



# Imagine

## East 9th Street

A neighborhood event to  
explore the possibilities

Documentation from the November 16, 2014 event at  
Abe & Jakes Landing in Lawrence, Kansas

## Contents

3	Thank you
3	Introduction
3	Contacts
4	Background and ground rules
4	Cultural History Map
5-6	Prompt 1 - Stories of East 9 <sup>th</sup> Street
7-9	Prompt 2 - Where our hearts are
10-11	Prompt 3 - What we envision
12-14	Prompt 4 - What we want going forward
15-16	Additional notes
16	Additional Resources

This report was prepared by Sara Taliaferro and Dave Loewenstein, representatives from the Lawrence Field Office of the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.



Thank you

Thank you to everyone who participated (and brought delicious food), and to all those who couldn't make it but who have added their voices to the conversation. Special thanks to ELNA Vice President Jacki Becker for helping to make Abe & Jakes available for this event.

## **Introduction**

This gathering was proposed by East Lawrence residents as a way to create a safe space for neighbors to speak openly with each other, and to imagine East 9<sup>th</sup> Street beyond the frame of the proposed ArtPlace project. Imagine East 9<sup>th</sup> Street was open to the public and intended especially for East Lawrence people. Invitations were made using the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association's (ELNA) email listserv and facebook page, and by posting fliers. ELNA asked the local Field Office of the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture to help facilitate the event and create this report.

Based on sign-in sheets, forty-eight people attended the three-hour event. This group included members of the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission, the city's Director of Arts and Culture, historian Dennis Domer (a consultant for el dorado, the chosen design firm for the 9<sup>th</sup> Street project), and many East Lawrence neighbors.

Participants were divided into color-coded groups of eight to ten per table. Everyone made their own nametags and spent a few minutes introducing themselves to one another. All groups were provided with markers, pencils and large sheets of paper to sketch and write on, and each table had a USDAC facilitator and a note taker. Every effort has been made to accurately report and transcribe what was said, written and drawn at the event. We apologize for any errors and encourage those with questions or corrections to contact the Lawrence Field Office of the USDAC at [usdac.lawrence@gmail.com](mailto:usdac.lawrence@gmail.com)

## **Contacts**

East Lawrence Neighborhood Association  
[eastlawrence@yahoo.com](mailto:eastlawrence@yahoo.com)

U.S. Department of Arts & Culture – Lawrence Field Office  
[usdac.lawrence@gmail.com](mailto:usdac.lawrence@gmail.com)

## **Ground rules and background**



The facilitators asked each group to share the strangest/funniest/most memorable thing they could recall happening on or near East 9<sup>th</sup> street. Below are each group's responses (The groups are each identified by a color). After fifteen minutes of discussion, drawing and writing, a spokesperson from each group shared their stories, while a scribe wrote them on large sheets of paper at the front of the room.

### **Pink**

- \*Guy volunteered to mow lawn for \$50.00. Gave the guy money and he left to get mower. Never returned.
- \*Tunnel (storm sewer) near Amtrak that winds in and narrows as it goes, ends up near Loewenstien's studio. Used to explore that as teenager.

### **Red**

- \*Found statue in wall of basement and brought outside. Was amazed that neighbors knew of it and pleaded for its return to the basement nook.
- \*Van Camp's Pork and Bean factory. Students and locals worked there together
- \*Long haired and low income
- \*Mario's tavern a gathering place for hippies, factory workers, etc., where Allen Press is now.

### **Magenta**

- \*3am Bike ride through neighborhood
- \*Came to look at house. Saw naked kids running nearby, thought, "Ah, this is home!"
- \*Shelley Miller's free sale. Someone came up to her and asked how much. When she said "free," they returned all the items they were holding and left.
- \*Door to door veggies
- \*Dennis in bunny suit in big snowstorm

### **Yellow**

- \*More Dennis stories, including him showing up at workshop and asking for a stand for the tree he had in his cart on Christmas eve. They obliged.
- \*Wakarusa Valley source for vegetables throughout Midwest
- \*Redbud trees by St Luke's AME Church
- \*Fruit trees by New York School
- \*Chubbys automatic

(Prompt 1 continued)



## Blue

- \*On 11<sup>th</sup> Street, person talking to himself, totally ignores other humans while greeting their dogs warmly, talks to the dog. Acknowledges dog not a person
- \*House with brightly colored yard umbrellas when person moved in. At first, unsure, then read about it in the paper, liked it and what it represented, put up umbrellas for solidarity.
- \*2010? Flood, pouring rain, ran around in the rain, Burroughs creek trail, wild water in the creek, bunnies, birds, babies run for their lives
- \*Returned to Lawrence after teaching Elementary School in Australia, was married and found perfect house to move into in E. Lawrence. Stone house. One corner had collapsed. Partner refused to move into half-collapsed house.
- \*Vernacular architecture, went into houses, got to know a lot of people. Ran into funny and tragic things. Not far from 9<sup>th</sup> Street, a house filled to the brim, lots of different things in piles, had to go in and measure. Documentation for historic restorer.
- \*Van Camp Stokely cannery 100 years, hired young hippies, 1972?, Learned to play harp from coworker. Coworker, man who ate sandwich with two slices of bread with meat and cabbage in between slices.



## Prompt 2

Facilitators asked each table to consider what they most cared about now (where their hearts were) in relation to this place and the people who live and work here? After fifteen minutes of discussion, a spokesperson (or two) for each table read the responses while a scribe wrote them on large sheets of paper at the front of the room.

## **Pink**

- \*Bike-friendly neighborhood
- \*Memories and character of alleyways, whole subculture of parties and socializing along alleys
- \*Mix of modern, traditional
- \*Tony Peterson's house-Quantrill's raid, wealthy folks moved out after that.
- \*Neighborhood has sense of self
- \*Open to all, inclusive
- \*Affordable housing
- \*Free expression-no social mold
- \*Brick streets
- \*Hobbs Park is a gathering place and is free
- \*Murals
- \*People outside and on porches
- \*Agricultural history and local growing culture
- \*Urban landscape that is eminently explorable, nature is well-integrated
- \*Lots of dogs
- \*Intersections are important places for people to gather, infrastructure that allows gathering
- \*Protect place for aging people and people with disabilities

## **Red**

- \*Word-of-mouth news network
- \*Small scale of buildings
- \*Part of original plan of Lawrence
- \*River has a way of coming in, being part of neighborhood
- \*"Anti-covenant" neighborhood
- \*Arts without consequence exists here
- \*Property taxes are manageable

(Prompt 2 continued)

- \*Safe neighborhood
- \*Authentic
- \*Neighborhood of tolerance and acceptance
- \*Village atmosphere
- \*Place that has history of being catalyst for change
- \*Neighbors are invested in their place

## **Blue**

- \*Vernacular houses
- \*Open studios
- \*Showing of short film "Facing East" at...
- \*Pedestrian-friendly
- \*Organic nature of growth
- \*Sense of community
- \*Local businesses
- \*Trees, redbuds are assets of an established neighborhood
- \*Safety-a safe neighborhood
- \*Food justice important-want to see Sunrise garden developed, want food and justice center in E. Lawrence
- \*St. Luke's AME catfish fry
- \*Maker's Space
- \*Dave's Studio
- \*Events such as the neighborhood cleanup
- \*NY School
- \*YART Sale

## **Magenta**

- \*Heartfelt values
- \*Culture of architecture rather than economic investment
- \*Mixed incomes
- \*Children playing at New York School
- \*ReStore and other services within walking distance
- \*ELNA newsletter and active neighborhood association
- \*Bike and walking
- \*Free sale

**(Prompt 2 continued)**



- \*Weirdness and experimentation
- \*Hispanic story and community, now empty lots La Yarda (La Llarida)
- \*Front yard gardens
- \*Embracing non-traditional
- \* vibrant place, continue to have that village vitality
- \*Sounds of owls, trains, etc. Once heard owl flying off with screeching animal in talons
- \*Rebricking parties

## Yellow

- \*People giving, warm-spirited, recognizing beauty in others
- \*Safe space for people to be different
- \*People are currently able to live here
- \*Mix of long-term residents and newer ones, continuity to that
- \*Sustainable lifestyle
- \*Walkability, people like to visit
- \*Unconventional properties
- \*Desirable place to be because it is what it is
- \*Historic value of narratives
- \*Taxes are currently affordable
- \*This place has a strong identity of its own



Prompt 3

Facilitators asked each group to consider the question - Beginning today and looking forward, what do we envision in relation to East 9<sup>th</sup> Street? As spokespeople responded, scribes took notes at the front of the room.

## **Red**

- \*Open up train station
- \*Laundromat/gallery, seating
- \*Light-up path or walkway with design work that tells history of each block
- \*Ninth street has not one single way down and up, avoid "cutting through" feeling for people using it
- \*Guerilla gourmet-pop-up chefs showcasing their skill
- \*Grocery store
- \*Bikeshare stations with bikes with insignia, also, air and cleaning at station
- \*Invite local artists as part of process in their space

## **Blue**

- \*Good, safe sidewalk
- \*Explore one-way street
- \*Lighting important but directed down, unobtrusive to neighbors
- \*Seating
- \*Different surfaces for walking versus biking, narrow or pinched lanes for non-car lanes with real dividers between
- \*Plaza for walking around
- \*Organic, changing art places
- \*Bike racks

## **Yellow**

- \*A process that does not involve eminent domain
- \*Bike lanes, parking, etc have variable surfaces and are permeable, not just cement
- \*Incorporate art into the street itself
- \*Streets can be pedestrian-only at times, with careful consideration of real and current uses
- \*Sustainable installation and infrastructure
- \*Historic foods offered, edible plants
- \*Lighting in street itself without light pollution

(Prompt 3 continued)

## **Pink**

- \*Real bike lanes with barriers
- \*Kiosks with maps and information (history, best trees, etc.)
- \*Walking allows strollers, walkers, etc.
- \*All history of East Lawrence neighbors incorporated rather than retold by third party
- \*New York school children involved
- \*Open space for markets and such
- \*Toll for drivers
- \*Pocket parks, minimal shelters
- \*Chalkboard for free expression
- \*"My favorite thing is..." conversation space
- \*Wall dedicated to ongoing art, electronic submission, living testimony projection
- \*Bronze statue of K.T.
- \*Butterfly and other gardens
- \*World's biggest whirligig or some other "biggest or best" local art
- \*Keep and foster neighborly feeling and relationships, people who live here know each other

## **Magenta**

- \*Incorporation of and accessibility to St. Luke's AME Church and maintenance of its art (stained glass windows)
- \*Fence with amazing art to NY School
- \*Living yard for NY School
- \*All transportation, including skateboards, accommodated
- \*Safe walking spaces, especially for children
- \*Affordable events
- \*Place for cultural history of East Lawrence to be presented
- \*Inclusionary zoning to keep the current businesses on Ninth Street
- \*Equity in living spaces, gender and socioeconomic equity
- \*Safe spaces
- \*Art as defined by neighborhood
- \*Policies that support affordable housing, spaces, and businesses
- \*Preserve Ninth and New Jersey Streetcar lanes
- \*Consider scale and maintain transition between downtown and neighborhood
- \*Little free library(s)/Little free art box

## **Prompt 4**

For the last prompt, facilitators asked the whole group to express how they wanted the process related to the proposed East 9<sup>th</sup> Street project to go forward including the risks and concerns associated with the project. As individuals responded, scribes recorded their thoughts at the front of the room.

- \*Everyone along 9<sup>th</sup> Street has a real voice in the process.
- \*Keep big picture while not trying to be everything to everybody
- \*Everyone who is affected needs a voice
- \*Projects include local artists and expertise on subcontracting, etc.
- \*Shade and trees, a natural presence
- \*Transparency of overall project and visions of area
- \*Clarity on everyone's intentions with the project
- \*Approve project through Lawrence Arts Commission
- \*Have paid ELNA representatives on decision-making team
- \*Historic properties are recognized and preserved
- \* East Lawrence specialists on design team
- \*Benefits for entire district/neighborhood
- \*Enhance parking options for business owners and residents  
(current problem that needs to be addressed)
- \*Proper funding to do things well
- \*Focus on what we can do so that mindsets are not a roadblock
- \*Maintain or enhance diversity and support for community
- \*Keep work in community
- \*Need specific plan to ensure accountability to East Lawrence
- \*People are willing to stand up and make their voices heard
- \*Identify where questions can be addressed, to whom
- \*Identify who can affect the change
- \*Old wounds preventing a new process
- \*Recognize and address in meaningful way that neighborhood is a different "agency"  
than others who are involved, not professional
- \*Prevent neighbors from getting overextended, burned out
- \*Be willing to communicate
- \*Proper City oversight of money spent
- \*Neighborhood approval of design plans
- \*Real use of information gathered at Imagining

**(Prompt 4 continued)**

- \*One or two representatives who take this forward to ELNA and other entities/stakeholders
  - \*One person does not want corridor project at all
  - \*Feel the process has been subverted. Original idea was about celebrating East Lawrence
  - \*Integrated placemaker is what one person wants
  - \*Positive thing, concentrated, 3 million \$ to go somewhere and solutions
  - \*Some people want some development and do not want to be perceived as road block
  - \*How to exemplify people's concerns in the plan?
  - \*Could celebrate with signage on specific places to find out what happened there
  - \*Should be low impact intervention
  - \*Open air public space and performance space. Some people do not want places that are noisy with music, etc. Some people want places to gather
  - \*Not specific development-but want integrated approach
  - \*Solar-powered walkways or paths
  - \*Color-code bikes for sharing so they do not end up at recycling center, would not be bought if stolen
  - \*Basic infrastructure without worrying up? Non-intrusive
  - \*How feel? Who served? Spirit of it? How used?
  - \*Ideas about changing use
  - \*How important is it to have cars on Ninth Street? Don't want traffic to go up Eighth Street
  - \*What is going to draw people?
  - \*People want and need a Laundromat and a grocery store
  - \*Expand kitchen at Maker Space, people could cook for friends
  - \*Like a chess game
  - \*This is an underserved place in other parts-draw attention over there
  - \*When speculation gone, will get a different kind of organic process of growth
  - \*Like busker stuff-should be linked to, say, Van Go who are learning about busking/but others want to have surprises here and there
  - \*Local art included, and need to celebrate the area of town-not all about artists
  - \*Could focus on other areas of town
  - \*Space for gardeners
  - \*Make train station into a gallery
- (Prompt 4 continued)

- \*Have things that aren't just high dollar coffee shop and upscale galleries
- \*This makes Arts Center look bad, save our art center for the community
- \*Hobbs Park becoming a performance place-it is a residential area however
- \*Busker spaces are different than big performance places
- \*Folks being viewed with suspicion
- \*How to prevent gentrification



**Additional notes**

The notes below were transcribed from writings and drawings found on the large papers covering each table that participants used to document their conversations.

- \*Borders because "free Borders" branch of Library was nice,
- \*904 Pennsylvania, found a Virgin Mary with wavy eyes (googly or wiggle eyes)
- \*Happy memories, walking to Final Fridays and always getting stopped by friends
- \*Self-determination
- \*Uniqueness, doesn't need to stick out, neighborhood can be small and quaint, doesn't need big improvements
- \*Pride, recognition, growth is already happening
- \*Perhaps need a monument to railroad workers and immigrants
- \*Homeless camp or Poehler Building, do not need anything bigger
- \*People have followed the railroad, brought lots of cultures
- \*Parallel endeavor-let's be careful how we memorialize things
- \*Integrate art into people's lives in non-punitive way, make improvements in a way that does not punish property owners (raising property taxes, for example)
- \*This is a legitimate and authentic place, is what it is, hope what is happening here can continue and people are not forced out, it remains eclectic and people can express themselves
- \*Moved here because of connections and community
- \*Let corridor be catalyst for seeds of new ideas that spread, continue to be a fertile ground, mix of ages and a vibrant place, continue to have that village vitality
- \*Not involved until got building, an acceptance of mix, but/and neighbors very involved
- \*People won't mind an occasional party?
- \*Would be unfortunate to lose what neighborhood is.
- \*Story of crossroads, \$400,000 to 5 million \$ property values now not much allowing artists, won't be able to own property and hang on to it
- \*East Lawrence is perceived as "shady" by some W. Lawrence folks but not true, is not a dangerous nor shady place. A lot of people on W. side do not agree with the East/West divide
- \*Celebrate uniqueness, different attitudes and lifestyle, catalyst for creative ideas
- \*Things that built mistrust, Art Center asked to sign on to project but was not including the 9<sup>th</sup> street corridor, then got T. Krsnich on the board. Later, a real estate agent came around making cash offers on properties, did not say who client was, (Additional notes continued)



T.K. denied it was him, then later admitted it. Believe he called fire department to inspect all building along 9th?

\*Freestate blvd. corridor project - paternalization, colonization

\* H. Fortunato could not put signage up along Burroughs trail without first checking with Arts Center CEO, city said

\*Technology-based art, expectation part of budget

## Additional Resources

Link to the Lawrence Arts Center's ArtPlace proposal

<https://www.lawrenceks.org/assets/agendas/cc/2014/11-18-14/ArtPlaceGrantApplication.pdf>

City of Lawrence email sign-up for information about East 9<sup>th</sup> Street project

<http://www.lawrenceks.org/subscriptions?l=98>

East Lawrence Neighborhood Association website

<http://www.eastlawrence.com/>

U.S. Department of Arts and Culture website

<http://usdac.us/>

