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Rhetorical Spacemaking and Inventive Ecologies

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Rhetorical Spacemaking and Inventive Ecologies

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Dedication

To Bob, Jack, and Leo.

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So many people I respect and admire have been generous with their time and guidance to help see me through this project, and I am grateful beyond measure. Thank you is not enough.

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Rhetorical Spacemaking and Inventive Ecologies

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Joining a vibrant conversation on spatial rhetorics, this project proposes a framework for rhetorical engagement with space that foregrounds spatial production as rhetorical action. Specifically, it develops a matrix that puts Henri Lefebvre's famous triad of spatial registers—perceived, conceived and lived space—in conversation with geographer Colin McFarlane's triad of translation, coordination, and dwelling in order to locate the specific ways that human and nonhuman inhabitants are bound up in the rhetorical production of space through their affective, material, and symbolic relations to it. Each chapter focuses on how one element of Lefebvre's triad comes to life in the ongoing public placemaking efforts in Austin, Texas, and then traces out the more granular rhetorical activities contributing to the production of the city using the categories offered by McFarlane's triad. Ultimately this exploration reveals the particular ways that space is produced and transformed into place via ongoing invention within ecologies of generative rhetorical relations. It moves toward a rhetorical ethic of space that frames spatial production as a both a responsibility for caretaking and opportunity for embracing new modes of being, practices of intervention, and ways of representing the places we live.

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Introduction

Inventive Ecologies

This project responds to a call issued by rhetoric scholars to expand rhetoric's approach to issues of place. The call is to engage place as a "generative concept and practice, a space of enaction," as Jenny Rice put it at the 2013 RSA Placemaking Workshop. Taking up this challenge means moving beyond frames that enable thinking of space as something outside ourselves that we are able to occupy. It also means that we cannot neatly deal with places as texts to be analyzed or representations to be wielded for a particular political or economic gain. In short, it assumes that rhetoric has more to offer spatial studies than its critical lenses, marketing power, or its status as a tool for intervention in the politics affecting life in particular locations. Instead it traces out multiple ways in which rhetoric and its practitioners are inseparable from space and in fact are key to its production via ongoing invention. One way to begin the shift toward a generative spatial rhetoric is to attune ourselves to what both space and rhetoric *do*, or how they produce one another through constantly shifting material, social, and rhetorical entanglements.

To that end, this project immerses itself in ongoing public placemaking efforts in Austin, Texas as a means of exploring particular ways that space is

produced and transformed into place via human and nonhuman actants[1] within

rhetorical ecologies that include affective and nonrepresentational rhetorical action.

These ecologies also include traditional actors like city officials and residents, who

are not only engaged both actively and passively in placemaking, but as I will argue,

in rhetorical spacemaking. Rhetoric's place-making power has become an

increasingly popular subject for scholarship, but its role in the production of space

itself deserves further attention. I define space according to geographer John Agnew

as a "dimension within which matter is located" (1) but draw on sociologist Henri

Lefebvre to add that the "content" of space is the relations that constitute it. Space is

not abstract or empty, but constantly shaped by the social, economic, political,

symbolic relations that are immanently entwined in generative ways. Places, then,

are spaces that become differentiated not just as geographical locations but as living

sites not interchangeable with any other. While residents are often aware of their

role in shaping the places they live through the ways they cultivate and care for

their own homes or influence community activities, they are less likely to be aware

of the ways they are engaging in spacemaking processes that make any place

possible. As rhetorical spacemakers, residents are fundamental parts of the

relational interplay that generates space. Their role in the creation of space itself

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[1] I follow Bruno Latour in using "actants" to mean "something that acts or to which activity is granted by others" (7), or in other words an element within an ecology that impacts others even if simply by being there. I choose this term specifically because it is more inclusive of human and non-human, individual and collective entities than "actors" or "forces."

foregrounds their power as inventive actants in natural and built environments, and in rhetorical landscapes that they both create and are created within.

Because of what Nedra Reynolds terms a "renaissance" of geography in education and scholarship post-WWII, space and place have come to impact rhetoric scholars in a number of ways. Most frequently the spatial awareness sparked by this resurgence of geography in the humanities has manifested in a desire to apply a rhetorical lens to place in order to, for example, investigate discourses and practices associated with particular places or kinds of spaces (see David Fleming, Richard Marback, and Andrew Wood). Or, as in Reynolds' case, it is brought to bear on the development of spatially-informed approaches to writing and pedagogy that foreground the writer as situated and note how composing is taking place in concrete ways (see also Douglas Reichert Powell and John Paul Tassoni, Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser). Such scholarly rhetorical engagement of spatial studies has been valuable in illustrating the complex and intimate ties among writing, rhetoric, and space. In order to build on these contributions toward a generative engagement that asks not only what rhetoric can bring to space but what space can bring to rhetoric—how the relations that produce it are in themselves rhetorically charged—the challenge is to think inclusively about the constituent components of space, including human and nonhuman, material and symbolic, and to reconsider the writer's relationship to space and place in light of this expanded spatial awareness. Many scholars, including Dobrin and Weisser, Margaret Syverson

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and Rice have made significant progress in this direction by drawing on ecological

models that resonate with the constant interplay of forces—both material and

rhetorical—that constitute places and their identities. In thinking about both space

and rhetoric ecologically, they have opened up approaches and lines of inquiry

around spatial rhetorics that go beyond the most common descriptive and analytical

postures and toward models that take seriously space's own generative power.[2] I

draw on their work to begin to show, through the example of Austin, Texas, how

rhetorical-spatial ecologies shape inhabitants' ways of being in space and ways of

representing space as place(s).

In *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition* (1999), Syverson

explores composition as ecology by drawing on theories of distributed cognition.

She calls for more attention to be paid to the embodied aspects of writing, whether

the body of the author or of multiple agents involved in the creation of a text (48),

pointing out that our embodied experiences "arise co-dependently in collaboration

with our environment," including other people and the physical settings we interact

with (52). In part, what Syverson demonstrates is that writing is an environmentally

embedded practice. I pick up this insight that writing emerges in relation to one's

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[2] While the ecological model has gained popularity in recent years, many scholars and activists have
long acknowledged the complex systems that constitute and are constituted by urban spaces.
Sociologists and urban planners began to study urban spaces as ecologies in the 1920s. In the latter
half of the twentieth century, the work of Gregory Bateson, Bruno Latour, and Edwin Hutchins,
among others, provided valuable insight into the power of thinking in systems, and so the ecological
approach found corresponding theoretical ground spanning multiple diverse fields like anthropology
and neuroscience upon which to prop itself.

surroundings and note that this emergence and responsiveness is essential to understanding rhetorical engagement in the context of space.

Rice builds on Syverson's work to suggest how ecological models help reveal the rhetoricity of place itself. The theory of the rhetorical situation that Rice[3] developed in "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetoric Ecologies" calls attention to the rhetorical situation and place both as networked experiences or "affective ecologies," (9) the between and not the in of their elements (10). She argues that cities, like rhetorical situations, are not compilations of discrete elements but rather a series of encounters that are physical and full of traces from historical and social experience. They are verbs, in other words, though considering the distributed agency of the rhetorical-material ecosystems of place, they are not ever entirely first-person active. Edbauer writes, "[w]e do city rather than exist in the city" ("Unframing" 11); similarly, we "do rhetoric rather than find ourselves in a rhetoric" ("Unframing" 13).

Writing and rhetoric practices such as those Rice proposes seven years later in *Distant Publics* exemplify how this relation is borne out, for example, when she urges scholars "to examine how the networks of discourse and environment made possible certain rhetorical gestures"(*Distant Publics* 13) so that they might understand how those gestures function in the larger scene of public discourse (2012). By emphasizing the ongoing movement and action that animates the spaces

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[3] Jenny Rice previously published under her maiden name, Jenny Edbauer. I will cite works published under both of these names but will refer to her only as Jenny Rice to avoid confusion.

"between" elements, in essence the relationality of rhetorical and material elements, Rice illustrates how rhetorical actions, including placemaking activities, are embedded in space. If then, as Lefebvre argues, space comes to be through the relations active within it, Rice's works helps to suggest that rhetoric plays a critical role in the production of space, where rhetorical spacemaking and rhetorical placemaking have a recursive, co-constituting dynamic. The nature of rhetoric's role is an ethical question. That is, the relationality rhetoric instantiates in space (or that is instantiated by any presence that takes up space in relation to other things) is inseparable from an ethic of rhetorical placemaking.

When applied to explorations of space itself, ecological orientations like those taken up by Syverson and Rice help call attention to the ways placemaking is an ethical practice. Ecological, new materialist, and post-humanist scholars have begun to grapple with this ethical dimension by opening lines of inquiry that position rhetoric as enmeshed in the processes and practices of placemaking rather than as a tool for interpretation somehow separate from or pre-dating the material or social environs it seeks to explain. Work by scholars like Bruno Latour, Thomas Rickert, Alex Reid, Casey Boyle, Nathaniel Rivers, and Jennifer Bay illustrates the meaningful ways that agency, including and especially rhetorical agency, emerge in relation to complex material conditions and elements. Whereas rhetors have been traditionally thought as autonomous, thinking agents, an ecological approach demands a refiguring of both agency and rhetoric. Rickert writes in *Ambient*

Rhetoric that human agency, traditionally thought to be seated in the mind from where it directs rhetorical activity, including invention, "is already given in the environment, in the deep patterns of relationality from which a world, as a composite of meaning and matter, comes to be what it is" (221) and therefore "rhetoric's work is distributed and ecological" (221). Ethics, like rhetorics or spaces or subjectivities, emerge from ever-evolving entanglements of relations, from "life as it is lived, from what we do, say, and make" (Rickert 223) and are never static constructions.

Large-scale public placemaking projects are underway worldwide, from Cincinnati, Detroit, and Asheville to Rio de Janiero, Barcelona, and Sydney. These projects—which include branding, redevelopment, economic invigoration, and cultural renaissance—are shaping the future conditions of space and how residents will be able to live there in both the short- and long-term. The emphasis the above-listed projects put on human experience of space and agency to (re)create place is a common thread among them. The underlying assertion is that if people can write the right building codes, design the best transportation systems, promote equitable development practices, build state-of-the-art buildings, or create an identity that draws in tourists and businesses, they can shepherd the spaces they occupy into more livable, more well-known, more future-ready, and more meaningful places. Certainly this spectrum of human-driven placemaking methods is rich with rhetorical considerations of representation and practice, and these are essential to

understanding the change underway in Austin as well. However, human relations to space and the ways we navigate those relations through rhetoric are only one component; residents are themselves produced within/by the spaces they are actively shaping, and this calls for consideration of the complex spatial ecologies from which our own rhetorical relations, including ways of dwelling, emerge.

IMAGINE AUSTIN

At the center of this project is one such large-scale and highly public placemaking effort in Austin, Texas. The Imagine Austin project, led by the Austin City Council, arises from a need to manage the intense growth the city continues to experience. US Census Bureau data shows that from 2013-2014, Austin was the nation's fastest-growing city, with the population increasing by 2.9%. That growth has continued to the present, with estimates placing new arrivals to the city at between 54 and 110 daily (Selby).

Rapid growth has brought significant challenges, both to residents and to city government. The area's highways and public transportation options have not kept pace, and traffic continues to worsen, becoming emblematic of Austin's growing pains. As demand for housing grows, prices are soaring. The historically black and Latino neighborhoods on Austin's East Side are rapidly gentrifying and pushing long-time residents out. In addition to these trying material circumstances, the city is experiencing a very public identity crisis. As more high-rise condos, chain restaurants, and big-money music festivals stake their claim to the city, how

residents and city officials will be able to "Keep Austin Weird" and still accommodate the influx of new inhabitants who are also now part of the fabric of the city is a deeply personal question and one taken up by the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP)*, published by the city in June 2012. The 343-page document essentially describes the process of the plan's creation, defines the Austin of today as "a funky, offbeat destination" set apart by its "progressive spirit, environmental ideals, and innovative character" (19), and lays out the goals that the plan will help the city achieve over the course of its 30-year purview. Specifically, it claims to provide a roadmap to an Austin that is "Vibrant. Livable. Connected." The mandates it lays out in working toward achieving this vision are as follows: "Grow as a compact, connected city," "Integrate nature into the city," "Provide paths to prosperity for all," "Develop as an affordable and healthy community," "Sustainably manage water, energy, and other environmental resources," and "Think creatively and work together" (*IACP* 10-11). How Austin's traditionally "weird" ethos fits into a future that adheres to all of these mandates is yet to be seen.

According to its authors, the *IACP* provides the high-level view of the city that will enable both its government and its residents to maintain its status as one of the country's most desirable destinations by equipping them with the data and principles to guide them through the challenges, like congested streets and lack of affordable housing, that the city currently faces (3-4). Certainly the account of Austin given through diagrams and charts representing population and topographic

data, commute times, and land use will help to orient the public to the state of their city. Meanwhile, the authors use the plan to brand the movement through elements like the Vision Statement, the "Vibrant. Livable. Connected." tagline, and the colorful icons used throughout the plan to tell the story of what makes up a "complete community" (88). The development of visual and verbal branding elements helps the authors to establish the project and its vision for the city as legitimate and helps to rally public support by making the plan more marketable and engaging.

While the plan references intangibles like the energy and spirit of Austin throughout, it takes a decidedly human-centered approach. It celebrates, for example, the collaborative nature of its development, noting that it received "18,532 inputs from the community over more than 2 years" through social media, surveys, public meetings, "meetings-in-a-box," stakeholder interviews, and public speaking events (*IACP* 9). It positions residents, city officials, and hired consulting firms as the change agents that will make its vision a reality. Of course, all of these human actants play a major role in both producing the place that Austin is at any given moment and in guiding it toward some specified future state. It will be residents who will set policy and make choices about how to bring the values of the plan to life—by where and how they choose to live, where and how they spend their money, and what they choose to tell others about the kind of city that Austin is now and is becoming. These specific placemaking practices contributing to and generated by the Imagine Austin effort require closer analysis for the impact they will no doubt

have on the social, material, and economic landscapes of the city and the guiding

narratives they do or do not align themselves with.

The *IACP* is at work on many other levels beyond even the ambitious role it

sets out for itself as a driving force and directive for change. It sets many other

things in motion as well, including the propagation of powerful stories about what

Austin is and (therefore) what it can or should become. On the one hand, the plan's

authors have neatly packaged the city's current and future identity for consumption

by the public. On the other hand, they have solicited the public's input about their

personal and daily experiences living in the city as well as their ideas for how it can

best evolve. The way initiative leaders incorporated this information into the

planning efforts is far from transparent, so their influence on the plan and its

subsequent policies remains unclear. However, they have included examples,

primarily on the Imagine Austin web pages and social media channels, of specific

feedback they received. In this way, the report calls attention to the process of its

own creation as well as to the generative dynamic of grand narratives and little

narratives in any placemaking effort. Grand narratives, introduced in *The

Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard as "metanarratives," are totalizing

and consensus-forming practices meant to establish legitimacy of knowledge. The

"little narrative" (*petit récit*), in contrast, is "the quintessential form of imaginative

invention" as well as dissension (Lyotard 78-9). Grand narratives show up

frequently in placemaking efforts because they serve to focus attention on specific

aspects or values of a place and can therefore work to further the interests of a particular group. Jeff Rice offers the example of the hyperbolic narrative binary "Detroit is in ruins/Detroit is about to be rejuvenated" (*Digital Detroit* 225). He argues that such grand narratives "don't do anything but serve as reminders and, therefore, keep possibilities unseen" (Rice 43). Rice performs instead how a multiplicity of voices, narratives, and rhetorical approaches contribute to the development of place and begin "allowing the meanings of a space to overcome" the limitations of totalizing or, in Imagine Austin's case, tightly branded characterizations of place that do not leave themselves open to questions of origin, nuance, or complexity or allow for how space itself pushes back in all rhetorical engagements, including writing and spacemaking.

One relevant thing the *IACP* does not account for is the rhetoricity of space itself or the larger ecosystem of forces from among which the human agents emerge and within which they are able to participate in placemaking efforts at any level. This project intends to engage with Imagine Austin both on its own terms—by looking at the discourses and behaviors that are working to shape the city's future—and in terms of its broader rhetorical ecology, inclusive of affective and nonhuman modes of being in the world. It does so in order to embrace the implication of the plan's call to "imagine Austin," and to begin the work of invention it spurs in a rhetorically ethical way.

An approach that expands to include the constant interplay of human and nonhuman bodies and forces within a given space assumes that rhetoric's generative potential "proceeds from an ongoing series of mediated encounters" (Boyle "Writing" 534) in which it does not self-assuredly or singularly direct relations among spatial elements but can help us live productively among them by cultivating a sensitivity and openness to our relations within the vast ecologies of elements that generate, occupy, and define space. This approach to spatial studies proceeds from the posture that rhetoricity produces spaces and that rhetorics emerge in relation to place. What I am proposing positions rhetoric as enmeshed in and generative of the processes and practices of space-making rather than as an outside lens or tool suited strictly for place-interpreting. It also addresses placemaking as inventive rhetorical practice within multiple registers of spatial experience. As an interventionist endeavor, it sets rhetoric about doing—putting other things in motion—and not primarily observing or explaining or persuading. To draw again on Boyle's conception of practice, this project of writing with and in between the elements of spatial ecologies does not intend to arrive at concrete answers but instead hopes to help develop "new capacities for conducting ourselves" (549) by repeatedly cultivating alternative ethics of rhetorical placemaking.

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The specific orientation to spatial rhetorics on which I build this project

brings together Lefebvre's famous triad of spatial registers—perceived, conceived,

and lived space—with geographer Colin McFarlane's triad of placemaking

processes—translation, coordination, and dwelling, to see what capacities for

invention rhetoric brings to space and how space, in turn, generates new grounds

for rhetoric. The matrix formed by bringing Lefebvre's and McFarlane's triad into

conversation does artificially isolate elements of space to allow for greater focus on

the rhetorical contributions and origins of each, but it also aims to emphasize the

ongoing motion and evolution of spatial components. It attempts to activate the

spaces between frameworks for thinking about space to see what emerges.

Both Lefebvre and McFarlane demand engagement with the essential

elements of space beyond the conscious building of skylines or ideologies

performed by human inhabitants. Using them together—Lefebvre's account of types

of space with McFarlane's account of specific modes of spatial production—and

bringing contemporary rhetorical theory to bear on both, calls attention to the way

the rhetorical forces that comprise spatial ecologies impact inhabitants' ways of

being, practices of intervention, and ways of representing space.

Proceeding from a detailed discussion of this matrix in Chapter 1, I apply it to

examples pulled from the *IACP* and its related initiatives. Each of the three

subsequent chapters explores one element of Lefebvre's triad—perceived,

conceived, and lived space—in relation to a particular facet of these placemaking

efforts and then more specifically through all three elements of McFarlane's triad—translation, coordination, and dwelling—to see what the matrix opens up in terms of thinking conceptually about spatial production as rhetorical action. Each chapter also engages these examples more granularly to explore how specific rhetorical actions are contributing to the invention of the future Austin.

In Chapter 2, I sit with Lefebvre's idea of perceived space as spatial practice to illustrate how that practice, which occurs prior to understanding, is later enacted as perception—eventually giving space a way to be thought, articulable, or otherwise representable for purposes of collaborative placemaking such as the activities engendered by the Imagine Austin initiative. Perceived space comes to life most readily in the CodeNEXT initiative of the Imagine Austin project, where residents are asked to capture the spirit or essence of their neighborhood's character in photographs as a way of informing the team in charge of revising the land-use code of what qualities residents would like to see preserved.

In Chapter 3, I look at official representations of a future Austin—the *IACP*'s Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map—as examples of Lefebvre's concept of conceived space. I point to the ways that these artifacts as well as on-the-ground placemaking efforts meant to propose alternative uses for space are acts of rhetorical invention and intervention that help generate other possibilities for dwelling. I also outline how as part of a larger rhetorical ecology, these iterations of conceived space mutually modify, contest, and reinforce one another as they shape

the future of the city.

In Chapter 4, I position the production of lived space as a *kairotic* process and illustrate how the lived space of East Austin is being formed by the interaction of multiple competing claims about the past and future of a key landmark in the area, the Rosewood Courts public housing project. The type of intervention at stake in the kind scholarship on space and place I embrace via Lefebvre and McFarlane has more to do with actively shaping lived environments by the distinction between writing *with* space versus writing *about* place or writing *for* place. The kind of generative, interventionist practice at issue here is that which does not pin place down so it can be written about or hold place up in a move of advocacy for a particular iteration or idea of it. Instead it is that which allows for places to continually reveal themselves as acts of invention, as affective responses, or as analytical dwellings. The matrix I propose is intended to help facilitate alternative scholarly relations to space in order to open up other opportunities for occupation and new spaces for interaction, practice, and reflection. The matrix creates traction points between Lefebvre and McFarlane but also activates the vast spaces between them, creating a kind of ecology within which to situate oneself, allowing one to move from relation to relation to see what unfolds. In some small way it tries to perform the multivalence of spatial rhetorics, and of space itself, by offering multiple generative concepts that could engender new practices for how space gets enacted in rhetorical scholarship.

Chapter 1: A Matrix of Spatial Relations

INTRODUCTION

In order to move toward a rhetorical ethic of space that engages multiple registers of both space and rhetorical relations to it—affective, material, and symbolic—I develop a matrix that puts Lefebvre's triad of perceived, conceived and lived space in conversation with McFarlane's triad of translation, coordination, and dwelling (see Fig. 1). Lefebvre provides a vocabulary for three primary modes of spatial production, and McFarlane complements him by naming specific processes and practices that generate space and can be applied to all three registers of spatial production delineated by Lefebvre.

		MCFARLANE		
		Translation	*Coordination*	*Dwelling*
LEFEBVRE	*Perceived space*			
	Conceived space			
	Lived space			

Fig. 1. The matrix created from Lefebvre's and McFarlane's triads.

Pulling together the threads that each author makes visible within space into a matrix creates immersion points from which to engage with a particular placemaking project—in this case the *IACP* and its related initiatives—in order to see what relations and rhetorical modes emerge as part of the process of its

production or as effects of its implementation. Doing so suggests that government-led placemaking initiatives are not simply of interest to urban studies or political science but are vibrant rhetorical moments that provide opportunities to investigate a working rhetorical-material ecology. To this end, I aim to follow the connections that present themselves and see what else they can attune us to. The matrix is not intended to cast a mold around this project or future scholarship on spatial rhetorics. Instead, it is a tool valuable for the spaces it opens between Lefebvre's spatial production and McFarlane's placemaking actions, and for how it highlights the possibilities within those spaces to begin to trace the ecology of rhetorical motions within the ongoing process of spatial production.

LEFEBVRE'S (RE)INVENTION OF SPACE: AN OPENING FOR RHETORIC

A French sociologist, Lefebvre famously provided a vocabulary and a theory for talking about space as a dynamic material and social entity rather than an abstraction. With the publication of *The Production of Space* in French in 1974, he laid the groundwork for thinking about space as a simultaneously mental, physical, and social construction through his spatial triad. Geographer Andrew Merrifield notes that the triad, which Lefebvre offers as perceived, conceived, and lived space, is also one way that Lefebvre refused the dualism of Cartesian thought, which had posited a divide "between thinking and the material world, mind and matter" ("Place and Space" 518). Lefebvre insists that space is not given ground upon which everything else takes place. Instead, he illustrates how space is itself produced by

the dialectical relationship between it and its inhabitants. For Lefebvre, the generative processes from which space emerges, including human social relations, are embedded, distributed, and practiced from the macro level of global economics to the micro level of a spider spinning a web.

Lefebvre's characterization of space as emergent and fundamentally relational has significant implications for rhetoric. If space comes to be via the shifting ecologies of social, environmental, and bodily interactions, rhetoric becomes important beyond just giving space identity as place and beyond representations that assign it meaning from without. Instead, there is no outside of space, because there is no outside of relationality. Rhetoric, then, plays the crucial role of constructing space by its ongoing speculative process of invention and the shifting relationships among co-constitutive elements. Lefebvre is often celebrated for bringing the abstract concept of production in conversation with the subject to "restore their value and render them dialectical" (*Production* 69-70). That move is a primary reason why "Lefebvre's writings on cities, urbanization, and space have thus been a key source for the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences" (Kipfer and Milgrom 38), and now in the wider humanities, including rhetoric and writing studies (see John Ackerman, Roxanne Mountford, and Robert Topinka).

Lefebvre's resonance for rhetoricians interested in spatial studies intensifies when he is read alongside current rhetorical theory on ecology and new materialism, both of which reveal how rhetorical engagement, including invention,

emerges from the connections among ecological components. Lefebvre's work

develops a theory of spatial production that exceeds the human relation and the

agency of any subject. While he emphasizes this distributed space-making power

most clearly in relation to his category of perceived space, it shows up frequently in

his references to bodily knowledge and pre-representational production practices.

In the context of Imagine Austin and other placemaking projects, Lefebvre's

argument that space is produced carries the implication that other spaces are

possible, which serves as an important opening for rhetoric's generative power. If

space is "[i]tself the outcome of past actions" (Lefebvre 73), then a refiguring of

relations within space can generate new directions and possibilities. As Lefebvre

writes, "social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others

and prohibiting yet others" (73). He positions space as essentially a series of

encounters and networked experiences, similar to how rhetoric is positioned within

an ecological approach, such as the one Jenny Rice offers. The relations that produce

space speak to the rhetoricity of ecologies and to the potential they generate for

potential future spaces and potential rhetorical intervention in space.

LEFEBVRE'S TRIAD

For rhetoricians, Lefebvre's work offers a frame for understanding how

space is produced at every level of the spatial ecology—from the personal to the

institutional—and prompts further questioning of rhetoric's role in the production

of space and in the process of placemaking. Each element of his spatial triad

positions rhetoric as a productive force embedded in affective-symbolic-material

ecologies and with affective-symbolic-material consequences. Each element

foregrounds one of these registers of experience and locates generative potential a

bit differently from the next, but they never exist apart from the other spatial

registers. Their dialectical relation, Lefebvre urges, is a driving force for spatial

production and its inherent possibilities.

The first category of the triad, perceived space, foregrounds the role of

affective experience in the ways that people come to know space by cobbling

together traces of their pre-conscious, pre-representational relation to it into

something recognizable, thereby orienting themselves and giving space meaning.

Lefebvre focuses this category around the body's ways of being in space as

productive of the very networks of relation within which it operates every day.

Specifically, Lefebvre argues that bodies moving in space are productive of that

space—that space itself is "first of all *qualified* by that body" (174)—and that bodies,

memories, and daily routines are enmeshed with any given space's materiality.

Every little move inhabitants make, every "micro-gesture" performed, constitutes

the subject, the space itself, and a set of relations among them.

The bodily knowledge that Lefebvre points to is, from a rhetorical

perspective, affective experience that may or may not accumulate and eventually

circulate as representations of space. These affective intensities, however fleeting or

incomplete, shape the discursive and material conditions of the spatial ecosystem, in

turn necessitating new bodily knowledge and reformed spatial practice for inhabitants making their way through space day-to-day. Cast this way, perceived space helps expand the domain of rhetoric by suggesting its centrality in the ongoing, nonlinear, generative process of personal, affective spatial practice.

In contrast to perceived space, which locates placemaking power in the personal and intangible, Lefebvre's second category of conceived space foregrounds the power of representation or the often abstract constructions of space—like maps or blueprints—that have traditionally been the realm of city planners and geographers (38-9). When Lefebvre characterizes conceived space as "the dominant space in any society" (38-9), he reveals his belief that representations of space are frequently used by those in positions of power to direct the behavior of inhabitants according to the technocrat's own values and interests, and that in doing so they foreclose other valuable spatial possibilities.

However, I add that because space is malleable and its production ongoing, any representation of it, and particularly of its future, is speculative. Similarly, because every representation of space exists within a living ecology of other representations as well as of people, ideas, and material conditions, they remain open to rhetorical intervention that can take shape not just through discourse but also through behavioral or material alterations. These interventions are not ends in themselves; instead, they spur other activity in hopes of disorienting and refiguring space to reveal what else is possible.

The third and final category of Lefebvre's triad, lived space, describes how personal perceptions of space, like those captured in residents' photo submissions to CodeNEXT, interact with representations of space, such as the value of "social equity" highlighted in the Vision Statement, in complex ways. This interaction creates what Lefebvre terms "representational spaces," or socio-material activations of a space's "associated images and symbols" (38-9). Multiple competing realities emerge from this interaction and generate friction that compels continual change, both in terms of the material environment and in terms of place-based identities. Even within these complex processes of change, traces endure and repeated ways of being in space instantiate lived qualities that form sticky relations. Examining how these relations change over time demands a rhetorical lens that accounts for how shifting landscapes reflect shifting values and practices—how different ethics emerge as part of the scene of lived space and how they shape the place(s) it becomes.

Taken together, the elements of Lefebvre's triad provide a more comprehensive way to engage rhetorical placemaking practices—like those at work around the Imagine Austin initiative—by foregrounding how places are not static entities but in fact always in flux, under construction. As historian Tim Cresswell writes, places are "always the result of processes and practices" and so "never completed, finished or bounded but are always becoming—in process" (37). At a broad level, for rhetoric scholars interested in urban studies, Lefebvre's triad helps

bring to light how the city's changing skyline isn't all that is at stake in the enhancement, alteration, or destruction of the material environment. Representations of space as well as the practices that inform and emerge from perceived and conceived space are altered as well. For example, the Texas State Capitol was the tallest building in Austin from 1888 to 1937, when the UT Tower was built. Not until 1974, with the construction of the JP Morgan Bank Tower, did the height of the skyline rise again. Since then, it has continued to rise quickly. On a large scale, the shifting skyline mirrors the shifting focus of industry in Austin and its accompanying cultural changes, from a seat of a conservative state government to a liberal college town to a rapidly expanding economic and cultural center. On a smaller scale, for residents, changes like these mean that as material realties are altered, so are affective and meaning-making practices. These practices include the creation and circulation of highly contextualized place-based narratives—like those told in the photographs residents contributed to the CodeNEXT initiative—that enact certain relations to space. In the case of Imagine Austin, these images will be used to inform extensive revision of a land-use code aimed at establishing certain qualities of or relations to space, such as those touted in the project's tagline: Vibrant. Livable. Connected.

Therefore Lefebvre's triad provides a way of classifying the actions and relationships that produce space so that they might be understood in very specific contexts. For example, perceived space is a way of thinking about Austinites' deeply

personal, deeply felt impressions of their neighborhood's particular character. Similarly, conceived space situates the government's plans for Austin's growth and development as a speculative rhetorical act and a major intervention in the spatial ecology that triggers a host of other, sometimes competing, interventions. Lived space gives voice to how space changes, and how it remains recognizable as a particular place, over time. These contexts are all important to understanding that place-based discourses are highly dependent on material and social conditions and to informing how scholars might understand their production and effects (the kinds of spaces they produce and the kinds of places they help imagine). And because the triad ultimately requires that each mode of relation be understood as interacting with and dependent on others, it also helps establish a more comprehensive view of the larger ecologies in which place-based discourse and non-representative spacemaking activity occurs.

The triad also calls attention to rhetoric's role in the formation of urban space and identity. City and neighborhood identities often get distilled to a set of essential characteristics like physical landmarks (e.g., Austin's capital building and 6th Street), or strongly associated with key industries or cultural values (e.g., Austin as synonymous with quirky liberalism), or known for moments of developmental crisis (Austin's East Side and gentrification). But no one representation can account

for all the ways people understand and interact with the places they live.[4] Rather, ideas disseminated over time combine with, are influenced by, and continue to influence lived experiences.

Jenny Rice demonstrates, for instance, how the "Keep Austin Weird" campaign originated in the efforts of local businesses protesting encroaching chain stores via banners, bumper stickers, and T-shirts. In its subsequent adoption by the city as a publicity effort, however, it spread quickly through multiple iterations such as a corporate slogan and counter-phrases like "Keep Austin Normal." Now, in the midst of Austin's rapid growth and rising skyline, the stakes in Austin's "weird" ethos continue to become more diverse and complex. The campaign, combined with a growing business sector, has made the city so attractive to outsiders that 1,000 people move here each week (Urban Land Institute), necessitating rapid residential development and putting local landmarks at risk. A recent case involves the Broken Spoke, a famous honky tonk in offbeat South Austin. The Broken Spoke is praised for encapsulating an authentic Texas experience, but it now sits in the shadows of two towering condo developments and has become a symbol of how Austin's rapid growth is destabilizing the city's identity, which is even incorporated into its most public placemaking efforts as a main pillar of what the plans laid out in the *IACP* seek to preserve. What it will take to "Keep Austin Weird" in the future and what

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[4] McFarlane suggests that learning the city is not limited to urban experience but "emerges through a relational co-constitution of city and individual" (*Learning the City* 6-7). These experiences combine with group experiences and inputs from multiple media used to communicate agendas, memories, concerns, etc. (McFarlane 7).

definition of "weird" Austinites will collectively accept remains to be seen, even as the spirit of the phrase continues to guide the city's view of itself. By focusing attention on space's inherent instability and constructedness, Lefebvre's triad cultivates further depth of engagement with the ways rhetoric manifests as part of the ecology of relations that continually (re)produce space as iterations of place.

McFarlane's triad helps bring attention to the very specific ways that placemaking happens in the hands of inhabitants as well as in the wake of other emerging relations that do not necessarily entail human presence. His foregrounding of translation, coordination, and dwelling helps ground the discussion in practical, tactical modes of rhetorical placemaking, especially as they relate to generating rhetorical spaces from within which to complicate, diversify, and resist grand narratives about a particular place and the ways of being that get counted there. The micro-view that McFarlane's triad helps to unfold is particularly important because in contrast to the grassroots origin of the "Keep Austin Weird" campaign, the widely publicized and commonly reiterated narratives of place that most often shape and regulate behavior are often told by those in positions of power such as city officials, cultural institutions, and corporations and get widely circulated in the form of place brands, government-sponsored tourism sites, or even Travel Channel episodes. These characterizations of place tend to be used to advance a political or economic agenda and do not necessarily represent the day-to-day experiences of local residents. For example, Austin's official tourism website,

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austintexas.org, is in many ways the city's face to the world. Site visitors are immersed in an Austin defined by its music festivals, sports events, and favorable film-production conditions. The audience is external, but the implications of this representation of Austin weighs heavily on residents, who more often laud the city's green space, local restaurants, and laid-back, liberal atmosphere to the large events that many can't afford to attend and whose crowds disrupt their daily routines for months out of the year. In short, "official" representations play an important role in terms of tourism and city development but present a very limited perspective on lived spaces.

Because these grand narratives are so influential in determining the physical sites and local characteristics deemed valuable by a large audience, they require close critical analysis. However, they cannot be understood in isolation, as people come to know and continually change their relationship to a given place based on multiple diverse inputs, including lived experience on the ground, news media, maps, official signage, social networks, and broader historical and cultural knowledge. Particularly in times of rapid urban growth and redevelopment, when decisions about the city's future are made in relation to standing official narratives of place, the critical need for ongoing community engagement, diversity, and intervention reveals itself. There is much at stake economically, politically, personally, and culturally, as we have seen, in Austin's "weird" ethos. And while alternative narratives and public rhetorical and physical action are often productive

counterbalances to decisions made behind closed doors by city planners, politicians, developers, and investors, moments of fast-paced and widespread developmental crisis aren't the only moments when community intervention matters. Instead, discourses of place are always in process, and community activism is not limited to grand gestures or spurred only by resistance of or support for profound change. The operational identity of place in a city like Austin, for example, is continually built, reshaped, and negotiated among publics engaging in, as Robert Asen calls them, "everyday enactments of citizenship" (207). McFarlane's "interrelated, ongoing processes of translation, coordination, and dwelling" (23) point to specific ways that inhabitants' actions materially and meaningfully contribute to the daily work of refiguring space.

MCFARLANE'S TRIAD

While Lefebvre's triad provides a framework for seeing space as emergent and constructed (via language, images, material configuration, political processes, etc.), McFarlane's triad from *Learning the City: Knowledge and Translocal Assemblage* sheds light on how inhabitants of those places and spaces make sense of them and how they actively, though not always consciously, participate in their production. Viewing McFarlane's and Lefebvre's triads as a matrix in which McFarlane's concepts of translation, coordination, and dwelling are applied to perceived, conceived, and lived spaces allows us to bridge the societal scope of Lefebvre's inquiry and the ways inhabitants—like those involved in the Imagine

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Austin initiative—relate to space as something they are always transforming and that is always transformative, full of the "possibility of invention" (26).

Though McFarlane's concern is most explicitly about urban knowledge—how knowledge is triggered, how learning operates, and how urban knowledge is lived in the context of the city to facilitate development and change (21)—the relationships he points to as the foundation of urban knowledge can be characterized as invention by ecology. His triad exposes *what else* happens in and following the processes of producing space—how it activates other elements within the larger ecology to generate possibilities for space. When he argues that cities are networks of relations continuously in flux and as such they "demand" learning (8) by inhabitants, he implies too that cities demand rhetorical relation—something like Rickert's attunement—as the fundamental way that inhabitants participate in the construction of the urban ecology and experience. Because learning includes not only the reproducible knowing of maps and demographics but the fleeting, immersed knowing of the body (McFarlane 15), McFarlane's framework provides a way of better locating the rhetorical practices and patterns that emerge as part of larger affective-symbolic-material ecologies.

I characterize McFarlane's approach as ecological, though he does not do so himself, because of how his concept of spatial assemblage aligns with Syverson's characterization of ecology as "self-organizing, adaptive, and dynamic interactions" (5). Spatial assemblages emerge from a need for change and are specific enactments

of urban learning in a specific spatial context. McFarlane couches his definition of assemblage in Deleuzian terms, where its elements are unified only in their "co-functioning" and the relations are not those of "filiations" but of "alliances" or "contagions, epidemics, the wind" (Deleuze qtd. in McFarlane 24). Importantly, in this ecology relations are co-constituted with the assemblages they become part of (24) and foreground a "conceptual openness to the unexpected outcomes of disparate intentions and activities" (26). In its focus on intensely flexible and generative relationships among elements, spatial assemblages—and the learning processes of translation, coordination, and dwelling that they engender—are a useful way of thinking through the particular ways Lefebvre's perceived, conceived, and lived spaces take shape again and again as "the emergence, consolidation, contestation, and potential of urban worlds" (McFarlane 16).

Translation emphasizes how knowledges get distributed and move across spatial ecologies (McFarlane 17). In rhetorical terms, it names how people represent their spatial experiences to themselves and how the relation they establish between themselves and their environment in the process of representation shapes urban practice (18). Inhabitant participation in Imagine Austin's CodeNEXT project exemplifies how translation "positions learning as a constitutive act of world-making, rather than occurring prior to or following from engagement with the world" (McFarlane 18). As inhabitants attempt to capture in words and images the feelings that their neighborhoods evoke in them, they are not only actively

constructing an identity for that neighborhood that will influence future development and options for living there, they are also situating themselves in relation to that shifting identity and experiencing the emergence of new ways of relating to their neighborhoods and each other.

As McFarlane points out, since "[t]ranslation always occurs in relation to multiple sites and objects… it requires coordination" (19). Coordination puts into perspective how knowledge is distributed within any spatial ecology. With the multiple inputs and sets of relations necessary for learning and action comes the need to bring those forces into functional relation with one another. Coordination accounts for this need and shifts the focus from the individual to the generative power of "collective agency" (19) for the ongoing reinvention of space. CodeNEXT helps to illustrate this concept as well, as the images individual inhabitants submit become actionable inputs to the placemaking effort when brought into relation with other submitted images and the values and priorities those images convey about a given neighborhood. The power of the images to maintain or disrupt Austin's identity comes from the intensities, tensions, and synergies of the larger story they tell about their collective hopes for the city's future.

Finally, dwelling is both an outcome of the processes of translation and coordination and inclusive of them. McFarlane defines dwelling as "a way of seeing and inhabiting urban worlds" through learning ("The City" 365). The concept of dwelling has deep roots in the work of Martin Heidegger's *dasein*, or a being-in-the-

world that the built environment enables, embodies, and orients. Dwelling is the way that being-in-the-world is enacted through relation to things. McFarlane uses dwelling in the sense of an "education of attention" through which inhabitants shift their relation to space as conditions change. For McFarlane, then, dwelling is an ongoing process that always entails (re)learning both cognitive and bodily ways of being in the world as it is at any given moment. To understand space as produced in any register—perceived, conceived, or lived—requires understanding that building is already a mode of dwelling. Any effect of a given assemblage on the material, built environment depends in large part on dwelling practices and in turn impacts how inhabitants are conditioned to live as well as the affordances made by any environment for future dwelling.

I read McFarlane's explanation of dwelling as an "education of attention" as related to the concept of dwelling as "an ongoing and never stilled process of attunement" offered by Rickert (248). Both authors resist the connotations of Heidegger's dwelling as limited by its grounding in a blood-tie between a people and the land (Rickert 247) or in "rustic nostalgia" (Rickert 248) and instead put the concept to work in the context of the global, the urban, and the technological. Where I find Rickert's thinking on dwelling a valuable addition to McFarlane's is in Rickert's careful attention to the ethical implications of dwelling. He notes the importance of *how* dwelling takes place—as a process of "caretaking" (248) that invites and tends to what the world discloses, what recedes, and how inhabitants are constituted

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through the ecology that emerges through the ongoing process of dwelling. Rickert shares McFarlane's characterization of dwelling as vitally active and generative but extends this understanding to account for affectability as a condition for any other rhetorical relation to space or each other, including learning. The Imagine Austin project aims to strategically refigure the built environment of the city as well as to inspire relationships among residents and between residents and the environment that perform the values and principles the plan outlines as best practices for shaping Austin's future. The success of the 30-year plan rests on what possibilities for dwelling emerge or withdraw as Austin's landscape changes and its population grows. It depends just as much on how inhabitants tend to their own ecologies of feeling, meaning, and materiality in the context of large-scale changes.

Translation, coordination, and dwelling can each be examined in the context of perceived, conceived and lived space to help us see not only how space is produced now, in a particular city, but also *what else* happens in and following that production in multiple registers of spatial experience. In other words, what are spaces productive *of*? How does place take shape at the level of the individual to the level of the city plan(ner)? For rhetoricians interested in spatial studies, this matrix has the potential to foreground the generative practice of spacemaking and to encourage readings of and interventions in place that better account for how space comes into being through processes of invention within larger rhetorical ecologies. The matrix offers an orientation toward space that highlights the value of sitting

with the nuances of rhetorical invention as it relates to affective, symbolic, and material spaces. It also showcases the generative potential within spatial ecologies and celebrates the radical potential of space itself. Seeing what unfolds from the matrix can help inform future work, bringing insight to which scholarly interventions might be most effective, most ethical, and most likely to expand the field's engagement in meaningful ways.

To this end, each of the subsequent chapters examines one element of Lefebvre's triad in terms of all three of McFarlane's types of placemaking activities—translation, coordination, and dwelling. Chapter 2 takes up perceived space as affective placemaking practice, examining how residents' impressions of and feelings about their neighborhoods are shaping the land-use code via Imagine Austin's CodeNEXT initiative. Chapter 3, focuses on the speculative work of the *IACP's* Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map as conceived spaces productive of possible future conditions for the city and examines how other visions of that future are being enacted on the ground by city organizations and residents, reinforcing, complicating, and challenging the vision presented in the *IACP*. Finally, Chapter 4 engages lived space in terms of *kairos* and examines how it is produced by and productive of multiple competing realities, as seen in the redevelopment of a public housing project on Austin's East Side.

Chapter 2—Perceived Space: Affective Placemaking as Rhetorical Invention

The historic diversity of the city—the source of its value and magnetism—is an unplanned creation of many hands and long historical practice. Most cities are the outcome, the vector sum, of innumerable small acts bearing no discernible overall intention.
– James C. Scott

INTRODUCTION

In Lefebvre's spatial triad, perceived space is often equated with inhabitants' everyday interactions with material elements such as sidewalks and buildings. But this interpretation is limited by an assumption of a purposeful and human-centered spatial practice. Ackerman, Mountford, and Topinka, among others, have demonstrated how this reading of Lefebvre offers inhabitants avenues for resistance against imposing institutional forces and some agency in shaping the spaces where they live via physical and symbolic forms of rhetorical action. Creating openings by resisting spatial representations that fix power relations and reinforce totalizing modes of dwelling is a throughline of Lefebvre's corpus as well. He locates generative and transformative power in residents' spatial and bodily logics as preceding and underlying discursive logics, in turn opening up space to other forms of relationality.

I supplement the readings of Lefebvre's perceived space referenced above with a rethinking of spatial practice that highlights it as a messy and non-representative mode of invention—one rooted in affectability rather than intention.

I present this mode of invention as a primary mode of rhetorical placemaking, noting the implication that at a basic level, rhetorical invention takes place as an effect of bodies in space and is an ongoing constitutive force in generating rhetorical situations rather than remaining an active response to situations as they present themselves. The human relation to any environment demands this consideration because, as Rickert writes in *Ambient Rhetoric*, "our environments…inhabit us just as we inhabit them" (42). The production of space is inextricable from the very being of its inhabitants. Reading Lefebvre's perceived space across McFarlane's triad of translation, coordination, and dwelling, I highlight how rhetorical spacemaking occurs through the development of practices within space even prior to the registering of those practices on a conscious level. I draw on a rather ordinary example from the space of my own neighborhood in South Austin to show how inhabitants become attuned to perceived space through translation, coordination, and dwelling (see Fig. 2). Looking at the historic honky-tonk the Broken Spoke as a nexus of feelings about urban redevelopment offers a sense of the complex scene that Imagine Austin seeks to address, specifically through the CodeNEXT initiative.

		MCFARLANE		
		Translation	*Coordination*	*Dwelling*
LEFEBVRE	*Perceived space*	▨▨▨	▨▨▨	▨▨▨
	Conceived space			
	Lived space			

Fig. 2. This chapter focuses on the ways that perceived spaces are produced via translation, coordination, and dwelling.

CodeNEXT is the city's current effort to redesign the land use code. This particular project is notable for its underlying strategy: to capture space's ineffable qualities in order to shape future spatial production. The scaffolding of the ideas CodeNEXT forwards is built from input collected via digital platforms. It also entails material implications for how residents may or may not be able access the "answer" at which the code arrives. That is, considered as a way to program the interface of Austin, the land-use code traces out how the future of the city is to take shape. It traces out possible building scenarios and provides "if this, then that" frameworks to guide those engaged in its creation. So the revision of the land-use code as guided by CodeNEXT influences not just the built environment but also a user experience for residents that will be interacting with the elements of that environment in the course of their daily lives. Not all residents will be positioned to uniformly access the future Austin that the code proposes as optimal, both in terms of how they are able to navigate the material environment and how they are able to locate

themselves within the idea of the city that the code helps bring to life, including its identity, principles and values.

PERCEIVED SPACE AS SPATIAL PRACTICE

As I detailed in Chapter 1, my interpretation of Lefebvre's perceived space amplifies the spatial practice that enables perception, as this is one way rhetoric scholars can respond to Ackerman's call that we "extend our fluency" (85) in space. It opens up one avenue for scholars to engage with place as more than just a set of signs, an approach in which our field is so well-practiced and, according to Ackerman, is poised to deconstruct. In my formulation, the spatial *practice* that is both engendered by and productive of perceived space is an action-oriented and ongoing proposition built from ordinary lived experience. Spatial practice is an affective and embodied form of emplaced, *kairotic* invention driven by everyday micro-gestures, a term that calls attention to how a body's presence and pre-conscious movement in space produces the space itself and generates a network of relations that facilitate dwelling. This line of Lefebvre's thinking helps expand the space of rhetoric into the territory of situatedness but situatedness that extends beyond discrete elements or moments in time.

Lefebvre offers the example of the path to illustrate the difference between spatial practice (or perceived space) and representations of space (conceived space), which help make spatial practices visible:

Paths are more important than the traffic they bear, because they are what
endures in the form of reticular patterns left by animals, both wild and
domestic, and by people (in and around the houses of a village or a small
town as in the town's immediate environs). Always distinct and clearly
indicated, such traces embody the "values" assigned to particular routes:
danger, safety, waiting, promise. This graphic aspect, which was obviously
not apparent to the original actors but which becomes quite clear with the
aid of modern-day cartography, has more in common with a spider's web
than with a drawing or a plan. Could it be called a text, or a message?
Possibly, but the analogy would serve no particular purpose and it would
make more sense to speak of texture rather than texts in this connection.
(*Production 118*)

There are two nuances worth lingering on in Lefebvre's example that serve to clarify
the interpretation of perceived space on which I base my subsequent discussion.
The first brings Lefebvre's work into conversation with contemporary theorists
Brian Massumi and Boyle, and the second with Rickert. Massumi's assertion that
"practice becomes perception" (189) stands out as a concise explanation of the pre-
representational nature of spatial invention that Lefebvre's path example illustrates.
His reversal of the assumed progression between practice and perception is derived
in part on studies that have identified a half-second lag between when brain activity
begins and things begin to register as happening. People, then, are affected prior to

any ability to curate their experience, a key point in uncovering how translation, coordination, and dwelling actually take place in the context of perceived space. Massumi's work offers a neuro-scientific foothold for the idea that though people are always emplaced, because "[a] body needs a world" (Rickert 163), they are foremost not in control of how they are oriented in space or affected by it. It also has much in common with what Lefebvre terms an "intelligence of the body" (174), the "capacity for action" (170) that precedes *logos* but is fundamental to spatial production itself. Unlike Lefebvre, Massumi demonstrates a scientific basis for this type of nonconscious, pre-representational generative action. In Boyle's work on posthuman practice, this idea of productivity via affectability becomes a condition of rhetoric itself (547). Working from Massumi's idea that the ways people and things practice perception are integral to their very being—who or what they are—Boyle formulates an "ethic" of practice through perception that builds "capacities for becoming affected by others as much as affecting others" (548) within the context of any ecology. CodeNEXT performs a kind of ethical and rhetorical capacity-building within the context of spatial practice by calling inhabitants to engage a practice of affective perception in which they assemble their encounters into a sense of place. By bringing their perceptions of the city face-to-face with the perceptions of others, inhabitants open themselves up to experiences directly at odds with their own deeply held ideas of Austin that may challenge them to expand their capacity for registering other affective undercurrents. Drawing on Jeff Rice's concept of

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aggregation, it is possible to see CodeNEXT as setting the stage for inhabitants to shape the city by populating the current moment with prior beliefs and experiences and inviting them to do so in a way that leverages these aggregated experiences to drive placemaking efforts.

Lefebvre and Rickert also emphasize spatial practice as entailing distributed agency. Lefebvre's distinction between text and texture speaks to this shift away from the human-centered agency widely accepted in his time. For him, text implies a purposeful composer and subsequent acts of interpretation directed at deriving meaning. It requires the agents to be able to interact with the text-object as they wish, and with a comfortable distance between "it" and "I." However, the spatial practitioner cannot be separated from the environment in which he moves. Texture is the concept Lefebvre proposes to account for the spaces (social and material) produced by the enmeshed interaction of elements with their environment. He aims to reframe the relationship as one that is co-constitutive rather than unilateral.

Rickert's concept of ambience helps illuminate how and why texture arises from spatial practice. He writes that ambience depends on the "active role that the material and informational environment takes in human development, dwelling, and culture" (*Ambient Rhetoric* 3). This view takes seriously, as Lefebvre, Massumi, and Boyle do, the position of the human as one among many forces in a world that "emerges from having a life with others and with things" (Rickert, "In the House," 220). But Rickert adds a rhetorical component to his formulation of the human

relation to any given environment, noting that as one is "at once *embodied*, and hence grounded in emotion and sensation, and *dispersed* into the environment itself" (43), one is moved to continually reorient and reattune oneself to other things.

Rhetorical invention isn't just made possible within this mode of being, it also becomes a mode of being itself. In the case of the rhetorically inventive act of spacemaking, ambience is a fundamental input to any further action. A being's ambient relation to its environment colors and texturizes experience: an inhabitant's capacity for registering experience is both "grounded in emotion and sensation, and *dispersed* into the environment itself" (43). Ambience also has a generative effect by providing productive limits from within which one can influence and respond. Texture then is created against this ambient backdrop from the lived experience one has among networks and processes that produce what inhabitants perceive as stable spatial entities. Including textural considerations urges us not to focus on reading the entity itself but to consider the horizon of meaning that includes it.

Ambient rhetorics like those that are produced by and productive of space extend beyond meaning (Rickert 220) to the affective, nonrepresentational impressions that people and non-living objects leave and are left on them. The rhetorical register at play then is one that is "contrary to the subject/object dichotomy built into the dominant notion of persuasion" and in which "affectability

already emerges with our being in the world" (Rickert 221). Situating invention as

not limited to the creative output of intentional rhetorical beings but as a process

activated by the originary affectability of those beings as they go about the business

of existing in space is an important move. It significantly extends the range of

rhetorical relations to space that spacemaking entails and gives us view into another

dimension of rhetorical activities those relations make possible.

It is from within the conceptual space that Lefebvre offers when placed in

conversation with Rickert, Massumi and Boyle that it becomes possible to engage,

for example, the intangible qualities of place[5] so influential in urban growth and

development, as evidenced by both reactions to the changing scene of the Broken

Spoke and by the CodeNEXT project. Thinking about perceived spaces as ambient

environments helps to ground perception as distributed in an environment from

which everything, including subjectivity and structure, unfolds (Rickert 5). Massumi

positions perception as following practice, a kind of invention grounded in affect.

Finally, Boyle notes that any practice has ethical implications in that it grows

inhabitants' capacity for affectability, exposing them to the other elements of the

ecology in ways that alter what relations are possible and ultimately feed back into

how ecologies take shape. I use these theorists to extend Lefebvre's previously

underacknowledged ideas about bodily knowledge to a contemporary moment in

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[5] Or a felt sense of its "more elusive qualities" (Rickert 6) that "depends on neither knowledge nor consciousness but is given to emerge prior to them" (Rickert 284). Here Rickert draws on Diane Davis's *Inessential Solidarity*, noting her demonstration that "affectability comes before and gives place to symbolic action in human sociality, being distributed throughout the infinitesimal encounters, direct, indirect, and emergent, ongoing in the world" (163).

urban development. Through Massumi and Boyle, I refigure spatial practice as an engine of perception in an ambient environment. This broad and rich view of spacemaking values everyday, unintentional, unregistered action alongside the more common, intentional physical and discursive acts credited with shaping the places people live.[6] Inhabitants benefit from this broad view, especially when they are invited to draw on their perceptions of place to influence where they spend time and money—as they do on Yelp in the Broken Spoke example that follows—or to inform policy, as they do in an urban planning effort like CodeNEXT, which prioritizes inclusion of input from affected communities.

THE BROKEN SPOKE AS PERCEIVED SPACE

A single building on bustling South Lamar Boulevard symbolizes the drastic change affecting one of Austin's most iconic areas and, some have suggested, the rapid growth and redevelopment of the city as a whole. The *New York Times* frames this building as the protagonist in a quintessential story of the clash between "new" and "old" Austin (Hall, np), between slick high-rise condos and gourmet restaurants, comfortably tattered tattoo parlors and cluttered auto body shops. The Broken Spoke is a plain, almost shabby, one-story wood building that opened in 1964, when it sat proudly at the "dusty edge of town," as Katherine Gregor describes it on the Imagine Austin blog. In subsequent years, other local businesses joined it to form an

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[6] As suggested in the introduction to this project, Imagine Austin is a human-centered venture and so my close analysis of that living archive focuses on the human experience in and of space. I do not wish to suggest any human predominance in the actual production of space, only that this is the most accessible milieu of activity available for study.

eclectic drag dotted with live music joints, bodegas, all-night diners, and used car

lots.

An historically offbeat residential and commercial area, South Austin—home

of the Broken Spoke and the 78704 area code that adorns locals' T-shirts—

represents a way of life for Austinites devoted to "keeping it weird," a phrase that

Rice traces through/as a rhetorical ecology in "Unframing Models of Public

Distribution." One popular bumper sticker says it best: "South Austin: We're All Here

'Cause We're Not All There." But if South Lamar[7], South Austin's primary

thoroughfare, was historically a charmingly awkward, high-spirited teenager with a

crooked smile, it's well on its way to becoming a polished, post-braces adult—all

grown up with a closet full of tailored shirts.[8] Of course, this way of thinking about

the South Austin area does not apply to all residents. In particular, those new to the

area are likely working from an entirely different set of references about South

Austin than longtime residents and therefore do not read their neighborhoods in

these terms. In *Distant Publics*, Jenny Rice explores these "memory claims" and how

they shape participation in public discourse about urban (re)development in depth.

In this particular case, the narrative of Austin's quirkiness being diluted by huge

population growth and development is most common. The implications of relying

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[7] There are at least 12 such neighborhoods that comprise South Austin, Zilker, Barton Hills, Barton Oaks, and Southwood.

[8] Gregor puts it this way: "As a built environment, South Lamar is no *Champs Elysees*. But its chaotic streetscape is home to iconic South Austin businesses – Matt's El Rancho, the Saxon Pub – and trendy newer eateries – Uchi, Olivia, Barley Swine. Local boutiques, yoga studios, and houseware emporiums have moved into low-rent industrial centers, and tried to spruce them up." (n.p.)

on this narrative as "the" core identity of the city is creating tension among new and old residents as well as residents who perceive themselves as contributing to the city's signature "weird" vibe and those perceived to be destroying that rich culture.

The actors in the story of this "grown-up" South Austin include Austin's city council and its comprehensive plan for redevelopment; the developers themselves, purveyors of brand new mixed-use spaces; the homeowners, renters, visitors to social service centers, and guests in long-term rehabilitation facilities that live in the areas' neighborhoods; the dive bars, auto parts stores, and other longtime businesses that now display "We've Moved!" signs in their otherwise empty windows along South Lamar; affordable housing advocates; and the polished new restaurants and boutiques that realtors enthusiastically advertise as nearby attractions to their hot "SoLa"[9] listings.

South Lamar's rapidly changing landscape means the Spoke is now dwarfed by a new $60 million, five-story mixed-use development, one of six such developments within a two-mile stretch that were underway or recently finished at the time of this writing. One might easily drive right by the Austin landmark, now visually swallowed up by the surrounding buildings, though the sign for the new

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[9] SoLa is the product of a popular naming convention in urban neighborhoods used to evoke affluence and a progressive spirit, like New York City's Soho to mark the region South of Houston Street. When South Congress, another main thoroughfare in Austin, became home to popular local restaurants and trendy boutiques, surrounding neighborhoods became known as the "SoCo" district and home values skyrocketed. Austin real estate experts expect the same for South Lamar in its rapid evolution toward "SoLa," the name embraced by commercial interests in the area and mocked by those who lived in its neighborhoods before they were branded by developers.

"704 at the Spoke" development nods to the Spoke's owner James White and complements the vintage neon of the honky-tonk's own classic wagon wheel. When construction on the development meant giving up his parking lot for over a year, White braved it, determined that the "Last of the True Texas Dance Halls" would come back stronger and with access to new, younger demographic, that it would continue its tradition well beyond the 50-year anniversary it celebrated in November 2014.

The example of the Broken Spoke speaks to a sense of place and identity that derives from and exceeds a configuration of material structures. Despite my heavy reliance on adjectives to convey the sense that I (and others) have of the Spoke and surrounding area, I inevitably fail to communicate how it feels there, how I know this part of the city as distinct from all the others. It's this failure in the daily work of placemaking, what I argue is a productive inability to translate my own South Austin experience in the way that CodeNEXT asks me to, that invites an opening up to possibilities other than a controlled, self-directed spatial experience. From out of this failure to conjure (at least in the stereotypical way of the "lightbulb" moment) arises the expanded capacity for invention. Spacemaking necessitates the ongoing experience of relationality or, to build on Boyle's idea of posthuman practice, the ever-expanding capacity for affectability, that in turn enriches not only the places that our practices give rise to but that texturize our ways of dwelling with them. The failure to clearly articulate our felt sense of place and our relation to spaces bonds

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residents in a felt but inexpressible shared experience of their common city or neighborhood space. To pass the time at the bar or at the bus stop, residents talk around it until they get as close as they can to a recognizable description, but the description isn't what concretizes belonging or appreciation or even disenchantment. It's the ability to remark offhandedly, "that's South Austin for you" and have the people you're talking to know what you mean.

South Austin residents bear witness too as their legendary Texas diner and two-step hall trades its gravel parking lot for a valet stand. Some give voice to the nostalgia, irritation, and disappointment they feel as they see the Spoke's classic western look used to brand its new neighbors, including a yoga studio and urban dog park. One place where residents translate and share their experiences is the popular review site Yelp. Despite their different motivations (often implied by their location or number of previous reviews) and articulations, reviewers are compelled to share their experience and evaluation of the Spoke, and in doing so they figure the landmark not only as a physical place but a social and cultural one. As reviews and rankings accumulate and reference one another, Yelp becomes a platform for coordinating accounts and identities that are ultimately meant to influence future lived experiences at the Spoke and, more generally, modes of dwelling in the neighborhood and the city. That is, these reviews, taken collectively, serve to influence how much and what kinds of attention others should devote to the Spoke, and by extension, to the social and cultural codes so strongly associated with it.

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While Yelp provides guidelines on etiquette, the site does not provide explicit direction on what reviewers should address or how they should address it. The guidelines for posting do, however, differentiate between "relevant" reviews, which "address the core of the consumer experience" and inappropriate/irrelevant content which would include "rants about a business's employment practices, political ideologies" or "extraordinary circumstances." Users can construct a rhetorical approach to their subject in part informed by these guidelines, but the tacit suggestion is that reviews be about how a consumer feels above all else. Specifically reviews should serve the rhetorical purpose of sharing very personal reactions to a moment in time and not reflections on how an institution aligns with one's values. This guideline does not seem to apply the same way when reviewers want to talk about how well an experience aligns with what they believe to be the character of a city or neighborhood, an angle from which many users approach their contributions to the site.

In the case of South Austin's famous honky tonk, Yelp users remark on the Spoke's "character" and "charm" and discuss to what extent it is "authentic," "original," or even "GEN-U-WINE." Reviewers often evaluate how well the honky tonk "really" represents Texas or honky tonk culture, or Austin's "weird" ethos, as if they are responding to Yelp's mostly invisible writing prompt, which, essentially, they are. For example, "Mike S." from California comments in his five-star review on 2/20/12 that "This place is an (unofficial) national monument. Its spirit

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reverberates through the heartbeat of Texas... and its honky tonk music can be heard in the pulse of America... there's no denying the authenticity of this place—the feeling you get is one that can only be had here. Great experience... I'll remember it forever." Similarly, "Vanessa B." claims "the Broken Spoke is still the best place in town to steep yourself in all classic Austin has to offer" (1/13/13, 4 stars). This type of narrative has roots in the Spoke's owner's insistence on maintaining the original look and feel of the establishment. In a recent interview owner White compared the Spoke to the Alamo, saying he'd never change it no matter how new development encroached where open fields used to be (Sieswerda). Musicians like Ray Benson and Dale Watson celebrate that ethos, saying that the Spoke is the last of its kind in Austin and, in Benson's words, that it is keeping "this great tradition of Texas dance halls alive" (Sieswerda).

Other Yelp comments focus on specifics of their experience, such as how big or small the space felt, how good they thought the food was, how nice people were there, and whether or not the shabby, aging wood building added or detracted from their overall experience. For example, "Rachel P." includes in her review that "People may say well it's trying to be rustic - it's really trying to be a health hazard!" (6/29/14, one star). Hers is just one of many comments that "read" and evaluate the physical structure through the lens of popular narratives circulating about the building's history and cultural significance. Embedded in these reviews are what Rice describes as claims of the affective public subject: memory, injury, and

equivalence claims. These claims ground rhetorical invention in personal experience, foregrounding reaction and using it to position inhabitants in relation to urban development. For example, former Austin resident "Larry W." makes a memory claim in an exceptionally lengthy review of the Spoke that he "was here before Austin was trending," unlike the "TRENDING-Neo-Austinite-Gen-X-Twenty-Thirty-Somethings" that either don't now about the Spoke or only consider it a "novelty" (6/3/2013, five stars). "Vanessa B." makes an injury claim when she writes that she's "deathly afraid that the new condo building surrounding this Austin institution will be its demise, reminiscent of the charming house in the movie Up being swallowed by high-rises."

The perceptions these Yelp reviewers hold of the Broken Spoke, of Austin, of Texas, and of the physical and cultural geographies of their personal histories lead them to make decisions about places and to share their conclusions. Their perceptions are based on how this place and others have affected them. Though I agree with Rice that this is not a sustainable mode of public discourse about place, I dwell on it here because these reactions nonetheless shape place in concrete ways; that is, affective placemaking practices have material effects.

As the example of the Broken Spoke illustrates, affective placemaking works the other way around too. When the physical environment changes, so do its ineffable qualities—its energy, its spirit, and what it represents. Tools like Yelp are useful for revealing how and when such changes occur. The graph below illustrates

that since 2011, the overall rating of the Broken Spoke has decreased from 3.6 (out of 5) to 2.6. This coincides with major redevelopment along South Lamar and on the land around the Broken Spoke. Construction on the 704 began in 2012, but it and the five other major developments slotted for construction on South Lamar were widely publicized and debated prior to groundbreaking. Though no singular cause can be identified for the drop in Yelp ratings, the distance between patrons' expectations of the Spoke and how it is positioned to deliver on those expectations from its new context among high-rise condos puts its physical position increasingly at odds with the tradition of authentic Texas honky tonks that it seeks to forward.

More recent reviews reflect on the Spoke's icon status less to cheerlead it through the redevelopment and more to point out how it just doesn't measure up any more. It's as if the weight of its legacy as an "old Austin icon" is working against it rather than for it; as it works to maintain its authenticity, many patrons seem to read that effort as "trying too hard." For example, John S. writes, "Lifelong Austin Boy here. The Spoke sure ain't what it used to be. They're trying too damn hard to make it "seem" like it used to "back in the day", but as y'all know, nothing ever is" (3/11/2016, 1 star). Other reviewers echo the sentiment that it's not what it used to be. Michelle M. goes a step further, writing that she had "[b]een in Austin for 3 days and experienced more of local Austin, but decided to go to this "tourist trap" because of it being a staple. Big mistake." (8/2/2016, 1 star). Her review suggests the Spoke is becoming a cartoon version of itself, while other reviewers criticize it

for not changing—not having more flexible payment options and not focusing more on customer service, for instance. It's difficult to discern what the change in feeling around the Broken Spoke arises from exactly, but it appears that the changing context of South Lamar's built environment and of Austin's culture overall are influencing the ways people are affected by their interactions with the landmark.

Average Yelp Rating vs. Time

3.590909091

2.644444444

Yelp Rating

◆ Average Yelp Rating

—— Linear (Average Yelp Rating)

Year
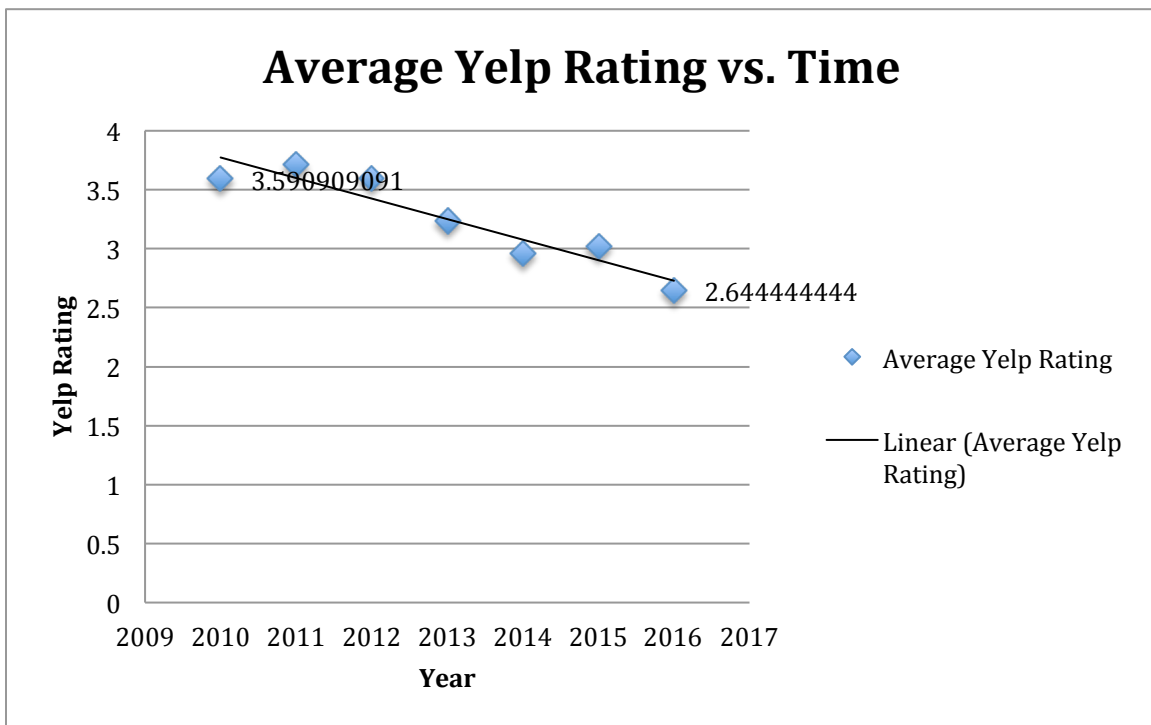
Fig. 3. Average Yelp ratings for The Broken Spoke from 2010 to 2016.

CODENEXT AND PERCEIVED SPACE

While Yelp reviews of the Broken Spoke exemplify the contested identity and evolution of one site in relation to the city, CodeNEXT works on a much larger scale.

It is a formalized inquiry into the identity of every Austin neighborhood with the goal of learning what Austin does and does not want to become. This inquiry will eventually lead to a revision of the land use code, including building and preservation practices. The stakeholders involved in this portion of the Imagine Austin project include Portland-based consulting firm Opticos Design, which is in charge of managing the process of collecting information from city officials and residents. Opticos consolidates these inputs and formalizes them into public reports provided to city council members along with their assessment of the priority issues that have emerged from conversations with the public. As a first step, the firm conducted Public Listening Sessions during which residents shared what they liked and disliked about where they live. Opticos then published that report along with a more in-depth *Code Diagnosis* in spring 2014. In December 2014 City Council used this information as well as the *Community Character Manual* (*CCM*) to make a decision about the extent to which the land use code should be revised. Once those revisions begin, the *CCM* will help guide decisions around specific alterations to adopt. Drafts of the new code will be shared online and at town hall meetings for public review. Many commissions and independent development and special interest groups have already submitted feedback, posted on Austintexas.gov.

The *CCM* was released in September 2014 as a structuring document to facilitate the information-gathering portion of the CodeNEXT initiative. In order to re-evaluate, and later revise, the city's land use code, city officials, residents, and

hired consultants have been documenting in words and pictures Austin's 103

individual neighborhoods, or "Neighborhood Reporting Areas" (NRAs). This work

happened through public listening sessions as well as through input submitted via

Community Character in a Box kits, which encouraged residents to use tools

provided by Opticos to document how their neighborhoods look and feel. The

resulting early draft of the *CCM* is an effort to share what's been documented so far

of the NRAs' "shared and unique characteristics," which, to summarize the *CCM*'s

authors, will help the CodeNEXT team develop an understanding of Austin's existing

conditions to work from as they determine "the types of zoning tools that could be

considered based on place-specific character and patterns" (1-2).
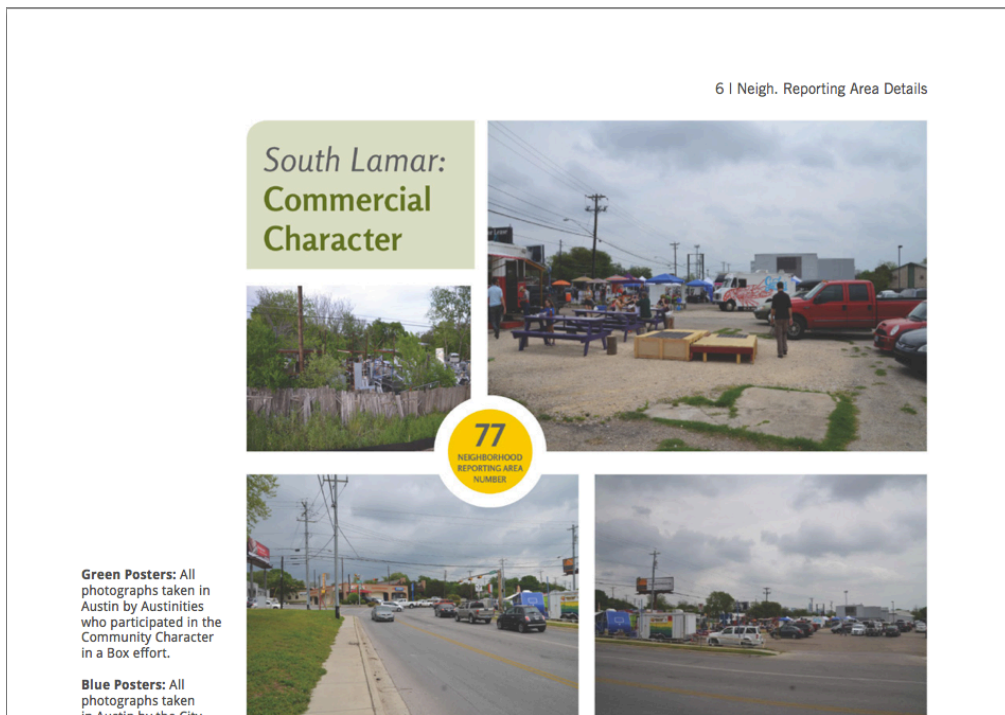
Fig. 4. An excerpt from the *CCM* section on South Lamar, home of the Broken Spoke.

That's the stated purpose, but the *CCM* also documents the process by which

Opticos Design is learning about the city and establishing a baseline from which it

can determine what moves need to be made to evolve the city's neighborhoods

toward the ideal "complete communities" reflected in the Imagine Austin plan. It's

also evidence of how they are educating Austinites about what cities and

neighborhoods are made of so that they can more efficiently respond to Opticos'

requests for feedback on the places they live. To that end the *CCM* outlines types and

components of place and provides examples for readers. It also offers maps of each

NRA and displays a sample set of photographs submitted by residents of each

neighborhood designed to document the character and landmarks of their

communities.[10]

The "tear-down, build-new" trend in Central and East Austin epitomizes the

need for a reevaluation of the land use code. An October 2014 article in the *Austin-

American Statesman* series "Growing Austin" documents the reasons for and

reactions to the practice of demolishing homes in Austin's oldest neighborhoods to

replace them with what is commonly referred to as "McMansions," or large, modern

single-family homes that often don't fit into the overall aesthetic of the

neighborhood's architecture. Developers argue that they are meeting increased

demand for larger, more expensive housing in Austin's urban core, a demand that is

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10 Most of the submitted images capture, in close-in shots rather panorama, public art, commercial
signs, and details from residential buildings (almost no people or landscapes are present in the
collection).

rising with the influx of high-income, well-educated tech industry workers from California and elsewhere. They argue, for example, that Austin's current size restrictions on new homes in established neighborhoods do not protect the character of the neighborhood but do limit design options and overall home quality. Beyond diminishing the neighborhood character, residents see these McMansions as emblematic of how middle- and low-income residents are being squeezed out of their neighborhoods altogether by the rising housing prices caused by the influx of transplants (Hawkins and Novak).

While city officials lead the effort to minimize growing pains through proactively addressing land use and building code issues, Austin's inhabitants are engaged in deeply personal conflicts spurred by population growth and building trends. One such conflict manifested in hostility about the time of the article in the *Statesman* series that highlighted Austin's Hyde Park neighborhood. Many neo-Austinites live there because of its accessibility to the University of Texas and density of local businesses, and the influx of new residents has seen large modern homes built on lots where older Craftsman and plantation-style houses once sat. It was within this scene that one resident (a renter with California license plates)

found the following note on her car:
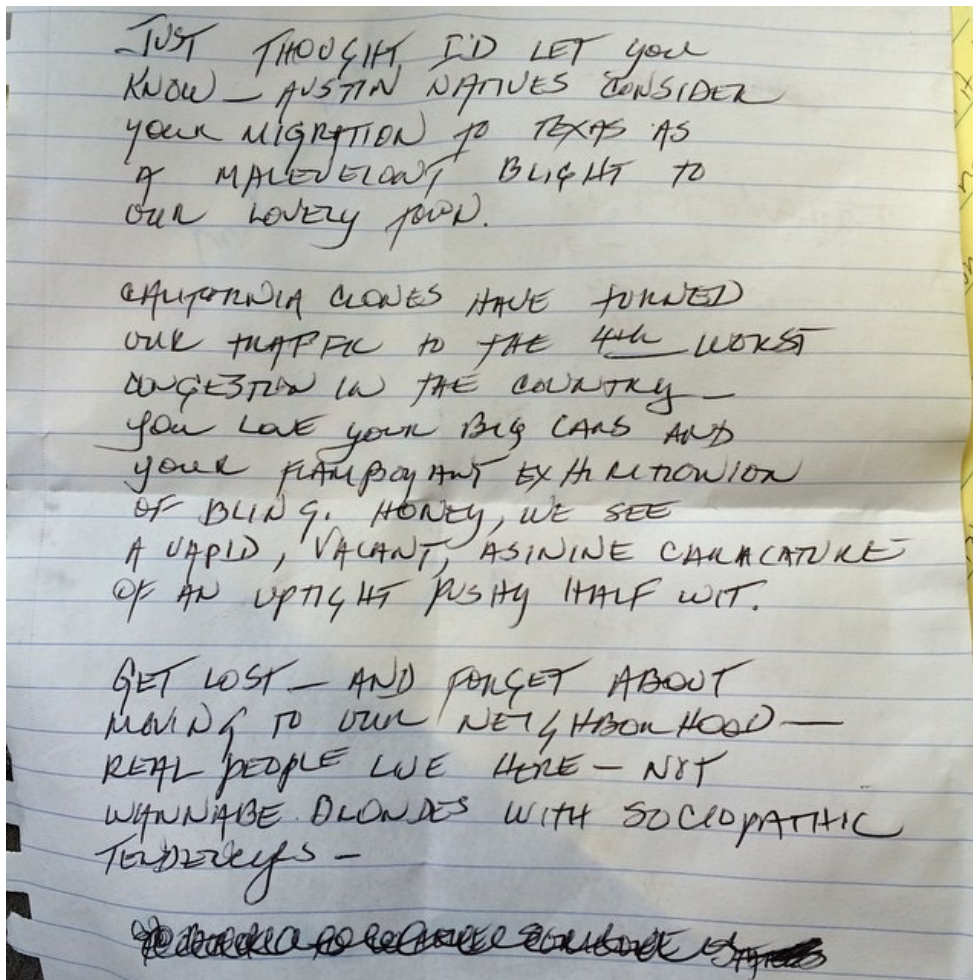
Fig. 5. Handwritten note on Hyde Park resident's car.

It reads (spelling errors corrected):
Just thought I'd let you know—Austin natives consider your migration to Texas as a malevolent blight to our lovely town.

California clones have turned our traffic to the 4th worst congestion in the country—you love your big cars and your flamboyant exhibition of bling. Honey, we see a vapid, vacant, asinine caricature of an uptight pushy halfwit.

Get lost—and forget about moving to our neighborhood—real people live here—not wannabe blondes with sociopathic tendencies—

CodeNEXT is designed to address the growing tension among Austin residents over the practical matters of land use. But it also has repercussions for the culture of the city and power to prioritize its values, which in turn influences cultural codes and codes of conduct. Rules about construction design, in part, the "feel" of a neighborhood, something that sounds inconsequential but is tied closely to the material realities of residents in the area. That is, the determination of land use and building codes will inevitably create an urban environment that welcomes certain types of residents and disenfranchises others. Affordable housing developer and art historian Mark Rogers notes, for instance, that the change in residential buildings in established neighborhoods is "like losing memory through the loss of structures" (Hawkins and Novak). The destruction of buildings and changing aesthetics of neighborhoods are central themes that residents not in favor of the widespread growth and development use to suggest that "old Austin," by which they mean the "real Austin" is disappearing. While these claims, as Rice points out, can become too-simple rationales for not engaging in deeper consideration of the issues and in productive public debate about them, the shift in architectural presence does also shift how people feel about and describe their neighborhoods' defining characteristics. That change in attitude can in turn feed future development as residents become untethered from the aspects of their histories, social groups, and cultures that are rooted in the particular place they can no longer afford or no

longer want to live. In this situation and in urban growth and redevelopment at large, the material and the social are mutually modifying, as are practice and perception.

Chapter 3 of the *CCM,* "Components of Place," tackles this relationship between built and felt environments. It lays out the specifics of, for example, "building types," "street network types," and "open and civic space types" (3-1), all of which "define the character of a place" (3-2). But it is the final category, "Intangibles – Local Flair," that warrants further attention as an example of the production of perceived space. The manual states that "Local flair might be likened to the unique 'vibe' or energy of a place, it is as if the place had its own personality." The authors classify this personality as a sum of parts—a unique assemblage formed of "the specific demographics of the resident population, the political environment, interests and hobbies shared among neighbors, and the diversity or sameness of value sets meeting and interacting" (3-42). An ecological orientation begins to surface in this description, as does a gesture toward something like ambience, though human activity and awareness get a lot of credit for creating the important intangibles that serve to identify place. However, some phrases point to what lies beyond intentional placemaking behaviors and recognizable inhabitant behaviors within the built environment; for example, that "each place carries its own energy within the form" (3-42). The unspoken premise of CodeNEXT and its efforts to preserve place-specific energies and vibes that inhabitants deem remarkable and

desirable is that these intangibles affect inhabitants, not only influencing how they perceive their environs but also suggesting that affectability underlies residents' relation to space and can be harnessed to help feed placemaking efforts that will in turn influence the energy, and therefore the way residents are affected in the future.

One might expect Yelp to foreground reaction rooted in feelings and personal perception, but probably not expect a systematic categorization of the components of place as they relate to the city land use code to prioritize the same. The authors begin the manual with the declaration that its focus is on the "physical elements that make Austin the great place it is" (1-2) and detail those elements in diagrams and subcategories (e.g., "Loops and Lollipops" as a type of "Drivable Suburban Street Network"). And yet they cannot ultimately leave it at that. Instead, they rest on the ineffable to represent the forces that animate the physical components of place they've gone to great lengths to explicate. Not only do the physical components not add up to Austin, but the authors rely on resident input to fill in the blanks of what that title, "Intangibles – Local Flair," serves as a placeholder for, a strategy that implies the neighborhood character they're after is a collaboratively intuited entity. In short, they can't get at what place is without knowing how it affects people or the ways something about it moves them to know it in a particular way—its ambience and texture.

According to Opticos, the purpose of gathering information for the *CCM* is to garner "an understanding of the current character of each place and the components

of that character to enable informed discussion about whether or not change is

desired, and what aspects of the current character the community wants to protect"

(1-2). They assert that ultimately the code should help shape Austin into the city

envisioned by the Imagine Austin team, including members of the community. Some

of the goals include making the city more "compact and connected" with an eye

toward "sustainability" and "affordability" (*IACP* 10-11). But the land use code will

not be "correct" or even better than the current version, they imply, unless it makes

people happy in their space and preserves what they perceive as good in it already.

In other words, the result of the revision process might be a more technically

efficient code or one that leads to more "livable" neighborhoods by urban planning

standards, but what people will react to is something they cannot point out in the

code itself—how they feel when they're living there—which is based on

expectations of the past and future. That's why CodeNEXT's role in a larger effort to

reimagine the city's identity and material features makes it particularly interesting

and valuable for interrogating the relationship of the non-representational

rhetorical relation to space.

There are evident limitations to translating an experience of one's

neighborhood into a coordinated planning effort that aims to preserve particular

modes of dwelling and revise others. For example, the images submitted are

themselves coded—by the residents' past experiences of what makes a legible

image and in the sense that each image stands in for a spatial value or a valued lived

experience. I draw from W.J.T. Mitchell in using "image" to describe a moment of resonance that can take material form in a "picture," but also in words. As he suggests, an image lasts beyond and outside the physical (or digital) form it takes in a picture (Mitchell 18) such as a photograph. This distinction is particularly useful for parsing the process of capturing affective experience in the form of visual knowledge, as Austin inhabitants have in the context of CodeNEXT. Part of the project committee's role is to crack that code without context from the resident as to what intangible values s/he intended to capture. If the committee can decipher them, the CodeNEXT team can better deliver a land-use code that lives up to the future city Austinites have imagined, a city that also preserves what they feel connected to in the present. As that present changes and the priorities and demographics of Austin's people change along with it, the measure of success for the code revision and the very future it is designed for remain moving targets, and supplements and smaller-scale revisions will no doubt be made along the way. However, taking photographs that document the spatial elements to which one feels most connected is an important effort in that it values deeply personal relations to place and fosters an attunement to how space works on inhabitants. As Barbara Stafford writes in *Good Looking*, images are powerful at "destroying specious certitudes and in revealing…the limitations of human comprehension" (27), which make them an appropriate way for residents to communicate their feedback to the

Opticos team and city government regarding how they feel about their city and their place within it.

PRODUCING PERCEIVED SPACE

In the context of this effort to capture the intangible qualities of lived spaces, McFarlane's triad offers a way of locating spacemaking agency in the ongoing, indeterminable, and often unpredictable interactions among bodies and across ecologies in the form of urban assemblages. I use assemblage to describe the nature of the city itself—city as assemblage—as well as describe the process by which its inhabitants relate to and ultimately learn how to sustain or change that relation. McFarlane notes that it is through "incremental immersion . . . in relation to fear, hope, fantasy, fun, wonder, and so on" rather than "simply a cognitive or optical view" that one experiences urban environments (47). A closer look at CodeNEXT reveals how this type of learning is necessitated by and generative of assemblages that allow for expression of urban experience not fully representable to oneself or to others. Assemblage can also be understood as the potential to alter the ideological, material, social, and political networks that form spatial textures so that they serve different needs as residents' understanding of and relationships to their lived spaces evolve. These alterations are made from inside a given assemblage and could include, for example, policy changes, like those CodeNEXT seeks to make, or material ones, such as tearing down rows of older buildings around the Broken Spoke to build more modern, large-scale housing.

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However, the kind of learning, adaptation, and spatial production that assemblages call to attention stand in stark contrast to others, such as spatial learning based on maps or city codes. Though the production of perceived space is not a primarily discursive process, examining processes of translation, coordination, and dwelling that contribute to this production kicks up traction with the intangible. The future land use code, which will regulate what can be built when and where, shapes the material conditions of Austin, but it is based on community perception of what Austin neighborhoods are and should be as much as it is on urban planning principles and best practices, so it is ultimately an interaction between perceived and conceived space aimed at producing the best lived spaces or built environments that then feed back into perception. In the realm of perceived space, McFarlane's triad calls attention to the crucial pre-representational moments of spatial experience that feed the energy of a place and feed off its energy. Even as agents immersed in ambience and textures that structure possible ways of being in the world, residents nonetheless act. They derive meaning from their participation within an assemblage as well as a way to focus "attention on the possibility of invention and potential" (McFarlane 26) as active products and transformers of shifting spatial structures.

Through these moments of experience within space, practiced responses to the material conditions of place accumulate over time into a perception of the neighborhood as having this or that character. Coordination and dwelling also play

significant roles in this formation of perception, and all three processes feed back into shaping practice itself. They "recursively-durationally smudge as messily as anything" (198), to borrow Massumi's phrasing. For example, if over time a lot more sidewalks and crosswalks are installed on South Lamar and it becomes known for walkability rather than traffic, new shared perceptions will emerge. Residents will see each other walking confidently down the street, crossing easily to access points of interest on either side of the busy boulevard rather than darting precariously across between cars. South Austin residents' chosen mode of transportation might change as a result, as might their individual and collective lifestyles and ways of interacting with local business and each other. But as every practice and every perception is part of a complex ecology, shifting the identity of the neighborhood requires coordination with others. Perceived space is always collaboratively made, both by individuals' practices and by accumulated perceptions that become identity. Practices drive perceptions that can drive change in the material environment and in inhabitants' ways of being there.

TRANSLATION

The first element in McFarlane's triad is integral to the specific placemaking efforts around CodeNEXT, the purpose of which, according to the city's website is "to translate Imagine Austin into code." What CodeNEXT calls Austin residents to do as part of that effort is translate their felt sense of place into words and images so that those characterizations can be coordinated with others' in the community and

used to (re)design the parameters for future development and invention in those spaces.[11] The objects of translation called for by the *CCM* are affective experiences, some of which leave an impression and some of which do not, some that later become represented in language and others that accumulate but remain illegible. Residents are part of the always-variable spatial assemblage that includes material structures like sidewalks and buildings (new and old) as well as the weather, neighbors (human and animal), smells and sounds, topography, and degrees of publicness or privateness. Over the course of their daily lives, they interact with these factors in any number of registers, simultaneously turning those impressions into action (e.g., where and when to walk, what time to leave to get to work on time, whether or not to recommend a park to a friend), which over time takes on the semi-solid form of spatial practice. As Massumi puts it, "compound forms of result feed back to the thought-o-genic level, where they fuse with more "elementary" or gnat-like components of experience, toward a new emergence" (198).

As with any act of translation, then, something is always left behind and something gained. Here, an excess of experiences that are inarticulable recede, while others join a circulating body of networked ideas about the neighborhood to reinforce or evolve public expressions of its character. Translation is not transfer, though arguably some transfer does occur when translations are coordinated into

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[11] Though I address the processes in McFarlane's triad one-by-one to aid readability, they do not unfold in linear time. Instead, they prove to be recursive and revisionist, yet generative, at every point of their interaction.

new assemblages like the efforts represented in the *CCM*. The *CCM* makes an important move in recognizing this excess even as it attempts to catalogue the intangible elements of place that produce it and are produced by it. It is a particular kind of excess—that of affect—that warrants further attention as a generative force within perceived space. For Massumi, affect's ability to exist before or outside of someone's narrative about it is its defining characteristic. Much of what registers for inhabitants at the level of perceived space does not get captured in a communicable way or even in the form of a memory that can be recalled. However, even those experiences that do register at a level that offers the potential for conscious response, which is the threshold for the CodeNEXT call for input on community character, then require articulation. Translation points to the moment of actualization via representation that occurs in order that residents can contribute at the individual level to the code-revision effort.

Though the scene of perception is hazy, residents do their best to bring the shifting, disconnected layers of experience into view in order that they might be used to some end or shared with others equally immersed in spaces that exceed and escape them. There is much in Gregory Ulmer's work that can offer more directed ways of thinking about the task before Austin residents, including an approach that foregrounds the personal as a driver of invention. While Ulmer does so in a way that specifically accounts for the generative potential of affect to take shape in and as a function of digital writing/expression's interactivity, layered time schemes, and

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often unfulfilled logics, his intent to facilitate connections among multiple registers of experience, including personal and civic, to encourage exploration of how together they create meaningful responses in digital-rhetorical spaces can be applied to other discursive spaces as well and is applicable for participants in the CodeNEXT project.

For Ulmer and for many working on the study of spatial rhetorics, *chora,* often juxtaposed with *logos,* is a useful space of invention. As Ulmer suggests in *Electronic Monuments*, collective invention emerges here as well, when *chora* is thought as a " specific geographic region" that "provides a mnemonic space," like the one that Austin becomes in light of Opticos' call for residents to, in a sense, remember the present and to document what they most strongly and personally associate with their city in advance of its evolution. The community input to the CodeNEXT project exemplifies the potential power of this association-driven response to a city's (soon to be) past. In that "commemoration is a fundamental experience joining individual and collective identity" (Ulmer xxi), the process of documenting together makes Austinites' own values visible and puts front-and-center what it is they believe holds them together. For example, if Austin emerges primarily as "weird" through the submitted photos, it reveals not just the strength of that narrative on residents, but the power it gains in aggregation and also how they might be able to wield that power to better navigate and influence the future. Hopefully, the image-submission exercise will also reveal what is sacrificed for that

identity—what and who it pushes to the margins of the collective visualized identity of the city.

Ulmer's various modes of harnessing the personal for generative purposes help illustrate both the challenge and opportunity of the CodeNEXT work. Translation in perceived space (or, as productive of perceived space) helps modulate between experience and perception. Every close-up of a house or neon sign or street corner compiled in the *CCM* illustrates an attempt to overcome this gap. They serve their purpose of educating the Opticos team and residents of other Austin neighborhoods about one's own, helping them to feel the energy, ambience, and texture as they do. In the process of preserving or re-inventing the city's neighborhoods over time, this compilation of perceptions matter as an archive of what was, what some wanted to preserve, and what others pushed to change. These individual acts of translation in the form of residents' photo submissions and, separately, text-based testimonies, have already been translated again into a report, which dictates the forms in which translations can be shared and which will be translated again by stakeholders as they make decisions about the land–use code. The snapshots of place captured in the report will continue to exceed it and themselves.

One way they continue to create and compound a/effects is through their aggregation. In Jeff Rice's "Digital Outragicity," he contends that when people experience and express intense feeling, specifically through social media, they are

reacting to an assemblage of previous experiences, trace memories, and images that

in effect take shape *as* and in place of the actual event that ostensibly sparked their

reaction. Similarly in the case of CodeNEXT—which intentionally spurs a

constellation of placemaking events or actions—a sense of Austin arises as people

publicly file their images. The visual construction of the current Austin is the event

wherein, as Rice noted in a 2015 talk on aggregation, "people populate the current

moment based on their belief of the past." The process of aggregating experiences

(their own and theirs in combination with their neighbors) becomes the thing

people see and what they also must respond to, for example filling in things they feel

haven't yet been captured or reinforcing someone else's take on what counts as

Austin by submitting a different shot with the same central theme. Where one might

expect Imagine Austin, or more specifically CodeNEXT, to play the role of event,

inhabitants' reactions assert themselves in its place.

COORDINATION

In the context of CodeNEXT, the process of coordination is a gathering and

interpretation of perceptions of space. The *CCM* is a group effort that depends first

on individual translations of felt experience and then on a secondary translation—

into a shareable digital image, for example—to allow those felt experiences to be

visible within the given structure of the *CCM*. However, though the *CCM* doesn't

explicitly say so, those translations must add up to at least a loose consensus around

a particular community's character in order for residents' efforts to be actionable for Opticos. Their goal, again, is to design a code that reflects the kind of Austin proposed in the Imagine Austin plan. Therefore, some kind of coordinated response is essential in order for any particular version of a neighborhood's character to be counted in the final decision-making process.

As a note of context, the structure of the report is such that for each NRA, there is first a brief overview of the neighborhood, including its name, any conservation areas or historic districts, and where its Imagine Austin reporting center is located. The second page features an overhead map of the area, followed by a third page of smaller maps that represent features specific to that area, e.g., zoning, street networks types, and transit options and access points. Finally, photographs submitted by Imagine Austin participants are grouped on two separate pages—one for photos showing "residential character" and the other showing "commercial character," as in Fig. 4 on page 60.

Through the Community Character in a Box activity, Opticos helped facilitate collaboration by encouraging neighbors to walk around together to take notes and pictures of the spaces near their homes for submission to the *CCM*. These sessions were fed by the impressions and ideas about their neighborhoods that individual residents were already coordinating for themselves every day. For example, an impression about the character of their neighborhood might arise from how frequently the local news is citing crimes that occurred there. They might coordinate

that information with how safe they tend to feel in their communities and the

similarities or differences between the two could begin to shift their attitudes or

behaviors, and thereby their ways of being in the space. Similarly, residents might

coordinate reports about businesses opening or closing with their own observations

of construction projects and net out some perceived shift in neighborhood culture.

In short, residents are constantly receiving information that reinforces or evolves

how they feel in their space.

Another important, recurring step in the coordination process occurs when

an Opticos team member or city employee selects what information to package and

send along in the process and what information to hold on to. For example, a

particular city employee (whose name I have changed to Richard to protect his

privacy), is responsible for attending all town hall meetings where residents discuss

their neighborhood characteristics and what they want to preserve and see

changed. Richard is responsible for synthesizing that information and providing it to

the city council member he reports to. In order to do so in a way that he felt was

effective, he bracketed opinions that weren't widely held. He noted that they might

be revisited later, but that in order to coordinate community input in a way that

helped the city council member act, Richard couldn't share everything at once. He

acted as curator, concentrating on what most people felt were high priorities for

preservation and change (Interview). He was also, in effect, coding the future Austin

by establishing parameters that deemed some data relevant and excluded data deemed not as relevant.

Similarly, the *CCM*'s authors do not include every photograph submitted for every Austin neighborhood. When there are more photos than space in the allotted pages of the report for a particular neighborhood, they cull them down to a sample they feel is representative.[12] This first requires them to engage in extensive translation and interpretation. As Stafford points out, imagery can both illustrate something via representation and also express things "as an untranslatable constructive form of cognition" (27). Because images perform their rhetorical work on multiple levels, so must viewers; they participate in how the image comes to life through how they read its content and register its affective value and approach (Stafford 27). In the CodeNEXT project, the photographs are not accompanied by interpretative remarks when they are submitted. The authors have to decide what characteristics each photograph illustrates, then coordinate those characteristics throughout the set of photographs in order to organize and provide something legible to share. Considering their stated goal of learning about community character in order to preserve what matters to residents, the characterizations of a neighborhood that will have the most impact are those that get repeated and/or those that are interpreted as representing similar qualities of a neighborhood. When multiple people say similar things about community character, that aggregation of

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[12] All photos have been shared on their Flickr account, but this requires users to create an account and move away from the "official" report in order to view them.

ideas becomes the voice of the community and, in a very real sense, the community itself. The outliers were important but not operational in this particular coordination process. Instead, characteristics submitted in the most photographs will register as intensities with the Opticos team as they collaboratively develop an "official" sense of place for each neighborhood. Because Opticos' process for coordinating samples and criteria for what gets included in the *CCM* are unclear, they could be choosing images that ring true with their own perceptions of an area or that are most aesthetically pleasing to them personally. However, Opticos' goal of revamping the land use code is clear, so they will have to cull the submissions down to a representative sample based on what they know to be impactable elements of each neighborhood (whether for preservation or revision) via city policy.

While using photographs can only represent inhabitants' experiences and realities in a limited way, and while it may not be possible to meaningfully present the total body of images submitted in the context of the *CCM*, it is important to recognize the affordances that digital photography grants inhabitants as well. Rather than only seeing the representational limits of the image or the distance it puts between viewers and the "real" world, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites see generative excess. They write that in a single photograph, untapped potential can always be found, even if the subject matter includes dire human or natural conditions (48). Even more powerful, however, is a large group of photographs appearing together, as they do cumulatively throughout peoples' daily online

experiences, as a "museum without walls" from which emerges "a sense of a continuous unfolding world that is inherently excessive, beyond representation itself" (Hariman and Lucaites 47). Digital photography is commonplace, and functions often as a spatial practice by which inhabitants give expression to and share their geographical and personal views. In the affective territory of perceived space, images like those in the *CCM* do seem to offer a way to, as Hariman and Lucaites write, "engage with a world that is profoundly excessive" (55). From this engagement and many others like it, inhabitants produce their own particular version of a shared space and perform daily their particular ways of dwelling within it.

DWELLING

One of the important rhetorical projects underway within the CodeNEXT initiative is the generation of a space for reflection on the intangible. It engages residents by asking them to pay attention to how they live in their neighborhoods and to the existing structures that make those modes of dwelling possible. The *CCM* in particular makes explicit the role of affect in shaping public policy. As Jenny Rice's work demonstrates, an affective subject position is not effective when that subject wants to participate in public discourse. But the *CCM*'s acknowledgment that the ineffable plays a serious and sustained part in the production of space has a productive disorienting effect on how a subject in space gets conceptualized. Put

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another way, while the affective may not be productive as a position from which to argue a direction for the city (i.e., to deliberate), it can increase attunement to the multiple rhetorics of which inhabitants are not in control but that nonetheless shape their experience of the city (i.e., how they dwell).

CodeNEXT's primary concern lies in shaping the spaces where Austinites spend time in ways that facilitate their desired lifestyles while also accounting for the inevitable commercial and political interests that influence the city's landscape. It pushes for what rhetoricians might regard as an attunement to spatial affectability—a rhetorical relation based on responsiveness rather than representability—and in this way it offers a way to probe the potential of perceived space as a concept and a layer of experience. Because dwelling is a process of assigning attention to particular ways of being, it depends in part on learning a relation to the environment and manifesting that knowledge—bodily, semiotic, or otherwise—into practice, sometimes purposeful and sometimes itinerant. Dwelling also entails awareness of one's own perception and generating a life that fits within or works around an environment as it is felt and as it is understood. How inhabitants choose to practice their attention impacts the other elements/agents in the environment too.

The revised land use code will help shape the material conditions of Austin by imposing parameters on where people can live and work—in what types of structures and in what parts of the city—which also influences *how* they live or

work. Changes to the built environment will bring changes to the "intangibles," to use the language of the *CCM,* of an area's energy and identity. If the codes allow "McMansions" to become the norm in historic neighborhoods, they begin to change not only the aesthetic identity of the area but the way inhabitants identify with it (or not). This has clearly been the case for the Hyde Park resident who wrote the note admonishing the woman with the California license plate to return to her home state. Hyde Park is one example, then, where this trend serves as a tangible way that people register the effects of migration to the city and changing demographics on the intangible, the "soul" of their neighborhood. Here again, on the scale of law, "practice becomes perception" (189).

The register of perceived space helps to situate inhabitants' affective and bodily logics as fundamental to spatial production rather than simply material from which discursive engagement with space—including the articulation of the character of place—is formed. It expands the territory of rhetorical action in space to include how space is itself part of the rhetorical situation and to the capacity for rhetorical invention across all inhabitants of the ecology. Perceived space, then, helps to shift the conversation from a goal of understanding the places people live to *how* they live there—how they create their own spaces together through ongoing processes of translation, coordination and dwelling. Reading Lefebvre across McFarlane's triad provides unique insight into the power of affect for spacemaking across various degrees of articulability. Chapter 3 moves to the vital role of

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representations of space as a complement and challenge to affective experience in

imagining the future of the city.

Chapter 3—Conceived Space: Rhetorical Invention through Representation

It is often said that if something is conceptual, it is only an idea, but that is missing the point. It is because it is an idea that it is important.
– Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby

The small geography that each of us is the center of does not always appear on maps drawn by others.
– James Corder

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 made a case for the critical role of affective, intractable experience in the ongoing formation of spatial identity. This chapter turns to the formalized, measurable representations of space, Lefebvre's "conceived space," as generative of urban futures. To illustrate how conceived spaces emerge in the context of Austin and its proposed futures, I look at two key elements of the *IACP* as examples of rhetorical speculation. Calling attention to multiple ways that residents are engaging in rhetorical speculation of their own by performing alternative futures for the space of Austin, I begin to map out how these two representations of space operate within larger ecologies from which they derive their meaning and their ability to impact how Austin could actually take shape. Finally, I discuss how translation, coordination, and dwelling become ways that inhabitants can both respond to representations of space and begin to craft alternative futures for the city (see Fig. 6). What this chapter explores, in part, is how the representations of space offered in

the *IACP* aim to influence the everyday lives of those inhabitants from the present into the Austin of 2039 as well as how they facilitate and frustrate the placemaking efforts they catalyze among inhabitants.

		MCFARLANE		
		Translation	*Coordination*	*Dwelling*
LEFEBVRE	*Perceived space*			
	Conceived space			
	Lived space			

Fig. 6. This chapter focuses on the ways that conceived spaces are produced via translation, coordination, and dwelling.

In Lefebvre's triad, physical (perceived) and mental (conceived) relations to space both play generative roles and are deeply dependent on one another, in part because of the limitations of each. The sensory inputs of any environment cannot all be processed, so as anthropologists Thomas Blom Hansen and Oskar Verkaaik note, people impose conceptual order on them to give them meaning and attempt to understand the city, which ultimately exceeds these attempts (15). Conceptual order can enable more directed physical and ideological navigation of a space, but it also forecloses alternative possibilities, discouraging or excluding alternative modes of dwelling. For example, the parallel lines and yellow sign that mark a crosswalk aid pedestrians and drivers alike in knowing how to interact at a particular point in the

road, but they also impose limitations on how pedestrians can safely or legally tread across other, non-designated sections of the same road.

In Lefebvre's terms, conceived spaces can and often do arise from the kinds of spatial practice closely associated with perceived space (41), revealing those practices from a high-level view often with the intent of systematically influencing them. While closely connected, the two concepts make visible very different ways that spatial elements and inhabitants come into relation with one another. Conceived space (i.e., representations of space) is differentiated from both perceived space (i.e., spatial practice) and lived space (i.e., representational space) by the logical consistency it presumes and enforces. As Lefebvre writes, "representations of space have a practical impact," because they are "embedded in a spatial context and a texture" (42). This embodiment in space means that they "will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms" but instead enable tangible interventions (Lefebvre 42).

In generating conceived spaces, people assume a world stable enough to be represented and understood and yet fluid enough to someday become what they want it to be. This is exactly the case with the *IACP*, as it maps out Austin's current state in order to present an improved future version of the city. Representations of space have the power to make particular aspects of space legible while forcing others to recede. They can enable approaches to placemaking that fail to cultivate meaningful relations among ecological elements. However, I posit that

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representations of space—as a condition of their being—are also rich spaces of rhetorical relation and invention.

By raising awareness of a possible future state, conceived spaces—such as maps of the complete communities envisioned in the *IACP* or even in models of Martian space colonies—speculate as to what can emerge from a given ecology without having to necessarily outline a path to achieving that future state. Conceived space offers a temporary and partial approach to shaping place from a vantage point outside the embodied, distributed experience of everyday, affective placemaking and can complement such grassroots practices. Importantly, it can be effective at generating futures or alternatives to space without having to demonstrate that the future space it is suggesting is a possibility that can be realized. Therefore conceived space can be productively thought in ecological terms not only as a product of speculation and design but as a process of speculating about alternatives to current realities through rhetorical means like cartography, art, or protest. In this light, conceived space can be seen as an orientation interested in what else it can set in motion rather than a totalizing schematic directed only at mobilizing others toward a particular outcome.

The potential of representations of space to guide the shape of the material landscape makes this a rich category for inquiry. However, that inquiry must be done in the context of a particular site so as to track whose logic(s) are at work in acts of representation, what ends such representations seek to bring about, what

effects they have, and what counts as knowledge about a place as a result of those effects. Imagine Austin offers an opportunity to trace the way that conceived space operates in a large-scale, present-day placemaking project. As a conceptual order that offers insight into its own creation, goals, and intervention process, Imagine Austin makes it possible to rethink conceived space in the context of a contemporary urban-rhetorical environment. At the same time, the lens of conceived space can facilitate greater insight into projects like Imagine Austin. Imagine Austin sets forth a framework—articulated in clear visual and verbal representations of the space—for thinking about the past, current, and future cities that are constructed to guide inhabitants' involvement in the placemaking process.

As a series of related representations of space that reinforce an official narrative, Imagine Austin brings attention to the rhetorical speculation inherent in placemaking.[13] Even when based on extensive research and data,[14] such representations of space intrinsically rely on speculative practices for their creation. Boyle offers a rhetorically speculative orientation toward texts in "Low Fidelity in High Definition" that helps to illustrate how representations of space become more generative when thought in terms of larger ecologies of action and meaning. Specifically, Boyle calls attention to the potential for invention that comes from engaging the instability of texts, even those positioned as "primary" texts, by

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[13] The necessity of invention for placemaking has been documented by Edward Soja, Edward Said, and Yi-Fu Tuan, among many others in spatial studies.
[14] Dunne and Raby note that many critical design projects "draw from rigorous analysis and thorough research" to make their proposals (189).

creating a context that more meaningfully frames their connections within an ecosystem. That ecosystem would include responses to the text as "primary to the text" (134) and as able to "influence [its] reinvention" (132). Boyle calls this textual ecology a "rhetorical edition."

Boyle's proposal has implications for thinking about the "primary" texts of conceived space as well. Whereas Lefebvre's discussions of conceived space focus on the foreclosure of possibility that occurs when space is documented by authorities and presented as a singular fixed truth, Boyle demonstrates an inherent textual instability that opens relational possibilities instead of limiting them. When he asks "not what a text is but what a text can do" (Boyle 138), he distributes agency for meaning-making throughout the material and rhetorical ecologies of texts. In the context of conceived space, Lefebvre sees government officials and technocrats as in possession of the power to draw and redraw territorial lines and reduce the complexity of urban space to oversimplified charts and maps that make space more ordered and controllable at the expense of accounting for everyday lived experiences of residents. Boyle's model, however, imbues the entire ecosystem with agency to disorient, destabilize, and continually redraw the lines of engagement and occupation.

In fields outside of rhetoric, scholars and activists are seeking similar ways of working toward representations that serve to destabilize understanding and emphasize future possibilities. One such effort that speaks directly to the concerns

of spatial rhetorics is critical design, which designer Dunne and designer-architect Raby suggest is a category of creative endeavors that place themselves "intentionally at odds" with the present (*Speculative Everything* 17) in order to facilitate change "by generating alternatives" (44). Like a futuristic concept car unveiled at the Detroit Auto Show or a fashion show where the pieces are stunning but nearly unrecognizable as wearable clothing, these design projects provoke, disorient, and excite their viewers about "everydayness and how things could be different" (Dunne and Raby 189). In ecologies of space, where the interactions among all inhabitants and forces are producing space and co-producing the producers, one cannot be certain of what will emerge. Processes like critical design play the important role of speculating on what is possible, thereby expanding the horizon of futures inhabitants might see. This in turn can energize difference, motivate alternative behaviors, and set new, generative interactions in motion.

While any representation entails simplification and ideological ordering, an emphasis on speculation and invention also offers avenues for resistance and alternative ways of being in space. These openings are particularly important for inhabitants, who are often subject to the material effects of government-led interventions in the space of the city. As recent placemaking efforts such as Imagine Austin show, any opportunity to speculate is also an opportunity to reimagine the potential of space and view the stability of its current form as a tentative and collaborative invention. And yet however untraditional the map or artifact offered

as a starting point for that reimagining, it celebrates some worldviews over others, even as it simultaneously offers alternatives to the status quo. This becomes all the more perilous when the artifact is offered by an authority, like a city government, with the power to enact the new reality it proposes.

Offering conceived space as a source of inventive placemaking practices is not intended to diminish Lefebvre's belief that conceived space, as manifest in the hands of politicians, planners, and technocrats, serves to oppress inhabitants by abstracting, codifying, and oversimplifying. These common behaviors effectively elide the social content and local practice already existing in any space. They are, however, necessary to enable analysis of and wayfinding within space, making possible many of the day-to-day operations of the city such as zoning and bus routes. Even so, arguments offered by Lefebvre and by political scientist James Scott in *Seeing Like a State*, addressed later in this chapter, illustrate that manifestations of conceived space through technocratic artifacts inculcate space with the capitalist and political interests of those in positions of power and further consolidate that power. As opposed to those who intervene in spatial production by proposing a potential future as a stable, factual future, inhabitants often embrace productive disorientation and leverage the value of unpredictable, untraceable networks in how they engage with spatial representation and with each other.

Holding questions of the future open even while representing that space in seemingly static artifacts is itself a productive intervention in conceived space. The

commonly used spatial conceptions, such as maps of future transportation routes, play a powerful role in the process of placemaking. They can inhibit residents' options for dwelling in part by attempting to direct behavior on ideological grounds and/or by bringing place in line with the most current urban planning principles. These principles, while logical in the abstract, often disrupt the existing order of daily practice at work in the networks of activity and understanding already in place. When viewed in the context of spatial assemblages, as McFarlane suggests, the limitations that Lefebvre emphasizes as inherent in representations of space are themselves limited. Instead, they become dynamic elements of larger urban environments that are capable of influencing and being influenced by numerous other factors. The spatial assemblage puts front and center the ability of the rhetorical effects of representations of space to change, leaving more space for truly speculative and transformative actions from all stakeholders.

OFFICIALLY AUSTIN

Two key elements of the original *IACP* adopted by Austin City Council in June 2012 lend themselves particularly well to a discussion of conceived space: a Vision Statement, which summarizes the key values and characteristics of the future city, and a Growth Concept Map, which illustrates the application of the Vision Statement to the space of the city. Both elements of the comprehensive plan were based on community input that organizers began collecting in October 2009 via focus groups,

social media, and in-person and online forums (*IACP* 81). This input was then

translated into a series of descriptive phrases and visual figures that answer the

question of what Austin should become.

A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200ᵗʰ anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.

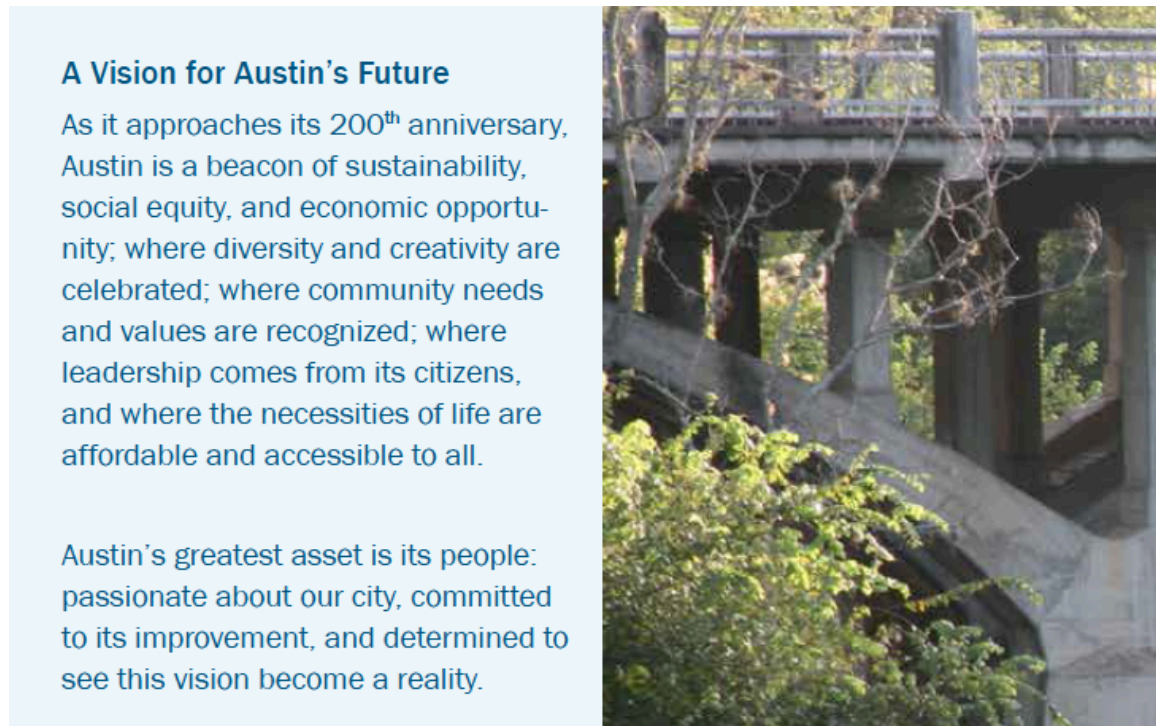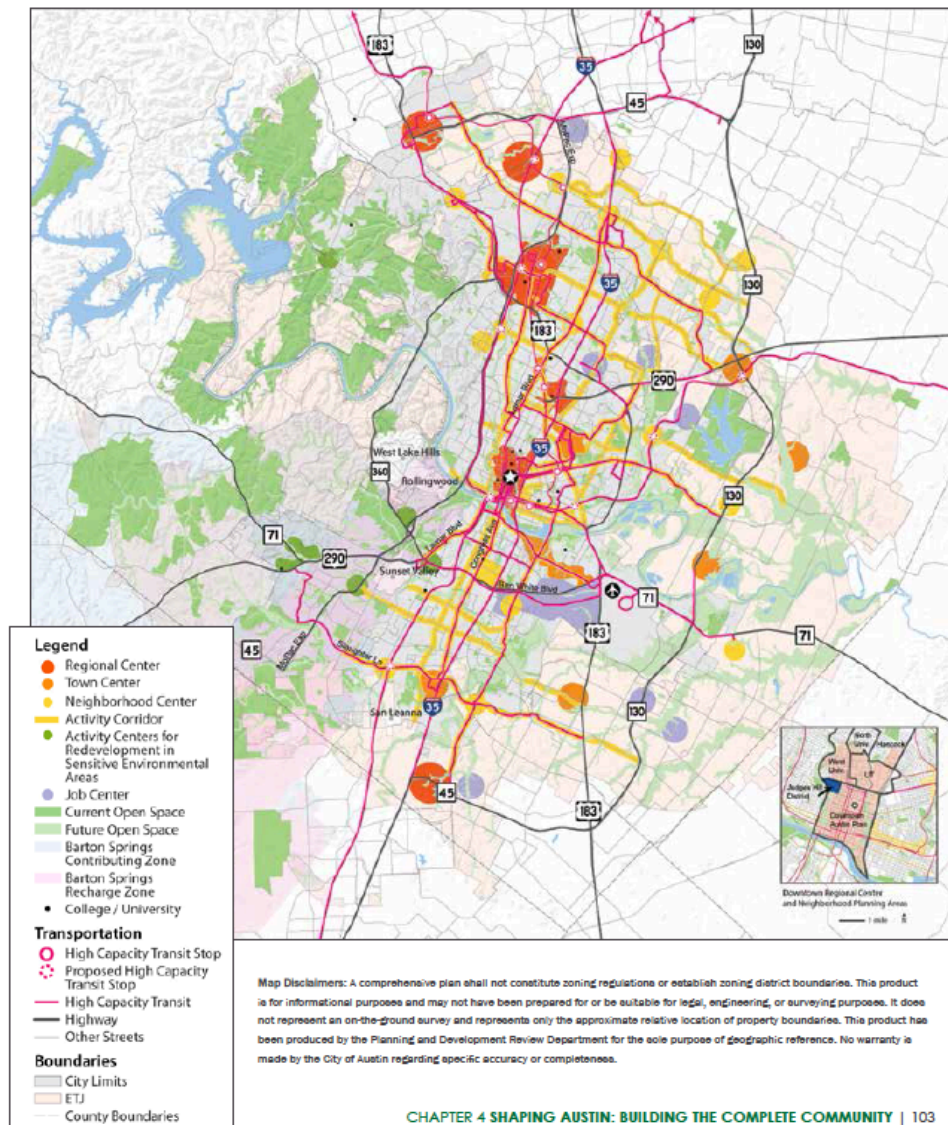Fig. 7. Vision Statement from the *IACP* (82). The city will celebrate its 200ᵗʰ anniversary in 2039.

Figure 4.5   Growth Concept Map

Fig. 8. Growth Concept Map from the *IACP* (96). The map synthesizes issues that are the subjects of individual maps within an accompanying series. Each map deals with a key value of Imagine Austin's vision such as environmental resources and bicycle and pedestrian networks.

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Embracing the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map as the type of "rhetorical edition" that Boyle proposes helps to situate these elements of the *IACP* and the report itself within an ecosystem of other related discourses around the city's future, including child documents like the *CCM* and the land use code that it "parents," as well as public input and reaction, debate among city council members, and media reports on developments and impact of the plan. This frame also emphasizes the life of the *IACP*'s words and pictures as powerful grounds upon which inhabitants can intervene in Austin's unfolding future, and it points to the ways the representations of space contained in the document are refigured in relation to each pair of hands the plan falls into. The Vision Statement and the Growth Concept Map cannot perform their ordering functions or realize their potential as calls to action from within the confines of the page; instead, they become most powerful in the ways they influence inhabitants' relations with the city as they build it. In other words, these elements help illustrate that conceived space and the practices through which it is produced do not occupy a place of exception outside of ecologies, including affective relations. Thinking of the statement and the map as dynamically primary and secondary, they begin to interrogate one another to as to what each reveals or conceals and what each affords its audience in understanding or relating to its content instead of simply reiterating the same message in different modes.

The abstraction of Austin's ethos into a Vision Statement and of the landscape into a simple map serves an important purpose for achieving city council's objectives of planning for the city's future, including revision of the land use code through the CodeNEXT initiative. However, the comprehensive plan has implications well beyond how it feeds into the land-use code and other policies. It translates into guidance for economic development by private companies and into residents' behaviors in those spaces, including those that endorse or resist development via spending choices. For example, activity density and accessibility of those activities to inhabitants are some of the goals highlighted in both the Vision Statement and in Imagine Austin's tagline "Vibrant. Livable. Connected." The Rainey Alley is one area where the Imagine Austin team is using this principle to reimagine and ultimately redevelop the space of the city. The alley runs behind a dense row of bars along Rainey Street and is currently used for storing dumpsters and housing discreet backdoor entrances for employees (see Fig. 9). Imagine Austin is engaging local development and landscape design agencies to explore how the space might be reimagined to give it a wider range of possible uses and in doing so attract the public, including Rainey Street patrons (see Fig. 10). They are also interested in its potential to connect the outskirts of the Rainey district along East Avenue to a massive new housing development further northeast (see Fig. 11). There is more to be said about the creative work underway for Rainey Alley later in the chapter, but

at minimum it demonstrates how ideas about what Austin should become are being

applied as concrete changes to the physical and economic landscapes.

Fig. 9. Section of the Rainey Street Alley as of March 2015 (*Downtown Austin Blog*).
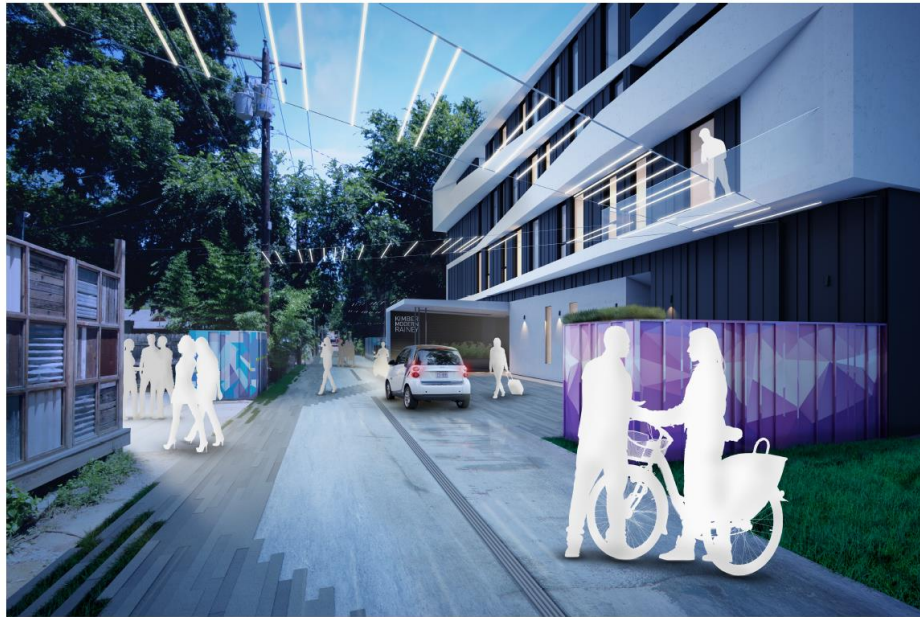
Fig. 10. Rendering of an enhanced Rainey Street alleyway by Baldridge Architects. This is one of many designs submitted to the Downtown Commission's Alley Working Group and Austin Public Works Department (*Imagine Austin Blog,* 24 August 2015).

Fig. 11. The corridor produced by extending Rainey Alley north to the Millenium Rainey development (*Downtown Austin Blog*, 27 March 2015).

The power of the characterizations made in the *IACP* is amplified for

inhabitants because they are communicated as self-obvious and stable starting

points for collectively creating a future. "Here is what we know," the plan seems to say in its opening pages. For example, it makes the following statement:

> Austin today is a model of livability, widely acclaimed as one of the top cities in the country. We have a distinctive and appealing vibe, a resilient economy, a growing national profile, good job and business opportunities, a fun and relaxed way of life, a beautiful natural setting for outdoor living and recreation, a thriving arts and live music scene, and a reasonable cost of living for a big city. (3)

Here the plan's authors codify Austin's character in order to align inhabitants to a shared picture of the "now" and then help move the city on from there/then. As Jacques Derrida and others point out, the words cannot simply convey this message from the authors to the audience and have it land. Instead, in the very writing of the words a reality is constituted. Simultaneously the inability of that reality to be fully present is betrayed by the need to try to commit it to words, to capture it. The writing does function despite its structural inability to do so in a way that is fully in line with the author's intended meaning or consequences; that is, any attempt to pin down the city is an act of rhetorical invention through always-speculative language. Nonetheless, readers can reiterate it, provide commentary and context that refigures it, and let it start them down pathways of encounter that were perhaps not visible to them before.

Even as the authors of the city's 30-year plan present a cohesive vision of a future Austin, they indicate their own knowledge of the ultimate instability and affectability of the city. The critical intervention they are making depends on Imagine Austin being a thoroughly speculative enterprise. The word *speculative* comes from *specula,* for watchtower, and Imagine Austin has the desire for a sweeping view of the city and for guardianship over what it becomes. In reaching for that conceptual view and the change it will engender, Imagine Austin makes visible vital, ongoing placemaking processes that seem remarkable when they surface but are in fact part of the very structure of place. Even the most ordinary cities are built and evolved by everyday acts of risk, curiosity, and imagination.[15] Change enacted through these generative processes, including rhetorical placemaking efforts like Imagine Austin, constitute places as much as their material elements do. Intentional interventions in conceived space take many forms, as do the often unintentional, affective interventions made in the realm of perceived space. An example of an intervention made with the production of space in mind is painting murals along an urban corridor where people may not be comfortable walking in order to make that corridor a destination in itself. The atmosphere created by the murals might also facilitate the flow of people from one area of the city to another area in order to

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[15] A mundane example might be that someone opens a shop, with no true precedent and no guarantees. Maybe one by one people realize that they are or that they want to be the kind of people who need what it sells. The city is changed, and so are they in some small way. Then again, maybe the venture fails. Then still something has been said about the future direction of the city and a version of itself that inhabitants or lease prices will not embrace, and others to come will reference that failure. Change is the goal and the inevitable reality. In recent years in Austin this has been a frozen "fruit poop" stand, any number of massive mixed-use developments, and a dog park–bar combination.

better connect historically detached communities. Of course the outcome and effects of such an intervention are never fully known. Perhaps the corridor of murals would increase traffic to businesses in the districts it connects and foster closer relations among residents who otherwise may not have interacted. Or perhaps opening multiple districts up to one another could also spur gentrification or dilute a community's sense of identity over time.

The Growth Concept Map, as a representation of a future space, might facilitate particular interventions by setting an expectation of a particular outcome or approach to Austin's evolution. For example, as decisions are made as to how to improve transportation options within the city, decision makers will likely consider how any new option—from wider highways to more dedicated bus or bike lanes to a light rail line—would funnel people toward the designated activity corridors and avoid designated future open spaces. Often these interventions are facilitated by representations of space, but representations are just one catalyst of change among many. They are nonetheless significant, as Ackerman suggests in "The Space for Rhetoric in Everyday Life." Ackerman writes that places "operate as both contexts for discourse, and signs within discourses" (86). As such, Austin and its inhabitants influence the comprehensive plan and the comprehensive plan in turn influences the place and the people.

While representations of space like the Growth Concept Map are significant for the ways they suggest the values of their creators and for the force they can exert

on peoples' consciousness, this is a limited understanding of their role in

placemaking. This understanding assumes reliance on human-centered rhetorical

practices like interpretation to "unlock" a representation's inventive potential. It

does not account for the impact that representations like maps have outside of that

specific human interaction or how they have "rhetorical lives of their own," as

Laurie Gries suggests, and in relation to other, non-human things. It is important to

recognize that "visual things…play active roles in shaping collective existence" and

so "deserve to be taken seriously as dynamic actors who transform…those lives

whom they encounter" (Gries xviii). The place-makers within the ecology of the

city—inclusive of city officials and inhabitants but also of the space they occupy and

the images and discourses that circulate within it—are continually reconstructing

each other during the course of their "self-organizing, adaptive, and dynamic

interactions" (Syverson 5), not just in this formal moment of collaborative

imagination and composition but in the course of daily life.[16] As Jenny Rice points

out, these interactions, rather than the elements themselves, are the life force of

places ("Unframing" 10) and are generative of rhetorical possibilities (15).

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[16] Places are always imagined in that they are never fully present, never cohesive or reliable or still.
But they are rich material from which people construct for themselves a reality, coextensive with a
mythology, that puts them in actionable and meaningful relation to its elements. This extends to me
as the researcher-analyst as well. As Ackerman suggests, because any "site of analysis is invariably a
lived space, the analyst is implicated because such spaces do not exist a priori of their designation"
(86). Roy Wagner makes a similar point in *The Invention of Culture,* noting the impossibility of
measuring and documenting "a world of natural 'forces'" such as those we presume to constitute
culture, without producing it and our relation to it in the process (71). I am making elements of
Austin's reality legible for a particular audience for purposes of directing attention to issues I deem
important, and am therefore implicated in the types of simplification and control to which I hold city
officials accountable.

It is significant that even the *IACP*, which attempts to freeze the city in time(s) by presenting clearly demarcated present-day and future-state versions, is guided overall by the imperative to recognize that cities are in constant flux. While it is the limited representation made available in the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map that make both artifacts legible and actionable, it is also these elements that call attention to how Austin will move to become a new version of itself, the next iteration in a never-ending, coexisting mess of iterations. Imagine Austin does important rhetorical work in part because it embraces and publicizes the fact that intervention in space is possible and necessary, even as it seeks to manage the possible relations of its inhabitants to the city. Some degree of this control on behalf of government and urban planning specialists is necessary for maintaining order in any shared public space. However, tension exists between this necessity and perception among inhabitants of their own power to effect change, whether by helping set a vision for the future of the city or by actually building the place dreamed up as part of the collaborative creation effort of the *IACP*.

PLACEMAKING AS RISK-TAKING

The very name "Imagine Austin" and the titles of the components under discussion here—the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map—convey the speculative nature of the placemaking processes they are part of and that they help enact. The project seeks to forecast the conditions under which an improved and impressive version of the city will emerge as well as the characteristics that city will

possess. Though the versions of the future city presented in the Vision Statement and the Growth Concept Map are not ideal in the sense of striving for a perfect society, the way the city positions them casts them as representing the best possible future. The entire Imagine Austin initiative takes on a kind of populist origin story, where all Austinites could make a meaningful intervention in the placemaking process by contributing their ideas. No concrete result is explicitly promised in the report, but as the Vision Statement is written in the present tense, the suggestion is that the version of Austin it projects is attainable, or at least worth the time, energy, and resources it will take to attempt its actualization.

In their work on critical design, Dunne and Raby argue that imagination is a necessary catalyst for change. The purpose of generating ideas that venture into uncharted territory for both designer and audience is to open up space for debate and discussion. In general, what-if scenarios of critical design are "by necessity provocative, intentionally simplified, and fictional. The fictional nature of these scenarios requires viewers to suspend their disbelief and allow their imaginations to wander, to momentarily forget how things are now, and wonder about how things could be" (Dunne and Raby 3). By mapping and reacting to future scenarios, people weigh alternatives and iteratively construct a personal and social compass to help guide future attitudes and behavior. It is Dunne and Raby's supporting premise that highlights the value of conceived space as part of the Imagine Austin project. They suggest that because critical design anticipates and attends to future needs

and not the present, the proposal that emerges as a *product* of the work is less

important than the *process* of orienting oneself to desired outcomes. It is an exercise

in imagining how we will need to change ourselves to fit the vision as we choose to

set it, asking who we would have to become to inhabit this future "now." The

process through which the *IACP* was constructed falls in line with the tenets of

critical design. It included invitations for residents to weigh options and prioritize

values as they worked toward designing a roadmap to a place that did not yet exist.

In this way Imagine Austin can be viewed as a product of an inherently speculative

critical design process. Importantly, the process of the plan's creation began shaping

people to fit the city even as it invited people to shape the vision of the city.

In the case of the Vision Statement, the focus is on inhabitants. It declares

that "Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its

improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality." Inhabitants are

the key to achieving the list of characteristics in the first half of the statement, and

they find here suggestions for what kind of people to be in order for the desired

future city to be achieved. For Austin to be a creative city, it needs creative people,

for example. The speculative design of a future Austin as created by the Vision

Statement hinges on the evolution/fit of its inhabitants to embody the values of the

plan.

The conceived spaces of Lefebvre's triad, bound up in powerful networks of

actors and artifacts, certainly have very real consequences for inhabitants of any

place. But the scenarios of critical design—and of maps or other hallmark texts of conceived space—are rhetorical acts that prescribe rather than describe, and in that way they are fictions, powerful yet unfulfilled visions of a place-to-come. Though carefully crafted, such representations of space circulate and are implemented in lived contexts in which their creators cannot control all factors, including human reaction. In the hands of interested citizens, these speculative efforts often come to life, moving off the page and into performances of possible executions of real urban redevelopment efforts.

There was enough allure to such a project of future-building through speculation to bring residents along on the journey. A total of 17,843 Austinites, or 1.9% of Austin's total population, participated in the four Community Forum Series events (*IACP* A-9–A-11), though the report does not specify that the total represents only unique residents engaged; in fact, it is likely some residents attended more than one event. The demographics of participants reveal that they over-index as white, college degree holders over 30 years old with incomes over $50k. More than 40% of participants were from Central Austin though only just over 30% of Austin's total population resides there. The demographic data is a testament to the interest of this particular segment of the community in the process, but also of their ability to get transportation to meetings, dedicate time to participate, and feel like their voices would be heard.

The way that multiple groups are working to transform the city's alleyways reflects Imagine Austin's ideas of connectedness and vibrancy. It also illustrates how speculation through design influences inhabitants and translates into on-the-ground redevelopment efforts that serve to highlight space's malleability. In 2013 Art Alliance Austin launched its 20ft WIDE project, which featured temporary art installations and environmental design that aimed to draw people in and invite them to linger for music, yoga, visual arts, and food. The activation of the space lasted 5 days, as planned. The traction it gave to grassroots urban development and design efforts exceeded the project's timeframe, however. Now, as part of the Imagine Austin effort, the city is engaging some of the same organizations involved in 20ft WIDE to conduct a case study that will "help launch discussion and offer inspiration for how other urban alleys in Austin could be redesigned" (*Imagine Austin Blog*). 20ft WIDE, then, makes the signature gestures of critical design— disrupting expectations, making new possibilities visible, and setting other generative acts in motion. It is intervention through speculation.

As critical design projects, Imagine Austin and 20ft WIDE hold particular promise as outlets through which inhabitants can act on their rhetorical agency, an agency that Ackerman argues "belongs to everyone" (85). Because this right and ability to shape everyday life through even the smallest actions "includes the production and maintenance of social space," (85) inhabitants can intervene even if

they are "not formally designated as the architects of the concept city" (Ackerman 102). In other words, people can supplement and resist the conceived spaces constructed by governments and developers by putting their own representations of space into circulation within the lived context of place. Efforts like 20ft WIDE do this in a particular way that reflects the values of but does not claim membership in a larger movement, "tactical urbanism," which emphasizes intervention aimed at improving urban livability by transforming public space with few resources, little time, and often for the short-term.[17]

The Better Block Foundation is another noteworthy example of an intervention that displays the hallmarks of critical design, and one that has been particularly active in Texas. The organization was founded in Dallas in 2012 and has given people around the world inspiration and training on how to reimagine the potential life of an urban space like an abandoned theatre or a city block to foster the kind of culture, lifestyles, and interaction among inhabitants that they want to see in their communities. The goal from an urban planning perspective is to show how "complete blocks" can be achieved in existing spaces through what Better Block's founder Jason Roberts calls "highly visible interventions" (Lydon and Garcia "How One Weekend") that are "temporary, low-cost, flexible, iterative,

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[17] *Tactical Urbanism* authors Lydon and Garcia referred to Michel de Certeau's dialectic between strategy and tactics for their naming of this movement. De Certeau sees strategy as the realm of those in power and tactics as the response of those without it. The former animates master planning documents like Imagine Austin that set out goals and outline the strategies necessary to achieve them. Lydon and Garcia note that tactics are also used by those in power in the world of urban planning and development to get things done when faced with dense and slow administrative processes (9).

participatory" (Lydon and Garcia 25). These same qualities are considered the foundation for many of the same urban experiences that Imagine Austin seeks to achieve: accessibility, diversity, and vibrancy through "complete communities" that are "compact and connected," a goal that CodeNEXT is designed to help realize (*IACP* 7). The Better Block process manifests differently depending on the material and cultural conditions of the site, but it often includes temporary additions of or improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, greenery, pop-up cafes as well as food courts, seating, and art. It is a real-time, material enaction of the potential future of a city—a representation drawn out on the canvas of asphalt, brick and concrete.

Placemaking practices like those behind 20ft WIDE and Better Block play off of and play into larger-scale design projects like Imagine Austin. They activate spaces to demonstrate their potential worth and prove out the need that the transformation of such spaces would meet. This can cause those in power to take notice, as the city did of Art Alliance Austin's alleyway evolution, and give such spaces a place on the official agenda, a position that attracts resources and publicity that can help enable larger and more permanent interventions. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the Rainey Alley, the object of the city's attention, lies in an area that the Growth Concept Map already designates an activity corridor, which will both connect larger activity centers to one another and itself be a destination for diverse housing and entertainment options (*IACP* 106). Governments

often find smaller-scale activities like 20ft WIDE valuable references, as they allow for quicker and easier testing and demonstration of the value of an effort that on the city's end is tied up in dense regulation and long approval processes. It can also be a way to engage the public (Lydon and Garcia 12). Those engaged in tactical urbanism might find government or developer support an expedient way to give their ideas a bigger and more well-funded stage on which to play out. Some Better Block projects have investor support or leverage corporate sponsorships, for example. Additionally, efforts that prove successful in one community can become a template and be imparted to interested activists elsewhere. The Better Block Foundation team took this resource-sharing and training approach after their initial interventions in Dallas, for example, resulting in a model that is now widely used. Seeing how speculative interventions can have ripple effects across places attests to their potential to inspire change and also highlights how their value for intervention is embedded in rhetorical practices durable enough to be taught and also dependent enough on the relations within any given ecosystem that they must be adapted to account for local conditions in order to be most effective.

Many different approaches to generating conceived spaces can be powerful, and though their influence circulates via different media and channels, they are part of the larger ecology of the conceived space of the city. In that they intersect with one another and mutually modify each group's activities, they attest to conceived space being more robust than just discrete artifacts showing the city mapped and

measured as part of the government's domain. They also illustrate a few of the ways that representations of space are themselves interventions that can shift the discourse around what's possible and lead to material change. When considered in the context of one another, the examples of the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map, the Rainey Alley redevelopment, the 20ft WIDE project, and Better Block begin to map out a kind of "rhetorical edition" for critical design efforts producing conceived space in Austin.

THE COMPLEX AUTHORSHIP OF CONCEIVED SPACE

In both cases—Imagine Austin's vision-casting on paper/pixels and the community-led reimagining of spaces on the ground—the projects bring attention to the proposed direction of redevelopment efforts, making a particular set of values legible alongside the space itself in their respective contexts. As a primary purpose of representations of space, legibility is a crucial first step in connecting the rhetorical speculations made through critical design with the audiences who will be learning the new city and the inhabitants who will bring the vision to life. For spatial-rhetorical studies and on-the-ground placemaking processes, legibility is about making visible what is possible, not simply showing what is there. It is a speculative endeavor based on legitimizing some forms of knowledge over others, and it has concrete implications for the daily lives of a place's inhabitants. In this sense, Imagine Austin is part of a centuries-old trend of imposed legibility by

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government entities in order to establish and extend power over the land and its residents, a practice that Scott details in *Seeing Like a State*.

Scott positions legibility as made possible by high-level knowledge of something large-scale, like topographic or demographic data, which he says gives the state operational insight into its inhabitants that gives it more power over their lives. He contrasts this kind of knowledge, termed "synoptic," with localized knowledge, which serves to convey information useful for residents in navigating their daily activities as well as preserving local culture and history but does not serve the state's need to make the territory navigable or attractive to outsiders, including themselves. The practice of numbering roadways made an impact on downtown Austin in 1884, for example, when numbers replaced the names of the native Texas trees (e.g., Pecan, Magnolia, etc.) originally given to the streets by Austin's first mayor, Edwin Waller (Uriegas). Whereas the road names used to convey information about local indigenous trees, they made for roads less easily navigated by people who did not have intimate knowledge of their order, direction, and points of intersection. Numbered streets create a pattern most urban dwellers are now familiar with, so while a larger group of residents and visitors may now find navigation more intuitive, those people are not prompted to learn specifically about Austin in the same way as before. Of course, it is always the case that rhetorical choices mean prioritizing who is being communicated to and to what end. They also always establish particular ways of relating to a subject or object. The particular

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power and also danger of legibility is that it does so on such a large scale and, in the case of organizing space, has lasting effects both for those whose interests are being forwarded and those whose interests are being elided.

Imagine Austin has made its own moves toward legibility, as evidenced by the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map, which help establish a shared language for officials and inhabitants for the purposes of the project. The government is supplying the terms and in doing so derives more control over the process by instituting a consistent, sanctioned vocabulary to describe the future city. The government worked with locals to construct the plan, translating inhabitants' input about their own experiences and desires into a polished vernacular. This vernacular served the city's specific needs for communicating its version of the shared vision to a much wider audience that includes many non-inhabitants, such as neighboring city councils affected by the plans and a number of developers from other parts of the country.

Such legibility practices are not unusual and not inherently damaging. Scott likens them to modes of mapping in which, like with all representations, only a portion of the geographical or social landscape is represented (3). When the lenses through which that society is observed are state interests, the lived context of place is often stripped away. The "maps" that remain, "when allied with state power…enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade" (Scott 3). Therein lies the real potential for harm to any spatial ecology: a representation absent of

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meaningful concern for the impact of one societal element on all others, especially on inhabitants' daily lives, does not account for the content of and productive force behind space itself.

For Austin's government, the *IACP* makes fiscal, political, and social priorities legible in ways that allow it to more efficiently uphold its ideology about the central value and purposes of the space of the city. One result of that legibility is that it changes the reality of the places and contexts in which inhabitants live. Therefore, the speculation and invention that take place within projects like Imagine Austin are powerful. They catalyze placemaking practices around prescribed, high-level goals. While the principles outlining what Austin should become may be generally in line with the local communities' own thinking about the ideal future, the implementation of policies based on those principles do not necessarily impact all inhabitants positively. The rhetorical intervention does not dictate the actual form of the material intervention.

For example, affordability is mentioned in the Vision Statement as it relates to "the necessities of life." But most of the objectives Imagine Austin puts forth relate to intangible improvements to quality of life such as vibrancy and connectedness that are projected to enhance the culture of the city and the lives of those who reside there. As the city's record growth in recent years has already led to skyrocketing rents and gentrification of culturally significant areas like E 11th Street in Austin's historically black East Side, it is clear that the more attractive Austin

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becomes, the more difficult it will be for economically disadvantaged inhabitants to benefit from the vibrant future city, even if they have deep roots and rich lives within particular communities. The legacy of segregation on the East Side is a high density of low-performing public schools, black students dropping out of school at three times the rate of white students, and an unemployment rate that is twice that of white Austinites (*IACP* 213). Of the 5.4% of Austin's black population who have moved out of their neighborhoods, 56% say that the primary reason for their move was that they could not afford to stay in their homes (Tang and Filola). These residents are additionally burdened by increased transportation costs due to their displacement further from the city (*IACP* 136).

If the plan succeeds in actualizing the future that it proposes, inhabitants will be able to find affordable housing somewhere, and while by then they might have more public transportation options for commuting closer to the city center, the report does not suggest that it will be able to reverse the trend of the rapid displacement of its minority populations. For those minority residents, who are at particular risk of displacement from the communities where they have the strongest historical and social ties, being able to afford basic necessities like housing within the ever-growing city with rapidly increasing rental and home prices likely means leaving the vibrancy and connectedness they enjoy in their long-time homes. These groups are not in a position to fully participate in the holistic plan for improving the city: they will have to give up some of its affordance for others.

Additionally, the vision detailed in the comprehensive plan invites particular kinds of growth over others. Specifically, it prioritizes growth in the creative sector and emphasizes the importance of keeping the "government, technology, medical, and institutional sectors" healthy because they "form the base of Austin's economy" (*IACP* 48). But jobs in these sectors are more likely to require highly educated workforces, and even access to "skilled service jobs" is limited for those with less education. As the *IACP* notes, lower education levels are most commonly barriers for minorities (48). While the vision articulated through the Imagine Austin plan is of a future reality that is more inclusive and equitable for all inhabitants, the implementation of that plan may have some adverse effects, particularly if more inhabitants are not equipped or empowered to participate in the economy and may not be able to adapt to the Austin the plan imagines.

This slice of the *IACP* points to a permeating and critical condition of legibility: that it demands erasure of critical textural and contextual nuances in the fabric of place. This is a point well documented in the realm of urban planning. Just as Lefebvre declares space to be socially constructed, so urban activist Jane Jacobs describes the city as a social organism in her seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (7). In doing so, she puts herself in direct opposition to the influential high-modern urbanist-planners like Le Corbusier, whose interventions, according to Scott, ignored entirely the local contexts in favor of visual order and "functional efficiency" (Scott 106). Jacobs writes that in cities we encounter "life at

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its most complex and intense" (372). Therefore, even urban planning efforts with the best intentions, but particularly those that leverage legibility via imposition of a "static grid," stifles the "unknowable possibilities" (Scott 129) that arise from a city otherwise alive with complex social processes (139). This is in part why triads like Lefebvre's and McFarlane's are so important. They offer ways of accounting for how these competing knowledges interact and are used to create urban space, even if the understanding that results is incomplete. Though Lefebvre focuses on the limitations exerted by representations of space as abstractions divorced from the lived experience of space as well as the control they allow ruling forces to exert, he acknowledges their role in facilitating space's production. McFarlane's triad insists on the life of representations of space and the influence they may have as part of assemblages for (re)learning and (re)making the city.

ECOLOGIES OF SPECULATIVE SPATIAL REPRESENTATION

McFarlane locates possibility for change in space within assemblages because they rely on flexibility rather than stability to function. They also bring dissimilar elements into productive relation with one another to an end that is not decided in advance. Their value lies in their openness to the unexpected (*Learning* 26). As part of assemblages, representations of space, like any other artifact or condition of a space, can be "stabilized…or destabilized" in relation to other assemblage elements (McFarlane 25). This condition of chronic instability applies to the Imagine Austin Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map as well, as they are

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open to continual refiguring by the shifting relations among them and other

elements of their assemblages—including the city, the Imagine Austin website,

readers, and time. This point is significant for placemaking projects like Imagine

Austin because it means that no matter how "official" or how public the

representation of space presented by a government or community group, no one

thing can dictate a singular meaning of a given space. Made powerful only by its

interactions with the entire assemblage, the meaning of any representation of space

depends on the historical, social, economic, and political forces among which it

circulates.

Therefore, as Boyle points out, the question of what particular texts like the

Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map *do* (or in this case what particular

representations within the ecology of a larger document do) becomes rich and

complex. In the context of conceived space, McFarlane's triad provides three ways to

begin an answer. The processes of translation, coordination, and dwelling can be

seen as ways that inhabitants are activated to speculate about the future of the city

as responses to the representations of space within the *IACP* that are themselves

speculative.

Imagine Austin's Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map are best

positioned to guide the city into the future when inhabitants are already attentive to

the city as a valuable space with unrealized potential. It helps also if inhabitants

accept the government's reading of Austin's current condition and embrace the

comprehensive plan as the "roadmap" (*IACP* 4) for finding an ideal future version of the city. Finally, inhabitants might opt to join in if they buy into the city's assumption that this ideal future Austin will be found by following the steps outlined in the plan—that is, that the future place exists and so participation is not about creating but about seeking. Under these conditions inhabitants might take to heart the core values Imagine Austin makes legible and lobby for policies and material changes that reflect those values. They would then help implement the ideas the plan espouses and thereby help stabilize it within the larger spatial assemblage.

For residents that participated in crafting the vision for Austin's future but feel their input is not meaningfully reflected in the comprehensive plan, and for those who did not participate and may not support the city's approach to speculating about the city's future or their implied claims to ownership over that process, one available course of action is for them to create and circulate their own representations of the future city. Events like 20ft WIDE, though not a direct intervention against the comprehensive plan, does have a destabilizing effect by showing that inhabitants do not have to wait for the city to make a better Austin materialize but can instead take action on their own. Such performative events also call attention to openings left by the comprehensive plan for interpretation of its principles, which remain vague even in their most concise incarnations, the Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map.

The second notable point about assemblage in the context of the conceived

space is that it is a mindset for learning and participation—a fluctuating space of

imagination and actualize-able possibilities (McFarlane 25-6). The shifting,

relational socio-material environments within which acts of translation,

coordination, and dwelling are carried out testify to the openings that constantly,

incrementally create change within place. By looking closely at how each of these

learning-oriented activities happens in the context of conceived space, it becomes

possible to see the multiple roles that representations of space have in urban

placemaking—both their potential for foreclosing possibilities and their penchant

for making visions of a future city real.

TRANSLATION

As intentional abstractions and simplifications of a complex and unknowable

reality, representations of space rely on translation to produce and transmit a

particular perspective on place. In the case of Imagine Austin this perspective is

designed to be understood by inhabitants and to be operational, allowing its

principles to be acted upon and brought to life through the development strategies

laid out in the comprehensive plan. To make the process actionable for inhabitants,

the Imagine Austin team orchestrated encounters with the community in the form of

workshops and town hall meetings. The input from these events was then

synthesized and adjusted to fit within the framework designed by the project team

to create a readable bird's-eye-view of the issues facing the city. At each stage, these

encounters—between government and residents, residents with one another, and both parties with the comprehensive plan—generate ideas and relationships that not only lead to what inhabitants learn about the city (i.e., through the creation and sanctioning of knowledge about what Austin is and should become) but also inform how inhabitants learn (i.e., through what channels, at what pace, and in whose language).

Long before the specific processes of knowledge production that became Imagine Austin were set in motion, someone with the power to act on behalf of the city had to have interpreted a need for such a comprehensive plan. The first significant act of translation would have been that of material and social conditions—whether they were the city's rapid growth, the nearness of the city's 200th anniversary, or personal political aspirations—into exigencies that would warrant a call to action for speculating together about Austin's future in such a methodical way. The reasons cited by Imagine Austin to justify the comprehensive plan it presents are not in themselves exigencies; instead, the authors generate their own exigencies, a process Richard Vatz is well known for suggesting, and might draw on issues such as population growth affecting traffic and housing prices to do so, all of which are issues that have garnered national attention and that city council members might be eager to tackle. Within the ecology of the city, Jenny Rice points out, exigence is even more complex; it cannot be simply constructed by the rhetor; instead the entire assemblage of the rhetorical situation emerges from an

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"amalgamation of processes and encounters" (8). The impetus for intervention cannot be pointed to, either at the moment of decision to act or now, in retrospect; however, their intervention is evidence that conditions within the physical and ideological space of Austin pressed in on inhabitants and moved them to respond.

After the initial call was made to Austinites for input, the process of creating the comprehensive plan then relied on the translation of inhabitants' and government officials' desires into a language and document that made those desires legible to others. At this stage the real work of critical design was collectively done. The thousands of inhabitants who participated offered content for the Vision Statement, drew maps of what the city could become under different scenarios, gathered in parks to write their hopes for the city on whiteboards, and carried out conversations on Twitter using the hashtag #ImagineAustin. Though only the most common and palatable ideas made it into the official comprehensive plan, the ideas generated during those speculative exercises have the potential to be taken up and made real. Even those ideas that do not ultimately come to fruition have value, whether they act as foils to mainstream plans, opening questions about why one plan was the preferred direction over another, or inspire individual residents to see the city from another perspective. In that the process made inhabitants' lives and values legible to one another, it was a successful civic project regardless of what input was included in the *IACP*.

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The legibility that inhabitants created around their own lives within the city gives Austin's government powerful insight into its population as well. One interesting way that the government chose to use that insight reveals itself in the Vision Statement. Though it refers to the city's future state, the *IACP*'s authors chose to use present tense verbs, making the future city feel as though it had already arrived and that the goals of the Imagine Austin initiative had been accomplished. However, much of the Imagine Austin team's and the public's critical translation work is yet to be done. Ultimately Imagine Austin is not just a thought exercise; the speculation it engendered will drive material changes within the city. The vision will translate into policy, and those policies will manifest in tangible ways in Austin's landscape and in the lives of its inhabitants.

COORDINATION

Imagine Austin coordinates the existence of a thought space for speculation and for self-examination in relation to possible futures. In this sense it is a quintessential critical design project, first confronting people with a heightened sense of future possibilities, sparking further innovative thinking and all matter of emotional responses, and insisting that they can be productively "applied to even the most mundane aspects of everyday life" (Hansen and Verkaaik 44). The framework it establishes and processes it asks the public to embrace spur the process of collective change and provide direction for prioritizing and implementing ideas.

As inhabitants translate their desires into articulable values and characteristics and map possible physical futures for Austin, they relate highly personal urban experiences and local knowledge: drawing in bike paths along the routes they travel through their own neighborhoods and parsing out just what kind of vitality they hope to see in their communities. The Imagine Austin team is challenged with coordinating these sometimes competing local knowledges with the government's goals for the project and knowledge of best practices for urban planning to create a singular vision for growth and development. The Vision Statement and Growth Concept Map are the most succinct expressions of those plans. But though the tenor of the comprehensive plan is that the vision is simple enough to be expressed in bulleted lists and scannable graphics, the overall length of the comprehensive plan at 343 pages, and the detailed research it offers on every measurable aspect of Austin from demographics to environmental health, tell a different story. In other words, to reach a wide audience, the *IACP*'s creators had to be extremely selective in the imagined futures they presented and in what it would take to achieve them. As they were beginning to construct the plan, the city was coordinating a PR effort around the Imagine Austin initiative as well, so narrowing the focus to the most memorable and digestible language benefited that effort.

In addition to simplifying the message for public consumption, the coordination process also requires erasure. Absent from the comprehensive plan are the local knowledges that informed inhabitants' input to the comprehensive

plan: there are no anecdotes, no quotes about particular neighborhoods, and no rationale for why participants voted for one proposed direction over another. What remains are polished artifacts illustrating a mash-up of material conditions and ideological preferences. These artifacts are admittedly flawed, as in the case of the Growth Concept Map, for which the authors of the comprehensive plan have included a footnote that includes these statements: "This product has been produced by the Planning and Development Review Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness" (103). It is worth reiterating that this inability to do more than approximate reality is not, of course, a failing of the authors but instead a condition of representation in general. That inability as well as the very strong ability to create a new and seemingly clear-cut reality are both reasons why these artifacts can exert so much power within the placemaking process: on the one hand they are vehicles for productive speculation and on the other they are resolute declarations of the way things are.

DWELLING

Dwelling can be its own form of speculative design, as in the case of 20ft WIDE, and modes of being in space can be generated by the activation of policies that result from such speculation, as in the case of the future Rainey Alley redevelopment. If dwelling is, as McFarlane suggests, an "education of attention" ("The City" 365), then urban change demands an investment of oneself—one's time

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and energy—into learning or relearning a space in order to reframe or unsettle it. It is a mode of attunement that is not simply the result of placemaking processes, but an active practice of placemaking itself. Space, as Lefebvre suggests, is made up of social processes. Without being borne out in the actual processes and practices of living in or using a space, the change does not hold. Material alterations must alter the fabric of social space in order to be real such that their lived expression offers them the legibility required for legitimacy. This active, material intervention is the power of tactical urbanism; it embraces a posture of speculation to learn about a space's potential and in creating a new possible reality, it generates speculation from others, effectively teaching inhabitants new ways of relating to the city and modeling a mode of placemaking through experimental movement and unexpected presence. In that way, it is not only a mode of attunement for those that participate but also a process for attuning others to possible future conditions.

Similarly, Imagine Austin calls into question the very modes of dwelling available to people in the city at large and in particular areas within it, though it does so with a prescriptive bent. Through elements like the Vision Statement and its present tense description of the city, the *IACP* suggests to people how they should behave now in order to thrive in the future, improved version of the city. Through the Growth Concept Map, the plan suggests ways of being in the world (e.g., active in the Rainey corridor through to downtown) and works to attune inhabitants in advance to their relation to the places where they will live and work. At an even

more basic level, the Growth Concept Map declares to inhabitants whether the areas where they dwell are inside of or outside of the attention of the primary planning efforts, suggesting which areas and by extension which residents are or aren't visible under the plan's definition of what constitutes Austin—which are worthy of investment and which are legible only in that they are noticeably absent from the planning activities as represented on paper. The plan raises questions about whether the areas where people are currently living and their ways of life will exist in the future Austin, prompting inhabitants to consider if the plans include material changes that will prevent them from living there or strengthen their ability to do so as well as whether the plan evolves their community into something they can see themselves represented in or if the proposed direction for the character of the future place precludes them from identifying with it. The ways residents negotiate these different versions of the histories and futures of their communities are central to the production of lived space, discussed at length in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4—Lived Space: Inventing Austin(s) in Rhetorical Time

At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences…Every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings.
– Kevin Lynch

Sometimes—perhaps often, perhaps always—we spiritually and psychologically reenact in our individual ways the great folk shifts, movements, discoveries, loss. The loss of frontier, for example, and exodus, happen again and again in large and small ways, in public and intensely private ways.
– James Corder

INTRODUCTION

Whereas conceived space foregrounds mental abstraction to enable

representation, and perceived space foregrounds the physical and affective

experiences of the body, lived space foregrounds how both modes of spacemaking

are ongoing in relation to one another. At every moment, lived space is

(re)produced as residents react to their environment in order to forge a sense of

place; this process includes working through the multiple meanings and experiences

that converge at any given point in time. First, a recent example from an annual city

event helps to introduce this idea by illustrating how Austin residents are

encountering different—often conflicting—versions of past and present realities as

the city moves toward its future(s). Following an account of Lefebvre's concept of

lived space, this chapter offers rationale for using *kairos* as a meaningful lens

through which to bring Lefebvre in conversation with current thinking on spatial rhetorics. It then situates these concepts in relation to the example of the Rosewood Courts public housing project, a community whose future is being contested due to its historical significance not just for East Austin but also for the United States. The very public debate around the future of Rosewood Courts centers on whether or not to designate it a historic landmark, a move that many argue will preserve its cultural significance and others argue will further disenfranchise its residents. Such historical designations are a key component of the Imagine Austin initiative and reveal much about the ways in which many of its key goals, such as affordability, are weighed against preserving neighborhood character and what counts as "Austin-worthy" in the near future state of the city. The chapter concludes with a focus on the specific rhetorical activities that generate lived space, or in other words, on the ways space is produced among multiple co-existing forces whose representations emerge from *kairos*. As in previous chapters, McFarlane's triad of translation, coordination, and dwelling will provide the means for situating placemaking as rhetorical action (see fig. 12).

		MCFARLANE		
		Translation	*Coordination*	*Dwelling*
LEFEBVRE	*Perceived space*			
	Conceived space			
	Lived space			

Fig. 12. This chapter focuses on the ways that lived spaces are produced via translation, coordination, and dwelling.

In his introduction to Mayor Steve Adler's state of the city address on February 16, 2016, University of Texas at Austin President Gregory Fenves called Austin's 1928 City Plan "innovative" for its role in diversifying the city's industry and for spurring the city's development into an education center. Since the plan's adoption, Fenves added, "knowledge has fueled the city's culture, its civic life, and its economy." Fenves' characterization of the plan as a success story to be celebrated was called a gaffe by local media (King), since the 1928 City Plan is widely cited as responsible for setting in motion a deep and long history of segregation in Austin, the effects of which are still felt today through strained race relations and economic disparity. The plan called for mass relocation of the city's black residents to a designated "Negro District" on the East Side and was carried out through tactics such as cutting off utilities to black homes and businesses in predominately white areas as well as artificially raising rents to unaffordable levels. The *IACP* lists a few of this segregation's lasting effects: a high density of low-performing public schools

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on the East Side, dropout rates for black students that are three times that of white students, and an unemployment rate that is twice that of white Austinites (213).

In addition to being the education center Fenves describes, Austin is also the third most segregated city among large metros in the US, according to a 2015 study by the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto (Vincent). Additionally, it is the city with the most segregation between those with and without a high school diploma. This economic segregation is an effect of gentrification that pushed home prices up and pushed black residents to areas east and north of Austin's city limits. Residents of East Austin have been most impacted, with 63% of those who have left the city moving from that area (Tang and Falola). During a period of three years ending in 2014, "the median home price in East Austin's zip code 78702 tripled from $125,000 to $375,000" (Tang and Falola). Increases in population in the area led to higher home prices accompanied by higher property taxes. New, wealthier white residents were able to afford to renovate the homes and drive the prices up even higher. Lack of affordable housing was a major factor in the migration of black residents out of their neighborhoods, with 56% of displaced residents reporting affordability as the key issue that led them to leave their homes (Tang and Filola). While exact demographic shifts within East Austin's neighborhoods have not been determined, there has been a 5.4% decrease in black residents within Austin city limits overeall, as many black residents relocate to suburbs farther outside the Austin area.

With the current conditions in Austin's historically black neighborhoods in mind, it is not surprising that many in the audience found Fenves' comment jarring. His words were a clear foil to Mayor Adler's speech, which focused on equitable economic development, in part through The Spirit of East Austin initiative, which is designed "to combat the effects of historical and intentional inequitable policies and practices, as well as the results of benign neglect" in that area (King). The 1928 City Plan is chief among the ways that *de juro* and *de facto* racism have been facilitated in Austin. The plan's lasting effects on the city's black residents were also noted earlier by several keynote speakers at the Spirit of East Austin community forum held in September 2015, including in comments by Adler and City Manager Marc Anthony Ott.[18]

The rich cultural histories that grew up in East Austin after the application of the 1928 City Plan are now center stage in the rapid redevelopment of the area. Residents are clashing over which of these legacies to preserve and how. The situation is further complicated by the lingering structural injustices in the community seeded by the 1928 City Plan. The contested physical and representational grounds that are East Austin have their foundation in the many intertwined histories, people, and policies that have defined the area. In addition to ranking among the country's most segregated cities, Austin is hailed as an innovation center and national leader in economic growth. All of these complex

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[18] At the Spirit of East Austin community forum, 450 eastside inhabitants and city leaders worked together to discuss what "equitable economic development" could look like (Goodman).

layers of the city's identity co-exist within peoples' lives, particularly in East Austin, and factor into the planning of the city's future through Imagine Austin. Therefore the remarks of Adler and Fenves serve as shorthand for introducing how the third element of Lefebvre's triad—lived space—is taking shape in Austin now, as productive tensions among divergent realities rooted in the same space are deeply felt and heavily circulated in public discourse.

Imagine Austin and its related initiatives are attempting to manage these multiple and changing realities through government designations such as cultural districts and historic landmarks aimed at preserving what residents see as valuable in the space as it exists today. This is one change management strategy Imagine Austin uses that is particularly relevant in East Austin neighborhoods, where competing agendas and versions of the past are in daily conflict as the city works to forge a path forward. In applying district and landmark designations, the city is imposing an affective order on physical elements, effectively legitimizing one version of place over others and generating an officially sanctioned reality through its rhetoric. That aspect of lived space as it is brought to life in the *IACP* speaks to the rhetorical power of the document and the role of its authors in shaping the city. Similarly, the untidy current cultural and political moment in East Austin offers a way of investigating lived space as generative of histories and interpretations of history that animate and reanimate the spaces of those histories.

The contested legacy of the 1928 City Plan—and the contrasting ways that East Austin's built environments and inhabitants signify its effects—reveals itself within the discourse around Austin's future as the very stuff of lived space. In Lefebvre's triad, both perceived spaces and conceived spaces are encompassed in and generative of a series of real-time encounters that produce lived space. Though the concept is often cast as a kind of catch-all for spatially bound experiences of the everyday, i.e., the realm of conscious daily experience, lived space has a very particular and exciting role in the triad, bringing lived time to the foreground. Lived space is generated by and embodies dreams, imagination, history, and memory mediated and persistently felt through the spatial elements that feature as material and symbolic at once (e.g., Home) (Lefebvre 121). It is therefore both deeply personal and collaboratively constituted. Lefebvre writes that lived spaces, or "representational spaces" as he often refers to them, are "[r]edolent with imaginary and symbolic elements" that "have their source in history—in the history of a people as well in the history of each individual belonging to that people" (*Production* 41). Time comes into play for Lefebvre in the recursive, often disjointed, ways people process space based on their own memories and dreams for the future, making many modes of relating to space present and active at once. These individual modes of dwelling and of making dwelling meaningful coalescence as shared space. Even then there is room for unpredictable, diverse actions and reactions by individual

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residents to operate. Whatever form space has taken, it influences residents'

relation to it and these relations serve as contributions to the space's future state.

   While Lefebvre acknowledges the importance of shared meanings for

coordinating spatial use and experience, he notes that these are not complete or

dependable, because lived spaces "need obey no rules of consistency or

cohesiveness" (*Production* 41). Lived spaces are constituted as much by their ability

to hold together multiple divergent activities and ideas as they are by residents

actively campaigning to define them. As spatially-bound agents, residents require

both the physical immersion in environment experienced in perceived space and the

abstracted experiences of conceived space that enable long-term navigation and

orientation. Lived space brings the intensely personal feeling of perceived space and

the "thought markers" of conceived space together so residents can sense their own

relation to what's been, what is, and what's becoming.

   Memory, imagination, and natural processes like entropy—among many

other forces at work in the production of lived space over time—lend to it an

inherent volatility. This inability of space to ever be an objectively stable or

knowable entity, to ever *take place* in anything but a mass of concurrent evolutions,

necessitates invention on the part of residents, human or otherwise, to make

something livable and salient of it.[19] This reading of Lefebvre is colored and clarified

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[19] As rhetorician and writing teacher James Corder performs in "I Proposed," people are both
entangled in and eluded by the real and imagined places of their own histories. They pick up living
rhythms and track their own place in the world by the natural and manmade spatial cues of the
places they inhabit and those they long for. In the case of East Austin as across the world, moments of

by Rickert's idea that rhetoric is an "embedded practice" always emerging from

"many complex interacting agents dynamically attuned and exposed to one

another," whether their relationship is collaborative, competitive, or otherwise

(*Ambient Rhetoric* 34). To grapple with the rhetorics that manifest within lived

spaces—whether they take up educating or persuading via discourse or are

aggregations of affective experience that color engagement with others—means

embracing the untidy way that relations within space play out in each moment,

often in ways that are disorienting to inhabitants or that do not register as

influential until they surface during a later encounter. As I will illustrate in the next

section, the magic is in the mess when it comes to how lived space is produced. No

actant has full control over its part in the production or even over the way it

experiences lived moments, so there is a wanting for closure via understanding that

never arrives and simultaneously a constant smattering of excess relations, feelings,

and lines of thought that never have the time (or capacity) to fully play out. And yet

somehow, lived space materializes with enough resolve to mark itself on/as places

and endure over time, as the case of a premise like "Keep Austin Weird"

demonstrates. I posit that *kairos* offers one way to trace out these many realities and

rhetorical activities at once. To do so, I follow Rickert's extension of *kairos* as time

significant change call residents to survey where they live and how they live there, bringing them to
sync up their personal rhythms to external ones or to acknowledge the discord between them.
Investigating the ways we are disconnected from the places we have been is rich rhetorical ground
for effects of policy, identity, and the power of representational practices.

into spatial terms and thus begin to link *kairos* to the particular rhetorical work of placemaking.

KAIROS AS ECOLOGY

In order to demonstrate the rhetorical makeup of lived space, one idea in particular from Lefebvre—that *lived* space is itself *alive*—demands closer inspection. Lefebvre writes that "representational space is alive; it speaks" from "an affective kernel or centre" (42). It is this statement that calls *kairos* into the conversation. *Kairos* is a common rhetorical term most often associated with the advantageous timing of a rhetorical intervention within a larger cultural and historical moment. Under this more traditional view, *kairos* is valuable as a concept for analyzing the context within which rhetorical action becomes meaningful. However, a different view of *kairos* is necessary for understanding the process of spatial production as rhetorical. Like lived space, *kairos* too is alive, or more specifically, it is invention compelled by the continually shifting relations within any ecology. Rickert situates rhetorical invention within the rich material ecologies of space. If invention is typically thought as creative work or problem-solving conducted by a rhetor, the recognition that any rhetor, human or otherwise, is irrevocably emplaced, affectable and only ever part-owner of its agency means that intervention in lived space cannot look like a sovereign subject seizing an opportunity in time. Rather, it acknowledges the "backdrop of relations" (Rickert 93) present in any given moment as actively engaged in rhetorical invention (95).

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For lived space, *kairos* is a kind of rhythm, irregular and imperceptible as it may be, of change—a series of tiny conversion points generated by the momentum of its particular context.[20]

Considered ecologically, *kairos* requires any force for change, including residents wanting to re-create or re-invent or re-animate place, to be part of the scene of energy and movement and intensities that are space. Because spatial relations are constantly shifting and reconstituting their human and non-human actants, *kairos* becomes a way of naming the will to ongoing (re)invention that pervades spatial ecologies and gives rise to the need for affective rhetorical and meaning-making practices to step in to (re)orient inhabitants again and again over time.

Taking up Rickert's configuration of *kairos* as spatialized, situational time helps open up a discussion of lived experience within and as part of space that acknowledges that neither lived space nor *kairos* is a linear construction but that both are fluid, recursive, and irregular. It makes the mess of spatial realities more meaningful—less a temporary state of affairs that have gone off the rails but can be brought back on track by the right interventions and more the very grounds of being in space-time, a beautifully disorienting and frayed interaction of already entwined

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[20] Lefebvre's *Rythmanalysis* is an extended reflection on how best to study the aliveness of space and call together the scattered, disjointed parts of the elusive city. The method that emerges requires one to be both inside and outside of rhythm, experiencing it and also giving oneself the distance to reflect on it. Lefebvre details how there are long-term rhythms and short-term, biological and mechanical, those that emerge from policy and those that persist on tradition. Traffic lights, business hours, the pace of a walker's breath, and the historical movements of entire populations all bring order and meaning in multivalent ways. Rhythm is one critical element of *kairos*; however, *kairos* offers a lens for investigating lived space that is more comprehensive and more readily rhetorical.

variables and experiences. Showing the ways that Lefebvre's lived space and Rickert's *kairos* speak to one another through the example of Rosewood Courts reveals the ongoing invention within lived space and positions it as a life that exceeds residents' individual lives. Just as symbolic and structural elements both influence how residents present the spaces they occupy to themselves and others, those experiences are highly contextualized; they conform not to universals but to the situation on the ground. Therefore one finds that one is part of that *kairotic* context—where *kairotic* refers to experience of space in any lived moment as multiple, emergent, and in perpetual inventive motion—and not a rhetor positioned only to read it and respond.

In the process of building his concept of *kairos*, Rickert picks up traces from Victor Vitanza's work in *Negation, Subjectivity, and The History of Rhetoric* that emphasize *kairos*' multiplicity, embeddedness, and distributed subjectivity. Vitanza positions *kairos* as a kind of middle voice between the active and passive in which "*many competing, contradictory voices*" (289, italics in original) hold together in harmony, but not unity. Because the middle voice often includes the subject as the object of the action, it implicates the speaker as inventive agent and locates that agency within a larger framework of activity. This idea resonates in other literature on place as well. In exploring how places retain recognizable characters even as they change over time, sociologists Harvey Molotch, William Freudenburg and Krista E. Paulsen cite a "third voice," one which "is neither active nor passive but both" to

claim that "*places make themselves up*" (819, italics in original). Rickert's *kairos*

offers a kind of passive-active voice to lived space; it points to how *kairos* is at once

emerging as part of the complex relations of any given situation, compelling

invention as an embedded part of those constantly shifting relations, and spurring

manifold intersecting space-time realities.

The concept of *kairos* as a materially-bound and continual process of

invention rather than a moment of invitation for rhetorical action also helps to

better account for the breadth of rhetorical placemaking activity within lived space.

Boyle's posthuman practice, which positions rhetoric "as an ongoing series of

mediated encounters" (543) has particular resonance with the generative qualities

of lived space and the range of responses it demands, many of which are not

consciously composed. If *kairos* is a kind of emergent will to invent and refigure

relations, and if it is engendered by multiple messy sets of relations and transverses

multiple complex situations at once, nothing is equipped to keep up with composing

responses at the rate such change unsteady ground requires. That inability to

process and yet still function in space from one moment to the next is a hallmark of

lived space as Lefebvre describes it. And so Boyle's position that "[w]e do not

withdraw a prior experience to fit with an event but are habituated by having had to

resolve related events and become disposed toward composing fitting responses"

("Writing" 545) offers one way of understanding the kind of rhetorical posture that

lived space requires.

Kairos also helps to illuminate the interplay between the ongoing evolution of space's cultural, economic, material, and natural infrastructures and the elements that remain recognizable enough to identify the place as itself over time. The specific backdrop at a specific time is, Rickert writes, what "constitutes the place as *place*" (Rickert 93, italics in original). Marking moments of departure from the past is the way many residents make sense of their surroundings in their everyday lives, taking stock of what is new and relying on most things to remain the same to help facilitate the continuity that imbues their daily experience with a sense of stability. Even small changes, like a new restaurant opening or a favorite or long-time establishment's clientele shifting, as discussed in Chapter 2 in regard to the Broken Spoke, can shift how residents relate to the places they live. These are linked to broader changes in both activity and thought, like an area being referred to by a new name or rent prices rising to levels that prevent long-time residents from remaining in their homes.

It matters not just how these changes are felt (as in perceived space) or how they are planned (as in conceived space) but how they are brought forth by and situated among ecologies of affective landscapes, built environments, and influencing circumstances that produce, define, and designate place as knowable now, or at any given time. Probing what relations are at work in a given space is essential to critically and responsibly reading claims of ownership over space and its related identities as place, whether those claims come to life in labels of

gentrification, preservation, positive redevelopment, or natural evolution. Fenves'

and Adler's very different takes on the legacy of the 1928 City Plan are one example.

Many factors likely contributed to how they articulated the impact of the plan,

including their own lived experiences, the images they wanted to project of

themselves as leaders, and the agendas they are carrying out as representatives of

their respective communities of Austinites. Seen through the lens of *kairos,* the

tension among the city's realities and identities becomes a kind of friction that

serves to keep the momentum of spatial production going. The varied forms of this

reinvention and the various ends to which they are enacted all actively coexist and

give space form as place(s).

   In the case of East Austin, the *IACP* characterizes the intentional changes to

the area as "revitalization" (30) while black activists speak of opportunities to

"reanimate" the area.[21] These choices in how to represent the life of the space are

significant. Both terms imply that something was lacking in East Austin pre-Imagine

Austin policies and also suggest that the area did have a life prior to current

placemaking efforts. Especially given the contentious cultural and economic claims

to the land and character of the area, it is important to note that preserving

historical sites and improving quality of life for Austin's black residents are the two

objectives outlined in the *IACP* in reference to East Austin's redevelopment. The

plan does not state in any detail what specifically should be protected or what

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[21] Lisa Byrd quoted in Cindy Widner's article "Protect and Preserve" from *The Austin Chronicle* and on the website for the nonprofit group Six Square, which describes itself as Austin's Black Cultural District.

mandates redevelopment in order to achieve these objectives. Nonetheless, both

terms, "redevelopment" and "reanimation," provide openings into thinking about

kairos as a continual will to change from within that sets invention in motion and

allows space to unfold as multiple places at once. In turn, *kairos* provides a view of

rhetoric that is spatially constituted, generative, and inclusive of the rhetorical

representations that make any designation—historical or otherwise—possible. It is

for these reasons it can be productively thought as rhetorical time.

THE MANY LIVES OF ROSEWOOD COURTS

Active and atmospheric processes of re-membering and re-animating space

show up in one East Austin community whose future is now being intensely

disputed. Rosewood Courts was built in 1939 and has not undergone significant

renovation or improvement in its nearly 80 years. The complex contains 124 units

that house low-income residents of which many are elderly, disabled, or have been

involuntarily displaced from other areas. Rosewood Courts was a product of the

New Deal[22] and precursor to problematic nationwide public housing policies, the

effects of which are still felt today. Because public housing units were often excluded

from white or economically vibrant neighborhoods, they often contributed to an

ongoing concentration of poverty and furthered racial segregation. As conditions

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[22] There were three public housing projects built in Austin with funds from the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937. The projects were race-specific, with Rosewood Courts for black residents, Chalmers Courts for white residents, and Santa Rita Courts for residents with Mexican origin or ancestry. Santa Rita was constructed first and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

continued to deteriorate due to insufficient operations budgets, those who could

afford to do so moved to more affluent neighborhoods while more homeless and

very low-income residents were invited to take their place (Stoloff). Rosewood

Courts and the surrounding East Austin neighborhoods have not been immune from

these patterns. Patterns of "residential segregation and racial inequality" like those

visible within the effects of US public housing developments (Freund) make

geographically distant and culturally unique places appear similar; but it's the ways

that similar practices formed and, over time, affirmed relations among inhabitants,

governments, economies, and material resources in similar ways across spaces that

give that impression. The *kairotic* currents of public housing in cities as different as

Austin, Chicago, and New York swept through and spun tales of lived experience

that resonate over time as both historical realities and deeply personal lived pain.

Tracing the ecology of relations shaping up around the material and

rhetorical spaces of Rosewood Courts and East Austin more broadly can help begin

to account for the lived qualities of those places over time and in this particularly

interesting moment of their histories. The Housing Authority of the City of Austin

(HACA) wants to replace Rosewood Courts with new mixed-use developments that

it argues would better serve low-income residents through modern amenities and

attract higher-income renters and new business to the area. HACA's plan would

retain 15 of Rosewood Courts' original units for historical preservation. The

redevelopment of the other units, they argue, would increase the total number of

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affordable housing units and improve residents' standard of living. The HACA plan

also includes reopening Emancipation Park, the place where Austin's African-

American community historically observed Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when

Texans first received word of the Emancipation Proclamation, still celebrated

in East Austin today.

Leading the opposition to the HACA plan is Austin City Councilwoman Ora

Houston, who sponsored a resolution to zone the property a historic landmark. She

argues that as the oldest public housing project in the country, Rosewood Courts

must be preserved and the significance of the site honored by blocking the

redevelopment plan. Those in favor of the historic landmark designation argue that

the move will also protect residents from being displaced, though HACA has

promised that any residents forced to move during construction will be guaranteed

a place in the newly built or renovated units. The city council vote to initiate historic

zoning took place in February 2015 and so far no follow-up votes have occurred.

One group vocally advocating on behalf of Houston's preservation efforts is

Preserve Rosewood, whose leader, archaeologist and activist Fred McGhee,

authored a white paper titled *A Jewel in the Violet Crown* to advocate for

preservation of all units and to detail the group's opposition to HACA's current plan.

However, the paper acknowledges there is a viable middle ground, where

preserving the original buildings while also bringing the structures up to modern

standards benefit HACA by aligning with its mission to promote housing for low-

income families. The report says that "rehabilitating and upgrading" Rosewood

Courts within the limits of the historical landmark designation can make them

"some of the most desirable rental units in the city" due to a combination of their

location, historical significance, and potential for energy efficiency"(9). Because of

the preservation efforts, the paper argues, HACA, which is a public corporation, "will

be able to charge premium rents at its discretion, furthering the agency's mixed

income goals and generating additional revenue" (Preserve Rosewood 9). In this

way, Preserve Rosewood contends, the landmark designation could help remedy

some of those legacy issues surrounding public housing projects.

McGhee has been involved in preservation of public housing before. Most

notably, in 2006 he led the successful effort to get Santa Rita Courts listed on the

National Register of Historic Places. On the application for Santa Rita, McGhee

marked two reasons why the site deserved to be included on the register: 1) that it

was "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad

patterns of our history" and 2) that it is "associated with the lives of persons

significant in our past." The application goes on to name Lyndon B. Johnson as the

significant person(s). Similar language is present in Preserve Rosewood's white

paper, where the group quotes Johnson's speeches and emphasizes his contribution

to America's public housing initiatives through Rosewood Courts. McGhee's claims,

then, appear to have little to do with preserving the local cultural heritage

represented in the housing project and much to do with a national contribution he

sees it as able to make to both green building and LBJ's legacy. Preserve Rosewood's proposal does, however, do more to acknowledge the evolving needs of Rosewood's residents than Houston has publicly done.

The conditions of possibility that gave rise to the tension among those along the "preserve" to "progress" spectrum for the future of Rosewood Courts are specific to the ecology of East Austin, though the various relations to the space that have allowed for this specific situation are recognizable in cities worldwide. One of the forces implicated is the natural progression of time leading to the deterioration of the material site to the point that a decision on a course of action is a necessity. Another force is the rapid growth that has shifted the way the land is valued from a separate and "safe" place for black residents to a highly prized potential space for business interests and new predominantly white, middle class residents. Viewing the Rosewood Courts debate as a generative moment of lived space, however, requires attending to the intimacies of activity in East Austin, where productive tensions of lived experience are vast and visible from within a *kairotic* frame, wherein *kairos* names the collective life of the space by acknowledging the varying rhythms, pulses, forces, bodies, and reactions of bodies as emerging from and productive of the space as place. Revealing those tensions is even more important because the population of Rosewood Courts is particularly vulnerable to further disenfranchisement. They lack the resources, both financial and, in many cases, physical, to obtain a similar or better living situation elsewhere.

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Rosewood Courts has also taken on a symbolic role for those with a stake in the future of East Austin. It represents, in a high-profile way, the conflicting values vying for a place in the future of the city. It also stands in for how similar debates are playing out on the municipal, state, and national stages. Preservation takes many forms based on where people locate the value of a site—in the presence of its physical structure as it was at a key moment, some evolution of its presence thought to give it more usefulness or currency within a contemporary moment, or even in a symbolic marking of its absence. In any case, a leading consideration is how the site can best serve the needs and values of current inhabitants. Viewing Rosewood Courts in the contexts of East Austin, the larger city of Austin, and of Texas can help reveal the conditions that are catalyzing the particular set of competing narratives around preservation of Rosewood Courts and the way it contributes not just the built environment but the meaning of East Austin. It can also open questions about how the past can be most productively and responsibly integrated into the future in this particular lived space.

In the more than a decade since Austin's African American Quality of Life Initiative began in 2004 (*IACP* 214), several related initiatives have grown up within East Austin. These initiatives are aimed at persevering the area's history as the nexus of black life within the city and drawing on that foundation to promote a healthy future for East Austin communities. For example, in addition to Mayor Adler's Spirit of East Austin initiative and its attempts to spur innovation authentic

to the area's neighborhoods, there was the 2013 creation of the thinkEAST Creative

District, a 24-acre mixed-use project inclusive of affordable housing and work

spaces for neighborhood residents, and a 2007 designation of the African American

Cultural Heritage District (AACHD) between Red River and Airport roads, the first

such cultural district designation in the city and largely aligned with the borders put

in place by the 1928 City Plan (Widner 21).

Byrd leads the AACHD and suggests that despite her group's efforts to

highlight the vibrancy of black culture in East Austin's past and catalyze further

revitalization to carry it into a healthy future, the area's well-known history of

segregation and now the exodus of black residents to other neighborhoods,

challenge their progress. Byrd cautions against allowing key cultural sites to become

a series of "museum" stops (Widner 21)—many of which mark the significance of

the discriminatory policies and disenfranchisement of the past. Such sites will

attract attention because they invoke nostalgia but in doing so signal a belief that

the vibrancy of black culture in East Austin is history. In other words, Byrd worries

that the darkest themes of the area's history will aid its revitalization only if it is

marketed as its most enduring legacy. This treatment of culturally significant sites

could reinforce how the group's existence has been defined by the historical policies

and inadvertently sanction the forced movement they are facing now, as the arrival

of more affluent, white Austinites pushes them out of the neighborhoods where they

have long resided to the north and east. To resist this future of black cultural

"museum" sites on the East Side, Byrd stresses the need to "reanimate those spaces"
so that they celebrate East Austin's black culture as evolving and alive (Widner 21).
This will happen in part, Byrd suggests, through creating the kind of economic
vitality that black residents could see themselves as part of and attract them to stay.
Reanimation could help to texture and make less relevant the commonplace telling
of the history of black Austinites as separate from its white history or, in essence, as
a fringe history of an isolated group whose culture could be neatly demarcated by
both space and time. Byrd laments that many of the sites that marked black
presence via the built environment have already been destroyed through
gentrification. This is in part why she pushed for the AACHD designation, in hopes
that it would help call sustained attention to the ways that black residents shaped
the area and the larger culture of the city in the midst of rapidly changing
demographics.

For residents, the decision over Rosewood Courts' status will have important
physical implications as well as immaterial effects such as a sense of loss around
cultural heritage and belonging in the community. Tang and Falola write that of
residents driven out of their East Austin homes by factors like affordability, those
who moved further east have less access to critical health and community services
and "experience a lower quality of life having been forced out of the city they
historically have called home" (6). Even of those residents who moved north and
report having increased access to "public education, health clinics, supermarkets,

and public amenities," 48% would move back to East Austin because of an

"ineluctable sense of rootedness to Austin" and report that the "sense of history,

culture, and belonging" they experienced there is "irreplaceable" (7).

In addition to what's at stake for residents in the Rosewood Courts debate,

the consequences of such decisions are also pivotal for the city as they work to

achieve the goals set out in the *IACP*. Objectives like increased diversity,

affordability, and economic growth are essential to (re)making East Austin livable

for its long-time residents. Clearly the moves made to reach these objectives are not

made in a vacuum. The life of East Austin, the people and circumstances that make it

the place it is and has been, are already at work. East Austin's placehood has a

momentum generated by the rhythms, irregular as they may be, of individual lives,

of mass movements in and out of neighborhoods, of buildings deteriorating, of

traffic, and of the news cycle that circulates snapshots of these rhythms and plays

them back to residents as representations of their own lived spaces. East Austin is,

of course, shaped by the way it is represented, but it is also a borderless, living

fabric, the threads of which speak for themselves as one cacophonous voice. It is, in

a word, *kairotic.* Reanimation and revitalization are happening, but they are not

outside-in processes. Instead the space itself is animate in the sense that its

iterations, never stationary, generate the local context and set the stage for possible

action and experiences in concert with human and non-human residents, ideas, and

material conditions. Tangled gatherings of these iterations are always poised to tip forward into what's next and what will become possible there/then.

As part of this *kairotic* scene, the policies enacted in East Austin through Imagine Austin or otherwise are not products only of the city government but of economic initiatives, such as heritage tourism, promoted by the Texas Historical Commission. Travel aimed at experiencing "authentic people, places and sites of historical importance is a $7.3 billion dollar industry in Texas" that "accounts for more than 10.5 percent of all travel in the state," according to a 2015 study by The University of Texas at Austin and Rutgers University. The desire to grow the economy through heritage tourism and the desire to protect and preserve local histories are often indistinguishable. For example, The Alamo is a popular historic site that draws on the well-developed mythology of Texas's spirit of independence. The AACHD draws on a place narrative of important black cultural contributions made to the segregated city within which black residents were embattled, though quietly, for the last 85 years.

Authentic cultural neighborhoods are attractive targets for tourism as development consumes the city and ignites nostalgia for the "weird" free spirit and diversity that is Austin's own long-held mythology. However, with increased interest and traffic have come money and renewed attention on the land's value that makes longtime resident populations more invisible. Historic landmarks and sites with potential for landmark designations, however, are garnering more attention.

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They are used to celebrate a black cultural "legacy," as if that culture, located as it was in these neighborhoods, is at an inevitable end, the land now necessarily reallocated to meet the needs of the growing, modernizing city. Sites like Rosewood Courts, Hillside Pharmacy, Emancipation Park, and several black churches that represent the experience of East Austin as it used to be, post-segregation and pre-gentrification, are also sites that speak to these people and activities not being accepted as a living part of Austin's future, therefore rendering them more easily relegated to defined, designated spaces.

Preservation means something different to each of the major players in the debate over how best to treat Rosewood Courts. For Houston, it is primarily an attempt to freeze the structures themselves in time as much as possible as a way of honoring the black cultural life the place helped give rise to and continues to foster. For McGhee and his Preserve Rosewood movement, it is about preserving the structure while also upgrading some of its infrastructure for environmental reasons. HACA's interest in preservation includes elements of both Houston's and McGhee's preferred outcomes but with notable differences from both, such as preservation of only a few of the original units, the most extreme modernizing of the project's infrastructure, and the addition of more affordable housing. This spectrum of preservation approaches illustrates the kind of productive tensions that build up— in conjunction with natural forces of decay, larger population and building trends, Imagine Austin's specific redevelopment plans, and widely accepted views of the

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character of East Austin—to nudge space's natural flux in this or that direction in a process that is then generative of the place itself.[23] The constituting bundle of variables that continues to become East Austin is exponentially larger and more complex than is represented here. What the Rosewood Courts example offers, however, is a way to see how one thread in the *kairotic* fabric of an emergent and multivalent East Austin is positioned in relation to the others, and how the way that thread functions contributes to the production of a particular lived space.

Whatever ultimately comes of Rosewood Courts, the decision will have to be reconciled with the Imagine Austin plan and, more importantly, will help to define some of its key claims by contextualizing them within a real-world decision-making process. For example, the Rosewood Courts outcome affects other representational practices (e.g., tourism marketing) and material conditions (i.e., property values and therefore taxes). What will it really mean, then, to apply land-use policies to "Promote historic, arts, culture, and heritage-based tourism and events" (*IACP* 122)? With "maintaining history neighborhood character" (*IACP* 117) at odds with other tenets like fostering diversity, showing respect for all residents, and spurring

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[23] These plans for the built environment of East Austin are complemented and bolstered by the commentary/representations of the space found in digital forums, tools and initiatives. These include web experiences featuring interactive maps of the area used as storytelling tools, like Austin's Atlas and the interactive map on AACHD's website. The #IAmBlackAustin campaign aims to make visible the influential black residents, businesses, and cultural events at work in Austin in the present day, actively resisting the compartmentalization of black culture to East Austin and the impression given by historical preservation efforts in black areas that the culture has been important in the past but does not play an important role in the present or future of the city. Finally, *The End of Austin* blog documents Austin's changing physical, cultural, and economic landscape through images and analysis provided by a cross-disciplinary pool of contributors. Gentrification and East Austin are both popular subjects of the online publication.

economic vitality, there is little likelihood that an exact balance will be struck among all 7 elements of what IA terms "complete communities."[24] What, then, will prove most and least valued in practice? How will the plan actually shape and take shape itself as it is subjected to the fray of *kairotic* lived space?

KAIROS AND RHETORICAL SPACEMAKING PRACTICES

The *IACP* functions as a change management tool, not only providing general rationale to be used in transitioning between land uses, such as a shift from building to historic landmark, but also in laddering those case-by-case decisions up to larger goals set to help the city navigate its way through the rapid growth and change it is experiencing. Imagine Austin intends to influence life in the city over the long term. Lynch, the urban planner whose book *The Image of the City* is quoted at the outset of this chapter, argues that city design, like that undertaken through Imagine Austin, is a "temporal art" in part because the city can be "perceived only in the course of long spans of time" (1). Like all art, it demands improvisation on the part of its makers, which include residents, and it will never represent itself consistently. On "different occasions and for different people," Lynch writes, the space's "sequences are reversed, interrupted, abandoned, cut across. It is seen in all lights and all weathers" (1). Lived space, generated kairotically, is one productive lens through which to investigate the complexity of Austin in one instance.

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[24] From page 12 of the *IACP*: "Our city will be a city of "complete communities" that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and that values and respects all Austinites."

As custodians of Austin's legacies and architects of its future, the stakeholders that make up Imagine Austin's orbit are—no matter the length of their tenure as residents in the city—located there. That is, they are both products of and forces within the complex relations that together are Austin today. Formally, the *IACP* names "local context" among the technical challenges it faces in successfully negotiating change. But Rickert's conception of *kairos* reveals local context as the rhetorical breeding ground of invention and spacemaking practice. Seen as *kairotic,* space becomes alive with intersecting actions; it is composed by and driven forward by them. Residents are pulled along at different paces and along different paths within the same scene. Despite their inability to control space or to fully control themselves in relation to space (because of memory, circumstance, etc.), residents do take action; they are themselves pulsing toward a state of place that is yet to come.

McFarlane's triad helps parse out the way those actions, or even accumulations of feeling, contribute to lived space as well as how they are informed by it. Translation, coordination, and dwelling are three processes by which to contextualize a particular space as it *kairotically* and continually becomes place. If places truly "make themselves up," as Molotch et al. suggest, McFarlane's triad offers insight into some of the forces at work within that process, including residents' roles as influenced not only by their personal histories, memories, and hopes but, as

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Corder suggests, the collective experiences and widely represented histories of local resident groups.

TRANSLATION

One theme illustrated specifically in Rosewood Courts and more generally in the Imagine Austin initiative is how both a real, material condition of belonging and a less tangible, often cultural sense of belonging are pinned to lived spaces—inclusive of the histories, memories, politics, mythologies, natural forces, streetscapes, and human populations within them. Lynch notes that the abilities of environments to "make us aware of being alive now and together in a common present" (*What Time* 89) is in part due to the "external props" we use within space to make visible and to classify memory (*What Time* 123). Historical designations and the naming of cultural districts like those in play now in central East Austin are just such props, as are the buildings, plaques, websites, and hashtags that stand in for the significant events of the past and the historio-cultural designations they seek to honor and preserve.

It is from within the realm of possibility environment offers that, as Lynch writes, "we sense the flow of events" and "can attach our hopes and fears " (*What Time* 89). Whether to feel the productive entanglements of *kairos* or to discuss a more easily discernible tension like that between the statements of Fenves and Adler in this chapter's opening example, lived space demands translation in many forms. Rickert's *kairos*, cast as a kind of conversion process in which things collect to

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form something new and/or in which a substance changes state, is itself a type of translation. It applies also to the translation of conditions of Rosewood Courts into multiple, often dissonant calls to action. For residents, these countless interpretations of Rosewood Courts call for translation as they are put down, elevated, circulated, and muddled in the context of everyday life. In this instance translation is a first step in a larger deliberative process to determine which version of Rosewood Courts is the most true and therefore warrants action, whether preservation or significant reimagining. The very terms used by the *IACP* and by influential leaders in the conversation around East Austin's future—terms like redevelopment, reanimation, and revitalization—call for decisions about what the space's past has been and what it is now in order to sway the momentum of the place in the direction they deem best for the future.

COORDINATION

While individual residents or resident groups translate often unknowable or dynamic conditions to help themselves make sense of and exert directional force over their environment, it is the process of coordination among those translations that gives place noticeable momentum and fuels change. Coordination here does not necessarily entail either intentionality or cooperation. It does, however, entail overlap, friction, attraction, and distancing. At one end of its spectrum, it acknowledges that actants affect each other, even if it is unknown exactly in what way or to what extent. At the other end of the spectrum, it refers to an active and

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meaningful interplay among forces resulting in some (re)action such as division or reconciliation. Among the forces at work on Rosewood Courts' future, for example, neither those lobbying for preservation nor those advocating for redevelopment are purely in one camp or the other—all efforts would entail both preservation of some kind and some form of redevelopment, even if that is only symbolic redevelopment (as a historic landmark), which is unlikely to come without material implications as well. The stakeholders might drive each other further into their ideological corners, but they also reveal how in this particular place they are coordinating their differences and their similarities through public discourse and through existing government channels.

The collision of ideas, of actions, and of residents involved is shaping the structure of the present from which any future will proceed. This is the crux of Lefebvre's lived space, in which past, present, and future engage bodies at once and they muddle through, (re)formed by the interaction. Lynch puts it this way: "We act now, modifying our environment for the future. We recall now. We learn now, which is to say we modify ourselves to act more effectively in the future" (*What Time* 89). No matter the outcome of the debate over Rosewood Courts or the changes it sets in motion, they will serve as "a way of linking the living moment to a wide span of time" (Lynch 89). These choices and influences are not one-directional. Though of course it matters very much that residents determine "for what the past is being retained and for whom" as they go through the process of "[c]hoosing a past to

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construct a future" (Lynch 64), they are also constructing a past in order to choose a future. Rosewood Courts represents the persistent vitality of black culture in East Austin, it represents Austin's place as the origin point of American public housing, and it represents how black Austinites were pushed to one side of the city where their provided housing was not adequately maintained. Each of these ways of viewing Rosewood Courts may lead one to advocate for its preservation over its redevelopment or vice versa. Of course all of these ways of representing the area's history are true at once, and stakeholders must confront them and ignore them, shout them and silence them as they move toward some action on behalf of the property's and its residents' futures.

DWELLING

In the context of lived space dwelling begs to be thought as ongoing, undecided, and plural. In lived space, residents' dwellings—the ways they dwell and the spaces in which they dwell—arise within *kairos* and its concentrated multiplicity of realities. Again, Lynch inadvertently and happily brings clarity to Lefebvre's concept of lived space as read through dwelling when he writes that "[o]ur images of past and future are present images, continuously re-created (*Production* 65). For residents of East Austin, the overlay of historic districts and landmarks with other zoning designations touches on the very heart of rhetorical placemaking in lived space, where the worldmaking force of *kairos* holds inconsistent and off-rhythm bits of residents' cities and lives together, however loosely. Residents are caught up in

space, made and remade in relation to how it moves forward and simultaneously responsible for cultivating their own relation to its changing elements as well as establishing their own place within it despite their inability to direct the scene.

In Rickert's reading of dwelling via Heidegger, he suggests that "we do not gather things but are rather gathered across them" (*Ambient Rhetoric* 15). Dwelling then is not a controlled process, though it is an active one, demanding constant attunement to one's situatedness among the elements of lived space. *Kairos* helps point to the entanglements of time that we are "gathered across" as well. The resident who is dwelling is plural not only because conditions are constantly changing and s/he with them, but also because no person is fully present in the current moment. Rather residents carry traces of past habits and affinities, they have hopes and fears of future conditions, and they attune at each moment to the multiple pasts of others and to versions of places where they dwell. In the register of lived space, then, dwelling is a deeply social undertaking. Togetherness saturates the experience; no one is alone in being "gathered across" the elements of an environment, and no one occupies a wholly exceptional space. Others are part of the ambient whole and dwelling, as a way of attuning to that ambient environment and realizing one's own presence within it, is always plural as well. Even in the same place, people dwell multiple ways. Even the same people dwell differently at different moments, or they dwell inconsistently, their experience of dwelling being inclusive of partial and incohesive visceral and ideological experiences at once.

Dwelling together, however murky or incomplete that togetherness may be, is what ultimately produces space itself—to repeat Lefebvre's premise, social relations are the content of space and its productive engine.

These relations are not only essential drivers of the ongoing generation of space in every register, they are also deserving of the active cultivation and caretaking that Rickert notes is integral both to dwelling itself and to Heidegger's conception of dwelling as a "mode of thriving" (*Ambient Rhetoric* 15-16). A thriving Austin—and how the conditions such a place would create would presumably better support residents' wellbeing—is the ultimate hope and goal of city officials and residents alike. Despite the highly optimistic tone of the *IACP* and other Imagine Austin communications, and despite the focused intention on improving the lived experiences of Austinites, city officials do not expect the city to become an ideal place for every resident. They know the city's challenges are complicated and that progress will be hard-won. Even so, one step the public effort takes toward the improvements it imagines is to help make residents aware of their role in the placemaking effort and in their collective power to help guide the vision for the city's future. It positions them as important parts of the placemaking process—as caretakers and cultivators of their shared spaces and the many histories and futures associated with them.

Thinking about space not as something residents occupy (i.e., dwell in), but that they co-create across rhetorical-material ecologies by which they too are

cultivated illuminates the richly generative nature of their everyday actions and experiences. Positioning inhabitants as rhetorical spacemakers means that in the face of dramatic growth and redevelopment, when the well-loved material conditions of place are in flux and the habits and identities that residents form in relation to those conditions are at stake, change is not something that is simply happening to them. They are part of the fabric within which change is arising and have both the opportunity and responsibility to respond. Two possible responses that signal awareness of residents' ethical and rhetorical responsibilities and opportunities are 1) dwelling from a posture of caretaking—of the environment, of other inhabitants, and of the memories, hopes, and identities one values—in order to carefully tend to existing relations and 2) dwelling from a posture of cultivation— of the future conditions, relations, and self-evolution that one desires—in order to purposefully enrich the ecologies of which one is a part. The matrix developed throughout this project is one attempt to show the multiple registers at which residents' responsibilities and opportunities for spacemaking exist. Of course, what constitutes an ethical response looks different depending on the particular ecologies of which one is a part and the particular situation one faces at any given moment.

It is my hope that this project serves to deepen scholarly engagement with space as rhetorical ecology and to highlight the ways that spacemaking happens via acts of rhetorical invention. It is also my hope that it begins to open pathways for conversation about our own responsibilities and opportunities for intervention in

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the places we live, work, and study. Highlighting how space is produced through the

relations of its inhabitants underscores the possibility for generating alternatives

for one's self and one's community through spacemaking and placemaking activities.

It also implicates us all as inventive agents in the ongoing process of crafting a

future and emphasizes that what's at stake are not only the conditions within which

we will live but what modes of dwelling and of relating to one another will be

necessitated by that imagined future. As a small celebration of the power an effort

like Imagine Austin has granted residents to share their vision of the city's future, I

conclude with my own favorite contribution from a young Austinite who offers a

simple and unexpected response: "I imagine Austin MORE LIZARDS" (*IACP* 248). His

response, more than any of the others, compels me to attune to the possibilities for

space yet to be imagined and to the richer relation to the city I have been granted

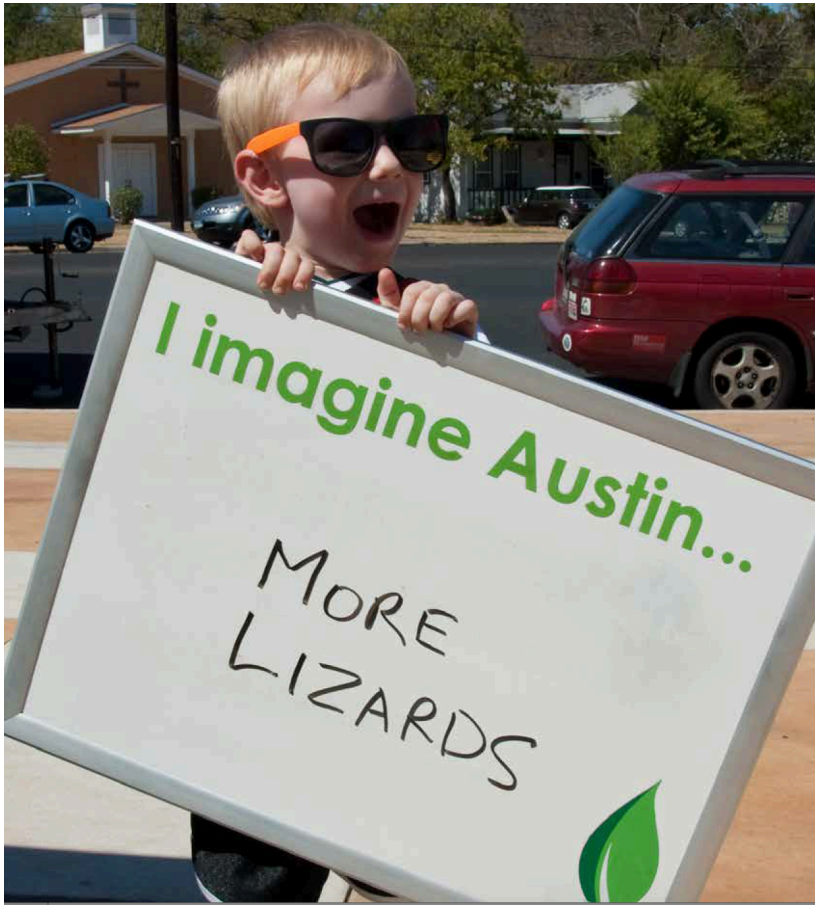through the city's effort at caretaking and cultivation through Imagine Austin.

Fig. 13. Boy at Imagine Austin community event.

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