THE POWER OF PLACE
How Engagement, Happiness and Attachment Will Shape the Midwestern City

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THE POWER OF PLACE

DESIGN

INDEPENDENCE

HEALTH
“I believe that the community - in the fullest sense: a place and all its creatures - is the smallest unit of health and that to speak of the health of an isolated individual is a contradiction in terms.”

— Wendell Berry, *Health is Membership*
The quality of healthcare has a limited impact on our well-being. The guiding factors regarding the social determinants of health rest in the socio-economic factors that define our everyday routine.

*Source: The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity (2015)
“The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire.”

— Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference
If we look at our communities as integrated social systems, designed to allow their users to engage and interact, we can begin to better understand and predict their inefficiencies. These networks, like many systems, often hinge on **disruptive singular trends providing the widespread occurrence of an infectious phenomenon**.
The suburban sprawl popularized in the 1960s had a dramatic impact on how communities behaved socially. Like an epidemic, a new behavioral model transformed our social patterns and, as a result, radically altered our health.

CONFUSING CAUSATION AND CORRELATION

ACKNOWLEDGING A TIPPING POINT

SOURCE: Tyler Vigen (http://tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations)
“From low social mobility and poverty to divorce and drug addiction, my home is a hub of misery.”

J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*, p4
ACKNOWLEDGING A TIPPING POINT

Top 10 best in overall well-being

Top 10 worst in overall well-being

USA TODAY
DESIGN supports a community’s transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

ORGANIZATION involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

PROMOTION positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics.

ECONOMIC VITALITY focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

FRAGMENTED SYSTEMS
The “general store” (i.e. “Mom and Pop”) mentality presented an inwardly focused social network that utilized and depended on centrally located goods and services.
The suburbanized development model (i.e. “Big Box retail”) presented an outwardly focused social network that depended on destination events and isolated exchanges.
EVALUATING SMALL TOWN INDIANA (2010)

- % With Age 65+
- Mean Commute Time
- Median Household Income
- % w/Bachelor Deg. or Higher

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<th>U.S. Average</th>
<th>Indiana Average</th>
<th>Target City Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% With Age 65+</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean Commute Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>% w/Bachelor Deg. or Higher</td>
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Indiana Population Growth from 2005 to 2040:

- 15% for 65+ population
- 90% community fragmentation
TRADITIONAL SENIOR LIVING SERVICES
(providing care to older adults through conventional facilities, institutions, and programs)

SUPPORT NETWORK
(assumes collaboration with other community organizations and civic leaders in the offering of an ageographic support network aimed at providing successful aging through engaging, intergenerational neighborhoods)
CHANGE

The way in which cities have been developed over the last fifty years has left a growing number of citizens isolated and unable to engage the world around them. If we are to survive the coming demographic shifts, we must acknowledge the connection between place and quality of life. More importantly, we must envision how our shared downtowns can exist as incubators for inclusive placemaking strategies.
ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY

Transforming the conditions in which people are BORN, GROW, LIVE, WORK and AGE for optimal health, mental health & well-being.

HEALTHY PEOPLE
- Prevention
- Mental Health Services
- Culturally/Linguistically Appropriate and Competent Services
- Income Security
- Housing
- Neighborhood Safety/Collective Efficacy
- Environmental Quality

HEALTHY COMMUNITY
- Health Care
- Child Development, Education, and Literacy Rates
- Food Security/Nutrition
- Built Environments
- Discrimination/Minority Stressors

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

HEALTHY SOCIETY

SOURCE: California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity as inspired by the World Health Organization.
Evidence shows that people who hold pervasive positive illusions about themselves, their abilities, and their future prospects are mentally healthier, happier, and better liked than people who lack such illusions.”*  


Research has shown that lonely people are 30% more likely to suffer from a stroke or heart disease.

Some researchers thought this was simply due to less people noticing when a person was ill. However, last year Harvard University found that having no friends was linked to the increased level of blood-clotting protein, which can cause heart attacks and strokes.

― Sarah Knapton, Loneliness is deadlier than obesity, study suggests.  
The Telegraph, August 2017.
Despite traditional variables such as jobs, economics, and safety also being analyzed, these specific factors appear to always have more impact on one's attachment to place and community.

In 2008, the Knight Foundation launched the *Soul of the Community* project which found that successful cities consistently prioritized communal attachment through three categories:

- **Social Offerings**: Places for people to meet each other and the feeling that people in the community care about each other.
- **Openness**: How welcoming the community is to different types of people, including families with young children, minorities, and talent.
- **Aesthetics**: The physical beauty of the community including the availability of parks and green spaces.
Despite traditional variables such as jobs, economics, and safety also being analyzed, these specific factors appear to always have more impact on one’s attachment to place and community.

As communities prioritize the impact of reengaging isolated populations, they will begin to see:

• **Improved GDP**: A sustainable and consistent increase in local economy.

• **Vibrant Neighborhoods**: The resurgence of diverse, active, and meaningful neighborhoods centered around a sense of camaraderie and trust.

• **Sellable Community Product**: As GDP grows and neighborhoods reenergize, it presents a marketable product for outside investment and resident migration.

As opposed to focusing on increasing success in attracting migrating emerging professionals, there may be a stronger case for pursuing the reengagement of existing marginalized residents... especially within smaller cities and towns.
The equation for community attachment is complicated, but the result is simple. Our happiness is directly connected to our perceptions of how engaged we are in the world around us.
HAPPIENESS FORMULA

\[ H = S + C + V \]

H: EXPERIENCED HAPPINESS
S: BIOLOGICAL SET POINT
C: LIFE CONDITIONS
V: VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Happiness is a complicated thing and is perceived in two very distinct ways - through experience (happiness while in the act of doing) and memory (happiness through the act of remembering).

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PLACE IMPACTS HUMAN CAPITALIZATION
CORRELATING ENGAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS AND LEVELS OF SUCCESSFUL AGING

- I am satisfied with my life the majority of the time: 31%
- I am able to make choices about things that affect how I age: 24%
- I have a high quality of life: 39%

Identity vs. Control

An elder’s home might be a comforting, familiar place even though it is becoming burdensome to maintain and unsafe (and therefore a source of anxiety).

Source: AARP, Home and Community Preferences of the 45+ Population, November 2010
Meaning of home for the elderly*

**ENGAGEMENT MEANS EVERYTHING**

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
- Characteristics of the residences
- Activities and services offered
- Services used
- Architectural features

**HOME**
- Socio-demographics
- Health status
- Needs
- Life cycle stage
- Personal ideas and values

**USERS**
- Residential itinerary
- Reasons for moving
- Choice of housing
- Residential satisfaction
- Aesthetic preferences

**SOCIETY**
- Architectural expressions
- Character and ambience
- Perceived function

- Social meaning of nursing homes
- Perceptions of institutions

- Personal identity
- Self-esteem


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The built environment is a behavioral system. Humans, by nature, are dramatically impacted by our surroundings. Where we live changes how we live.
Effective transformational strategies require us to understand the difference between *outputs* and *outcomes*. 
INCLUSIVE PLACEMAKING
HEALTHY PLACEMAKING

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HEALTHY PLACEMAKING

2016 State Well-Being Index

For more see https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com/
HEALTHY PLACEMAKING

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

Gallup and Healthways have developed a comprehensive, definitive source of well-being measurement, the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. This scientific survey instrument measures, tracks and reports on the well-being of populations. The five essential elements of well-being are:

- **Purpose**: liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social**: having supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial**: managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- **Community**: liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical**: having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

For more see https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com/
How **livable** is your **community**?

enter your address, city, state or zip code

The Livability Index scores neighborhoods and communities across the U.S. for the services and amenities that impact your life the most.

**SOURCE:** https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/
CONSUMERISM

A hospitality-based relationship highlights the trust we have in a service provider (e.g., waiter, doctor, contractor, social worker).

COOPERATION

A reciprocal relationship highlights the trust two people have in each other, valuing and accepting services to be exchanged frequently.
“Commerce, trade, and exchange make other people more valuable alive than dead, and mean that people try to anticipate what the other guy needs and wants. It engages the mechanisms of reciprocal altruism, as the evolutionary biologists call it, as opposed to raw dominance.”

- Steven Pinker
reciprocity requires trust
which can only be earned in repetitive relationships (i.e., reputation)
Bonding Relationships
Bonding networks are close ties that help people get by. These connections are usually with family, friends and neighbors. Connections with others who are like you give you the sense that you belong, and help you get by. Close connections (also called strong ties) give you someone to call in times when you need personal support – if you’ve lost your job, have marital problems or a health concern.

Bridging Relationships
Bridging networks are ties that are not strong, but that give people more opportunities. We have bridging networks with people who are different from us; who are members of organizations, occupations or associations that we don’t usually engage. People with broad connections expand their opportunities. Broad connections may only be nodding acquaintances. But they also are a resource for smaller favors and experiences.
1. HOME
The home provides us our sense of control by offering a shelter for our sense of belonging and memory. It’s the realm of privacy.

2. WORK
Our chosen task (whether work or volunteerism) strengthens our identity and validates our talents. It’s the realm of purpose.

3. HUB
Social hubs provide us our ability to network with family, friends, and peers while exposing us to repetitive experiences that generate trust in others. It’s the realm of fellowship.
LEVERAGING THIRD PLACES
LEVERAGING THIRD PLACES

BOOKS vs. BURGERS

16,766
PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE U.S.

14,157
MCDONALD'S IN THE U.S.

= 1,000 libraries

= 1,000 McDonald's
LEVERAGING THIRD PLACES

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR LIBRARIES

Working together, libraries and local partners are creating strong networks to address the well-being of all community members.

- 59% support patrons in identifying health insurance resources
- 58% support patrons in locating and evaluating free health information online
- 48% support patrons in understanding specific health or wellness topics
- 23% support patrons by offering fitness classes

18% of libraries bring in healthcare providers to offer limited healthcare screening services
35% of those screenings include referrals to appropriate health and social service agencies

“Main Street public libraries became local agents, physical and figurative, through which their communities’ citizens – elite as well as common – accomplished two tasks for local harmony. First, the libraries provided public space to demonstrate and teach social behaviors and responsibilities acceptable to the community. Second, they provided literary space through collections and services that offered models for successful living, problem solving, and an orderly life at the same time they peacefully mediated a set of ever-shifting cultural values constantly influenced by inside and outside forces.”

- Wayne Wiegand

“Main Street Public Library,” American Libraries Magazine, September/October 2011, p. 16
Last year, a branch of the Philadelphia Free Library was transformed into the South Philadelphia Community Health and Literacy Center. The building has not only a traditional library but also a pediatric and primary care clinic on the top floors (seeing 30+ people per day).

TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES
THANK YOU.