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MADI *Master of Arts in*
DESIGN & INNOVATION



Your District Dynamos



Atifa Shalwani

Finance



Benjamin J-L

Health, Education, & Human Welfare



Kristi Flanders

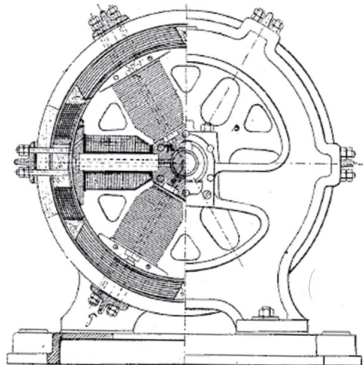
Education



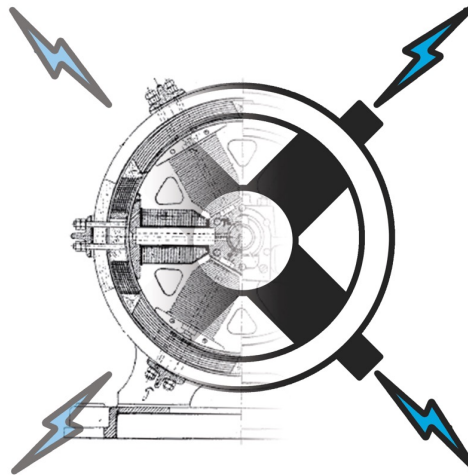
Melody Chiang

Early Childhood Development

Why District Dynamos?



Generating Energy



Facilitator of Transformation



Sparking Ideas

How might we...

...improve community
participation in the
AT&T Discovery District?

Client Briefing



Lingering Questions & Curiosities

Who

- Who is the target audience for the AT&T Discovery District?
- Do the people who live closest to the space use it?

What

- What are the specific expectations or criteria our client uses for measuring improvement & engagement?

How

- How do people interact with the AT&T Discovery District?



Debriefing Session

[Team A] District Dynamics

How MIGHT we IMPROVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION WITH THE AT&T DISCOVERY DISTRICT?

Increase sales
in the district

Improve impression
interaction with community

Understand target
audience

Having
consistency

Students

Certain
theme
brand

Employees
in the
DT radius

Events

Tourism

Residence
who live around
the district

Spending
money
Others

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What do we mean by...

...improve community
participation in the
AT&T Discovery District?

Debriefing Process

Improve

Increase
District sales

Consistency

Understanding
the audience

Community
impressions

Community

Young urban
professionals

Downtown
residents

Event
attendees

Tourists

Participation

Venue buyouts

Spending
money

Time spent in
the District

Word of mouth

AT&T Discovery
District

Central
location

Dining &
entertainment

AT&T HQ

Dynamic &
connected



Outside Research & Literature Review



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What do People Experience, Living in Downtown Dallas?

More neighbors than ever, especially people under 40.

City of Dallas, 2011; Schutze, 2017; US Census Bureau, 2023

Hotter days and hotter nights.

New York Times, 2023

Limited walkability.

City of Dallas, 2022; Gaudet, 2024; WalkScore, 2024

Challenging parking situation.

Parklio, 2024

High sensory stimulation.

Aspey, 2022; D Magazine, 2018; New York Times, 2019

What Encourages People to Participate in a Space?

Access

Can I get into- or around the space easily, even if I have a stroller, or if I have a disability?

Comfort

Do I feel welcome and safe there? Would I feel safe bringing children?

Uses

Is there a place there for me to sit and read?

Sociability

Can I meet my friends there?
Are there places where we can spend time together?

Activities

What is there for me to do?
Are the activities affordable?

Connections

Does this space connect to other destinations? Do distinct sections connect to each other?

Design

Does the space “make sense”?
If something looks like a seat, can I sit there?

Gatje, 2010; Steuteville, 2019; Project for Public Spaces, 2024; Whyte, 1980

Narrowing Our Scope

Improve

Increase
District sales

Consistency

Understanding
the audience

Community
impressions

Community

Young urban
professionals

Downtown
residents

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connected



Observing & Learning From District Visitors

Valentine's Week

Dates/Times:

- February 10
2pm -5pm
- February 14
11:30-12:30pm
- February 16
1pm-3pm



Observation Methods

A.E.I.O.U Observation

DATE: 2/10/24	PROJECT NAME: STUDO	TYPE OF RESEARCH:	
TIME: 1440	RESEARCHER NAME: ESL	COLD/RAINY	
Activities	Environments	Interactions	Users
<p>talking w/ friends or family waiting out car.</p> <p>looking at pop up shop</p>	<p>side walk under overhang</p> <p>pop up shop</p>	<p>friends</p> <p>pop up shop</p> <p>friend boyfriend</p>	<p>nothing / only friend only seemed to want to get out of rain</p> <p>looked at items, did not buy anything</p> <p>30s f w/le w baby in stroller</p> <p>30s f on date?</p>

Behavior Mapping

SUPPER

DATE: 10 Feb 24	PROJECT NAME:	TYPE OF RESEARCH:
TIME: 15:00	RESEARCHER NAME:	

COMMERC ST

THE EXCHANGE

16 EATING
8 TALKING
4 SITTING
3 STANDING & WATCHING
14 WORKING
(NOISE @ KITCHEN)

JACKSON ST WALK

AKARD ST WALK

AT&T HQ

73 PHOTO
8 TALKING
1 WORKING
1 WALKING
1 STANDING

BROWDER ST

OBSERVATION NOTATION

S (SITTING)
T (TALKING)
E (EATING)
W (WALKING)
P (PLAYING)
OT (OTHER)

FIELD ST

COWBOY CHOW

WOOD ST

GB

EXP. CENTER

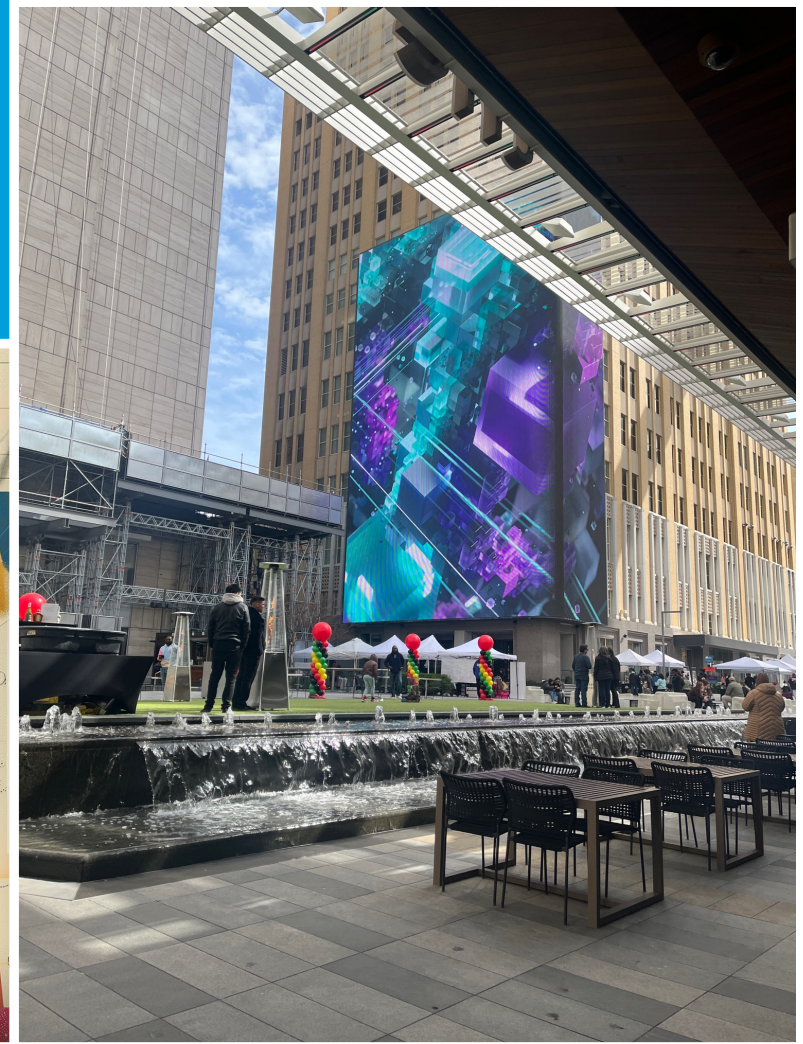
JACKSON ST

Multi-Event Confluence

Date: February 17

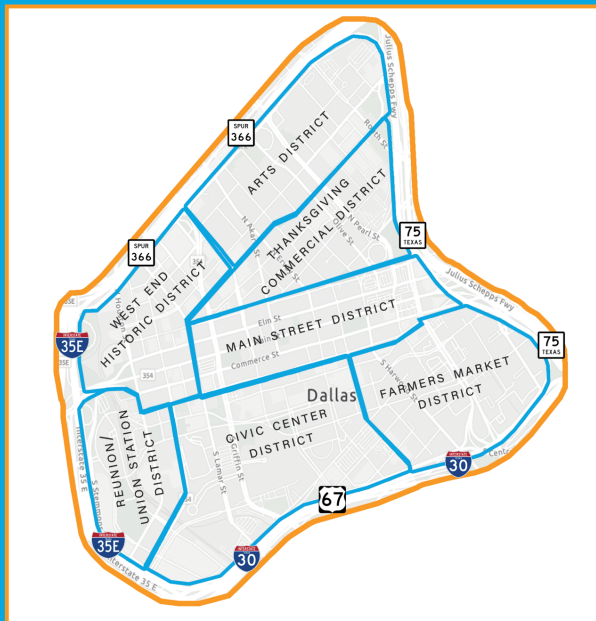
Time: 10am- 2:30pm

- Experience the Culture
- Volleyball Tournament
- Cheerleading Competition
- Wedding at the Adolphus



Mapping Activity

I LIVE INSIDE OF DOWNTOWN DALLAS



WHAT DO I DO HERE?

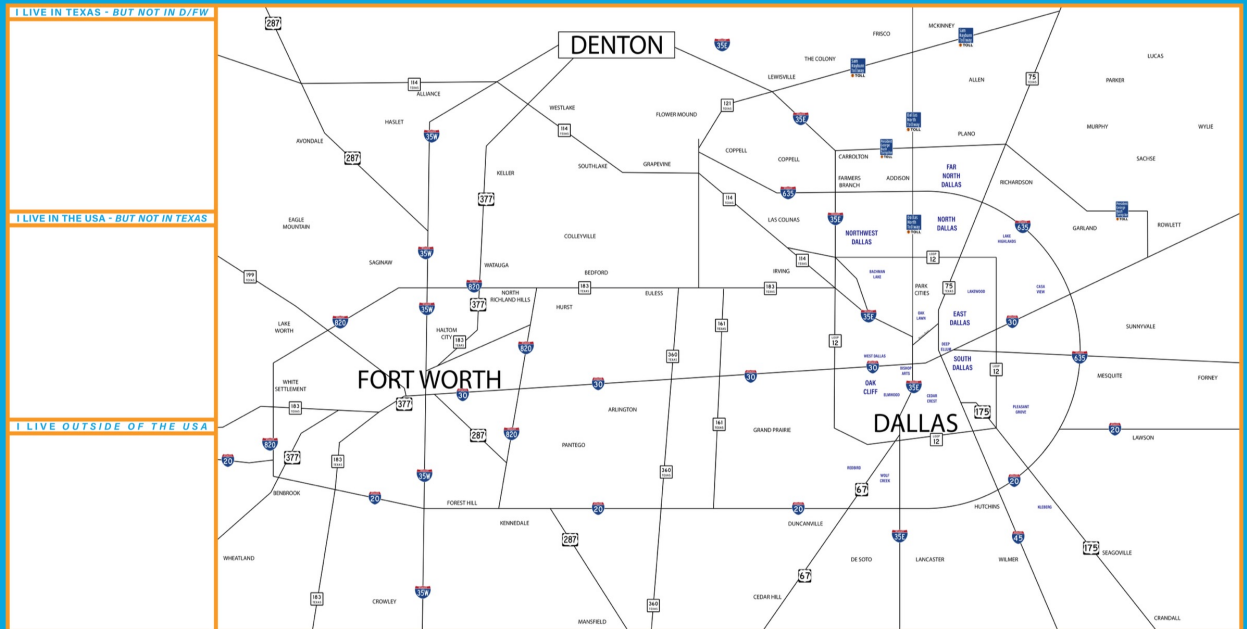
Place your dot sticker on the map, near where you live.
Please try to not cover a place or highway name.
Don't worry about perfection - close enough counts!



SMU



I LIVE OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN DALLAS



WHAT DO I DO HERE?

Place your dot sticker on the map, near where you live.
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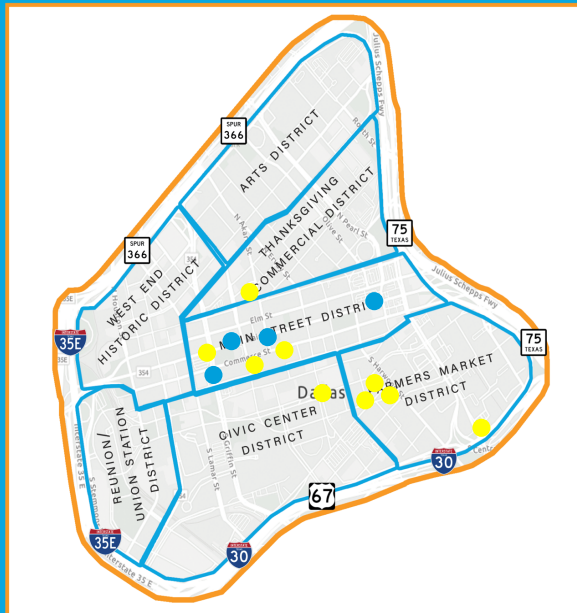
SMU



Mapping Activity



I LIVE INSIDE OF DOWNTOWN DALLAS



WHAT DO I DO HERE?

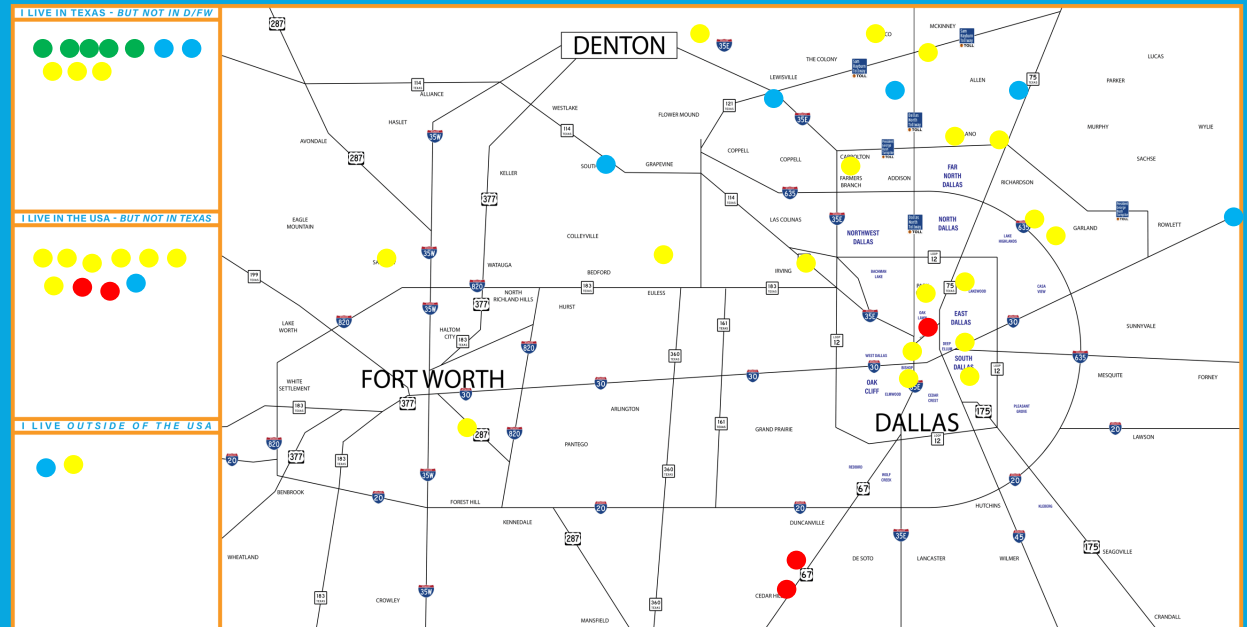
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SMU



I LIVE OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN DALLAS



WHAT DO I DO HERE?

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SMU



61 participants from around the city and across the globe

Discussion Responses

Out of the 61 participants, only 20% live in Downtown Dallas

- “I want more events and community events like yoga.”
- “I want to move here for the city vibe and the rent is not too crazy comparing to other cities.”
- “I used to come down here more in the beginning, but it seems more like an athletic complex now. I’m not sure where I fit in down here.”



How might we improve community participation in the AT&T Discovery District?

Let's Learn More
About Them!



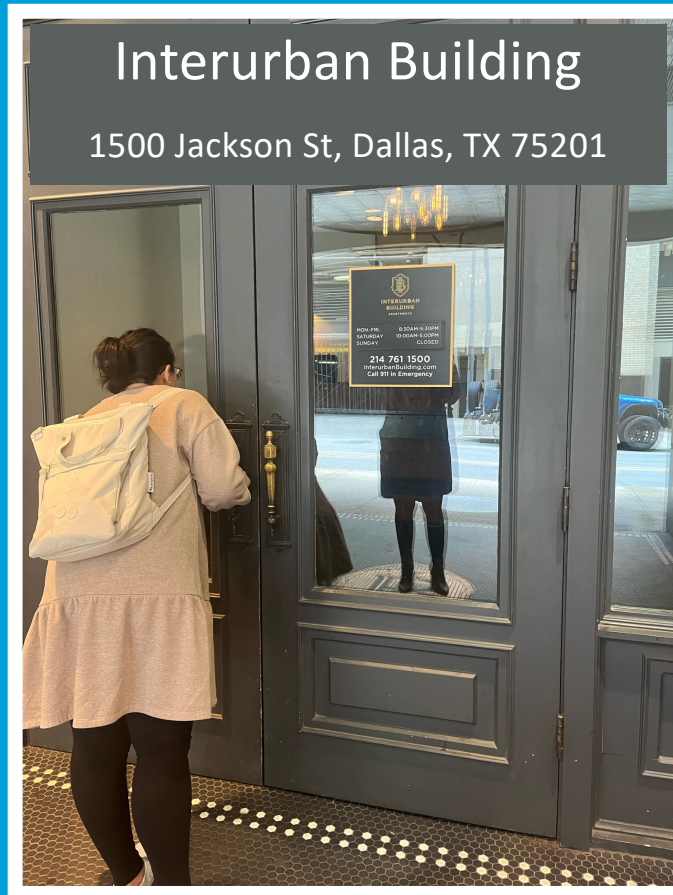


Step 1: Create a Resident Survey

Step 2: Create an In-Person Event

Step 3: Distribute to the Residents

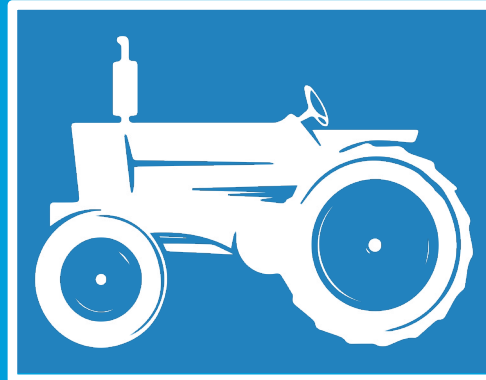
Connecting with the Residential Buildings





DallasUrbanists

Dallas Urbanists



*Farmers Market Stakeholder
Association (FMSA)*



LinkedIn



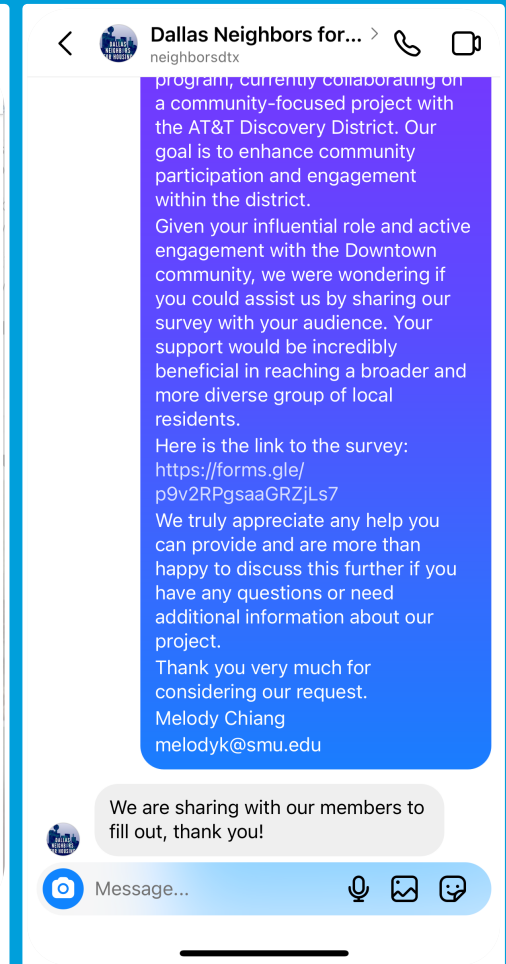
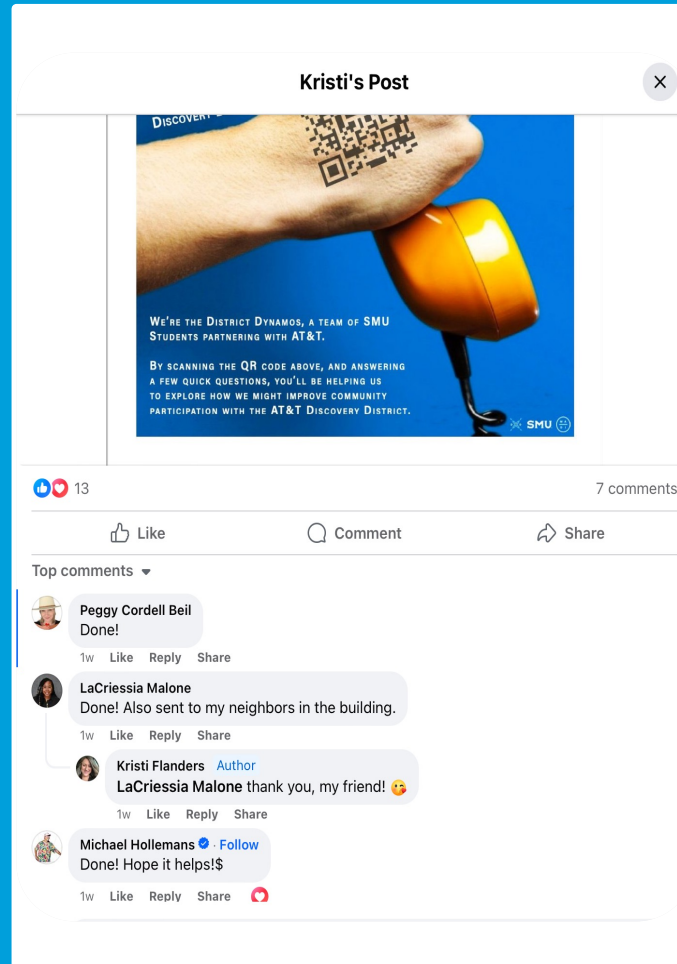
Downtown Residents Council

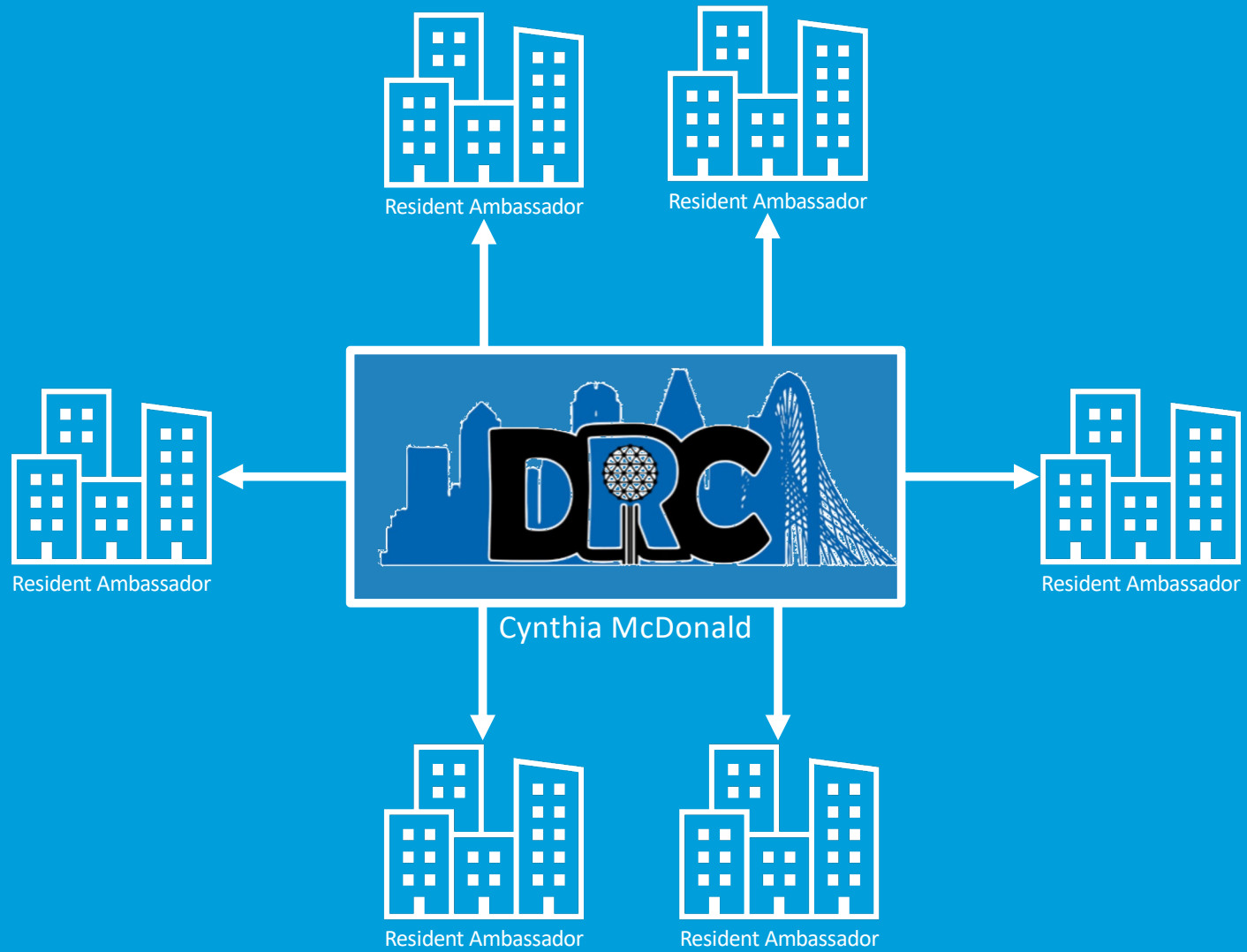
33

Responses

What We Learned

Direct social media contact
with residents yields a
greater response in a
shorter time







Resident Group Interview (Wednesday, April 24th)

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Let's Talk

About the AT&T Discovery District

Hi! We are a team of SMU graduate students partnering with AT&T to improve community participation at AT&T Discovery District.

We want to hear from YOU - the District's downtown neighbors. Will you please join us for snacks and conversation?



RSVP
HERE



Wednesday, April 24

The Exchange Food Hall, 211 S. Akard St.

6:00 - 7:30pm







Resident Survey & Group Interview Insights

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Survey Findings

About the 33 survey respondents:

85%

- Working-age adults (20-59)

>90%

- Small households (1-2 people, no children)

>50%

- Lived Downtown > 5 years

Survey Findings

Why do they live in Downtown Dallas?

85%

- Proximity to places to eat or go out

42%

- Proximity to where they work

18%

- Proximity to family/friends

Survey Findings

Residents' engagements with the AT&T Discovery District are very positive.

People generally find the AT&T Discovery District to be an interesting and tourist-centered area with a vibrant and *swaggy* atmosphere.

73%

▪ Visit to hang out at least once per month

57%

▪ Attend at least one event per month

70%

▪ Eat or drink at The Exchange at least once per month

Group Interview Findings

They have a lot of ideas for events and amenities in the AT&T Discovery District.

They want to attend events and be involved

They would like to know more about when events take place, but don't use the website/ mailing list

They interact with Downtown differently than non-residents;



Design Principles

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Design Principles

How might we improve
community
participation in the
AT&T Discovery District?

Play to your strengths

When it comes to
communication, meet
residents where they
are.

Prioritize meaningful
relationships with the
residents

Design Principle #1

Play from your strengths! A person's experience in a place, or at an event, can affect their willingness to participate in future events.

People love new ideas as a “yes, and” value-add to existing programming.

Recommendations:

1. Continue bringing new event ideas into the space.
2. Consider maintaining “legacy” programming, even if the frequency or “programming mix” changes.
3. Provide a clear list of up



Design Principle #2:

Local communication: When it comes to communication, meet residents where they are. They are in this active affinity group ecosystem.

Recommendations:

WAYS OF COMMUNICATION



Downtown Residents Council
Facebook Group



Email from DDI



Instagram



Building representative/ambassadors-Subsets of
communication: Text, Whatsapp, GroupMe etc.



Design Principle #3

Prioritize meaningful relationships with the residents. Residents love being engaged “behind the scenes,” and want to feel like their feedback is being heard.

Recommendations:


1. Maintain a “personal touch” when communication with local residents.
2. Know your local Resident Ambassadors.
3. Gather ideas collaboratively.





How might we improve community participation in the AT&T Discovery District?

By communicating with the residents where they're at:
local effort, engagement, and awareness at the grassroots level.



Questions & Thank You!



