ALLEY-LUJAH: ACTIVATING LOUISVILLE’S HISTORIC ALLEYS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The following presents a summary of the Capstone Project, Alley-lujah: Activating Louisville’s Historic Alleys.
The City of Louisville, located in Boulder County, Colorado was platted by Louis Nawatny in 1878. Alleys running north to south divided the area into several blocks which continued to evolve and form until WWII. Louisville has changed over time and now the city expands across approximately eight square miles and is home to nearly 20,000 residents. Restaurants, a diverse mix of employment opportunities, and 1,700 acres of designated open space are some of the amenities that make the City of Louisville a great place to live, work, and enjoy.

The City of Louisville’s Planning Division is interested in improving the quality of the historic commercial and residential alleys in Downtown Louisville and Old Town Louisville to support a better public realm for the community. Beautification efforts through the Louisville Arts District have already begun along the primary commercial alley in Downtown Louisville, known as “Via Artista.” Two murals and wayfinding signage have been incorporated into the alley parallel to Main Street.

This Capstone Project is the culmination of research, data collection and analysis, mappings of master plan designs, design recommendations, and proposed best practices to inform the City of Louisville of the potential their alleys hold. Furthermore, it provides a vision for alley beautification that will ultimately help activate these alley spaces for the community. Altogether, the recommendations, design solutions, and strategies will facilitate in engaging residents, business owners, city officials, and other community members to become active participants in the revitalization of their alleys.

Three objectives (Access, Action, and Activation) are essential for realizing the potential of Louisville’s alleys. Through improved access, community action, and activation, Louisville’s alleys have the ability to be artful attractions that create a sense of place and encourage community interaction.

Background research offers a review and critique of major concerns, theories, methods, and the historical evolution of alleys from practitioner and academic literature. Through case studies, review of existing alley plans, and best practice research, this chapter synthesizes and reinforces the importance of the three objectives for this Capstone Project. The Objectives (access, action, and activation) have proven to be essential tools for revitalizing alleys according to precedent analysis. The listed research topics, case studies, and existing alley plans above were selected for their comparable scale, location proximity, and intended outcomes. As a result of conducting such research, lessons can be learned, improved, and applied to fit the particular needs of the Louisville community.

The approach of methodology was informed by the findings and techniques discovered in the background research. Exhibit 0.03 illustrates the step-by-step process and methodology that was needed to complete a thorough inventory and analysis. More specifically, there were six primary methods for collecting the data that guides the strategies and recommendations presented in this Capstone Project. Research, demographic collection, geospatial information system data, existing conditions analysis, and community input are all fundamental to understanding a comprehensive context of Louisville and its alleys.

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SITE INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

To understand the existing conditions of alleys in Old Town and Downtown Louisville, a thorough site inventory and analysis was completed. This chapter includes demographics, the Old Town neighborhood alley layout, Old Town land uses and destinations, Downtown layout and destinations, and the assets and needed improvement areas along the commercial alley in Downtown. This comprehensive inventory and analysis advised the design solutions and recommendations for Louisville’s alleys.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the research and site inventory + analysis of the alleys in Old Town and Downtown Louisville, design solutions illustrate the opportunities that the alleys can absorb to create dynamic spaces. Recommendations directly align with the objectives (Access, Action, and Activation) to provide a comprehensive motive in improving the public realm of the alleys. These implementation strategies include wayfinding and signage, pavement, bike racks, temporary programming, policies, public art, lighting, and landscaping. Each of these strategies serve as vital components in achieving the overall vision for the commercial and residential alleys in Louisville.

MOVING FORWARD

In moving forward, the City must collaborate with the Downtown Business Authority, Louisville Arts District, Louisville Cultural Council, and Public Works to begin considering and implementing some of the recommendations presented in this report. Additionally, collaboration with local businesses and property owners will be essential to realize the implementation of this vision. Recommendations should be implemented in phases. Public wellbeing and safety measures are top priority. First, the commercial and residential alleys should be repaired to maintain a high level of safety. Next, banners, wayfinding, and directional signage must reinforce Louisville’s identity. Finally, through temporary programming, additional public art and murals, lighting, and landscaping, the alleys have potential to be highly used spaces with music, activity, and spirit.