Participation by Design

A Graphic Design Approach to Public Participation in Planning

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Participation by design: A graphic design approach to public participation in planning

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Abstract

What new methods can planners use to better engage with the public on substantive visioning issues and induce participation in the planning process? Despite working within a society increasingly dominated by visual messages and styles, the use of graphic design by contemporary planners is limited in both ambition and scope. The central argument of this Supervised Research Project is that graphic design—in the form of a participatory method—can be used to augment existing participatory planning processes and provide new avenues for community outreach and public participation. Increasing awareness of design principles and rising usage of digital design software has made this argument increasingly relevant. Using designer and planner Candy Chang's 'I Wish This Was' medium as a test case, the project examines the usefulness of the graphic design participatory method—to the public, researchers/planners, and designers—through a case study of 'I Wish This Was' distributions in New Orleans, Louisiana and Montréal, Québec. The key findings of the case study illustrate that the medium's strengths rest in its ability to efficiently collect relevant local knowledge, to encourage community visioning, and to overcome many of the typical issues associated with the participatory planning process. The graphic design method to participation—though limited in some respects—offers planners and designers a flexible, integrative, and simple approach to gain insight into the views and visions embedded in local communities, while providing the public with an opportunity to provide low-barrier input into the planning process.

Keywords: community visioning — graphic design — local knowledge — participatory urban planning

Abrégé

Quelle nouvelles methods l'urbanistes peut utiliser pour mieux collaborer avec le public et developer une nouvellle vision de la cite et de induire la participation du public au processus d'urbanisme? Malgré de travail dans une société en plus dominé par des messages et les styles visuels, l'utilisation de la graphisme par les urbanistes dans leurs processus participatif est limitée en l'ambition et la portée. L'argument central de cette etude est que la design graphique—en la forme d'une méthode participatif—peut être utilisé pour augmenter les processus d'urbanisme participatif qui existe et pour developer de nouvelles avenues pour l'approche communautaire et la participation du public. Avec le produit « I Wish This Was » du graphiste et urbaniste Candy Chang, le projet examine l'utilité de la méthode de design graphique participatif—avec le public, les chercheurs, les urbanistes, et les concepteurs—à travers une etude de cas. Cette etude est concentré en fonction de deux distributions du produit en Nouvelle-Orléans, Louisiane et à Montréal, Québec. Les conclusions principales de l'étude de cas illustrent que les forces du produit reste dans sa capacité à collecter efficacement les connaissances pertinentes locales, d'encourager une vision communautaire partagé, et à surmonter plusiers des problèmes typiques associés au processus d'urbanisme participatif. La méthode du design graphique participatif offre aux urbanistes et aux concepteurs une approche flexible, et simple pour mieux comprendre les points de vue et des les visions intégrées dans les quartiers, tout en offrant au public l'occasion d'offrir d'entrée dans l'urbanisme.

Mots-clé: connaissances locales – design graphique – l'urbanisme participatif – vision communautaire

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To my father, who has always been encouraging.
To my mother, who has always been inspiring.

I. Introduction

Following a significant shift in both urban planning practice and in general attitudes towards democracy and governance in the late 1960s, public participation has become an important part of both planning practice and theory. While the core principle of public participation—the collaborative and democratic engagement of a public in the planning process—has remained the same over time, the approaches to its application have evolved commensurate with socio-demographic and cultural attitudes, and professional and technological capacities. Challenged by bureaucratic inaction, declining rates of civic and political engagement, and the rising monetary and time costs associated with participation, planners are called to develop new approaches to the traditional outreach process, and to better capture the imagination of the communities they are engaging with.

This study examines a novel approach to encouraging public engagement in a participatory planning framework through the use of an 'interactive' graphic design medium. What role can graphic design—an ostensibly unrelated discipline—play in the public participation process? What are the opportunities and limitations? The medium's role is not limited to serving as an output – as a way to visualize and present final plans. Graphic design media can instead be used to actively engage with local communities and act as an input for local knowledge. With the advent of new participatory avenues, there is also the question of what role is assumed by the practicing planner? The planner, as a facilitator of the public participation process, remains an important actor in this approach. In an increasingly visually communicative world, the planner is called upon to develop new strategies to invite local knowledge, and more importantly, to engage the public in a planning dialogue (Krieger, 2000).

In the cities of New Orleans, Louisiana and Montréal, Québec, design professionals from various backgrounds are using a graphic design medium to invite public participation in ad-hoc community visioning exercises. The medium in question forms the basis of urban planner/graphic designer Candy Chang's 'I Wish This Was' (IWTW) project. Beginning in November 2010, Chang invited individuals in her community of Faubourg Marigny, New Orleans[1] to write their hopes and visions of their neighbourhood and their city on a 3 by 4.5-inch vinyl sticker and apply it to areas deserving attention, care, and renewal. The stickers were later made available for purchase on the Internet, opening up the IWTW project to a wider audience. While conceived as a socially informed and interactive street art campaign, the iconic IWTW stickers also have also shown that well made and easy to use graphic design media can play an important role in inviting public participation in urban visioning and, more broadly, the public participation process in general.

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1   The project soon extended to other neighbourhoods throughout New Orleans.

2. Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore the potential applicability of a graphic design-based participatory method to the planning process. In doing so, the study will first identify what an 'interactive' graphic design method *is*, and will then proceed to an evaluation of its advantages and disadvantages, and determine how such a method is best integrated into planning practice. This report is an exploratory step into the synthesis of graphic design and urban planning. While much has been written of related visually rooted participatory approaches using geographic information, mapping and community visioning tools, there is a paucity of both literature and practice in the use of graphic design media to invite participation (Cuthill, 2004; Dunn, 2007; Elwood, 2006). This study will go beyond the practical examination of a graphic design-based participatory method to also describe the theoretical rationale behind the intersection of the design and planning disciplines.

The study follows a case study approach to inform the above research questions. It focuses on the 'I Wish This Was' (IWTW) design outreach project, using both the original crowdsourced distribution in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a participatory research process in Montréal, Québec as the basis for study. Within this context, the study will use a basic content analysis approach to determine how participating individuals in both cities are using the IWTW medium. This is a chief concern as ultimately the medium's use informs its effectiveness. The study then follows with an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the participatory method as a tool for research, for engagement, and for informing design, drawing from data and interviews detailing the Montréal experience. The case study subject—'I Wish This Was'—was selected due to three factors: Chang's dual role as an urban planner and graphic designer, the author's familiarity with the work of Candy Chang, and the use of IWTW in a Montréal-based research exercise.

The literature review and case study sections are informed by a variety of informational inputs. IWTW content form an important part of the study, with 63 sticker messages drawn from the New Orleans study and a further 14 derived from the Montréal process. To explore the practical usefulness of IWTW in a design and planning context, the study also uses an after-event survey of participating Écologez 2011 charette designers, for which IWTW served as a significant contextual input. A majority of the survey responses were made in French, the primary language of many of the participants. These have been translated to English for ease of understanding. Expert and key informant interviews were conducted with design, planning, and research professionals[2] to develop a rationale for a graphic design-based participatory approach, to explore the commonalities between design and planning, and to gain insight into the use of IWTW as an engagement and research tool. The interviews bridge gaps in the literature review and inform the case study. Interviewees were asked questions from a prepared list, but were given the opportunity to speak freely about their personal experiences and philosophies concerning the subjects of design, participation, and planning. The interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes; research ethics clearance was granted through the McGill School of Urban Planning's Making Megaprojects Work for Communities Community-University Research Alliance (CURA).

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2   See Appendix 1.

The study is divided into three main sections. The first provides a review of relevant participatory planning and graphic design literature, exploring respective histories, key definitions, benefits and challenges associated with each discipline, and significant practical examples. The second section—the case study—describes the IWTW project, its objectives, design, and distribution. This is followed by a content analysis of the messages generated in the New Orleans process, and the development of an overarching thematic framework in which the messages are organized. The third part of the case study looks to the Saint-Raymond neighbourhood in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Montréal. While this section contains a content analysis similar to the prior section, it features more prominently a practical assessment of the usefulness of IWTW, with respect to researchers, participants, and designer-planners. The last section—an analytical discussion—answers the research questions by assessing the potential of IWTW from the two case study examples, and by integrating it into a larger planning framework.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Public participation and urban planning

Public participation in the urban planning process is a contested concept. Though rudimentary efforts to engage the public in planning were made as early as the development of the Plan of Chicago in 1909, a truly representative and participatory approach to urban planning was only achieved following the decline of planning's rational-comprehensive model in the 1970s. While public participation is now commonly accepted as a requisite part of the overall planning process, there remains discussion among both practitioners and theorists as to the true purpose of public participation, and thus the level of involvement required from the public in the process (Day, 1997). This introductory section will define public participation in a planning framework, introduce the importance of context in the process, and identify the principles and practicalities that public participation needs to encourage in order to be effective. The section will then move to assess the more difficult questions associated with public participation. For while "citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you", why do we do it, and moreover, how? (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216).

The concept of public participation in planning is—on the surface—well understood. It is the participation of various publics (community groups and individual citizens alike) in the political and often bureaucratic decision-making processes that exert influence on the built environment and on the spatial organization of society. This is often realized through the participation of citizens in the development of local community and strategic plans, building development programs, and citywide visioning projects. Darke (2000) expands this definition, focusing not only on participation itself but the *ability* to participate. For him, the definition is "the range of opportunities and mechanisms for the public to engage directly in the land-use and environmental policy process" (p. 388). In this respect, it is clear that the concept of public participation is very flexible and assumes a different meaning subject to context. In Arnstein's (1969) important work on public participation in planning, she indirectly highlights such difficulties. For her, public participation is "a strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out" (p. 216). While offering a more nuanced view of what participation is and who it is aimed at, she limits her definition to specific circumstances. Questions emerge: what of participatory processes held in high-income neighbourhoods? Are there no have-nots in this context, or has the definition of 'have-not' merely changed? In this respect, it is the context—the conditions specific to every space and place—that influences participation, the development of a satisfactory definition for the process and beyond. Indeed, as noted by Brand and Gaffikin (2007), "the maxim that everything depends on context is an overarching part of the ontology upon which collaborative planning rests" (p. 285).

With the definition of participatory planning subject to context, it is not surprising that the practical approaches to public engagement are themselves situation-dependent. The participatory process can assume a variety of different forms, being as simple as communicative interaction between citizens and officials, or as complex as the "formation of civic organizations and [the] conducting of studies and lobbying [government]" (Wagle, 2000, p. 216). Despite these practical differences, it is clear what a participatory planning process should offer citizens and what it should encourage. The ideal participatory process offers the opportunity to "directly engage with

other arguments, needs, and concerns, and to use these insights to modify [one's] own positions" (Cameron & Grant-Smith, 2005, p. 27). In navigating this dialogic process, participation also encourages legitimacy, a search for common values, the promotion of the democratic principles of fairness and equality, the distribution of power among all participants, and the consequent fostering of responsible leadership (Weber, Tuler, & Krueger, 2001).

Considering the discussion over what public participation is and what it offers, it is still to be explored how and why it is performed. The following section will develop an answer to these questions. It begins by examining the antecedents to contemporary participatory planning, followed by discussion of the implications of the participatory turn for the practicing planner. It continues with an assessment of the benefits and challenges associated with the process, with an emphasis on the local knowledge dividend that is offered. Finally, the section concludes with a brief study of practical application, looking at different methods and experience.

3.1.1. Origins of participation in urban planning

Early modern participation: The 1909 Plan of Chicago

While urban planning and democratic participation have existed in various configurations since the European Renaissance and Athenian democracy, respectively, we limit our study of the disciplines to the start of the 20th century. During this period, urban reform movements throughout Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States organized in response to the endemic deterioration and environmental chaos present in industrialized cities throughout the respective countries. In parallel, the profession of urban planning grew in number, gained legitimacy, and developed a guiding premise that would inform activity for much of the following sixty years— "that organized and physically coherent cities grounded in good functional and aesthetic principles are better than those that are not" (Beauregard, 1996, p. 215). It was also during this time that different schools of planning thought began to emerge, with tension growing between two major planning perspectives. Many early practicing planners envisioned themselves as specialists, possessing competencies and skills that separated them from laypeople, and qualified them to plan (Taylor, 1999). Regional planner and polymath Patrick Geddes advanced the alternative position. Informed by the radical participatory theories of 19th century anarchist philosophers Pyotr Kropotkin and Jacques Élisée Reclus, Geddes believed that all citizens—regardless of profession—should make their own cities, "in order to escape a world of mass production and centralized authority" (Hall, 2002, p. 263; Walters, 2007). This early split in professional philosophy anticipated the contentious advancement of participatory planning practice through the 20th century.

In Chicago, the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* was an important early development in the emerging profession of urban planning, and the use of public participation by the discipline. Led by architect/planner Daniel Burnham, the *Plan* called for the physical transformation of the city through a series of projects, including the provision of new streets, transportation facilities, parks, and civic buildings. The development of the *Plan* was encouraged by one of the earliest instances of participation in planning; Burnham consulted with and gained support from the city's prestigious Commercial Club in the writing of the *Plan*. Membership was drawn from Chicago's local elite, a group of "successful men of affairs who were accustomed to dealing with large-scale enterprises" (Smith, 2006, p. 71). While the process involved the public, it was a very *specific* type: an elite group of Chicago's private citizens.

While it was a very exclusive public that provided input into the development of Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*, it was left to the public at large to support implementation of the *Plan*. At the time, the City of Chicago had no legal power to implement urban plans and had to defer to public referenda. As a consequence, Burnham and the Committee used the local news media to conduct a widespread public engagement campaign in support of plan implementation. As noted by Smith (2006), the Committee seized on every opportunity available to "sell the idea of planning and the contents of [*the Plan of Chicago*] to virtually every man, woman, and child in the city" (p. 131). The Committee's efforts proved successful; both City Council—through local ordinances—and the public—through bond issues and voting—supported *Plan*-related urban development in the city. While citizen engagement was an important factor in the conclusion of this planning process, it is important to note that it was used only to support the implementation of an existing plan rather than to offer the public the opportunity to provide substantive input in plan development.

Legislating participation: the 1954 US Urban Renewal Act and beyond

Government-legislated public participation in urban planning in the US began with the passing of the 1954 Urban Renewal Act. From then, all significant federal urban legislation "required the participation of citizens in the formulation and implementation of policy [at] the local level" (Kweit & Kweit, 1980, p. 649). However, participation as defined by the Act was initially very narrow. Neighbourhoods were represented by 'citizen-leaders', individuals who "could make development work, such as contractors, bankers, developers, and legislators" (Day, 1997, p. 423). It was not until public participation in planning proved politically expedient that it was opened to the public at large. Public officials hoped that providing citizens the opportunity to participate in the decision making process would induce them "to share the [government's] aims" (Day, 1997, p. 423).

The evolution of public participation in the United States was prompted by events occurring outside the influence of the state. The nascent Civil Rights movement motivated neighbourhood activists to push for broader participation in local policy development (Boone, 1972). These calls were fulfilled first by the passing of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), and later by the federal government's War on Poverty initiative. The EOA mandated the 'maximum feasible participation' of the country's most marginalized groups in neighbourhood-level planning processes, while the War on Poverty sought input rather than merely cooperation in steering policies that affected deprived neighbourhoods (Day, 1997). Despite the promise offered by these programs to public participation, the EOA's caveat of 'maximum feasible participation' proved problematic. Lacking a definition as to what this practically constituted, the EOA's Community Action Program meetings were characterized by divisiveness. Single-issue interest groups often controlled discussions, leaving other perspectives largely unrepresented (Day, 1997; Strange, 1972).

Following the lessons learned in the EOA's deliberative process, the federal government adopted a different approach with the 1966 Model Cities Act. Where past acts had drawn participation from either elite or marginalized groups of citizens, the Model Cities Act encouraged involvement from a wider cross-section of society. While ostensibly a sign of the participatory process' growing acceptance, the program's aims were motivated by political reasons. Federal administrators were faced with a conundrum; they could not stop the participatory process without experiencing political fallout, but they were loath to continue providing funding to community groups they considered not 'politically responsible' (Strange, 1972). Meanwhile, political infighting ultimately derailed the potential benefits offered by the Act. Civil servants sought to redistribute decision-making power to neighbourhood groups, while federal politicians pushed for power allocation to local governments. Individual citizens caught between this bureaucratic infighting were discouraged by both these unclear parameters of power, and the consequent delays in achieving meaningful results.

Planning's rational-comprehensive model and the push for participation

For all the token attempts at involving the public in urban planning and policy development processes, a scientific approach to planning ultimately provided the greatest impetus for a participatory turn. Gaining prominence after 1945, planning's rational-comprehensive model reflected a synthesis of attitudes prevalent before and during the Second World War. The approach incorporated the physical design orientation of early modern planning with a new scientific emphasis, informed by the rational decision-making model developed by Herbert Simon (Simon, 1955; Taylor, 1999). Planning practice was re-cast as a top-down and 'value-neutral' approach to the organization of space, and the structures and people within. The approach ostensibly "allowed modernist planners to disengage themselves from the interests of any particular group, avoid accusations of self interest, and identify actions in the public interest (Beauregard, 1996, p. 218). However, the outward advantages offered by the rational-comprehensive approach masked the negative consequences that would come to define planning history in the decades following the 1940s.

Several faults appeared in the planning practitioner's reliance on the rational-comprehensive approach into the 1950s and 1960s. Its objectivity—emphasizing dispassion, separation from local context, and a reliance on quantitative data—proved problematic in practice. It instead only served to objectify places; disregarding the intangible factors that contribute to local quality of life. This objectification, in turn, "does violence to the people who are attached to [that place] and even to the planners who try to understand that place and its inhabitants" (Fischler, 1995, p. 45). Where the rational-comprehensive model, it was hoped, would allow planners to develop plans free from subjective interference, it instead excluded types of knowledge that fell outside of a 'scientific' perspective. This included knowledge ingrained in local communities; the "tacit knowledge or practical 'common-sense reason' [...] that are *not* open to scientific measurement and quantification" (Pennington, 2002, p. 188, emphasis in original). Additionally, practitioners of the approach were often more concerned with process over outcome—as long as the appropriate 'scientific' process was taken, concern over results was minimal (Albrechts, 1991). Meanwhile, the expert-driven decision making processes of the model made many feel that planners were "imposing their vision of an idealized bourgeois world on a resistant population" rather than working with communities to realize meaningful change (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1996, p. 268).

While the operational and philosophical foundations of the rational-comprehensive approach were subject to criticism during the mid-1960s, the loudest condemnations were reserved for the model's practical outcomes. Emblematic of the approach were the urban renewal projects built throughout the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The imposition of these projects proved disastrous for the dense neighbourhoods subject to these efforts; historical urban fabric was destroyed, communities were broken apart, and society's most marginalized groups were often relocated (Zipp, 2010). The fallout resulting from these urban renewal measures prompted several planning theorists and writers to call for greater participation, transparency, and understanding in the planning process. Paul Davidoff, Herbert Gans, and Jane Jacobs each called for a realignment of sorts in planning, drawing attention to the inherent contradiction in planning for neighbourhoods without the input of the communities who are home to these spaces (Davidoff, 1965; Gans, 1968; Jacobs, 1961). More broadly, the spirit of protest that had emerged throughout western nations during the 1960s supported a move towards public participation in the planning process. In this US, protest movements variously took aim at the federal government's foreign policy in Vietnam, institutional and social racism, and the growing influence of corporatism (Grudin, 2010; Hillier, 2002). Embedded in this rhetoric were a call for greater civic engagement and democratic reform, and a challenge to the expert-driven systems thinking prevalent at the time.

As the rational-comprehensive model lost legitimacy with mounting criticism, new planning approaches were advanced, with many calling for broader participation in the planning process. Davidoff (1965) advanced a model of advocacy planning; he placed emphasis on the representation of marginalized groups in the planning process through the work of dedicated planners. While working as a planner with the City of Cleveland, Norman Krumholz similarly advocated the redistribution of resources and power towards marginalized groups (Krumholz & Forester, 1990). In both of these instances, though the planner is an advocate for a relatively egalitarian approach, they are still working within a top-down bureaucratic system. The work of Friedmann (1973) and Forester (1989) went further in developing a more equal, communicative planning process. Friedmann's text lends support to the "value of local, or experiential knowledge" that eliminates the "monopoly on expertise and insight by professionals" (Sandercock, 1998, p. 175). In turn, Forester (1989) advocated new methods for planners to engage in a communicative process with citizens in order to examine local stories, as "stories embody and enact the play of power" in the planning context (Sandercock, 1998, p. 175). While important in their own right, these texts suggest a shift away from top-down planning towards more transparent and participatory methods.

3.1.2. The changing role of the practicing planner

With significant shifts occurring at both the practical and theoretical levels of planning, it is without surprise that the role of the planner has itself been shaped by change. The evolution of planning throughout the 20th century has increasingly pulled planners in different directions while simultaneously heightening the expectations of the vocational skills and training a good planner must have. This fraught operating environment is made more difficult by disagreements between planning practitioners and theorists as to the true role of the planner; the former stresses the necessary operational skills and qualities required in planning, while the latter points to a growing emphasis on the argumentative and mediatory imperatives in the profession.

Through the majority of the 20th century, the role of the planner has vacillated between that of designer, manager, and many alternative classifications in between. The planner-as-designer is representative of the rational-comprehensive approach, and is informed by a belief in "orderliness, functional integration, and social homogeneity" (Beauregard, 1996, p. 224). Reflecting the role's physical orientation and objectives, many of the planners working during the apex of the planner-as-designer were drawn from architecture and engineering backgrounds (Higgins and Karski, 2000). Predicated on the conviction that planners possessed specialist knowledge in the realms of spatial design and planning, the planner-as-designer eschewed outside information and dialogue with the public. This approach fell out of favour in the 1970s, following the negative responses and widespread challenges to the hegemony of the rational-comprehensive approach, as discussed (Taylor, 1999).

Into the 1970s, the role of the urban planner was redefined to one of 'managerialism'. In reaction to mounting criticisms that spatial planning had become "inadequate, incomplete, [and] inessential," the planning profession became increasingly concerned with guiding the process of urban development and interacting with the responsible public and private actors (Glazer, 2000). As a result, the competencies required of the practicing planner changed; the architects and engineers entering the profession earlier were increasingly replaced by individuals with a background in the social sciences (Higgins and Karski, 2000). The planner became a "provider of specific skills, [...] being armed with an adequate toolkit to steer developments in a 'desired' direction (Albrechts, 1991, p. 124). This was a stark departure from the rational-comprehensive approach that depicted planners as specialists overcoming urban issues through the physical design of spaces, and of making policy decisions in the interest of the 'public good'. Instead, the planner served as the "manager of the process of arriving at planning judgements" (Taylor, 1999, p. 330). While the managerial planner predicted the facilitative role planners would later take, it remains significantly embedded in dominant economic and political power structures, and separate from any participatory planning process.

The incremental shift in planning theory and practice towards a participatory framework has caused the most significant challenges to the role of the planner. While several perspectives exist, the position of the planner in a participatory context can largely be explained by two alternative views: the planner as advocate/gatekeeper and the planner as mediator/facilitator. The planner-as-advocate position owes its genesis largely to Davidoff (1965), who acknowledged the potential for planners to advocate for a multiplicity of interests but chiefly as a representative for marginalized groups. With a view towards negotiation in the process of advocacy, Davidoff states that a planner must defend and argue for substantive positions held by their constituent groups. Tewdwr-Jones (2002) continues this line of thought, stating: "planners have long been concerned with the nature of planning as a decision making process involving a variety of actors communicating, negotiating, bargaining, and arguing over the 'right' way forward" (p. 65). As a gatekeeper to the deliberative process, the planner is granted a great amount of leverage in setting the agenda "for future change and development" (Stephenson, 2010, p. 17). In this respect, the planner is able to advocate for their position not only in dialogue, but also in setting the terms for how the dialogue can proceed. The planner is well positioned to assist or obstruct the competing political and social forces that seek to better their own position (Forester, 1989).

As an alternative, there exists the planner-as-mediator perspective, where the planner adopts a facilitative position within the planning process. Since the 1980s, the view that "planning is more than anything an interactive, communicative activity" and the corresponding position of planner-as-mediator has been advocated by many (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Burby, 2003; Healey, 1997; Innes, 1995, p. 184). While inherently less argumentative than the planner-as-negotiator role, the mediator approach is nevertheless fraught with challenges. Richardson (1996) writes that mediating planners have sizeable pressures to contend with, as the debates they mediate are "fundamentally shaped by powerful discourses, each with its own substantive content as well as internal and external power/knowledge dynamics" (p. 288). The mediating planner must also be prepared to act within an increasingly multicultural context; Briggs (2008) states that now more than ever planners must "behave in culturally competent ways and promote more inclusive decision making" (p. 234). They are also forced to become more experiential learners; the planner must process incoming information from the mediating process and understand where the goals of different stakeholders overlap in order to reach consensus (Fainstein, 2000).

Into the 21st century, the practicing planner is faced with increasing expectations and responsibilities borne out of past professional experiences. The planner must translate the theoretical concerns over participation and engagement listed above into practical action. However, in doing so they must not lose sight of their professional capacity; a planner can mediate and negotiate, but they must still ultimately plan (Hague, 2000). Influenced by planning's design heritage, the contemporary planner is also called upon to plan physical spaces using a variety of technical skills and competencies. Borrowing from the managerial path, the planner must employ the same capacity for guidance as the earlier planning model amongst a more varied set of actors—the public is now included alongside development agencies and other private actors. In a similar vein, the planner must be ethical. As Hague (2000) notes, "the issue of ethics inevitably arises in a process in which competing interests are at stake and a regulatory body, such as a planning authority, can determine the outcome" (p. 18).

Above all, and perhaps most difficult in a profession subject to multiple divergent viewpoints, the planner must be visionary in their approach. Through the development of plans appropriate to the needs of local communities, and the navigation of argumentative discourse to arrive at appropriate solutions, planners must "combine vision with practicality" and be "sensitive to the qualities of places and to the needs of the people" (Hague, 2000, p. 17). In this discussion, it becomes clear that a moderate tone is necessary. The planner is not bound to any one approach; they are instead at their best when informed by a variety of approaches, theories, and skills. Similarly, when translating theory to practice, the hardened divisions between schools of thought disappear. Forester (1999) posits the divisive view of the planner as mediator or negotiator is untenable and in practice there is little demarcation; the planner will shift roles as the situation requires it.

Advances in communication technologies since the 1980s have also been a key influence to many contemporary planning perspectives; this is unsurprising given the technical competencies of many planners, and the profession's overarching flexibility. Krieger (2000) suggests that if planners are to be successful, they must be more visually attuned and they must develop new tools to promote, illustrate, and incorporate planning in the public discourse. Campbell & Fainstein (2003) look to the Internet and networked communication in examining new roles for planners; they must become able "managers of local network-based interest groups, as webmasters,

and as virtual chat-room monitors (p. 11). Thackara (2005) has similarly called on planners (as well as architects and designers) to emphasize greater networked communication and collaboration to rethink our valued spaces and places, and our roles within them. For these new and different directions in planning practice, they are united by the common responsibility of planners. They must be able to "redefine [themselves] and [the] profession in ways that will make [their work] congruent [...] with the re-emergence of civil society as a collective actor in the construction of our cities and regions, in search of the good life" (Friedmann, 1998, p. 20).

3.1.3. Benefits of public participation in planning

So why include the public in the planning decision making process? Public participation in the planning process offers many benefits—for both the involved public and the responsible planner. It also is advantageous for both the outcome and overall planning process (Stern, Gudes, & Svoray, 2009). For the involved public, participation in the planning process offers an opportunity to improve local quality of life, to increase local capacity, to create a sense of ownership, to exercise their democratic citizenship, and to build social capital. For planners, public participation facilitates consistent citizen-government interaction, recasts perceptions of local government, and improves the quality of final plans, and recognizes and mediates a diversity of perspectives in the process. While these benefits have been organized into binary public/planner groupings, it is important to note that there is overlap—some benefits that affect the public may also affect local government, and vice-versa.

Improving local quality of life

By providing input to the planning process and seeing discussion come to fruition in final plans, public participation can contribute to the improvement of local quality of life. Smith (1973) makes an important link between a positive experience with public participation and a psychological benefit. He writes that the process "can provide the context in which a person can have an effect on his environment. In this way, participation contributes to the health of the individual members of the community" (p. 289). Pragmatically, the inclusion of local input in the participatory process ensures that the resulting plans are not only sensitive to local needs, but also fulfills them. As Crewe (2001) notes: "the more designers value the input of citizens, the more appropriate the designs will be fore the users concerned" (p. 439). The opportunity to form new working relationships and develop a sense of community is also important facets of the public participation process. These too are significant contributors to the improvement of local quality of life (Aleshire, 1972).

Increasing local capacity

Public participation in the planning process can increase the ability of individuals, communities, and organizations to work within a political framework, and to collaborate to solve problems and meet challenges. From this process, new avenues for research also emerge. An effective participatory process empowers local communities by not only giving them the ability to affect final plans, but also by giving them the knowledge, resources, and skills to do so. This contributes to the "ability of citizens or communities to take action on their own behalf" (Stern, Gudes, & Svoray, 2009, p. 1069). The increase in local capacity is a vital part of the participatory process; without an informed and able civil society, public participation in planning would prove to be an unnecessary endeavour. Indeed, as written by Cuthill & Fien (2005), "democracy is not well served when governments simply pass on their responsibilities to citizens or community groups without appropriate support" (p. 65). There is also a significant

education dividend offered by public participation in the planning process. Stakeholders have the opportunity to become educated about "poorly understood problems and policy issues, which builds understanding and incentives for collaboration" (Burby, 2003, p. 35). Similarly, stakeholders participating in the planning process are better able to reach community-wide solutions from these situations (Booher, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Creating a sense of ownership

Participation in the planning process not only gives the public an opportunity to provide input on the ongoing development of plans, but also contributes to a sense of ownership in having helped to create a final plan (Burby, 2003; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). By participating in the planning process, individual citizens and community groups can "challenge the gate keeping of creative initiative in place making, now located almost exclusively within the planning and design professions (Carp, 2004, p. 253). Local governments also benefit from these emerging feelings. The public will be more amenable to, or alternatively, will take responsibility for the contents of a plan when they feel they have contributed to it (Selin & Chavez, 1995). Local governments can also ensure their due diligence in plan making by involving the public. Irvin & Stansbury (2004) write: "often, public participation is assumed to be cost-effective because it reduces the probability of litigation" (p. 57).

Exercising democratic citizenship

Involvement in the planning process allows citizens to fulfill their democratic right to civic participation. Put simply, if democratic societies want to adhere to their governing principles, then "public participation is a normative prerequisite" (Renn, Webler, Rakel, Dienel, & Johnson, 1993, p. 210). The benefits offered to the public are couched in moral terms. These include the "basic concepts of fairness; the rights of the individual to be informed and consulted and to express their views on governmental decisions; [and] the need to better represent the interests of disadvantaged […] groups in governmental decision making" (Burby, 2003, p. 34). More philosophically, Stivers (1990) writes that public participation contributes to the development of the highest human capacities, and to a greater understanding of what it means to be a citizen. The discussion of different political and social perspectives in an open forum also contributes to a more reflective and sensitive public. Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) note that public participation is "part of the project of building citizens who are not only responsive to the views and concerns of other groups, but [are] also able to reflect on their own particular and partial perspective" (p. 22).

Building social capital

Social capital is an important part of the public participation process (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). The term refers to the "extent and effectiveness of formal and informal human networks, as well as the impact of social ties on opportunities" (Manzo & Perkins, 2006, p. 341). The benefits experienced by a neighbourhood high in social capital include a positive social environment, strong neighbourhood ties, and an active and engaged public. While the benefits generated by social capital are often realized following the conclusion of a successful public participation process, it will be seen that the existence of social capital in a community is often required at the onset in order to conduct a productive participation process. In this respect, social capital is both a product *and* requirement of the participation process.

Facilitating citizen - government interaction

The consistent interaction of government representatives and engaged citizens benefits local democratic institutions. Chess & Purcell (1999) state that an effectively run participatory process—founded on meaningful dialogue between parties—can push local civil servants and officials to be more reflexive in their duties. In turn, this can "lead to long-term changes in formal or informal agency policy or procedures. Such social learning is arguably as important as a single government decision about a project or program" (Chess & Purcell, 1999, p. 2687). Similarly, an engaging public participation process can better educate and inform planners about the communities they plan for (Godschalk, 1967). As public participation becomes more entrenched, local administrations can become more democratic and responsive to citizen concerns (Day, 1997). Forester (1989) underscores the important role this dialogue can play in crafting a new political life; it bounds the citizen to the state and the state to the citizen to create a "shared, critical, and evolving political life" (p. 118).

Recasting perceptions of local government

More pragmatically, by engaging with citizens local governments are able to recast their images and address perception. Irvin & Stansbury (2004) write, "improved citizen participation could stem the deterioration of public trust evidenced by widespread hostility towards government entities" (p. 56). Shaw (2009) also notes the potential wellspring of goodwill present in public participation. Speaking to an urban planner about the feelings engendered by the use of public input in final plans, the planner responds: "when the public sees how you actually use their input, they are amazed and grateful" (p. 56). In this respect, participatory planning can contribute to the legitimizing of both local plans and local governance, with the latter seen as more interactive (Laurian & Shaw, 2009). This is particularly important when planning for areas characterized by deep mistrust between local officials and citizens. Stern, Gudes, & Svoray (2009) state: "citizens of deteriorated neighbourhoods often suspect the authorities' intentions. Therefore, trust must first be built between citizens and authorities" (p. 1069).

Improving the quality of final plans

Public participation in planning creates the potential to improve final plans, by inviting new perspectives, new knowledge, and new critiques. The chief premise of participatory planning is its intention to "produce better decisions, and thus more efficiently [provide] benefits to the rest of society" (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 56). Local knowledge—the information possessed by locals concerning their community—allows planners to better understand neighbourhood conditions, and to gain insight into local relationships and the potential consequences of planning intervention on them (Harris, 1999; Wagle, 2000). Public participation also invites ideas that may fall outside of conventional planning wisdom. Harris (1999) writes that at its best, public participation can contribute "imaginative or unconventional approaches to [planning] problems" by widening the field of knowledge "available for informed decision-making" (p. 322). By opening the floor to a variety of perspectives, planners are also better prepared to "explore alternative development scenarios, and [to] establish benchmarks for evaluating on-going development efforts" (Klosterman, 1999, p. 394).

Recognizing and mediating a diversity of perspectives

Public participation is also important in its potential to incorporate a diversity of community voices into urban plans and policy. Healey (1999) describes the participatory process as "building policy discourse that recognize multiple claims and voices and provides space for the assertion of those claims and voices in the [planning] process" (p. 118). In this respect, the participatory planning process can mitigate divisions between different local groups by using the exercise as an opportunity to discuss issues and build consensus. In doing so, the ideal public participation process "allows factions to compromise and find solutions to previously intractable problems" (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 57). While public participation allows groups to overcome problems as they arise during the planning process, what of pre-existing divisions and long-standing disputes within the community—how does the participatory planning process overcome these problems? Citing evidence drawn from both American and Australian experiences, Margerum (2002) writes that while existing tensions can exist between groups going into the public participation process, "many participants viewed the consensus-based efforts as a new opportunity, distinct from past conflicts [and] a new forum for dealing more constructively with differences" (p. 245). The collaborative process can also strengthen community ties among participants by eliminating communicative barriers. Kaza (2006) writes that the process "increases trust among the participants", while "the negotiation builds shared meanings of positions and clarifies each standpoint" between groups (p. 266).

3.1.4. Challenges of public participation in planning

For its advantages, public participation in planning is not without significant challenges to its usefulness, or indeed, its operation from both the perspective of the public and of the practitioner. The challenges are many and include: time and monetary costs and constraints; determining the extent of public involvement; the incompatibility of bureaucratic systems and public participation; defining the participating 'public'; overrepresentation of fringe positions; the utility of plans produced through participation; the paradox between action and participation; lack of citizen engagement; lack of community social capital; minimum compliance and mismanagement by officials; ambiguity of planning profession's abilities; measuring procedural success; the 'future-mindedness' of the public; and the scale of the plan.

Time and monetary costs and constraints

An effective public participation process requires an investment of time on the part of both the public and responsible officials, and an investment of money from the presiding agency (Aleshire, 1972; Booher, 2004; Carp, 2004). An investment of time is necessary for a public participation process, as "any requirement to consult with additional people [outside of the bureaucracy] will slow down the decision-making process" (Kweit & Kweit, 1980, p. 654). A prolonged engagement in the participatory planning process can ultimately tax the abilities of local officials, and lead to 'burn-out' among the participating public. Irvin & Stansbury (2004) state that participating citizens can become complacent or alienated should the process extend past expected deadlines.

Determining the extent of public involvement

The phase at which the public engages with the planning process is a significant challenge to the effectiveness of public participation. If the public is only able to provide input on a plan in its final stages, public participation amounts to a 'rubber stamp' rather than a vital part of the planning process. If planners opt to involve the public too late in the process, the public is not providing input; they are merely reacting to what is presented (Chess & Purcell, 1999; Davidoff, 1965). Early involvement is also important in setting the operational parameters of the public participation process itself. Brody, Godschalk, and Burby (2003) write: "early participation injects community knowledge and expertise into the planning process when it is most needed, before politics are set in stone" (p. 250). In this respect, involving the public early in the planning process is vital to its success—at least inasmuch as participation is concerned. Cuthill (2004) writes that early public involvement—through the articulation of a shared vision and goals—is a major determinant of the effectiveness of the participatory process. While public participation is considered important to the planning process at large, planners must also take care to provide clear boundaries and end the participation process when it is no longer yielding useful results. As noted by Day (1997), the balancing of participatory processes is necessary to maintain utility; while planning "cannot succeed without some participation, it cannot afford to be dominated by participatory processes" (p. 421).

The incompatibility of bureaucratic systems and public participation

The bureaucratic system, a hallmark of local governance, is fundamentally in opposition with the tenets of the public participation process (Kweit & Kweit, 1984). Predicated on a centralization of power, rigid structuration, and the allocation of decision-making capabilities to unelected civil servants, the bureaucratic system is chiefly concerned with efficiency and rationality. This is in sharp contrast to the public participation process, which is often slower in deliberation and informed by emotional response. This culminates in a 'tension' between planning as a rational activity and a democratic-social activity that makes "citizen participation inherently problematic" (Hou & Kinoshita, 2007, p. 302). By introducing a multitude of citizen actors and lengthening the planning process out of necessity, public participation ultimately serves to reduce both the autonomy and efficiency of the planning practitioner (Carp, 2004). Meanwhile, the complexities present in modern democratic institutions and that contribute to an entrenched bureaucracy have made it increasingly difficult to "facilitate the kind of face-to-face relationships upon which participatory democracy depends" (Day, 1997, p. 425).

Defining the participating 'public'

While participatory planning aims to ensure collaboration between municipal authorities and the public in plan making, the latter is not a monolithic entity. The contemporary view of the 'public' is one of heterogeneity; it is comprised of many different social, economic, and ethnic groups (Cameron & Grant-Smith, 2005). Due to this, planners must be prepared to communicate with "an array of publics [each] with their own languages, values, perspectives, cognitive styles, and world-views" when engaging in the public participation process (Booher, 2004, p. 33). As with any bloc distinguished by a variety of diverging viewpoints and interests, the 'public' may be subject to internal disagreement and factionalism when confronted with a controversial planning issue. The multiplicity of views—while part of a healthy democratic society—poses a problem when planners use input to shape their plans. MacCallum (2009) writes that due to the "number of stakeholders involved and their often

irreconcilable differences. […] It is scarcely feasible to communicate with all the main players, let alone to please everyone" (p. 1). In many cases, the loudest or most organized groups present in the public participation process can drown out more marginalized groups and individuals in the community. Contemporary citizen involvement is generally characterized by an 'iron triangle', comprising development interests, local government officials, and organized neighbourhood groups, that can contribute to "corporatist agreements between elite actors, rather than renewed democracy in planning" (Burby, 2003; Lane, 2003, p. 364). With these issues in mind, the question becomes what public is the public participation process ultimately serving?

Overrepresentation of fringe positions

Conversely, when a participatory planning process does not receive the level of involvement necessary from the public, it may suffer from an overrepresentation of input from single-issue interest groups (Day, 1997). Ostensibly, the public has been consulted, while in reality majority views will have gone unrepresented in the process. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) write that because citizens involved the participatory planning process are not compensated for their time, "committees may be dominated by strongly partisan participants, whose livelihood or values are strongly affected by the decisions being made, or by those who live comfortably to allow them to participate regularly" (p. 59). Where representation from a variety of economic and social groups does exist, fringe perspectives may still dominate. Kaza (2006) writes that moderate groups may encourage radical behaviour from peers, as they are then able to "claim sanity of their positions in light of these radicals" (p. 263).

The utility of plans produced through participation

Public participation literature often assumes that the decisions arrived at through the process will be clear and ready to include in final plans. In truth, the results of the participatory process can be ambiguous, founded on emotion rather than reason, and may directly conflict with present conditions or earlier planning aims (Aleshire, 1972; Innes & Booher, 2004). The ability to participate—though an obvious cornerstone of public participation—is just one part of the participatory planning process; Fainstein (2000) underscores the participating public's need for additional monetary, organizational, and knowledge resources to refine and support their input. Where sound input and minority voices are present, they may be silenced by a fear of countering majority views, regardless of the latter's validity. Fischler (2000) refers to this as the difficult process of publicly exposing the 'inner self'. Regardless of the quality of public input and suggestions, planners are often bound to use the decisions reached through public participation. According to Irvin & Stansbury (2004), "because these decisions [are] made by a citizen committee, government representatives […] may find it politically impossible to defy the decisions" (p. 60).

The paradox between action and participation

Planners hoping to engage with the public are confronted by the paradox between action and participation. Participation should precede action, but action is often necessary to generate interest from local citizen groups, and thus encourage their participation. Beauregard (1995) acknowledges "people will not undertake collective political action in the absence of persuasive representations of public issues and convincing reasons to act" (p. 61). The existence of an 'action' is important for community groups, as it provides the necessary conditions to "build the confidence of the group, generate momentum, and help determine their role" (Margerum, 2002, p. 245).

Lack of citizen engagement

Public participation in planning is founded on the premise of an active and socially involved public whose only barrier to participation is the system of governance in place. Instead, it is often the case that "the public is neither informed enough nor inclined to be actively involved in the formation of public policy" (Booher, 2004, p. 41). While this points to a lack of time and engagement among citizens, there is another significant reason contributing to low public participation in planning. Innes & Booher (2004) posit that individuals who are interested in participating are often discouraged "from wasting their time going through what appear to be nothing more than rituals designed to satisfy legal requirements" (p. 419).

Lack of community social capital

As noted, for public participation to be effective, a high level of social capital is often a necessary prerequisite. Where social capital is present, local networks can be mobilized for information and representation, local knowledge drawn upon, and the community's citizens and groups are better able to work together towards a common goal (Hibbard & Lurie, 2000). While social capital is useful in contributing towards a beneficial public participation process, it does conflict with other conditions required by the participation process. Social capital is the product of "dense social networks" within a neighbourhood; the size and scope of such a network suggests a large and diverse group of community views, subject to their own internecine conflicts (Hibbard & Lurie, 2000). However, Irvin & Stansbury (2004) note that collaborative decision-making works best when the participating public is small and homogenous. In large communities, "expecting ten or twenty citizen representatives to turn around popular opinion may be naïve" (p. 58).

Minimum compliance and mismanagement by officials

Despite the ostensible benefit offered by public participation in the planning process, mismanagement by civil officials can severely impact its effectiveness. The enshrinement of public participation in law forces unwilling civil servants to perform the minimum level of public consultation required (Howe, 1994). While the public's perspective has been included in the planning process, the planner is unlikely to use the input to shape plans, rendering the participatory process moot (Burby, 2003). Where planners *are* interested in the public participation process, poor data collection and communication, insufficient engagement techniques, and negative participatory atmosphere can all affect the procedural utility of public participation (Burby, 2003; Carmona, Heath, Oc, & Tiesdell, 2007 [2003]; Laurian & Shaw, 2009). Hou & Kinoshita (2007) argued that the institutionalization of public participation in planning impedes its effectiveness. They write: "the formalized rules and procedures have been found to encourage certain groups and [marginalize] others" (p. 302), illustrating that governing rules are as fallible as their writers. Tewdwr-Jones (2002) looks at issues of self-interest and self-preservation in participatory planning, as planners "reflect as autonomous individuals and learn how to not get caught out" (p. 67), suggesting that the integrity of the public participation process is very reliant on the values of the presiding planners.

The ambiguity of planning's abilities

With promises of effectiveness at the centre of public participation, planners must make clear to the participants the opportunities and constraints present in the planning process, in order to avoid uncertainty and misplaced public disapproval. As participatory planning demands a time investment from the public, disillusionment incurred by processes ultimately deemed unsuccessful by participants may stop them from participating in the future (Hibbard & Lurie, 2000). At worst, this disillusionment can turn to open hostility towards the process as participants feel their suggestions have been "ignored or merely taken under advisement" (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 59). Urban planner John Lewis, a professional with several years of experience in public engagement techniques, speaks of the importance of communication and honesty in this context. He states: "You're going to have points of tension in the process, but better to have points of tension about the true, honest situation than to have the public think that the process is completely open [if it is not]" (personal communication, 15 June 2011).

Measuring procedural success

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the participatory process. While quantitative measurement issues predominate, there is also a secondary problem of the definition of 'success'. Chess and Purcell (1999) explore the diversity of perspectives as to what 'success' in public participation entails. Is a participatory process successful when it exceeds some arbitrary level of local citizen involvement, or is it successful based on the outcome of the process? This ambiguity has meant "planning professionals and academics lack definitions and criteria of success in participation as well as [the] methods to assess participatory processes" (Laurian & Shaw, 2009, p. 294).

The 'future-mindedness' of the public

A significant challenge to public participation in planning is the degree of concern for the future that is necessary in plan making. The practical conditions of the participatory planning process are geared towards the preservation (or change) of the present conditions, potentially at cost to future generations. As noted by Smith (1973), "planning decisions made in the present may eliminate options and constrain societal processes in the future; and participants tend to be biased toward or limited by the time frame in which they exist" (p. 280). The implications of participatory planning extend past future physical conditions to those not yet born. Kaza (2006) notes that the process "excludes individuals and groups who cannot participate, like future generations" (p. 257).

The scale of the plan

The scale of the plan can also challenge the public participation process. While participatory planning remains a highly contested and complex process at any scale, this is magnified as the plan's scale grows. This necessitates the inclusion of more individuals and groups in the participatory process, which in turn requires planners to "communicate knowledge and [...] coordinate decision-making [extending] to a much wider, more complex set of issues" (Pennington, 2002, p. 197). This can contribute to the collapse of the participatory process under the weight of the demands placed on it, as "the range, complexity, and interrelatedness of the issues [...] are of a magnitude far too extensive to rely on conscious deliberation" (Pennington, 2002, p. 197).

3.1.5. Requisite conditions for public participation

From the benefits of and challenges to public participation, the necessary conditions for public participation to succeed can be inferred. The first is an active and healthy civil society, which encourages community organization, the building of social capital, and the formation of political consciousness (Friedmann, 1998; Lane, 2003; Sampson, 2008). The second is early communication, which ensures communities are providing input, not reaction. Third is the involvement of a diversity of groups, to ensure the participatory process is truly representative of the community it is serving. The fourth condition is the use of a variety of different methods in the participatory process, which best engages a diverse public and can collect different types of information (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003). The fifth is the provision of sufficient resources, which aids informed decision-making and can potentially offset emotion-based responses (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007). The sixth is the provision of clear decision rules and conflict management, which mitigates conflict within the process and ensures the procedural parameters are well understood. The last pertinent factor is the opportunity for feedback and monitoring of the process, which revisits the ideas produced from participation, and validates the process for the public by making it known their ideas are being considered and used (Chess & Purcell, 1999; Sarkissian, Hurford, & Wenman, 2010).

3.1.6. Local knowledge and 'crowdsourcing' in public participation

Local knowledge is both an important part of and a rationale for public participation in the planning process. While many alternative definitions exist, Geertz (1983) provides an authoritative interpretation, defining local knowledge as that which is "practical, collective, and strongly rooted in a particular place [that forms] an organized body of thought based on the immediacy of experience" (p. 75). In a public participation context, local knowledge exists alongside professional knowledge. Epistemologically, local knowledge differs from professional knowledge in that the former is held by a local community group or individual and often pertains to the practical conditions that inform daily experience, while the latter is held by established agencies such as professionals, universities, governments, or disciplines. Their differences arise from "the emphasis each place on information collection methods, standards of evidence, and analytic techniques" (Corburn, 2003, p. 421). Whereas professional knowledge is often gained through quantitative research methods, local knowledge is derived from an "intimate familiarity with and understanding of the particulars of a local situation" (Yanow, 2004, p. S12). The transmission of local knowledge is primarily accomplished through informal community networks and artistic forms, including "public narratives, community stories, [and] street theatre", making it accessible to community members (Corburn, 2003, p. 421). In contrast, professionals find great difficulty in accessing this information, partly due to their community 'outsider' status. This disconnect from community information sources is where public participation meetings and workshops are useful; they invite local residents to provide their experiences and knowledge on a topic, and can be a potential input for plans.

How does local knowledge relate to planning? The place-rootedness of planning requires practitioners to draw on local knowledge to produce planning solutions in keeping with local contexts. Planners also play an important role in mediating between different forms of knowledge, bridging the scientific rationality of expert professions with the contextual and experiential knowledge of community residents (Corburn, 2003). A number of benefits are accrued from the use of local knowledge in the development of urban plans. Van Herzele (2004) finds local knowledge useful as it allows practitioners to draw on perspectives outside (and untouched by) their profession, and can potentially lead to the development of creative solutions for local communities. The inclusion of local knowledge in the planning process also argues against reductionism and generalization in plan and policy development; invites dialogue from marginalized voices and can promote greater acceptance of final plans; balances (and is balanced by) the rationality of professional knowledge; and can identify cost-effective solutions to problems (Corburn, 2003). Indeed, plans developed with local knowledge better reflect their constituent communities; those created without any input of local knowledge can appear "irrelevant to those they are supposed to benefit" (Burby, 2003, p. 34).

The use of local knowledge in planning is not without complications. Some have criticized the idea that residents inherently know what is good for their neighbourhood, providing evidence of the exclusionary tendencies of communities in general, and NIMBYist (not-in-my-backyard) and BANANAist (build-absolutely-nothing-anywhere-near-anything) attitudes specifically (Holden & Iveson, 2003; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Walters, 2007; Yli-Pelkonen & Kohl, 2005). More practically, the insights embedded in local knowledge are difficult to collect and quantify. Stephenson (2010) attributes this to the lingering presence of scientific and rational views as to what planning knowledge is. Overall, she writes there are "very few tools that are designed to explore the nature of these [place-based] relationships" (p. 9). It follows that if the qualitative evidence derived from local knowledge can be collected; translating it to action is difficult for a system based on quantifiable data (Fischler, 1995).

An important adjunct to local knowledge is the concept of 'crowdsourcing'. This phenomenon is predicated on the belief that "under the right circumstances, groups are remarkably intelligent, and often smarter than the smartest people in them" (Surowiecki, 2004, p. xiii). In its contemporary form, crowdsourcing uses the aggregative power of the Internet to mobilize users to create, improve, and disseminate knowledge and content; ultimately it "harnesses the creative solutions of a distributive network of individuals" (Brabham, 2009, p. 250; Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2009). In the context of crowdsourcing, these "right circumstances" come to mean a group of people—though each with their own personal beliefs and preferences—working towards a solution of knowledge creation, or a greater understanding of a practical issue. Though there may (and will) be differences between individuals, they must share an overarching purpose. A product of post-millennial advances in information technology and web applications, crowdsourcing was first used for commercial means. However, it has since been advocated as an effective tool for participatory planning, as "the medium of the Web enables us to harness collective intent among a population in ways face-to-face planning meetings cannot" (Brabham, 2009, p. 242).

While distributive networks and collective intelligence support the creation of participatory user-generated plans, there is one major issue in the 'crowdsourcing' approach. Brabham (2009) points to the 'digital divide': "the chasm between those who have computers, computer skills, and Internet access, and those who do not" (p. 255). In this regard, the concerns of ensuring access to face-to-face meetings have been replaced with the problem of ensuring access to digital content creation tools. By using distribution and collective intelligence through a decidedly low-tech method, the I Wish This Was project is one possible solution to overcoming this issue of representation. The inherently place-based nature of the I Wish This Was medium provides a way in which to ground crowdsourcing in a local context and to invite participation.

3.1.7. Approaches to participatory planning

This section examines a selection of practical approaches to public participation. It does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of approaches; the breadth of contemporary approaches vary from the conventional—such as public meetings—to the unorthodox—such as play-staging and poetry-writing—and will not be included for the sake of brevity (Sandercock & Lyssiotis, 2003; Wagle, 2000). As this study is chiefly concerned with assessing the participatory potential in graphic design, this section will look to the processes considered most amenable to this approach: design charettes and community visioning exercises. While operationally different, both approaches share an emphasis on encouraging communication, clarity, cooperation, and action of a disparate group of community and professional actors.

Design charette

A charette is an intensive design workshop, where citizens and professionals (architects, designers, engineers, and planners) work in tandem to develop solutions to local urban problems. These design workshops are an early introduction to the participatory process; they are a popular activity in architecture and planning schools. A charette is Forester's concept of 'transactive' planning made real; it facilitates a dialogue between citizen and specialist groups to arrive at a design solution (Forester, 1989; Walters, 2007). Through this process, participants are better able to "understand and accept the relationship between the project and their aims (Lang, 1987, p. 233).

Community visioning

The community visioning process is one where "members of a community build consensus on a description of the community's desired future and actions to help make goals for the future a reality" (Booher, 2004, p. 36). Conducted in community meetings and facilitated by planners, the visioning process first invites citizens to share their desired neighbourhood conditions, then restates these desires as goals. From these goals, planners and community members work in concert to determine the actions necessary to achieve the projected goals, using this as the basis for an implementation strategy. While similar to a charette in that it invites community members to develop solutions to neighbourhood issues, the scope and aims of the processes differ. Where a charette is often concerned with design interventions on specific sites, community-visioning processes are more abstract in their prescriptions.

Common features of the visioning process in practice are widespread participation (indeed, as a necessity), the development of shared community values and vision, exploration of alternative perspectives on community futures, and an emphasis on graphical/visual presentation of results (Sarkissian, Hurford, & Wenman, 2010). The collaborative and consensus-based strategies in the community visioning exercise offer many advantages to the broader participatory planning process. These include the development of a sense of trust and collaboration among the participants, the broadening of understanding and knowledge of the community, the supply of local knowledge, and may lead to a feeling of ownership in the resulting plan (Booher, 2004; Cuthill, 2004). However, the process can be plagued by ambiguity at both visioning and goal levels, and there is concern over whether participation in this process actually strengthens community resolve to achieve the goals set for themselves (Cuthill, 2004; Shipley, 2002). The success of the process is predicated on a number of important factors. They are: a valid pre-existing knowledge base, a multidisciplinary approach to visioning subject to different professional influences, and extensive communication efforts between local citizens and professionals (Cuthill, 2004).

Participation processes in practice

In practice, both charettes and community visioning activities are popular methods for engaging the public in the planning process. Due to the similar goals of each activity, they are considered complementary and can be carried out at once. With regard to the practical effectiveness of the processes, divisions exist in the literature. Shipley (2002) questions the usefulness of the community visioning process. In a survey of twenty-two planning departments in the province of Ontario, Canada, he notes that the "majority of planners indicated that the vision statements and the experience of participating in visioning exercises was having only a moderate impact on decision making" (p. 13). A similar study conducted by Shipley in 1998 suggested less congruence between the visioning process and subsequent decision making efforts; a majority of the responding planners "indicated that [vision statements] were having very little or only a moderate impact" on the decision making process (Shipley, 2002, p. 14). In contrast, Booher (2004) and Cuthill (2004) suggest that the visioning process is effective provided an appropriate level of resources and information are employed in the process.

3.2. Graphic Design

The influence of graphic design on society is unquestionable. From the moment we wake up in the morning and until we go to sleep, the products of graphic design surround us. It is found on our cereal boxes, on the signs that guide us through our daily commutes, on the computers we use to work, and on the money we use to shop. It is precisely because of this ubiquity that graphic design—as a discipline—is often misunderstood. Is graphic design (as a product) merely a venue for messages? Or is it art? Is graphic design (as a discipline) value neutral? Or is it culturally constructed? Is graphic design (as a profession) dedicated to the perpetuation of capitalist methods of accumulation? Or does it have a social responsibility? Each of these attendant issues—and a host of others—have influenced the development of graphic design over time to become, as with public participation, an essentially contested concept. This section will explore the different perspectives present in theory and practice concerning graphic design as a definition, graphic design as an activity, and graphic design as a process. With these important operational issues covered, the section will develop a brief history of graphic design as a tool for public engagement; examine the social role of graphic design; and finally discuss the contemporary and potential role of graphic design in urban planning, with specific attention towards the latter's public participation aims.

3.2.1. What is graphic design?

The fundamental concern of graphic design is the symbolic and visual communication of a message. The discipline is founded on a very practical purpose; it has come "to exist because someone wants to say something to someone else" (Frascara, 2004, p. 12). It is however set apart from other visual media in that it is created with the intention of overarching accessibility through mass reproduction (Barnard, 2005). There is little consensus on the meaning and purpose of the discipline past these characteristics. Graphic design, as with planning, is characterized by a variety of perspectives as to its true purpose, its use, and its methods. Twemlow (2006) illustrates this diversity of views: "marketing people think that graphic design is a function of marketing, graphic designers liken graphic design to art, historians see graphic design as social ephemera" (p. 22). Consequently, it is difficult to provide a definition that satisfies all of the different subfields within the discipline (Barnard, 2005). This section will examine the two most significant (and contrary) definitions of graphic design, before looking to what graphic design 'does'.

Graphic design as a value neutral mode of communication

One view sees graphic design as an "innocent or transparent medium [...] for the communication of messages and information" (Barnard, 2005). The value neutrality of graphic design was first advocated by an international group of designers studying and working in Switzerland during the 1920s. The design philosophy of the group promoted an internationalist, scientific, and rational approach to design. The designers owed their position to the prior use of design as a means to stir nationalist sentiment and propagandize during the First World War (Cramsie, 2010). Visual characteristics of this design approach ostensibly spoke to its 'scientific' nature; it included a strict adherence to a mathematically constructed visual grid, the use of geometric sans-serif typefaces, and an emphasis on layout and typography over illustration and artistic embellishment. The central tenet of the design movement—that design is not influenced by context and can be made scientific—has since been refuted. Frascara (2004) contends: "design is never neutral, every form [...] has a cultural root and a cultural impact" (p. 65).

Graphic design as a sociopolitical mode of communication

A second perspective sees graphic design as a subjective vehicle for reflecting a certain system of beliefs and mores. Followed by the decline of the rational model, this view became the dominant perspective in contemporary graphic design. However, positions on what this approach means for the impartiality of the discipline are mixed. For Knox (2011), graphic design owes its existence to the capitalist market system and its perpetuation of material consumption. It reflects "the *zeitgeist* of the prevailing political economy, while serving [...] as one of the means through which the necessary conditions for the continuation of the system are reproduced" (p. 36, emphasis in original). In this respect, graphic design is a monologue delivered by the market to the consumer. Barnard (2005) takes a contrary position; he highlights the potential for challenge as much as conformity in design. Graphic design can either "reproduce or resist the [dominant] social order" (p. 68). From a perspective of design history, post-modernism can be seen as the realization of this perspective; its forms and products are grounded in specific contexts and societal influences that are themselves acknowledged (Cramsie, 2010).

What graphic design 'does'

As to what graphic design *does*, the answer is as varied as the answer to what graphic design *is*. Through visual communication, graphic design can perform a host of roles, to be developed in this section. Absent from this assessment is a discussion into the social role of design, this will be developed in a following section. There are four primary roles attributed to graphic design. Barnard (2005) lists the overall responsibilities of graphic design as follows: to inform, to persuade, to decorate, and to inject 'magic' in daily life. There is a fifth role—to engage— that should be at the heart of every design project; a description of this will follow.

The first role—information—refers to the dissemination of knowledge or intelligence through visual communication. Barnard (2005) cites the practical examples of "pub signs, shop-fronts, coats of arms, company logos, and packaging," but this function can also extend to more specialized forms of information, including infographics and rhetorical posters (p. 14). McCoy (2003 [1995]) elaborates on more substantive forms on information, writing that design is "a powerful tool, capable of informing, publicizing, and propagandizing social, environmental, and political messages, as well as commercial ones" (p. 6). The second role—persuasion—is aimed at convincing individuals of a certain position or point of view. Barnard (2005) explains that, unlike the selectivity of the first role—design need not be informational—graphic design is inherently persuasive. He notes: "it may be argued that all graphic production has a rhetorical function" (p. 15). The third function of design is to decorate; graphic design becomes a source of fun, whimsy, entertainment, and enjoyment. However, for all of graphic design's aesthetic quality, Barnard (2005) writes that there is some discord among graphic design historians as to whether this is a necessary and consistent element of design. Indeed, some design movements eschew ornamentation altogether; this was especially prominent in the work of aforementioned Swiss modernist designers. The final role is that of creating 'magic'. In comparison to the communicative and aesthetic roles that precede it, Barnard (2005) describes this role as "probably the least obvious function of graphic production" (p. 15). He states that graphic design is able to "[make] something different from what it truly is," rendering distant places near and abstract ideas concrete through subjective visual representation (p. 15).

The fifth—and arguably the most important—role of graphic design is to engage. Designer Paul Rand (1993) provides a comprehensive assessment of what it means to design, and from that we can infer the true utility of graphic design. He writes: "to design is much more than simply to assemble, to order, or even to edit; it is to add value and meaning, to illuminate, to simplify, to clarify, to modify, to dignify, to dramatize, to persuade, and perhaps even to amuse" (p. 3). In speaking to the use of design, Rand transcends the conventional view of graphic design as communication. In his view, graphic design is a way to engage. The difference is subtle, but important; where merely communicating suggests the passive reception of a message, engagement suggests some degree of active involvement from the audience. Grudin (2010) similarly discusses the potential for engagement in design using a 'dialogic' perspective. He argues: "good design allows for an honest dialogue with the world at large. [It] tells us that although the world is challenging and dangerous, there are solid means of engaging it" (p. 23).

Graphic design as a process

Graphic design is typically viewed in terms of its output: the design product, be it a poster, magazine, or sticker. When one speaks of graphic design, they tend to speak to the visible colour and typographic choices, layout, and composition. The *process* of graphic design—the steps that culminate in a carefully crafted product—is comparatively less acknowledged. In the graphic design process, the designer must not only satisfy questions of *what* they are saying and *how* they are saying it. They must also ask *why* they are saying it. Past the basic communicative function of graphic design, every good design is predicated on an attempt to solve a practical problem. Designers employ their professional sensibilities and skills to shape "materials and processes to solve practical problems of human activity" (Buchanan, 1985, p. 9). As a design problem can be as varied as selling goods or developing wayfinding systems, the design process is inherently adaptive and scalable. At the most basic level, the design process demands that designers undertake "the action of conceiving, programming, projecting, and realizing" their projects (Frascara, 2004, p. 2). In following these steps, graphic designers must acknowledge a variety of influences, including universal access, colour theory, cultural context, cost, and use, among others. In viewing graphic design this way, it removes a layer of abstraction and provides understanding as to why designs appear or work as they do. In viewing graphic design as a process, we are moved past merely looking at the final product to instead acknowledge "the impact that [graphic design] has on knowledge, the attitudes, and the behaviour of people" (Frascara, 2004, p. 13).

3.2.2. A history of engagement in graphic design

Graphic design's roots in communication and engagement have heavily influenced the discipline's historical development. This section will provide a brief overview of the shifting views and uses of the discipline, and the concurrent maturation of design and print technologies that have made this process possible. While graphic design—in its earliest and most primitive form—dates to the 15th century, this assessment will look only from the early modern era beginning in the 19th century (Eskilson, 2007).

The widespread use of graphic design takes its start during the industrial revolution. While printed material followed the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1440s, many of the products were expensive and limited to those of wealth. In the rapidly industrializing countries of Europe, the industrial revolution stimulated a rise in urbanization. Cities—growing in physical size and population—were ideal places to display messages. Cramsie (2010) writes: "the cities' new buildings provided a broad, red-brick canvas on which a host of competing groups could paste their messages" (p. 124). Early designs featured a patchwork of large slab typefaces to ensure readability even at great distances. Urban commercial and civic engagement efforts would later evolve to more complex and visually coherent designs during the Art Nouveau epoch in the 1880s (Frascara, 2004). Despite this change, graphic design remained a passive appeal to the city; viewers were not expected to engage with the material in any substantive way, they were however expected to follow its messages.

Engagement in graphic design reached new heights in 1914, and again in 1939. The World Wars brought with them the concept of 'total war', a state of being that demanded much from the citizen. It was through graphic design that these expectations were communicated. Instead of selling goods or promoting a political position, graphic design was used to "influence the views of potential recruits and financial backers, as well as to garner the support of the population to maintain backing for a conflict" (Eskilson, 2007, p. 116). The way individuals interacted with the material had not changed; they were still expected to follow the messages embedded in the designs. However, the way the material interacted with the individual had shifted. Designs were used to propagandize and manipulate the viewing public; the messages had never been so pronounced in their rhetoric and so significant in their recommended actions. In the United Kingdom, posters aimed at inducing recruitment during the First World War called into question the patriotism, and indeed, the

Figure 1. 'We Can Do It'. The War Production Committee's 'Rosie the Riveter' is emblematic of the call to civic participation embedded in 1940s wartime imagery.

masculinity of men who had not joined the British Army to fight on the western front (Eskilson, 2007). In Russia, 'agitprop' posters urged civilians appealed to civilians to join the revolutionary struggle after questioning their courage and integrity (Cramsie, 2010). While propaganda in design would continue after the 1910s, it did not reach the same negative levels as it did during this time. In the Second World War, many of the Allies eschewed the negative approach of their previous engagement efforts and instead opted for a more hopeful and positive tone. Rather than patronize or shame individuals, graphic design products instead implored them to work for the war effort, to buy war bonds, and to encourage efficiency and waste reduction.

Technological advances beginning in the mid-20th century altered how individuals interacted with graphic design. From being a passive audience to the visual information supplied by graphic design products, individuals were able to interact with design on a creative and personal level. Design was no longer entrusted to a narrowly defined professional group of artists and printers (Frascara, 2004). The development of the photocopier, complemented by existing typewriter technology, made the democratization of print content a reality. Reflecting on this shift, McLuhan and Fiore (1967) write: "anybody can now become both an author and a publisher. Take any books on any subject and custom-make your own" (p. 123). While earlier groups had used the photomontage as a communication tool—notable in the work of several designers associated with the 1920s Dadaist movement—this was different. Cramsie (2010) affirms: "for the very first time it was possible for ordinary people to make cheap notices and publications without any expertise or any outside agency" (p. 290). Not only did this new technology provide the ability to create communicative media, it also facilitated the efficient dissemination of information .

The genesis of desktop publishing in the 1980s further opened visual communication by effectively democratizing the design process. Desktop publishing—in accordance with its name—removed design capability from the design studio and placed it onto the individual's desk, using new computing, printer, peripheral, and communication technologies (Cramsie, 2010; R. Ross, personal communication, 18 May 2011). The nascent 'do-it-yourself' print movement that had begun with the photocopier grew through desktop publishing. By the early 2000s, "the expansion of the internet and the availability of powerful desktop computers [had] fueled a tremendous increase in the amount of time and energy that the average person devotes to DIY projects" (Eskilson, 2007, p. 415). The ability to easily design graphical products, print high quality copies, and disseminate information through the internet has
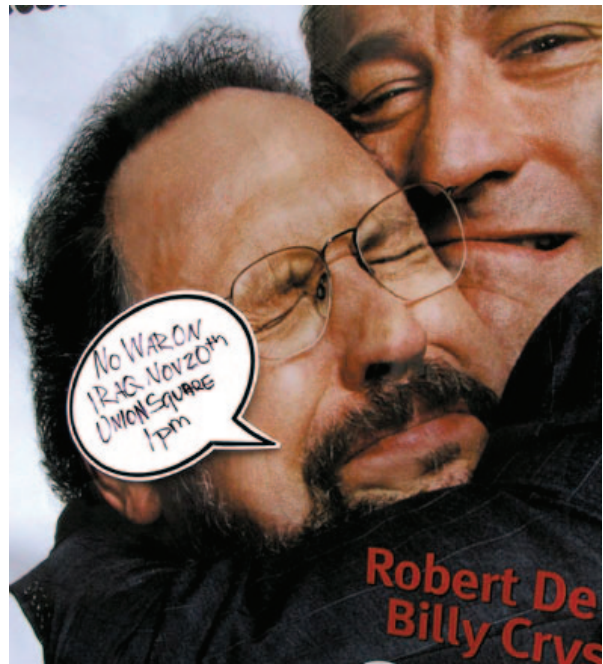
Figure 2. 'Bubble Project'. Using removable stickers, individuals in New York City were invited to write their own messages on ubiquitous urban print advertising.

reoriented graphic design from a passive, one-way form of communication to a more active, dialogic form of engagement, or has at least made the latter an accessible possibility. As noted by designer Rebecca Ross, "we're seeing people taking greater agency in relation to who has access to images, who gets to interpret those images, [and] who gets to choose them and how" (personal communication, 18 May 2011). In many small-scale projects, such as Ji Lee's 'Bubble Project', Rebecca Ross and Andrew Sloat's 'I Am and I Am,' and Candy Chang's 'I Wish This Was', individuals are provided with more opportunity to engage and interact with design products like never before—by providing input and content in acts of protest, self-identity, and civic engagement.

3.2.3. The social role of graphic design

Intrinsic to graphic design is the potential for designers to play an important social role. This can be approached from two perspectives: the first, that design must be socially conscious and engaging in its message and format, and the second, that the design process must be a dialogue between designers and citizens, and that it must speak to local contexts. This section will examine the tools for social engagement, the roots of the 'social turn' in graphic design, followed by an assessment as to what the implications are for this dialogic turn.

Tools for engagement

When we speak of design 'products' and 'media', we refer to the host of graphic design artifacts - the posters, stickers, pamphlets, badges, t-shirts, and any other physical or digital materials serve as vehicles for visual communication. *What* medium the designer chooses is unimportant, as long as it is appropriate to both the design context and their aims. Twemlow (2006) writes that despite the modesty of design forms, they can be quite effective given the right design. She notes: "at first glance, the tools for dissent at graphic design's disposal may seem limited […] and yet when generated with passion, conceived with thoughtfulness, and used effectively, such tokens can actually reach more people than their modest forms suggest" (p. 46). In designing for engagement and participation, the resulting designs must—aside from contextual—be convivial. Sanders (2006) explains: "convivial tools allow users to invest the world with their meaning, to enrich the environment with the fruits of their visions, and to use them for the accomplishment of a purpose they have chosen" (p. 68). It is through this lens that this project views the potential for graphic design in encouraging participation.

A history of social responsibility in graphic design

Witnessing the social activism of the 1960s, graphic designers reflected on their professional duties and began to question their role in society. The concept of social responsibility in the design field at large was not new; 19th century textile designer William Morris advocated the social utility of design, while in the 1950s modernist designers viewed their professional work as a "democratizing and inspiring force for good" (Eskilson, 2007; Shaughnessy, 2010, p. 7). Despite these earlier progressive inclinations, the design discipline at large remained an expert driven top-down process into the 1960s.

Contemporary designers adopted a professional view different from their forebears. Design would not be imagined solely by designers and imposed on society; social responsibility would be realized through a dialogic process. This shift is reflected in the attitude of influential designer Victor Papanek (1972), who argues: "designers can no longer be the employees of corporations, but rather must work directly for the client group - that is, the people who are in need of a product" (p. 92). A catalyst for this movement arrived in 1964 with the publication of the 'First Things First' manifesto, written by designer Ken Garland and signed by over 400 design professionals. Positing that graphic design is not neutral and is indeed social, the document pressed for a "refocus of design's attention and energies away from consumer advertising and toward social causes" (Twemlow, 2006, p. 46). This movement predicted the graphical turn of protest that would follow later in the decade. On the streets of Paris, London, and Washington D.C., using placards and badges, graphic design played a significant role in mobilizing protest, stimulating discussion, and communicating political positions. Designs spurned embellishment for a simpler approach. Cramsie (2010) writes of the posters used in the May 1968 protests in Paris: "people on the

street could tell what they were from their general appearance alone, and their graphic simplicity made them stand out against the more elaborate, conventional commercial posters that usually dominated" (p. 278).

For all its promise, the practice of social responsibility in design was more difficult than the development of its underlying theory. While the work of designers Garland, Papanek, Jan van Toorn, and Pierre Bernard, among others, suggested an increase in the extent of social engagement in graphic design, such designers encountered a strong opposition (McQuiston, 1993; Poynor, 2008). Graphic design was used in promoting a neoliberal corporatist agenda during the late 1970s and 1980s; it was during this period that the profession "lost its public responsibility, its journalistic side" (van Toorn, 2010, p. 48). By the 1980s, Shaughnessy (2006 [2004]) states: "design [became] sexy and no business could afford to ignore the blandishments of big design groups offering business-nirvana via the medium of professional design" (p. 167).

Figure 3. 'Mai 1968'. This poster was one of many designed during the events of Spring 1968 in Paris.

The breadth of the graphic design profession—and indeed, the numerous roles it sets for itself—has meant that while the commercial role of graphic design has never lost its prominence, the social role of design has regained its momentum following the low point of the 1980s. Several design professionals and theorists attribute this shift in part to the rise of affordable communication technologies and software, as well as to the increasing appreciation of graphic design's expanded role in society (Eskilson, 2007; R. Ross, personal communication, 18 May 2011; Twemlow, 2006). Furthermore, design education—once woefully inattentive to the social imperatives of graphic design—has made tentative progress in educating young designers about their *multiple* roles in society (K. Hughes, personal communication, 4 May 2011; McCoy, 2003 [1995]).

Implications for design

The 'social turn' in graphic design brings with it several implications for the discipline and those who work in it. A socially responsible discipline requires the entrenchment of high-level ethical principles, and training and experience in creating design forms and products that may outstrip the skills acquired for more conventional commercial design (Eskilson, 2007; Szenasy, 2003). That much is appreciated. However, what is more pressing are the effects the more recent dialogic approach has for graphic design. For all its advantages, designing in collaboration with communities and using it to facilitate a conversation with individuals—as all good design should do—is potentially problematic. This section will examine issues derived from practical experience.

In using graphic design to facilitate engagement and open conversation, the design product must first be capable of attracting individuals. However, design is not necessarily universal. The designer must be careful to examine the context where their output will take root; they must be mindful of local languages, cultural sensitivities, and visual histories, among other properties. In using visual communication methods to engage a group of people, the designer is often forced to prioritize one group over another (K. Hughes, personal communication, 4 May

2011). In using design to engage socially with groups, designers must ultimately value and protect "the voices of the people that they're designing for" (K. Hughes, personal communication, 4 May 2011). While making certain choices about the audience to engage are necessary to effectively engage, the choice of design medium also play an important role. Selecting the appropriate medium for a situation affects not only how people engage, but also what type of outcome is met and what type of information is gathered. As noted by Ross: "care with graphics can impact its potential for engaging and facilitating, [...] the type of image that you use to communicate does affect how people are able to engage with it" (personal communication, 18 May 2011).

For all the care a designer can place in designing a context-sensitive and medium-appropriate way to engage socially, once it has left the studio it becomes subject to external influences. While designers may try to produce designs that "seldom leave much room for audience involvement or alternative interpretations", design products are ultimately adaptive and flexible (Twemlow, 2006, p. 77). When designs are released to the public, designers lose control over how they are used. In her experience with co-designing with communities, designer Kristin Hughes says: "it's not until the person actually [uses the design] that tells you what it's going to be used for" (personal communication, 4 May 2011). While adaptability is not necessarily a negative issue in and of itself, there remains a possibility that the design product will not be useful in the way it was originally intended.

There is cause to evaluate the true extent of the 'democratization' of design. While technological advances have opened the field of design to amateur use, how accessible is it in truth? Moreover, what effect does this shift have on the graphic design professional? While it is clear that communications technology has proliferated and computer hardware has never been more powerful or more affordable, the way in which these tools are used vary. There are two groups: those who use digital technologies to produce content, and those who use them to consume content. In the case of the former, it is often the case that "the people who participate tend to be people of greater means and greater education" (R. Ross, personal communication, 18 May 2011). Ross reflects on the use of media in the participatory planning and implementation of the High Line in Manhattan, New York. A largely middle-class movement, the Friends of the High Line community group used photography and other digital media to push for change on the Manhattan rail viaduct (Gopnik, 2001). She contends: "it goes to show that more advantaged people have more facilities with [design media]" (personal communication, 18 May 2011). When the public uses design to participate, and design demands a certain level of technological savvy and education, it can undermine the process. Ross continues: "it's more complicated [...] when in order to participate you have to be a computer programmer or have a really expensive camera" (personal communication, 18 May 2011). The multiple technical and monetary constraints, to say nothing of the time and motivation required to produce meaningful content, all serve as significant barriers and leave many individuals to only consume digital content.

The democratization of design has also engendered an oppositional atmosphere amongst professional designers and their amateur counterparts. The availability of inexpensive, open source, or pirated design software, as well as increasing awareness of visual forms and styles has spurred this shift (Eskilson, 2007). While these tools provide a level playing field between amateurs and professionals where practicality is concerned, they do not confer on the amateur an accompanying level of expertise. This has led to a polarizing situation where non-specialists are proclaiming themselves designers without understanding the history and principles of design, while designers are retreating into elitism in defence. Ross calls for a necessary middle ground, recognizing the potential for positive development: it is one "where people have a more savvy relationship to the visual environment, but also where graphic designers are more generous to people" (personal communication, 18 May 2011).

3.2.4. The urban planning context for graphic design

While the relationship between graphic design and urban planning has been in place largely since the development of the latter as a profession, the potential application of 'interactive' graphic design in a planning context has largely gone unexplored by both designers and planners.

Most commonly, graphic design in planning is employed conventionally—as a tool for one-way visual communication. It is used during public meetings to represent a final product, characterized by planning outputs such as master plans, zoning maps, or neighbourhood renderings. As planning "is a discipline which very largely consists of organizing objects in space," it is not surprising that visualization is so often invoked in its support; it is the clearest way to explain the fruits of planning (Söderström, 1996, p. 250). Despite this clarity, graphic design as a visualization tool in planning is often political. The representation of space in maps and renderings is often used by practitioners to "influence views and frame problems," and to "stimulate emotional involvement and obfuscate conflict" (Fischler, 1995, p. 39). Indeed, planning owes in part its early legitimization to the political use of graphic design. The 1909 Plan of Chicago used graphic design—in this case, bird's eye lithographs—to not only promote its vision of the city, but also to convince both political and public spheres of both the need for and the potential of the nascent planning profession (Ross, 2011/2012).

The entrenchment of visualization in planning has brought with it complacency. Conventional visualization is problematic due to its reliance on an overtly technocratic representation of the urban environment. While it is barrier to understanding by a public unfamiliar with expert images, it also colours the perceptions of the planners themselves. Rebecca Ross argues: "[planners] don't even realize that the particular visual properties of the images that they're working with are affecting their judgement […] it's just like a default way of working now" (personal communication, 18 May 2011). The highly technical rendering of space—a scientific and rational approach—serves to obscure the more intangible qualities inherent in place (Stephenson, 2010). Despite this issue, some are using these conventional visualization techniques in a novel way: to invite participation. Van Herzele and van Woerkum (2008) contend that the visual representation of space can highlight "the ways in which communicative tools available to agents as both a mode for expressing meaning […] and as a practical device for constituting such meaning" (p. 445). In using visual communication to engage, planners must be certain that their audience possesses an appropriate design vocabulary. Salter, Campbell, Journeay, and Sheppard (2009)

note when publics lack the skills needed to decipher planning visuals, the public participation exercises to which they are a part become a meaningless exercise. Planners, in turn, must be able to bridge the disconnect between the public and a spatial-graphical focus. Shaughnessy (2010) provides a practical example of this issue. Looking to a public space redevelopment project in London, England, he relates the insights of one of the responsible designers: "we continually talked with the residents […] we came up with a solution that they had thought of but didn't quite know how to express themselves visually" (p. 7). While visualization forms an important and sizeable portion of graphic design's involvement in the planning process, it is clearly not without its challenges. However, if operationalized correctly, visualization tools and other graphical products can be used to open a dialogic process between planners and participating publics.

However, graphic design's employ in a planning context does not need to be confined to the visualization techniques used in public meetings and design charettes. There is great potential for alternative approaches to its practical use in planning. If graphic design can be used to encourage people to take political action or motivate them to purchase a certain brand of consumer good, it can and should be used to promote engagement in the planning process. Indeed, the aim to affect environments and engage citizens is a principle shared by planning and graphic design. Buchanan (2006 [2001]) posits: "general access to […] design thinking can provide people with new tools for engaging their cultural and natural environment" (p. 143). Meanwhile, in a public sphere increasingly dominated by visual media, planners are required to draw upon more varied forms of visual communication to remain relevant. Krieger (2000) asserts: "the best planners will understand the (nearly dominating) importance of the visual sense and of visual media in contemporary culture" (p. 208). Increasingly, graphic designers are adopting a holistic approach, viewing their designs not only as a two-dimensional arrangement of colour, lines, and text, but also as a product capable of engaging and integrating with a wider environment. Planners, in turn, call upon new visual communication skills to better communicate their ideas, and involve individuals in the planning process in order to affect the same environment. In this context, it becomes clear that the relationship between graphic design and urban planning is more complementary—and indeed, more inextricable—than previously imagined.

4. Case Study: 'I Wish This Was' in New Orleans and Montréal

4.1 The project

The 'I Wish This Was' (IWTW) project forms the basis of the graphic design-informed public participation study. Developed by urban planner and graphic designer Candy Chang, the project, described as a "kind of love child of urban planning and street art," uses a vinyl sticker design medium to invite local residents to participate in a distributed community visioning exercise (Marinello, 2011). After moving to the New Orleans neighbourhood of the Faubourg Marigny in July 2010, Chang quickly grew frustrated with the lack of local services—specifically, a grocery store—available in the neighbourhood (MacCash, 2010). She developed IWTW in response to this frustration, predicating the project on the question of "what if the residents [of a neighbourhood] could influence the type of stores and services that enter the neighbourhood" (Chang, 2010a). The choice of the sticker medium as a vehicle to receive input supports this participatory approach; the IWTW project provides a 'no-tech', accessible method for 'crowdsourcing' and accessing local knowledge in targeted areas. While founded on a premise of local economic development, participant responses have since transcended this initial focus to ask for improvements to infrastructure, to call for safe and vibrant public spaces, and to envision a better future for their cities.

The project was unveiled in November 2010, with support from New Orleans' Du Mois Art Gallery in the city's Freret neighbourhood. Chang distributed boxes of IWTW stickers at no cost to local businesses—primarily bookstores, coffee shops, and bars—throughout New Orleans. Sticker 'grids' and permanent markers were also made available on abandoned buildings and vacant storefronts throughout the city. While the project reflects its roots in the Marigny— most of the responses are found in the neighbourhood—its widespread distribution has meant that IWTW stickers have been found in neighbourhoods as far north as Gentilly Terrace, and as far west as Freret and Uptown. Chang also conducted small information sessions to explain the rationale and approach of the project (A. Olmos, personal communication, 2 May 2011). That said, the distributed nature of the project makes it difficult to gauge how many of the IWTW responses were informed by these sessions. Citizen response to the project has generally been favourable. Chang undertook the project expecting stickers to be used to

Figure 4. 'I Wish This Was' sticker box

transmit 'goofy' messages. Contrary to expectations, "most of her anonymous collaborators in the still-recovering city used the stickers as [originally] intended" (MacCash, 2010). Photographed sticker responses from both New Orleans and Montréal have since been posted online to Chang's iwishthiswas.com website. IWTW forms the first step of a larger initiative. With funding from a Tulane University Urban Innovation Fellowship, Chang and the planning and design firm CivicCenter—of which she is a founding partner—are using the ideals of the project as

the basis for a digital platform. Made open to the public in July 2011, the 'Neighborland' platform will provide a social networking approach to civic engagement, using a digital network to facilitate collaborative approaches to problem solving. According to Chang, Neighborland "will help residents voice their needs, share local knowledge, and shape the commercial and physical development of their neighbourhoods" (Marinello, 2011).

Figure 5. 'I Wish This Was' sticker medium

4.1.1. The design medium

As a vehicle for public communication and as an interface for engagement, the design of the IWTW medium is an important consideration. Using 3 by 4.5 inch die-cut rounded vinyl stickers, Chang adopted a 'no-tech' format to better ensure wide distribution, access, and participation (Marinello, 2011). Often stuck to the outside of buildings or placed on physical infrastructure, the sticker material was chosen due to its fade, scratch, and water resistant properties. It was also chosen due to its low-impact adhesive quality. While more expensive than paper materials, the vinyl stickers can be removed without damaging surfaces and leaving visual traces. This last point is particularly important to ensure adoption and use by individuals and groups who do not want to be seen as vandalizing the places in which they are encouraging improvement. The design itself features bright red stripes bordering a white rectangle in which the participating public is invited to write their wishes and insights for the posted location. The 'I Wish This Was' text and layout draws inspiration from the ubiquitous 'Hello, My Name Is' identification stickers that are the standard of conferences, public meetings, and reunions throughout Canada and the United States. The sticker text is typeset in Gotham Bold, a typeface designed by Tobias Frere-Jones of New York-based type foundry Hoefler & Frere-Jones. Appropriately, the typeface reflects the urban ambitions of the project. It is inspired by the drafting typefaces that proliferated in New York's built environment during the mid-20th century; "the no-nonsense lettering of the American vernacular, those letters of paint, plaster, neon, glass, and steel that figure so prominently in the urban landscape" (Hoefler & Frere-Jones, n.d.). Appropriately, the typeface informed by the urban environment has—through IWTW—begun to help inform its surrounding environs through a process of participation and change.

4.2 The Marigny, New Orleans, Louisiana

The Faubourg Marigny neighbourhood of New Orleans forms the first part of the case study. While IWTW stickers have been found throughout New Orleans, the Marigny was chosen as the section's focus for three reasons. As the home neighbourhood of Candy Chang, it formed the initial inspiration for the IWTW project; it is also the hub of the IWTW project as a majority of participating neighbourhoods are situated *around* the Marigny; finally, it is the neighbourhood with the largest overall percentage of IWTW sticker distribution in the sample dataset, at 36.5 per cent. This section will first look to the context of the Marigny—its geographic location, recent history, and socio-economic conditions—before assessing IWTW content drawn from the sample.

4.2.1. Context

The Marigny is a subdistrict of the Bywater District Area, located in New Orleans' Ninth Ward. It is bounded to the north by St. Claude Avenue, to the east by Franklin Avenue, to the west by Esplanade Avenue, and to the south by the Mississippi River. The neighbourhood is adjacent to the Seventh Ward and St. Roch to the north, Bywater to the east, and the French Quarter—the city's oldest landmark area—to the west. The Marigny dates to 1805, when city planner and architect Barthelemy Lafon (1769-1820) laid out a street grid and subdivided area land to create residential lots for a primarily Spanish and Haitian Creole local population (Times-Picayune, 2006). During the landfall of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the Marigny escaped much of the significant flooding experienced throughout New Orleans. The city's northern neighbourhoods were subject to the brunt of the flooding due to their proximity to the city's levee system and Lake Ponchartrain. Distant from both of these hydrological features, the Marigny experienced flooding only in its low-lying northern half. Water damage to area structures was minimized by the raised houses that predominate throughout the neighbourhood (Meek, 2005).

The comparatively limited disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina in the Marigny is reflected in the neighbourhood's demographic changes. In 2000, neighbourhood population was 3,145 people. By 2010, this had decreased to 2,973 for a percentage decrease of 5 per cent (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center [GNOCDC], 2011b). The population loss reflects a wider exodus at the citywide level. The Marigny's share of the city's total population in 2000 was 0.6 per cent; in 2010, this had increased to 0.9 per cent (GNOCDC, 2011b). The number of housing units has increased in the same period by ten from 2,349 in 2000, while the number of vacant units has increased from 389 to 478 (GNOCDC, 2011b). This is again attributable to the post-Katrina flight from the city. The average household size in Marigny as of 2010 is 1.57; residents in the neighbourhood are more likely to be without children than elsewhere in New Orleans (GNOCDC, 2011a; GNOCDC, 2011c). Economically, the aggregated Marigny-French Quarter area was home to approximately 17,073 jobs in 2008. The majority of these (12,737) paid under $40,000 US a year (GNOCDC, 2010).

Figure 6. Participating neighbourhoods in New Orleans.

4.2.2. Results

The study uses a sample of 63 photographs capturing different IWTW stickers throughout New Orleans, sourced from the official IWTW website (iwishthiswas.com). It is important to note that this is not considered the definitive extent of the IWTW project in New Orleans. The open and crowdsourced nature of the project makes it difficult, if not impossible, to track all responses. While participants are invited to submit their messages as photographs to Chang's IWTW site, there is no way of knowing if this has been consistently done. The areas of greatest IWTW distribution are Chang's home neighbourhood of the Marigny (23) and the adjacent Bywater neighbourhood (13). The remainder of listed neighbourhoods show a total sticker distribution between 1 to 4, with the lowest number of reported instances shared by the comparatively distant neighbourhoods of Gentilly, Uptown, and the Seventh Ward. A complete listing of sticker content, classification, and location is found in Appendix 2.

Through the analysis of IWTW photographs, it was found that the content of the IWTW stickers could be organized into a thematic framework featuring three categories. This was reaffirmed by one of the interviewed Montréal IWTW researchers, who states: "you have this beautiful range, with a few wild [and] crazy ideas at one end, and a few things that should normally be done, and a bunch of sensible things in the middle" (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). The first category under study refers to messages that are *practical*; these contain positive comments that can inform and contribute to meaningful urban change. The second category includes content that is *wishful*; these are comments that reflect a valid demand or need but fall outside either contextual practicalities or the capabilities of

Figure 7. Proportion of thematic areas

the planning profession. However, it is important to note that some of the messages in this category could be enacted through public (planning) intervention given the appropriate private partnerships. The third category refers to messages that are *whimsical*; these are comments that show the participant's humorous, quixotic, or romantic sensibilities. While not useful in any conventional sense to the planning processes, these comments can still speak to how the respondent views themselves in their city. While this type of message is arguably contrary to the practical nature of the IWTW project, designer Chang nevertheless hopes "the exercise remains 'loose, funny, interesting, and entertaining'" (MacCash, 2010). Again, it is stressed that in many instances, 'wishful' messages seem 'practical' enough to be included in the latter category. However, the framework situates IWTW in a planning context—that is, it assesses whether the suggestions could be incorporated into interventions developed by planners. Each of the 63 messages were analyzed and grouped into the appropriate category based on the ability of the planning process to fulfill these written wishes.
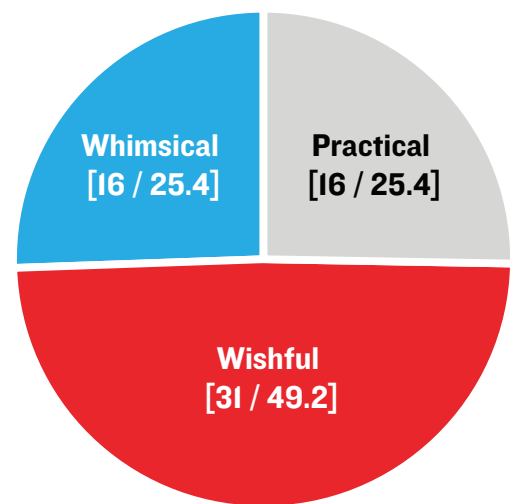
Though the IWTW project began by asking individuals throughout New Orleans to envision new services and stores, the resulting messages reflect a diversity of perspectives in both content and style. While a majority of responses stayed true to the original mandate (here grouped into the 'wishful' category), there is still a diversity of comments within this group. Of the 31 (49.2 per cent of the total) 'wishful' responses, 25 are commercial in nature. This ranges from wholly practical wishes, such as a "source for tasty, healthy food that I could afford" in Bywater, to secondary wishes like a "vinyl record store" in the French Quarter, to more questionable wishes, such as "a strip club" in Bayou St. John. Notably, Candy Chang's original request for a grocery store in here neighbourhood has been echoed in responding areas throughout New Orleans. This suggests a paucity of commercial food options in these neighbourhoods. Nine of the 31 'wishful' entries refer to grocery stores, butcher shops, or bakeries. At 29 per cent of all 'wishful' entries, the focus on

Top: Figure 8. Example of the wishful category
Bottom: Figure 9. Example of the practical category

food forms the largest subcategory. This reflects the avowed presence of several 'food deserts'—deprived areas with few retail food options—throughout New Orleans (Rose et al., 2009). The remaining six 'wishful' responses also vary, but relate to organizations and services. These range from a "chess club" and a "centre for [Louisiana] maritime history" in the Marigny to a "nursery" in Bayou St. John, and a church in the Central Business District.

While many IWTW responses called for new shops and services—or things outside the jurisdiction of the planning profession—still some requested public spaces, infrastructure improvements, and housing. These practical messages are present on 16 of the IWTW stickers, or 25.4 per cent of the total amount. Many messages speak to the decaying infrastructure found throughout the city. These range from wishes for "properly paved [roads]" and repairs to blighted structures in the Marigny, to calls for a "neighbourhood where assholes didn't graffiti everything" in Bywater. Meanwhile, in Seventh Ward, an IWTW sticker wishes for the city to treat the area as "a higher priority". Others in Bywater and the Marigny push for basic infrastructure for active transportation, calling for bike lanes and storage facilities.

Some of the 'practical' messages also refer to the city's housing blight problem. This issue began as a product of suburban flight beginning in the 1960s but was later exacerbated by Hurricane Katrina and the late-2000s financial crisis (Bruno, 2011; Krupa, 2010). Three of the 16 'practical' entries refer to these issues, assuming 18.8 per cent of the *thematic* total. These speak to the arresting presence of these blighted homes in their respective neighbourhoods. In Bywater, a message wishes that these blighted structures were "not so scary looking" and that they be restored to their original purpose, while in the Marigny IWTW sticker input wishes for a blighted structure to be "owned by someone who cared". The issue of absentee owners is particularly problematic in New Orleans, as the City government is forgiving in its blight management policies (Chang, 2010b; Friedman, 2008).

Other IWTW responses call for more and better public spaces for the city. While New Orleans is notable for its tendency to generate ad-hoc and temporary public spaces where necessary, many of its established public spaces suffered water and wind damage resulting from Hurricane Katrina. Following 2005, the desirable public spaces became increasingly privatized over the course of their rehabilitation, while others were left as they were (Neville & Coats, 2009). A tabulation of the IWTW stickers reveals that of the 16 'practical' messages, 6 speak to this lack of public spaces. In the Marigny, the IWTW stickers call for public spaces as complex as a "community resource centre" and a "community garden" to spaces as simple as "a place to sit and talk."

As expected of any writable surface subject to the devices of anonymous passersby, the New Orleans IWTW entries also show a tendency towards whimsy. Chang's street art experiment invited a variety of bizarre, esoteric, and above all, humourous comments concerning the vision of a future New Orleans. Surprisingly, there is almost a complete absence of any vulgarity (unless it serves an emphasizing purpose) or crude messages in the IWTW process, through Chang may have filtered the results when posting to the website.3 Of the sample total, 16 or 25 per cent of
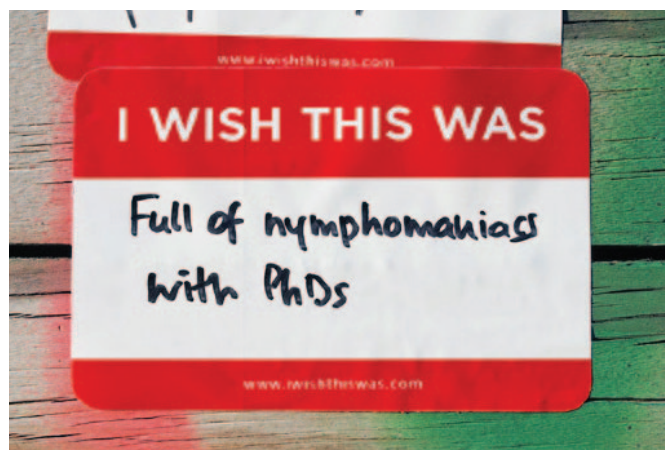
Figure 10. Example of the whimsical category

the cumulative total are whimsical in nature. Despite the thematic category, there is little similarity between messages. They range from poignant—a sticker in Bywater wishes the city was "100 feet above sea level"—to funny—a sticker in the Marigny hopes for a house "covered in bacon". While ostensibly not contributing to the building local knowledge or planning concerns, these messages are indirectly useful to the promotion of the sticker as a tool for research; its outlandish input attracting attention and making memorable the project.

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3   A past invitation extended by Candy Chang to the public to provide input on available local services was met with the response of 'fuck off, Candy'. See Chang, C. (2007). Hello, neighbors!: Outdoor flyers, online forums, and an eye towards collective neighbourhood communication. Unpublished masters thesis. Columbia University, New York City, New York.

Some of the sample IWTW stickers show the adaptability of the project. Secondary commentary appears on nine of the stickers found throughout New Orleans. Individuals passing by already written-on stickers have appended their own insights. The secondary commentary takes four forms: agreement with the original message, disagreement with the original message, the provision of a non-sequitur comment, and the modification or obfuscation of existing messages. The latter action illustrates a potential problem in

Figure 11. Example of multiple IWTW contributors

the IWTW project, as ideas can be obscured by a simple strikethrough of a felt marker. In the case of agreement, a potential for collaboration can also arise. In Bywater, an IWTW sticker comment calling for a bakery is met with the appended response "if you can get the financing, I will do the baking!" While the unsupervised use of the IWTW medium inherently restricts the formation of new collaborative relationships such as the one proposed here due to its inherent anonymity, a supervised moderation of the IWTW process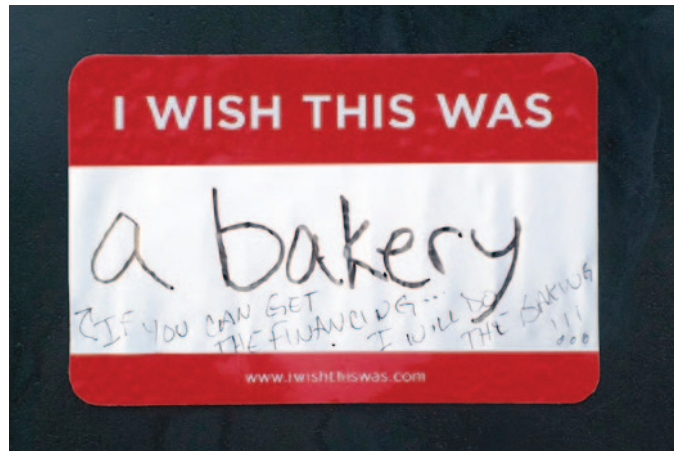 offers a potential solution. Collaboration can also be realized using a digital approach, as seen in CivicCenter's online Neighborland platform.

In general, the initial IWTW process can be seen as a success in many ways. Offering a blank canvas is always a risk; the designer does not have any real voice in how their designed media will be used. However, that participation in the project is occurring, and that it is occurring in a relatively constructive manner supports the dialogic potential in this graphic design approach to participation. It is also important to restate the initial parameters of the project when assessing its efficiency. In describing the project, Chang placed no limitations as to what people should 'vision' when writing messages onto the stickers. While this research study has seen fit to divide the responses into thematic categories, these are artificial constructs necessary for an academic approach. Chang does not limit the IWTW process to public spaces or areas of planning jurisdiction; indeed, the picture included on the IWTW sticker boxes made available throughout New Orleans is one that calls for a commercial service. In looking at how the project was used with this in mind, the number of feasible responses rises from the 25.4 per cent representative of 'practical' responses to 74.6 per cent when considering both 'practical' and 'wishful' comments. The IWTW process has also been notable in reflecting the considerable issues facing the city of New Orleans, as read in both the academic and popular press. A majority of the visions people submit are not derived from fanciful perspectives; they result from local context and the knowledge that accrues therein. Finally, as both a potential positive and a negative factor, the IWTW process is adaptable past the first message written in its white space. As has been shown, potential for dialogue and collaboration has arisen as individuals take to appending the IWTW comments of others. This is also potentially problematic as good ideas and important local knowledge can be obscured or redacted by anonymous passersby.

4.3 Part C: Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Montréal, Québec

The Saint-Raymond neighbourhood of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG), Montréal forms the second part of the case study. In March 2011, Adriana Olmos[4] and Jason Prince[5] conducted a small scale supervised IWTW deployment in Saint-Raymond as part of a research exercise associated with the Écologez 2011 design charette and the Making Megaprojects Work for Communities CURA. In its sixth iteration, the charette was co-organized by non-profit group Équiterre and the Université du Québec's École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS). Architecture, engineering, environment, and urban planning students from Montréal's four post-secondary institutions participated in the two-day intensive design process from 12 to 13 March 2011. Charette participants were tasked with developing an integrated design for a environmentally friendly and affordable housing development for residents and hospital employees at the intersection of Saint-Jacques and Upper Lachine in the neighbourhood (Écologez, 2011). In the research exercise, the researchers used the IWTW project and filmed interviews to engage with neighbourhood residents, and to have them relate their feelings and hopes for the area. The collected local knowledge from these complementary research processes was used as inputs for the design charette. Researcher Adriana Olmos sets out the aims of the exercise; she states: "the main purpose was to do some quick ethnographic research [...] and user research for the purpose of inspiring design" (personal communication, 2 May 2011).

Meetings between the researchers and charette organizers began in January 2011, in preparation for the March event. Gaining the input of individuals living in the charette's area of focus was seen by organizers as difficult, subject to the mobility, proximity, and time constraints of residents in St-Raymond and the impracticalities of hosting a public participation session during an intensive two-day design charette. Prince was surprised to find that the charette was originally planned to go forward without local input and contextualization. He affirms: "you can't do [a charette] without going and seeing the place [under study]" (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). As a response to this issue, Prince intended to conduct filmed interviews with neighbourhood residents, which would then by uploaded to an online video-sharing service. A chance meeting with researcher Olmos, coupled with a looming deadline, broadened the scope of the site analysis past the interviews to include the IWTW process. These novel approaches to public engagement in the planning and design process reflected the professional dispositions of the participating researchers. According to Prince, members of the environmental design professions must "find different ways to get the perspectives of people in the neighbourhood to try and bring that quality that you get from the site visit to the design process" (personal communication, 28 April 2011).

The IWTW project was selected by the researchers for use in Saint-Raymond to get charette participants "to understand the urban space, and the people living in that space, how they perceive it, how they can use it, and how they want it to change" (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). Due to his longstanding involvement in projects occurring throughout NDG and the CURA network, Prince was able to draw upon a pre-existing network of contacts in Saint-Raymond to connect with potential participants and to introduce them to the parameters of the charette in general and the IWTW project in specific. However, not all IWTW participants were found through this approach. Some were introduced to the project after meeting the researchers on the streets of Saint-

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4   Research Associate, Shared Reality Lab, McGill University, Montréal, Québec.
5   Coordinator, Making Megaprojects Work for Communities Community-University Research Alliance (CURA), School of Urban Planning, McGill University, Montréal, Québec.
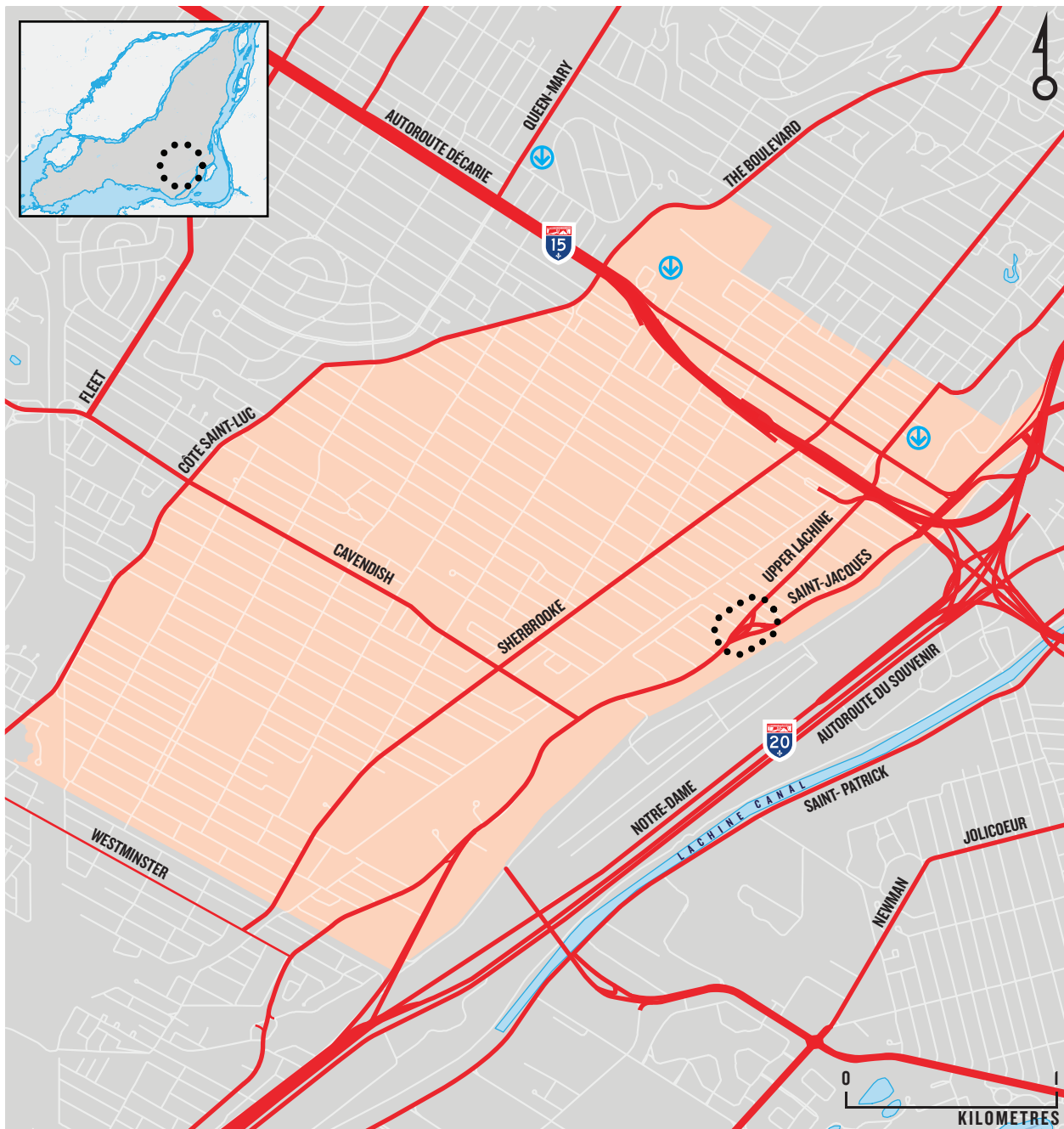
Figure 12. Study context and site location in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

Raymond during the exercise. Olmos and Prince conducted the IWTW process with participants over a 90-minute period during the afternoon of 9 March 2011. Departing from the original mode of sticker distribution, the IWTW stickers used in the process were packaged in a kit—designed by Olmos—featuring explanatory text (written in English), project information and credits, and a map establishing the study's area of interest. The participating public included both male and female neighbourhood residents and was culturally diverse; between the fourteen respondents there were a combined nine languages spoken (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). The process took place on and around the site of the Upper Lachine - St-Jacques interchange. The site itself is triangular in shape, due to the convergence of the surrounding streets, and is overlapped by two roads extending from them. While the focus of both the research exercise and the project centred on the interchange site, the map included in the kit expanded the scope of the study to include all of Upper Lachine and Saint-Jacques within approximately 120 metres from the site. IWTW stickers were distributed as far east as Clifton Avenue and Upper Lachine Road, while in the west they were confined to the interchange site.

4.3.1. Context

Saint-Raymond is located in the southernmost area of the NDG neighbourhood, in the borough of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Côte-des-Neiges (NDG-CDN). The boundaries of Saint-Raymond are Sherbrooke Street to the north, the Saint-Jacques Escarpment to the south, Décarie Boulevard to the east, and Cavendish Boulevard to the west. The community is separated from other areas of NDG; it is bounded on all sides by major rail and road infrastructure. Saint-Raymond—originally middle-class and largely Italian in character—grew in size over time from its foundation in the 1920s to the 1960s (Twigge-Molecey, 2009). Despite its comfortable middle-class origins, the neighbourhood became home to increasingly lower-income families over time. The local unemployment rate has similarly risen, from three per cent in 1961 to 17 per cent 30 years later (Twigge-Molecey, 2009).

Within Saint-Raymond, there are approximately 1500 residential units. The area remains one of the most affordable in NDG with respect to rental unit pricing (NDG Community Council, 2008). However, the extent of social housing in the area is modest. Community and social housing in the Upper Lachine area of NDG—south of Sherbrooke Street, west of Claremont Avenue, and east of Brock Avenue—represented 6 per cent of rental housing units and 5 per cent of total occupied units in the area in 2008 (Ville de Montréal/Habiter Montréal, 2009). The borough government has initiated a process to introduce more housing development to the area. In October 2006, the borough proposed a draft *plan particulier en urbanisme* (PPU) for the Saint-Raymond area, targeting an additional 200 residential units on Saint-Jacques street (NDG Community Council, 2008).

Though not adopted, the extent of this planned housing allocation was later expanded. In Fall 2007, the Mayor of the CDN-NDG borough Michael Applebaum announced the planned demolition of the Upper Lachine - Saint-Jacques interchange, a triangular piece of land bounded by the two streets and intersected by a combination over- and underpass. The borough has targeted the replacement of the interchange with between 200 to 400 units of affordable housing (NDG Community Council, 2008). The advantages of the site for the introduction of affordable housing are clear. The borough is better able to afford and justify social housing on the publicly owned piece of land than would be the case in market-rate housing developments elsewhere in Montréal. However,

Top: Figure 13. 'I Wish This Was' materials used in Saint-Raymond
Bottom: Figure 14. 'I Wish This Was' explanatory kit used in Saint-Raymond

I WISH THIS WAS

Cities are full of vacant storefronts and people who need things. These stickers provide an easy way to voice what you want, where you want it. Just fill them out and stick them on abandoned buildings, lampposts and beyond. The stickers are custom vinyl and they can be easily removed without damaging property. It's a fun way to tell your neighbours and your community leaders what you want in your neighbourhood, and the responses reflect the hopes, dreams, and colourful imaginations of different neighbourhoods.

This project is part of a research excercise at the McGill School of Urban Planning. A collaboration between Jason Prince, CURA, Making MegaProjects Work for Communities; and Adriana Olmos, Shared Reality Lab.

I wish this was project was created by Candy Chang of Civic Center.

These ones are for you:

map of the area to explore
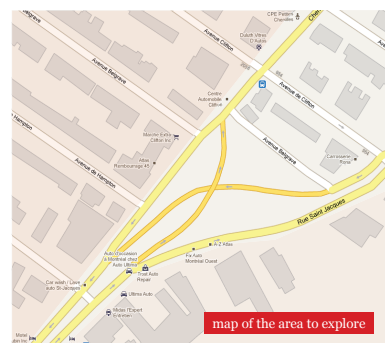
the process of demolishing the interchange and remediating the land for a housing development has proven expensive. This has in turn rendered the borough's initial social housing targets economically unfeasible, and would instead require a shift towards market-rate housing (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). As of July 2011, the interchange remains standing.

Demographics

Lower NDG—the area of the borough home to Saint-Raymond—is organized into three census tracts for the purpose of Statistics Canada data collection. The neighbourhood of Saint-Raymond is located in census tract 94.01, bounded by Claremont Avenue to the east, Connaught Avenue to the west, the Canadian National rail lines and De Maisonneuve Boulevard to the north, and Pullman Street to the south. The census tract area, while containing Saint-Raymond, nevertheless exceeds the neighbourhood's boundaries to include other parts of NDG. Total land area within the tract is 1.78 kilometres squared. Area population was 5962 in 2006, showing a decrease of 10 people from 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Of this group, 2085 speak exclusively English, 520 speak exclusively French, and 2980 speak both official languages. 2580 individuals—or 43 per cent—of Saint-Raymond and surrounds are immigrants. Italy is the most common country of origin, at nearly 14 per cent of the immigration total (Statistics Canada, 2006b). The extent of Italian immigration in the area reflects Saint-Raymond's historical legacy as an Italian community in NDG. A majority—63.5 per cent of immigrants in the census tract—are relatively recent arrivals, having arrived in 1991 or later (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Area employment and median income is below the City of Montréal average. The employment rate among the 15-64 working age group for Saint-Raymond in 2006 was 48 per cent, while the unemployment rate was 14 per cent (Statistics Canada, 2006c). These rates compare unfavourably to the Montréal averages of 58 per cent employment and 9 per cent unemployment of the working age group in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007). Concerning local income, the median family income in Saint-Raymond was $28,847 in 2006 dollars, compared to $49,969 in the City of Montréal proper (Statistics Canada, 2006d; Statistics Canada, 2007). Contrary to this economic disparity, educational attainment in Saint-Raymond is relatively high. 91 per cent of the population above the age of 25 holds at least a high school diploma or equivalent, while 68 per cent of have a post-secondary (trade, college, university) degree of some type (Statistics Canada, 2006c). The City of Montréal exhibits similar numbers; 92 per cent of the population above the age of 25 holds at least a high school diploma, while 78 per cent of the 25+ population has a post-secondary degree (Statistics Canada, 2007).

While the City of Montréal exhibits similar levels of educational attainment to those found in Saint-Raymond, there is a great disparity between the employment and income rates of the two census areas. Indeed, Saint-Raymond diverges significantly from the general employment experience in Montréal. The former's high recent immigrant population provides a possible answer; research conducted in both Canada and the United Kingdom suggest a correlation between large immigrant populations, and low levels of labour market success (in both employment and income) despite generally high levels of educational attainment (Dustmann & Theodoropoulos, 2010; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2007).

Housing in the area is characterized by a primarily rental economy. Of the 2815 dwellings within the census tract, 2315—or 82 per cent—are rented accommodations. This is significantly greater than the City of Montréal average of 65 per cent rental (Statistics Canada, 2007). The tendency to rent in the Saint-Raymond housing market is problematic when considering the potential impact of the completion of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) with respect to gentrification. That said, while the MUHC development has motivated preliminary gentrification in areas of NDG closer to the future hospital site, the neighbourhood of Saint-Raymond had yet to experience any gentrification as of 2006 (Twigge-Molecey, 2009). The predominance of certain types of housing stock reinforces the tendency to rent in the area. A majority of the available housing stock are apartments of five units or less (66 per cent) or duplexes (28.5 per cent). A large share of the housing stock is thirty years or older (91 per cent), with housing built from 1946 to 1960 predominating (Statistics Canada, 2006e).

Continuity and change: The Turcot Interchange and the MUHC Glen

Saint-Raymond is particularly notable for its proximity to the future McGill University Health Centre's Glen Campus. The hospital is situated on the site of the former Canadian Pacific Railway's Glen Yards and adjacent to the Ville-Marie Expressway to the south and the Vendôme Métro and the Agence métropolitaine de transport commuter train stations to the north. Purchase of the former train yard was completed by the MUHC in November 1998, while the Québec government approved the hospital's site plan in April 2006 (Chan, 2008). The completed hospital complex will include 280,000 metres squared on the site; it is anticipated that an additional 36,700 metres squared of office space will be required to house the hospital's ancillary services and complementary business operations (Daniel Arbour & Associates, 2005). Due to its proximity, both hospital employees and complementary medical service providers have targeted the neighbourhood of Saint-Raymond as a potential area for relocation upon completion of the MUHC Glen (NDG Community Council, 2008). In response, the NDG-CDN borough has several interventions planned for the neighbourhood. The borough aims to better integrate residential and commercial functions, improve accessibility, improve the overall image of the area, and emphasize the natural beauty of the Saint-Jacques Escarpment (Ville de Montréal, 2011). However, there remains concern amongst borough planners that the affordable housing and rental market present in the neighbourhood "will be eroded by an influx of complementary commercial and industrial uses" and that processes of gentrification will take root in the area (NDG Community Council, 2008). While gentrification has not yet been an issue during the planning and construction of the MUHC, it remains to be seen the changes wrought by an operational hospital complex.

To Saint-Raymond's southeast lies the Turcot Interchange, linking the Québec Autoroutes 15, 20, and 720, and connecting the western half of the Island of Montréal to the downtown core. Following a 2003 study on the structural integrity of the interchange, as well as the concerns raised following the collapse of the De la Concorde overpass in Laval in 2006, the Québec government announced the planned demolition and redevelopment of the Turcot in June 2007. The initial planning and public participation process for the project was hotly contested by residents in the affected neighbourhoods of Côte Saint-Paul and Saint-Henri; the project's pre-production phase was later halted following the 2008-2009 financial collapse (Corriveau, 2009; Corriveau, 2010). A second reconstruction plan—ostensibly incorporating public input from participatory meetings conducted by the *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*—was released by the Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) in

November 2010 (Aubin, 2010). The MTQ estimates the reconstruction of the interchange will last from 2012 to 2018, with limited service beginning in 2018 (MTQ, 2011; McQueen, 2011). While Saint-Raymond is distant enough from the interchange that the commensurate health and noise problems associated with superhighways do not generally affect residents as they do those in other areas located in closer proximity, the neighbourhood's relationship to the Turcot remains problematic. McQueen (2011) writes that the resulting disruption to traffic flows posed by the reconstruction process and additional work to surrounding highway infrastructure will not only reduce accessibility to the Greater Montréal area for residents living in NDG, it will also divert traffic onto streets in the borough.

4.3.2. Results

Case study results are organized into two main sections. The first follows the analytical framework established in the previous New Orleans case study; it develops a content analysis of IWTW messages in Saint-Raymond. Using combined interview and survey data, the second section employs an operational analysis to evaluate the IWTW process itself. The operational evaluation of the IWTW process is organized into three parts. First, the experiences and opinions of the researchers Adriana Olmos and Jason Prince in engaging in the process and using the IWTW medium will be reported. Second, the general responses of the participating public to IWTW will be reviewed. Finally, the usefulness of the IWTW process as a design and planning input will be tested through an evaluation of charette participants' experiences and opinions. In the latter case, the charette process and its participants serve as analogues to the planning process at large. The first two sections are informed by key informant interviews conducted with the researchers during April and May 2011, while the last section uses a post charette survey (containing 28 instances) administered beginning 16 March and ending 7 April 2011. Following the conclusion of the charette, researchers sent an email message to participants inviting their feedback in the survey. 28 of 57 charette participants responded to the request, representing 49 per cent of the total.

Content Analysis

The second content analysis study uses a sample of 14 IWTW photographs located in and around the Upper Lachine - Saint-Jacques interchange site, provided by Adriana Olmos. The supervisory nature of the IWTW process in Saint-Raymond ensures that this is a full account of the stickers used in the area. The digital photographs include geo-tag information in their respective metadata; the responses can thus be pinpointed to their geographic location. While the research kit detailed the study area extent, some of the IWTW stickers were placed outside of these boundaries. Seven stickers were used at the triangular interchange site, while four additional stickers were placed within an approximate 120 metre study buffer. Three stickers - though in close proximity to the buffer - were placed outside the study extent, on Avenues Belgrave (two) and Clifton (one) north of Upper Lachine. A complete listing of sticker content and classification is found in Appendix 3.

In organizing the generated messages according to the thematic framework established in Part B, an even split between the practical (seven) and wishful (seven) categories is found. In contrast to the New Orleans example, no whimsical messages were posted during the exercise. This can be largely attributed to two factors that separate it from the original process in New Orleans. The first was the atmosphere in which the project

I WISH THIS WAS || SAINT-RAYMOND

DATE	TEMP	DISTANCE	PEOPLE
03/09/11	-6°C	~240m	14 + 2 RESEARCHERS

Practical [7 / 50.0]   Wishful [7 / 50.0]
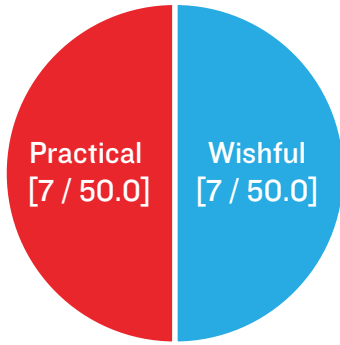
1 a row of trees on St Jacques

2 Dr Offices

3 Houses all along

4 Common area to lot (underground)

5 PARK for kids

6 OPEN AIR MARKET FRUITS + VEGETABLES

7 FIXED ..!

8 Big mall (movie Cinema ..)

9 GELATO (ICE CREAM SHOP)

10 street light TRAFFIC LIGHT

11 A Laudrymat

12 Traffic lights. (safety for kids)

13 tree. park.

14 Coop Maison Verte style Coffee Shop. (corner Clifton)

took place; researchers Olmos and Prince accompanied the residents during the IWTW process. The second was the ambition of the project. Where Chang's original New Orleans IWTW distribution was a crowdsourced experiment in graphic design-inspired participation with no specific end in mind, the Saint-Raymond IWTW distribution was a supervised exercise aimed explicitly at gaining local sentiment as a charette input. It appears that the 'whimsical' messages found in New Orleans were instead replaced in Saint-Raymond with comments at the extremes of the 'wishful' category. These messages will be elaborated upon in a following paragraph.

Some of the practical messages spoke to making the neighbourhood a safer and more convivial space for residents and visitors. These practical messages were concerned with two issues: area traffic problems and a general lack of accessible public green space. Concerning traffic, the triangular site is subject to sizeable traffic flows due to the convergence of the major Upper Lachine and Saint-Jacques arteries. In two instances, participating residents targeted the intersection of Upper Lachine and Clifton as needing traffic lights in order to make crossing the street safer for neighbourhood children. With respect to the neighbourhood's environmental aspirations, two IWTW messages call for a "row of trees on Saint-Jacques" and a "park for kids" around and in the site of the current interchange. Yet another IWTW message—further east on Upper Lachine and Clifton—calls for a "tree park". While Parc Georges Saint-Pierre is located in the eastern section of the neighbourhood at Upper Lachine and Old Orchard, the immediate study area is without any significant publicly-managed green space, whether for sports, children, or merely leisure. At present, the largest green space in the immediate area is the interchange site itself, though the major roads bisecting it do not make it suitable for such use.

The remaining practical IWTW messages share no commonality past their practicality. One IWTW message speaks to the deteriorating road infrastructure in the area. Rather than being stuck to a nearby surface, the message (IWTW 'Fixed!') was dropped into a pothole on Upper Lachine and Belgrave, not only speaking to the adaptability of IWTW application but also to the appropriateness of the vinyl material choice. The message itself arose from an exchange between the researchers and a resident passerby. Viewing the IWTW visioning exercise as impractical in light of the more immediate issues facing the neighbourhood, the resident opined: "you shouldn't be thinking about improving anything until you've finishing fixing the potholes" (J. Prince, personal communication, 28 April 2011). While the resident himself did not participate in the exercise, the researchers included the message. The final IWTW message included in the 'practical' category, and most appropriate for a research exercise commissioned for a housing design charette, calls for an influx of housing development on the interchange site. In this case, the message repeated directly the borough government's intentions for the site.

Within the 'wishful' category is a range of message types: some are practical but for their incompatibility with the intervention and policy-making powers of planners, while others are incompatible with both planning powers and the local context in Saint-Raymond. Indeed, in the Saint-Raymond example, many of the 'wishful' responses spoke to a need for basic services that ideally *should* be present in a residential area. Other messages continued this trend. One respondent wished for a general medical clinic in the area. At present, the clinics nearest to Saint-Raymond are a public NDG *Centre local de services communautaires* (CLSC) on Cavendish Boulevard and a private walk-in clinic located adjacent to the Vendôme Métro station at De Maisonneuve Bouelvard. While ostensibly close to the neighbourhood, access to either clinic is made difficult by the barriers that surround Saint-

Raymond. Residents walking west to the CLSC are required to make a limited crossing over the CN rail line located parallel to De Maisonneuve Boulevard, while those walking east to the private clinic are required to cross over the Autoroute Décarie via the Upper Lachine overpass. Another expressed a desire for a dual community resource centre/coffee shop, modelled on the existing Co-op La Maison Verte, located north of Lower NDG at Sherbrooke Street and Melrose Avenue.

The IWTW messages at the extreme of the 'wishful' category are few in number. The first— an underground Communauto parking station— appears at first glance practical. It is contextually relevant; while Communauto stations exist throughout NDG, as of July 2011 none are present within the Saint-Raymond boundaries and the closest stations are beyond the area's significant barriers. The northern station at Sherbrooke and Benny Avenue is separated from Lower NDG by the CN rail line, while the station at De Maisonneuve and Décarie Boulevard is located east of the entrenched Autoroute 15. While several underground parking stations exist within the Communauto parking station system, most are

Top: Figure 15. 'I Wish This Was' and traffic safety
Bottom: Figure 16. The flexibility of 'I Wish This Was'

located in Montréal's downtown core and are integrated into the area's existing dense urban fabric (Communauto, 2011). These conditions are not in place at the site of the IWTW message on Upper Lachine and Saint-Jacques. The sticker's placement underneath the interchange overpass may have influenced the decision to situate the ideal parking space underground. The remaining questionable response wished for a "big mall [and] movie cinema" on the northern corner of Upper Lachine and Belgrave. Using this suggestion as an example, Prince commented on the inconsistency of local knowledge: "you can't only rely on local knowledge for design ideas [...] somebody suggested a shopping mall and entertainment district; these ideas are clearly not going to hold [up to scrutiny]" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). While not useful as a design idea, the inclusion of impractical messages forces the exploration of underlying motivations. An entertainment district may not be needed, but what are the leisure options available to local residents?

Researcher Experience

The following section examines the experiences of researchers Olmos and Prince in the planning, supervision, and assessment of the IWTW process in Saint-Raymond. The advantages, disadvantages, requirements, and potentialities that became apparent during this practical application of the IWTW process will be explored.

Advantages
The design of the IWTW medium

The supervisory IWTW process demonstrates the influence of graphic design products in effectively and efficiently inviting participation. Researcher Prince states that the design's similarity to the 'Hello, my name is' sticker works in its advantage in inviting and engaging passersby; "automatically, you're invited to talk to somebody, to have a conversation as if you were at a conference [...], so it's extremely friendly" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). Olmos also concludes the design medium's effectiveness: "the way it was designed, the format, the size, it functioned well to solicit quick feedback, and entice people. I mean, the fact that it is catchy and then you see it right away [...] as a concept, I think it works" (personal communication, 2 May 2011).

Efficiency and flexibility of the IWTW process

The aforementioned time constraint under which the researchers operated did well to demonstrate the efficiency and flexibility of the IWTW process in collecting information. Prince noted that, following a preliminary site visit and a brief session to introduce IWTW, he and Olmos were quickly able to conduct the research exercise. This is largely attributed to two factors. One, there is limited complexity associated with the IWTW medium. Writing an individual vision on a vinyl sticker does not require a great amount of explanation, time, nor training. For those who remained unsure, the included IWTW kit clarified objectives and procedure. Two, as noted by Adriana Olmos, researcher Prince "already had a lot of contact with people in the area, and he has been there many times, and knew the history of the area" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). This ensured that the researchers were quickly able to find interested potential participants for the exercise.

Inclusive and proactive practice

The researchers found that—through the no-tech, quick, and low-impact sticker exercise—they were able not only to involve but also engage a sample of neighbourhood residents in a community visioning exercise. The relative ease of outreach and inclusion brings with it several benefits. As noted by Prince, "with this kind of ultra-light exercise, people haven't invested anything. If they are able to see from the exercise something coming back to them, it might draw them into a larger and more creative process over a longer period of time" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). The ease of IWTW deployment also offers an opportunity to proactively consult the community. This allows researchers and planners to integrate ideas into the planning process *before* any plan is tabled. Finally, Prince noted that the low-pressure nature of engagement through the IWTW process can better target groups not represented in more conventional public participation processes. IWTW solicits responses from individuals in neighbourhood public spaces, and not those necessarily attending public meetings. Thus, the interest groups and motivated individuals participating in conventional processes retain their vehicle for expression, while IWTW opens an avenue of expression for groups that would otherwise be marginalized or go without representation by conventional approaches.

Local knowledge and practicality

The IWTW process in Saint-Raymond spoke largely to practical visions for the future, and thus, a positive perspective on local knowledge. A majority of the messages—even if they fall into the 'wishful' category—were largely conservative in their ambitions (Heffez, 2011). In this sense, IWTW can provide an avenue for the simple sharing of practical ideas unburdened by longer term and more involved participatory processes. The individual messages generally speak to a sense of practicality embedded in the daily lives of neighbourhood residents. Prince concludes: "do random people on the street already have an intuitive understanding of what the limits are, of what can be done? From our tiny sample, it suggests that yes, the common sense may just pour out of people's heads when you ask them" (personal communication, 28 April 2011).

Disadvantages
Self-censoring

While IWTW invites individuals to give their thoughts and feelings on the state of things in their neighbourhood, it is a given that not everyone will agree with their publicly aired sentiments. This is especially problematic when IWTW stickers wishing for a host of positive urban changes are posted on buildings owned by operational businesses or current residents. In potentially offending business owners, both IWTW and the planners who use it can be seen in a negative and oppositional light. As stated by Prince, "in Saint-Raymond's case, many of those buildings [on which IWTW messages were posted] were a going concern. It's kind of embarrassing to go up to a building and say 'we wish this was something completely different" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). In these cases, the written stickers were placed on the buildings in question, photographed, and removed, as the researchers did not "want to offend the people in the building" (A. Olmos, personal communication, 2 May 2011).

The limitations of IWTW in exploring motivations

The second issue associated with IWTW lies in its anonymity and brevity. While not so much an issue in the supervised process, it was frequently returned to in discussion of the medium's operational effectiveness. The limited writing space available on the medium, coupled with the crowdsourced and anonymous potential of the IWTW process can make it difficult to understand message context and, in some cases, true meaning. While IWTW is easy to deploy, it is considerably less easy to gain meaningful information from the process. Olmos explains: "you want to dive deeper into their messages and the "why" [...] With the pictures, if you don't meet the [author], you cannot always find the deeper meaning" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). In this respect, hosting an IWTW process in a supervised atmosphere allows the researchers the freedom to observe and enter into a dialogue where necessary. However, this can also serve to reduce the flexibility, widespread distributive potential, and adoption of the medium. In this respect, operational decisions need to be made in the planning stage as to what aspects of IWTW are to be emphasized—not all can be served at once.

Requirements
Personal dynamics

While IWTW is itself an inanimate graphic design medium and participatory process, in a supervised approach it appears that its use is also informed to an extent by the personality of the participating researcher. While the design makes clear how it is to be used and invites comment, the researcher must also be able to engage with the public. As noted by Prince, "I'll just say it again now, that it was the combination of outgoing personalities—myself and Adriana—that made it possible for the [supervised] process to work" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). While a key determinant in the supervised approach, this issue is limited by the crowdsourced approach as was conducted in New Orleans. In that example, Chang's playful design sense and general attitudes towards public spaces and public involvement were essential in developing the IWTW process, but the widespread distribution minimized the personality factor.

The study neighbourhood

The effectiveness of IWTW can be enabled or constrained by the atmosphere of the study neighbourhood. In Saint-Raymond, the reasonably walkable and densely populated neighbourhood proved advantageous. However, the diversity of population and its geographic isolation proved problematic for the researchers' aims. Olmos contends: "I think the neighbourhood was difficult, it was challenging. I think if we had done this in the Plateau [Mont-Royal], developing it would have been much easier. I think [Saint-Raymond] was a big challenge, because of the type of the neighbourhood, because of the mix of population" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). In this instance, while Saint-Raymond has a more established resident population relative to the Plateau, there is more institutional distrust present than in the latter neighbourhood. The issues associated with inviting neighbourhood residents to participate will be expanded in the following experience section.

Potentialities
The iterative potential of IWTW

Iteration allows IWTW to become a properly dialogic process. In a participatory design context, iteration refers to an effective feedback loop that sees participant suggestions incorporated into design processes, which are then returned to participants for further commentary (Zeisel, 1981). The research exercise illustrated that while IWTW is a fun and engaging participatory process, it requires integration into an iterative design approach. Prince argues, "the proper IWTW process would have some kind of feedback loop, coming back to the people and saying 'look, these are some of your ideas, they've been incorporated, what do you think?" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). Since conducting the IWTW exercise in March 2011, Olmos and Prince have discussed returning to Saint-Raymond with the charette results to elicit further response from the participating public.
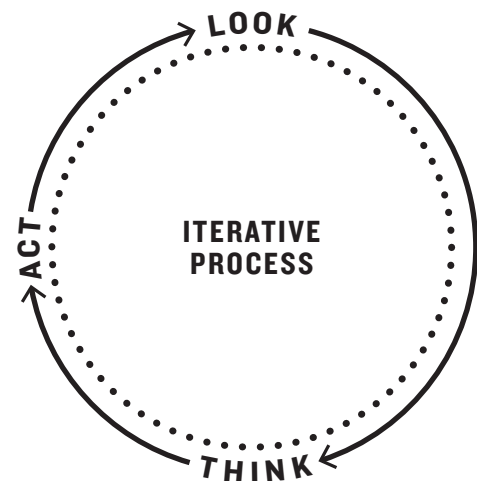

Figure 17. The iterative design process (Stringer, 1996)

A flexible and stackable number of approaches

The IWTW process also holds the potential to be conducted through different approaches as part of a larger process. In the Saint-Raymond example, the supervised approach was borne out of necessity. As noted by Prince, the researchers "tried to have some independent elements [in the process] but it didn't work" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). The IWTW process was restricted by a lack of time to introduce it to the community, which in turn led to a lack of widespread adoption. While both Olmos and Prince state they would use IWTW again in a participatory context, they advocate a multi-tiered approach. This includes the crowdsourced approach as conducted by Chang in New Orleans but expanded to include door-to-door distribution of the kits, the approach conducted in Saint-Raymond, and a widespread public awareness campaign to introduce the idea to potential study communities. In this respect, the different approaches to the IWTW project can be conducted simultaneously (or 'stacked') to provide multiple methods for engagement and participation.

The input to a larger process

Coupled with the iterative and multi-tiered potentials of IWTW is its effectiveness as an input to a larger design or participatory process. As with iteration, this approach addresses with relative inertia associated with a crowdsourced IWTW process. While the information gathered in the Saint-Raymond IWTW process served as an input to the design charette, this is not its sole purview. The IWTW process can be adapted to a multitude of participatory planning models. Prince advocates, "the responsible planner would use [IWTW] as one of many tools, to rethink places and engage people in the processes of visioning and change" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). Olmos similarly views its potential as a foundational process. For her, IWTW is significant as a "way to brainstorm with the local people as to what could be done in an area, [harnessing] that wish list and [getting] the same people involved to make [the wishes] happen" (personal communication, 2 May 2011).

Participant Experience

The following section looks to the experience of residents participating in the supervised IWTW process, as related by researchers Olmos and Prince. The positive and negative feelings engendered during the IWTW process will be considered.

In general, the IWTW process was well received by the participating residents. The process was considered a creative, fun, and novel approach to engagement, and provided residents with an opportunity to think creatively about spaces that feature prominently in their daily lives. Olmos reports: "we did have a very positive response from [the residents] who better understood how things work [in community visioning], and those who said 'let's brainstorm anyway!', it's just good to have fun and foresee what can be done for the environment" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). Prince notes that in participating in the IWTW process, residents were less concerned about how their messages were perceived and more about ensuring they were simply understood. He continues: "some people knew they were saying completely unreasonable things, other people were saying things that really had to be done yesterday" (personal communication, 28 April 2011).

Participants also easily understood the IWTW process. In general, Prince explains, "it was amazing how fast, how quickly people understood what we were doing" (personal communication, 28 April 2011). While the researchers explained the process to the initial participants before conducting the exercises, the residents they met in conducting the process provide an example of the ease of understanding the aims of IWTW. The researchers also noted how IWTW was quickly able to transcend a linguistic barrier present between them and a resident passerby. The resident—of Chinese origin—spoke little English and no French, but was able to quickly understand the objective of the exercise and provide input using the IWTW medium.

Despite its creativity and ease of understanding, the researchers reported some issues among participating residents. While the IWTW process is geared towards quick distribution and transmission, and individuals were easily able to grasp the aims of the project, some were initially intimidated by the project. Olmos recounts, "because we did [the process] very quickly and it had to be done on the spot, some of the [participants] were feeling very intimidated at the beginning" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). This is attributed to the transmission of private visions on the sticker medium in very public spaces, and giving agency and voice to individuals not accustomed to being engaged in participatory planning processes of any sort. Still more residents dismissed participation in the IWTW process outright due to concerns over the usefulness of the exercise, and past experiences with government indifference to their interests. Olmos continues: "I think we found a bit of resistance from some people, because it's a very poor neighbourhood, and people have very strong opinions and inhibitions towards what the local government is doing for the [built] environment" (personal communication, 2 May 2011). While this issue is not a problem with IWTW per se, IWTW may prove problematic in engaging with people doubtful of the effectiveness of an engagement technique characterized by a small-scale deployment, limited context, and a playful appearance.

Design and planning experience

The following addresses the experiences of the planning, design, and engineering students participating in the charette design process for which IWTW served as an informational input. The general response to the usefulness of IWTW in this context, as well as specific experiences with the project will be developed. Some limitations exist in the assessment of IWTW in a design and planning context. As the post-charette survey was conducted anonymously, it is not possible to associate the use of IWTW with the quality of the resulting designs. There is little way of knowing which group used which (if any) IWTW messages in developing their designs unless the respondent was explicit in the number and qualities of the messages used.
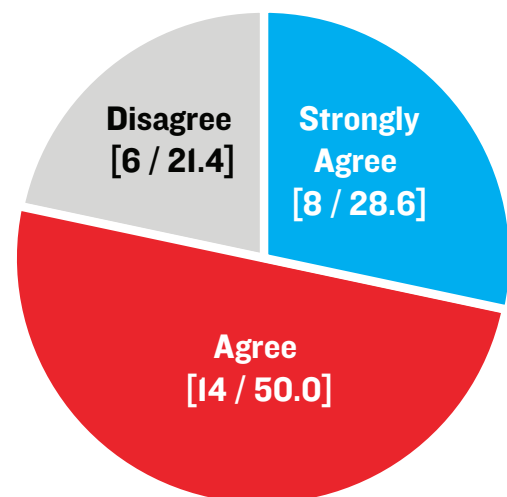

Figure 18. Charette participant experiences with 'I Wish This Was'

The response of charette participants to the usefulness of IWTW was generally favourable. Of the 28 survey respondents, 22 responded that the IWTW exercise helped to guide and inspire the charette design process to some extent. 14 (50 per cent) respondents agreed that the IWTW photos provided a great deal of information and aided their process of design, while another eight (29 per cent) strongly agreed. Six (21 per cent) disagreed that the IWTW input was useful. Taken in context of the other information source—the online 'Snapshots of Saint-Raymond' videos—IWTW does not fare as well. In that case, participants found the videos in general to be more useful to the process. All 28 respondents used the videos to inform their design thinking. 12 (42 per cent) respondents agreed that the interviews provided useful background information, while a further 16 (57 per cent) strongly agreed. The disparity in responses between IWTW and 'Snapshots of Saint-Raymond' speaks to the inherent differences in the two mediums. IWTW is designed for quick and efficient, if context-limited, information collection. In contrast, the video interviews are more time- and labour-intensive but return a greater depth of context and information. When taken together, the complementary processes did well to cumulatively inform the charette design process. 27 respondents found the charette inputs useful to their team's process and the charette in general. Twelve (42 per cent) found the sources important, while 15 (54 per cent) found them to be a key support of their final designs.

The positive comments derived from the IWTW spoke to different elements of the process. The majority of positive respondents reported the ease with which the stickers provided local knowledge into the design process. Broad opinion is summarized by one participant, writing: "the stickers directed us - to some extent - in designing our site, with respect to what we should include in order to promote the opinion of local residents". Though local knowledge is an expected byproduct of the IWTW process, it is important to highlight that charette participants gained a local perspective through the use of the medium's embedded messages. One respondent spoke to the importance of IWTW's inherently place-based nature. They write: "to be able to write your wishes concerning the [specific] site on a sticker is brilliant!" The stickers were not only important in illustrating local knowledge, they were also useful in reducing ambiguity by tying that local knowledge and vision to a specific place or tangible product. Another common sentiment was that while the IWTW approach does not replace the comprehensive process of site analysis, its quick and efficient nature served the intensive design process well. As one participant explains: "with little time allotted and no opportunity to do a site analysis, the [two] information sources were essential to understanding the context of the district".

Another major respondent thread focused on the creative, social, and dialogic potential of IWTW. The novel approach to participation embedded in IWTW, as well as its playful design, motivated participants to go beyond a conventional technocratic approach to site design. One respondent writes: "the videos and photos offered conceptual inspiration for a project that was originally conceived as a more technical undertaking". Others spoke to the potential of IWTW to motivate citizens providing information for participatory planning processes to be creative. As one related: "the format [of IWTW] seems a favourable choice to stimulate the creativity of people". Another participant viewed this creative potential as a method to humanize the design process and remind designers and planners of their social responsibilities. They write: "the information presented by these two sources placed an image to the words. The style of the individual [...] these are full of details that enlightened

our design process". Seeing handwritten notes made it apparent to the participants that they were designing *for* the residents providing their input. In response, one participant stated: "the project we develop are to be lived in by these people. They are also, to some extent, our clients". Another continued that following an analysis of the IWTW and video information, "the social aspect [became] the central point of the design".

IWTW provided secondary advantages to charette participants, speaking to its flexibility and adaptive potential for the future. One charette group went further than including the IWTW messages in their design process. They used the photographs of the IWTW stickers to assess the types of building materials behind the stickers; those indigenous to the neighbourhood and reflective of local architectural styles. This knowledge, in turn, was incorporated into their choice of building materials for the architectural design of their structure. Another group, looking to the iconic and friendly design of IWTW, also exceeded the expectations of merely practical use. IWTW was not only used to inform the design process, but also used as a conceptual theme in their group identity and presentation of their final housing and site designs.

While IWTW did engender some negative responses related to its effectiveness as noted above, a majority of the participants who did not find the process useful did not respond to the invitation for feedback. There was only one participant (of the six who disagreed with IWTW effectiveness) who did not factor the IWTW responses into their design process but nevertheless provided comment. They noted that their group "did not have enough time to look at the photos. We do not believe [the stickers] lend much value [to the design process]." However, they offer no further comment as to why they felt the latter statement was true.

5. Analysis

The case studies used in the previous section demonstrate the applicability of a graphic design method to a participatory context. However, to satisfy the primary research question, this section will synthesize the practical lessons developed in the case study with the theoretical processes examined throughout the literature review. The IWTW process is first compared alongside a participatory planning advantage/disadvantage framework, before using the lessons from the process to discuss how to best integrate IWTW into a participatory planning framework. Finally, the rationale for using a graphic design participatory method is restated, incorporating the lessons derived from the case study.

5.1.1. Participatory planning advantage/disadvantage framework

This analysis subsection will situate the lessons learned from the New Orleans and Montréal IWTW processes in a context of the participatory planning advantage/disadvantage framework developed in the literature review. While the operational effectiveness of IWTW has been developed in the latter half of the case study, this section looks instead to apply the specific lessons learned from the IWTW process to these general rules. This ensures that IWTW is not judged on its own, instead it is applied to the literature to see what challenges it can overcome and what problems remain. Some points presented here will be obvious, while others will be more nuanced. IWTW, while reinforcing many of the typical advantages associated with participatory planning, is notable for its potential ability to overcome some of the entrenched problems associated with the process.

Addressing participatory planning advantages
Improving local quality of life

The extent of IWTW's impact on local quality of life is mixed. On the one hand, the medium provides an opportunity to proactively seek out and build local input for plan development. The low impact and simple method of engagement ensures planners can adjust designs and plans according to input, and allows local residents to have some impact on their own environment. However, the capability of IWTW to form new working relationships and strengthen feelings of community typically present in participatory processes is questionable. While participation in IWTW is highly visible, and the messages transmitted in the process are malleable and can be elaborated upon by multiple participants, the medium's relative anonymity and the individualism associated with submitting a message make it difficult to engender a sense of community through its use.

\Increasing local capacity

Local capacity, as noted, refers to the ability of individuals and groups within a neighbourhood to effectively participate in the decision-making process by ensuring an appropriate level of knowledge, resources, and skills. IWTW is inconsistent in this respect, and is largely dependent on how it is used and by whom. The simplistic nature of IWTW—while befitting its distributive nature and ease of use—lessens the medium's ability to increase local capacity. There is no specialized knowledge, resource, or skill necessary to participate in the IWTW process, and thus no new capabilities are generated. However, this perspective assumes that IWTW is conducted in a top-down approach. The flexible nature of the project can alternatively place initiative in the hands of local residents or groups. In this regard, if residents are themselves organizing and distributing the IWTW process throughout their own communities, local capacity is increased. Furthermore, through its approach, it does give agency and voice to individual citizens, which contributes to a sense of empowerment. However, this resulting sense of empowerment is practically limited unless the IWTW project is folded into a larger participatory process.

Creating a sense of ownership

IWTW—in the proper facilitative context—allows citizens to take initiative and wrest some creative control away from designers and planners by envisioning ideal urban futures. By providing local input (and moreover, seeing it included in the planning process), IWTW provides a good potential avenue to a receptive public. IWTW messages, when pragmatic, can be easily used as an input into a participatory or design process, allowing plans to better reflect local wishes. This ensures a modicum of plan ownership is transferred to the participating public.

Exercising democratic citizenship

While all public participation methods aim to provide individuals with the opportunity to exercise some degree of democratic responsibility, IWTW provides an easy opportunity to do so. In being quickly deployed and staged in neighbourhood public spaces and on streets, IWTW allows individuals to easily comment on the state of urban affairs in their areas, as well as provide alternative visions. The placement of the media in public spaces also facilitates the engagement of those unwilling or unable to participate in more formal, centralized processes.

Building social capital

IWTW—through its emphasis on a distributed network of messages—promotes a degree of social capital with the development of informal human networks. In this respect, an organized and deliberative IWTW process can connect individuals through shared visions and foster social capital within neighbourhoods. This process does require a certain type of approach; placing IWTW stickers on neighbourhood surfaces and hoping for a sea change in one's local community is likely to be ineffectual. An appropriate social capital building process must recognize the *human* element over that of the *network*. This perspective requires a 'grassroots' community organization effort (where, ironically, a certain amount of social capital must already exist for this to happen), an involved supervised effort where researchers or planners mobilize the community, or adoption by private actors seeking their own primary data. If this is not done, the prospective IWTW 'network' remains, in all likelihood, merely a collection of isolated respondents unable to transcend the IWTW media to form lasting connections. Requiring social capital to build social capital—as seen in this instance—recalls the overarching problem established in the literature review.

Facilitating citizen-government interaction / Recasting perceptions of local government

If deployed correctly, the proactive and novel IWTW approach (be it supervised or crowdsourced) provides a potential iterative feedback loop between local government representatives and the public. The ability to easily participate in the project removes barriers between the two spheres and allows them to better interact. Past the 'goodwill' dividend promised by a participatory process. IWTW offers an additional benefit when used by local government officials. Due to its novelty and playfulness, the use of the process speaks to a planner trying to connect and engage with the public, not a professional simply going through the motions. This in turn can excite and motivate potential participants. In this respect, IWTW effectively assuages the common concern of minimum compliance by officials. That said, the participating planner must steward (and merit) the renewed trust that can emerge from the project throughout the planning process.

Improving the quality of final plans

IWTW's flexibility and widespread distributive possibilities make it an ideal choice to recognize a diversity of voices. The variation in content throughout New Orleans and in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce's Saint-Raymond neighbourhood reflects a breadth of commentary. How the medium is able to mediate different viewpoints is less clear. The collection of the IWTW messages by the responsible public authority would be as transparent or opaque as the local government deems fit. When IWTW leaves the care of participating local residents, it is difficult to know how the resulting content is assessed, filtered, and used. However, this problem is not necessarily reflective of IWTW; any participatory process that sees local participants provide input is subject to this potential issue. IWTW *is* separated from other processes due to its 'open' nature. The concomitant anonymity subjects the process to interference from unofficial 'mediators', a point that is potentially problematic. In this respect, outside action can be introduced to communications between residents and officials. IWTW messages left throughout the public spaces of a neighbourhood face the possibility of redaction or vandalism before their collection.

Addressing participatory planning disadvantages
Time and monetary constraints

The material and organizational requirements of IWTW mitigate the typical time and monetary constraints resulting from many participatory planning processes. As of July 2011, the maximum number of stickers (100) that can be purchased in one lot is priced at $35.00 US, making the medium a cost-effective way to solicit input. Time constraints are also not a significant concern; the IWTW process in Saint-Raymond was conducted over a single afternoon by researchers facing a quickly approaching deadline. Were the results from the sticker process not immediately required, the exercise would have been continued for a longer period of time. With respect to the 'burn-out' typically associated with participatory processes, again the light nature of the IWTW initiative is advantageous. The aggregative approach—the collection of messages from a variety of individuals—replaces an emphasis on selected individuals participating in an evolving process. It is in this context that IWTW thrives; the experience in New Orleans remains an ongoing process after having begun in November 2010.

Determining the extent of public involvement / Defining the participating public

IWTW's open and free form process, and its ease of distribution render the question of the extent of public involvement relatively moot. Local authorities and planners can easily engage with the public early (and repeatedly) in the planning process, or indeed, prior to the start of the planning process, due to the simplicity associated with the deployment of the IWTW sticker medium. Furthermore, the project's open approach to commentary and its deployment to public spaces make it ideal for engaging a diverse public—it ensures that many voices are heard. This removes from planners the task of defining the participating 'public', at least during the participatory process itself. While it is certain in any participatory process that not all input will be used, with IWTW it is more likely that these perspectives will at least be seen and understood.

The incompatibility of bureaucratic systems and public participation

A consistent problem among participatory planning processes is their compatibility with a bureaucratic system concerned with efficiency and rationality. With IWTW, this is no different. While the participatory process is undoubtedly efficient, emphasizing quick distribution by planners and condensed input from citizens, it is considerably less 'rational'. The content analysis of messages from both New Orleans and Montréal reveals that, along with the practical messages reflecting contextually relevant needs, there are still many arbitrary messages. Indeed, the medium's inherent unpredictability and variation of content make it difficult to reconcile with a bureaucratic system dependent on consistency. Even where practical messages are concerned, there remains the issue of how to distill the content into something useable by those working within the bureaucratic system.

The paradox between action and participation

Participatory processes are often hamstrung by a question of how to motivate participation where no action or potential threat against the status quo is present. The ease of deployment, the novel call for participation, and the simple process of IWTW all act in favour of overcoming the action-participation paradox. In both the New Orleans and Montréal examples, IWTW elicited participation in spite of a lack of an accompanying planning action to motivate the process. In this respect, it appears that the simplicity and spontaneity of this process make it an attractive outlet for expression even in the absence of a convincing reason to act.

Lack of citizen engagement

The combined creativity, productivity, minimal time requirement, and novelty associated with IWTW offset many of the issues associated with poor citizen engagement in the participatory planning process. Furthermore, as with the facilitation of citizen-government interaction, the forward-looking nature of the project as well as its novel process suggest the opposite of officials going through the motions. In the Montréal case study, it was pointed out that many of the participating individuals did so because it was a fun exercise that allowed them to brainstorm with like-minded individuals. Those who contested the process in Saint-Raymond (and did not participate) were concerned that it did not form a part of a larger participatory planning process aimed at correcting problems in the neighbourhood. These feelings are thus not a reflection of the effectiveness of the medium in such a context.

Overrepresentation of fringe positions

A concern in most participatory processes is a small group of vocal residents promoting a message that marginalizes the voice of the community majority. As demonstrated in the IWTW content analysis in both New Orleans and Montréal, a majority of the responses in both the crowdsourced and supervised approaches spoke to real and practical concerns associated with the areas. While 'whimsical' messages persisted in the New Orleans example, they did not outnumber the other entries nor did they marginalize their more sensible counterparts.

The ambiguity of planning's abilities

IWTW content analysis reflected an indiscriminate and varied number of messages in both New Orleans and Montréal. If operationalized in a planning context, responsible planners would need to make clear first the capabilities of their office and profession at large to mitigate disappointment within the process. In the case study examples, many messages—though ostensibly practical—were outside the jurisdiction of the planning profession to create change. These messages outnumber and equal the responses oriented to planning's capabilities in New Orleans and Montréal, respectively.

Measuring procedural success

IWTW is also potentially subject to the difficulties associated with measuring procedural success. Again, this is not specifically associated with this approach; the difficulty of measuring procedural success is a symptom present in many participatory planning approaches. Both the medium's open-ended nature and its present novelty make it difficult to judge according to current standards. For instance, is it the number of IWTW messages used in a planning process that determines success? Would planners accept the success of the medium in returning high message totals over the incorporating the resulting content into their work?

The scale of the plan

The scale of the urban plan may also be a determinant of IWTW's usefulness. Though the media has been deployed across a large area, as in the New Orleans example, its effectiveness at larger geographic scales is questionable. The current distribution in New Orleans is not thematically linked or aimed at addressing a specific urban project. While a large-scale distribution—a requirement of any city-wide project—is not difficult due to the medium's ease of reproduction and deployment, its use past this stage raised problems. Effectively managing the process and distilling information for use in the planning process are the primary issues. A crowdsourced approach demands less human resources and administration overall, but requires the planner to either search for posted messages or provide a digital platform to post responses online (as Chang has done). The supervised process mitigates many of these problems, but reduces the flexibility of the process and requires a greater investment in human resources and the administration of the process. While the two approaches can be combined in a single exercise to maximize the types of data collected and voices heard, the planner would be then challenged by the disadvantages present in both approaches.

5.1.2. Integration of IWTW into a planning context

The graphic design approach provides planners with an interesting approach to public engagement on the subject of community visioning. However, to maximize benefits and minimize potential pitfalls, the method must be well integrated into a participatory framework and working planners must be supportive of its use. This section—building on the lessons learned from the case study—will look to develop the optimal working conditions and professional qualities required for IWTW to be used effectively in a planning context.

The planner and professional philosophy

The planner, as the intermediary between the public and the planning process at large, is the key determinant in the adoption and effectiveness of the IWTW approach. While the design of IWTW induces its use, the larger participation process underlying IWTW requires the planner to have skills in interaction and engagement. As IWTW is a visioning process at its core, it is generally unaffected by the argumentative atmosphere that follows participatory processes aimed at resolving matters of practical importance, such as the allocation of funding or the physical design of space. The planner serves in a mediating position, echoing the model developed by researchers Innes (1995) and Healey (1997) among others. However, the planner does not mediate between parties; instead she is required to mediate the content with the planning process. In a supervisory model, the planner is tasked with guiding the IWTW process, informing the public, and assessing the validity and usefulness of the resulting output. In the crowdsourced process, the planner is left only to the latter task, but must balance message outputs without the context and understanding that generally accompany a person-to-person interaction.

The planner-as-mediator position is also informed by the professional trajectories discussed by Krieger (2000), Campbell and Fainstein (2003), and Thackara (2005). Their respective emphases on new elements of the planning toolkit—visual communication, digital moderation, and mobilized distributive networks—are all vital influences in the IWTW process. Krieger (2000) stresses the importance of visual communication in the planning profession to better engage with the public. This concept is foundational to the IWTW process. The sticker, with its design emphasis on clarity and usability—to better engage with communities—is emblematic of the role of visual communication in planning. However, Krieger does not only suggest that visual communication is important to planning. He goes further to underline that the practicing planner must be supportive of this visual shift and willing to learn the necessary skills and vocabularies to expand the usefulness of an approach. If planners are unwilling to learn the skills and meet the expectations commensurate with the method, this recognition of the importance of visual communication is irrelevant.

Meanwhile, Campbell and Fainstein (2003) suggest that planners—in the face of emergent technologies and trends—must be able to adapt their professional views and mediatory abilities to a host of new situations. Gone is the sole focus on the public meeting; in its stead is a multiplicity of complementary and competing approaches towards engagement and participation that require planners to step beyond basic conflict and risk management skills. In these new contexts, planners are tasked with managing extensive networks of 'grassroots' action, and ensuring that the ongoing conversations occurring in participatory processes are useful to their ends and generate a fruitful conversation between residents and neighbourhood groups. In these contexts, planners

must also change how they collect and assess data; different participatory approaches invite different types of information to which planners must be sensitive. The IWTW project has demonstrated the breadth of information that is collected when the public is invited to participate freely; the responsible planner must be able to evaluate and distill the results of such a process into a useful decision support system.

Finally, Thackara (2005) speaks to the importance of harnessing networked communication to reevaluate and redesign the built environment and urban communities. Despite the choice of the term 'networked', Thackara does not call for a technological approach to communication between individuals. "The solution", he writes "is not to add more tech. Learning relies on personal interaction and, in particular, on a range of peripheral [...] forms of communication (Thackara, 2005, p. 99). In this respect, 'network' comes to mean the interconnection of individuals within a community. IWTW—with its emphasis on reproduction, distribution, and adaptability— provides planners with a simple method to develop a distributed network of engaged citizens concerned with community visioning, if not the planning process at large. At the community level, one of IWTW's greatest strengths rests in awareness. The display of different messages and perspectives on IWTW media throughout an area, as done in New Orleans, allows residents to discover new information about their community and their neighbours. It creates opportunities to uncover commonalities and differences, for collaboration and negotiation, and for the integration of a community visioning process into everyday situations. In this context, the planner's role is limited, with agency largely resting with residents. The planner is instead tasked with educating communities of the project and its philosophy, informing them of objectives, and maintaining a continued dialogic process with the community. In giving citizens a greater amount of agency in the participatory process, the planner must also be a capable motivator, and able to bring citizens unused to greater participation into the process. In ceding control to allow citizens to be more active, resistance can paradoxically arrive from the groups receiving this mandate to act. John Lewis explains, "the [active approach] has its downside, because a few people expect a passive 'I'll say something and you write it down' method, because that's just the way it's done. Some people have left [our sessions annoyed] because they've had to do too much work" (personal communication, 15 June 2011).

IWTW further allows planners to move beyond the professional planning vernacular—replete with its own jargon and obfuscatory visualization techniques—to pose simple questions to the public and involve them in a low pressure atmosphere. This serves planners and the public in multiple ways. It allows planners to step out from under the umbrella of professional images and engage the public in a clear way. It allows the public to respond to important questions concerning the neighbourhood's future in an uncomplicated manner. In this respect, IWTW engages the public on the premise that they each know something of the neighbourhood and can contribute to relevant planning discourse without special training or a sizeable time commitment. As argued by John Lewis, "people know what they like about their community. They don't need training or education to answer these questions" (personal communication, 15 June 2011).

For all of these philosophical positions and necessary competencies, the planner must above all be open to testing new approaches and integrating them into the participatory process. This willingness is as much influenced by the operational culture surrounding the planner as by the planner's own personal outlook. John Lewis explains: "planners get beat on by citizens, by other departments, by council, they get it from everybody. At this point, planning becomes risk management, and so that doesn't lend itself very well to creative approaches" (personal communication, 15 June 2011). In this respect, the high idealism and potential offered by IWTW can be offset by very practical concerns over its relevance to a conventional planning process, or worse, by an organizational culture that eschews creativity in order to minimize potential risk.

Integration into the participatory planning process

IWTW does not aim to replace contemporary participatory planning methods; it instead aims to complement them. The project's small-scale process and limited space excludes it from assuming a larger role in the information collection and research process. By its nature—as seen with the contrasting views of IWTW and the 'Snapshots' videos in the Écologez design process—it is not going to replace such context-rich participatory standbys as design charettes and public meetings. It is not intended to; IWTW, as with other graphic design approaches, seeks out a different role. It is a simple but effective tool for collecting local sentiment and knowledge away from the often conflicting and pressured venue of public consultation. In this respect, ideally it serves as an input to a larger participatory process. By soliciting input away from these conventional encounters, IWTW allows individuals—in the words of Fischler (2000)—to more easily expose their 'inner selves', their wishes for the neighbourhood derived from personal experience. However, this is not a seamless process. While the crowdsourced approach responses reflect an unencumbered approach to visioning, the responses derived from the more structured approach instead saw participating individuals return to self-censoring.

In its distribution in public spaces, IWTW also targets input from groups that may not attend or participate in more conventional engagement processes. John Lewis speaks to the importance of these novel approaches in reducing barriers and 'growing' the participating public. He argues, "people appreciate the novel approaches [to participation], because you're always going to get the people that have been to every open house and every council meeting, so you have to cast the net wider" (personal communication, 15 June 2011). In bringing participation to the streets and public spaces that make up a neighbourhood, the engagement process is brought out of unfamiliar, often officious spaces to everyday spaces where people tend to be most comfortable. Going to these familiar places is an effective choice for inviting participation, as people are more apt to participate in areas where they are most comfortable (J. Lewis, personal communication, 15 June 2011).

In any participatory process to which the IWTW project serves as an input, the medium's strengths are best realized as part of an iterative approach to design. As noted, the medium's invitation to provide input as part of a visioning process, while novel, is not likely to retain its appeal if the provided information is not seen to be used correctly, or at all. The case study evidence supports this point; at present IWTW provides an interesting if somewhat limited opportunity for commentary. If folded into a larger, iterative participatory process, the IWTW medium can gain momentum and credibility in the eyes of local residents as a valuable and efficient tool for the transmission of ideas for useful ends.

5.1.3. The intersection between graphic design and urban planning

What does graphic design, both as a medium and as a process, bring to urban planning? The use of graphic design in a participatory planning process—its intersection with planning—is an appropriate choice for a planning profession looking to connect and engage with a varied and diverse public increasingly pressed for time and ever distant from the decision making process. As developed in the case study section, the use of graphic design in this context brings with it many advantages that contribute to an effective, engaging, and above all, useful participatory planning process. At the same time, participating planners must guard against and mitigate the disadvantages inherent in the application of a graphic design method to the participatory process. Graphic design's core tenets favour use in and can help facilitate the participatory planning process. The stated emphasis on information, persuasion, engagement, decoration, and the injection of 'magic' into otherwise everyday proceedings all underpin a key way to connect with participating publics.

The information aspect of graphic design remains vital, though in IWTW the collection of information is conducted in a process altogether different from convention. Typical graphic design—as discussed in the literature review—envisions the dissemination of information as a top-down process. An individual or a group in some position of authority within a public or private organization uses the design medium to broadcast a message or inform a selected public. In the IWTW model, the dissemination of information process is inverted. The new approach sees the spread of knowledge as a bottom-up approach; individuals within a diverse public are invited to contribute information and opinion as part of a graphic design process that, in effect, can crowdsource content. While not without its problems, this approach to information gathering concurs with the ideal participatory planning process, which removes some degree of agency from the professional and situates it in a newly-empowered participating public. This reorientation is not to the detriment of the planner and the planning process at large; the contribution of local knowledge from an engaged public ensures better plans reflective of neighbourhood contexts, and potentially minimizes both discord between the planner and public, and within the public itself.

Concerning engagement and persuasion, a graphic design approach to participatory planning is again useful. Indeed, such a process is predicated on persuading individual citizens and civic groups—each with their own external time and lifestyle constraints—to participate. At its most simple, the power of persuasion embedded in graphic design aims to use a clarity of message, colour, and art to induce engagement with a certain point of view or process. In a context of participation, the persuasive power of graphic design also rests in its ability to reduce barriers to participation; persuading an individual to participate is made easier when all the appropriate requirements necessary for participation are met (Meslin, 2010).

In this regard, IWTW's persuasive powers are two-fold. Its rhetorical function—the "I Wish This Was" statement—effectively poses a question of visioning; it engages with the imagination of users to project a future neighbourhood and asks them how to get there. Moreover, its blank canvas—the white message space—invites input resulting from these brief and informal visioning sessions. In the latter process, graphic design's engagement potential is vital. Rather than being the passive recipient of messages, the public is instead invited to contribute and engage with the medium in an substantive way. The design of the medium does play an important role in this action. While it is designed to be attractive and inviting, it does not discourage participation, does not obscure intent, and ultimately assumes a secondary role to the participant's input.

The decorative and 'magic' potentials of graphic design—though ostensibly far removed from the practicalities of the planning profession—can assist in promoting the participatory planning process. Before being acquainted with the goals and objectives of the IWTW process, individuals first see the design, or decorative aspect, of the sticker. Applied to ordinary objects in public spaces, the medium's vibrant colours and contrast, and its bold typeface, inject a modicum of decoration in the proceedings of everyday life. Moreover, the inherently speculative nature of the process, through the envisioning of new spaces and objects in place of present day problems and eyesores, highlights the 'magic' potential of graphic design. The IWTW project, with its emphasis on engagement and imagining as part of a larger planning process, serves as the opening volley in an operation to make "something different from what it truly is" (Barnard, 2005, p. 15). IWTW, with its focus on novel and fun engagement, enlivens the participatory process and provides individuals with an efficient and relatively substantive alternative to protracted open houses and public meetings.

For these philosophical benefits, the introduction of graphic design methods to the participatory planning process brings with it several practical advantages. The procedural approach to design ensures that resulting design products are supported by sufficient background research to assist in general problem solving, and that the products are also adaptable and scalable enough to be useful in multiple contexts. In the IWTW case studies, this adaptability rests in the medium's popularity in a variety of neighbourhood contexts, and its usefulness in both crowdsourced and supervised visioning efforts. The use of graphic design in a participatory context is also aided by the field's practical focus on the ease of material reproduction, design clarity, and communicative potential. In the former case, design's core tenet of reproducibility ensures that any resulting design products should be used to reach the highest number of people. The focus on clarity and communication builds on this aim; the graphic design approach also ensures that not only are the maximum number people reached by this product, but also that they are clearly communicated to and engaged by the distributed material.

6. Conclusion

Public participation forms a key support of any urban planning process. However, there is no set formula used to encourage and conduct participatory planning exercises. Instead, the planner is presented with a variety of options from which she or he must choose, according to both the needs of the process and of the local context in which the process is operating. This study provides insight into a novel field of study concerning participatory planning: the marriage of practical and interactive graphic design to the participatory process. The graphic design method for public participation—displayed prominently through Candy Chang's 'I Wish This Was' project—exhibits early promise. The potential of this approach to participation is supported by several factors: the continued strength of desktop publishing and the Internet, the proliferation of inexpensive computer design applications, an increasingly visually-savvy public, and a planning profession and public that is progressively more open to different approaches to encouraging participation. Indeed, the graphic design approach is a welcome addition to a participatory planning toolkit already suffering an embarrassment of riches.

IWTW, as a participatory method complementary to the larger planning process, brings with it several advantages. Most broadly, the medium can mitigate many of the typical problems associated with participatory methods. By providing a novel format for participation, it serves to enrich the process for participants. Its focus on adaptability, efficiency, and reproducibility also makes it an effective avenue for the collection of local knowledge; it can be deployed quickly in many different situations to the benefit of the planning process at large. The case studies revealed the following three chief lessons derived from the IWTW process: it allowed researchers to quickly uncover the interests and future visions of the local population; it provided agency and an opportunity to act proactively to local residents; and the responses revealed that many of the participants eschewed implausible, grand visions in favour of practical solutions to existing problems.

The experiences of the participating researchers in the IWTW process provide an indication of the role of the planner using this medium. While the planner working in this context shares some features of the mediating planner, it is with many caveats. The planner becomes the caretaker of local knowledge. She is tasked to guide and manage the IWTW process, to inform the public about it, and to mediate between messages based on their usefulness and validity to the planning process at large. The planner's position in this context is also informed by new perspectives on the necessary competencies required of a planner working in a grassroots, interactive and visual context. Planners using IWTW must have the ability to work within and understand the visual design process, the ability to adapt to and foster new data collection techniques to meet these new information inputs, and to manage a network of distributed messages and contacts within a community. These skills are emblematic of the problems and possibilities facing contemporary urban planners.

The advantages of graphic design in a participatory context are many. In a field actively attempting to engage with an often busy or reluctant public, design's philosophical emphases on clarity, engagement, persuasion, and decoration each bring benefit to the participatory process. To want to engage, to do so in a clear and attractive way, to persuade a disengaged public to participate in the planning process, and to decorate the message in a way that is appealing are all potential vital supports to the participatory process. The field's practical emphases on adaptability and reproducibility are also relevant; they can effectively facilitate the participatory planning process in a number of different contexts.

The graphic design influenced participatory method is variable. It is a diverse field characteristic of a number of different approaches and objectives. In this respect, the local knowledge and visioning mandates of Chang's IWTW represents one of many different potential applications of the overarching method. As a result, the study of the graphic design influenced participatory method is limitless in scope. While the author recommends several directions going forward, it is in this context in which these suggestions are made.

The two most significant future directions for study that have emerged over the course of this process are as follows: the design influence on engagement and participation, and the application of IWTW to an iterative process. In the former direction, if we are to recognize that design plays an important role in inducing participation, we must ask what design choices (colour, layout, text) motivate this behaviour. In this study, Chang's design was treated as a *fait accompli*. It was implicitly assumed that part of IWTW's success was motivated by the choices made during the design process. In the latter direction, this study has placed great emphasis on the best potential practice of IWTW—its integration into an iterative design process. The iterative potential of IWTW is clear; it would be indeed useful to develop a trial process to see where IWTW succeeds and where it falters in this context.

Study limitations are few in number but significant. While the content analysis of the New Orleans and Montréal IWTW experiences presented a combined total of 77 messages, a larger sample of messages would have made fir a more nuanced study. More significantly, in this study the IWTW process was largely tested for effectiveness in an academic or otherwise 'synthetic' planning context. Researchers associated with McGill University conducted an exploratory distribution, while student designers from Montréal's four post-secondary institutions used the resulting content as input for their designs and plans. Meanwhile, Chang's initial IWTW process was not couched in an explicitly planning-oriented mandate. This is largely owing to IWTW's lack of penetration into the established participatory planning field; one cannot study what has not been done. While this study forms a valid first step, the question of how IWTW is integrated into the planning process remains hypothetical at present.

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New Orleans 'I Wish This Was' images courtesy of Candy Chang / iwishthiswas.com.

Montréal GIS shapefiles courtesy of Transportation Research at McGill and DMTI Spatial Incorporated. Available at: http://tram.mcgill.ca. Map projection is NAD 1983 MTM 8.

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Appendix I: List of interviewees

Kristin Hughes
Designer; Associate Professor[1]
[1]School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

John Lewis
Urban Planner; President & Founder
Intelligent Futures - Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Adriana Olmos
Interaction Designer, Human Factors Specialist
Shared Reality Lab, McGill University - Montréal, Québec, Canada

Jason Prince
Urban Planner, Member of the Ordre des urbanistes du Québec; CURA Coordinator
School of Urban Planning, McGill University - Montréal, Québec, Canada

Rebecca Ross
Graphic & Interaction Designer; Senior Lecturer[1]; PhD Candidate[2]
[1]Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design - London, United Kingdom
[2]Graduate School of Design, Harvard University - Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Appendix 2: IWTW messages in New Orleans, Louisiana

#	Location	Message	Message Type PRA	WIS	WHI
1	The Marigny	A grocery! With fresh produce and pumpkin pie!		●	
2	Bywater	A butcher shop		●	
3	The Marigny	Community garden	●		
4	The Marigny	A taco stand		●	
5	Freret	Heaven			●
6	The Marigny	Repaired	●		
7	Bywater	Bakery [appended]		●	
8	French Quarter	A city in the midst of revolution			●
9	The Marigny	A bike lane	●		
10	The Marigny	Full of nymphomaniacs with Phds			●
11	Bayou St-John	Footlocker		●	
12	New Orleans	A sunken canal we could enjoy		●	
13	The Marigny	My mom's house			●
14	The Marigny	A bike shop		●	
15	The Marigny	A place to buy flowers for my baby		●	
16	Bywater	A donut/flower shop		●	
17	Treme	Donut shop		●	
18	The Marigny	A place to sit and talk	●		
19	The Marigny	A chess club		●	
20	Freret	Shoe store		●	
21	The Marigny	Swimming pool	●		
22	The Marigny	Full of people and/or a city bike tour company	●		
23	The Marigny	A Trader Joe's		●	
24	St-Roch	Community resource center	●		
25	Gravier	A store with reasonable prices - unlike across the street		●	
26	The Marigny	A center for LA maritime history		●	
27	Central Business District	My art gallery		●	

PRA - practical content **WIS** - wishful content **WHI** - whimsical content

#	Location	Message	Message Type		
			PRA	WIS	WHI
28	Bywater	What you need			●
29	The Marigny	Pittsburgh			●
30	Treme	Community center / bookstore	●		
31	Bayou St-John	Nursery		●	
32	St-Roch	A thrift clothing store		●	
33	Bywater	Not so scary looking	●		
34	The Marigny	Just like it is - except not			●
35	Bayou St-John	Strip club - for real		●	
36	Central Business District	A Church		●	
37	The Marigny	Cover'd in bacon			●
38	Bywater	A bike rack	●		
39	The Marigny	Properly paved	●		
40	Gentilly	Still the home of Chilly Gentilly			●
41	Bywater	A neighbourhood where assholes didn't graffiti everything	●		
42	Bywater	100' above sea level			●
43	Bywater	A source of tasty, healthy food that I could afford		●	
44	St-Roch	An affordable farmer's market		●	
45	Bywater	A grocery! Locally owned!		●	
46	Bayou St-John	A grocery!		●	
47	Bywater	A grocery with fresh veg and beer!		●	
48	The Marigny	Brad Pitt's house			●
49	The Marigny	Not my neighbour		●	
50	French Quarter	Disneyland			●
51	Uptown	A portal to another dimension			●
52	Bywater	A recycled or used art supply store		●	
53	Freret	A place to help homeless people	●		
54	Seventh Ward	A higher priority for the city	●		

#	Location	Message	Message Type		
			PRA	WIS	WHI
55	French Quarter	A day in New Orleans c. 1885 - [appended - 'what they said']			•
56	St-Roch	Not a potential Walmart			•
57	Bayou St-John	Seafood place		•	
58	The Marigny	A California-style medical marijuana dispensary			•
59	Freret	A dancing school		•	
60	Gravier	Real soul food [appended - 'something different']		•	
61	The Marigny	Owned by someone who cared	•		
62	French Quarter	A vinyl record store		•	
63	Bywater	A home	•		

PRA - practical content **WIS** - wishful content   **WHI** - whimsical content

Source: C. Chang / iwishthiswas.com
Date: November 2010 - April 2011

Appendix 3: IWTW messages in Montréal, Québec

#	Location	Message	Message Type		
			PRA	WIS	WHI
1	Saint-Jacques & Upper Lachine	A row of trees on Saint-Jacques	●		
2	Hampton & Upper Lachine	Doctor's offices		●	
3	Hampton & Upper Lachine	Houses all along	●		
4	Saint-Jacques & Upper Lachine	Communauto lot (underground)		●	
5	Saint-Jacques & Upper Lachine	Park for kids	●		
6	Saint-Jacques & Upper Lachine	Open air market		●	
7	Belgrave & Upper Lachine	Fixed! [pothole]	●		
8	Belgrave & Upper Lachine	Big mall (with movie cinema)		●	
9	Belgrave & Upper Lachine	Gelato (ice cream shop)		●	
10	Belgrave & Upper Lachine	Street light - traffic light	●		
11	Belgrave & Upper Lachine	Laundromat		●	
12	Clifton & Upper Lachine	Traffic light (safety for kids)	●		
13	Clifton & Upper Lachine	Tree park	●		
14	Clifton & Upper Lachine	Co-op Maison Verte style coffee shop		●	

PRA - practical content **WIS** - wishful content   **WHI** - whimsical content

Source: A. Olmos
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