EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLACEMAKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY ON THE REO TOWN DISTRICT OF LANSING, MICHIGAN.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the relationship between the concept of Placemaking and levels of community engagement, focusing on the REO Town District of Lansing, Michigan as the case study. In order to begin the research a basis of existing knowledge was gathered on the concept of "place", Placemaking, and their existing relationship. Using this theoretical base a two-part survey was created to distribute to a sample of residents and workers of the REO Town district asking questions about their community, interest in Placemaking, and general demographic information. The data gathered from these surveys was plotted on a scatter plot after each respondent was coded on a scale of negative seven to seven based on their responses to each section of the survey. The analysis of these charts, and this research overall, aims to understand if Placemaking can increase levels of community engagement or if high existing levels of community engagement can make implementing Placemaking projects easier.

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Ch. 1: Introduction

Ever since Placemaking initiatives first became a popular method of building a "sense of place" the concept has gone hand in hand with community engagement. It is important for residents to be engaged in successful communities, otherwise there will be a lack of human activity in the public sphere. However, achieving high levels of community engagement can often times be a struggle for many communities, especially those that are economically struggling. The purpose of this study is to identify if existing levels of community engagement can lead to the successful implementation of Placemaking projects, or if Placemaking can be used as a method to help increase the levels of citizen engagement in a community. Ideally, in the future, this research can be used to help organizations find sites where Placemaking initiatives may be more successful and shape policy for non-profits or municipalities looking to create a strong sense of place.

Placemaking is a planning and management approach for public places that involves what currently exists in a local community, including current assets and potential.[1] This approach is often implemented with the intent of creating spaces that help to create a sense of place and promote healthy social interaction for citizens. The hypothesis of the thesis is that the concept of "place" and Placemaking initiatives can be used to create levels of community engagement and bring people together. Through educating individuals on Placemaking and other planning tools the public and planners can create potential community engagement opportunities that organizations, municipalities, or citizens may currently be unaware of.

The body of research on the feasibility of Placemaking is already significant, as is the discussion regarding how to increase levels of community engagement. However, exploring the relationship between these two theoretical bodies can help yield new insight on the foundation of

the concept of Placemaking. The concepts of "place" and "community engagement" can often be vague, thus it is to clearly define these concepts, which will be accomplished in the literature review. In order to test the theoretical link between Placemaking and community engagement a case study of REO Town was used that incorporated survey research and statistical analysis.

In addition to adding to the theoretical knowledge of this topic this research can be beneficial to professionals in the planning field and officials of smaller municipalities. Placemaking has been growing in popularity in Michigan in recent years, and by exploring ways to help to further justify its implementation throughout the state it can help further spread the awareness of planning tools that regular citizens can utilize. This can be increasingly beneficial for small, or struggling, municipalities who often lack resources to embark on large development projects or to find ways to motivate apathetic citizens. REO Town was chosen for the case study in large part because it is a struggling community, but there have been great strides made in recent years to make the district a more appealing place to live, work, and visit. The district also is home to the REO Town Commercial Association, a local non-profit that could potentially use this research to help assist in future Placemaking endeavors.

A final reason that this research could be significance comes from its implementation. The survey instrument includes definitions of Placemaking and links for local comprehensive plans that will encourage respondents to further research this subject. If this survey were recreated in separate communities then it could be used as a tool to both gather data and inform the public simultaneously. The concepts discussed in the paragraphs above were used to assist in the creation of the research hypothesis and methodology.

The analysis of Placemaking and community engagement proceeds in five stages. First, a review of the planning and community literature was done to create the theoretical concepts that

this research is based on. Second, this research was used to create the survey instrument, which was then distributed to the residents of REO Town. Third, the survey data was gathered and the aggregate data from the responses was compiled on SurveyMonkey. Fourth, the results were analyzed by placing the respondents' answers on a chart based on their answers. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the analysis and the initial research question was answered.

Ch. 2: Literature Review

In order to analyze the relationship between civic engagement and levels of activity in Placemaking initiatives several terms need to be discussed. First of all a definition of "place" must be established, second a clear definition of civic engagement must be outlined for this paper so that the relationship between the two can be clearly understood. The first part of this section begins with a discussion of the literature on the topic of "place", and an overview of what type of Placemaking initiatives are currently being implemented by communities. The second portion aims to define what community engagement means, and since there are differing opinions on this the literature used will work to find common ground in order to create a working definition for the evaluation portion of this paper. Finally, there will be a review of current literature and case studies on how Placemaking has already been used to improve areas and the effect it had on the community.

2.1 Place

Yi-Fu Tuan discusses what defines "space" in his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, however, more must be added to the definition in order to have a complete sense of the intricate systems that create a functional place. In this section Tuan's book will be discussed first, in order to set the foundation of the definition by discussing the relationship between space and place, and why people need both of these elements to survive. Next the human aspect will be added to the place by using research from Jane Jacobs' book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Finally, Kevin Lynch's book *Managing the Sense of a Region* will provide one of the final elements that add to the definition of "place", management and governance structures.

Tuan begins *Space and Place* by describing how people exist and live in space, and that the space around us is representative of freedom.[2] But as an infant or non-intellectual being the feeling of space is not formalized because there is no structure to it. In order to structure the world around you intelligence is needed, and without intellectual acts and senses the worlds surrounding people would never have any worth.[3] As humans begin to grow they begin to create more specific ideas of the space that surrounds them, and they begin to make attachments to objects and features of certain localities. The physical realm that surrounds people is not only structured by human senses, but it is formed in relation to the individual human body.

According to Tuan, without the human body there are no specific principles of spatial organization. However, when taking the posture and form of the human body and the distance between human beings into account, Tuan describes the spatial organization of the previously non-descript space. Tuan writes that since the human body usually maintains an upright and forward position space is laid out around the body by front-back and right-left axes.[4] What is laid out in front of the person is taken in visually, which leads Tuan to say that it is "illuminated" because it can be observed, while the space behind the body can never be visualized.[5] Because whatever is oriented in front of the human body is what is visualized that is the direction that people move, which makes the front and back axis of motion primary, and the left and right orientation around us secondary.[6] This, however, only describes the space immediately around an individual person; the second measure of spatial organization according to Tuan is measured in terms of distance between humans. In order to measure distance a central point must first be established, which varies depending on individual humans. The central point is often defined as an individual's home, since it is the center of their world.[7] The human body is also necessary to measure the distance of space, since they are the ones who understand if significant people and

objects are near or far from themselves and at the smaller capacity manmade objects and actual portions of the human body can be used as measuring tools.[8]

The space around an individual person is free for them to explore past their present surroundings, and the perceived distance that any individual needs to travel throughout space is augmented by using a tool like an automobile, since it makes distant spaces accessible.[9] The human ability to travel continents and utilize their freedom to traverse space is a spatial skill that varies based on the technological achievement of various societies. The advancement of society led to the creation of architectural form and the built environment which then defines a place based on sensory perception.[10] Humans are aware of what they are constructing when making the built environment around them, and the creation of specific places in the space that is both oriented around, and occupied by, humans is the unique tie that makes both space and place necessary for human survival.

Tuan's conclusion is essentially that while space is the abstract area that humans survive in, it is impossible to discuss space without discussing the physical places or objects that define the space.[11] Both places and space are necessary for human survival, since there needs to be both a sense of attachment to a safe area and the freedom to travel space.[12] This book is important for building the basic formation of the physical world, which could be considered the "place" in Placemaking. Abstract space is formed by the orientation of the human body and distance between significant other places or individuals, while the actual places are physical, built environments that occupy this space. According to Tuan, places are stable areas that people are attracted to due to the safety and feeling of enclosure, and because they are humanized areas that act as the center of human activity and established values.[13]

City building and urban design principles are also an important aspect of the physical built environment. Urban design principles have long been established as an important part of the relationship between buildings and public open spaces, which is pivotal in creating spaces for human use. Central public plazas must be open enough so that its users can interact with the built environment and other users. The artistic element of successful urban design assists public spaces in becoming functional areas for commercial activity, economic growth, and discussion of public affairs.[14] Important design elements of these spaces can include the relationship to the buildings size and height, street access, and proper placement of trees and monuments so that they do not obstruct the line of sight.[15]

A physical place is still incomplete without human beings living and traveling through it, similar to a human body missing blood. Human activity breathes life into a place since they are its primary users. Human contact creates action on the streets and sidewalks that bring people into the area, creates a sense (or lack thereof) of safety, and creates a sense of togetherness. Jane Jacobs discusses social interaction in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which is an attack on current city planning practices. Jacobs believes that the ideal city neighborhood is too large to breed this human contact, yet too small to be classified as a full city district.[16] She believes that the correct size for a neighborhood is one that achieves harmony between personal privacy and various degrees of personal contact, his way that people can maintain their personal lives while being a part of the social society that they are a part of.[17] Living in a smaller area with more people interacting in public seems as if it could be detrimental to the safety of pedestrians, or could breed a habitat for crime, however, Jacobs' work actually proves that more eyes on the street actually make the neighborhood safer.

High traffic city districts and neighborhoods can be overwhelming when many residents pass by on their daily routines, so it is paramount that people are not intimidated by this and feel safe walking. Jacobs uses this information to create a theory that she calls "eyes on the street", which is a way that public activity can mitigate crime. Jacobs theorizes two ways that could make deserted streets safer: adding police presence or thinning out the city.[18] However, thinning out a city may actually offer more opportunities for crime to thrive, while other districts like the North End of Boston, Jacobs' oft referenced case study in the book, are some of the safest streets in America despite being dense and in a poor area of town.[19] To be a safe street it must have three qualities, which includes a clear demarcation between public and private space, citizen eyes on the street, and fairly continuous usage on the sidewalks.[20] All of these increase the number of eyes on the street, since people will be more inclined to walk on the sidewalks or view the street from their private property. People are necessary to keep sidewalks safe, which means that density is key for city districts, and diversity stabilizes these environments.

Diversity and density, of humans and uses, give a place economic and social reassurance because these elements supplement each other to create a complete neighborhood and make it convenient for people to live there.[21] Diversity in uses makes it opportune for people to find housing options and jobs, which makes places appealing for all demographics to move to the district, which in turn allows for all residents to become involved in their society in a variety of ways. In a neighborhood, life attracts life, which makes density important because it leads to human contact.[22] If a place loses these elements they quickly can become dangerous and uninhabited, essentially creating blight and high vacancy rates. This adds meaning to place, moving it past a stationary, man-made development to a vivid landscape full of human activity and social interaction. A place requires a human element to bring it life, which in turns brings in

more life in the form of potential residents, businesses, and visitors. Ample city density and human activity brings safety by increasing the number of eyes on the street and a safe environment for pedestrians.

Creating a sense of safety blends urban design and human activity to ensure that civilians are safe from undesirable activity and other threats, such as busy roads or highways. The threat of disagreeable people or criminal behaviors can cause communities to preemptively remove public seating or street vendors as a measure of prevention, which in turn discourages positive human activity.[23] An example of this occurred in the United States following terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001; when large buildings cancelled public events in their plazas in fear of potential threats, effectively eliminating any positive interaction in those spaces.[24] For eyes on the street to be an effective safety measure public space needs to be designed for positive human activity, which includes a range of access, uses and activities, comfort, and aesthetic image.[25]

Civilian self-governance in the form of "eyes on the street" is important to create a web of informal social structure in communities. However, formal governance and rules in the form of local municipalities or legislation is necessary to support the region. Public management is an equally important facet of "place" because it puts rules in place for the public and the governmental structure is responsible for the welfare of the neighborhood.[26] Experiencing a place requires sensory recognitions of human surroundings (as described by Tuan), and public management and governance is way to put these senses to use in a social aspect.[27]

Places that simply combine the built environment and humans run into problems because people are unable to identify how they fit into the places around their home. Rules need to be in place that are developed with the local people in mind, and administered to help increase the local areas sense of place and personal identity.[28] However, because human populations and

places vary so differently it is important to realize at the local level that district rules will vary to fit the locale. Place and time are important aspects to take into account when creating rules, for example, some old places wish to be preserved as they always have been or communities may wish to open underused areas for safe use at all time.[29]

Rules regarding the management of places and people make it much easier for people to meet and interact with each other in the public realm. In larger places they regulate mass meetings and special events like parades, or they can manage the pattern of uses to separate groups of people and ensure privacy. Being able to manage communication in public places because it is the basis of creating human activity, and open communication is necessary to cultivate and organize the political power of the masses.[30] These rules control the web of human life that circulates throughout physical places and creates a viable connection between physical space and human life.[31] Additionally this will help ensure the well-being of human life in the public realm and move groups from observers of public space to active citizens.

Two potential ways that a public agency could manage a place is developing sensory policy for the public and recommend developmental regulations. The sensory quality of a place refers to the look, sound, touch, and smell of a place and how these qualities affect the well-being of individuals who live there.[32] Planning tools can be used to help guide the sensory qualities of a place, such as zoning ordinances that help to monitor the aesthetic qualities of an area through regulations that control things such as signage and vegetation. Public management and sensory qualities in a community often times go hand-in-hand, and should be considered regularly in public management since it helps to guide the aesthetics of a community and assist in the well-being of residents and visitors.[33]

Sensory policies require public involvement in the form of public review or participation, such as voting to create institutional change, to improve the seemliness of the administration.[34] Developmental regulations can be used to install public controls for the physical space, for example, regulating open space enclosures, the preservation of fine settings, and managing community amenities.[35] Both of these management tools can be tailored to specific locations, and are used to enhance the sensory aspect of the place for the people there. The important thing to keep in mind when analyzing a place is the inherent political aspect involved in creating the "sense of place". The governing body of a locality has the ability to control the physical look and the human pattern of places as large as regions and as small as city neighborhoods.

Proper management of a space can have positive effects in various aspects of planning and regulating spaces. Places that are not planned or are unregulated can actually degrade the quality of the space by leading to an increase in segregation and social inequality.[36] Quality management can help to alleviate the threat of crime and help to integrate vulnerable groups into the community, making public places a more welcoming place for minorities and safer for the general public.[37] One common misunderstanding with public management may be that it has to come from a structured organization, however, managerial interests can come from various groups of people including users, non-users, owners/managers, public officials, and designers. Users, which include anyone in the community who uses the space, help the space look inviting and create engagement in the space, while non-users (generally the same demographic) have an effect on the tax base that funds the space.[38] Managers/owners and designers work to improve the aesthetics, maintenance, and profit/return on investment of the space.[39] Public officials also play a significant role in the relationship of the project to city codes, standards, and guidelines as

well as the economic development of the space.[40] Together, all members of the community must work together to effectively manage public spaces.

The section above is meant to build a concept of place from the ground up. This includes building a stationary, man-made place for people to inhabit and groups of people to interact with each other and utilize this place. To manage this area a formal government structure is needed to control the human element and increase the sensory aspect of the place beyond what the "eyes on the street" can provide. All of these elements combined work to create a sense of place for the area. Sense of place is the combinations of elements that make a place unique and appealing.[41] This is where the concept of Placemaking has its roots as an approach to building a "sense of place" and planning for a public space based on a local community's assets and inspiration.[42] Placemaking is not a new term, having roots in Yi-Fu Tuan's work in the 1960's, however, it has begun to increase in popularity throughout the world.

Placemaking also has roots in the concept of New Urbanism, a planning philosophy that began in the 1980s that encapsulates the art of Placemaking in urban design.[43] New Urbanism is based on the following principles: walkability, connectivity, mixed-use and diversity, mixed housing, quality architecture and urban design, traditional neighborhood structure, increased density, smart transportation, sustainability, and quality of life.[44] New Urbanism takes the existing culture and history of a place and blends it with these principles to attempt to create a place that breeds human interaction and engagement.[45] While New Urbanism seems like a practical, human-centered planning approach it has not existed without some criticism. It is argued by some that New Urbanist developments more often look like successful urban neighborhoods than actually are successful urban neighborhoods, and the focus on aesthetics does not lend much to creating the community.[46] Zoning segregates districts in New Urbanist

developments and leads to reliance on automobiles, which violates the New Urbanist principles

of smart transportation and walkability. Placemaking has come to popularity following New

Urbanism, and has focused on the importance of utilizing existing neighborhoods and public

spaces as inviting spaces for people.[47] Placemaking does embody several New Urbanist

principles, yet it takes existing places and aims to make them inviting and lively, rather than

creating new developments from the ground up.

Practical approaches to Placemaking did not start until the mid-1990's and later by

programs such as the Michigan Municipal League and Project for Public Spaces. However, on

the national scale Project for Public Spaces has been implementing a comprehensive

Placemaking approach in communities throughout all U.S. states since the mid-1970's utilizing

the thought process of scholars such as Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte.[48] PPS' goal is to take

community assets and use them to create quality public spaces by using the social identity of a

place to create patterns of use that facilitate social interaction.[49] The PPS approach lays out the

following guidelines to help communities: create a vision using community input, create a plan

that embodies this vision, and ensure implementation of the plan.[50] This framework is

universally the approach that PPS has implemented throughout the world; however, it does

require community input to be successful.

Evaluating the success of Placemaking can be difficult due to citizens and communities

individual preferences. However, Project for Public Spaces has stated that there are four general

attributes that successful places share: accessibility, comfortability, sociability, and people

engaged in activities.[51] To evaluate these attributes PPS has created a Place Diagram (shown

below in Figure 1, pulled from Project for Public Spaces) that shows "Place" in the center,

surrounded by the four key attributes listed above. Beyond these attributes in the next ring there

are intuitive or qualitative aspects that relate to each attribute that allows individuals to judge a place.[52] Finally in the third ring there are quantitative aspects of the initial attribute that individuals can measure a place on with statistics. For example, if the attribute is comfortability one intangible in the second ring to judge a place on is "safe", which can be statistically measured by crime statistics.[53] These attributes of "Place" are not guaranteed ways to successfully evaluate places, but PPS has provided a template that allows and individual to evaluate what makes a great place based on visual cues or numerical data.

Figure 1: The Place Diagram

Source: http://www.pps.org/refernce/grplacefeat/

2.2 Applied Placemaking

In Michigan, Placemaking has been a successful approach in communities of all sizes, evidenced by the PlacePlans process from the Michigan Municipal League. The purpose of PlacePlans is to assist local communities utilize their place-based assets as economic drivers.[54] These plans have shown effectiveness in communities of varying sizes and with projects of varying degrees of difficulty, giving proof to the public that Placemaking can be a workable approach regardless of what assets they currently possess. For example, the City of Allegan, population 4,998, asked for assistance with the preparation of a plan for an extensive riverfront redevelopment project. Despite the small size of the city they have enhanced storefront facades and renovated historic buildings and the Veteran's Riverfront Park, which contributes to the economic development of Allegan.[55]

Comparatively, larger cities like Midland (population of 21,355) have asked for assistance with smaller projects, specifically improving its farmers markets. While this seems like a much smaller process than an entire riverfront redevelopment it will result in similar end results for the community: the creation of a sense of place, creating economic growth, and bringing more people to riverfront and downtown districts. Midland asked for assistance from MML in order to help take their assets, mainly the river, network of trails, and Main Street, to help develop a plan for economic growth. Even though this may seem like a simple project to implement it still requires an intensive planning process and research on national economic trends related to local food and if the public would have enough interest to support the project.[56]

Placemaking also has been implemented and shown promise in much larger cities. Michigan Municipal League has worked to create a PlacePlan for the City of Detroit (population 713,777) that included the redevelopment of a vacant, city-owned brownfield. Ideally, this PlacePlan would help create a plaza for gathering, a shared marketspace for local entrepreneurs,

and improvement of neighborhood at the intersection of Vernor and Livernois.[57] The Detroit

PlacePlan is unique because it provides long-term and short-term goals for the redevelopment,

rather than a one-time plan that is expected to show long-term results. The short-term goals

should help build confidence and be more affordable for Detroit and focus explicitly on the 7-

acre brownfield parcel. The long-term goals are much more extensive and affect the surrounding

area by improving the street network and prioritizing redevelopment around the intersection by

using the original parcel as the districts lynch pin site.[58]

Some cities can take Placemaking initiatives into their own hands and create successful

programs without assistance from larger, national or state organizations. Madison, Wisconsin has

had a successful Placemaking program since 1999 thanks to grant funding from the city

government and continued local support for the program. In the city limits of Madison,

neighborhood associations, business associations, or other community organizations can apply

for grants through the Neighborhood Grant Program for projects that benefit the public and are

free and open to all citizens.[59] This program aims to enhance the community through local

Placemaking projects that will eventually improve all public spaces in Madison. This program

also aims to educate citizens on how Placemaking can benefit the community by providing

educational links for applicants since it recognizes that Placemaking has been happening for

years, although many citizens are unaware what they were participating in.

2.3 Community Engagement

Defining community engagement is a not an easy task, since the term varies greatly in its

usage depending on the research context or time period that it is used. First, a brief definition

will be used to give a baseline definition of community engagement, then the term will be broken

down and a working definition of community engagement will be created to be used for the

analysis of this paper. After the term is defined it is necessary to have a brief discussion of community engagement in action, and what being civically engaged means. Finally, as technology rapidly increases traditional community engagement has started to mutate (especially among youth), so a modern definition of the term will be included.

One difficulty with defining community engagement is that the term often changes to fit the interests of the researcher. Several ways that community engagement can be classified as are community service, collective action, political involvement, and social change.[60] Brief definitions of each of these categories are included within Table 1 below based on Adler and Goggin.

Table 1: Types of Engagement and Activities

Type of Engagement	Activities
Community Service	Local volunteering, group activities, embracing the role of an active citizen in a community.
Collective Action	Attempting to improve society, spurring social change through a group movement, public collaboration on social issues.
Political Involvement	Anything that involves government action, voting, solving problems through political process.
Social Change	Focuses on social change, shaping the future of the social aspect of a community.

Source: Adler and Goggin, 238-239

The chart above, taking various definitions provided in Richard Adler and Judy Goggin's article *What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"?,* have several aspects in common that are important

for building a comprehensive definition. First, all of the activities focus on the local community and its future prospects. Second, all of the definitions include gathering together and collaborating on how to solve problems through group movements. In effect this will help lead to an improved quality of life for local communities since each resident will be contributing to the larger part of the social fabric of the neighborhood.[61] The first portion of the definition of community engagement in terms of this paper is that it requires citizen action in some form at the local level.

A more comprehensive definition of engagement will be used for this paper in order to be able to research community engagement as a whole rather than through a narrow lens. Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone*, offers a complete definition of community engagement despite not actually providing a section that explicitly defines this term. Rather, Putnam discusses this term by looking at it as the opposite of civic disengagement in terms of club meetings, committee service, philanthropic endeavors, and electoral turnout.[62] This includes activities from each section of the table above and synthesizes them into one definition that includes a myriad of community aspects. However, what this definition fails to discuss is the inherent political nature that is included in this term.

Engagement requires that people become active as citizens and actively participate in the American Democratic process nationally and at their local municipality, on a smaller scale. This gives way to the success of participatory democracy and social responsibility that is required for the political process.[63] While this process does not need to be political, it is necessary to an extent as active community engagement requires citizens to be more involved and knowledgeable in local problems, which is often supported by interaction with local elected officials. Political and social awareness may not be the direct consequence of engagement but it

makes citizens more aware of social issues and raises questions that active citizens will continue to pursue.[64] The second portion of the definition of community engagement is that it is inherently political, regardless of the nature of the engagement, because it evokes what it truly means to be a citizen and guides people towards understanding political awareness and social justice. While citizens may not seemingly be involved politically, there is legislation in place that allows for the formation of neighborhood associations and non-profits.

Finally, the third portion of the working definition of community engagement is that it must be purposeful and public. Engagement is not an accidental occurrence and citizens must be consciously engaged in accomplishing their mission.[65] Community engagement has to be directed as the public sphere and community or else it would be considered a personal endeavor rather than something that addresses social issues. This also helps understand how this engagement can help play a role in creating a public space. Since community engagement involves the public sphere and requires local collaboration it often times has to take space in a public space, and the more populated the public space the more opportunities for engagement.[66]

Taking all of this into account, the working definition for community engagement for this paper is an inherently political action that is consciously done in the public sphere through citizen action, generally at the local level. This definition will be used in the analysis portion of the paper to evaluate the results of the survey completed for the REO Town Case Study. However, maintaining this definition over time should not be difficult despite how rapid advances in technology have been changing community engagement strategies. The basic political and structural growth of small local communities has always been closely tied with civic life of American citizens. Regardless of the time period electoral politics and political activity are fueled by the communication that is bred through engagement, and despite technologies rapid

increase this tenant of community engagement should remain the same. However, technological advances may make the process of engaging citizens much easier.

One example of how smartphones and communication devices can make community engagement easier is through the creation of electronic applications (apps) that enhance the communication levels of the community. "Civic apps" can be used to increase the ease at which people can send in data or report problems to improve their local community.[67] An example of a civic app is SeeClickFix, a platform that is meant to allow people to collect feedback on problems and create solutions for urban communities through allowing members to report problems, interact with local officials, export data to address stakeholders, and review data on community trends.[68] Apps like these still enhance communication and concern the public space of the community, however, it simply eliminates the time required to write letters or drive to locations to meet with the community or public officials.

This digital era of engagement is causing the traditional idea of community engagement to shift while also making engagement easier for younger generations, although excessive reliance on digital interaction may also alienate those who do not own or use digital media. Electronic trends such as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge have allowed for volunteerism and advocacy to spread across the United States by simply having people post videos online and share it within their immediate social circle.[69] Social networking is one reason for enhanced digital communication, which can lead to enhanced civic activity, since it is estimated that 39% of adults took part in political activity through social networking sites in 2013.[70] Advertising this engagement is significantly faster than traditional methods due to the fact that it eliminates communication time.

Digital engagement will never be equivalent to physical social gatherings or collective

action in the public sphere. However, it does create some engagement and could possibly

mitigate the decreasing trends in civic engagement in America. Engagement levels have been

decreasing in America in recent years, a trend that has been mainly affecting younger

generations. The generation who was growing up through the Great Depression and World Wars

are now more likely to work together to solve common objectives than today's youths.[71]

Electronic apps and social media cannot directly lead to increased turnout at the voting polls but

it can create a user-friendly environment for today's youth to become more aware of social

problems and grow into civically engaged adults.

2.4 The link between Civic Engagement and Placemaking

In theory, Placemaking and community engagement are intertwined in the sense that

Placemaking can help increase engagement, and vice versa. Citizens can be the creators of

successful cities, and while a "place" can be appealing, Placemaking requires an element of

"making" to be effective. If residents do not engage in community building and social justice, the

physical qualities of space will not be utilized to their full capacity.[72] Placemaking can lead to

the creation of pride in a local community and create an attachment for local residents to the

place where they reside. The physical place's aesthetics and opportunities for gathering are what

help people learn to love where they live, which should also theoretically boost engagement.[73] It

is important to note that the core of civic engagement is the community, and without the people it

is impossible to begin having a lively place.

It is no question that citizens have the potential to wield significant power, however,

planners and community organizers often misjudge what processes can most effectively build

social capital. A major problem with democracy is not who holds the power, but if these groups

can unify for a common purpose that reflects the community's aspirations.[74] Community

Placemaking efforts can provide an outlet for citizens to work together constantly throughout the

idea formation, planning, and implementation of a process.[75] Engagement throughout the

Placemaking process is positive for the community since it leads to increased organizational

capacities and builds trust within the community.[76] The following case studies are evidence how

Placemaking initiatives are founded on and made successful through effective community

engagement.

Fabulous Fridays in West Branch, MI is an initiative taken up by West Branch business

owners to hold a weekly event downtown that revitalized the streets during the summer after

normal business hours. This event did not require infrastructure changes, but brought people

together to help better use the existing public space downtown. The accomplishments of this

project include boosting downtown business by 10-15%, encouraging social interactions and

walkability in the community, and growing a sense of pride in the community.[77] This may not

seem like a difficult project to set up, however, without continued public support it would not be

possible. Local business owners are continually responsible for providing seating and reaching

out to neighborhoods to advertise the event.[78] Local government officials also must be brought in

to ensure that the event is in compliance with local regulations and ordinances. This event helps

to create a welcoming place where people can visit and enjoy, which takes existing community

assets and uses them to their highest and best use.

On the opposite side of the spectrum local initiatives can be intensive, infrastructure

altering projects that rely on large budgets and more community investment. Boyne City Main

Street, initially started by a small group of volunteers, has turned into a large project with a

$400,000 annual budget that has led to a dozen façade renovations, new restaurants and stores, a

farmers market, annual downtown events, and a multimillion dollar mixed-use complex.[79]

Overall the project has been recognized as the Michigan Main Street program of the year and has

partnered with the city on over six million dollars in downtown infrastructure investment, which

has led to the creation of an environment that attracts residents and outside visitors for various

activities.[80]

Boyne City Main Street relies on management and investment from the entire

community, including constant collaboration with state and government agencies and local

institutions such as the city government and chamber of commerce. The actual organization

would cease to exist without citizen engagement as well, since the governance of the program is

heavily composed of volunteers. The program has grown so much since its inception that it is

now governed by a nine-person board and has a full-time salaried program management who

receives staff support from Boyne City.[81] The program also has four Main Street committees

(promotion, design, organization, and economic restructuring) that are completely ran by citizen

volunteers, along with volunteer groups that manage special projects such as festivals or farmers

markets.[82] Boyne City Main Street is an example of how citizen interest and engagement can

take a stagnant organization and turn it into one of the most successful Placemaking initiatives in

the state.

In terms of this research it is necessary to define these ambiguous terms in order to

attempt to understand the effect that community engagement has on Placemaking initiatives. The

terms "place" and "community engagement" had to be clearly defined in terms of this paper in

order to successfully create a survey instrument based on these theoretical concepts. It has been

established here that a place is a stationary, built environment with a governance structure,

residents, and public visitors. Community engagement has since been defined as an inherently

political set of conscious, social citizen actions in their local community. Placemaking can be

divided into both a physical sphere (Place) and a social sphere (Making), and exploring the

overlap between these two spheres should ideally help locate an environment where Placemaking

initiatives can be successful. Once this has been established it can help to answer the research

question of whether "place" helps to create engagement, or engagement helps to create "place".

<center>**Ch. 3: Methodology**</center>

This section will discuss the research methods used to help evaluate the relationship between levels of community engagement and Placemaking initiatives. This includes discussing the problems that need to be considered when researching this subject, methods of research used, creation of the survey instrument, potential respondents, and data collection. This will include evaluating the potential variables that could affect the survey results and why REO Town, Lansing was chosen for the case study. The research discussed in the Preliminary Research section (3.1) was used as the foundation for the research's hypothesis statement, which will be evaluated by the survey instrument discussed in the Survey Creation section (3.3).

3.1 Preliminary Research

With the idea of Placemaking gaining significant traction in the State of Michigan the timing for this research is advantageous in relation to the climate of planning work in the state. While the idea of Placemaking is not new, Placemaking projects have become highly publicized in recent years through the efforts of organizations such as the Michigan Municipal League. Initial research in this paper on Placemaking identified many avenues for potential analysis and eventually evaluating the relationship between community interest in Placemaking initiatives and levels of community engagement. Ideally, the case study of REO Town will identify favorable environments for Placemaking projects to find success by exploring how engaged residents and workers relates to how well Placemaking efforts are understood or accepted.

The literature review discussed a conceptual image of Placemaking and community engagement, which is necessary to frame the thesis. The research for the literature review was completed in three phases that combined to create a thematic framework that defined these concepts. The concept of Placemaking proceeded first defining "place" before adding in the

<center>25</center>

"making" element. This approach used historical literature from Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, and Yi-Fu Tuan to frame the concept of building place in a historical context before providing practical applications of Placemaking in the modern world. This approach exemplifies the workability of Placemaking practices by demonstrating how the historic roots of the concept of "place" tie into current projects.

The definition of community engagement can be vague, creating the challenge of a tangible, working definition of community engagement needed to evaluate levels of engagement. Research was completed on various types of community engagement activities through both a political context and a community context. After this definition was established it became possible to evaluate community engagement later in the paper in the REO Town Case Study. The final portion of the literature review research showed how community engagement and Placemaking can be related, which ties the thematic concepts outlined earlier in the literature review together and creates a lead in for the case study used later in the paper. The final research done before beginning the paper was used to create the survey instrument used for the REO Town Case Study, which will be discussed in the *Survey Creation* in this methodology chapter.

3.2 Identifying a Research Method

After gathering the initial preliminary research for the paper the next problem was deciding what method would be appropriate. A mixed methods approach was chosen to gather aggregate quantitative data and combine it with qualitative data from the same survey instrument. The purpose of this was to gather quantitative data in order to examine social trends, while being able to add in a personal human element to the study through asking short answer questions in the survey instrument.[83] The data were then used to create a case study on the REO Town District in Lansing, MI.

A single case study method was used in order to fully utilize the qualitative element of the survey responses and spend time evaluating my findings using Michigan Municipal League PlacePlans and civic engagement data gathered by PEW Research Center and other outlets. This will be used to establish validity for my case study through comparing the survey results with existing data. In order to meet the test of construct validity the REO Town Case Study will refer to the literature review for the definition of what constitutes civic engagement and interest in Placemaking, and existing studies will be used to compare the data gathered through the survey.[84]

One problem with using a single-case study method is determining external validity, and ensuring that the results of this case study survey will be applicable to other locations.[85] However, the assumption that this single case study is generalizing results that can be found elsewhere is incorrect because this case study analyzes the existing relationship between community engagement and Placemaking. The survey results are not creating a new theory, but rather taking a known relationship and using original data to help evaluate potential cases where it may be easier to implement Placemaking initiatives based on community engagement levels.

3.3 Survey Creation

The survey instrument, located in Appendix B, was informed by the concepts identified in the literature review and designed to generate enough quantitative data to uncover trends in the district and enough qualitative data to better understand the human elements of REO Town. REO Town Lansing was chosen because it is a small, measureable area that is currently undergoing main strip renovations and has an ample amount of community support for larger festivals. The survey was designed to ensure that it encapsulated correct information about the REO Town District and types of civic engagement. The citations located in the survey itself

come from John Gallagher's books *Reinventing Detroit* and *Reimagining Detroit*, the *Design Lansing: 2012 Comprehensive Plan*, and other text that has been previously used in the Literature Review. During the actual creation of the survey the questions were divided into four categories: Your Community, Placemaking, The Future, and Demographics. The survey was only given to residents and full-time workers of REO Town to ensure that only people with an intimate familiarity of the district could participate. The completed survey consists of 26 questions, containing a mixture of multiple choice, rating on a scale 1-10, and open answer.

The first section was based on questions regarding the community and engagement in REO Town. One problem with creating a survey instrument that would be distributed to the general public was a fear that words like "community or civic engagement" are not popular buzzwords that encourage people to participate.[86] In order to mitigate this fear the words "community engagement" or "civic engagement" never explicitly appear in the survey instrument, and the section is titled "Your Community" in order to appeal to the sense of pride in these residents surrounding area. There are eleven questions in this section that are primarily multiple choice questions, with the exception of two questions that ask respondents to rate the efficiency of an organization on a scale of 1 to 10. Respondents had the ability to provide their own input on several questions by asking them to provide more details on responses such as elaborating on what elections they voted in or explaining a situation where they assisted other community members in solving a problem where they live.

The second portion of the survey, "Placemaking", is aimed at helping to inform citizens at the same time as collecting data for the case study. To do this the first question in this section asks respondents to describe what comes to mind when they hear the term "Placemaking", and after they write their answer the next page provides an actual definition of the term from the

Project for Public Spaces to provide context for the remainder of the question set. This section provides space for respondents to provide written input in addition to the multiple choice questions provided, a majority of which include small sections for respondents to describe why they chose their answer, in case the multiple choice answers were not to their liking. Perhaps the greatest qualitative data gathering section in the survey is the section following the "Placemaking" section titled "The Future". This section asks if respondents are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of REO town being a desirable place to visit and live in order to gauge the attitudes of residents and workers to determine how applicable Placemaking initiatives may be. The final section of the survey is six multiple choice demographic questions, which was intentionally placed at the end of the survey so that respondents are not intimidated by personal questions and are more comfortable providing their answers.

      After the 26 survey questions were developed a consent form was created so that respondents were aware of my intentions with distributing the survey, and they understood that they would be able to withdraw at any time and the survey is voluntary. The consent form (which was required by the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board) in the beginning included a place for respondents to sign and date to acknowledge their consent, a map of REO Town, and contact information for myself and Dr. Mark Wilson of Michigan State University. Contact information was again included at the end of the survey, throughout the survey process no respondents contacted researchers with any questions relating to the survey. After the completion of the survey instrument it was sent for approval as an exempt application to the Michigan State University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) to ensure the protection of individuals who may be potential respondents. On July 1, 2015 application i049069 was approved by the Institutional Review Board as IRB number x15-644e.

The survey was distributed electronically on SurveyMonkey and in paper format for potential respondents who did not have access to the internet beginning in July 2015. The responses did not come from a random sample of people in REO Town, and was instead the survey link for SurveyMonkey was e-mailed to local businesses, posted on the REO Town Facebook page, the presidents of the neighborhood associations for Moore's Park, Fabulous Acres, and River Point, and sent out to the REO Town Commercial Association e-mail list, which was provided by the REO Town Commercial Association President and Volunteer Coordinator. Eighty-eight surveys were answered electronically on SurveyMonkey. Data gathering for the survey concluded in August 2015 with 88 responses.

3.4 Data Collection and Analyzation

Following the data gathering portion of this study the survey responses were analyzed using the data tools on SurveyMonkey. All of the aggregate data were analyzed to see if any trends emerge from the responses. This discussion of the overall responses will be included in the Case Study section of this paper. Looking at the aggregate data as a whole will also help to identify if the demographic data gathered from the survey matches what was initially gathered for the district as a whole during the research phase of the study.

In order to analyze the survey responses in aggregate the individual respondents were plotted on a scatter chart based on their responses for the community engagement (X-axis) and Placemaking (Y-axis) sections separately. Seven questions from each section were chosen and coded so that a positive response to what was asked was worth one positive point, a somewhat positive point for the response was worth a positive half-point, a somewhat negative response was worth a negative half-point, and a negative response was worth one negative point. The responses to each question in each section were totaled and placed on a scale of +7 to -7 for each

respondent. These numbers, the total score in each category for each respondent, were used as coordinates for plotting the respondents on the charts.

Once all of the respondents were plotted, trends could be discovered helping to unearth the relationship between community engagement and Placemaking in REO Town. The data will also be separated into different groups to see what group of people are the "drivers" of engagement or Placemaking in the community, and to see what group of people are the most active in the district. The data was separated to compare workers and residents and different age groups. These plots will be used to help analyze the survey in its entirety and to draw conclusions for the study.

Ch. 4: Case Study of REO Town, Lansing

The case study for the overall paper is the city district of REO Town, Lansing. REO Town is an appropriate area for this study due to its small size and the current state of the district's development and population. The area is on the long path to becoming revitalized through the efforts of local non-profits and large development projects along the Washington Avenue Corridor. Placemaking is also a relevant theme in the district, where smaller Placemaking projects have started to be implemented throughout the district. REO Town is relatively small, roughly an area of 0.5 square miles, although it has a population density comparative to the City of Lansing (3,158 people per square mile to 3,256 people per square mile).[87] The district is formed around a central strip on South Washington Avenue, which has been full of vacant store fronts until recent years. This section will cover the history, demographics, and current planning/Placemaking initiatives that are currently underway in REO Town. After building a profile of the district the aggregate data from the survey will be discussed in detail.

4.1 History

REO Town, the oldest city district in the City of Lansing, Michigan, was initially settled in 1835, twelve years before Lansing was chosen as the Capital of Michigan.[88] The name "REO Town" is derived from Ransom Eli Olds, who is often considered to be the founder of the automobile industry in America.[89] Olds created the REO Motor Company in Lansing, which was a major employer in REO Town from its inception in 1905 until it went out of business in 1975.[90] The district is comprised of three neighborhoods, which are defined by the City of Lansing and have official neighborhood associations, (Moore's Park, Fabulous Acres, and River Point) that surround the former R. E. Olds Motor Plant.[91,92]

The district has experienced some difficult times following the closing of the REO Motor Plant, which was a major employer in the capital region for seventy years. Crime was rampant in the area, in the later 1980-1990s, with hot spots for prostitution, drugs, and murder, such as the Deluxe Inn, popping up all over REO Town.[93] However, despite these hard times residents and business owners in the district still believed that there was immense potential for growth and prosperity. Steps toward this began to fall in line during 2001 when the Lansing Grand River Assembly, a General Motors Company, Inc. owned automobile assembly facility, opened and brought close to 1,300 jobs back to an area immediately bordering the district.[94] 2001 also marked the creation of the REO Town Commercial Association, a group of residents and business owners that has worked to promote various forms of development throughout REO Town.[95] The REO Town Commercial Association and City of Lansing have had success in revitalizing REO Town, which will be discussed in the current initiatives section of this chapter.

4.2 Demographics and Geography

REO Town is south of the downtown district and Capital Loop in Lansing. The physical boundaries of the district are West Malcolm X Street to the north, South Cedar Street to the east, West Mount Hope Avenue to the south, and a combination of Townsend Street and Todd Avenue to the west. A street map (Figure 15) and topographic map (Figure 16) are included in Appendix A for reference. There is no census tract that exclusively contains REO Town, and the City of Lansing does not have specific data that is unique to the difference. Per recommendation of the City of Lansing Government in order to gather U.S. Census data three block groups needed to be examined to cover the REO Town district, this information was gathered on Social Explorer. Social Explorer was the appropriate tool to use in the demographic analysis because it had the most recent dataset from the United States Census and American Community Survey.

This tool was also useful because the data was shown on a map, which helped to find what block

groups composed the district. Unfortunately, these block groups don't fit perfectly in the

boundaries of the district, and include other small residential neighborhoods. The map below,

which was taken from Social Explorer, had colored lines added to it to indicate the block groups

that compose the district. The black line shows the boundaries of the REO Town district, the

green line is Block Group 3 of Census Tract 20, the yellow line is Block Group 4 of Census

Tract 20, and the blue line is Block Group 3 of Census Tract 66.

Figure 2: Block Groups in REO Town

While these block groups do not fit perfectly in the geographical boundaries of the

district it should not have a large impact on the demographic data because it is such a small area

that it could not alter the character of the entire block group. Block Group 3, Census Tract 20 is

best indicative of the residential area of the district, and only expands one block past the district

line. Block Group 4, Census Tract 20 is also nearly entirely within REO Town, although with the

exception of some small residential blocks this block group contains the commercial strip of

Washington Avenue. Block Group 3, Census Tract 66 is the largest of the three block groups that

make up REO Town, however, it is also is the smallest part of the district and only contains

several small residential neighborhoods in the district. This block group contains a large strip of

US-127 and the Frandor Shopping Center, which means that if this was included in the overall

results it may skew the demographic information for the dense residential areas of REO Town.

The unmarked area in the map above is the Lansing Grand River Assembly facility, and has no

inhabitants.

The chart below, Table 2, will examine the population, population density, race, and

income of Block Groups 3 and 4 in Census Tract 20 and Block Group 3 of Census Tract 66. All

data found for this section uses the American Community Survey 2014 (5-year estimates) for the

data set on Social Explorer.

Table 2: Demographic Information in REO Town, 2014

	Population	Population Density	Race (number of people)	Median Household Income
Block Group 3, Census Tract 20	1,041	7,812.4 people per sq. mile	White: 835 (80.21%) Black: 127 (12.2%) Two or more races: 67 (6.44%)	$53,750
Block Group 4, Census Tract 20	738	3,591.1 people per sq. mile	White: 467 (63.28%) Black: 120 (16.26%) Two or more races: 113 (15.31%)	$23,510
Block Group 3, Census Tract 66	1,516	2,781.2 people per sq. mile	White: 1,069 (70.51%) Black: 230 (15.17%) Two or more races: 92 (6.07%)	$16,900

The total population for Block Group 3 and 4 of Census Tract 20 is 1,776, and since a

small portion of Block Group 3 of Census Tract 20 is not located in the district and several

neighborhoods from Block Group 3 Census tract 66 are in REO Town the district's population

could be hypothesized to be approximately 1,900 people. The assumption that Block Group 3 of

Census Tract 20 is REO Town's residential section is accurate because the population density is

significantly higher than the other two block groups, indicating that it is a highly residential area.

Approximately 73% of residents of Block Groups 3 and 4 of Census Tract 20 are Caucasian. The

median household income is the highest in Block Group 3 of Census Tract 20, which means that

the majority of people in this residential area may be homeowners. The median household

income drops by nearly $30,000 from Block Group 3 to Block Group 4 of Census Tract 20. This

block group also has less residential homes and has several apartment complexes, which are

indicative that people are spending less money on living expenses. These demographic numbers

are nearly identical to what was recorded in the United States 2000 Census, which was gathered

a year before the formation of the REO Town Commercial Association. In 2000 the population

in Block Group 3, Census Tract 20 was 1,068 (27 less than in 2014) and in Block Group 4,

Census Tract 20 was 898 (160 more than in 2014). The only notable change came in the

percentage of Caucasian people in Block Group 3, Census Tract 20, which increased from 59.9%

Caucasian in 2000to 80.2% in 2014.

4.3 Current Initiatives

     REO Town has begun to move away from the stigma that it is just a hot spot for crime

and dangerous activity. In recent years many physical changes have taken place down the main

strip of the district, thanks in large part to a grant from the Federal Highway Administration and

U.S. Department of Transportation. In August 2011, 13 projects in Michigan were granted

funding, including $326,100 for the REO Town Complete Streets Project in Lansing.[96] The total

cost of this project was roughly $2.8 million dollars, which was gathered from a combination of

federal, state, and city sources.[97] The funds went to widening sidewalks, installing pedestrian bump-outs and medians, bicycle lanes, and small green areas for storm water irrigation.[98]

This streetscape project was a major effort to revitalize the area surrounding the Lansing Board of Water and Light (BWL) REO Town Cogeneration Plant, which was announced in 2011 and was completed in 2013. The completion of the plant brought approximately 180 new jobs to the REO Town area and provides 20% of the Board of Water and Lights electric services.[99] The construction of the REO Town Cogeneration Plant also led to the revitalization of the former Grand Trunk Western Railroad Depot, which is now on the Michigan and U.S. Register of Historic Sites, to be used as a boardroom for the Lansing BWL.[100] The creation of the cogeneration plant and the streetscape project sparked the economic revitalization of REO Town, which has continually been filling vacant storefronts on the main strip. The formation of the commercial association in 2001 and the relocation of the offices for Studio Intrigue Architects and Cinnaire (formerly Great Lakes Capital Fund) have created a favorable climate for new businesses to find their homes on Washington Ave.[101] The main strip has seen its usual vacant buildings and criminal hotspots slowly be replaced with churches, restaurants, theaters, and non-profits.[102]

REO Town has also slowly started becoming a site for festivals and other events to be held during summer months. The REO Town Commercial Association has worked with local non-profit, REACH Studio Art Center, to put on REO Town Art Attack! for the fifth straight year in 2015. Art Attack! is a celebration of community art which encourages community members to meet up and engage each other in a public setting completely free of charge.[103] With the creation of more local restaurants on the strip smaller monthly festivals have been started to showcase the food and beverage culture of the district. The primary example would be REO

Eats, a monthly pop-up food court on Washington Avenue, where local businesses can provide limited outdoor seating in exchange for increased food traffic and consumer activity due to the festival.[104]

These current initiatives in REO Town are discussed in the *Design Lansing 2012 Comprehensive Plan*, which was created by the Planning Board of the City of Lansing and approved by City Council. The plan places a special emphasis on capitalizing on Placemaking assets in places like REO Town, due to its traditional development patterns, unique architecture, and geographic relationship to the downtown area.[105] The discussion of Placemaking in the *Design Lansing* plan focuses more on the built environment portion of Placemaking (the element of "Place"), however, it is not discussed in significant detail. In fact, he phrase "REO Town" only occurs 9 times in the 208 page plan. However, the built environment on South Washington Avenue is briefly discussed as an approach to help revitalize urban mixed-use corridors throughout the city, however, nothing specific about the district is mentioned during this section.

Despite limited discussion in the *Design Lansing* plan, the drastic and expensive renovation of REO Town's built environment combined with the engagement from local business owners has created an environment where Placemaking initiatives can thrive. This may be coming to fruition sooner rather than later, on December 2nd, 2015 REO Town won the Creative Community Award from the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, which recognized the community for its achievements and projects that show best practices in Creative Placemaking.[106,107] The purpose of the survey instrument used for this research was to help understand these trends and further the discussion of Placemaking in REO Town. The sections of the survey are representative of these two spheres of "place" and explore the relationship of citizen engagement and Placemaking using the citizens and full-time workers of REO Town.

4.4 Survey Results

During the survey distribution phase there were 88 responses from REO Town residents and workers recorded via SurveyMonkey. This means that out of the 1,779 residents located in the two major block groups of REO Town the survey was completed by approximately 4.9% of the districts population. Out of all responses 32 came from REO Town workers, while 10 respondents lived in the district over 10 years, 6 for 7-9 years, 3 for 4-6 years, 25 for 1-3 years, and 11 for less than one year. These responses for this question were promising since it indicates that the responses for the entire survey come from a mix of short- and long-term residents and people who spend their time in the district working. The survey was filled out by more females (53) than males (26), although there were nine respondents who skipped this question. A dominate portion of respondents were Caucasian (74), while the only other respondents who answered the ethnicity question indicated that they were African American (2) or two or more races (3). The demographic responses are indicative of some attention-grabbing trends in the district, demonstrated in Figure 3 and Figure 4 below.
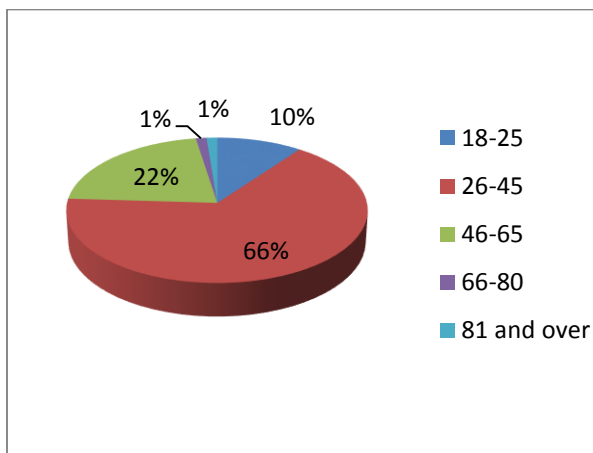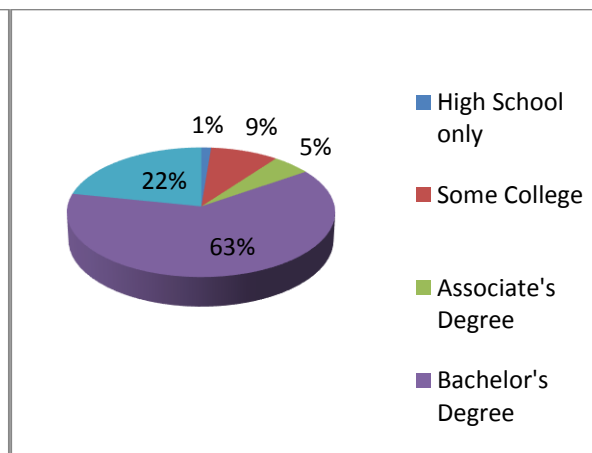

Figure 3: Age   **Figure 4: Level of Education**

Figures 3 and 4 show that a majority of residents who responded are between the ages of 26-45 and have a bachelor's degree, which is indicative that the area is a spot for young, educated individuals. A majority of respondents also are currently employed, with 67 (85.9%) being employed in a full-time position and 4 (5.13%) being employed in a part-time position, 6 respondents are retired, 1 is not employed, and 10 respondents skipped this question. Forty-seven of the 78 respondents who responded to the question on living arrangements live in a family household, while 20 live alone and only 11 live in the district with roommates.

The first section of the survey was meant to gauge resident's levels of community engagement, taking into account local politics, voting, and volunteerism. A majority of respondents indicated that they follow local Lansing politics, with 38 saying that they are actively interested and 37 are interested when matters concern their neighborhood, and only 12 respondents saying they are not interested in local politics. After recording this it was not surprising that 24 (27.3%) of respondents stated they are very familiar with the Lansing City Council, 49 (55.7%) are somewhat familiar, and only 16 (18.2%) are not familiar with the city council. However, the next question yielded opposite results, showing that only 46 (52.9%) of respondents are familiar with the REO Town Commercial Association and that 41 (47.1%) are not, despite it being a prominent non-profit in the district. The graphs below show the respondents' belief of the effectiveness of the REO Town Commercial Association (Question 4) and the Lansing local government (Question 7) on a scale of 1-10, percentages are based off of 88 total responses.
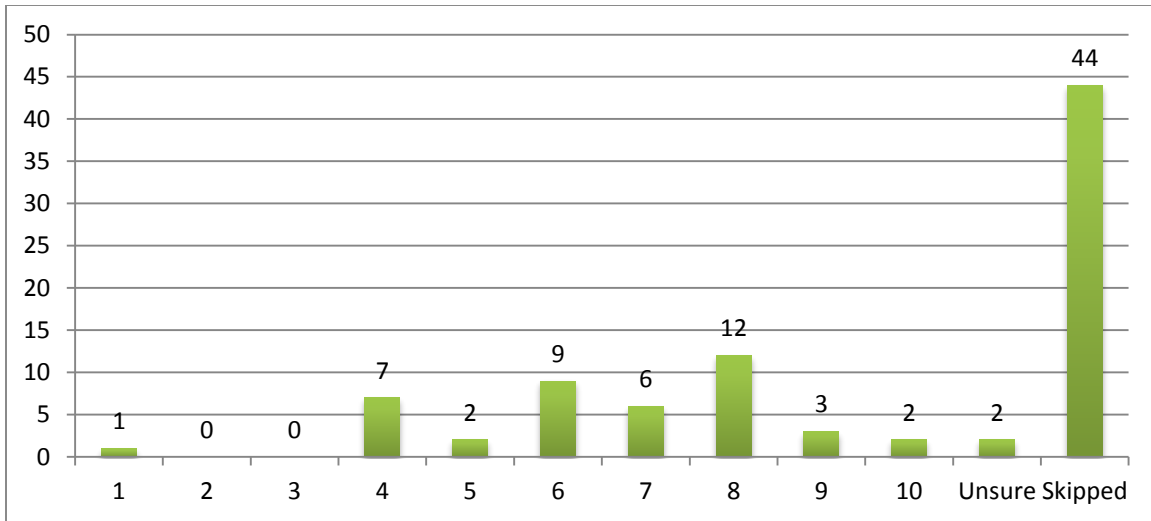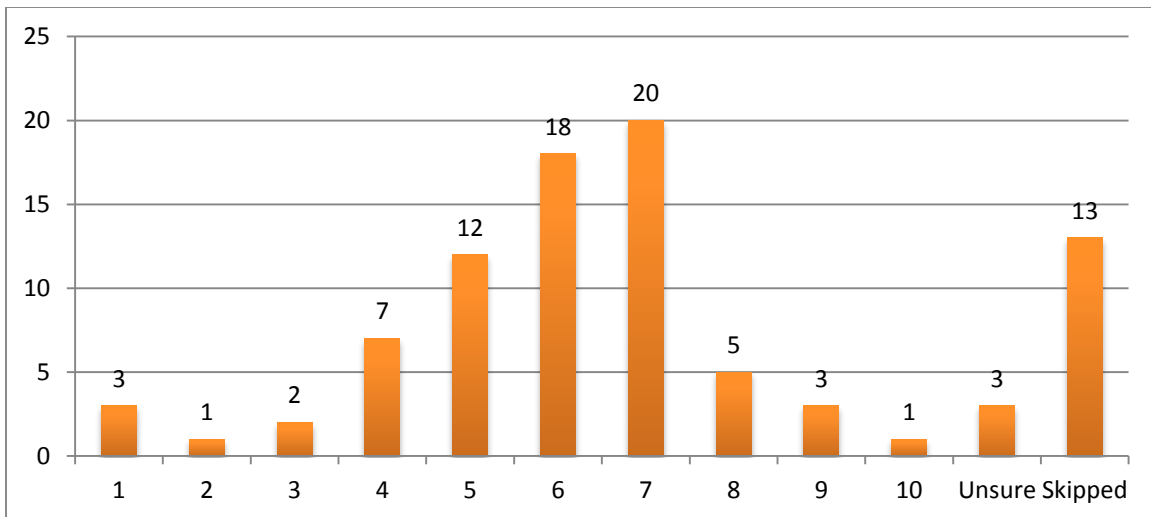
Figure 5: Performance of the RTCA

Figure 6: Performance of Lansing's local government

For Figures 5 and 6 a rating of 1 represented a high level of ineffectiveness and 10 represented that the organization was very effective. The response from Figure 5 has a relatively clustered group of responses; a majority of respondents rated the effectiveness of the non-profit between a 6 and 8. General trends show that the community views the RTCA favorably, and the

large amount of respondents that skipped this question can be attributed to the fact that the survey instrument only asked respondents who responded yes to the previous question (question 3) to respond to the follow up question (41 respondents answered "no"). Figure 6 has a more varied responses and a smaller number of respondents skipped the question. The largest groups of respondents still viewed the local government's performance relatively favorably, although it was clustered around the middle of the scale. There was one interesting response that gave the overall Lansing government a "6", but indicated that in regards to REO Town it should receive a "2", indicating that the representation in the district may be sub-par. Unfortunately, despite interest in local government, a large number of respondents are not particularly familiar with the local planning commission. Only 8 respondents would consider themselves "very familiar" with the local Planning Commission, while 29 respondents are only "somewhat familiar" and an astounding 50 respondents are not familiar at all.

Question 8, asking if the respondent was a member of any local non-profit, conservancy, or quasi-public corporation, was valuable for research on REO Town since it provided a list of community actors. While 56 (64.37%) of respondents stated they are not a member of any local organization, 31 (35.63%) indicated that they were, and 27 of those commented what organization they were a part of. The diversity in responses was indicative that community members were engaged in helping various aspects of the community, and Lansing as a whole. Organizations listed included: REO Town Commercial Association (6), Lansing Arts Council REACH Art Studio (3), ACTION of Greater Lansing (2), Moore's Park Neighborhood Association (2), St Casimir Church, Firecracker Foundation, Ingham County Women's Commission, Michigan League for Public Policy, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Friends of the River Trail, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Relay

for Life Lansing , Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, Saginaw Oakland Commercial Association, Old Town Commercial Association, American Institute of Architects Mid-Michigan, Capital Area Humane Society, Live Green Lansing, The Robin Theatre, and the Lansing Unionized Vaudeville Spectacle.

The final two questions about volunteering, questions 9 and 10, had similar answers from the previous question on organizational membership. Thirty-six respondents stated that they have spent time volunteering in the community (52 did not), which is only five more than the number of respondents who are members of community organizations. Even fewer people, 33, stated that they have worked with other local community members to solve a problem where they live in the last year. However, the final question of the engagement section yielded some positive results, 68 (78.2%) voted in an election in the past two years compared to only 19 (21.84%) that did not vote and 1 respondent that did not answer. Respondents were encouraged to comment what elections they usually voted in, resulting in 24 respondents stating that they vote in every election they can, and 7 specifying that they vote in local elections for the community.

The section on Placemaking (questions 12-20) started by asking respondents to write what came to mind when they heard the term "Placemaking", before providing them with a formal definition of the word. The responses to this question were coded into seven categories: Art, Business, Character/Identity, Community Building, Development, Unsure, and Walkability/Safety. Community Building was the most relevant theme for all of the responses with 16 of the 59 responses, and Character/Identity and Unsure both had 14 responses that fit the category. The four other categories received less than 10 responses. Figure 7, below, is a Word Cloud representation of the responses from Question 12. It is clear from looking at this that the respondents associate a sense of community with Placemaking, since the largest fonts (most cited

words) are community, place, REO Town, Lansing, and area. To a lesser extent residents

mentioned things such as play, branding, work, safe, development, parks, and business.

Figure 7: Word Cloud Representation of Survey Question 12

The *Design Lansing* comprehensive development plan discusses several strategies on

Placemaking efforts in the district, and it should be important for active REO Town residents to

be familiar with their communities plan. Unfortunately, 47 (61.04%) of respondents are not

familiar with the plan, 22 (28.57%) have not read it, and only 8 (10.39%) have read through the

plan (11 respondents skipped the question). The link to the *Design Lansing* plan was included in

the footnotes of the survey in an effort to help spread awareness of its existence in REO Town. It

is hopeful that the spreading of the survey will also help to educate citizens on local initiatives in

their community to help further potential Placemaking efforts.

Questions 14 (shown in Figure 8) and 15 (shown in Figure 9) were used to see how active

residents and workers are in the community. Only 9 respondents do not attend events in the

community, such as the festivals discussed above in the "Current Initiatives" section. The largest

group of respondents (27) in Figure 8 are heavily active in the community, and participate in a

high percentage of all events offered in the community. Figure 9 shows that only 10 respondents never visit local businesses, 4 of which were employees and not residents. These figures show that people who are tied to REO Town use their community's assets in both long-term and short-term ways. People not only plan out to attend large events at a high-rate, but frequently support local business on a consistent basis.
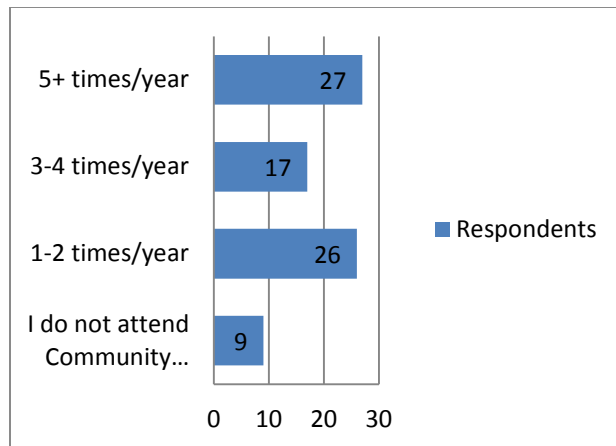

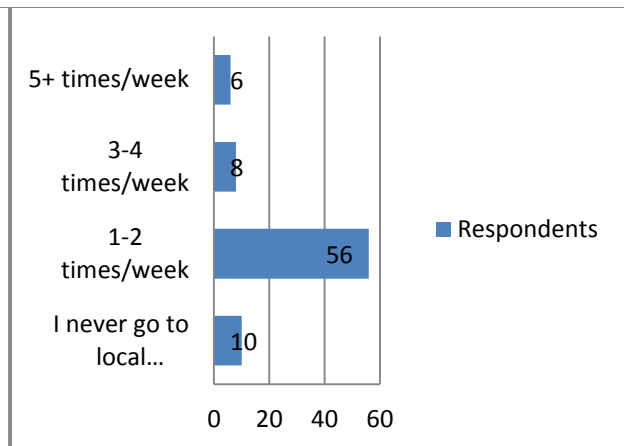**Figure 8: How often do you attend events in REO Town?**

Figure 9: How often do you visit businesses in REO Town?

When creating the survey it was important to discover if there was a sense of hope regarding the future of the district coming from the residents in order to estimate how receptive, or enthusiastic, they would be to potential Placemaking initiatives. When asked if the respondents believe that they can reinvent the identity and character of the district when working together (question 16), the results were overwhelmingly positive. Forty-two (53.16%) respondents strongly agreed they could reinvent the area and 34 (43.04%) agreed in that statement, only a total of 3 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could not work together on this endeavor (9 respondents skipped this question). To follow up on this, question 17 asked if it is important for REO Town to engage in Placemaking, which had strikingly similar results. Thirty-seven (50%) respondents strongly agreed and 34 (45.95%) agreed that the

community should engage in Placemaking, similarly only a total of 3 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement (11 respondents skipped this question).

Question 18 was created with elements of Jane Jacobs' "eyes on the street" theory, where she believes that streets are safer with more activity and citizens using the streets. This question gauges how safe residents and workers feel walking the newly renovated streetscape in REO Town. In total 30 (37.97%) feel safe walking in REO Town at all times and 38 (48.1%) respondents feel safe walking in REO Town. Encouragingly, only 6 (7.59%) people do not feel safe walking and 5 (6.33%) people do not walk in the area at all. Out of the 32 respondents who were workers in the district there was not a single respondent who indicated that they do not feel safe walking in REO Town. These results indicate that the area has come a long way since being known as a hot spot for criminal activity, and that the area has become more walkable and safe over time with the renovations.

The final two questions of the Placemaking section deal with the overall image of the district, and how people view the area. When asked to agree or disagree that REO Town is an attractive area for knowledge-based workers or young professionals to live the largest groups of respondents either strongly agreed (24) or agreed (41) with the statement. Likewise, in question 20, the two largest groups of respondents either strongly agreed (39) or agreed (36) with the statement asking if they are optimistic about the future of REO Town being a desirable place to live and visit. Overall, this indicates that the people closely associated with the district believe that there is hope for the area to become appealing to young professionals, which potentially could mean that individuals would be more motivated to participate in Placemaking initiatives that capitalize on the communities strengths.

Ch. 5: Analysis

The analysis section aims to answer the initial research question asked in the beginning of the paper: does community engagement lead to Placemaking or does the concept of "Place" lead to increased community engagement. The community engagement responses and the Placemaking responses will be put together to create a larger picture of what is going on in the REO Town community on a single graphic. The data from the survey will be analyzed taking all respondents into account, then the data will be sorted on whether or not the respondent is a REO Town resident or worker and the respondents age to see what sectors of the community are contributing to Placemaking. The charts created to analyze the data will yield insight to help validate the hypothesis statement, that Placemaking can be used to help create community engagement.

5.1 "Place" and Community

In order to take the data gathered from the survey and portray it on a single chart there needed to be an equal amount of questions from the Placemaking segment and Community Engagement segment used in order to not skew results unequally on each axis of the graph. Seven questions from each section were used in this analysis, and responses were coded so that the most positive answer receives a +1 point, a somewhat positive answer receives a +0.5 point, a somewhat negative answer receives a -0.5 point, and the most negative answer receives a -1 point. The totals for these questions were added together to create a maximum score of 7 and a minimum score of -7 on each axis. Each respondent was placed on the scatter plot, so that the score for community engagement was placed on the X-axis and the score for Placemaking was placed on the Y-axis. From the "Your Community" question set this included questions 2, 3, 5,

6, 8, 9 and 10, and the questions from the "Placemaking" section included 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19.

Seven questions that from each section that were equal in importance to the survey were pulled, and each question was coded so that the positive answers are worth an equal amount. Questions that are left unanswered are marked as zeros, so that they are neutral and do not add or subtract from the respondents total scores. The results for this section are represented on a scatter plot with four quadrants along axes of Placemaking and engagement. Respondents who fall in the top right quadrant exhibit high qualities of involvement in community engagement and high potential involvement in Placemaking initiatives. It can be assumed that if a majority of people fall into this quadrant that community engagement and Placemaking initiatives grow hand-in-hand in the community. Alternatively, respondents who fall into the lower right quadrant exhibit low levels of involvement in Placemaking and community engagement, and show the potential to grow together linearly into the top right quadrant.

The top left and bottom right quadrants are where the two ideas begin to deviate because the respondents are placed in either quadrant since they respond poorly to one of the segments. The top left quadrant shows that residents are poorly engaged in their community, but that they are interested in Placemaking initiatives. This shows that the "Place" can be used to build the community, since the creation of the place can be used to bring people together and create community engagement where it currently does not exist. In the opposite quadrant, the lower right, the alternative is true, and it shows that community engagement can be used to build a "Place". Where there are high levels of community engagement, but low levels of interest in Placemaking, the community needs to be mobilized to participate in Placemaking efforts if they

were properly informed since the community is already familiar with working together on local issues.

The scatter plot of the REO Town survey respondents are here, where each point is representative of a survey respondent (some points are representative of two respondents who scored the same):
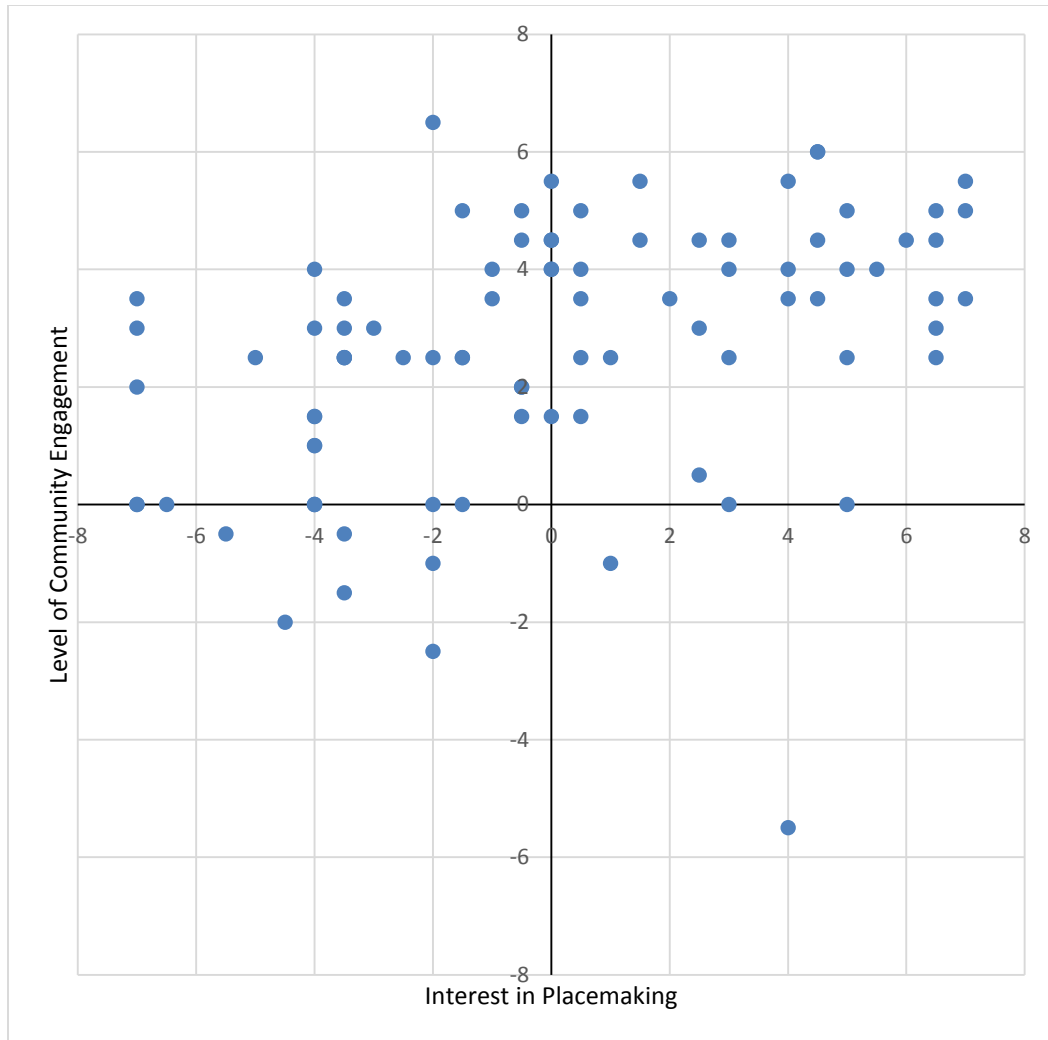

Figure 10: Community Engagement vs. Placemaking

In REO Town a majority of the respondents scored positively in terms of their interest in Placemaking initiatives, which is correspondent to the current initiatives that are underway in the district. However, the residents are divided in terms of their levels of community engagement.

This figure is indicative that there are residents in REO Town who are drivers of community engagement, and tend to be very active in the local community, and are active enough to overcome the shortcomings of residents who are less engaged. However, in the future the focus for the community should be in increase engagement since Placemaking seemingly has strong support in REO Town.

This figure shows that in this community the concept of "Place" has the potential to build the community and increase levels of community engagement in the district. There is a heavy interest in Placemaking initiatives according to the responses, even for respondents who are not engaged in the community. It is obvious that there are ways to become engaged in the REO Town community, but these residents may not have an idea of who to speak to or are unable to locate an avenue for their service. By educating residents about Placemaking or implementing Placemaking initiatives the residents can find a new way to become engaged through working to create a sense of place.

5.2 Gender

After placing the respondents on the survey as an entire group they were separated based on the respondents answer to the gender question in the demographics section. There are more females on this graph, as females were the largest group of respondents to this survey. Overall, there were 53 female respondents compared to only 26 males, while there were 9 respondents who did not answer this question. All three of these groups were placed on the chart, even the respondents who skipped the question, in order to see what gender may be more engaged in the community. The results of separating the results this way are seen below in Figure 11:
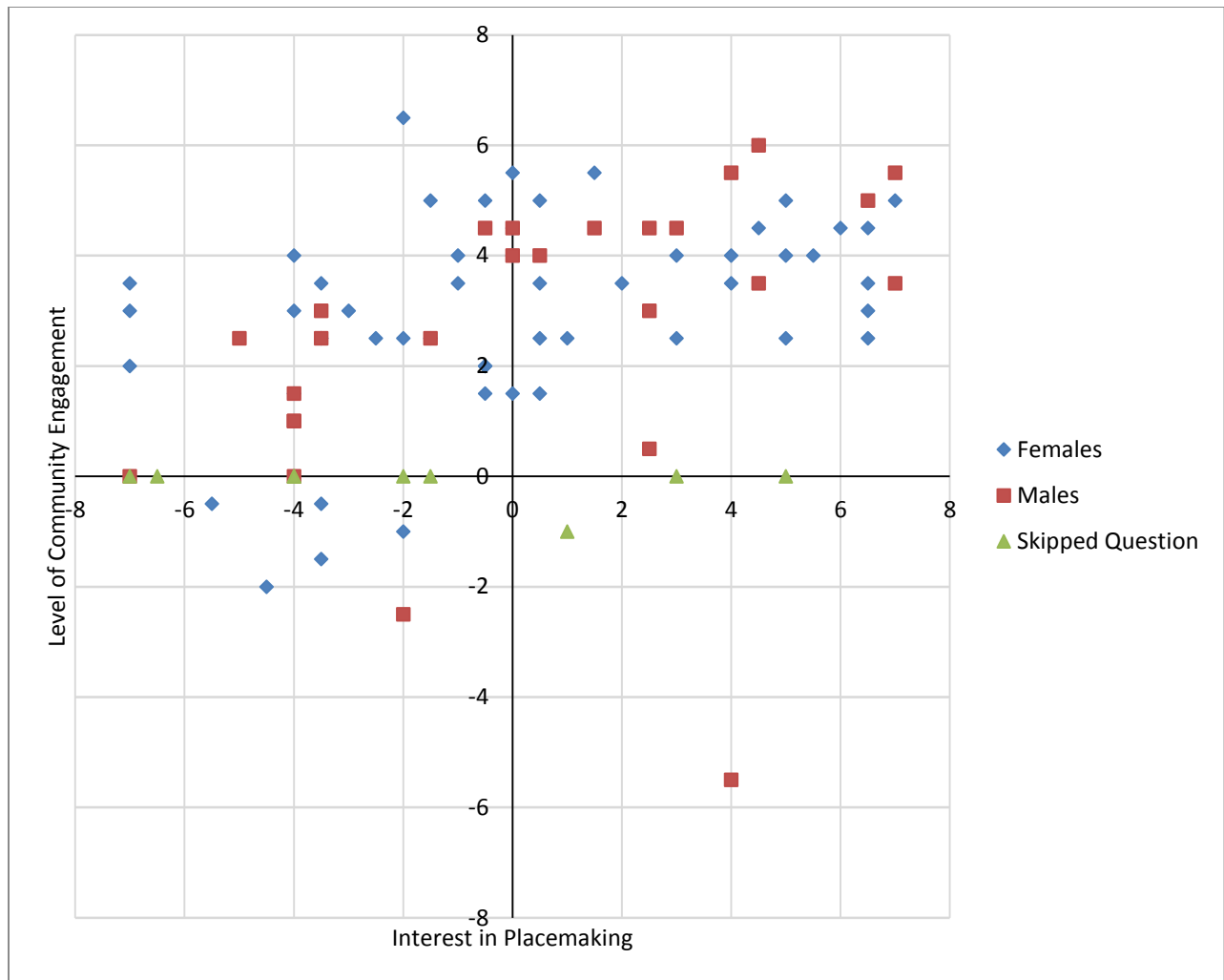
Figure 11: Gender: Community Engagement vs. Placemaking

With the exception of one respondent who skipped the gender question all respondents were completely neutral on their interest in Placemaking (two respondents green triangles overlap at coordinates [-4,0]). Unfortunately this is explained by the fact that these eight respondents who skipped the gender question also did not answer any questions in the Placemaking section of the survey instrument and the non-responses were counted as zero. It should also be noted that 6 of the 9 respondents who did not respond to the gender question found themselves in the left half of the figure, which means that they are not highly engaged, and could be a possible reason why they left sections of the survey blank.

The female respondents are the most relevant markers on the figure since they are the largest group of respondents. Only 8 total respondents show negative interest in Placemaking, which turns out to be 9.4% of female respondents and 7.6% of male respondents. The most promising result is that the largest group of respondents for both genders is found in the top-right corner of the graph, meaning that the largest percentage of each gender are both engaged in the community and interested in Placemaking. These 23 women and 12 men who's responses landed them exclusively in the top-right quadrant make up 39.7% of all total survey respondents.

5.3 Workers versus Residents

The next step in analyzing the survey data was to separate the responses between residents and people who just worked in REO Town, which is what the first question of the survey asked. Out of all respondents 55 indicated that they are residents, 32 indicated that they are workers, and one respondent did not respond, and thus was excluded from the charts. The trends on these graphs could show if the REO Town workers or residents are the driving forces of community engagement in the community, and how interested in Placemaking they may be. The responses from the residents and workers are found on the following two charts, where each marker on the graph is indicative of a respondent:
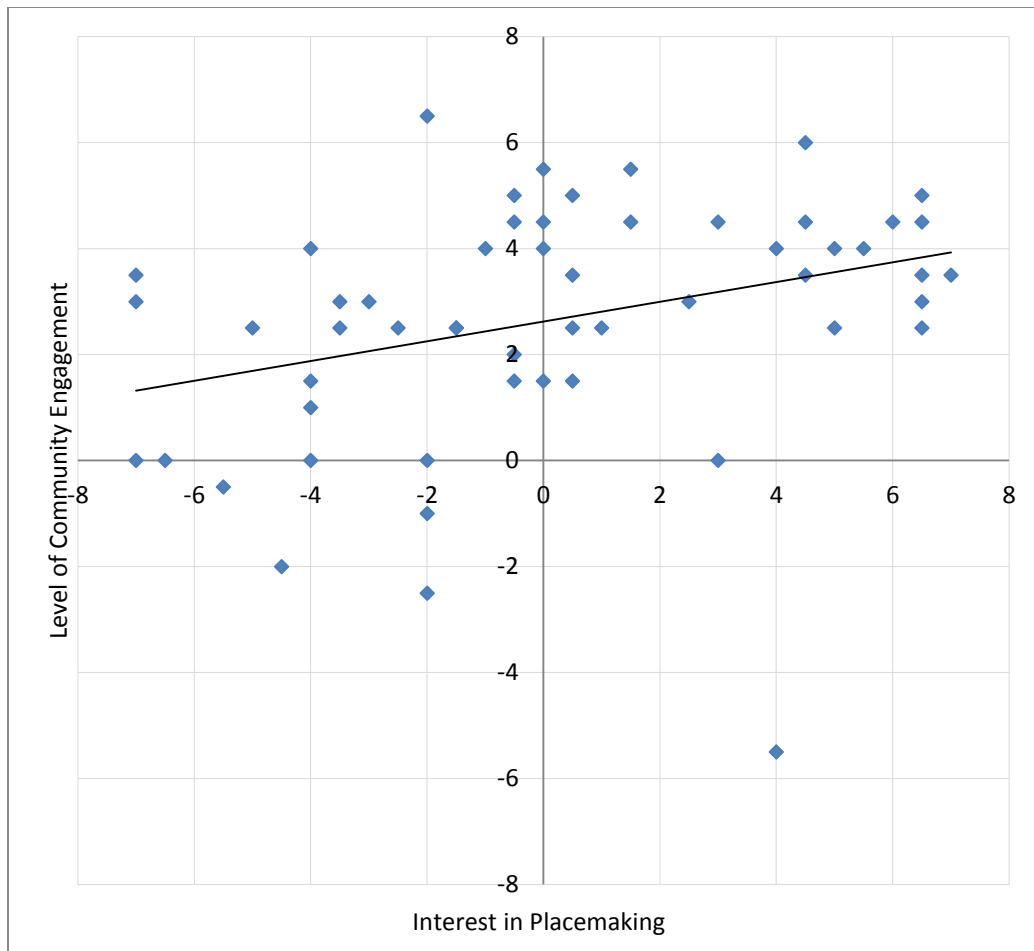
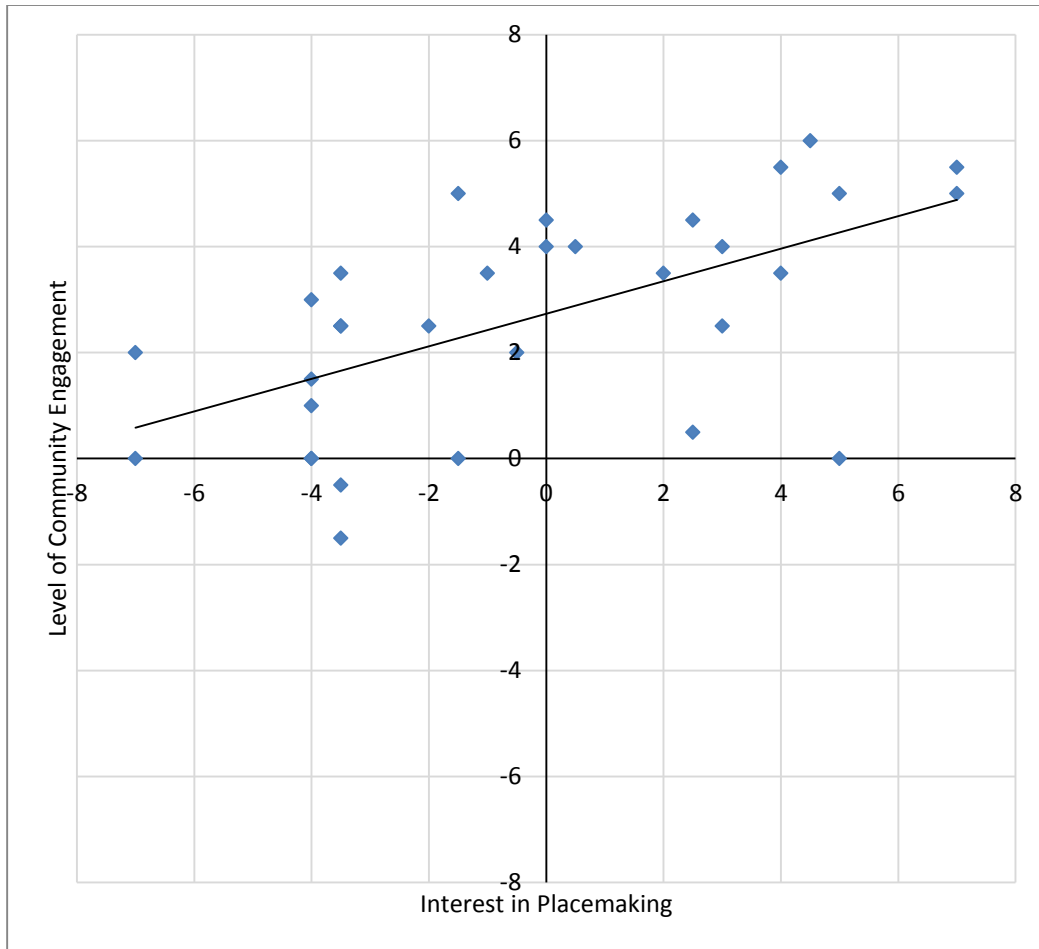**Figure 12: Residents: Community Engagement vs. Placemaking**

Figure 13: Workers: Community Engagement vs. Placemaking

Both of the graphs have a similar trend line, showing that lower levels of interest in Placemaking has the potential to lead in a positive way to higher levels of community engagement. A majority of respondents are still interested in Placemaking initiatives in the community. However, unsurprisingly, a higher number of residents find themselves on the right half of the chart, meaning that they demonstrate a higher level of community engagement.

When separating the residents from the workers it is evident that Placemaking can be used to increase levels of community engagement. Both residents and workers have an interest of the concept, and state that they are optimistic towards creating a sense of place in REO Town,
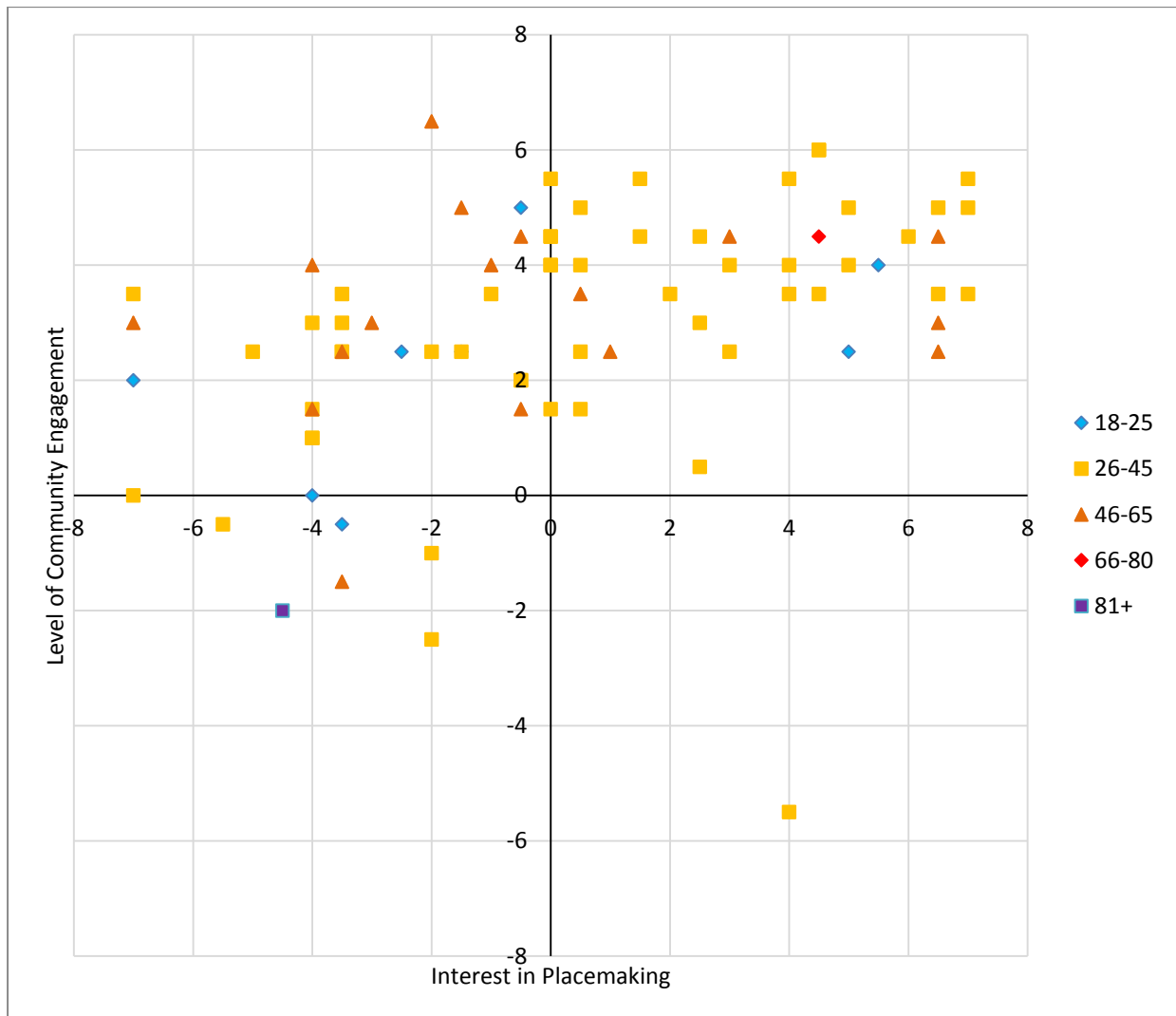
which is supported by survey responses from the district workers. All 28 worker respondents

who answered question 16, if the respondent believes that when working together citizens can

reinvent the character of REO Town, responded positively and answered strongly agree or agree.

All workers also strongly agreed or agreed that it is important for the REO Town community to

engage in Placemaking and they are optimistic about the future of REO Town being a desirable

place to visit and live. Even though workers may not be in the area as frequently as the residents

the interest in Placemaking shows that they can be engaged in the community more frequently if

there is a proper avenue to channel their time and efforts.

The district may already be doing a strong job in marketing the area as a place to visit

since there are so many workers who scored highly in terms of community engagement. Despite

not being a resident only five of the workers stated that do they not attend events in REO Town,

which means that they return to the district after work or on weekends. Even more encouraging

is that the workers assist in supplying the local businesses frequently, with 19 of the 32 workers

stating they regularly visited local businesses 1-2 times per week. Only four workers stated that

they never go to local businesses. While community engagement and Placemaking efforts may

be driven by residents, it is clear that workers who frequent an area can have a strong tie to the

place, and can play an integral role in creating a sense of place.

5.4 Age

A second way to view the data is by separating the responses by age, to see if any group

of citizens is more involved than others in the community. The survey gave respondents five

different options for indicating their age: 18-25, 26-45, 46-65, 66-80, and 81 and over. The

largest group of respondents was by far 26-45 year olds, and thus they are the most highly

represented on the graph, and the nine respondents who did not indicate their age were not

included. All age groups were put on the same graph, so that they could be compared amongst each other. These are the results from the previous figures, although separated by age:

Figure 14: Age Groups: Community Engagement vs. Placemaking

Compared to previous graphs the 26-45 year olds are most representative of the general trend of the graph, due in large part to their significant numbers.

The 26-45 year old age group is the mostly found in the upper right quadrant of the graph, which is indicative that they are the ones who are most involved in the community and

most interested in Placemaking projects. Overall the 26-45 year old demographic could be the easiest group to mobilize by using informative sessions about Placemaking since only five of these respondents showed neutral or negative interest in Placemaking. This chart shows that in REO Town the 26-45 year old demographic are responsible for the current initiatives underway in the district, and their levels of community engagement could increase even further if their interest in Placemaking was acted upon. The group of 18-25 year olds shows the least amount of interest, however, this could be explained by several factors. One being that they have to attend school, and thus leave the district semi-frequently, another could possibly be that they did not choose to move there and have been living with their parents or family members.

The 46-65 year old age group unfortunately tends to be less engaged in the community than the 26-45 year olds, however, it is positive that only 1 out of the 17 respondents in this age group shows disinterest in Placemaking efforts. The oldest two respondents equalize each other's responses, since one was placed in the upper right quadrant and the other is located in the lower left quadrant. It would be more encouraging for REO Town if more of the younger respondents were in currently located in the upper right hand quadrant, however, through encouraging more Placemaking efforts in the district these individuals could start to become more engaged. It is evident what age group is the most engaged in the community, and by assisting this group in reaching out to others in the community through Placemaking efforts community engagement could increase in REO Town soon after.

5.5 Final Thoughts

While these graphs do not weigh any sort of interest in Placemaking or community engagement efforts more or less equally than any others, they do allow for visualizing the data from the entire graph at one time. The trends presented here do not show that the highest level of

community engagement has been attained in REO Town, but the results are promising in the fact that workers come back to the district to attend events after work hours and that there is an obvious group of community activists in the 26-45 year old age group. What is even more promising is that the respondents reacted so favorable towards the Placemaking information that was presented to them in the survey. This shows that the community could be mobilized through Placemaking efforts, and ideally through working to build a sense of place community engagement in that area will greatly increase as a result. Through creating a "place" the community engagement and pride will continue to rise over time as the area continues to become a more desirable location to live and visit.

Ch. 6: Conclusion

This final section will discuss what implications this research has for future studies and the conclusions that have been drawn from the survey distributed in REO Town, and what the implications can be for future research. This will lead into a discussion about how the survey can be used to help identify what groups of people are the drivers of community engagement and Placemaking in a community. Finally this section will conclude with a brief discussion on how to improve this research model and what this research could be used for in future studies.

6.1 Future Studies

While this study brought out positive conclusions for the case of REO Town, there are several aspects of the research model that could be updated for future implementation. First of all, the survey instrument cannot be universally applied to different communities, and it would need to be updated on for new communities that it was being implemented in. The survey instrument could also be more intensive and cover a wider variety of questions, some of which are more open-ended, for respondents to provide feedback on. Ideally, if more resources were available for research efforts, the survey would be able to be distributed to more than 5% of the community in order to better identify the engagement level of the entire community. However, given the limited release of the survey instrument it was able to reach a significant portion of the REO Town community.

One worry with the survey instrument is that some of the words used to describe things such as community engagement could spur an unrealistic positive response from the community. When faced with questions about community engagement it was a worry that community members would lie on the answers to make themselves seem more credible in the eyes of the researcher. This is why such careful measures were taken in order to eliminate wording that

would seem increasingly more positive or more negative for each question. However, if the research was able to be gathered and analyzed over a more prolonged period of time than more questions could be included in the instrument that would allow respondents to include more detail in their responses. Ideally, the survey would have more open-ended responses and allow respondents to create responses entirely on their own in order to properly analyze the character of the district, neighborhood, or city.

6.2 Survey Conclusions

The initial research question asked whether citizens take the most important role in creating a "place", or if the concept of "place" can bring people together and create community engagement. While the survey could not yield a direct answer for this question itself, it did identify trends and associations that answered this question in terms of the focus area. These responses are a direct representation of a sample of the REO Town community, and the results and trends gathered may not be directly repeated if the survey were distributed elsewhere. In this instance the survey reveals that while there is a significant group of people that who engaged in the community, the interest in Placemaking initiatives is high throughout the whole community, and by using this interest in creating a sense of place the community could be mobilized to become more engaged. In terms of this research, the initial hypothesis was affirmed, and in the instance of REO Town "place" could be used to bring people together and create engagement.

The survey can also be used to help identify what groups of people within certain communities are currently the most engaged, and thus have the potential to be drivers for the creation of a sense of place. Respondents to the survey who find themselves in the right half of the matrix are typically more engaged in the community based on their responses. By separating the respondents based on identifying demographic information a certain group of people that

could be targeted to help push others to become engaged. For example, in REO Town the most

engaged group of respondents based on age is the group of 26-45 year-olds.

The survey also yielded some positive results for the community regarding the issue of

implementing Placemaking initiatives. The concept of Placemaking can still be relatively

unknown to the general public; however, this survey showed that most people have at minimum

a general interest in Placemaking, familiarity with their local comprehensive plan, or optimism

for the area they live in. This can help to justify the implementation of Placemaking information

or training sessions for communities facilitated by organizations such as the Michigan Municipal

League or Michigan State University Extension. In areas where the community demonstrates this

interest it would be beneficial to implement these training programs or to provide assistance in

Placemaking in order to help grow levels of community engagement.

These conclusions found from the survey are relatable to the theory gathered during the

literature review earlier in this report. Starting with the basic elements of place, as discussed by

Tuan and Lynch, it becomes obvious that the social element of citizens can grow from careful

planning of neighborhood structure. This relates to the "eyes on the street" theory discussed by

Jane Jacobs, where the neighborhood streets are made safer if people have a reason to be active

and engaged citizens. This corresponds with the conclusions drawn from the survey distributed

in REO Town, where it appears that Placemaking can be used as an avenue to increase

engagement in the district.

One of the most beneficial aspects of this research is that it can be used as an informal

method of educating citizens on Placemaking and making individuals more aware of their

personal engagement in the community. One of the most positive studies that could come out of

this is following up in the community that the survey was initially distributed in a year, or several

years, later to see if community engagement has increased through the implementation of Placemaking initiatives. Through accomplishing this it can be seen what effects Placemaking has on actual citizens instead of the physical place that it augments. After the initial survey is collected and the most active group of respondents is identified it can be seen after several years if this group of respondents has changed or if more people have started to become engaged in the years following the start of Placemaking in the community.

After finalizing the data collection and analysis of this research it can be hoped that at some point down the line this research can be used to help shape policy in REO Town and beyond. At minimum this survey can be used to help educate the respondents through the links included in the footnotes and definition of Placemaking. The survey could be improved in several areas such as the response rate and scope of questions asked, however, it did still yield positive results and responses and results. The follow-up for this research will be sending the results to organizations such as the REO Town Commercial Association and hoping that it can assist the community in creating an action plan to shape Placemaking policy in the future.
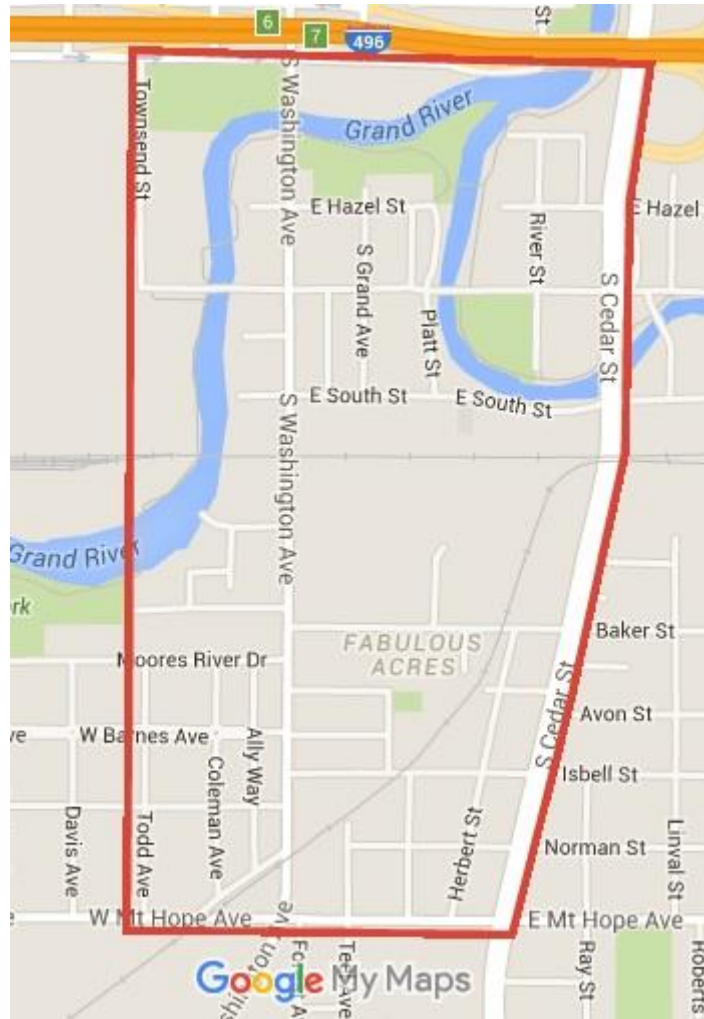
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Maps

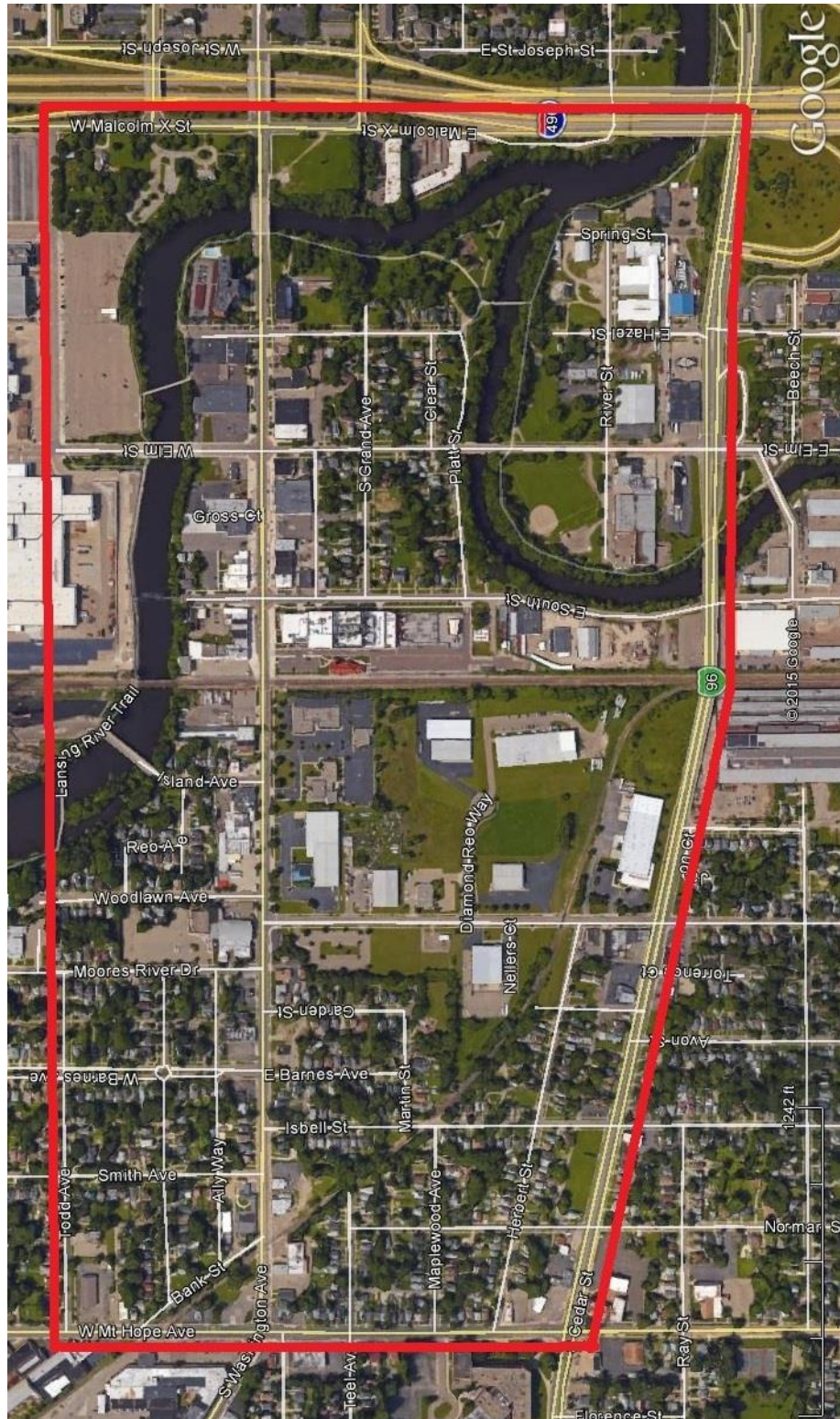**Figure 15: Street Map of the REO Town District**

Source: Google Maps

Figure 16: Topographic Map of the REO Town District

Source: Google Earth

Hello,

I am Jake Parcell, a graduate student in the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program at Michigan State University. I am interested in your opinions about your community. Attached is a short survey for residents and employees of REO Town (see map below). Your voluntary participation in this study will help build a case study on the district. Results will be kept anonymous, no names will be used in the final report, and only the aggregate data will be used in the analysis. The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete and there are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study. Participating in the survey is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time, so please sign and date the line below the map if you consent to taking the survey. Thank you for your participation, it is greatly appreciated!
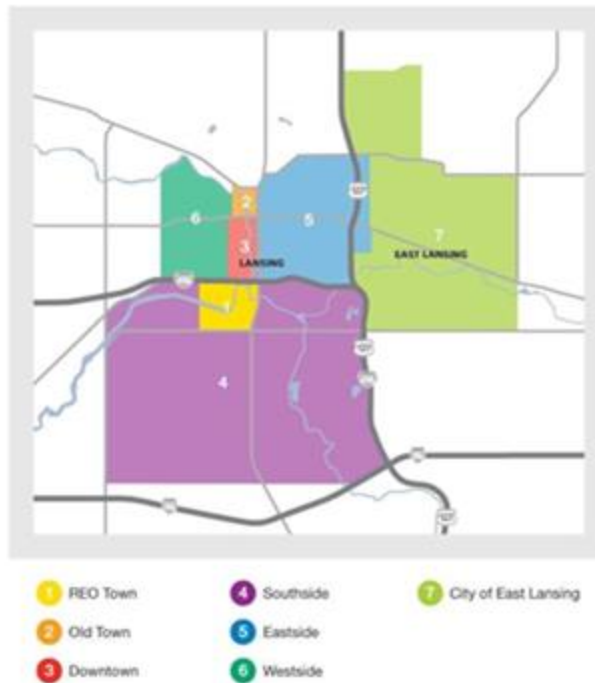

Figure 17: Colored Map of the Greater Lansing Area

If you have any questions regarding the survey please contact me at parcell5@msu.edu or (989)385-1562 or Dr. Mark Wilson (of Michigan State University) at wilsonmm@msu.edu or (517)353-9054. Completed surveys can be delivered to myself in paper or via email.

Signature:_____   Date:_____

JP:_____

If you complete the survey on paper please circle the answer you choose and write in your response when asked. If completed on a computer please bold or highlight your response and type in your response when asked (for the consent portion type in your name and date).

YOUR COMMUNITY
This first set of questions will ask you about involvement in your community and your local government.

1. How long have you been a resident of REO Town?
a. Less than 1 year
b. 1-3 years
c. 4-6 years
d. 7-9 years
e. Over 10 years
f. I only work in REO Town, I am not a resident

2. Do you follow local Lansing politics?
a. Yes, I am actively interested in local politics
b. Yes, but only when a matter concerns me/my neighborhood
c. No, I am not interested in local politics

3. Are you familiar with the REO Town Commercial Association?
a. Yes
b. No

4. If you answered yes to #3 above, please rate the strength of the REO Town Commercial Association's performance on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 10 (effective). You may skip this question if you answered "no" to #3 above:

5. How familiar are you with the Lansing City Council?
a. Very familiar
b. Somewhat familiar
c. I am not familiar with the Lansing City Council
5A. Please write if you attend Lansing City Council meetings, and how frequently you attend:

6. How familiar are you with your local Planning Commission?
a. Very familiar
b. Somewhat familiar
c. I am not familiar with my local Planning Commission
6A. Please write if you attend Planning Commission meetings, and how frequently you attend:

7. Please rate the overall strength of Lansing's local government's performance on a scale of 1 (ineffective) and 10 (effective):[1]

8. Are you a member of any local nonprofit organization, conservancy, or quasi-public corporation (for example the REO Town Commercial Association)?[2]
a. Yes
b. No
If yes, please write which organization: _____

9. In the last year have you spent any time volunteering for an organization or for the REO Town community?
a. Yes
b. No
If yes, please write what organizations you volunteer for and estimate how many hours you have spent volunteering in the last year:

10. In the past year have you worked with other local community members to solve a problem or improve where you live?
a. Yes
b. No
If yes, please explain:

11. Have you voted in an election in the past two years?
a. Yes
b. No
If yes, please write which election(s) you voted in:

PLACEMAKING

12. What comes to mind when you hear the term "Placemaking"?
Please write your answer here:

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[1] Gallagher, J. (2013). *Revolution Detroit: Strategies for Urban Reinvention.* Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. Page 5.
[2] Gallagher, J. (2010). *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City.* Detroit, MI: Painted Turtle. Page 144.

Placemaking is a hands-on approach to reinvent public spaces as the heart of the community.[3] It requires collaboration between local residents, and citizen participation to create public places that embody the community's vision. Placemaking may include redesigning a street to make it more pedestrian friendly, allowing restaurants to provide outdoor dining, creating apartments above stores, holding community-wide events in public spaces, and more. The following questions will gauge your current, or potential, engagement in Placemaking initiatives.

13. Are you familiar with the *Design Lansing* comprehensive development plan (2012)?[4]
a. Yes, I am familiar with the plan and have read through it
b. Yes, I am familiar with the plan, but have not read it
c. No, I am not familiar with the plan

14. How often do you attend events in REO Town (REO Eats!, Farmers Markets, etc.)?
a. I do not attend community events
b. 1-2 times per year
c. 3-4 times per year
d. over 5 times per year
Please write what community events you attend:

15. How often do you frequent businesses located in REO Town?[5]
a. I never go to local businesses
b. 1-2 times per week
c. 3-4 times per week
d. over 5 times per week
Please write what local businesses you visit:

16. Do you believe that when working together citizens and local residents of REO Town can reinvent the identity and character of the district?[6]
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree
Please feel free to write why you chose your answer:

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[3] What is Placemaking? (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2015, from http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/
[4] Lansing, MI. (2012). *Design Lansing: 2012 Comprehensive Plan*. Available at: http://www.lansingmi.gov/media/view/Design_Lansing_Comprehensive_Plan__ADOPTED_April_9__2012___LowRez/3523
[5] Gallagher, J. (2010). *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City*. Detroit, MI: Painted Turtle. Page 130.
[6] Gallagher, J. (2013). *Revolution Detroit: Strategies for Urban Reinvention*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. Page 131.

17. It is important for the REO Town community to engage in Placemaking?
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree
Please feel free to write why you chose your answer:

18. How safe do you feel walking in REO Town?[7]
a. Yes, I feel safe walking in REO Town at all times
b. Yes I feel safe walking in REO Town, but not at night
c. No, I do not feel safe walking in REO Town
d. I do not walk in REO Town

19. Please choose whether you agree or disagree with this statement: REO Town is an attractive area for knowledge-based workers and/or young professionals to live or work.
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree

THE FUTURE

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: I am optimistic about the future of REO Town being a desirable place for people to visit and live.[8]
a. Strongly agree
b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree
Please briefly explain why:

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DEMOGRAPHICS

21. What is your age?
a. 18-25
b. 26-45
c. 46-65
d. 66-80
e. 81 and over

22. What is your gender?
a. male
b. female

23. What is your ethnicity?
a. Caucasian
b. African American
c. Hispanic or Latino
d. Asian
e. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
f. Two or more races

24. What is your level of education?
a. High School degree only
b. Some college
c. Associate's Degree
d. Bachelor's Degree
e. Master's Degree or Ph. D.

25. Are you employed?
a. Yes, I have a full time job
b. Yes, I have a part time job
c. No
d. Retired
e. Disabled/not able to work
25A: What is your occupation? _____

26. What is your current living situation?
a. I live alone
b. I live with roommates (non-related)
c. I live in a family household

Thank you for your participation!

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Consent form photo retrieved from:
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