

Design a Public Market, Socially

A process of transformation in Hollins Market

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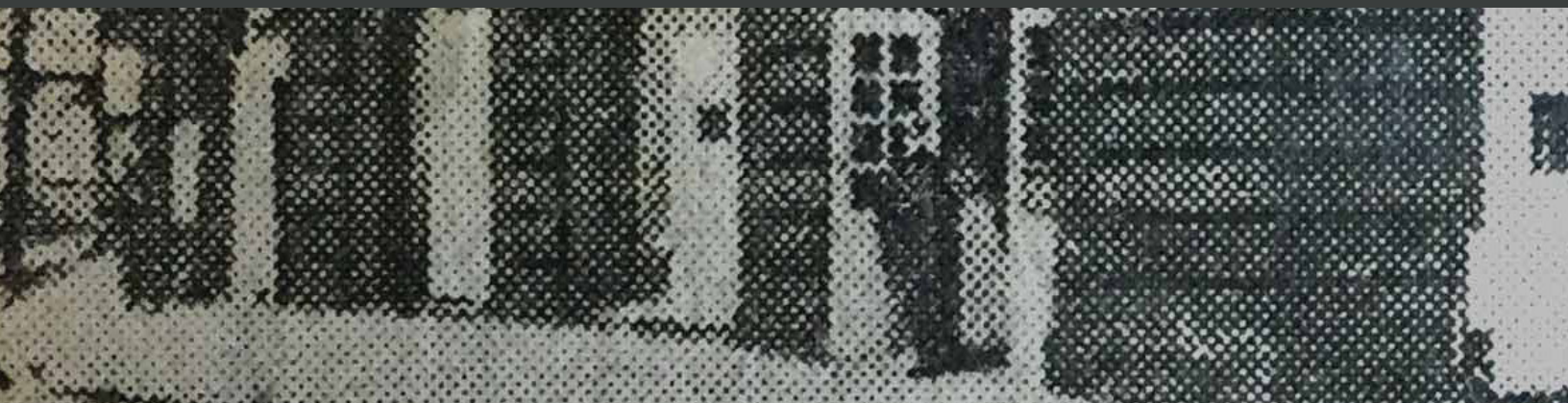


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	PREFACE
2	THE CONTEXT
8	RESEARCH
	SECONDARY RESEARCH AND PHENOMENA
	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
26	ANALYSIS
	FIVE WHYS
	THEMES AND INSIGHTS
32	IDEATION
	"HOW MIGHT WE" QUESTIONS
	COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP
40	INTERVENTION
	THEORY OF CHANGE
	POP-UP HOLLINS MARKET
48	REFLECTION
50	BIBLIOGRAPHY

PREFACE

I grew up in Taiwan where I bought food at traditional public markets. My mom and merchants taught me what food is and how to appreciate it through my many market shopping experiences. These experiences - sweet and salty, aromatic and stimulating, hard and tender - are linked with memories. For me, moments in public markets may not be sophisticated, but they are so true and real. Since those young days, public markets have been a source of fascination for me.

As an adult, after moving to the US, I noticed that almost everybody shops at supermarkets where food is processed, packaged, and labeled in an industrialized language. The appreciation of food and interactions between merchants and patrons are missing in the current setting.

This stark difference with the situation in Taiwan drove me to think about the historic way people shopped and interacted with food and people in this country. This in turn led me to look at public markets, and eventually to this project where I have tried to gain a deeper understanding of the role of a public market in a social ecosystem and what opportunities and challenges the public market is facing in modern day America.

This thesis explains the path of my project. It starts by explaining what public markets are and why they are valuable to communities. I then explain some of the particular characteristics of Hollins Market, including the challenges it is facing and some other projects that have tried to deal with those challenges. Next, I detail my own secondary and first-hand research, including observations, participation, and interviews with Hollins Market stakeholders. From this, I postulate reasons Hollins Market is facing its current problems and explain how I then worked with stakeholders to develop and carry out an intervention. I conclude by evaluating the project, and considering possible next steps.

THE CONTEXT

What does a public market do?

Why does Baltimore city need public markets?

Why Hollins Market?

What does a public market do?

In America, a public market is a city-owned facility that features diverse vendors selling a variety of food and non-food products. Historically, most cities have flourished alongside the roots of public markets. Overtime, the market becomes as substantial as a religious temple in people's lives, especially in an immigrant society - newcomers exchange their background, share their wisdom, and embrace different people with different cultures.

Public markets are the cornerstone in a community. It is a lively gathering place, a small business catalyst, a food security provider, and indeed, an opportunity-incubator: the opportunities for people to live, exchange, share and feel a sense of belonging.

However, the historical public market retail model was negatively impacted by the rise of fast food chains and supermarkets in the 1950s. Lots of public markets in many cities were forced to end their operation and close their doors .

But today, in some cities, we are beginning to see a reversal. As the leading national organization for public markets, Project for Public Spaces notes, "Markets spark urban revitalization, foster community diversity and improve public health." The public market renaissance has begun in many cities along with awareness of local, slow food movement and creative placemaking. Public markets are regaining their importance today in cities for their functions of urban revitalization, food security, economic development and social stability.

Can a thriving public market create economic opportunities? Can a vibrant public market build community resilience? The answer is positive. Establishing a thriving public market is actually a means of gaining financial sustainability, creating social stability and building community resilience.

Why does Baltimore city need public markets?

The importance of public markets in Baltimore city should be emphasized for two reasons. First, the city needs more social-oriented gathering places for people to interact with and support each other. Baltimore is struggling with many economic and social challenges such as poverty, an increasing school dropout rate, violence, property vacancy and homelessness. The city has attempted to deal with this issue in the past by opening recreation centers. However, without enough funding to keep them operating, there are not positive environments in the city where people can spend time sharing and learning. In contrast to, for example, a recreation center, a successful public market can both sustain itself financially and fulfill the role of a community gathering hub.

Secondly, instead of needing to build everything from scratch, the city is fortunate to have six public markets still standing, forming the Baltimore public market system. Baltimore Public Markets Corporation (BPMC)

operates and manages five of them – Avenue Market, Broadway Market, Cross Street Market, Hollins Market and Northeast Market, while Lexington Market is under the management of Lexington Market Inc. These two quasi-governmental organizations share the same board of directors, executive director and marketing resources. Some of the markets reside in the neighborhoods where they are most needed, where people are experiencing daily frustrations such as unemployment, poor education, and food deserts. These issues can potentially be addressed by providing a market with a public mission in a neighborhood.

Therefore, revitalizing and optimally utilizing public markets should be prioritized, especially in marginalized areas in Baltimore City. This thesis project focused on researching different challenges and opportunities faced by Baltimore public markets and utilizing social design processes and methods to explore ways to revitalize public markets and benefit the community.



Baltimore Public Market Map

Why Hollins Market?

In order to develop a deeper understanding of public markets and their role in a community, I chose Hollins Market and southwest Baltimore as my research target. I picked it for its three unique attributes: proximity to food deserts, its representative market building and history, and a changing community.

First, according to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, which conducted the "Mapping Baltimore City's Food Environment: 2015 Report," Hollins Market is abutting food desert areas on the north and west end. This fact indicates that the area is under resourced and people have limited options for healthful food. As a public market, Hollins Market has a great social responsibility to fulfill.

Secondly, established in 1836, Hollins Market still preserves its historic building which is the Baltimore's only remaining two-story public market building. The second floor used to be a community gathering center until the 1970s. At that time, due to maintenance needs, community

volunteers and business owners collectively contributed their effort and money to maintain Hollins Market. The market used to be the social, cultural and civic hub of Baltimore City. Hollins Market was the heart of community spirit.

Last but not least, Hollins Market is in the middle of seven neighborhoods in southwest Baltimore: Barre Circle, Franklin Square, Hollins Roundhouse, Mount Clare, Pigtown, Poppleton, and Union Square. Each neighborhood has different socioeconomic levels and characteristics. People describe Hollins Market as a place sandwiched between gentrification and blight in southwest Baltimore. It is surrounded by the Poppleton redevelopment project and the University of Maryland BioPark, and high vacancy and intensive violence. Hollins Market could and should play an important role in these racially and economically diverse neighborhoods to ensure social equality for different populations.

Overall, Hollins Market needs a transformative process to bring back the glorious community spirit and to better serve its people and neighborhoods.

The empty second floor of Hollins Market.

RESEARCH

I investigated how Hollins Market functions and the relationship between Hollins Market and southwest Baltimore neighborhoods. Based on the news, previous Hollins Market-related projects and my interview with the executive director of BPMC, I identified three phenomena that describe the current situation. Then, I went in the field to do detailed qualitative research for more in depth insights.

SECONDARY RESEARCH & IDENTIFY CHALLENGES

Declining business and empty spaces

The Baltimore public market system is not perceived as performing well. The Baltimore Sun reports that “for decades Baltimore has wrestled with falling sales at its public markets.” Before a public market brings social value to a community, it should first invigorate itself. As The Project for Public Spaces indicates, “The social benefits of public markets are achieved through economic strength, not the other way around.”

Hollins Market and the surrounding three blocks used to host over 300 stalls, most of which were operated by immigrants. Now it is home to only 11 vendors. There are still lots of empty spaces to be filled. It is a hard sell for both empty stalls and existing businesses. Throughout this eight month project, the only ownership of a business that turned over was that of the cellphone shop.

Disconnection between Hollins Market and the surrounding community

As BPMC mentioned in a brochure, “the markets are the last stronghold of independent food merchants who trade on personalized service and the quality of their merchandise in an atmosphere that still reflects the community around it.” However, the truth is that a challenging obstacle is sensed in Hollins Market - it is hardly keeping up with the change of the community.

In my interview with the BPMC executive director, Robert Thomas, he mentioned that “The biggest challenge for the success of the market is the disconnection between community and markets.” The community is certainly changing. As people started cooking less and eating out more, fast food stands selling chicken wings and pretzels began popping up all over the markets. In the 1950s, when fast food became a trend, public markets adapted fried food and

carry-out business. Today, after the passing of more time, however, the public is starting to focus on health and changing their diet. Nevertheless, Baltimore public markets are not agile enough to follow people's dining and shopping behaviors and have not yet responded to the local, organic and healthy food movement.

A hot topic, unimplemented projects

During the time 2012 to 2015 there was a lot of work and focus on Hollins Market. I studied three projects (see the following table and the highlighted information) that were conducted by different organizations: Project for Public Spaces, Southwest Partnership, and Center for Social Design. Clearly, revitalizing Hollins Market is an existing popular idea. These projects focused on improving building infrastructure, branding, accessibility and creating a market district.

However, little improvement or implementation followed. This raised another question: why has nothing changed? According to the

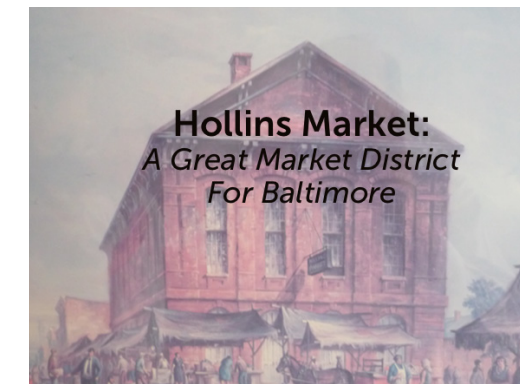
conversations I had with researchers who conducted the Southwest Partnership Vision Plan, the reason for limited implementation is that there is no one to connect the market with the community to execute the plan. This says, focusing on people's connections is the key to move the progress to the next level.

In these projects, Hollins Market was viewed as one entity due to the researcher's external point of view. In contrast, I shifted to an internal perspective and recognized key stakeholders in four categories: residents, shoppers, market management and merchants. The scope of this thesis is focused on Hollins Market itself instead of the whole market district. My goal is to use human centered design process to recognize stakeholders' needs, generate insights from stakeholders and reconnect the market and the community.

CASE STUDIES

Hollins Market: A Great Market District for Baltimore

2012, Project for Public Spaces



Primary Goal:

Identify short and long term targeted investments in physical improvements in and around the market.

Highlighted challenges:

Lack of fresh food at market

- Should be the destination for office workers, visitors, and students
- Lack of management resource - should staff a regular on-site market manager
- Highlighted solutions:
- "A next step of aggregating more

public input, and soliciting the view and ideas of people who actually use the market, such as customers and workers in the market is to be completed and will be truly insightful."

Quotes:

"The social benefits of public markets are achieved through economic strength, not the other way around."

"80% of the success of a public space or district is management."

"Today, there is no organization or entity to bring stakeholders together to plan and implement outdoor events and markets, or even just to keep people informed and connected about what is going on the neighborhood. The Baltimore Public Market Corporation, by virtue of having no on-site manager, lacks the capacity to serve this role."

Hollins Market District Vision Plan

2015, Southwest Partnership



Primary Goal:

Re-establish the market and its surrounding streets as a social and economic hub of the Southwest community.

Highlighted challenges:

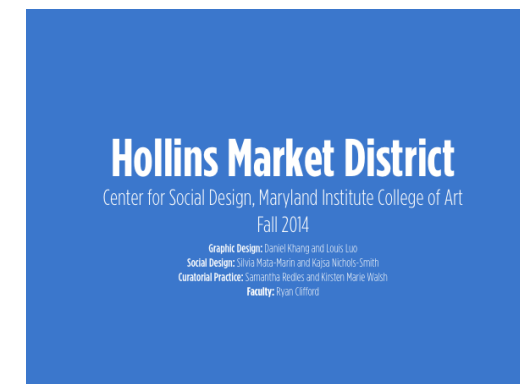
- Poor vendor mix within the markets
- Lack of seating and amenities for patrons
- Poor connectivity to the surrounding district
- Security in and around the market
- Vacant or underutilized storefront facing the market

Highlighted solutions:

- Increase activity and use of the market
- Celebrate the historic character of the market and make it a community gathering space

Practice Based Studio - Hollins Market

2015, Center for Social Design



Primary Goal:

Activate Hollins Market to engage the community in a shared social space.

Highlighted solution:

Branding and graphic design intervention

Quotes:

“As you enter into the market there is a lack of unity and visual appeal, it is dark and people are not encouraged to overstay their visit, it is not a place that invites social exchanges between locals.”

“Many residents pointed [to] Hollins Market as a “local gem” as well as many food places within the market.”

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Be present, Be consistent

Qualitative research methods are used a lot in design research processes, especially for social design projects. It is to gain an understanding of underlying expectations, opinions, and motivations of people; provide insights into problems; and help to develop ideas. I used observation, participation and volunteering, conversation and interview research methods to find out root causes of these three phenomena - slow business, disconnection and failure to implementation.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TIMELINE

10.19.15	First visit of all Baltimore public markets
10.24.15	Broadway Market design workshop with the Social Design cohort
11.3.15	Management interview
11.7.15	Observation and Conversation in Hollins Market
11.10.15	Neighborhood workers interview
11.13.15	Management interview
11.20.15	Attended Southwest Partnership committee meeting
11.21.15	Residents interview
12.2.15	Phone call with previous Hollins Market project researchers
12.4.15	Introduced myself to merchants
12.4.15	Residents interview
12.6.15	Volunteered in Jingle Jam
12.12.15	Residents interview
12.12.15	Observation and Conversation in Hollins Market
12.13.15	Participated in Union Square Cookie Tour
12.20.15	Management interview
1.25.16	Attended Southwest Partnership annual meeting
2.20.16	Visited Hollins market and scheduled interviews with merchants
2.24.16	Merchants interview

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Hollins Market:

- Lack of food diversity: 1 seafood stall, 1 cellphone stall, 1 gift shop stall, 2 sandwich stalls, 1 meat stall, 1 meat and deli stall, 1 poultry stall, 1 produce stall, 1 carry out still, 1 convenience store.
- 11 vendors: 8 Asian (7 Korean, 1 Chinese), 2 Caucasian, and 1 African-American
- The products offered neither reflect the culture of the community nor the merchants.
- The patrons' demographic does not reflect the composition of the community.
- EBT money is the main source of market revenue
- Not a welcoming market. Lots of warning signs such as "No loitering," "20 mins staying time" and a locked restroom
- There is a merchant association but no one comes to the meeting.
- Hollins Market Merchants Association has tried organizing activities such as "Take a photo with

Santa" and live music in the market. However, some merchants had negative feedback of the live music being too loud.

Community:

- Vibrant and active neighborhood associations
- People gather at restaurants as social gathering places (Zella's Pizzeria, Mi Ranchito)
- Art is prevailing in the community: Sowebo art and music festival, Black Cherry Puppet Theater

PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERING

Through volunteering and participation in many different community events, I discovered different characters and personalities of neighborhoods. People in the area care about each other. Also, they pay attention to housing, education, and safety issues. The sense of community here is strong and getting stronger. I also noticed something that lots of activities take place around Hollins Market, but not in it or with it.

Jingle Jam

Neighborhood: Hollins Roundhouse

Many donors and volunteers participated to provide Christmas presents for neighborhood kids and parents - more than 200 hundred happy kids showed up. Love and giving is a theme in Hollins Roundhouse, especially to children.

Union Square Cookie tour

Neighborhood: Union Square

30 housed participated in the open house event. There were over 200 tickets sold. Welcoming and embracing is the theme here, especially to young, energetic people.



At the end of the Jingle Jam event, I saw a kid running across street, saying "I am having so much fun" with a big smile on his face.

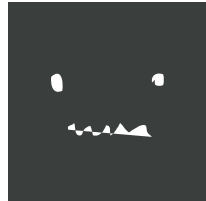
CONVERSATION AND INTERVIEW

It is important to listen to and get direct feedback and opinions from different stakeholders. I had conversations with people when I was in the market or neighborhoods. I also interviewed stakeholders: community members, market management and merchants. With these conversation and interviews, I built personas to represent different perspectives, opinions and expectations of different people.

PERSONAS



Frustrated Management



I am frustrated. Hollins Market is only a small portion on my plate. I am sandwiched between merchants and the city. But I'm not getting any support from either one. I don't know if anyone cares. I don't know how to deal with the merchants' problems. And we are so disconnected from the surrounding neighborhoods. Hollins Market does not make it to the top of the priority list in terms of getting investment and renovation from BPMC.

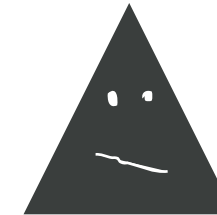
Quotes:

- "The biggest challenge for the success of the market is the disconnection between community and markets."
- "The city is trapped, it does not want to move."
- "How do you manage their cultural problems?"
- "My job is to keep the markets clean, safe and open."

Expectations:

We need people to come and tell us what we do right and what we do wrong. We need more support and attention from the city.

Exhausted Merchant



I am exhausted. I work 70-80 hours a week. I don't have time for meetings or to think about the future of my business. I like working here because I like the history and tradition. I love interacting with my loyal customers. Some of them drive from the county to buy my products. But business is getting really slow. I barely make a living. We need support from the government to make a bigger change. The management should do something. My parents used to work in the market too. It has changed so much. If the market stays as it is now, I cannot sell my business. I don't want my son to take over my business either. I think it is better for him.

Quotes:

- "We don't know who live [sic] here. Don't know who our customers are."
- "I don't do delivery. It is too dangerous outside."
- "I prefer to not work on Mondays."
- "The empty stalls are problematic."
- "People say that everything will be better in three years, I hope that is true. I am waiting for that..."
- "Anything is better than nothing."

Expectations:

More new businesses, more people, less stress.

Helpless Merchant

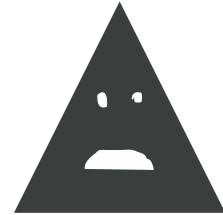
I feel helpless. I really want to see more changes in the market. I have my social media page and I do promotions. We should unite together as a family. We should help ourselves, but it is so hard to get people on board.

Quotes:

- "The bureaucracy was the reason. Everything has to be decided by the board."
- "If they have a problem, they should say it."
- "I don't know how to make them come."
- "She is young, her vision is too big, beyond what the market can provide. So she left."

Expectations:

People working together actively.



Angry Merchant

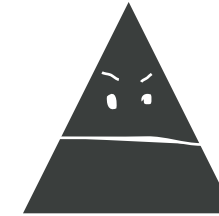
I am angry. Sometimes I don't feel respected. The market is hopeless. I just want to take care of my customers.

Quotes:

- "Not a big fan of the manager. He is not putting the market interest in heart."
- "In five years, everyone will be closed."
- "I don't trust him for that."
- "We did not vote the president for this."
- "Sell, sell, sell whole day, what other things can I describe?"

Expectations:

We deserve to be treated better. We want to be better informed.



Disappointed Resident



I am disappointed. There is a second floor that we cannot use. It would be nice if I could see the uniqueness of Hollins Market. The food is not fresh. There is nothing to offer. I don't need that much fried chicken! But it is hard to get the market changed. Hard to deal with the city. Our community is diverse and we have people from different parts of the nation and even the world. But the market is not thinking about catering to those people.

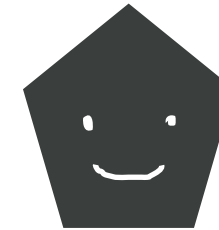
Quotes:

- "The risk is always on vendors, not on the market side. No one want to go in."
- "The market should help itself first."
- "We are diverse, we have people from sixty countries in this neighborhood."
- "I wish the market offered goods from other countries for the people here."
- "Why don't they stay open late for us?"
- "If they had more food diversity, I would definitely shop here."

Expectations:

- To see more food variety.
- To have Hollins Market become more open and be part of the community.

Regular Shopper



I come here because I have a tight budget. I cook for my family. I know the chicken guy here. Sometimes I come in just to talk to people that I know. My grandma came here, my aunt came here, my mom came here, so I come here too! The market is changing so much. It really needs some help.

Quotes:

"I don't care what kind of food."

Expectations:

- Keep the old fashioned family tradition of the market.
- Keep the good merchant and customer relationships.

ANALYSIS

Five Whys Themes and Insights

FIVE WHYS

To suss out root causes of any phenomena, continually asking “why” the key. I developed a five why chart by asking the question: why is Hollins Market experiencing slow business?

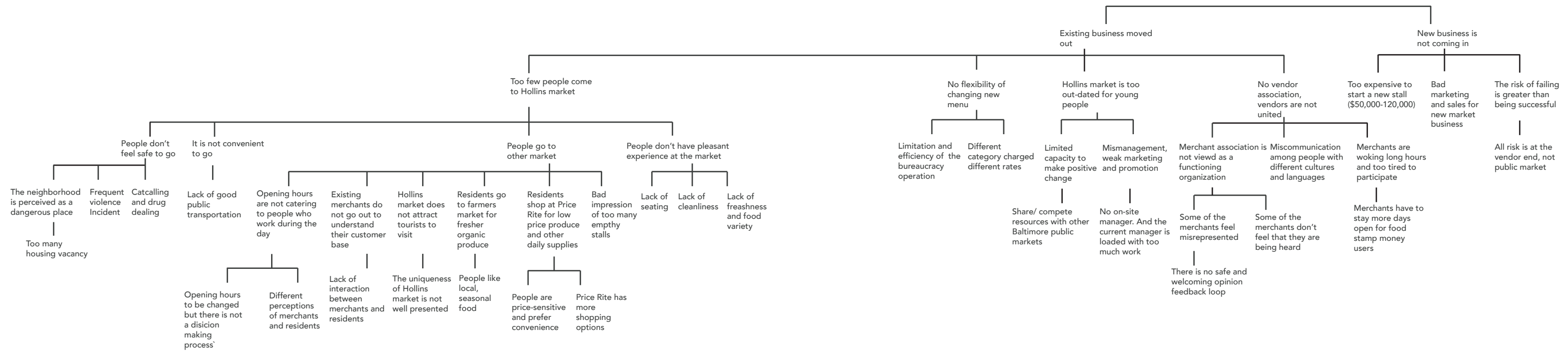
Slow business is caused by lack of interaction between Hollins Market and the community; Lack of interaction is caused by miscommunication of merchants and management and also merchants and the community. Miscommunication is caused by different expectations and perceptions.

Everyone has different expectation of the market, and also, everyone tends to only look at their situations and overlook other people’s difficulties. For example, residents often ask, “Why don’t they stay open late for us? We have to go to work during the day.” What they may not know is merchants already work 70-80 hours per week, and they cannot afford more staff. Merchants often say, “This neighborhood is not safe, no one wants to come here during the night.” I realized that without interaction,

people’s perceptions are more likely to be built on hearsay and bias.

This is another example: Hollins Market is perceived as a fried chicken market, but it is not. For non-regular shoppers, the market is all about fried chicken or other fried food, even though the fried chicken stall has been closed since my project started. Regular shoppers and other merchants perceived the fried chicken stall as the most successful business in the market. They don’t know that the cost was actually higher than the profit margin, so the stall had to close down.

Hollins Market is experiencing slow business



Five Whys Chart

THEMES AND INSIGHTS

To capture what I've learned from the research and sum up the analysis, I clustered insights synthesized into three themes: miscommunication, expectation, and lack of interaction.

Lack of interaction

- Human interaction and connection get people who live and work here together in the area and yet people from inside and outside the market don't interact with each other.
- Lack of interaction with the surrounding community is the biggest source of revenue loss for Hollins Market.
- Lots of empty spaces in Hollins Market are not being used and yet the community needs more places for business opportunities and social engagement.
- Hollins Market is passively waiting for people to come and change the current situation.
- Without interaction, people's perceptions are more likely to be built on hearsay and bias.

- Lots of activities happen around Hollins Market, but not in or with it.
- Hollins Market does not respond to the art culture around it.
- People from inside and outside the market care about similar issues such as safety and commercial development and yet there is no platform to aggregate people's energy

Miscommunication

- Transparency is needed in the decision-making process to fix the damaged relationships between merchants and management. Without support from merchants, the market can not move forward.
- Language barriers are amplified in cross-cultural communication, which mainly requires empathy and respect from the beginning.
- A top-down mentality perpetuates the bad relationship between management and merchants.

Different expectations and perceptions

- Merchants are expected to have an ever evolving business plan, to conduct market surveys and promotions, yet merchants are not capable of doing that and no proper training is provided.
- Both the market and the neighborhood are negatively perceived by each other - the market merchants think the neighborhood is dangerous and neighborhood residents think the market is neglecting their needs.



IDEATION

Timeline
How might we questions
Community design workshop

IDEATION TIMELINE

- 3.9.16 Held organizing meeting with Southwest Partnership
- 3.17.16 Invited residents to workshop
- 3.21.16 Invited management and merchants to workshop
- 3.26.16 Conducted the community workshop



HOW MIGHT WE?

Before ideating and advancing any intervention, I reframed my insights as “how might we” questions to switch the gears to ideational and innovative level. With these questions, which focus on both social and business components, I brainstormed with stakeholders at a community design workshop to find new ideas and opportunities, and then developed the following interventions.

How might we leverage existing community assets and create an opportunity for stakeholders to communicate and interact in Hollins Market?

How might we leverage existing businesses to incentivize southwest Baltimore residents to patronize Hollins Market?

COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

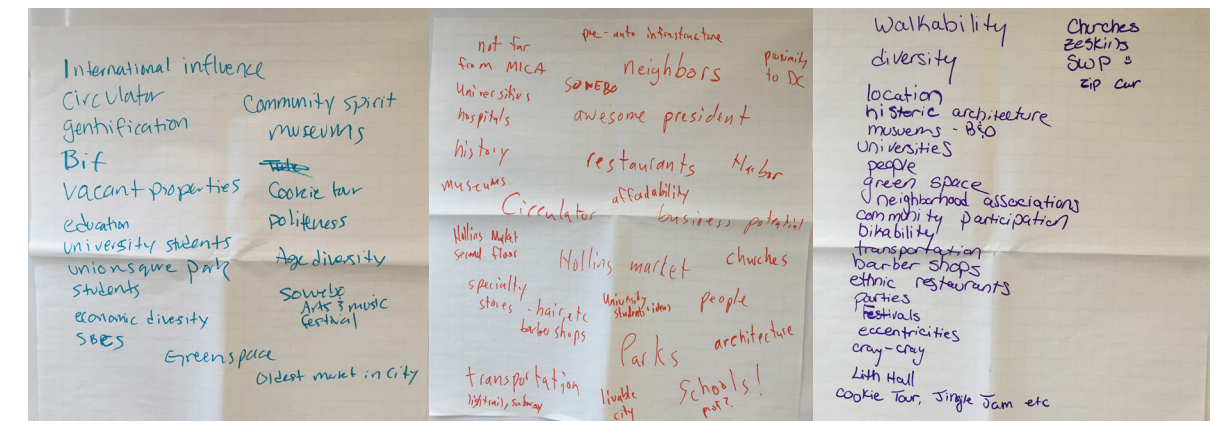
With help from Southwest Partnership, I was able to put together a community workshop with 23 participants from six different neighborhoods. There were three sessions. First, I brought people to the market to shop. Not just shopping, but creating a more personal shopping experience. Each person went with a positive attribute in mind, such as love, tradition or relationship, then purchased something in Hollins Market that represents the attribute. In the second session, we listed out community assets and brainstormed how to improve the market. Then in the third session we shared our findings with the market manager and the merchant association president.

Community assets

Highlighted assets:

Historic architecture, neighborhood associations, Cookie Tour, Jingle Jam, international influence, community spirit, age/economic diversity, oldest market in the city, Hollins Market second floor, circulator, barber shops, Sowebo festival, affordability, business potential, livable city, proximity to DC, B & O museums


Also, people listed out some assets that are debateable as assets: Cray-cray, eccentricities, gentrification



Let's shop at Hollins Market

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Bill Marter
Neighborhood: Bare Circle
I purchased: Vegetables
How often do I come here: Every Other Week




Description: Vegetables
Vendor: Vegetables

Story: for LOVE, No Meat for My Vegetarian wife. so Bought Vegetables

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Nicole
Neighborhood: Hollins Market
I purchased: TRADITION
How often do I come here: rarely, almost never




Description: Old Bay Crab Cake Mix
Vendor: The Seafood stall at the West end

Story: I wanted crab cakes, but the one vendor who sells them was out. So went to a different vendor and settled for the seasoning packet.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: ALAN
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: SAUCE
How often do I come here: SAUCE




Description: SAUCE
Vendor: FRESH PRODUCE STALL

Story: I WILL BE A REGULAR @ HOLLINS MARKET NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS IS MY FIRST TIME @ MARKET. I WANT TO TRY!!! I LOVED MY 1st VISIT BUT WOULD LOVE TO SEE IT MORE VENTILATED AS THE SMELL WAS OVER POWERING. I WILL ALSO RECOMMEND STRONGLY MORE FRESH PRODUCE.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: NANCY
Neighborhood: Union Square
I purchased: SOCIAL
How often do I come here: 2-3 MONTHS




Description: LUMPY
Vendor: LUMPY

Story: I brought grapes to share with my neighbors at Union Square Park concert Easter Sunday 5-7pm. Free Concert Everyone come & Shop City Market Celebrate your Community Support your market Vendors & neighborhood charm

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: DO
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: HISTORY
How often do I come here: SAUCE




Description: SAUCE
Vendor: L-R's Seafood & Berries Market

Story: I did a workshop today my wife & I did a Pubic I purchased produce from the market and Stella's sausage My wife was Public

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: M. Mellett
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: HISTORY
How often do I come here: SAUCE




Description: BACON
Vendor: one of THE BUTCHER STALLS (Southside of MARKET)

Story: PIG OWN IS A HISTORICAL COMMUNITY W/ A LOT OF PIG HISTORY.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: BOB
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: PEAS
How often do I come here: RARELY




Description: PEAS
Vendor: Cold cuts

Story: I purchased Relationships at Hollins Market I remember all the relationships I had with the vendors. Most of the vendors I know were gone. I remember the lamb guy who sold us our leg of lamb at Easter. I remember the salad guy & his wife. I remember Steve @ the cold cut stand where I bought his cheese. He lived around the corner and would feed the meter if we were illegally parked.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: KAVITA
Neighborhood: EDWARDS
I purchased: PEAS
How often do I come here: RARELY




Description: PEAS
Vendor: PRODUCE

Story: WAS HARD PRESSED TO BUY ANYTHING "COMMUNITY". (MARKET SHOULD DIVERSIFY MERCHANDISE, ISH) ENJOY PRODUCE SINCE IT REPRESENTS COMMUNITY (STRETCH - I ADMIT)

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Bill Browning
Neighborhood: Union Square
I purchased: SOCIAL
How often do I come here: SAUCE




Description: Red Grapes Green Grapes
Vendor: fruit vendor middle south side

Story: I chose grapes for social because they naturally grow in a social grouping of a connected cluster. They also are easy to share with others as they are also individually consumption sized as each grape. Another neighbor shared her extra funds with me to allow a larger quantity purchase further making this a social interaction.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Isouche Wessler
Neighborhood: Hollins Market
I purchased: Social Community
How often do I come here: Once a week




Description: Cheese
Vendor: Seafood @ West end

Story: Customers bring people together at gatherings and in homes. Seafood vendors also connect the Seafood merchants to the consumers in a Maryland cycle.

Community

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Shanna Kessler
Neighborhood: Hollins Market
I purchased: Smile
How often do I come here: Once a week




Description: (Chinese) shrimp dumplings
Vendor: next to the corner store (Asian woman)

Story: 1. We shop @ the carry out like the Asian woman is always smiling & very friendly. 2. The seafood guy (short) always jokes w/ customers to help break the ice & engage. 3. Produce gentleman makes us smile!!

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: JANE
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: Chinese food
How often do I come here: Not Very

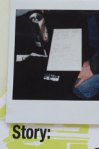


Description: CHINESE FOOD
Vendor: CHINESE FOOD

Story: MY TASTE WAS SERVED SO I FOUND I COULD BUY ANYTHING I WANTED SINCE THEN NOTHING ON ME WOULD BEHAVE A SERVICE. I GAVE MY EXTRA MONEY TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDED IT.

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Scott Kashnow
Neighborhood: Franklin Square
I purchased: Love
How often do I come here: NOT MUCH




Description: CORNED BEEF ON RYE W/ MUSTARD
Vendor: BERRIE'S DELI

Story: Reminds me of being a kid. BBA-CHIPS FOOT BEER & PICKLE + PICTURES OF LOVE FROM INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE MARKET

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: Holly Gray
Neighborhood: Hollins Market / Union Sq
I purchased: Value
How often do I come here: 2-3x per week




Description: Best Bacon in Baltimore!!
Vendor: Bernie's Meat & the Cheese Stall

Story: Best bacon in Baltimore!! Love supporting local & purchasing what I need - when I need it. Love talking to the merchants, especially in the convenience store @ L-R Produce. Great People!!

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: ROBERT
Neighborhood: HOLLINS MARKET
I purchased: CHEESE BACON
How often do I come here: ONCE A WEEK




Description: CHEESE BACON
Vendor: BACON

Story: HOLLINS MARKET HAS THE BEST BACON IN TOWN, LOVED BY THE PUBLIC

Let's shop at Hollins Market

Name: HUMER
Neighborhood: Union Square
I purchased: Orange Grapes Family
How often do I come here: Rarely



Description: Orange Grapes Produce
Vendor: Produce

Story: Little choice

Participants' worksheets

Brainstorm ideas

New Business/Products

Pickles, olives, international food (Korean, Mexican), something unique in the neighborhood, community farmed chicken eggs, flower, wine, beer, bakery (cakes, bread, gluten free) ice cream, farm to table, fresh food and veggies, raw bar, fried chicken, smoothie, Amish merchants, cooked bacon

Promotions

Loyalty punch card (partner up with Zella's and Mi Ranchito) market tours, B note, coupons, newspaper ads, sandwich board, free sampling, tasting, cooking demo, circulator ads, market wayfinding signage, smiles and customer service, signs of vendors' stories, discounts

Ways to use empty spaces

Pop-up shops, open to outside vendors, local artist stalls, used book stall, art gallery, neighborhood association stalls, community bulletin board

Infrastructure

Outdoor and indoor seating, lighting, parking, plants, windows, second floor, paint, sidewalks decoration

Special service for certain groups

Church, students, employees in neighborhood, city employees, policemen, regulars discount, open late for working people

Community Events

Live music, kid's day, puppy day, bacon festival, community yoga

Cleanliness

Trash cans, ventilation, regular sweeping, recycling, less smelly Intervention



INTERVENTION

Theory of Change
Timeline
Pop-up Hollins Market

THEORY OF CHANGE

To develop strategic interventions, and to keep on track of how and why a desired change take place in a particular context and period, I built a Theory of Change map to be followed.

Vision:

Southwest Baltimore becomes a thriving, safe community.

Ultimate Goal:

Hollins Market becomes a vibrant, social public market that is highly engaged with the community.

Mid-term Goal:

More and more people patronize Hollins Market. Then the market builds financial sustainability that supports more social services for people in need.

Short-term Goal:

Hollins Market is better connected and serving more neighborhood residents.

Near-term Goal:

The management should prioritize facilitating a better communication channel and build connection and trust among stakeholders.

INTERVENTION TIMELINE

- 4.6.16 Invited merchants to the proposal meeting
- 4.13.16 Proposed pop-up shop idea to the community
- 4.14.16 Proposed pop-up shop idea to merchants
- 4.15.16 Held organizing meeting with the market manager and Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood Association president
- 4.22.16 Invited merchants to participate in the pop-up shop event
- 4.27.16 Invited merchants and took pictures for making signs
- 5.7.16 Conducted the pop-up shop event

POP-UP HOLLINS MARKET

Through the workshop, participants generated lots of great ideas. Subsequently, the market management, Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood Association and I organized a pop-up shop event in Hollins Market to test them out. With the go-ahead from the management and the help from the neighborhood, we were able to set up a kids' drawing table and invite musicians, artists, and new businesses to come perform and sell their products. On one hand, the event was to encourage the market's workers to interact with the neighborhood. On the other hand, it was to create an opportunity for non-regular shoppers to come in and explore Hollins Market. This event served as a prototype for both social engagement and new business opportunities.



Main purposes

- **The public market is for the community**

I hoped to encourage more interaction among stakeholders. The event was to inspire residents to dream and change the current situation in Hollins Market and to show market management that the community needs a better and more welcoming public market. Finally, I wanted to demonstrate to everyone that a prosperous public space could give back a positive community spirit.

- **Get merchants on board - approach with a purpose and proposal and show them how much the community cares**

In order to make the event relevant for existing businesses, I invited merchants to feature one of their products as a Mother's Day special. Eventually, I was able to get eight merchants to participate in the event. Some of them provided special discounts, some brought in special products and some featured their best sellers.

- **Let's fill up the emptiness**

Bring more vendors and foot traffic to populate the market.



Strategies

- Draw on the assets of the Sowebo art community and invite local artist and musicians to participate.
- Invite church or other education groups to facilitate the drawing activity where patrons are prompted with the question, "What do you wish to have in Hollins Market or in the neighborhood?"
- Invite new businesses to participate: a coffee shop, a bakery or baked goods retailer, or an ice cream shop.
- Create a Facebook event page and keep people informed.
- Post posters on the walls in and out of Hollins Market.
- Produce promotion signs for existing businesses.



Participating Vendors

- Artists: Mijiza Creations, Fly: Folded & Fiber Gifts, Cassandra Kapsos Photography and Design Services, Pub & Paint, BMore Awesome Inc
- Non-profits: CEASE smoking cessation classes
- Musician: David Allen Thomas - Banjo musician
- New Businesses: Cups Coffeehouse, Bottoms Up Bagels, You Scream Ice Cream (showed high interest in participating)

Critical feedback from participants

- Consider the possibility of poor weather and necessary accommodations for live music.
- Better recruit volunteers to facilitate children's drawing activity.
- Some people asked if the children's activity is regular. They would like to bring their grandkids back every week.
- Provide more welcoming facilities - unlock the restroom and open main entrance for increased visibility.

- Keep foot traffic going to prevent vendors from leaving early.
- Some people said the west and east side of the market felt like two different places - a traditional market and artist's market.
- The wall where I posted posters started collecting other event posters. Creating a community bulletin board at Hollins Market was suggested.

**One of the merchants said,
"Thank you for doing this.
No one has done this for us."**



REFLECTION

Throughout the project, my tasks were to listen and understand, facilitate conversation and create interactions. This work does not seem to be “design,” but it is really the first step of moving things forward in a system to create positive results. It is not an object but people’s attitudes and relationships that social designers help make beautiful.

Through this project in Hollins Market, I learned to respect and accommodate stakeholders’ various needs and barriers and leveraged shared assets and energy to build a creative public place.

Thanks to the help and support from Baltimore Public Market Corporation, Southwest Partnership, and many community members, I was able to accomplish this project. The transformation of Hollins Market is an ever-evolving process. I believe with more and more people’s participation, Hollins Market will truly become a public market for everyone. Hollins

Market has proved its great potential and I am confident it will one day represent the community spirit.

Next Steps

It will be important to keep the focus on both better communication between merchants and management and also strengthening a connection between the market and the community.

Community:

- Collectively build a community bulletin board with the Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood Association to encourage more social engagement in Hollins Market.
- Keep the momentum and continue the pop-up shop event to foster more interactions and attract potential businesses to fill up empty stalls.

Merchants:

I suggest management approach merchants with risk-free proposals that do not place the burden of innovation on merchants. For example, the management could assist merchants

to better serve the community and merchants by consider extending the opening hours one day per week to 8 p.m. and closing on Mondays when business is typically very slow. With the success of collective change,

encourage merchants to self-organize a better functioning Hollins Market Merchant Association.



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