

COMMUNITY- CENTERED DESIGN

A vibrant, warm-toned photograph of a diverse group of people participating in a community event. In the foreground, a young child is riding a blue balance bike. Behind them, several adults are walking, some carrying large potted plants and others holding up cardboard boxes. The scene is set outdoors on a paved area with trees and buildings in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange circle and several colorful, wavy lines in green, red, yellow, and purple. The text 'COMMUNITY-CENTERED DESIGN' is in the top left, and '2024' is in the bottom right.

2024

WELCOME!

ARC has been committed to ensuring all of our region's residents have a say in its future growth. Innovative and thoughtful community engagement is key to making this happen.

Community engagement in regional planning should actively involve residents, stakeholders, and local organizations in the decision-making process to ensure their needs, values, and perspectives are reflected in development plans. It fosters transparency, builds trust, and creates more sustainable outcomes by prioritizing collaborative dialogue and comprehensive participation.

Over the years, ARC has invested resources aimed at expanding participation, strengthening relationships, and deepening involvement in the agency's long-range planning initiatives. Community-Centered Design (CCD) is part of that investment.

Community-Centered Design is an immersive program where community organizations collaborate with artists, local officials, and planners to design community engagement projects using arts and culture. The program intentionally includes individuals and organizations representing communities that are not familiar with local and regional planning processes.

2024 marked the second year of the Community-Centered Design class. Partnering with two local community-based organizations (CBOs) the group explored mobility justice with The Village Skatepark ATL and learned about collective ownership with the Ke'nekt.



I truly believe that our civic spaces will be better if there are artists at the table. They bring creativity, wonder, and possibilities not everyone can see. As we try to cultivate artists as leaders in planning through our work, Community-Centered Design is a phenomenal space to practice just that. For me, collaborating with Rosten helped bring in an engaging and creative perspective that helped me make more room to center the creative process as we moved through the class. We were also incredibly lucky with our resourceful, open, and resilient community partners as well as having ten sponsored artists with an incredible mix of students who showed their commitment to the possibility and power of art.

I am grateful for the openness the partners and students showed in moving through many unknowns, trusting the process, experiencing discomfort and holding on - but tapping into their creativity - and successfully completing two meaningful community projects within a six-week project period. The doubt, questions, and practical concerns that came up throughout the process were real and yet we slowed down, listened to each other and ourselves, adapted, and were able to make it all happen. A lot was learned, individually and collectively, and I'm excited for you to experience a snippet of our class on these next sixtyish pages.

I feel incredibly lucky to have been a part of creating a space of possibility through art, culture, and centering artists and the creative process. This energy and commitment from this collective force was such a beautiful thing to experience and gives me hope on what we can all actually achieve in our own neighborhoods and cities across the metro Atlanta region. Here's to nurturing and building upon these magical moments and collectively shifting our landscape with artists leading the way.

– ROSHANI THAKORE

A NOTE FROM

I've worked in this very specific space between art, community planning, and education for over two decades in New York, Los Angeles, and the Pacific Northwest and was totally blown away by what the students in ARC's CCD program were able to pull off. Early on, I invited the students to think of this space as a special opportunity to think and act in ways that were unbounded by the constraints of our other obligations. To treat the common space as a precious time and to a degree I have very rarely seen, these student's made good on that invitation. This despite the fact that this space stood on top of busy schedules, full-time jobs, families, and great distances across the Atlanta region.

Likewise, the community partners brought their authentic struggles, their enthusiasms and pessimisms, and their deep perspectives to the class and I really believe that this authentic level engagement allowed us all to be changed by the experience. I was moved many times throughout this class hearing stories of how students and partners had been able to rethink their business as usual and truly make interventions into their city - to realize their power and the responsibility to use their unique power, privilege, and positionality to forge a better, more just, and more interesting world. Although more often than not, I interacted with the class through the strange portal of a computer screen I think that we were able to hold an intimate, risky, and rewarding space with one another- challenging ourselves to engage in new ways, and then, incredibly to execute these ideas at a high level and keep the momentum going long after the last class.

– ROSTEN WOO

THE CO-FACILITATORS



MEET THE

CLASS



ANNA-KAY SINCLAIR

is a Program/Project Coordinator with ARC who believes in the power of understanding and amplifying culture and community voices in decision making.



CARA SOH

is an architect at Page Southerland Page, Inc. who specializes in the preservation of historic buildings.



CHARITY HAMIDULLAH

is a local Atlanta creative striving to connect with her community through the power of art.



COLLINE HERNANDEZ-AYALA

is a Principal at Perkins&Will whose focus is planning and design of urban multifamily/mixed-use redevelopment projects.



AYSHA PENNERMAN

is a visual artist and muralist whose vibrant works convey powerful messages through bold colors and intricate line patterns.



CHANTHA SON

is a Senior Planner in the Transportation Planning Department at ARC and a recent transplant to Atlanta.



CHRISTINA HIROKO KELLY

is an interdisciplinary artist who works as the Development Coordinator + Community Engagement for DanceATL.



DAISY WELLCOME

is a communications and social practice designer at Perkins&Will specializing in marketing, creative placemaking and cultural arts.



EDITH "EDDIE" COURTNEY

is a Cultural Affairs Project Coordinator with the City of Atlanta and self-described tastemaker with a deeprooted passion for the arts.



EMILY MOTTOLA

is a Georgia native who is in her third year of service as the project manager of the Decatur Arts Alliance.



E.L. CHISOLM

is an Atlanta, GA and Birmingham, AL-based artist, muralist, and Senior Urban Designer for the City of Birmingham's Department of Community Development.



HAVEN HENDRIX

is a Planner I for Gwinnett County serving as the primary point of contact for planning and zoning inquiries.



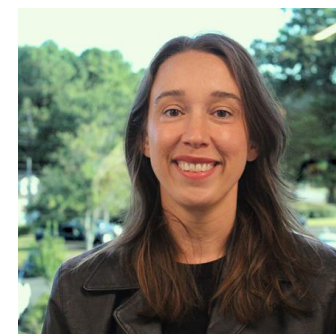
GAVIN BERNARD

is a British-born designer and large-scale installation artist who has called Atlanta home for the past 25 years.



EMIDA ROLLER

is a Georgia-based mural artist specializing in murals that enhance public spaces and foster community.



HOPE POLLARD

is a community planner working for Gwinnett County with a focus on public art, placemaking, and community advocacy.



JACQUE PRITZ

is a contemporary dance artist and founder of Catching Mangoes Dance Company.



JENNIFER RAMIREZ-SOTO

is a musician and bilingual outreach specialist at 85 CDC, a Gwinnett-based non-profit.



JUSTINE SCHWARTZ
is an Education and Public Engagement Specialist for the Natural Resources Department at ARC.



LAQUITA WILLIAMS
is a Planner I for the City of Sandy Springs, working on projects including the City's Comprehensive Plan known as The Next Ten.



MARISSA JACKSON
is an Urban Planner at ARC with a passion for building strong, equitable, and resilient communities.



NICOLE GILBERT
is a planner for the City of Fayetteville with a background in historic preservation.



NICOLE LE
Nicole is a ceramic artist exploring story-telling through functional and sculptural pottery.



KELSEY MITCHELL
is a designer at the Perkins&Will Atlanta Studio working within the Learning and Innovation group.



MARISA CARTER
is a community engagement strategist at Hummingbird and a passionate advocate for environmental and climate justice.



MAYIRA BUNTING
is a bilingual community and business engagement professional with extensive experience in cultural awareness initiatives.



MARIA EDWARDS
is a communication-focused, relationship-driven program manager and strategist dedicated to fostering open and inclusive partnerships.



PAUL LORENC
is a Planner for the City of Lawrenceville who is passionate about promoting safe and sustainable transportation in Atlanta.



REBECCA PAYOUTE
is a Planner II for Gwinett County with an educational background in Public Policy.



SARAH KITCHENS
is the founder of Get Out The Bed Productions who seeks to tell stories through video, photography, graphic design and animation.



RYAN SELLERS
is an urban planner at City of Atlanta and a PhD student specializing in land use with a passion for community development.



SARAH LAWRENCE
is a designer and civic engagement specialist whose work centers on play as a strategy for movement and engagement.



STEVEN ACETO
Steven Aceto is an urban planner with the City of Atlanta who believes in the magic of neighborhoods.



TYRONE WEBB
is a music educator, composer, and performing artist currently serving as Rural and Community Programs Manager with Georgia Council for the Arts.

MEET THE ARC CCD 2024 TEAM



ROSHANI THAKORE

Roshani Thakore (she/her) is a socially-engaged artist and the director of community engagement and culture at ARC. She leads initiatives including integrating culture into long-range planning efforts and designing innovative and inclusive engagement practices that center under-represented voices in planning. Through her art practice, she has collaborated with social-justice organizations, universities, arts organizations, planners, incarcerated men, students, youth, older adults, and more. She is passionate about the intersection of art, organizing, and public spaces in metro Atlanta.



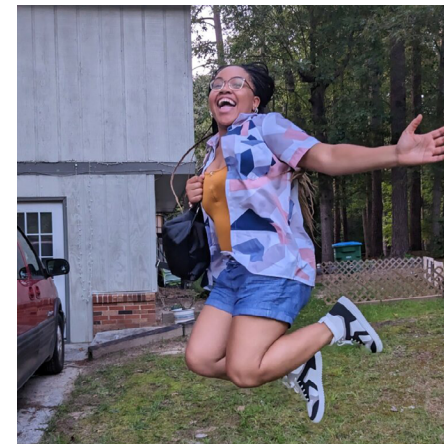
ROSTEN WOO

Rosten Woo is a designer, writer, and educator living in Los Angeles. He produces civic-scale artworks and works as a collaborator and consultant to a variety of grassroots, non-profit organizations, and local governments such as Los Angeles Poverty Department, the Black Workers Center, as well as the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. His work has also been exhibited internationally at art and design institutes as well as public housing developments, tugboats, shopping malls and parks. Woo is also the co-founder and former executive director of the Center for Urban Pedagogy, a New York Based non-profit organization and winner of the national design award for institution achievement, dedicated to using art and design to foster civic participation.



ELEANOR SWENSSON

Eleanor Swennson, MFA, MUPD, AIC is a community planner and multi-disciplinary artist. She currently works as a Senior Planner for ARC's transportation engagement team and lives in Athens with her partner, Mick, and three wily but adorable cats. She has a deep love for potlucks, poetic performance, and all kinds of dance.



ANTEMIL JORKEY

Antemil Jorkey is a culture and engagement planner in the Community Development department at ARC and is interested in housing and transportation and the intersections between arts/culture and people-focused planning. She loves cats, live music, a good pun, parks and the sounds of people existing within a city or place.



GINA CIPRIANO

Gina Cipriano is a Program Assistant for ARC's Community Development team who loves telling stories through creative design. She lives in Southwest Atlanta with her husband and toddler daughter.

OUR APPROACH TO THIS WORK

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) fosters thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments. ARC prioritizes engaging various stakeholders, taking a regional approach to solve local issues. Community-Centered Design provides creative tools and methodologies for more authentic and meaningful engagement for community members to solve local issues. **It is anchored in the definition of culture co-created by ARC's Community Development staff:**

Culture is the cultivation, intersection, and manifestation of shared histories, expressions, and practices that identify and amplify the unique perspectives of a community. Culture makes a space into a place when community members' lived experiences are honored and there are abundant opportunities for them to practice their civic agency. Since culture is essential to ARC's Community Development work, it is utilized to cultivate a sense of belonging, develop and practice community power, and examine and reimagine communities and neighborhoods.

CCD explored ways for community-builders to collaborate on investigating, envisioning, and manifesting new ideas for the world they want to bring into being. We studied real-world examples and learned from people doing the work, and most importantly - learned by doing. We explored the space between community building and urban planning and practiced authentic community co-design alongside our community partners. We made space for folks to think and do in new ways, collaborating with people from a range of professional and cultural backgrounds. Experimentation and learning from failure and success were key to individual and collective growth. With artists at the center, we looked at how creative interventions expanded and deepened the work of two local community-based organizations and how we could connect these groups with their immediate neighbors and within the global context of metro Atlanta. We conducted full-hearted, embodied, experiential research to learn as much as we could about these situations, and then built vehicles for joyful collaboration through meaningful, organic relationships. We learned in public, deployed our creations in real world situations and took the lessons where we found them.

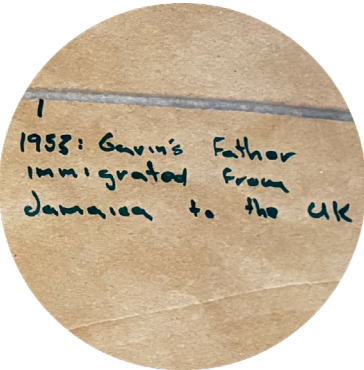


CLASS TIMELINE

INVITATION
& OUTREACH
INFO SESSION



INTRO
COLLECTIVE
STORYLINE
ACTIVITY
MEET SPEAKERS



THE VILLAGE
SKATEPARK

SITE VISIT &
PROTOTYPING
PRESENTATIONS
BUILDING
COMMUNITY
EVENT

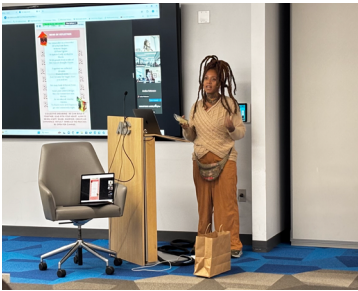


THE
KE'NEKT

SITE VISIT &
PROTOTYPING
PRESENTATIONS
COMMUNITY EVENT



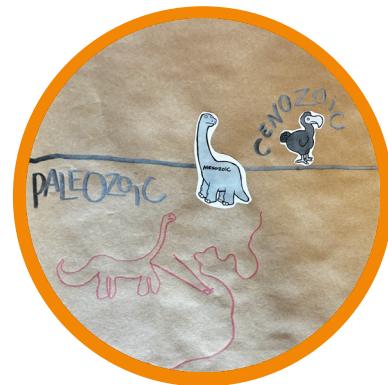
FINAL
PRESENTATIONS
& SEEDS



COLLECTIVE STORYLINE

During the first Community Centered Design class of 2024, we asked the class to think about moments in time that have shaped their lives through **arts, culture, community** or in **public spaces**.

Then, each participant added their moments to a **40 - foot - long timeline** to create a visual representation of their **shared history**.

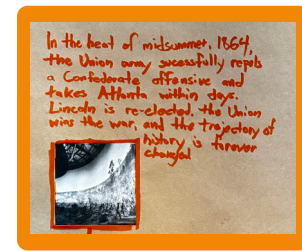


PRE-HISTORY



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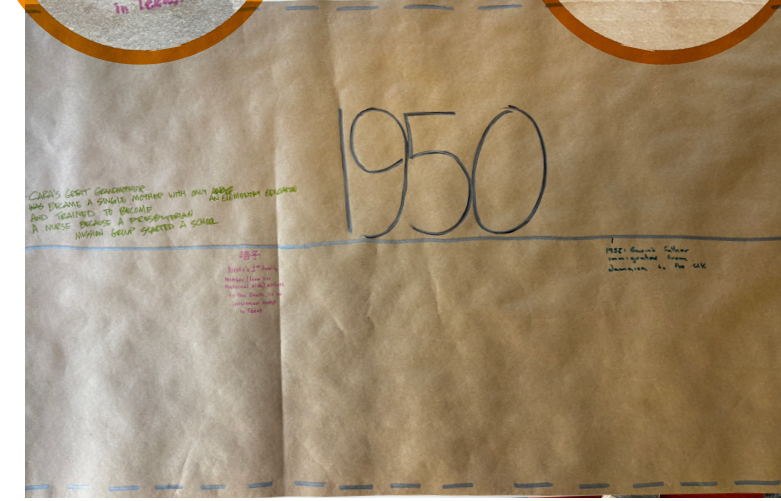
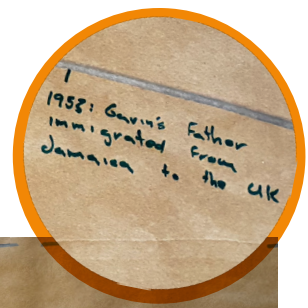
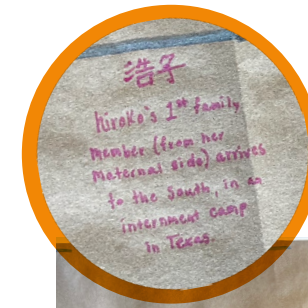
1800s



1850s



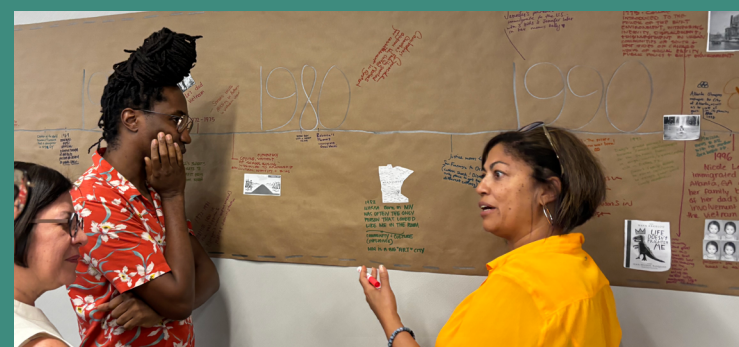
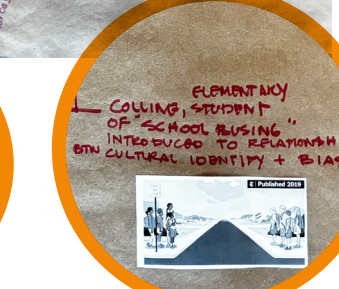
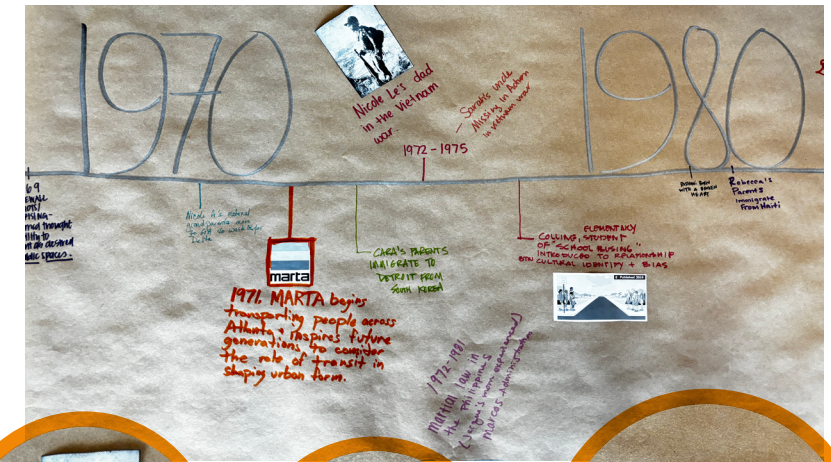
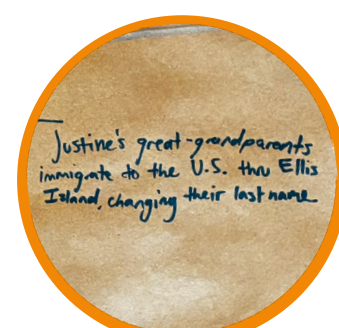
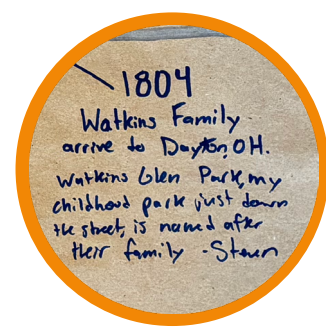
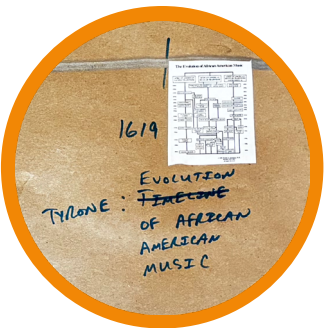
1900s



1950s

1970s - 80s

WE STARTED
AT THE
DAWN OF TIME



ASTROPOLIS

Sarah teaches herself how to code on (yep) her stuffed business

2005

2008

Steven begins to play trumpet in middle school - good choice!

2009

Seeth opts to go to UGA instead of an art school far far away... go dawgs!

2010

Arrived to USA "land of opportunity"

2008 OBAMA GETS INTO OFFICE REPRESENTED CHANGE, HOPE & REPRESENTATION

2005-2007 A 12-year old Erica C. is the 1st girl to play on her school's Football Team - challenging gender norms

2005

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2012-2015

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SPEAKERS



Community Development can be done at different scales and styles and have a range of outcomes.

We brought in multiple perspectives on the topic centering creativity and community, contributing to our conversations on mobility justice and collective ownership.



**GRANT
SUNOO**

DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNITY BUILDING
AND ENGAGEMENT

**LITTLE TOKYO
SERVICE CENTER**

"It's important to do development work, but it's more important to control how development happens in your neighborhood."



**AMY
FRANCESCHINI**

FOUNDING ARTIST
FUTURE FARMERS

"What *does* transcend cynicism is beauty, poetry, [and] resistance."



**KOFI
WAKHISI**

PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR
**ATLANTA REGIONAL
COMMISSION**

"There's a nexus between [transportation] safety and economic competitiveness."



Futurefarmers



**MIKE
ALEXANDER**

CHIEF OPERATING
OFFICER

**ATLANTA REGIONAL
COMMISSION**

"When artists collaborate in community engagement work, there's just more light in the room."



**RYAN
GRAVEL**

FOUNDING PRINCIPAL
SIXPITCH

"[The Beltline] comes from communities. It comes from people imagining a better life for themselves and making that possible."

THE VILLAGE SKATEPARK

INTRO TO ENGAGEMENT

Based out of a warehouse space in Bankhead, The Village Skatepark is not only Atlanta's first indoor skatepark, it's also a hub for creative community building!

Started by founders TK Billups and Max Kollman and incorporated in 2022, The Skatepark is committed to nurturing local community and culture by providing a safe space for creative expression and exploration. They believe in community empowerment by hosting hands-on learning opportunities like sewing circles, printmaking, fingerboard shredding, and Skate Skool.

The Skatepark's DIY culture drives the entire skating experience. The Skatepark also serves as a space for neighborhood meetings, gatherings, and resource fairs. They are a creative outlet for the Bankhead community to collectively strategize on ways to address local issues.



MOBILITY JUSTICE

/moh-bil-i-tee • juhs-tis/ n.

The goal of ensuring that all people feel safe existing on their streets and can enjoy full freedom of movement regardless of elements of their identity.

MOBILITY JUSTICE IN PRACTICE

The class defined mobility justice as “*The goal of ensuring that all people feel safe existing on their streets and can enjoy full freedom of movement regardless of elements of their identity.*”

The class collectively created this definition with The Skatepark to get grounded in their context and ethos. It served as a north star for the students as they developed relationships and brainstormed ideas with Skatepark members.

Students practiced “making as research” by identifying gaps and forming questions in response to the things they were learning about The Skatepark. Aligned with Amy Franchescini’s talk centering the importance of focusing on short-term wins as catalysts for longer-term wins, this approach encouraged students to collaborate on small scale iterative ideas and be open to new possibilities.

SITE VISIT

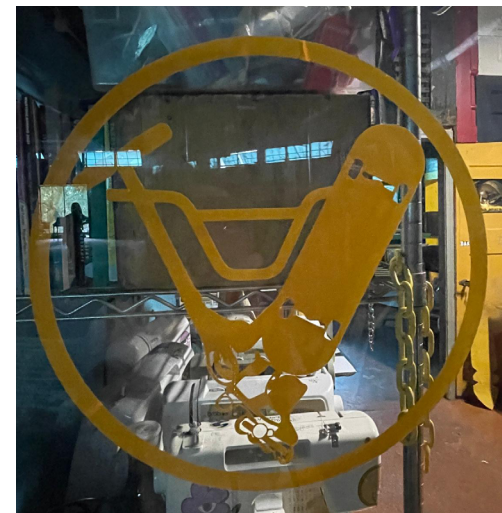
The class learned about the history of the neighborhood, toured The Skatepark and adjacent community spaces, and met two onsite fabricators, Aquinas Arnold of Grain Design Concepts (top right) and Joe Sissoko of Atlanta Forest Products (bottom right).

Community members actively participated in the class and overall project. Their input deepened the class's understanding of The Skatepark's context and allowed for an authentic collaboration.

The class learned that The Skatepark is located adjacent to the Atlanta Beltline's Westside development and could possibly lose their building located within historically disadvantaged Bankhead. The Skatepark had concerns around gentrification and displacement from the neighborhood.

With this concern, students in the planning field used their resources to examine the proposed redevelopment plans and discovered that The Skatepark's building was labeled "unoccupied." This discovery prioritized making The Skatepark visible and seen as a community asset. This process exemplifies in real-time why multiple forms of expertise is needed in community engagement processes. Creative cross-sector collaboration was vital for developing community-informed project ideas moving forward.





ASSIGNMENT:

Develop a community-engaged project related to mobility justice with The Skatepark.

Students considered two key guiding questions when developing their scopes:

- What's our intention, given our constraints?
- How will we evaluate the success of the project?

Because we started from a place of curiosity and intentional research, students developed organic connections with The Skatepark community members. We also included and collaborated with The Skatepark's existing community assets, Atlanta Forest Products and Grain Design Products.

To test out ideas, we started with eight different situations for groups to begin prototyping.

In small groups, students took those situations and produced scopes that were responsive to The Skatepark's context and needs. **Check out the next page to learn more about the ideas the students proposed for The Skatepark!**





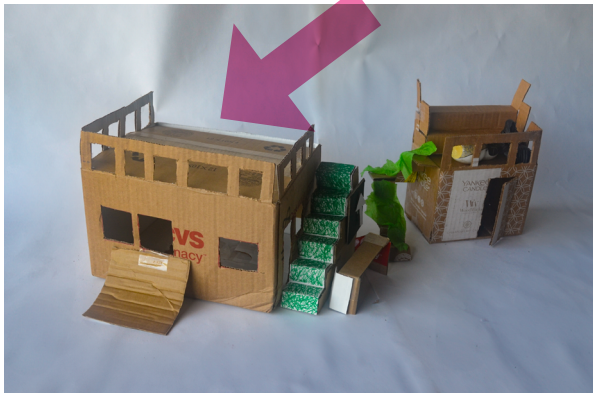
MAKING NEW FRIENDS

NEED

To connect The Skatepark to the greater Atlanta community.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

An outdoor traveling library/resource hub that can also be used as a resting place.



SKATE SPECTATORS

NEED

A safe space for non-skaters to hang out and feel like they can be a part of the community.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Several spectator "islands" around The Skatepark including a raised space on top of the shop space, and a ground level space with a separate entrance.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT



NEED

Getting the next generation of skaters involved.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A portable skatepark with moveable ramps and quarter pipes that can be set up at schools or other community spaces so kids can learn to skate in places where they already are.

WAYFINDING



NEED

Located in a repurposed warehouse with poor visibility from the road, The Skatepark not only struggled with wayfinding among the various industrial buildings on the property, but also a lack of awareness in the community as a publicly available resource.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Highly visible signage that can be easily seen not only on both the interior and exterior of The Skatepark, but also from the entrance on Donald Lee Hollowell Road.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



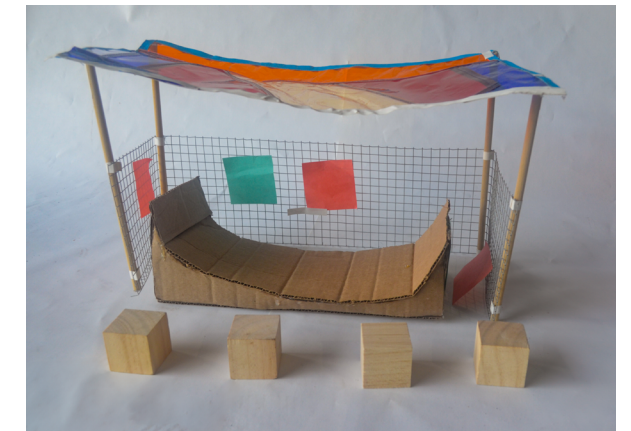
NEED

To expand community participation and interest in skate culture.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A small, portable, skateable wooden structure that functions as a recording device for community members to share tips and stories of skate culture.

NEIGHBORS AND MORE



NEED

A way for The Skatepark to interact and give back to the surrounding community of Bankhead.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A DIY shelter at a nearby bus stop that offers seating, a sunshade and a place for posting fliers about community events.



COMMUNICATIONS

NEED

Strategic branding and marketing.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

"The Wheel" - A dynamic marketing plan enveloping all facets of The Skatepark's community outreach including not just skating, but sewing, printmaking, and other community offerings.



NEIGHBORHOOD NOURISHMENT

NEED

Strengthening a sense of community through food.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A dinner party around Bankhead's position as a food desert, with menu options limited to foods that are easily available within neighborhood zip codes.



COMMUNITY EVENT

When the prototypes were presented, the class, along with Max, TK, Aquinas and Joe, considered which projects would be the most responsive to The Skatepark's needs and decided to move forward with the project proposed by the Wayfinding group. While many great ideas were proposed, the group ultimately chose the project that could be completed using available community assets within a one-week timeframe. The class came together and eagerly got to work, drafting plans and collaborated directly with Aquinas and Joe to create the two exterior signs in the shape of a skateboard and a wheel. Using what was on hand, a repurposed refrigerator door was transformed into a large skateboard-shaped sign, and reclaimed wood was used whenever possible. Planners and artists alike jumped in to learn how to fabricate and paint the signs. Thanks to the teamwork and dedication of everyone involved, the signs came to life in just one week and a budget of up to \$2,000. Creating the handmade sculptural signs was a collaborative process where the students channeled The Skatepark's DIY spirit by making use of existing materials and creatively integrating their tools and resources in the production. The process was naturally collaborative because of relationships developed between the students and between The Skatepark's community. Students asked for help when they needed it and leaned on one another throughout the production.

The engagement began with artists, planners, skaters, kids, teens, and everyone in between forming a procession to install the signs around The skatepark complex. The wheel-shaped sign was rolled to its new home at the entrance of The Skatepark, then the skateboard-shaped sign was carried to the entrance on Donald Lee Hollowell Drive. In the glow of golden hour, the group planted local greenery into the garden bed at the base of the street-facing sign in a powerful symbol of community stewardship. This was representative of The Skatepark's commitment to community and its position as an important cultural asset. The final community event showed the students ability to authentically practice community co-design through the organic connections they formed with The Skatepark and each other. That magic happened because the communities were centered and provided the space and resources to be equal decision makers.



WHAT HAPPENED

WABE.COM

OCT. 16, 2024

Keep Bankhead special': Atlanta's Village Skatepark wants you to know it's here



WABE

News Radio/Podcasts TV / Live Community Support

Live WABE 90.5 Fresh Air

90.5pm Here & Now

Change Stream

Schedule

Watch TV

ATLANTA BELTLINE | COMMUNITY | DEVELOPMENT | SKATEBOARDS

'Keep Bankhead special': Atlanta's Village Skatepark wants you to know it's here



Julien Virgin | WABE

October 16th, 2024

Listen 2:07

The Village Skatepark, located in the West Atlanta neighborhood Bankhead, has been relatively hidden. A new program is trying to change that. (Julien Virgin/WABE)

This story was updated on Thursday, Oct. 17, 2024 at 5:31 p.m.

Inside an industrial warehouse, a group of kids and adults rides on bikes, boards and skates.

Village Skatepark, is an indoor skate park that operates as a recreation center in the West Atlanta neighborhood of Bankhead.

PRESS

The event gained positive media attention! Julian Virgin from WABE wrote an article, produced a radio story, and shared footage of the event on his Instagram. Our efforts to spread the word about The Village Skatepark really paid off.

INSTAGRAM

OCT. 16, 2024

@JULIEN_VIRGIN

LIKES: 359 COMMENTS: 39

julien_virgin and villageskateparkatl

Original audio

View profile



View more on Instagram

351 likes

julien_virgin

'Keep Bankhead special': Atlanta's @villageskateparkatl wants you to know it's here.

Village Skatepark's mission is to nurture local community and culture by providing a safe space for creative expression and exploration.

The Action-sports based recreation center is open Thursday - Sunday 3-11pm.

"There is this narrative that it is vacant here, and we are here to elevate the visibility of the skatepark," said @roshanithakore , the director of community engagement and culture at @planatlanta .

The organization partnered with Village Skatepark To design and install a larger-than-life bright yellow skateboard-shaped sign to invite the community in.

The skatepark's director of programming, Max Kollman says, "It's not about making the place; it's about keeping it."

Listen & read the full story on @wabeneews

#supportahustla

View all 39 comments

Add a comment...

NEXT?

SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Because The Skatepark was not included in discussions pertaining to the Beltline development, students advocated for preserving The Skatepark beyond the scope of the class. ARC, along with student and planner for the City of Atlanta, Steven Aceto, arranged a meeting with the Beltline and The Skatepark to discuss options and potential collaborations. At the time of the writing of this publication, talks with the Beltline are still ongoing.

36

37

INTRO TO ENGAGEMENT

After The Skatepark engagement, we shifted gears immediately and moved on to exploring how collective ownership can be a means of anti-displacement with the Ke'nekt cooperative, a Black-owned coffee shop and community “third space” located in Atlanta’s Westview neighborhood.

Founded by Kiyomi Rollins and opened in 2023, the Ke'nekt identifies as a Black mutual aid-based cooperative that emphasizes business solidarity economies, drawing from the concepts of cooperative economies and localism. Their role as a community space fosters local growth, offering resources like printers and podcasting equipment to small businesses, creatives, and local groups, while also providing a welcoming environment for meetings and collaboration. At the heart of their mission, the Ke'nekt acknowledges that gentrification often accelerates when amenities like coffee shops move into an area and aims to ensure that the Black community directly benefits by redistributing a portion of quarterly profits back into the local community.

THE KE'NEKT

BLACK LIVES MATTER





SITE VISIT

The Ke'nekt's staff introduced us to the organization's models of community building and cultural preservation. We learned about its history, neighborhood context, and guiding principles. The Ke'nekt staff members facilitated a game to immerse us in the practice of localism, emphasizing the importance of investing locally and how it strengthens the community ecosystem. This strategy combats the threat of displacement from development spearheaded by forces outside of the community.

The staff identified immediate and practical needs, including more awareness of the need for community spaces and cooperative economics as a tool for preventing displacement of local businesses. They also identified a desire for creating more connections among other non-profits with similar or complimentary focuses to strengthen the impact of their work.

As we learned more through their hands-on research, it was clear that they were navigating a constant state of being under-resourced and overwhelmed. Founder Kiyomi Rollins voiced that the co-operative felt like it was constantly in "triage-mode".



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Throughout the engagement with the Ke'nekt, the class learned about collective ownership in other parts of the metro Atlanta region through a visit with Los Vecinos De Buford Highway, and through a town hall with other collective-ownership non-profits including The Guild, Self-Help Credit Union, and Metro Atlanta Land Bank.





THE GUILD
COLLECTIVE
OWNERSHIP AND
HOUSING



**METRO ATLANTA
LAND BANK**

**METRO ATLANTA
LAND BANK**
COLLECTIVE LAND
OWNERSHIP



What made [CCD] truly remarkable was the opportunity to create our own community and connect with community groups, forging relationships that felt as impactful as the work itself. [...] By blending an artistic perspective with a deep connection to community needs, we have the tools to elevate the quality of life for neighborhoods across the region.

– MARISSA CARTER



**SELF-HELP CREDIT
UNION**

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR
COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP



los vecinos
DE BUFORD HIGHWAY

**LOS VECINOS
DE BUFORD HIGHWAY**

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE
ON COLLECTIVE
OWNERSHIP

ASSIGNMENT:

Develop a community-engaged project related to collective ownership with the Ke'nekt.

Armed with the experiences from their engagement with The Village Skatepark and ready to hit the ground running, the class split into groups once again to create prototypes for the Ke'nekt. As the class got to work envisioning solutions, they considered what they had learned from their site visit and were mindful of the time and energy that would be required of the small co-op.



AMPLIFY ARTISTS IN THE SPACE NEED

A way to show off the work of local artists.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A virtual 3D museum that presents artist's work in a digital gallery.

SPREADING THE WORD NEED

For the immediate community to see the Ke'nekt as both a place to visit and join, and a model to learn from.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Create an 8-12 week internship/volunteer program for social media, community preservation, and documentation work.

GOVERNMENT AS AUDIENCE NEED

To illustrate to government officials how community spaces like the Ke'nekt can be impacted by decisions they make.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Board game that illustrates the impact of development on communities.

HELP WITH ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS NEED

The Ke'nekt does not have enough time or physical resources available to dedicate to administrative tasks.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A digital administrative tool kit to streamline the process of many housekeeping tasks.

CREATION STATION NEED

To activate the presently vacant rooms located at the front of the Ke'nekt's coffee shop space.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Designating and redesigning the rooms to be used as relaxation and creative spaces for the staff of the Ke'nekt. (Inspired by a recent coloring event hosted by the Ke'nekt, an idea was proposed for the creation of artist-designed coloring pages, and a suggestion for relaxation-themed gift baskets for the staff was offered as well.)



RESOURCE ALLOCATION NEED

To establish a low-cost and low-maintenance system for the allocation of space and resources within the rooms located at the front of the Ke'nekt. The desire is for community members to see themselves as "stewards" of the space to minimize the need for the Ke'nekt's staff to supervise and maintain the space in addition to their regular duties.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A digital system for community members to reserve space, with an option for reserving in person via white board. To help community members feel a sense of stewardship, a tea pet would be designed and added to the space.

A tea pet is a small clay figurine traditionally used in Chinese culture as a decoration or as a good luck charm. Excess tea is poured over the tea pet, spilling onto a tray below. Over time, the tea pet will take on the colors and scents of the teas. To embody the Ke'nekt's philosophy of rest, our tea pets were designed to look like bunny slippers!



COMMUNICATION NEED

To establish a clear way to communicate opportunities and potential threats to other community organizations.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

A bulletin board or an Ike digital kiosk at a nearby street corner outside of the Ke'nekt with information about upcoming programming and planning and social events.

TIME TO LISTEN!

During the presentation of the final prototypes to Kiyomi, she shared her wish to keep things simple. Kiyomi spoke candidly about feeling overwhelmed with emotional fatigue. The community was needing more support than usual but now the staff's capacity was at a minimum.

So we had to take a step back and ask ourselves “what type of engagement would have the best impact for this organization? How can we *practice* the idea of collective ownership to support them?

Rather than pursue the ideas that had been presented previously, we decided not to collaborate on a big class project like we did with The Village Skatepark and took a cue from the Ke'nekt's values of self-care and rest.

Inspired by a coloring event hosted by the Ke'nekt the previous week, a 15-foot-long custom coloring page featuring the Ke'nekt's facade was designed by students Charity Hamidullah and Colline Ayala. This coloring page was first presented to the community on the day of the final event, as well as duplicated for use at an upcoming community event called Ujamaafest (crossing another thing off of the Ke'nekt's to-do list!). Kiyomi had also been looking for an opportunity to thank her employees, so we decided to create gift baskets for all of the staff at the Ke'nekt. The baskets were thoughtfully curated with self-care items to provide a moment of respite and remind the team that their well-being is just as important as the work they do for others. A custom tea pet was also created by student and ceramicist Nicole Le and was presented to the Ke'nekt as a gift. In a heartfelt, impromptu moment, students took turns sharing what they had learned and appreciated from working with the Ke'nekt, then poured tea onto the tea pet as a symbol of community stewardship. We immersed ourselves in the the Ke'nekt's values of self-care and rest through the coloring sheets and thoughtful curation of the gift baskets for staff. For the Ke'nekt, collective ownership includes collective care for community. This was an opportunity for us to practice real listening to the community and respond to context and capacity.



THE KE'NEKT





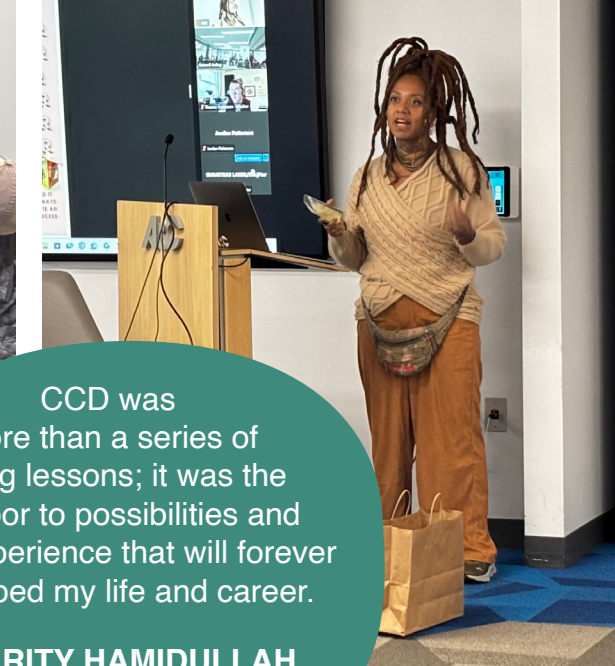
This class was **EVERYTHING**. It brought professionals from arts and government backgrounds together in a way that challenged all of us to think and act outside our comfort zones. It pushed us to be truly creative in our approaches to community building by expanding our toolboxes and breaking down our assumptions.[...] It also taught me, maybe above all, the value of progress over perfection.

– HOPE POLLARD



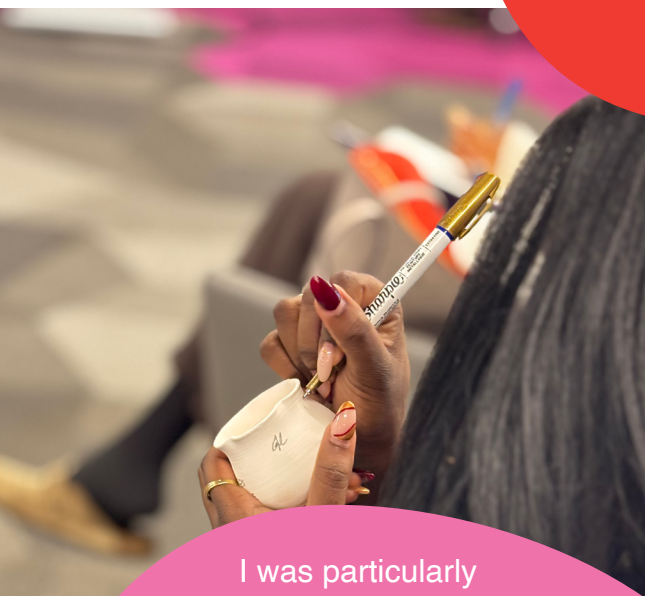
CCD was more than a series of learning lessons; it was the open door to possibilities and truly an experience that will forever have shaped my life and career.

– CHARITY HAMIDULLAH



My favorite part of the program was ideating and prototyping with two local organizations to explore some concepts into varying stages of execution. I learned alongside and collaborated with a unique group of people and expanded my network.

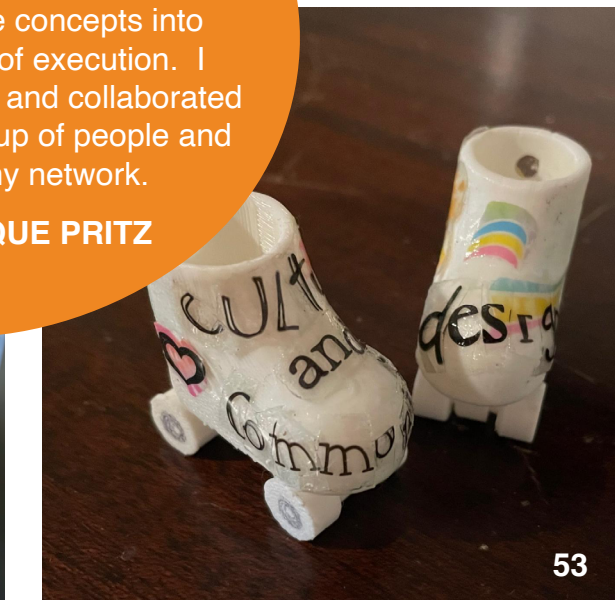
– JACQUE PRITZ



I was particularly surprised by how quickly our cohort bonded and how each session challenged me to think more creatively about land use and placemaking. This experience reinforced my belief that thoughtful planning starts with listening to the communities we serve.

– RYAN SELLERS

REFLECTIONS + PRESENTATIONS



A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO

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Aquinas Arnold
Avery Ebron
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Colline Ayala
Eddie Courtney
Eleanor Swensson
Emida Roller
Emily Mottola
Erica Chisolm
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Gina Cipriano
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Jacquelyn Pritz
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Jennifer Ramirez-Soto
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Justine Schwartz
Kelsey Mitchell
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Metro Atlanta
Land Bank
Self-Help
Credit Union
The Guild
Los Vecinos
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Highway
Fulton County

Thank you to our sponsors!



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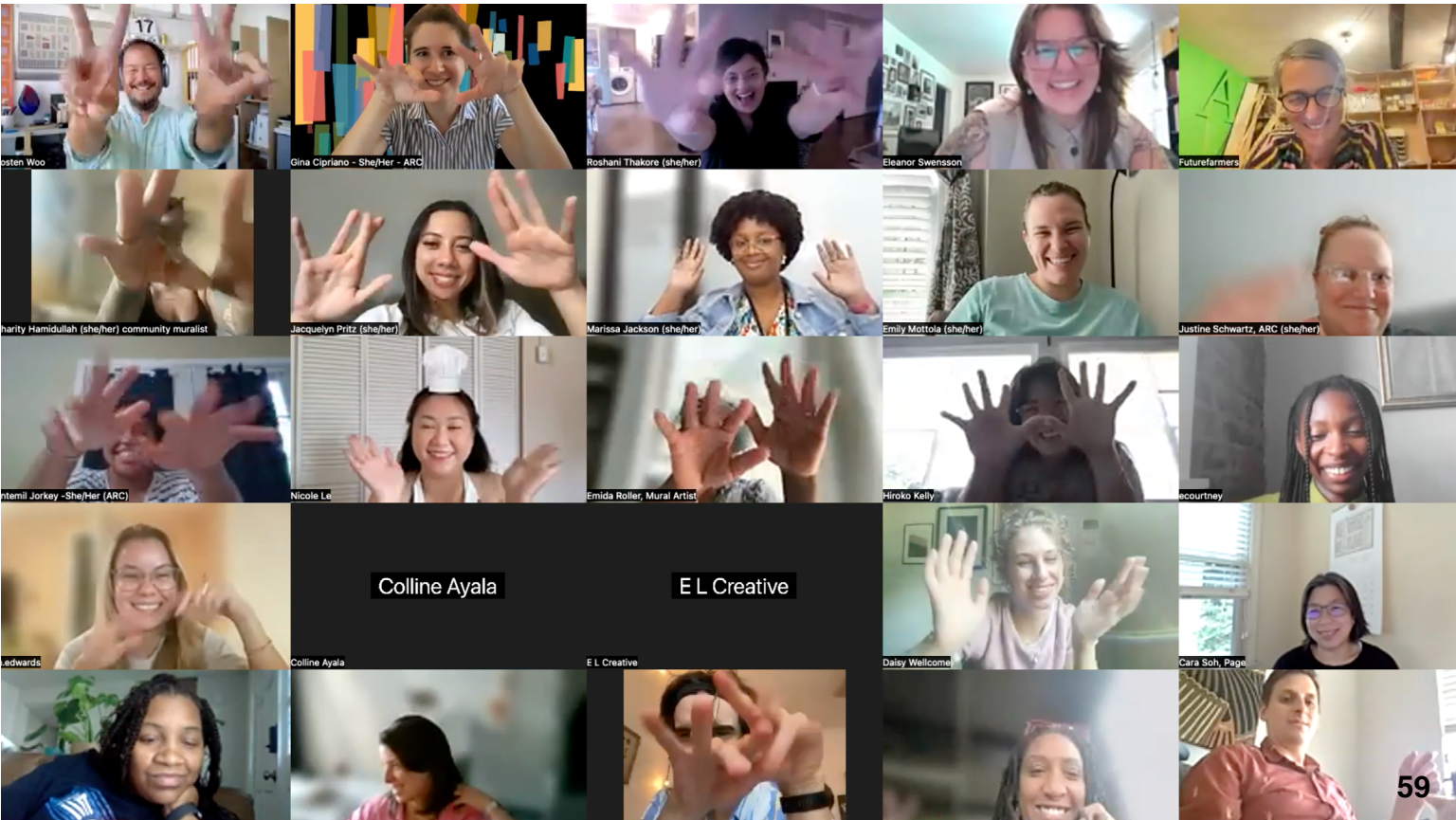
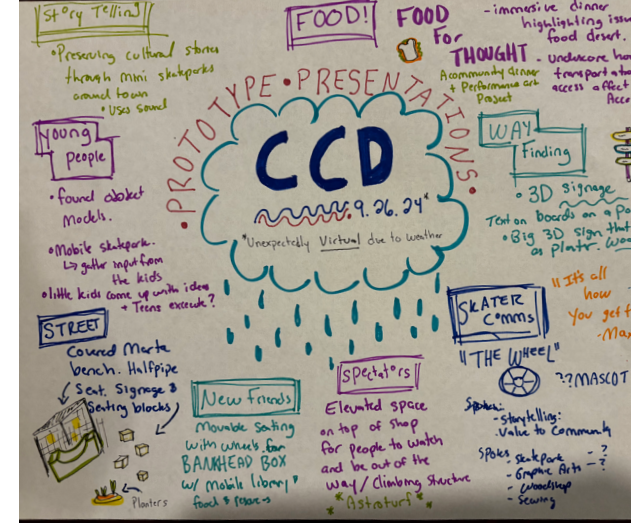
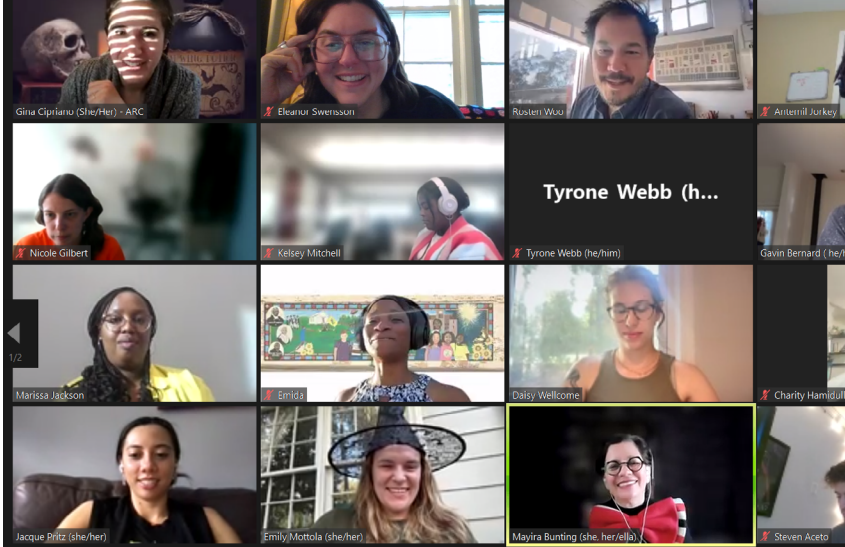
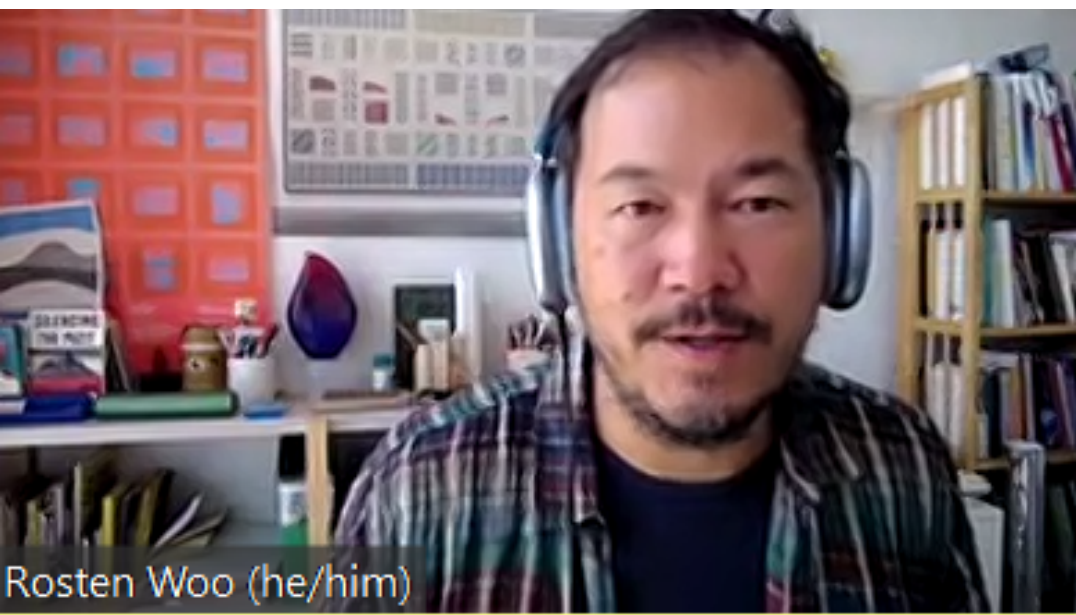
Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency, the National Endowment for the Arts.





OH YEAH,
SOMETIMES WE MET ON

ZOOM





ARC
Atlanta Regional Commission