A PLACE FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Camp Washington
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Goal(s)

This project was intended to showcase the economic and social potential of Camp Washington’s business district. A thorough investigation into the need and criteria of public spaces was conducted, which were then later identified, designed, and proposed. To supplement this idea of complete public places and street functionality, streetscape design was explored. This streetscape design was seen as an important factor for a viable business district and social interaction.

The three sisters of sustainability aspects (environmental, social, and economic) are addressed through multiple strategies.

Environmental. Environmental sustainability is introduced and proposed through small, but important elements throughout the new streetscape design. In addition, adding more public areas (as described in the ‘social sustainability’ paragraph of this report) will allow for more social interaction, community involvement, and more community pride as areas are now being shared and enjoyed by Camp Washington resident.

Economic. Economic development strategies were explored through the street functions, such as annual festivals, farmer’s markets, etc. With these functions, new businesses along Colerain may participate in such that they may draw more customers, or take part directly with the restaurants overflowing to the sidewalk, shops open for customers to explore, etc.

Social. Probably the most important aspect of these design proposals was the implementation of public spaces around Camp Washington’s business district. These spaces were made to be either adaptable or permanent. An adaptable public space use is one that transforms either weekly or annually into a public gathering space, while at all other times it is a functioning business or street just like any other.

Project Description

To reach the goal of public place creation and the introduction of Colerain Avenue acting as a gathering place for street festivals, viable businesses, and other areas for social interaction, various design elements (for the streetscape and the public spaces) were to be explored and proposed.
Neighborhood redevelopment and environment improvements were achieved through streetscape enhancements. These include the placement of benches, new flower pots, solar powered street lights, and bike racks. All of these elements have a style to fit that of Camp Washington. This style includes artistic use of metal for sidewalk benches, mosaic and organic shaped flower pots, and uniquely shaped bike racks. See below for examples.

Metal benches resembling the industrial elements of Camp Washington

Uniquely shaped flower pots

Bike rack examples

Solar powered street lights
Environmentally, the goals include adding subtle, but important, elements of environmental sustainability. Implementations of bike racks throughout the business district, as well as a proposal to legitimately designate the one-way traffic lanes on Colerain as shared lanes with bicyclists are introduced. This creates a more encouraging environment for bicycling to and from the businesses on Colerain. In addition to the promotion of biking as transportation, solar powered streetlights are introduced. These will cut down a lot of energy needed to light the road and sidewalks, while creating a bright, safe environment for the community members.

The social aspect goal can be seen more clearly in the design proposal through the improvement of the existing greenspace on the western corner of Township Street and Colerain Avenue. Currently, this greenspace holds a marker explaining a bit of Camp Washington’s history. Unfortunately, however, it is fenced in from the sidewalk, and overgrowing with bushes and other unkempt greenery. In addition to it being a blocked area of greenspace, it is littered with pieces of trash, exemplifying it as an area of lesser concern for those who walk by it.

**Rationale**

*Existing Conditions*

Overall, Camp Washington’s potential lies within the unceasing industrial spell it is under. Camp Washington has been, and always will be, and industrial neighborhood. To create plans and proposals, in which residents can live comfortably next to such prominent industry and residential and industrial lands can stay cohesive through the changes in technology, is a feat within itself.

In response to the existing conditions, the proposed design elements address that of social interaction and providing an essential, viable, and enjoyable place for Camp Washington residents and outsiders to gather, shop, eat, work, bike, etc. The existing conditions show great potential, despite the cracked sidewalks, and misuse of prime business locations (Colerain Avenue and Hopple Street to be more specific). The buildings along this business district have incredible character, and with some work, those that need help can be restored to original conditions.

*Stakeholder Input*

Camp Washington representatives exhibit incredible pride in their neighborhood. They were open to the proposed designs, as well as being straightforward with desires of their own. In all, the representatives allowed for the creativity to advance, as they were excited about new designs for Camp Washington as well as the rationale behind them. They understood the potential Camp Washington has as a community and were concerned more with other elements of Camp Washington’s business district redevelopment (more specifically the programming and fabric of businesses within the district).
Proposed I-71 and I-75 Changes

Because my design proposals were focused on the business district within Camp Washington, the direct connection with I-75 changes was not a major concern. The connection, however, was more oblique, dealing with the business district at Hopple and Colerain, a major intersection within Camp Washington and for those travelling to the West Side. The goal within this point of interest was to utilize all it had to offer, as there is an incredible amount of daily vehicular traffic at this intersection. Being able to divert those drivers from I-75 and the Hopple Exit from heading straight towards the West Side was an important goal when designing the public place and Hopple Street streetscape. Areas of transportation were explored with the implementation of a “Park and Ride” parking lot to allow those visiting downtown to park in Camp Washington and take public transit to the city core. The proposal of a realigned light rail (specified and developed by other Camp Washington student groups), would in the new design run underneath Colerain, and would be a viable option for public transit to and from Downtown Cincinnati.

Precedent Studies

Case Study: East London. This area is an old industrial sector of London with a very robust industrial past. Today, many of the older industrial elements are used as ornamental pieces, streetscape elements, etc. In addition, pockets of greenery are used to create areas of gathering for residents. Many of the streetscape elements have charm and industrialized characteristics. The examples below are from different streets around East London. All examples from [http://designdetailtrail.wordpress.com/details/](http://designdetailtrail.wordpress.com/details/).

Concrete lamp posts resemble the tangible surrounding industry

Toynbee St.
Pockets of greenspace are found throughout the neighborhood to create gathering spaces for residents.

Virginia Gardens

An old crane is used for a building-side ornamental piece.

Blossom St.

End Notes (if applicable)

Camp Washington is a neighborhood with room to grow. Housing redevelopment initiatives by residents and representatives is an incredibly important step in bringing residents to the neighborhood to live permanently. Simultaneously, streetscape improvements and public spaces will expand the interaction between Camp Washington residents, as well as allowing the neighborhood to become a destination, rather than a thoroughfare to and from the West Side.
Bibliography

<http://designdetailtrail.wordpress.com/details/>. General Notes: