central methodology of this thesis's architectural research is precedent analysis, which helps shape the conceptual framework for the design. For this thesis, precedents were selected specifically for their placement within dense metropolitan contexts and their ability to consider carefully fractured or broken environments. Each precedent exists within a city setting and demonstrates strategies for connecting gaps, reclaiming unused or damaged land, or creating civic spaces adjacent to major infrastructure. The study concentrates on how each project fits within its surrounding context through circulation, public space design, and its relationship to existing communities. The goal is not to replicate these examples but to extract guiding principles that can inform how and what programs can reconnect West Baltimore and address the scar left by the expressway.

Mapping

Mapping and spatial analysis are other significant research methods used in this thesis. By layering historic maps, demographic data, zoning information, street networks, and contemporary aerial imagery, mapping can reveal how the corridor has evolved over time. It can help identify changes in land use, street continuity, and density patterns before and after the construction of the highway. Spatial analysis showcases areas where streets once existed, where connections were severed, and where a restored ground plane could meaningfully repair circulation. Mapping functions as an instrument for evaluating prospective interventions and grasping the larger urban implications of the design. These drawings help organize the design

process by establishing a visual language for the project that connects research findings to spatial proposals.

Design Speculation

The final method is design speculation, which generates new knowledge through iterative testing. Sketches, models, sectional studies, and plan investigations can explore how a platform could span the expressway, how a building might become a new civic anchor for activity, and how a park could support everyday use and develop civic identity. This exploratory process responds to historical evidence, site conditions, precedent lessons, and community perspectives. Design speculation transforms this knowledge of spatial possibilities to address both the physical disruption and the site's cultural identity.

Conclusion

Overall, these methods establish a thorough and interdisciplinary research framework that supports the goals of this thesis. Historical and archival studies lay the foundations for the problem and clarify how the expressway came to shape the neighborhood. Site analysis, fieldwork, and social observation reveal the present spatial and experiential conditions that must inform any design response. Qualitative inquiry assures that community perspectives remain central to the work and that the design acknowledges lived experience. Precedent analysis draws on comparable projects to provide key insights and illustrates how other designers have addressed

fragmented urban landscapes. Additionally, design speculation opens up new possibilities for reconnection. Together, this combination of methods permits the design to emerge from a careful understanding of history, place, and community. They position the work to address the “Highway to Nowhere” as a site with the potential for renewed presence, continuity, and collective memory.

Chapter 4: Precedent Studies (Case Studies)

Introduction

Precedent study is a central part of this thesis because it reveals how architects, urban designers, and landscape architects have engaged with sites defined by infrastructural imposition and interrupted urban continuity. The Highway to Nowhere reflects the long-term consequences of mid-twentieth-century highway construction. It is a trench carved through predominantly Black neighborhoods, severing mobility networks, displacing residents, and leaving behind a gap that keeps impacting social experience. Addressing such a site requires careful examination of built works that have confronted related issues, whether by reconnecting divided districts, transforming leftover spaces, or designing cultural institutions that connect to their adjacent urban fabric.

The five precedents selected for this chapter represent a diverse range of contexts, scales, and cultural conditions. Each offers insight into a particular dimension of the thesis, from the role of promenade and movement in constructing spatial continuity to the transformation of infrastructural edges into public spaces that develop a sense of belonging. The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts in Cambridge demonstrates the power of movement and architectural promenade as tools for linking institutional and urban realms. Klyde Warren Park in Dallas provides a successful example of a platform deck park that reconnects neighborhoods divided by a highway and restores civic life to an infrastructural void. Paley Park in New York reveals how

micro-spaces and sensory design can create psychological refuge within cities formed by earlier renewal efforts. The Menil Collection in Houston offers a model for embedding cultural institutions into neighborhood contexts through modest scale, connective landscape, and careful control of light. The NEMO Science Museum in Amsterdam shows how architecture can emerge from infrastructure and postindustrial ground to create public promenades, roofscapes, and elevated urban experiences.

Together, these precedents build a layered understanding of how architecture can respond to various site conditions. This chapter examines what each project contributes, the questions it raises, and how its lessons can inform a design response for the Route 40 corridor that rebuilds connection and invites public life back into a fractured landscape.

5 Precedents

The Carpenter Center for Visual Arts



Figure 3: Carpenter Center for Visual Arts (Credit: ArchDaily)

The Carpenter Center at Harvard University remains the only built work by Le

Corbusier in North America, and its significance often starts with its approach to movement. The building's defining element is its curving ramp that cuts through its mass and draws in both students and the public to explore the structure. It is a promenade that choreographs views, shifting light, and changing spatial relationships between interior studios, exterior courts, and the surrounding campus.

Writers who study the Carpenter Center often point to the way its circulation resolves site pressures and programmatic needs¹⁵. The ramp binds the arts center to the larger campus network, allowing pedestrians who might never enter a studio to experience the building's internal rhythms. Glimpses into teaching spaces soften institutional boundaries and invite a broader public into the building's life. This openness allows for a dialogue between users who occupy the building for academic purposes and those who simply pass through it on their way to other destinations.

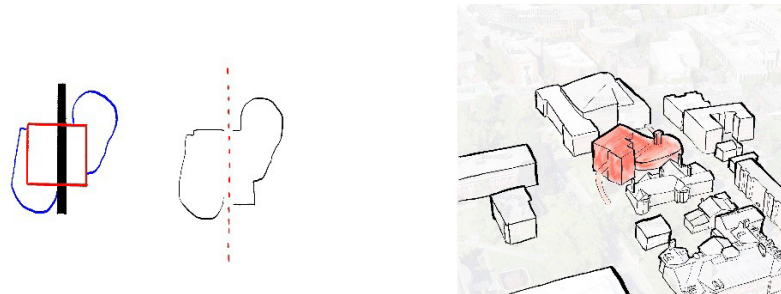


Figure 4: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

For this thesis, the relevance of the Carpenter Center lies in its translation of movement into a connective, democratic architectural gesture. The Highway to Nowhere interrupted daily movement patterns and removed the possibility of walking

¹⁵ James P. Snyder, "Winterthur Portfolio 14, no. 3 (1979): 328–30

through the traditional city neighborhood. A project that aims to repair this damage must consider how movement itself becomes an architectural experience that rebuilds and establishes new forms of circulation. The Carpenter Center suggests that circulation can create a shared ground between different user groups and can serve as a spatial bridge across a fragmented condition.

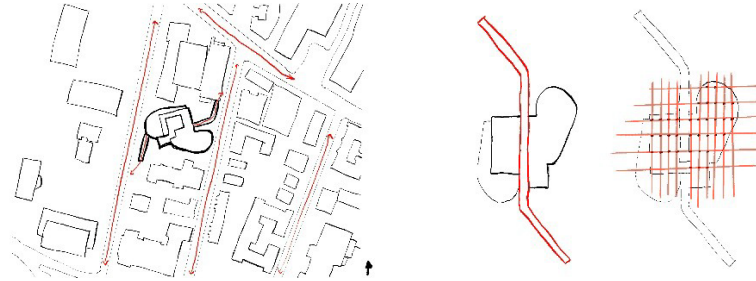


Figure 5 Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Studying the Carpenter Center sharpens an understanding of promenade as a design tool that produces continuity, encourages transparency, and turns the concept of circulation into an architectural experience.

Klyde Warren Park



Figure 6: Klyde Warren Park (Credit: Landscape Performance Series)

Klyde Warren Park in Dallas offers one of the clearest examples of how cities can reclaim land damaged by highway construction. The Woodall Rodgers Freeway once served as a deep divide between the Arts District and Uptown. It carried heavy traffic, generated constant noise, and discouraged walking between the two areas. The park replaced that barrier with a five-acre green space that unites the two districts, supports cultural programming, and provides an important civic anchor for the city.



Figure 7: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Research on the park describes how the deck supports a soil depth sufficient for a generous tree canopy, which cools the space and softens the surrounding hardscape. The transformation boosted foot traffic, reshaped adjacent development patterns, and reopened the area for public gathering¹⁶. Additionally, nighttime lighting helps people feel at ease and reshapes a place formerly characterized by noise and exposure. Programmatically, the park provides open lawns, shaded seating areas, performance spaces, food kiosks, and children's courts. Its flexible design allows for

¹⁶ Ventimiglia, Diana. "Bridging the Gap." *Lighting Design & Application* 43, no. 9 (September 1, 2013): 41–42. doi:10.1177/036063251304300911.

daily informal use as well as large public events. This balance is particularly relevant for the Highway to Nowhere corridor, which will need to support neighborhood-scale uses as well as citywide gatherings to encourage both local stewardship and broader civic identity.

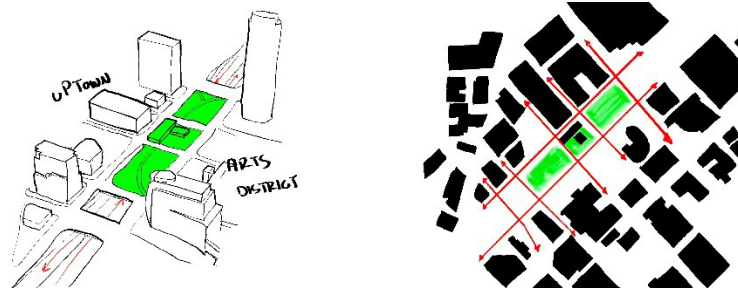


Figure 8: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

An important theme that emerges from this precedent is the idea of reimagining infrastructure. The design transforms the site into a new kind of public ground that redirects attention to human experience. Its success demonstrates that repairing a scar in the urban fabric can create a place that feels meaningful and familiar to the people who use it. The study of this precedent clarifies how the issues with urban renewal can be addressed through design, structural ingenuity, and programs formed by everyday human needs.

Paley Park



Figure 9: Paley Park (Credit: Paleypark.org)

Paley Park in Manhattan demonstrates how a small urban space can hold remarkable social value. Built on the footprint of a townhouse removed during urban renewal, the park creates a quiet, intimate environment in one of the city's busiest areas. Writers on modern landscape architecture commonly note Paley Park as a model of micro-scale urban design¹⁷. A canopy of honey locust trees creates shading. A high waterfall masks city noise and generates a micro-sensory experience within the site. Movable chairs allow visitors to claim their own space, cultivating a sense of personal ownership and comfort. The open street edge invites passersby to drift into the park naturally, without gates or thresholds.



Figure 10: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

¹⁷ Nan Fang, "Research on the Exploration of Micro-Space under Urban Renewal: Take Paley Park in the United States as an Example," *Learning & Education* 9, no. 3 (2020): 76–77.

The themes embodied in Paley Park resonate closely with the needs of the site of this thesis. The Highway to Nowhere has produced not only large-scale fragmentation but also smaller pockets of unused/ vacant gaps in the urban fabric. These residual sites can become important parts of an overall restoration strategy if treated with the same attention to human scale and sensory atmosphere that defines Paley Park. In a neighborhood where displacement and highway presence have created long-lasting psychological burdens, the creation of calm, welcoming micro-spaces can help rebuild trust within the broader community.

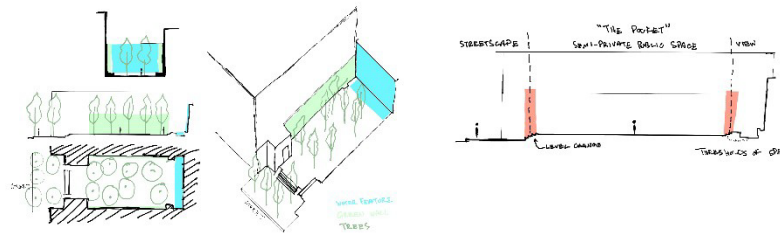


Figure 11: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Paley Park also illustrates how materials and sensory signals can shape emotional experience. The sound of the waterfall produces a protective acoustic environment that promotes relaxation. The presence of vegetation softens the hard edges of the surrounding city. These lessons are essential for transforming the expressway, which is currently dominated by the harsh textures and sounds of concrete, underpasses, as well as the emphasis on cars. The key takeaway from studying Paley Park is an appreciation for how small-scale interventions can complement larger urban transformations. It confirms that urban repair must occur at multiple scales and that pockets of quiet refuge are vital elements of a greater civic landscape.

The Menil Collection



Figure 12: The Menil Collection (Credit: Menil.org)

The Menil Collection in Houston demonstrates how a cultural institution can settle comfortably into a residential neighborhood. Renzo Piano's design adopts a low horizontal profile that is consistent with the scale of nearby houses. The museum sits among lawns and mature trees, creating a gentle transition between public and private realms.

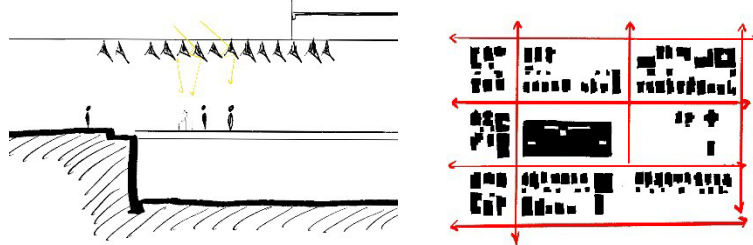


Figure 13: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Research often highlights the museum's innovative roof structure, composed of delicate ferrocement leaves that diffuse daylight throughout the galleries¹⁸. The result is a luminous yet gentle interior environment that focuses on visitors' thermal comfort. Circulation is organized around a central spine that connects galleries to courtyards, creating long visual axes that foster a sense of continuity and calm. In the

¹⁸ "The Menil Collection (1982–1986), Houston, USA," *Architecture History*

Context of this thesis, the significance of the Menil Collection resides in its ability to create a civic building that feels public and neighborly. The Highway to Nowhere requires new programs that engage the community, but these interventions must be sensitive to the residential fabric that borders the site. The Menil Collection demonstrates how scale, landscape, and materiality can ensure that a public institution does not overwhelm its context but instead becomes part of its everyday life.

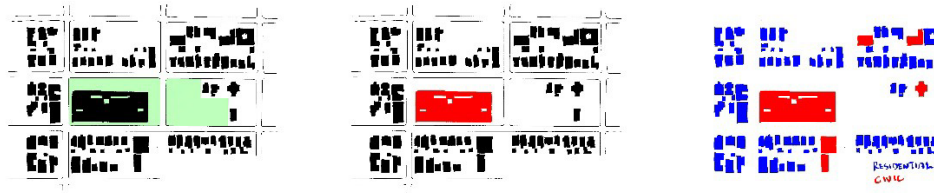


Figure 14: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Another important aspect of the museum is its campus-like organization. The Menil Collection is complemented by green spaces, satellite buildings, and pedestrian paths that form a network of public places at a neighborhood scale. This arrangement fosters a gradual transition from more intimate residential zones to spaces for public gathering, learning, and cultural activity. A similar gradient could be essential along the Route 40 corridor, enabling gentle transitions that restore the sense of neighborhood continuity disrupted by the highway. After analyzing the Menil Collection, there is a clear understanding of how cultural and public buildings can anchor community life while accounting for the scale and identity of the surrounding neighborhood.

NEMO Science Museum



Figure 15: NEMO Science Museum (Credit: Renzo Piano Building Workshop)

The NEMO Science Museum in Amsterdam occupies a strategic position at the intersection of infrastructure, waterfront, and post-industrial redevelopment. Also designed by Renzo Piano, the building meets the edge of the waterfront in a form that evokes a ship docked at the water. This symbolic reference ties the museum to Amsterdam's maritime history while situating it within the larger story of the city's redevelopment of its industrial waterfront.

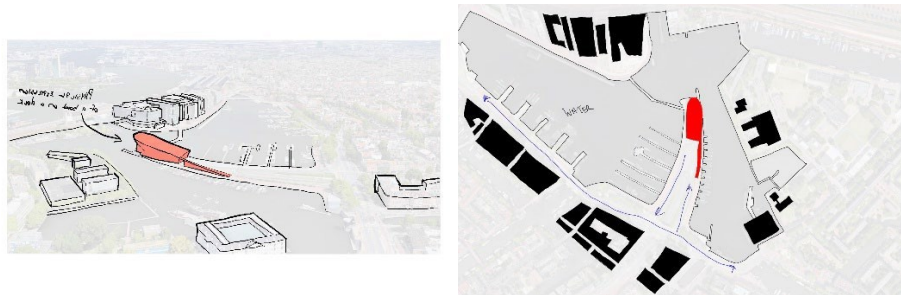


Figure 16: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

One of the museum's key elements is its occupiable roof. This stepped terrace serves as a public plaza that offers panoramic views of the city¹⁹. The ascent to the

¹⁹ Muhammad Hegazy Ali, "Contemporary Iconic Architecture in Amsterdam: Bilbao Effect Hunting the City," *International Journal of Research in Engineering and Social Sciences* 6 (2016): 19–34.

roof is a gentle promenade that brings visitors from the urban ground plane to an elevated civic platform. In doing so, the building creates a new vertical layer of public space that connects people to the waterfront and to one another. The museum's interior circulation is equally dynamic. The galleries are organized around sequences that encourage discovery and interaction. This integration of learning, play, and movement provides a multi-layered experience.

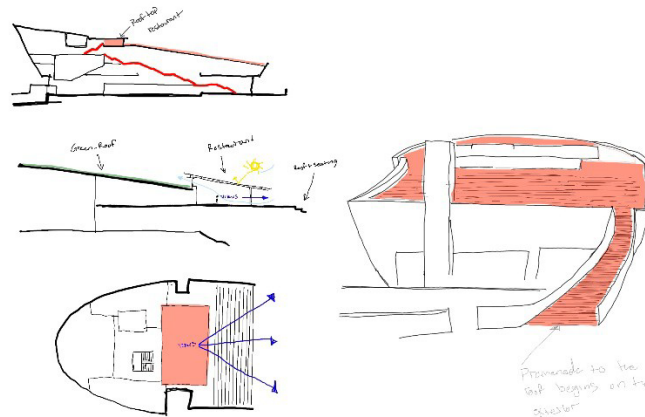


Figure 17: Diagrams (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

This precedent provides key takeaways for the Highway site in Baltimore. The highway trench creates significant elevation changes that could be utilized to develop outlooks, terraces, and new forms of public promenade. Instead of treating the trench as a barrier, design could form new public platforms that reconnect surrounding streets and offer new perspectives on the city. It demonstrates how a structure can emerge from complex topography, creating a sequence of spaces that promote civic participation and cultural identity. After analyzing this museum, there is a clear understanding of how architecture can transform industrial or infrastructural edges

into civic assets. It provides strategies for using elevation, form, and public roofscapes to reconnect neighborhoods and activate underused or overlooked urban sites.

Conclusion

The five precedents examined in this chapter offer a layered set of lessons that collectively inform the design approach for the Highway to Nowhere corridor. Each precedent engages with a different scale of intervention, yet several shared themes emerge. Movement appears as a central tool for reconnection. Through the Carpenter Center's diagonal ramp, NEMO's sloping roof terrace, or the Menil Collection's continuous spine, movement becomes a spatial device that re-establishes connection across contexts. Human-centered design also appears across all five cases. Klyde Warren Park and Paley Park demonstrate how comfort, vegetation, light, and sensory experience shape the emotional quality of public space. Contextual sensitivity is a third shared theme, exemplified by the Menil Collection's incorporation within a residential neighborhood and NEMO's engagement with industrial and maritime history.

These themes establish a multi-scalar approach for the thesis. Infrastructural reconnection can be paired with the creation of intimate spaces. Cultural or educational programs can be integrated in ways that respect neighborhood identity. The promenade can guide users through a renewed landscape that opens opportunities for new forms of collective experience. Together, the precedents provide a conceptual and methodological foundation for transforming the West Baltimore highway into a sequence of civic spaces and connective landscapes that restore continuity and support

public life. They provide a foundation for reimagining a renewed West Baltimore corridor that supports continuity, public life, and a gradual rebuilding of community connections across a place once divided by the highway.

Chapter 5: Zones and the Program

Program Abstract

The program of this thesis emerges from the urgent need to heal the physical and social divisions created by Baltimore's Highway to Nowhere. Once a thriving corridor of African American neighborhoods, the site now functions as a symbol of displacement, interrupted movement, and generational loss. The proposed intervention, a community park and Youth Arts and Education Center, seeks to transform this urban scar into a common place for memory, creativity, and community rebuilding. The project uses architecture, urban design, and landscape design as tools to revitalize shared space, mend fractured connections, and empower young residents who will become the community's future leaders. Fundamental to this program is the belief that healing must begin with the youth, whose opportunities, voices, and cultural participation will shape the long-term vitality of West Baltimore.

This program contributes to architectural discourse by reframing urban design as a process of social and generational reconstruction. The park and education center grow from the thesis question by converting ideas of reclamation, belonging, and civic agency into built form. The intervention reconnects divided neighborhoods and promotes new forms of communal gathering through gardens, learning spaces, studios,

and performance areas. Through this combination of public landscape and youth-centered programming, the project demonstrates how architecture can participate in healing historical trauma and convert an infrastructural void into a living framework that supports resilience, cultural continuity, and the community's future.

Program Zones

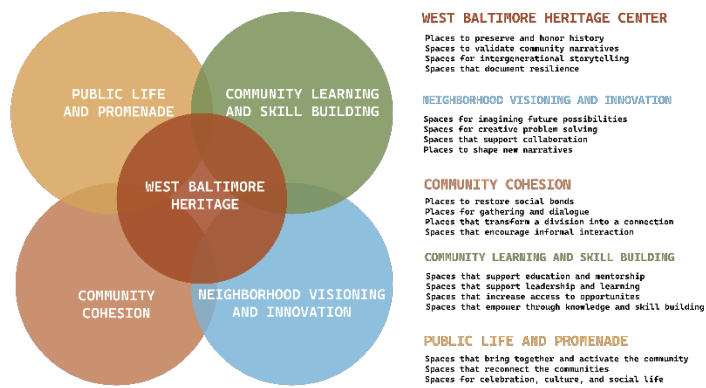


Figure 18: Program Zone Diagram (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The program zones shape the Youth Arts and Education Center into a place where history, creativity, and public life come together with purpose. They establish an architectural language that fuses memory, learning, imagination, healing, and community life into a unified idea. Each zone responds to the ongoing need to reclaim the space taken from the neighborhood during the construction of the highway, turning loss into a foundation for renewal. Through my thinking I developed these 5 program zones, with 4 zones overlapping in order to create West Baltimore Heritage.

West Baltimore Heritage



Figure 19: Sketching envisioning program spaces (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The West Baltimore Heritage Zone anchors the project in the lived history of West Baltimore. The Highway to Nowhere cut through established neighborhoods and stripped away homes, stories, and the everyday rhythms that once held the area together. In response, this zone becomes a quiet counterpoint. It houses archival rooms, a community gallery, a research and reading space, and an outdoor courtyard where visitors can pause to take in the site's history.

Youth can gain access to documents, images, and narratives that reveal how the corridor was shaped, who was displaced, and how the community carried its identity on despite the damage. The aim is to give young people a sense of identity within the community. By learning about the past through objects and stories, they begin to understand their own place in the neighborhood's wider arc.

Neighborhood Visioning and Innovation



Figure 20: Sketching envisioning program spaces (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The neighborhood visioning and innovation zone forms the building's educational core. Flexible classrooms, computer labs, and study lounges give youth room to explore ideas across design, performance, engineering, technology, and the arts. The word “agency” is important in this context because it implies a change from passive learning to the active shaping of individual and collective futures.

This part of the program creates opportunities that many young people in the neighborhood may not have encountered before. It centers mentorship, experimentation, and exposure to fields where representation has long been unequal. The rooms are open and adaptable, motivating students to test ideas, work together with peers, and move between hands-on making and independent study. The energy of this zone pushes the project beyond a static educational model and toward a place where curiosity and skill-building guide the daily experience.

Primary Spaces:

- offices
- Computer rooms
- Conference rooms
- Theater

Community Cohesion



Figure 21: Sketching envisioning program spaces (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The community cohesion zone addresses the physical divide created by the highway construction. Elevated pathways over the highway, a plaza/park, and outdoor terraces turn this highway corridor into a destination worth visiting. This zone opens up new ways to circulate through and gather on the site. Movement becomes a key experience on the site, with key views aligning both neighborhoods.

By restoring these connections, the zone reshapes how the community interacts with the corridor and with each other.

Primary Spaces:

- Lobby/ Welcome Spaces

Community Learning and Skill Building



Figure 22: Sketching envisioning program spaces (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The community learning and skill building zone brings creation, collaboration, and uplifting into view. Art studios, workrooms, critique spaces, and community rooms are arranged to make this process visible and easily accessible. Youth can see each other's work, share ideas, and learn how creative expression can extend into civic conversations. This zone merges personal development with public engagement, giving young people room to grow both as makers and as contributors to community dialogue.

Lounges and outdoor mural areas add another layer of involvement, offering places where informal exchanges or public artwork can emerge. As youth take ownership of their projects, they also build confidence in their ability to lead, advocate, and shape their environment. Additionally, a sense of identity can be brought back through muraling as a way to tell a story.

Primary Spaces:

- Art Studio
- Dance Studio
- Computer Labs
- Multi-purpose rooms

Public Life and Promenade



Figure 23: Sketching envisioning program spaces (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The Experience Zone brings people together through performance, events, and celebration. Performance lawns and flexible plazas create settings for concerts, exhibitions, festivals, and community gatherings. These spaces highlight the role of shared experience in creating a collective memory. Indoor and outdoor areas work in tandem, so the center remains active year-round. Performances can spill from the auditorium into the plaza, and neighborhood events can unfold across the lawn. This zone turns the site into a cultural anchor where artistic expression, joy, and gathering set the atmosphere.

Primary Spaces:

- Courtyard
- Park

Tabular Format

Community Cohesion	
Space Name	Area (SF)
Lobby/ Welcome Space	660

Neighborhood Visioning and Innovation	
Space Name	Area (SF)
Gym	790
Theater + Backstage	550
Theater Foyer	800
Offices x6	1450
Conference Rooms	1300

Community Learning and Skill Building	
Space Name	Area (SF)
Classrooms x6	800
Art Studio	2800
Dance Studio	2600
Computer Lab	1100
Multi-Purpose Room/ Lounge	3000

Public Life and Promenade	
Space Name	Area (SF)
Courtyard	12, 000
Park	~50,000

Youth Education Center	
Space Name	Area (SF)
Lobby/ Welcome Space	2,684sf
Gym	7,267sf
Theater + Backstage	~8,500sf
Theater Foyer	~2,500sf
Offices x6	~1,450
Classroom x6	715sf
Staff Lounge	660sf
Multi-Purpose Room/ Lounge	~3,000sf
Art studio	~ 1,800sf
Conference rooms x2	~ 1,300sf
Dance Studio	~ 1,800sf
Computer Lab	~ 1,800sf
Restrooms x6	~ 2,400sf
Courtyard	~ 12,000sf
Circulation	~ 7,000sf
B.O.H. Services	~ 10,000sf
Gym Mezzanine	~ 1,400sf
Total	~69,000sf
Park	~ 50,000sf

Figure 24: Table of varying Programs

Reverse Engineered Program Justification

Klyde Warren Park was chosen as the primary project to reverse-engineer because it addresses a condition that closely resembles the Highway to Nowhere. The park reclaims destroyed land, rebuilds continuity, and turns a void into a civic asset. Its success lies in transforming an infrastructural wound into a connective surface where public life, movement, and daily routines can unfold without interruption. That clarity of purpose is consistent with the ambitions of this thesis, making the Dallas park project the most instructive reference for designing the program, circulation, and spatial logic of the Youth Arts and Education Center.

Klyde Warren Park's elevated platform becomes a new plane of activity that sits above the freeway without denying its presence. The design redirects pedestrian movement across what once functioned as a divide and establishes a continuous landscape that draws people from both sides of the city. This strategy directly informs the Reconnection Zone, where the elevated platform and park system can literally fill in the void created by the highway trench in West Baltimore. The Dallas example shows how this condition can successfully serve as a fix for both urban renewal and a civic stage. This gives the thesis a valuable blueprint for reimagining mobility and public space.

The park also demonstrates how diverse programming enriches its life. Lawns, performance spaces, food stands, gardens, and shaded seating areas support everything from everyday relaxation to major events. This mix helps shape the Experience Zone, where plazas and open lawns create room for performances and community gatherings. The Dallas precedent points out the relevance of a flexible landscape capable of hosting both informal and organized activities, and that idea threads through the entire thesis program. By studying how Klyde Warren Park reclaims a highway through circulation, landscape, and layered public life, the project gains a grounded model for transforming the Highway to Nowhere into a pathway to somewhere.

Written Summary

The Youth Arts and Education Center grows directly from the research that informs this thesis, including the histories and present conditions of Harlem Park, Franklin Square, and Poppleton. These neighborhoods share a long history of

disinvestment and limited opportunity. Many residents complete high school without continuing their education, and some never reach graduation. This cycle limits access to secure jobs, lowers long-term earning potential, and contributes to the low homeownership rate, further weakening the area's economic vitality. The need for a place that supports learning, confidence, community relationships, and long-term investment became clear throughout the neighborhood research. The program responds to this reality by creating a center where young people can build skills, develop leadership, and envision futures beyond the boundaries imposed by history and policy.

Klyde Warren Park provides the clearest model for this revitalization. The Dallas Park demonstrates how land divided by highway infrastructure can become a new surface for public life. Adding a platform over the freeway creates continuity where a void formerly defined the city. Its lawns, plazas, pathways, and activity zones demonstrate how layered programming can bring people together throughout the day and year. This approach informs the structure of the Youth Arts and Education Center by showing how a similar platform condition can restore movement, create comfort, and introduce a mix of public and community-centered spaces. The Dallas example confirms that gaps in the urban fabric can be addressed through design that reconnects neighborhoods and invites people into shared experience.

The program zones translate these lessons into a set of architectural and landscape components adapted to West Baltimore. The West Baltimore Heritage Center and Plaza respond to the corridor's history by offering a space where stories are archived and neighborhood memory can be directly engaged by young people and

longtime residents. Neighborhood visioning and innovation give youth the tools to imagine and plan for futures that extend beyond the limits imposed by earlier displacement. The community spine reclaims the severed land by reconnecting Harlem Park, Franklin Square, and Poppleton with clear, inviting routes that encourage daily movement across the site. Community learning and skill-building spaces support growth, collaboration, and confidence through making, discussion, and shared production. Public life and promenade areas open the site to events, performances, and gatherings that strengthen social ties and create reasons for people to return.

These zones combine to form a well-organized program informed by research, community needs, and precedent insight. They reconnect neighborhoods that have long been separated, they support youth whose futures have been limited by structural barriers, and they create spaces that promote long-term investment through increased activity and renewed neighborhood pride. By transforming the highway trench into a place of learning, memory, and daily life, the Youth Arts and Education Center lays the basis for a corridor that can heal, grow, and serve as a lasting civic anchor for West Baltimore's next chapter.

Chapter 6: Site Selection and Analysis

Introduction

This thesis begins with the site itself and the importance of place as the foundation for architectural investigation. Approached as an interdisciplinary study rooted in spatial, historical, cultural and experimental research, this procedure seeks to understand not only the physical characteristics of the highway corridor, but additionally the broader social and urban forces that have formed it over time. The Highway to Nowhere in Baltimore is studied as a result of urban renewal policies, incomplete infrastructure planning and systemic displacement that disrupted long-standing community networks. Through research, site observation, mapping and historical analysis this investigation shows how the corridor operates as a physical and social landscape deeply connected to memory and lived experience.

Site Positioning and Selection Criteria



Figure 25: The 3 Neighborhoods (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The selected site is located at the intersection of three historically interconnected West Baltimore neighborhoods: Harlem Park, Franklin Square and Poppleton. Each neighborhood has a particular cultural identity and history, yet all have been formed by decades of urban disinvestment and the persistent impacts of the Highway to Nowhere. Harlem Park represents the first neighborhood directly affected by the highway corridor, while Franklin Square and Poppleton extend the larger urban conditions surrounding the site, with portions of Poppleton continuing to undergo redevelopment today. Together these neighborhoods establish the site as an important point of intersection between historical and contemporary conditions, considering it an appropriate location for investigating how architecture and urban design can address fragmentation, reconnect communities and support future neighborhood revitalization.

Site Analysis

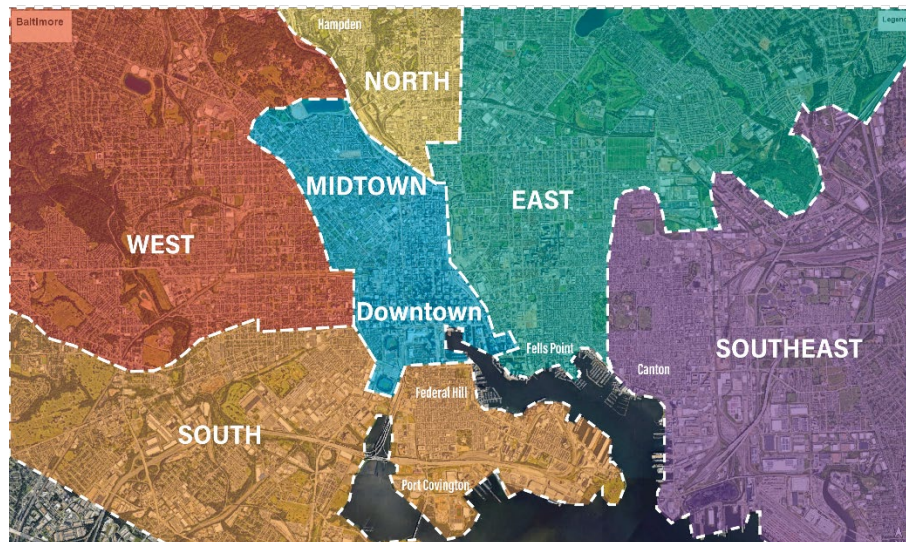


Figure 26: Baltimore City larger neighborhoods (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

When examining the site, it is important to first zoom out to understand Baltimore City at a larger urban scale. Across many parts of the city, there are prominent neighborhoods and districts that actively contribute to the city's economic, cultural, and social identity. South Baltimore includes areas such as the Peninsula and Federal Hill; Southeast Baltimore is anchored by Canton; East Baltimore includes Fells Point; and North Baltimore is shaped by neighborhoods like Hampden and the Johns Hopkins campus, while Downtown serves as the city's primary business district. In contrast, West Baltimore lacks the same level of concentrated economic and social investment, despite its cultural history and strong neighborhood identity. This condition is largely the result of decades of systemic disinvestment, compounded by the destruction of homes, businesses, and community networks caused by the construction of the highway to Nowhere. As a result, the site offers an opportunity to imagine a more walkable, inhabitable urban environment that reconnects neighborhoods and restores civic and economic vitality that has long been absent from this portion of the city.

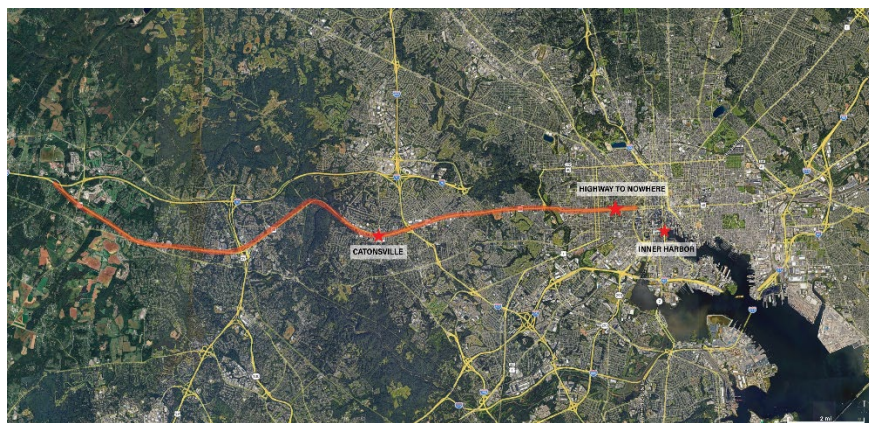


Figure 27: Map showing where the highway leads (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Another important thing to consider is that although commonly referred to as the “Highway to Nowhere,” the corridor remains an important regional infrastructure asset in Baltimore City. The highway provides a direct connection to Catonsville and links back into the larger I-70 corridor, making it a significant transportation route despite its incomplete condition. Because of this, the thesis does not propose removing the highway entirely but instead explores how new architectural and urban interventions can coexist with the infrastructure while repairing the social and spatial damage it has caused in surrounding communities.



Figure 28: Program Diagram (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The site's surrounding programmatic conditions are primarily residential, with rowhomes forming the dominant urban fabric throughout the adjacent neighborhoods. However, many of the row homes along the corridor are in a visible state of decay, with only a limited number appearing to remain fully occupiable. Scattered

throughout the corridor are several churches, schools in varying states of disrepair, and small corner stores, many of which also appear underutilized or abandoned. Apartment buildings are present within the area as well, with additional residential development anticipated in future redevelopment efforts. Together, these conditions reveal a neighborhood fabric that remains active and inhabited, while also reflecting the uneven patterns of investment and decline that characterize much of West Baltimore.

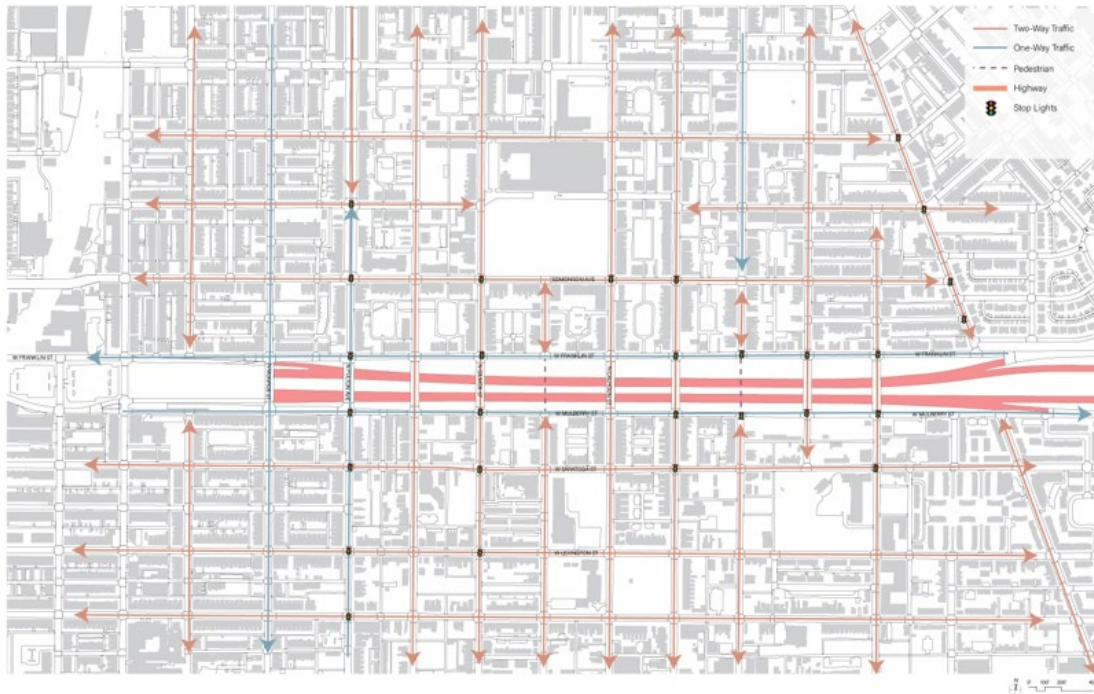


Figure 29: Circulation Diagram (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The circulation patterns surrounding the site are heavily oriented around vehicular movement, particularly along Franklin Street and Mulberry Street, which function as one-way traffic corridors moving in opposite directions just outside of the highway. Franklin Street carries westbound traffic, while Mulberry Street carries eastbound traffic. Most of the north-south streets intersecting the site remain two-way

streets, helping maintain some degree of neighborhood connectivity despite the large infrastructural divide. The site also includes two pedestrian bridges spanning the highway trench, though observations during site visits suggested limited pedestrian use, highlighting the continued challenges of walkability and social connectivity across the corridor.



Figure 30: Green Spaces Diagram (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The surrounding neighborhoods contain several green spaces, most notably within Harlem Park, where a series of interior block parks are embedded behind the rowhouse fabric. These smaller community green spaces contribute to the neighborhood's residential character while providing localized gathering and recreation areas. In addition to these spaces, the highway corridor itself features large areas of undeveloped land and green space along the infrastructure. While much of this space currently lacks strong programming or activation, it offers opportunities for

future public landscape interventions that can reconnect with the surrounding communities.

Through an in-depth investigation of the histories and demographics of Harlem Park, Franklin Square and Poppleton, several common conditions appeared across all three neighborhoods. Each community is predominantly African American, low-income, and continues to experience enduring effects of disinvestment and urban renewal. Research also revealed that nearly one-third of the population in these neighborhoods is under 18 years old, while homeownership rates and higher education attainment remain significantly low. Together, these conditions stressed the importance of first addressing the basic needs of the community through architecture and program development.

Conclusion

As a result of this research, three building typologies were identified as primary components of the proposed master plan: a youth education center, a community library, and a community museum. The youth education center addresses the structural barriers that limit young people's access to opportunities, mentorship, and creative career development. In a neighborhood with few stable youth-oriented resources due to decades of disinvestment, the building aims to provide a safe, helpful environment. It promotes creativity, confidence, and self-growth. The neighborhood library supports the area's educational needs. It offers accessible study space, internet access, books, and resources, so students do not need to leave the neighborhood. The community museum is dedicated to honoring and celebrating West Baltimore's deep African American heritage. It focuses on histories connected to

working-class communities, displacement, and the destruction caused by urban renewal. By documenting stories that were historically overlooked or erased, the museum operates as a space of remembrance and a catalyst for neighborhood pride. It also encourages intergenerational storytelling. Collectively, these buildings serve as new civic anchors for West Baltimore. They replace lost spaces and institutions while laying a stronger foundation for future community life.

Chapter 7: Discovery Phase

Introduction

This chapter signifies the transition of the thesis from research and analysis to architectural exploration and design development. It documents a series of early conceptual studies directly informed by the conceptual framework, literature review, precedent studies, program development and site analysis established in previous chapters. These investigations are presented as iterative and exploratory, serving as a process of testing ideas, spatial relationships and design strategies, that begin to translate research into architectural form.

Conceptual Testing of Thesis Schemes

Scheme 1: Site Responsive



Figure 31: Conceptual testing Scheme 1 (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Scheme 1 explores a site-responsive design approach shaped directly by the existing urban conditions and surrounding neighborhood context. A key strategy

within this scheme was preserving the existing pedestrian bridge as a central axis and circulation path running through the site, allowing the project to build upon an already established connection across the highway trench. The design focuses on recreating and redefining the urban edge by placing buildings that frame the site's perimeter, reinforcing the surrounding street wall, and the neighborhood's spatial character. This organizational strategy leaves a large open park space at the center of the site, creating a shared public gathering space that supports reconnection, visibility, and community activity.

Scheme 2: Program Responsive



Figure 32: Conceptual testing Scheme 2 (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Scheme 2 explores a program-responsive design approach in which the organization of the program zones directly informs the massing and overall site intervention. Unlike the first scheme, this approach shifts the buildings to line the central pedestrian path, creating a tighter streetscape condition inspired by the spatial qualities of European medieval urbanism. This arrangement strengthens the pedestrian experience by framing movement through the site with active building

edges and public gathering spaces. The scheme also pays closer attention to adjacencies with surrounding cultural institutions by relocating the youth center and community center closer to the existing church, reinforcing opportunities for shared community engagement and support. In addition, this scheme responds to the surrounding neighborhood fabric through a more compact urban form while also beginning to address practical site considerations such as parking and circulation.

Scheme 3: Reverse Engineering



Figure 33: Conceptual testing Scheme 3 (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Scheme 3 explores a large-scale urban design approach through the reverse engineering of Klyde Warren Park and the application of its programmatic strategies to the “Highway to Nowhere” site. This scheme examines how integrating recreation, cultural programming, public gathering spaces, and pedestrian connectivity within Klyde Warren Park can inform a similar intervention in West Baltimore. Unlike previous schemes, this proposal expands the project across three blocks rather than two, enabling a broader network of civic spaces, landscape interventions, and mixed-use elements. Through this expansion, the scheme explores how a larger

infrastructural deck and interconnected public spaces could create stronger neighborhood connections while establishing a more active and continuous urban environment across the site.

Conclusion: Direction of the Thesis

Through these conceptual explorations, the thesis question is actively tested through architectural strategies focused on reconnection, community empowerment, and the repair of urban fragmentation caused by the “Highway to Nowhere.” Among the three schemes, the conceptual ideas presented in Schemes 1 and 2 are most closely aligned with the thesis's overall goals, given their stronger focus on urban edge conditions, pedestrian experience, community adjacency, and public space integration. While each scheme revealed valuable insights, further exploration is still needed, particularly regarding different areas of the site and the optimal placement of the project’s primary civic building. These findings will guide the next phase of design development and refinement as the thesis moves toward a more resolved architectural proposal.

Chapter 8: Thesis Design Solution

The Proposed Master Plan

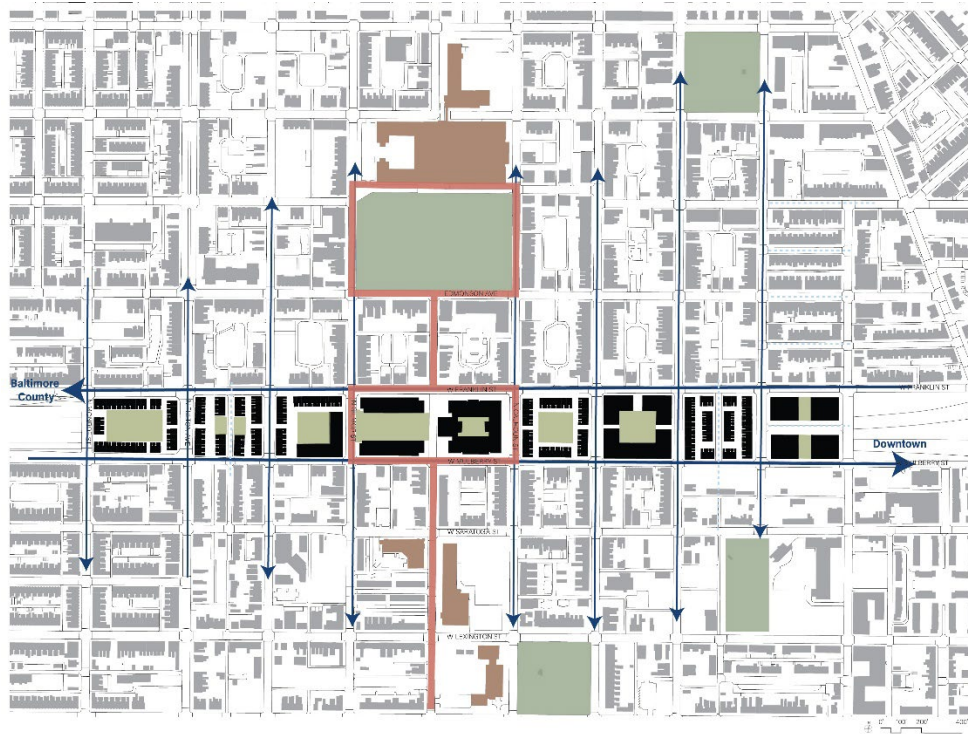


Figure 34: Parti for the master plan proposal (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The proposed master plan emerged through the development of the program zones established earlier in the thesis and serves as the primary urban design response to the urban conditions created by the “Highway to Nowhere.” Instead of removing the highway entirely, this proposal constructs a new platform over the existing highway, allowing it to continue functioning underground while reclaiming the ground plane for the community above. The overall parti of the master plan is centered on stitching the surrounding neighborhoods back together to repair the physical and social scars left in the city. At the center of the proposal is a strong civic anchor composed of the youth center, library, and community museum. These civic programs serve as the heart of development, creating a major public destination that

reconnects neighborhoods both physically and socially. The placement of this civic core establishes strong north-south connections to nearby schools, parks, and residential areas while also tying the development together east and west across the highway divide.

Figure 35: Proposed Master Plan (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

This master plan proposal introduces a mix of housing and civic typologies that work together to support long-term community growth and revitalization. The overall development includes new rowhomes, apartment buildings, and mixed-use structures that activate the site while responding to the surrounding urban fabric. To prevent the area from experiencing another cycle of rapid decline, the project is envisioned as a phased development strategy. The first phase focuses primarily on

establishing the civic anchor, with limited housing, allowing the surrounding neighborhoods time to adapt and grow alongside the development. This phase prioritizes community resources and public space before introducing large-scale development. The second phase expands the residential fabric by introducing additional rowhomes, bringing back a familiar housing typology that helps restitch West Baltimore's urban fabric. The final phase introduces mixed-use and apartment buildings, bringing new economic activity and long-term investment to the area. This final layer of development represents a new identity for the corridor while remaining grounded in the existing character and needs of the surrounding communities.

The BeMORE Youth Center



Figure 36: Site Plan (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

After developing the overall master plan, the design investigation shifted to the BeMORE Youth Center. This building serves as the central civic anchor of the proposal. The overall site and building parti are organized around a major public park.

This park aligns directly with the building's key emphasized spaces. This strategy creates a continuous dialogue between architecture and landscape, uniting open space and built form into one cohesive experience. Within the site plan, conceptual layouts for the library to the south and the museum to the north were developed. These helped clarify how the civic composition could function across the site. The forms and organization of these buildings drew inspiration from the push-and-pull conditions created by the backsides of Baltimore rowhomes. This translates familiar urban relationships into a new civic framework. Although still conceptual, the placement of these buildings helped ensure realistic proportions and massing across the development, both architecturally and urbanistically. The site spans two blocks and clearly distinguishes public and private spaces. It does so through the arrangement of an open civic park and a secure internal courtyard dedicated to the youth center children and staff.



Figure 37: Approach to the site perspective (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Visitors can approach the site from either the north or the south, especially from nearby schools and neighborhoods. They enter the center of the development via a primary pedestrian path that cuts through the site. This path reinforces the ideas of linkage and movement. It guides visitors straight into the heart of the civic space. Upon arrival, visitors are greeted by a large, transparent gymnasium volume. This acts as a visual signal for the youth center. It draws people into the building and expresses activity, openness, and public participation from the exterior.

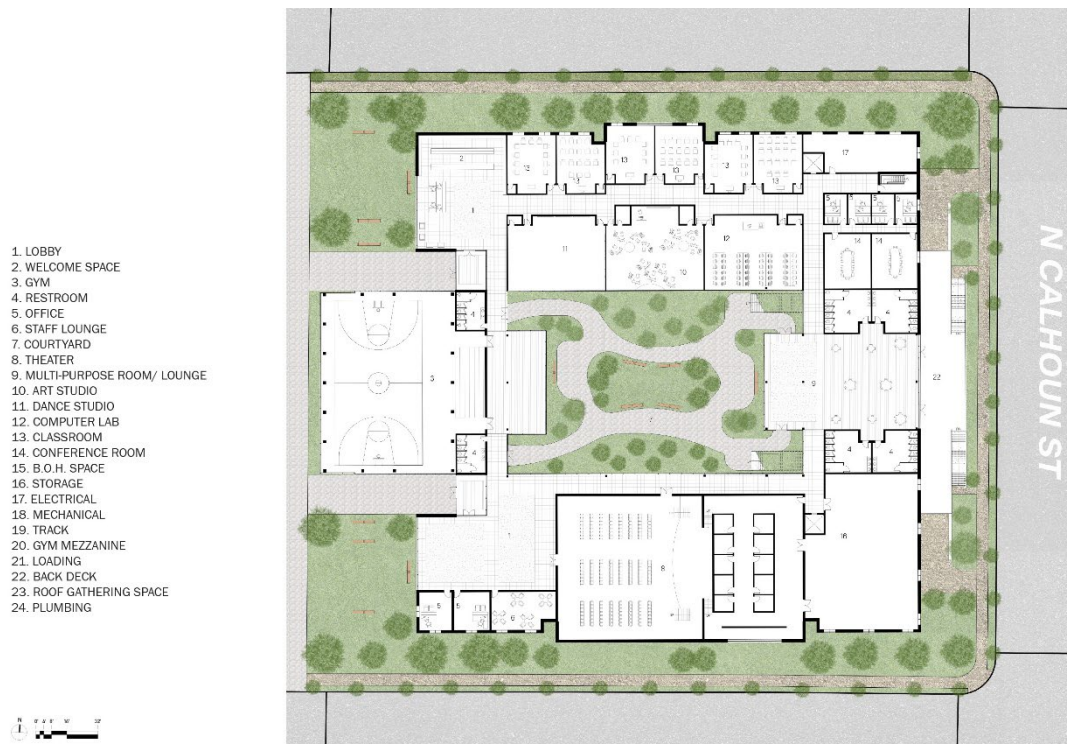


Figure 38: Ground Floor Plan (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The layout of the BeMORE Youth Center is organized in a clear, straightforward manner, centered on circulation and program accessibility. At the front of the building are two primary lobbies and welcome spaces that help organize the center's major functions. One serves as the main entrance aligned with the classroom

and educational spaces, while the second operates as a foyer for the theater/performance areas. Anchoring the front of the building is the gymnasium volume, which becomes a major visual and programmatic focal point within the overall design. Aligned with the gym is the central courtyard and lounge space that extends toward the rear deck overlooking the city. This elevated deck creates an opportunity for visitors to visually reconnect with West Baltimore while also strengthening east-west connectivity across the site. The overall organization and massing of the youth center are inspired by the push-and-pull spatial qualities found along the backsides of Baltimore rowhomes, translating familiar urban conditions into the building's architectural language.



Figure 39: The Courtyard Perspective (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

At the center of the building is a secure internal courtyard designed specifically for the youth using the facility. Unlike the larger public park spaces within the master plan, this courtyard provides a more controlled environment for recreation,

gathering, and outdoor learning. The surrounding building volumes frame the courtyard, providing a sense of protection while still allowing natural light and visibility throughout the interior spaces. The courtyard ultimately serves as the social heart of the youth center while allowing access to the roofscape.

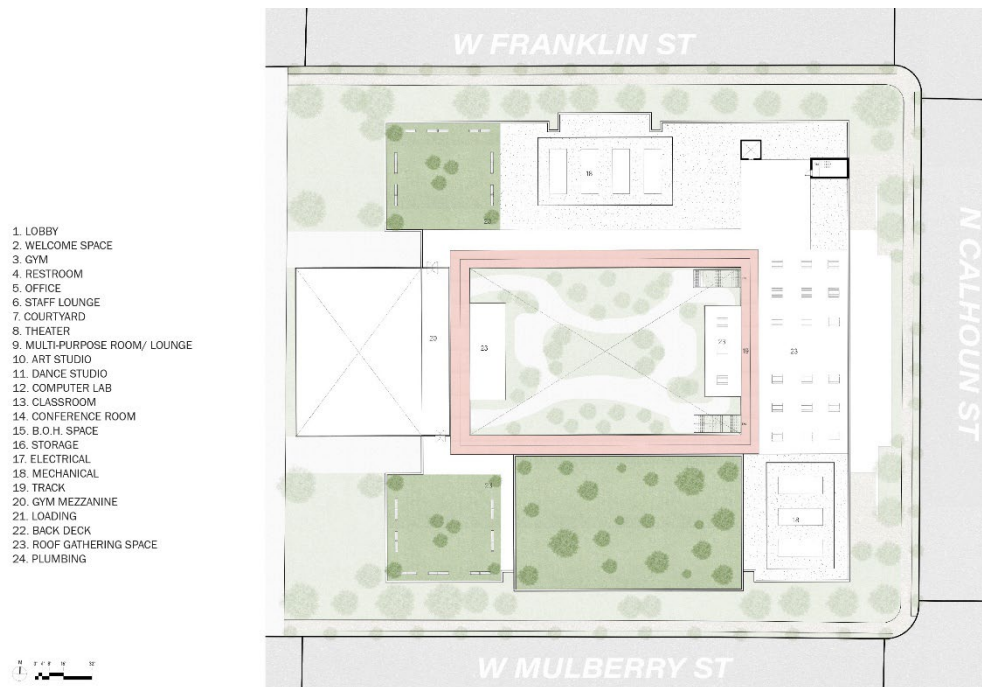


Figure 40: Roof Plan (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The roof of the BeMORE Youth Center is activated through a variety of public and recreational spaces that extend the building's life beyond its interior program. The roof includes green spaces, gathering areas, and a running track that encourage activity, interaction, and wellness for both youth and members of the surrounding community. Additionally, a mezzanine space allows visitors to view the gymnasium from a different perspective, strengthening visual connections among the building's program elements. While the roof accommodates important mechanical systems for the facility, these elements are concealed behind screened enclosures in order to

maintain the public character of the space. This elevated park becomes a place where people from surrounding communities can gather freely with friends and family while reconnecting with the city around them.

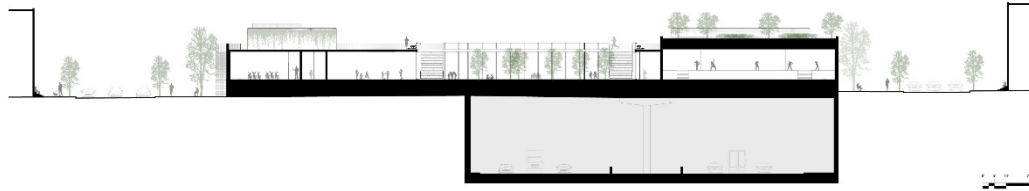


Figure 41: Cross-section (Credit: Ty'Jae English)



Figure 42: Site Section (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Due to the drastic change in the site topography, a basement level was introduced in order to accommodate loading and service access for the building. This lower level also strengthens connectivity by capturing movement along the north and south directions of Calhoun Street. As seen in the developed street section, the proposal introduces additional greenery along the building edge rather than allowing the structure to directly meet the sidewalk, creating a softer, more pedestrian-friendly condition than the typical urban edge found throughout much of West Baltimore.

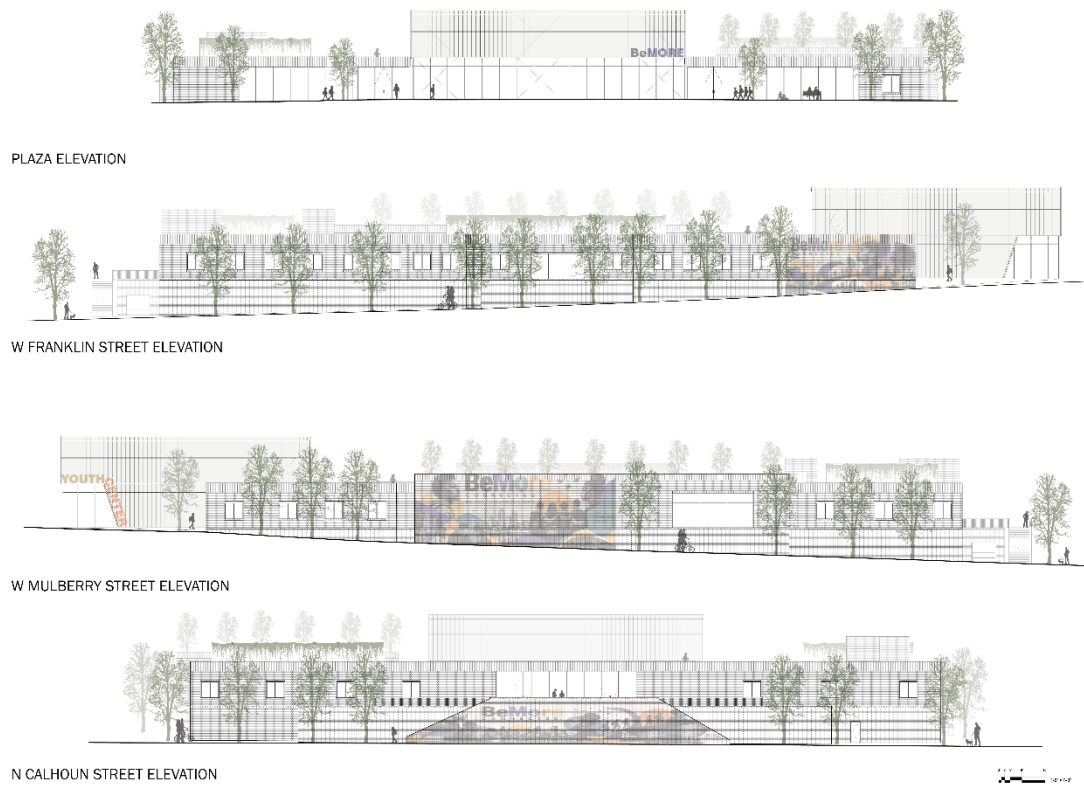


Figure 43: Elevations (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

The building elevations reflect two distinct architectural responses, each shaped by its relationship to the surrounding site conditions. The west elevation, which faces the primary plaza and pedestrian path, takes on a much more transparent, open character to strengthen the visual and physical connection between the park, the public circulation spaces, and the building itself. In contrast, the north, east, and south facades respond more directly to the surrounding neighborhood context through brick materiality and punched window openings that reference the architectural language of Baltimore rowhomes and institutional buildings. The gymnasium volume becomes a major focal point in the composition through transparent glazing combined with channel glass, further emphasizing it as the anchor of the youth center. Due to the

dramatic topographic changes across the site, portions of the north, east, and south elevations result in large blank wall conditions. This design embraces Baltimore's strong mural culture by incorporating large-scale public artwork along the street edges. These murals help bring a sense of cultural identity, expression, and community representation to the site while activating the pedestrian experience around the building.



Figure 44: Perspective looking at the building from the park (Credit: Ty'Jae English)

Baltimore is a city where two contrasting perspectives often exist simultaneously: those who deeply love the city and those who feel disconnected from it and aspire to leave. This thesis ultimately seeks to increase the number of people who feel pride and hope for Baltimore through architecture, urban design, and architectural design decisions. At the center of this proposal, the BeMORE Youth Center serves as a safe space dedicated to empowering young minds and providing opportunities for creativity, education, mentorship, and growth. Paired with the youth

center is a public park that reclaims land once lost to urban renewal and transforms it into a space for gathering, recreation, and community interaction. Together, the landscape and architecture create an environment where residents of West Baltimore can begin to form new memories, strengthen community bonds, and develop a renewed sense of belonging within the city.

Bibliography

Archer, Deborah N. "Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities." *Iowa Law Review*. 106, no. 5 (2021).

In *Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities*, Archer examines how transportation policy has historically contributed to the systematic underdevelopment of Black communities in the United States. She details how transportation networks, highways, and other infrastructure projects were frequently employed as instruments of economic marginalization, displacement, and segregation. Decisions about transportation destroyed existing neighborhoods while restricting access to housing, employment, and other necessities, therefore perpetuating racial disparities. This article also examines how many of these injustices are still perpetuated by modern transportation planning, posing significant questions on equity and urban growth. Archer advocates for deliberate, racial justice focused policy and practice changes, arguing that addressing the negative effects of past transportation choices is essential to creating more inclusive and equitable communities. This article serves as a crucial tool for understanding the interconnection between urban planning, transportation policy, and civil rights.

Keywords: Transportation policy, Racial justice, Urban planning, Displacement, Equity

Ackelsberg, Martha A. *Resisting Citizenship : Feminist Essays on Politics, Community, and Democracy*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2010.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203724415>.

In *Resisting Citizenship*, Martha Ackelsberg discusses key feminist political essays that interrogate dominant notions of citizenship, democracy, and participation. She offers a feminist political vision based on inclusivity, community, and caring, challenging liberal paradigms that prioritize individual rights over group responsibilities. The pieces demonstrate how marginalized groups fight exclusion and transform democratic life through case studies, theoretical discussions, and activist activities. In order to redefine political engagement and broaden citizenship beyond state-centered frameworks, Ackelsberg highlights the significance of feminist critiques. This collection provides tools to envision more fair and participative forms of community, making it a crucial contribution to feminist political theory.

Ali, Muhammad Hegazy. "Contemporary Iconic Architecture in Amsterdam: Bilbao Effect hunting the City." *Int. J. Res. Eng. Soc. Sci* 6 (2016): 19-34.

In *Contemporary Iconic Architecture in Amsterdam*, Ali examines the rise of contemporary iconic architecture in Amsterdam, focusing on the NEMO Science Center as a central case study. He compares NEMO to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao to reveal how each building contributed to reshaping its city's

identity. The study highlights how NEMO's ship-like form, waterfront location, and interactive programming establish it as both a civic landmark and a catalyst for the redevelopment of Amsterdam's docklands. The source is relevant to the thesis research as it situates architecture within broader narratives of urban regeneration and cultural identity, illustrating how design interventions can repair post-industrial sites while creating accessible and experiential public spaces.

Keywords: Theory, Democracy, Community, Resistance, Inclusion

Baldrige, Bianca J. *Reclaiming Community : Race and the Uncertain Future of Youth Work*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019. <https://research-ebsco-com.proxyum.researchport.umd.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=55325bdc-b41a-3015-948aa0fe1d83a7a6>.

In her book *Reclaiming Community*, Bianca Baldrige examines the impact of educational reforms on community-based youth programs such as academic tutoring, college prep, and cultural and emotional support. She specifically focuses on the Educational Excellence (EE) organization, whose mission is to support black youth in their academic, social, and personal development. She analyzes the tension EE navigates between its mission and the pressures of market driven policies that prioritize accountability and standardization. The EE organization works toward reclaiming the community by counteracting marginalization, fostering social and cultural ties, and creating safe spaces. Baldrige's analysis highlights the importance of community-based organizations in providing support to marginalized youth and critiques the forces that undermine the effectiveness of these programs.

Keywords: Youth, Reclaim, Marginalized, Education, Neoliberal, Empowerment, Community

Banks, C. Kenneth, and John Marshall Mangan. *The Company of Neighbours : Revitalizing Community through Action-Research*. Toronto, [Ontario] ; University of Toronto Press, 1999. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442680869>.

In *The Company of Neighbours*, Banks and Mangan explore how grassroots initiatives and participatory action-research can rebuild social ties in Canadian neighborhoods facing urban decline. They use case studies to illustrate how cooperation between local institutions, researchers, and citizens promotes trust, resilience, and a greater sense of community. They also emphasize how communities can revitalize themselves when members act collectively to address shared problems. This work provides theoretical frameworks and practical solutions for enhancing civic life by emphasizing community development, social capital, and participatory methods. This is a useful resource for learning how neighborhood involvement, as opposed to top-down planning, promotes long-lasting social change.

Keywords: Community development, Neighborhood revitalization, Civic engagement, Participatory action research, Social capital

Brady, Anne Marie, and Lauren Burke. "Vibrant Neighborhoods Forum: Leveraging Civic Engagement for Social Impact." German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28524>.

In *Leveraging Civic Engagement for Social Impact*, Brady and Burke present the outcomes of the Vibrant Neighborhoods Forum, a collaborative initiative involving six U.S. and European cities aimed at enhancing civic engagement in racially and economically segregated neighborhoods. Through innovative placemaking and participatory planning, municipal cohorts created ways to engage locals in tackling issues over a three-year period. According to the research, effective civic involvement requires capacity, community trust, and leadership. In order to promote inclusivity and social impact, they also emphasize how crucial it is to coordinate neighborhood-level initiatives with larger municipal programs. The results provide insightful information for community organizers and urban officials who want to improve social cohesiveness and democratic engagement in underserved areas.

Keywords: Civic engagement, Social impact, Placemaking, Economic inequality, Policy

Cardoso, Pedro J., S. and Rodrigues João M. F. , "Human-Centered AI in Placemaking: A Review of Technologies, Practices, and Impacts," *Applied Sciences* 15, no. 17 (2025): 9245, doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/app15179245>.

In *Human-Centered AI in Placemaking*, Cardoso and Rodrigues provide a comprehensive review of Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HCAI) applications in place-making, emphasizing the integration of AI technologies to enhance public space design and management. In order to promote community involvement and examine user behavior in urban settings, the authors investigate a number of AI-driven technologies, including computer vision, sentiment analysis, and participatory design platforms. They talk about how these technologies may help make evidence-based decisions about urban planning, creating public areas that are more responsive and inclusive. The article highlights the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration and ethical considerations in AI deployment while addressing issues related to HCAI in placemaking, such as algorithmic bias, privacy concerns, and the digital divide. This work provides insightful information for urban planners, designers, and policymakers who want to use AI to create sustainable and fair urban environments by combining recent advancements and spotting emerging opportunities.

Keywords: Human-centered AI, Placemaking, Urban design, Public spaces, User experience

Cernea, Michael M. "Public Policy Responses to Development-Induced Population Displacements." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 24 (1996): 1515–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4404275>.

In *Public Policy Responses to Development-Induced Population Displacements*, Cernea examines the flaws of traditional development policies in addressing the complexities of involuntary resettlement. He addresses eight key risks associated with displacement: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, social disarticulation, and increased morbidity. He argues that if these risks are not properly mitigated, they often lead to impoverishment and social instability. The author also emphasizes the need for comprehensive policy frameworks that prioritize the protection and rehabilitation of displaced populations, advocate for strategies that include livelihood restoration, community participation, and long-term support. This source is crucial for development studies because it offers a sociological viewpoint on resettlement that has impacted practice and policy around the world.

Keywords: Resettlement, Social impacts, Poverty risk, Community participation, Restoration

Cernea, Michael M. "Risks, Safeguards and Reconstruction: A Model for Population Displacement and Resettlement." *Economic and Political Weekly* 35, no. 41 (2000): 3659–78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4409836>.

In *Risks, Safeguards and Reconstruction*, Cernea introduces the Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction (IRR) model. He uses this model to examine how involuntary displacement caused by large-scale development projects creates interconnected socioeconomic risks. Similarly to his other article on *Public Policy Responses to Development-Induced Population Displacements*, He identifies threats such as landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to community assets, ill health, and social disarticulation. Additionally, he emphasizes that displacement does not have to result in impoverishment if safeguards and policies are put in place to help those who have been displaced rebuild. Cernea argues for compensation, equitable access to resources, and participatory planning as essential tools for minimizing vulnerability and exclusion. This article is crucial for comprehending how development initiatives can be planned to safeguard welfare while resolving the disparities that marginalized populations experience.

Keywords: Policy, Displacement, Social disintegration, Marginalization, Development, Community

Chapple, Karen, and Miriam Zuk. "Forewarned: The Use of Neighborhood Early Warning Systems for Gentrification and Displacement." *Cityscape* 18, no. 3 (2016): 109–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26328275>.

In *Forewarned*, Chapple and Zuk assess how neighborhood early warning systems (NEWS) have been developed and used in the US to monitor and respond to the risk of gentrification and displacement. They look at the toolkit's development from the 1980s to the present, emphasizing its indicators, structure, and users. They discovered that policymakers, local residents, and other stakeholders in empowering roles are implementing these NEWS systems based on survey data and interviews. These systems have undoubtedly influenced public discourse around housing and neighborhood transformation, but their impact on policy is less well-documented, raising concerns about their sustainability in the future. The authors believe that equitable neighborhood change and inclusion can be achieved by better integrating these systems into planning and governance.

Keywords: Gentrification, Displacement, Urban planning, Early warning systems, Equity

Chatterjee, Ipsita. *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition : Theories and Case Studies*. 1st ed. New Delhi: SAGE, 2016.

In *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition*, Ipsita Chatterjee argues that displacement is the central logic of contemporary urban exploitation. She synthesizes political-economic theory with grounded case work to show how redevelopment, resettlement, and state-market alliances configure cities and dispose of the poor. This book looks through the lens of third-world cities and interventions to move between conceptual claims and processes of removal, resettlement, and grassroots responses. Displacement functions as both a technique and a logic of urbanization, as redevelopment legitimizes exclusion.

Keywords: Displacement, Resettlement, Redevelopment, Urban political economy

Cohen, Alison K., and Joel W. Schuchter. "Revitalizing Communities Together." *Journal of Urban Health* 90 (2013): 187–196. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-012-9733-3>

In *Revitalizing Communities Together*, Cohen and Schuchter explore the intersection of education, urban planning, and public health, emphasizing their shared commitment to place-based, participatory, youth-focused, equitable work. They argue that disparities in health, education, and the urban environment coexist and reinforce one another. The authors include interdisciplinary initiatives that exemplify these shared ideals and strive toward shared objectives, including Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods, full-service community schools, school-based health clinics,

and community health centers. These programs provide chances to address social determinants of health by fostering civic involvement, social capital, and community resilience. To keep tackling these shared objectives, Cohen and Schuchter support greater cooperative research and practice in the fields of public health, education, and planning.

Keywords: Education, Planning, Place-based initiatives, Interdisciplinary programs, Urban planning

Connolly, James J., Dagney G. Faulk, and Emily J. Wornell. *Vulnerable Communities : Research, Policy, and Practice in Small Cities*. Ithaca [New York]: Cornell University Press, 2022. <https://research-ebsco-com.proxyum.researchport.umd.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=73f8c49c-f032-3dc7-bb876a8deec00d55>.

In *Vulnerable Communities*, the multifaceted challenges faced by small cities in the United States are examined. The authors define a small city as one with a population between 20,000 and 200,000. They examine how these communities deal with social fragmentation, demographic changes, and economic collapse, with several writers contributing interdisciplinary viewpoints. Additionally, the authors argue that small cities possess unique strengths and vulnerabilities that differentiate their experiences from those of larger cities. One of the cities that they discuss is Bessemer, Alabama, which was once a thriving industrial hub but has unfortunately faced economic challenges after the decline of its steel industry. They examine the strategies employed for revitalization that include community engagement and policy interventions aimed at economic recovery and urban renewal.

Keywords: Urban renewal, Community engagement, Economic diversification, Economic decline, cities

Daniels, Ron, PhD. , "Displacing Black People and Culture, Gentrification: The New "Negro Removal" Program: A Call for an Emergency Summit," *The Journal of Pan African Studies (Online)* 12, no. 7 (2018): 7_1,7_2,7_3,7_4. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/displacing-black-people-culturegentrification/docview/2173538349/se-2>.

In *Displacing Black People and Culture, Gentrification*, Daniels argues that contemporary gentrification functions as a modern-day “Negro Removal Program”, systematically displacing black communities from historically significant urban centers. Daniels emphasizes how current development attempts frequently put economic expansion ahead of the preservation of Black culture and civic life by drawing parallels to urban renewal operations that displaced Black neighborhoods in

the mid-20th century. He criticizes laws that facilitate this displacement, like the growth of Opportunity Zones, which he argues worsen gentrification without protecting current inhabitants. The paper emphasizes how urgent it is to solve these problems through legislative reform and grassroots activism in order to shield Black communities from additional marginalization.

Keywords: Gentrification, Urban renewal, Displacement, Cultural preservation, Grassroots

Doxiadis, C. A. "Problems of Urban Renewal." *Ekistics* 72, no. 430/435 (2005): 83–100. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43619509>.

In *Problems of Urban Renewal*, Doxiadis revisits his mid-twentieth century work to critique models of urban renewal in the United States. By doing this, he makes the case for more comprehensive and contextually aware planning. He focuses on the conflict between human scale and metropolitan ambitions. He states that in planning there is an overemphasis on technical and aesthetic solutions that are divorced from social realities, resulting in the loss of identity. He also recognizes issues including environmental damage, social dislocation, civic engagement failures, and the possibility of perpetuating inequality through urban regeneration initiatives that benefit privileged groups. Instead, he put out ideas for positive urban redevelopment, such as preserving human-scale, encouraging adaptable planning that changes over time, and respecting the local context and community.

Keywords: Neighborhood, Gentrification. Displacement, Housing affordability, Policy intervention

Fellman, Gordon and Barbara Brandt. , "A Neighborhood a Highway would Destroy," *Environment and Behavior* 2, no. 3 (1970): 281. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/neighborhood-highway-woulddestroy/docview/1292735575/se-2>.

In *A Neighborhood a Highway Would Destroy*, Fellman and Brandt analyze the potential and social environmental impacts of proposed highway construction on an existing urban neighborhood. The article discusses how highways can cause residents to be displaced, increase noise and pollution, and damage community cohesion. In addition to efficiency, the writers stress the significance of considering the social and human ramifications of infrastructure projects. Their research serves as an example of the larger difficulties facing urban planners in striking a balance between modernization and community life preservation. This source is especially relevant to studies on urban sociology, transportation planning, environmental impact, and how large-scale infrastructure affects community stability.

Keywords: Urban planning, Highway, Disruption, Displacement, Policy

Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. *Root Shock : How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It*. New York: New Village Press, 2016. <https://research-ebsco-com.proxyum.researchport.umd.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=012ba2ef-72c9-337d-8322948355873178>.

In *Root Shock*, psychiatrist Mindy Thompson Fullilove discusses the devastating psychological, social, and cultural impacts of urban renewal policies that have displaced thousands of families and dismantled well-established black communities throughout the United States. Fullilove presents the idea of “root shock” using case studies, interviews, and historical research. Root shock refers to the traumatic stress reaction experienced by individuals and communities when they are uprooted from their familiar environments. She argues that the destruction of neighborhoods fractures social networks, contributes to long-term health disparities, economic instability, and the loss of a cultural community. She supports her argument by analyzing the effects of urban renewal on cities such as Harlem, New York, San Francisco, and Newark, New Jersey. She also provides methods for re-establishing community resilience in her critique, including public policies that put neighborhood stability first, grassroots organization, and equitable urban planning.

Keywords: Root shock, Urban renewal, Displacement, cultural continuity, Urban design, Health disparities

Fang, Nan. "Research on the Exploration of Micro-Space under Urban Renewal” Take Paley Park in the United States as an Example." *Learning & Education* 9, no. 3 (2020): 76-77.

In *Research on the Exploration of Micro-Space under Urban Renewal*, Fang examines Paley Park as a model of micro-space design within the context of urban renewal. The study examines its location, material arrangement, and spatial scale to demonstrate how compact, well-planned public areas can revitalize dense urban environments. According to Fang, micro-spaces like Paley Park enhance environmental quality, foster community connection, and transform underutilized land into vibrant public spaces. This article demonstrates how small urban interventions can bring back human-scale design, foster social cohesiveness, and reestablish a sense of belonging in cities affected by large-scale redevelopment. A source such as this aligns with a thesis centered around mending neighborhoods damaged by urban renewal.

Gaston, John C. "The Destruction of the Young Black Male: The Impact of Popular Culture and Organized Sports." *Journal of Black Studies* 16, no. 4 (1986): 369–84. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784194>.

In *The Destruction of the Young Black Male*, Gaston examines how popular culture and organized sports influence the social and psychological development of young Black males. He argues that stereotypes are frequently reinforced by media representations and sports contexts, which also impose pressure to adhere to limited notions of masculinity and restrict opportunities for more extensive intellectual and personal development. The intricate relationship between institutional procedures and cultural expectations that lead to marginalization is also highlighted in the article. Gaston emphasizes the importance of developing supportive frameworks that promote holistic development as well as critical engagement with cultural narratives. This article creates a different point of view that suggests throwing the youth in sports and rec centers should not always be the answer.

Keywords: Popular culture, Stereotypes, Media influence, Youth development, Social marginalization

Hecker, JayEtta Z, and United States. General Accounting Office. Transportation Infrastructure : Cost and Oversight Issues on Major Highway and Bridge Projects. Washington, D.C: U.S. General Accounting Office, 2002.

Transportation Infrastructure is a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) of Washington, D.C., under the direction of JayEtta Hecker. The difficulties of overseeing major transportation infrastructure projects are examined in this paper, with an emphasis on oversight deficiencies and cost overruns. The report finds recurrent problems like poor cost projections, inadequate accountability procedures, and project delivery delays by using case studies of significant highway and bridge projects. In order to guarantee the effective use of public funds, it highlights the necessity of more stringent federal oversight as well as enhanced cooperation with state and local agencies. The report offers a critical evaluation of how infrastructure governance influences project outcomes to scholars, planners, and policymakers.

Keywords: Infrastructure, Highways, Public accountability, Cost, Policy

Hou, Jeffrey, and Michael Rios. "Community-Driven Place Making: The Social Practice of Participatory Design in the Making of Union Point Park." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 57, no. 1 (2003): 19–27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1425736>.

In *Community-Driven Place Making*, Hou and Rios explore how a community-based organization in Oakland, California, called The Unity Council, initiated and shaped the creation of Union Point Park on a former industrial site through participatory design. This study describes how social mobilization discourse in building and political crafting were all essential in engaging residents, youth, local nonprofit groups, and public agencies in defining the park's purpose, form, and identity. The authors criticize conventional participatory design techniques for ignoring the larger relational dynamics and institutional constraints in favor of an excessive emphasis on the interaction between professionals and consumers. They offer a paradigm for community-driven activities that combines opportunistic negotiation with institutional and governmental players with grassroots networks framing concerns. This article is a helpful analysis of how social equity and design results can be impacted by participatory techniques.

Keywords: Place-making, Urban parks, Identity, Revitalization, Collective decision making

Hyra, Derek S. *The New Urban Renewal : The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

In *The New Urban Renewal* by Derek Hyra, he explores the redevelopment of two historically black neighborhoods: Harlem in New York City and Bronzeville in Chicago. Hyra concentrates on more contemporary types of urban renewal as opposed to the clearance and public housing that characterized mid-20th century urban renewal. Recent forms of urban renewal have been driven by mixed-income housing initiatives and gentrification. He examines the ways in which these new processes change the demographics of a community and the economic and cultural make-up of established neighborhoods. According to Hyra, working-class inhabitants are displaced, cultural identity is undermined, and inequality is perpetuated. However, he does acknowledge that these methods might have potential advantages, such as better housing and increased safety.

Keywords: MIXed-income, Cultural identity, Inequality, Revitalization, Community, Gentrification

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 50th anniversary edition, 2011 Modern Library edition. New York: Modern Library, 2011.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by urban activist Jane Jacobs, she critiques the planning practices of the mid-20th century. She particularly focuses on large-scale urban renewal projects, such as highway construction and the separation of land uses. She argues that these interventions have disturbed the intricate social networks that allowed cities to flourish and undermined the vibrancy of urban neighborhoods. The author examines cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and even her own neighborhood of Greenwich Village in New York City. In order to counteract

these shifts, Jacobs advocates for shorter blocks, mixed-use development, and the preservation of older structures as crucial components for creating a thriving, safe, and resilient urban community.

Keywords: Urban renewal, Diversity, Mixed-use development, Separation, Community, Grassroots urbanism

Karas, David. "Highway to inequity: the disparate impact of the interstate highway system on poor and minority communities in American cities." *New Visions for Public Affairs* 7, no. April (2015): 9-21

In *Highway to inequity*, Karas analyzes the historical development of the United States interstate highway system and its disproportionate effects on poor and minority urban communities. He illustrates how highway design frequently put regional and economic connectivity ahead of the welfare of underserved communities, leading to social disintegration, economic downturn, and displacement. The article emphasizes how systematic racial and economic inequalities, urban planning, and transportation policy are intertwined. Karas argues that resolving current urban injustices requires an awareness of the historical background of infrastructure choices. Research on racial justice, public policy, urban planning, and the social effects of major infrastructure projects can all benefit from this source. Keywords: Highways, Urban planning, Displacement, Minority communities, Policy

Kaushal, Nandita. "DISPLACEMENT : AN UNDESIRABLE AND UNWANTED CONSEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 70, no. 1 (2009): 77–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856497>.

In *DISPLACEMENT*, Kaushal examines how large-scale development projects in India often lead to the forced displacement of vulnerable communities, particularly marginalized populations. The article emphasizes the economic and social cost of displacement, arguing that although development is presented as advancement, it usually results in inequity and hardship for those who are displaced. Kaushal talks about the absence of sufficient legal frameworks to safeguard the rights of displaced people, policy deficiencies, and insufficient rehabilitation initiatives. The study highlights governments' moral need to strike a balance between human wellbeing and development objectives. This source is useful for studies on how infrastructure growth and urbanization affect society since it offers a critical viewpoint on development as a process that can prolong exclusion. It helps present displacement as a political and ethical problem rather than only a practical one by providing theoretical understandings as well as policy criticisms.

Keywords: Policy, Displacement, Development, Marginalized, Urbanization

Kovak, Richard M. "Urban Renewal Controversies." *Public Administration Review* 32, no. 4 (1972): 359–72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/975000>.

In *Urban Renewal Controversies*, Kovak analyzes the debates surrounding urban renewal programs in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. He outlines how urban renewal efforts were intended to address blight and stimulate economic growth, but often resulted in displacement and disruption of established communities. The effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts is questioned, and the planning and policy frameworks that gave priority to large-scale development over social welfare are criticized. By bringing attention to concerns of vulnerability, exclusion, and the restricted role of community engagement, Kovak highlights the conflicts that exist between public objectives and the actual experiences of marginalized residents. This article is helpful in comprehending how development strategies and urbanization can perpetuate social and political tensions. It offers a fundamental basis for analyzing current discussions over equitable development and displacement by shedding light on the historical background of urban renewal disputes.

Keywords: Redevelopment, Displacement, Urban renewal, Gentrification, Resident opposition

Lawrence, Deliah D. "Community Development: Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?" *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law* 11, no. 4 (2002): 357–73. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25782567>.

In *Community Development*, Lawrence investigates whether community development strategies can counteract displacement generated by gentrification. She analyzes the limitations and potential of local organizing, affordable housing policies, land-use regulation, and community benefit agreements. The paper emphasizes how marginalized residents frequently lack decision-making authority, which results in insufficient protection and unjust outcomes even when good intentions are put out. According to Lawrence, communities may be able to preserve social welfare and avoid losing their sense of place and identity by combining legal mechanisms, public involvement, and strategic planning. In order to prevent displacement, she highlights the importance of preserving affordability and restoring existing housing. When examining how policy, equality, and grassroots resistance intersect with urban change, this source is helpful.

Keywords: Gentrification, Displacement, Affordable housing, Policy intervention, Grassroots

Marciniak. *Reviving an Inner City Community : The Drama of Urban Change in East Humboldt Park in Chicago*. Edited by Marciniak. Chicago: [Dept. of Political Science, Loyola University], 1977.

In *Reviving an Inner City Community*, Marciniak documents the social and political struggles surrounding urban change in East Humboldt Park, Chicago, during the 1970s. The book looks at topics like racial and ethnic tensions, gentrification, grassroots community organizing, and displacement. Marciniak draws attention to the initiatives taken by local groups, churches, and citizens to fight against deterioration and promote just urban growth. He demonstrates how community activity influenced reactions to housing policy, public services, and neighborhood revitalization through case study analysis. In addition to offering a historical perspective, the study offers a framework for comprehending the dynamics of urban transformation in underserved regions.

Keywords: Urban change, Gentrification, Displacement, Community activism, Neighborhood revitalization

Marouan, Maha, and Merinda Simmons. *Race and Displacement : Nation, Migration, and Identity in the Twenty-First Century*. 1st ed. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2013.

In *Race and Displacement*, Marouan and Simmons explore how race and displacement intersect across bodies, spaces, nations, and narratives in the contemporary era. They look at how ideas of identity and belonging are complicated by migration and forced relocation. They are able to show that displacement is not just geographical but also physical and imaginative by referencing literary texts, oral traditions, historical case studies, and cultural theory. Central themes include the instability of racial categories and the role of narrative in articulating displacement. This study relies heavily on the context of the U.S. and African diaspora with an interdisciplinary approach offering critical insights for scholars.

Keywords: Race, Belonging, Space, Diaspora, Cultural theory, Imagination

Natarajan, Lucy, and Michael J. Short, eds. *Engaged Urban Pedagogy : Participatory Practices in Planning and Place-Making*. London: UCL Press, 2023.

Engaged Urban Pedagogy by Lucy Natarajan and Micheal Short is a practice focused guide for teaching built environment subjects through participatory and community engaged approaches. They provide insightful analyses of curriculum design, emphasizing the ways in which lived experiences, histories of geography, race, and queer identity should influence course material. They stress the necessity of moving away from classroom exercises and toward community-based learning activities, including roleplay, podcast projects, neighborhood design, and digital civic

design. These draw attention to the connections between education and actual placemaking.

Keywords: Co-production, Planning, Education, Community engagement, Equity

O'Hare, Laurel M. "Concrete Legacy: The Effects of the Interstate Highway System on Black Communities in the U.S." *Tapestries: Interwoven Voices of Local and Global Identities* 13, no. 1 (2024): Article 6.

In *Concrete Legacy*, O'Hare investigates how construction of the interstate highway system has shaped Black Communities across the United States. She looks at the past and present social, economic, and cultural effects of highway construction, such as neighborhood fragmentation, displacement, and the breakdown of community cohesion. The article criticizes the emphasis of infrastructure efficiency over the welfare of marginalized communities and highlights how policy decisions contribute to the continuation of racial and economic injustices. O'Hare offers insight into advocacy and resilience by highlighting community reactions and opposition to these advances. Research on transportation policy, urban planning, civil rights history, and the structural effects of infrastructure on minority communities can benefit from this work.

Keywords: Community, Highways, Displacement, Racial inequity, Community fragmentation, Resilience

Ozdil, Taner R., Sameepa K. Modi, and Dylan M. Stewart. "A 'Texas threestep' landscape performance research: Learning from Buffalo Bayou Promenade, Klyde Warren Park, and Ut Dallas Campus Plan." *Landsc. Res. Rec* 2 (2014): 117-131.

In *A 'Texas Three-Step' Landscape Performance Research*, the authors evaluate the environmental, economic, and social performance of three major landscape projects in Texas, including Klyde Warren Park. The research employs quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys and onsite observations, to establish measurable criteria that demonstrate the social and ecological value of urban landscapes. Findings reveal how Klyde Warren Park reconnects divided urban districts, reduces stormwater runoff, mitigates heat, and enhances quality of life through accessibility and cultural programming. The study highlights the importance of evidence-based design and consistent evaluation frameworks within landscape architecture. In relation to a thesis on fractured communities, this research reinforces how strategic landscape interventions can physically and socially heal divided urban fabrics by transforming infrastructural voids into inclusive, community-centered public spaces that promote environmental and cultural resilience.

Page, Tara. (2020). *Placemaking : A New Materialist Theory of Pedagogy*. Edinburgh University Press.

In her book *Placemaking*, Tara Page explores how individuals and communities engage with and make sense of their environments through embodied and material practices. Drawing on new materialist theory, she also examines the relationship between bodies, place, and the socio-material world, highlighting the agency of matter and the entanglements that shape our experience of place. In her research, she emphasizes that place is not a static backdrop but an active participant in the process of becoming. Through case studies, particularly in her work with children in the Australian bush, she illustrates how learning and knowing emerge from the embodied engagements with land, climate, and other elements of place. By focusing on the “who with the where”, Page reorients the understanding of place from a location to a dynamic relational process.

Keywords: Placemaking, Place, Identity, Agency of matter, Embodied knowledge, Learning

Platt, Rutherford H. *Reclaiming American Cities : The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature Since 1900*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014.

<https://research-ebsco-com.proxyum.researchport.umd.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=0cd57812-6cb1-33da-a3cb5289b654e42b>.

In *Reclaiming American Cities*, Rutherford Platt critically analyzes the urban transformation in the United States over the past century. He examines the evolution of urban spaces through the lenses of housing, transportation, and parkland, highlighting the interplay between human development and the natural environment. Some of the challenges Platt discusses include balancing growth and sustainability, social inequalities, and transportation. Some of the successes Platt discusses include green spaces, historic preservation, and integration of environmental awareness. Through detailed analysis of case studies such as D.C., Portland, and Chicago, he highlights the importance of community involvement and environmental consciousness in shaping the future of American cities.

Keywords: Sustainability, Urban development, Green spaces, Community engagement, Urban policy, Gentrification, Urban renewal

Powell, Katrina M. “Rhetorics of Displacement: Constructing Identities in Forced Relocations.” *College English* 74, no. 4 (2012): 299–324.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23212903>.

In *Rhetorics of Displacement*, Powell examines how narratives of forced displacement are constructed and contested through rhetoric. She analyzes three case studies that include Spike Lee's documentary *When the Levees Broke*, Dave Eggers's novel *What Is the What*, and a documentary she co-produced about families displaced by eminent domain for the creation of Shenandoah National Park. Powell argues that these narratives illustrate the power dynamics at play in displacement, showing how prevailing discourses frequently denigrate displaced people while also providing insights into their resiliency and resistance. This article provides a framework for examining how displaced groups use storytelling to create and assert their identities, which is helpful for comprehending the relationship between rhetoric, identity, and displacement.

Keywords: Displacement, identity, Forced relocation, Social justice, Community narratives

Tomalty, Ray, and Alan Mallach. *America's Urban Future : Lessons From North of the Border*. Washington: Island Press, 2015. <https://research-ebiscocom.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=456b2451-41f03c3d-9f63-a48393fc90dc>.

In *America's Urban Future* by Ray Tomalty and Alan Mallach, they provide a comparative analysis of urban development in Canada and the United States, highlighting how the differences in planning and public policy shape urban outcomes. In order to demonstrate how Canadian communities have fared better than American ones in promoting sustainability and social equality, they examine cities like Toronto and Montreal. They credit these differences to a more resilient public transit environment and planning strategies that give mixed-use development and environmental stewardship top priority. According to the reading, the US might employ a number of tactics, such as enacting stricter sustainability regulations, fostering greater community involvement, implementing inclusive housing policies, and modifying the zoning laws.

Keywords: Metropolitan governance, Inclusionary Housing, Urban resilience, Neighborhood revitalization, Mixed-use

Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention : How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: The New Press, 2011.

In *Fatal Invention* by sociologist Dorothy Roberts, she examines how science, biotechnology, and business have re-created/ reinforced the false notion of biological race. She argues that race is a biological reality but a social construct that continues to shape inequality, health disparities, and public policy. In a portion of the book, she focuses on biomedical research and how using race does more harm than good. Roberts advocates for a more socially conscious approach to biomedical research that

includes social and environmental factors that impact health. During her research, a study was conducted on children with asthma. The study showed how children who lived in low-income areas or near highways often had higher air pollution rates, which causes the disease. Not only does this prove Roberts' argument, but it also shows how urban renewal projects, such as highways, can cause health inequalities in a city.

Keywords: Health disparities, Ethics, Institutionalized inequality, social factors, environmental factors

Rodriguez, Cheryl, and Beverly Ward. "Making Black Communities Matter: Race, Space, and Resistance in the Urban South." *Human Organization* 77, no. 4 (2018): 312–22. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26586912>.

In *Making Black Communities Matter*, Rodriguez and Ward examine how black communities in the Urban South navigate systemic challenges related to race, space, and urban development. They focus on community advocacy and resistance tactics that aim to protect cultural identity, fight displacement, and demonstrate political and social agency. The article focuses on the interplay between local residents' attempts to influence their surroundings and systemic injustices like gentrification and segregation. The authors illustrate the value of grassroots activism and spatial justice in preserving community cohesion by examining both historical and modern examples. Research in community planning, racial equity, urban studies, and social action can benefit from this study.

Keywords: Communities, Urban South, Spatial justice, Displacement, Community advocacy

Schaller, Susanna F. (2019). *Business Improvement Districts and the Contradictions of Placemaking: BID Urbanism in Washington, D.C.* University of Georgia Press.

In her book *Business Improvement Districts and the Contradictions of Placemaking*, Susanna Schaller explores the growth of business improvement districts (BIDs) in Washington D.C., analyzing their role in shaping urban landscapes. According to her research, BIDs frequently reinforce inequality and fuel gentrification even though they support the concepts of localism and civic engagement. She draws attention to the fact that, despite its claims of equity and colorblindness, the BID model frequently marginalizes low-income and minority communities. She is able to support her argument with detailed case studies of communities like the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood and how BIDs are responsible for its shaping. Overall, her work offers a critique of BID and its implications on future urban development.

Keywords: Marginalized, BIDs, Placemaking, Gentrification, Civic engagement, Urban redevelopment, Socioeconomic inequality

Smith, Stan. *Poetry and Displacement*. 1st ed. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.3828/9781846311161>.

In *Poetry and Displacement*, Stan Smith examines how twentieth and early twenty-first century poets depict experiences of exile, migration, cultural dislocation, and identity. He begins his analysis with a theoretical introduction on poetry, place, and displacement through a discussion of historical figures. He argues that displacement is not only a condition tied to biography but also a defining paradigm of modern and postmodern poetry. This book explores broader issues of language, history, and belonging by showing how memory, fractured narratives, and hybrid voices can be used as coping mechanisms for relocation.

Keywords: Displacement, Belonging, Migration, Memory, Cultural Dislocation, Voice

Snyder, James P. *Winterthur Portfolio* 14, no. 3 (1979): 328–30.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1180670>.

In this review, Snyder examines Sekler and Curtis's *Le Corbusier at Work: The Genesis of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts*, a detailed account of the design evolution of Le Corbusier's project. Snyder emphasizes how the Carpenter Center reconciles site conditions, circulation, and programmatic needs through formal experimentation. This particularly happens with the curved walls and central ramp that mediate between the urban context and architectural autonomy. He critiques the book for failing to fully articulate why the building's design achieves architectural significance but acknowledges its value in tracing Le Corbusier's process. For a thesis exploring architecture as a means to repair and reconnect fractured urban spaces, this source demonstrates how design can emerge from the tension between site, circulation, and social experience, offering a model for integrating movement and spatial continuity/sequencing.

The Menil Collection (1982–1986), Houston, USA," *Architecture History*.
<https://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/PIANO/OBJ/1982-1986,%20THE%20MENIL%20COLLECTION,%20HOUSTON,%20USA.html>.

This source positions the Menil Collection as an architectural gesture deeply tuned to its residential context, emphasizing continuity rather than monumentality. It explains the long "spine" that organizes public circulation and galleries, as well as

how interior areas are gradually brought to life by the utilization of filtered natural light through roof features. The structure creates a smooth transition between community and museum thanks to its low street presence and compatibility with the adjacent bungalow forms. This provides a useful example of how space may act as a mediator between the public and private spheres and how light and circulation axes can influence a visitor's perception of space in an otherwise discreet building.

Treib, Marc. 2004. "Modern Landscape Architecture: Monuments and Icons." *The Journal of Architecture* 9 (2): 199–207. doi:10.1080/1360236042000230170.

In *Modern Landscape Architecture*, Treib explores the evolution of modern landscape architecture through the lens of iconic works such as Paley Park in New York City. He argues that Paley Park redefined the role of small urban spaces by offering human-scaled refuge amongst the dense fabric of Midtown Manhattan. Treib notes that its simple design, which includes a honey locust canopy, a waterfall wall, and movable chairs, is a prime example of modernist restraint and urban intimacy. This material is helpful for a thesis in an urban setting as it shows how design interventions, such as Paley Park, can restore fragmented urban voids and turn abandoned or underutilized locations into public areas that promote social cohesion and a sense of belonging in the contemporary city.

Van Dyke, Kristina. "The Menil Collection." *African Arts* 40, no. 3 (Autumn, 2007): 36-49. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/menilcollection/docview/220961352/se-2>.

In *The Menil Collection*, Van Dyke explains Piano's use of diffused natural light through a system of roof louvers that filter daylight, creating a calm and contemplative experience of space. Circulation unfolds along a central spine that maintains visual and physical continuity between galleries and courtyards, emphasizing openness and intimacy. The building's modest street presence connects art, architecture, and the surrounding neighborhood rather than isolating them. The Menil Collection demonstrates how design can quietly transform its context by encouraging interaction and movement rather than separation. Its seamless flow between interior and exterior spaces can be a model for reestablishing unity in places once divided by urban infrastructure.

Ventimiglia, Diana. "Bridging the Gap." *Lighting Design & Application* 43, no. 9 (September 1, 2013): 41–42. doi:10.1177/036063251304300911.

In *Bridging the Gap*, Ventimiglia examines the design and lighting of Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, focusing on how the park creates comfort, safety, and social connection in an urban environment. Working with the Office of James Burnett, Focus Lighting designed a gentle, residential atmosphere that helps people feel at ease both

day and night. The article highlights how the park bridges not only the physical gap created by the recessed freeway but also the psychological divide between Uptown and the Arts District. Through carefully designed lighting, textures, and pathways, the park fosters a sense of intimacy and belonging. This source supports the thesis research by showing how design can transform infrastructural voids into active public spaces that restore social and spatial unity. It demonstrates how thoughtful lighting and landscape strategies can repair fragmented environments and strengthen community engagement in the city.

Wedge, E. Bruce. "The Concept 'Urban Renewal.'" *The Phylon Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1958): 55–60. <https://doi.org/10.2307/273004>.

In *The Concept Urban Renewal*, Wedge provides an early definition and concept exploration of urban renewal as a public policy instrument. This article explores how urban renewal came to be understood in both planning circles and in practice, especially within the mid-twentieth century United States. Wedge traces the intentions of renewal initiatives, including blight removal, better housing, and infrastructure improvement. He also looks at criticisms related to equity, community disruption, and relocation, demonstrating how regeneration initiatives frequently put economic expansion ahead of social welfare. Wedge makes the case for more precise conceptual distinctions between renewal that replaces and renewal that restores, cautioning against the dangers of top-down implementation with minimal community engagement. Scholars researching the history of urban renewal as a concept and as a policy will find this article helpful, as it provides background information for further discussions regarding marginalized groups under development pressure and exclusion vulnerability.

Keywords: Urban renewal, Redevelopment, Modernization, Planning

Westhauser, Karl E, Elaine M Smith, and Jennifer A Fremlin. *Creating Community : Life and Learning at Montgomery's Black University*. 1st ed. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005.

In *Creating Community*, Westhauser, Smith, and Fremlin examine the history and social dynamics of Montgomery's historically black university, showing how students, faculty, and community members developed a sense of belonging and cultural identity within a segregated society. The book traces how curricula, student organizations, and community connections promoted leadership and civic involvement, treating the institution as both a center of knowledge and a place of social activism. The authors contend that institutional networks and collaborative learning strengthened local social movements and community resilience by extending beyond the campus. Researchers of urban communities will find this study useful since it provides information on how universities might act as catalysts for social change.

Keywords: Education, Community, Change, Organizations, Activism

Winters, Nanneke, Heike Drotbohm, and Yaatsil Guevara González. (Un)Settling Place : Diverse and Divergent Place-Making of People on the Move. 1st ed. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2024.

(Un)Settling Place investigates the various ways that people who are constantly on the move create place. The exploration is often in context considered peripheral, temporary, or marginal. The authors analyze how social relationships, mobility, and surveillance influence experiences of settlement and displacement, utilizing ethnographic case studies. They present the concept of "unsettling" as a means of capturing the "in-between" spaces found through migration and displacement, as well as a challenge to ideas of place. The book acknowledges the constraints that are caused by geography, law, and inequity while highlighting innovative means of surviving and belonging. Additionally, it provides insights by comparing borderlands, urban areas, and maritime voyages.

Keywords: Place-making, mobility, displacement, peripheral spaces, social ties