

Shaping OurSpace



Created by girls at Girls Inc., Booker T. Washington Apartments, Columbus Georgia who were part of the Girls Inc. summer program, 2012, and

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Overview, Activities and Outcomes of *Shaping OurSpace*

Overview

The *Shaping OurSpace* program was developed over five, half-day meetings at the Girls Inc. site at Booker T. Washington Homes (BTW), in Columbus, Georgia. Approximately 12 summer camp girls (ages between 7 and 15) took part in the program (this varied from meeting to meeting). Two faculty from Columbus State University developed the weekly program to support the girls' involvement in the planning process to envision a future for the neighborhood: Dr. Becky Becker (Department of Theatre) and Dr. Amanda Rees (Department of History and Geography).

Activities

The program was a mix of theatre activities designed to support listening and speaking so that the girls would be prepared to engage in the public planning process, combined with geography and planning-oriented activities that supported each girl's ability to analyze her neighborhood, and imagine a new neighborhood development. The geography activities were developed as part of CSU's Cultural Geography class, spring 2012. The neighborhoods being planned in this activity included BTW, where the Girls Inc. afterschool and summer school meeting room is located, and the Liberty Neighborhood, two blocks to the north of BTW.

Outcomes

Shaping OurSpace is designed to prepare the girls to think about their neighborhood(s). We began by analyzing the girls' familiarity with the BTW neighborhood, we then toured the neighborhood and created an assessment of the neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses. Finally, we envisioned a future three-dimensional Lego plan for the Liberty Neighborhood section. As a culminating event, the girls will present their findings to a representative from the Columbus Housing Authority, the organization taking the lead in the redevelopment of BTW-Liberty District into a mixed use residential space. This report identifies data in relation to the following three activities:

1. Neighborhood Familiarity Assessment of BTW-Liberty District
2. Neighborhood Amenity Assessment of BTW Neighborhood
3. Visioning Process for the Liberty Neighborhood
 - a. Group discussion and design using Google Earth image
 - b. 3-D Legos Plan for the Liberty Neighborhood and block-by-block amenity description
 - c. Presentation to the Columbus Housing Authority

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Neighborhood Familiarity and Amenity Assessments for BTW-Liberty District

1. Neighborhood Familiarity Assessment of the BTW-Liberty District

Activity: We began the program by assessing how familiar the girls were with the BTW-Liberty District. The girls involved in this activity were divided into three groups of between three or four people per group. They were asked to indicate on a large Google Earth image of the Liberty-BTW neighborhood places they had visited or were familiar with.

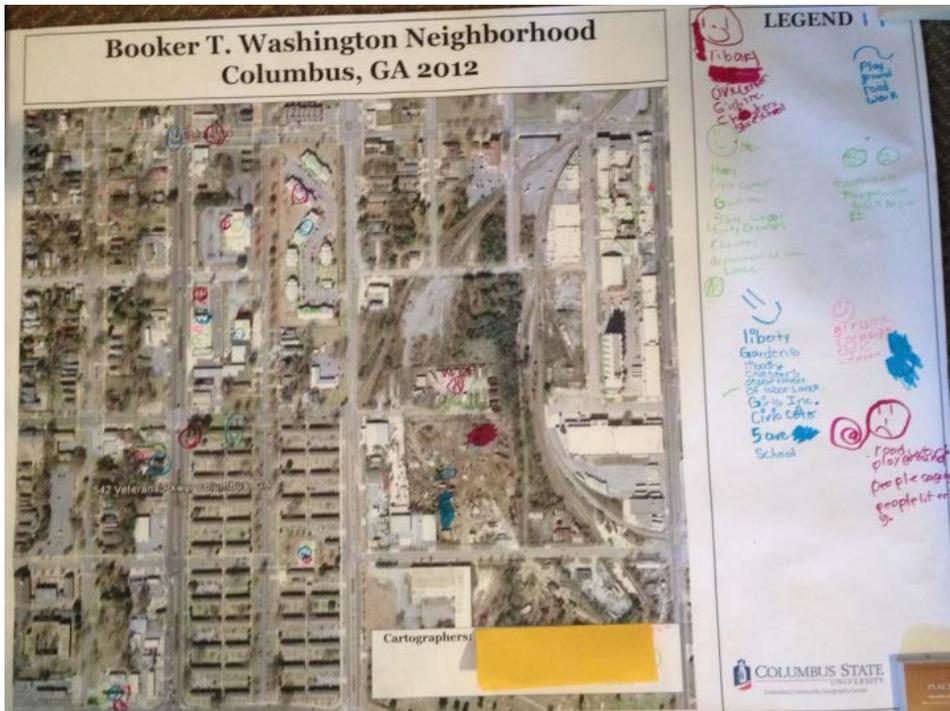
Table One: Neighborhood Familiarity Assessment of the BTW-Liberty District

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Girls Inc. Building at BTW	III	III	III	10
Civic Center	II	III	III	9
Riverwalk	I	III	III	7
Library	I	III	III	7
Liberty Theatre	III	I	III	7
Chesters BBQ	II	II	III	7
BTW Playground		II	III	5
Baseball Field	I		II	3
Liberty Garden Apartments	I		I	2
Skate Park		I		1
Church S of Liberty	I			1
Above Ground Gas industrial dev. (east of BTW)	I			1
Unidentified locations	I		II	3

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III. Amenity Assessment of BTW Neighborhood

Activity: Having taken a half hour walking tour of some of the neighborhood, the girls were divided into three groups of between three or four and asked to indicate on a large BTW neighborhood Google Earth image which elements of the neighborhood they liked and disliked. Each girl was given a different colored felt pen, filled in her name with the colored pen in the cartography box, and then asked to place either smiley faces or frowny on the map indicate places they liked and disliked in the BTW neighborhood. Girls were also asked to list these locations next to the smiley and frowny faces in the legend using the color. Tables two and three identify the amenities the girls liked and disliked.



Example of annotated Google Earth Image identifying amenities that one group of girls liked and disliked.

Table Two: Amenities the Girls Liked in the BTW Neighborhood

	Group 1 📄	Group 2 📄	Group 3 📄	Total 📄
Girls Inc. Building at BTW	III	II	III	9
Library	II	III	III	9
Civic Center (not on map)	III		III	8
Chesters BBQ	III		III	7
5 th Avenue School	I	II	III	6
Dept. of Labor	I	II	III	6
Liberty Garden Apartments	II		III	5
Church S of Liberty	II			2
Lance (Industrial)		I	I	2
BTW playground	I			1

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Table Three: Amenities the Girls Disliked in the BTW Neighborhood

	Group 1 ٧	Group 2 ٧	Group 3 ٧	Total ٧
Junk Yard (E of BTW) on 6 th St	III	II	III	10
BTW playground	III	II	III	8
Chesters BBQ	I	II		3
Liberty Garden Apartments	III			3
BTW	II			2
Veterans Parkway	I			1

Neighborhood Assessment: Analysis (using group discussion) Identifying Elements that Girls Did Not Like about the BTW Neighborhood

- Play Ground problems: bad sand with poor drainage, no shade (need trees), equipment designed for kids under five only (need equipment for older kids – slide too small and no swings), needs bathrooms by the playground
- Public smoking
- People who don't live in the BTW apartments hanging out there
- Junk yard east of BTW
- Train tracks, noisy, also noise from Victory Drive, big trucks make Girls Inc Shake

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III. Visioning Process for the Three-Block Liberty Neighborhood

Activity: This was a four part process. a. The girls first discussed the elements they would like in the new Liberty Neighborhood development. b. They then make a list of items they would like in their own neighborhoods. c. Prepared a three-dimensional plan of the Liberty Neighborhood using Legos on a large Google Earth scaled image, d. Presented their work to the Housing Authority.

Group Discussion Identifying Elements for the Future Three-Blocks of Liberty Neighborhood

- Bigger playgrounds, maybe several
- Sidewalks
- Bike trails
- Nice views
- Clean public bathrooms
- Keep the Liberty Theatre
- Swimming Pool
- Medical clinic
- Gym (for adults and kids)
- Grocery store
- Community garden (vegetables)
- Park (with trees)
- Water (pond)
- Tree house church
- Tree swing
- Tree houses
- Playground
- New design of buildings/homes.

Journal Entries: Girls Were Asked to List the Things They Would Most Like in their Neighborhoods

- Girl 1: pool, park, tree house, candy store, bike trail, Girls Inc, lake, gym, mall
- Girl 2: candy lady, more trees in the playground, a big gym, a good pool, a big clock to tell people the time, MacDonald's
- Girl 3: bike trail, gym, park, mall, candy car, library, grocery store, pool, medical clinic, playground, Girls Inc, restaurants
- Girl 4: tree house, pool, Florida in backyard, bank, candy shop, my family, clinic
- Girl 5: pool, candy shop, mall, family dollar, trail.
- Girl 6: candy ladies, McDonald's cart, more trees in the playground
- Girl 7: pool
- Girl 8: gym, bathroom, candy store, bike trail, music place, pool, mall, gates, game room, laundry room

Development and Presentation

The last of the five meetings with students was videoed and the audio was transcribed. This last afternoon involved the girls talking together about the three block site, and the limitations of the site:

Site Limitations

- Liberty Theatre would remain (historic building and active community center)
- Lot at 6th Avenue (parking for church across the street)
- Undeveloped northern edge (location of a large earthen berm that would along the northern section of the three blocks to screen the views of the local prison)

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- Requirements for the Columbus Housing Authority to build approximately 100 homes (1,2,3 bedroomed)

Girls identified the overarching elements of the plan across the three blocks

1. Bike trail throughout
2. One block separated for 1-bedroom homes only (white Legos). Girls decided that these would probably not include children and this would keep the noise of children playing down and wouldn't disturb those residents.
3. Sidewalks throughout.
4. Single shopping area.
5. Playgrounds for all ages (adult and children below and above ages of 5) as well as dogs.

V. Liberty Neighborhood Plan

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Liberty Neighborhood Plan Key

White Legos: 1 bedroom homes

Red Legos: 2 bedroom homes

Green Legos: 3 bedroom homes

Blue Legos: Commercial (shops & services)

Yellow/Orange Legos: park and playground areas and gym.

Gray Legos: public amenities (e.g. public toilets)

Black Marker: Bike trail

Light Blue Paper: Swimming pools (2)

Dark Blue Paper: Pond

Buff Paper: Sidewalks (did not have time to create them for all blocks)

Buff Paper Circle: Walking track next to gym.

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VI. Block-By-Block Description of Neighborhood Amenities

Block One

- Keep existing parking area at corner for church parking (church opposite)
- Tree house church next to the church parking lot
- Creation of a dog part next to church parking lot (grey Legos)
- Retain the treed area (at the heart of the block) with elongated playground for children using existing trees for shaded play. This area also includes a tree house (orange and yellow Legos).
- Houses for 2-3 bedroom homes organized around the central play area (green and red Legos)
- Bike trail weaving through the central play area (black line).
- Swimming pool (blue paper) connected to a health clinic (grey Legos) which is connected to the bike trail

Block Two

- Buff colored walking track connected to a gym that welcomes adults and children (orange Legos)
- Several small playgrounds either side of the historic Liberty Theatre (yellow Legos)
- 2-3 bedroom houses organized around two play spaces (red and green Legos)
- Green space at the northern end of the block left for bike trail

Block Three

- Adult-focused block
- Bike trail throughout the site
- One bedroomed houses (white Legos)
- Blue pond as a central feature (not swimming pool)
- Maintaining mature trees
- Adult activity area (playground) at the northern boundary of the block similar to Lake Bottom Park adult activity area (yellow and orange Legos).
- Commercial area at the southern end of the block (blue Legos)
- Community garden towards northern end of the block

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