Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts and their Public Vacant Lots in Bedford-Stuyvesant: A Case for Creative Adaptations

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Naturally Occurring Cultural District is a pertinent framework to facilitate the revitalization of publically owned underutilized land in Bedford-Stuyvesant, in order to advance collective goals through creative engagement, towards the development and programming of these spaces.
Naturally Occurring Cultural District (NOCD)

- Indigenous and organically formed in place
- Embedded and invested in place
- Cluster of cultural entities and activities
- Include: arts organizations, creative industries, local businesses, community organizations
Creative Engagement

• Community Context
• Participatory & Interactive
• Collective Purpose
• Social & Cultural Capital
• Creative City
NOCD-NY Working Group

- 2011: Coalition of citywide cultural organizations and Individuals
- Role of culture in community development and building social networks and cohesion
- Advocacy, Technical Support, Mentorship Alliance Building
- Current research: Spaces

nocdny.org
Bedford-Stuyvesant
Community Board 3, Brooklyn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Public Space</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black: 63%</td>
<td>Private Sector: 68%</td>
<td>Access to a park within ¼ mile walking distance: 93%</td>
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<td>Latino: 18%</td>
<td>Government: 17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White: 14%</td>
<td>Non-Profit: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian: 3%</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: 2%</td>
<td>Median Income: $33,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>10% growth</td>
<td>Below Poverty: 33%</td>
<td>Perception on the presence of excellent neighborhood cultural activities: 9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>since 2000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Approx. total: 134,000</td>
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Source: Center for the Study of Brooklyn
Community District 3 Brooklyn Neighborhood Report 2012.
CB3 Districts Needs Statement 2013

**Housing**
- Develop affordable housing to meet demand
- Vacant lots around Fulton Street in South Bed-Stuy for housing (2 projects completed)

**Environment**
- Meet PlaNYC 2030 Goals to reduce CO2 emissions
- Improve Air Quality to mitigate asthma problems

**Art & Culture**
- Financial support for organizations
- African-American Cultural Center
- Opportunities to showcase local talent
- Innovative use of public space
• Creative Placemaking through tactical means: “guerilla urbanism” “pop-up urbanism” “city repair”

• Pop-Up Shops, Pavement to Parks, Pavement to Plaza, Play Streets

• Experimentation, Pilots

• Flexible and short-term, with long-term potential
• Founded 2011: Public education, free accessible information about availability of publically owned vacant lots in NYC

• Data filtered to locate sites appropriate for community use: Street-level access, wider than 2 feet, not currently in use

• Advocacy, Technical Expertise, Facilitation throughout stages of planning and implementation

• Interim use for community purpose
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>Community Gathering, Market Place</td>
<td>NOMAD Gardens (San Francisco, CA), Vacant Lot Project (Albany, NY), ARTS Market (Phoenix, AR), Free Store (Brooklyn, NY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Annex, Pop-Up</td>
<td>Peralta Junction (Oakland, CA), Dekalb Market (Brooklyn, NY), Putting Lot (Brooklyn, NY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultivation</td>
<td>Agriculture, Native Planting</td>
<td>Parkway Partners (New Orleans, LA), Mill Creek Farm (Philadelphia, PA), Green Plate Special (Seattle, WA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Performance Art (Music, Dance, Theater, Poetry)</td>
<td>A Lot Series (Long Beach, CA), Mission Arts and Performance Project (San Francisco, CA), Holding Patterns (Seattle, WA), PlayHouse (Philadelphia, PA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Alternative Energy, Water Harvesting</td>
<td>Growth Through Energy &amp; Community Health (Pittsburgh, PA), Reimaging Cleveland (Cleveland, Ohio), Small Street Rain Garden Project (Baltimore, MD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remediation</td>
<td>Clean-Up, Recycling</td>
<td>Phytoremediation Project (Bronx, NY), Compost For Brooklyn CB4 (Brooklyn, NY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visualization</td>
<td>Visual Art, Community Canvas</td>
<td>Vacant Lot Project (Albany, CA), Lincoln Street Art Park (Detroit, MI), Holding Patterns (Seattle, WA), LentSpace (Manhattan, NY)</td>
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Implementation

• Cultivate Participation

• NOCD network and framework to facilitate

• Process: Workshop, Charette, Interviews, Survey, etc.

• Collaboration is imperative