

Defining Space in the Bryte & Broderick Neighborhoods of West Sacramento

Prepared by the UC Davis Community & Regional
Development 440 Class: Professional Skills
Mapping/Design Team

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Introduction

Our group's main objective was to build on existing work and partnerships to identify, define, and analyze the conditions and opportunities surrounding issues of "space" in the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods. In the true nature of Community Development, we formed a collaboration with the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition, the City of West Sacramento, and various other community stakeholders. Additionally the report and data produced by last years CRD 440 class lent to the identification, formulation, and evaluation of this project. A secondary objective of this project was to provide applicable data and findings to the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition members to supplement their 3 year, \$200,000 REACH implementation grant through the Sierra Health Foundation, due on the 23rd of March. The third objective of our team was to create a user-friendly, visual representation of data collected that would be available to the City Departments, the City Council of West Sacramento, various stakeholders involved in the project, and to aid in the continuation of the 2008 CRD 440's partnership with the residents of Bryte & Broderick. Additionally we sought to identify and empower community members and groups from the neighborhoods of Bryte and Broderick who currently are absent from the dialogue surrounding issues in their community.

The questions asked:

- 1) What conditions exist in Bryte and Broderick that are serving as barriers to the safe development of youth?
- 2) What opportunities exist in Bryte and Broderick that we can identify and how can we expand and/or enhance these?
- 3) What community/ social services exist in these neighborhoods and to what extent?
- 4) From the perspective of youth living in Bryte and Broderick, do they feel safe in their neighborhoods? What factors make them feel more or less safe? Is there a general consensus among youth about what makes some spaces "safe" and some spaces "unsafe?"
- 5) Are there other stakeholders that should be involved in the dialogue surrounding issues in these communities?

These questions were addressed and investigated with multiple resources and techniques employed by our research team. The resource that served as the foundation to the design and implementation of our project was the 2006 440's class data and findings on Bryte and Broderick. Specifically, we incorporated data collected from focus groups and utilized their extensive listing of identified community and social services. As a group, we went on a walking tour of Bryte and Broderick to map "spaces". We conducted participatory action research with the SacTown Heroes Youth Group (part of the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition) through a photo/mapping and journaling project to incorporate the youth perceptions of space in the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods.

The data collected through these processes resulted in a Conditions/Opportunities Map, a Youth Perceptions Map, and a Community Services Map.

Background Literature: Meaningful Youth Participation

Youth today are getting mixed messages about their importance in our society. While they are called the “citizens of the future,” or “leaders of tomorrow,” they are all too often treated as passive bystanders. As a society we neglect to acknowledge that youth can be participating citizens and engaged in meaningful participation in policy, programs, and research to positively affect community and social change (O’Donoghue et. al., 2002). An international movement is evolving in which numerous policies and institutional frameworks are in place to foster and empower youth to become active and engaged participants. “This more current view is captured in language describing youth as ‘assets,’ ‘active agents of social change,’ or ‘decision-makers,’ as well as by individuals who are promoting more democratic, inter-generational relationships through ‘adult-youth partnerships’” (Golombek, 2002).

Youth participation can be defined loosely as a “constellation of activities that empower adolescents to take part in and influence decision making that affects their lives and to take action on issues they care about.” At the organizational level, youth participation has been linked to greater sustainability and effectiveness (O’Donoghue et. al., 2002). Empowering youth to become active players in decision making and power-sharing through youth-adult partnerships is a key component of youth development and community change. “Probably the foremost barriers to participation comprise adults’ perceptions, including their images of children’s capacities, and their self-interest in maintaining their own position with respect to children. Linked to this is a view of children’s rights as undermining adults’ authority and rights, with a zero-sum assumption that transferring responsibility to children inevitably takes something away from adults” (Hill et. al., 2004).

In order to foster successful and sustainable youth participation adults need to be ready for youth participation through ongoing trainings and development which nurtures the adult’s role in the youth-adult partnership. “Thus, within youth programs, the youth-driven approach often takes the form of a partnership in which youth and adults may be contributing somewhat different things to the collaboration” (Larson et. al., 2005). Adults will not surrender their roles as guides and educators, but will serve a vital purpose as mentor, and information and resource center. Youth participation cannot be established through the façade of one youth leader serving on a board or council with no real power but rather should be fostered through multiple positions and levels of involvement that is representative of the current population (O’Donoghue et. al., 2002).

If youth’s concerns and perceptions influence choices and decisions that lead to local policies, the desired outcomes for effective programs will build Youth’s:

-Character: Youth acquire a sense of responsibility and accountability, the ability to thrive despite adversity

- Confidence*: Young people develop a sense of self-worth based on their ability to make choices and take the initiative
- Connection*: Young people develop a positive sense of belonging to their community, to caring adults, and to their peers
- Competence*: Youth are enabled to master sound educational and vocational skills to earn a living
- Contribution*: Youth become civically minded and wish to contribute their time, ideas, and talents to better their communities.

-International Youth Foundation, 2002

If there is generation and implementation of youth's social, cultural, and discursive space for their own agendas, paralleled with adult agendas, children will be looked upon as " . . . fellow citizens with rights, participating members of the social groups in which they find themselves, agents of their own lives but also interdependent with others, co-constructors of knowledge, identity and culture, children who co-exist with others in society on the basis of who they are, rather than who they will become" (Hill et. al., 2004).

Methodology

Group Photo Walk of B&B:

Our research group's walking tour of Bryte and Broderick was led by Stephen Wheeler, PhD, a landscape architect and professor at UC Davis. To map conditions and opportunities we took photographs and detailed field notes of places we thought could be better utilized or renovated for maximum community gain. We focused on issues surrounding general safety, community preservation, recreation, public and open spaces, and safe and efficient mobility for all community members.

Youth Photo Project of West Sacramento:

The SacTown Heroes Youth Group, comprised of approximately ten West Sacramento youth, ages 10-17, were active participants in the youth photo project of space in their neighborhoods. They came up with ideas about places in their community that were representative of positive/safe or negative/unsafe spaces for them. Our research team went on 3 separate photography trips, two in Bryte and Broderick, and one to Southport/Bridgeway. Youth took pictures and field notes of these physical spaces that were important to them and noted what they thought about those places. These pictures

were then utilized in a Photo Journaling project led by two of our team members. Youth picked out the most representative photos of safe and unsafe space in their communities, and then pasted them on posters. These posters were made available in the Collings Teen Center for youth comments, to provide our research team with qualitative data that defined the meaning and purpose of each photo used. The photos and comments of these spaces were incorporated into a geographic map to serve as a tool for showing areas that are underserved and/or threatening to youth, or areas that serve as opportunities for youth. These findings were used to help the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition in writing their Sierra Health Foundation community profile.

Data Analysis of Safe and Unsafe Spaces

Utilizing focus group data collected from the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition and community interviews from the 2006 CRD 440 Group, youth reported data was identified and analyzed for information pertaining to safe/unsafe spaces to be incorporated into the mapping process.

GIS Mapping for Bryte and Broderick Neighborhoods and Vicinity

Mapping of the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods was achieved through ESRI's mapping program ArcGIS (v. 9.2). The maps generated are based on using 1) City of West Sacramento data; 2) data acquired through last year's CRD 440 Report (Appendix A: Community Services Inventory); 3) data acquired through the youth photo trips and journaling process; 4) personal site visits/walking tour where UC Davis graduate students walked around the neighborhoods and noted observations on a base map; and 5) additional West Sacramento data acquired through online resources.

GIS data for the City of West Sacramento was acquired through the City's mapping/GIS webpage, accessible through the City's main website. The City's data was already formatted in the GIS file format, and included data layers for streets, parcels, city boundary, along with address points and other data layers. Additional general data for West Sacramento was acquired online, and included data for rivers, lakes, railroads and other transportation, and Sacramento Regional Transit routes. Again, the data for these layers were also already formatted for GIS use.

The data used from last year's CRD440 report pertained to the addresses for the existing community services in the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods, along with general service locations in West Sacramento (i.e. City services). The community services data were geocoded through the process of converting addresses to latitude-longitude coordinates using a free online service (<http://www.geocoder.us>). The resulting coordinates were placed into a database, along with general information for each community service. The database was then imported into the GIS mapping program and each community service was mapped. A similar process was undertaken to convert the youth photo trips/journaling data and data from personal site visits/walking tour into geographic data that could be mapped.

The final maps generated show 1) community services—each category of service marked by its own symbol; 2) youth photo destinations along with the youth's perceptions of safety regarding these places—with different symbols representing

different perceptions; and 3) general conditions and opportunities for the Bryte and Broderick neighborhood based on preliminary observations from class site visits and the walking tour. Additionally, general base map information is shown and includes general information such as city streets, interstate highways, city boundaries, railways, bus routes (Sac RT), and city parcels. The aim of these maps is to convey information in a graphical manner that is linked geographically to place. The information presented are by no means comprehensive, but are meant to provide a general understanding of the area and to stimulate further analysis of issues related to space and place.

Findings

Data Analysis of Safe and Unsafe Spaces

While there was little data pertaining to specific places that could be mapped, there was valuable data dealing with general youth safety issues. Through qualitative analysis and coding of the community interviews conducted by last year's class, we found:

- Parks were thought to be safe and unsafe, depending on whether it is day or night. Also there was a fear of the police raised with respect to parks.
- There was also concern with the levee breaking.
- Both the Collings and Club West Teen Center were portrayed as safe.
- There was some indication that not all children had safe homes to go to.
- The street near Club West was identified as a place where crime, drug use, homelessness and loitering were issues.
- People perceived their neighborhoods as safe

Focus Group survey data for place-based findings conducted by the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition had the following findings (focused on question #6 on safe/unsafe spaces):

- In general, youth felt safe at home.
- Parks were seen as both safe and unsafe.
- Schools were also seen as both safe and unsafe (particularly GSMS) or positive and negative.
- Apartments were mentioned as both safe and unsafe; it appears some apartment complexes have drug/crime problems.
- Church was perceived as safe.
- The river was perceived as unsafe, due to a fear of drowning.
- Under the I Street bridge was identified as an unsafe place due to gang activity.
- Also, West Capitol Ave. was perceived as unsafe due to a lack of crosswalks.

Research Group Photo Walk/ Youth Photo Journaling Project/ GIS Mapping

1) Community Services Map (please refer to Figure 1)

The community services map for the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods (and vicinity) provides a clear visual display of where general community services are located. The aim of this map is to provide a resource for the Bryte and Broderick community along with the larger West Sacramento community regarding local services specific to the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods.

2) Youth Perceptions Map (please refer to Figure 2)

The youth perceptions map displays general areas where youth indicated their views on community spaces (safe and unsafe). The data mapped includes findings from the youth photo trips and the youth photo project (photo journaling). Specifically, the data from the youth photo project was analyzed based on the number of times “safe” and “unsafe” perceptions were written on the photo/poster sheets and converted into a visual representation of safety (where green indicates “safe” and red indicates “unsafe”). The aim of the map is to provide a general idea of youth perceptions of the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods. This is preliminary data —further study of youth perceptions may reveal additional insights to the places youth perceive as safe and unsafe.

3) Conditions and Opportunities Map (please refer to Figure 3)

The conditions and opportunities map presents preliminary findings and general observations regarding the select sites that were visited during the group walking tour. The walking tour focused on three areas of the Bryte and Broderick neighborhoods and was meant to: a) familiarize the graduate students working on this project with the area, and b) to provide an “outsider’s” observation of the conditions and opportunities in these neighborhoods. General findings including noting the availability of vacant lots that can be potentially developed/preserved, noting the potential of adding medians and landscaping along major thoroughfares to improve walkability/bikeability (notably along Sacramento Avenue), and developing the riverwalk further by connecting the existing riverwalk to the south (near the Ziggurat building) with the riverwalk area to the west of Broderick (adjacent to the boat ramp area). Other general findings included the importance of and opportunities to preserve historic structures (i.e. Senator Garage, Bryte Post Office, etc.) and to create neighborhood commercial centers by focusing redevelopment near existing commercial venues (i.e. near existing neighborhood markets). There are also opportunities to provide additional open space and recreational areas in the neighborhoods, along with strengthening existing parks (i.e. Bryte Park) by conducting use analyses and needs assessments. For example, there is a potential need for more shade at Bryte Park due to the large open fields used during the summer time. The conditions and opportunities map is meant to be a vehicle to stimulate thought and provide focus on the current conditions and potential opportunities for neighborhood improvement and beautification. It must be noted that only a few select sites were visited during the walking tour, thus a more comprehensive analysis of the entire Bryte and Broderick area that documents current conditions and opportunities in detail would be helpful. Design charrettes with public input can help to bring more focus on what the

community would like to preserve in the neighborhoods and what opportunities are available in improving the neighborhoods.

Recommendations

Based on our research team's action, analysis, observations, findings and maps, we recommend:

- 1) Making the services guide and maps available to Bryte and Broderick residents.
- 2) Creating a framework for participation and dialogue through a community visioning process that includes the youth and residents of Bryte and Broderick, so that the City Departments and City Council of West Sacramento can best understand how to revitalize under-utilized spaces and preserve historic places in these neighborhoods in a way that is compatible with community needs and desires.
- 3) Addressing concerns identified by youth and community regarding police-youth tensions. A police/youth mentor program or community liaison program could provide initial steps in healing this relationship.
- 4) Educational/outreach programs to address the numerous threats perceived by youth regarding the river.
- 5) A partnership between the West Sacramento City Council and the West Sacramento Youth Resource Coalition to aid in processes that foster positive youth development in these communities through the Sierra Health Foundation's 3-year Implementation Grant.
- 6) Further evaluation by the City Council on the monumental consequences to the Bryte and Broderick youth's social, cultural, and recreational well-being regarding the closure of the majority of parks and playgrounds in these neighborhoods due to school closures.

Finally, and *most importantly*, we recommend that the West Sacramento City Council create a framework for youth participation, (ex. a multi-level youth advisory board or

council that is representative of the population) to assist and contribute to all future policies pertaining to youth and/or their community. A “multi-level,” partnership would involve creating various positions and outlets for youth input with varying degrees of decision making, leadership and participation. Youth concerns, ideas, and perceptions need not only to be heard, but incorporated in a legitimate and effective way.

For further reading on the evolution of Youth Participation in leadership and decision-making pertaining to local community and social change, please refer to the International Youth Foundation Website at www.iyfn.org or employ the assistance of local resources such as the Non-Profit Organization, Youth In Focus.

Works Cited

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