USE OF PUBLIC SPACE BETWEEN

SCHOOL, LAKE,

AND PARK

by

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DEDICATION

To my sons, Mauricio and Sebastian, for their unconditional love.

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ABSTRACT

The public space that was selected for this field study was the surroundings of one of the oldest high schools in Austin, Texas: Austin High School. It is located at the side of a major highway, multiple bridges, and across the street from the popular Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake. The combination of these places has made the environment prone to numerous inappropriate and dangerous situations due to the heterogeneity of the population and the neglected environment. The high school itself is obsolete in multiple ways and the surroundings of its location offer the students and visitors of the area the opportunity to participate in deviant behaviors. Fortunately, dangerous situations and deviant behaviors can be prevented by eliminating such opportunities. This public space can benefit from improving the environmental and surveillance design with the application of certain strategies suggested by middle range theories, such as: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, Routine Activities Approach, Opportunity Theory, and Problem Oriented Policing Strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park is located at the side of a major highway and multiple bridges. The combination of these places has made the surroundings highly risky for numerous inappropriate and dangerous situations.

Research Question

How would identifying hangout settings, where deviant behaviors occur, be helpful to improve the supervision around these problematic locations and prevent more crimes from occurring?

Thesis Statement

This field study focused on the surroundings of a high school and how these surroundings may be an influence in the participation in deviant behavior. For example, the central intention of the study done by the Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP) was early prevention intervention by identifying protective factors that promote prosocial and antisocial development. The study was done in the homes and classrooms of the students (Hawkins, Smith, Hill, Kosterman, & Abbott, 2007). However, the SSDP study did not include the surroundings outside of the school. Thus, the scientific relevance of this field study, by identifying and mapping hangout locations outside a single high school, is important because its central intention was to study the general use of this

public space and understand how the surroundings have been used to commit deviant behavior and do something about it (Andresen & Felson, 2010).

The school used for this research is one of the oldest in Austin, Texas. The school is Austin High School, and it was selected because it is located in an environment highly risky for inappropriate and dangerous situations. This risk is clearly observable since the high school is surrounded by multiple bridges, multiple trails with neglected surroundings, and across the street from the popular Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake. By studying how public spaces between the high school, lake, and park are being used and by mapping the locations where hangouts occurred, an opportunity was created to identify risky locations that allow inappropriate behavior and suggest appropriate recommendations to attack the problem.

The high school is surrounded by multiple bridges. Each bridge offers niches in which people can gather, away from appropriate supervision, to commit deviant behaviors. Cohen and Felson (1979) stated in their routine activity theory that for a personal or property crime to occur there must be at the same time and place a criminal, absence of guardian, a victim, or an object of property. The main proposition of the theory is that the rate of criminal victimization is increased when there is a meeting in space and time of the three minimal elements, that is, the possibility of crime increases when there are one or more persons present who are motivated to commit a crime, a suitable target or potential victim that is available, and the absence of formal or informal guardians who could deter the potential offender. The presence or absence of these elements is very important, and the risk of criminal victimization varies among the

circumstances and locations in which people place themselves and their property (Akers & Sellers, 2013).

Felson and Cohen took the elements of time, place, persons and property, and the absence of proper protection to develop their theory (Akers et al., 2013). For example, in the hangout presented in Figure 1, it is observable how the three main elements of routine activities theory can be applied to that identified hangout location. The isolation of this location and the absence of any appropriate supervision may motivate the students from the high school to gather to smoke, and then they can become easy targets for victimization; or, the location can be used for any people for the sale of illegal substances or stolen items, since it provides the essential elements for these criminal activities; or, any person passing through the area can be targeted for any type of assault.

Figure 1. Hangout Area for Smoking Under a Bridge. This setting is used by youths to gather to smoke under extremely isolated conditions.

Additionally, the high school is surrounded by multiple trails. The trails pass under bridges, along the side of the highways and train tracks, and throughout the whole park. According to Bichler, Merrall, and Sechrest (2011), hangouts for deviant behaviors are selected from the locations frequented during non-crime activities. For example, the students of this high school and visitors to the area walk around the trail settings. In these settings, it is observable how trails are surrounded with heavy vegetation that blocks the view, allowing people the opportunity to engage in deviant behaviors (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Neglected Path Trail on the Way to Tunnels. Trail with neglected vegetation that blocks the view to a hangout setting.

Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake attract visitors from all over the city. In these public places a multitude of events are organized through the year, such as yearly music festivals that attract people from all over the world. Due to the diversity in population the possibility of crime increases (Roncek, 1981). Thus, the possibility of crime increases when there are one or more persons present who are motivated to commit a crime, a suitable target or potential victim is available, and the absence of formal or informal guardians who could deter the potential offender (Akers, et al., 2013). For instance, when festivals are in progress, in Zilker Park, there will be one or more persons motivated to commit a crime, such as smoking marijuana or underage drinking. These persons committing these deviant behaviors may become potential victims for robbery, a violent assault, or a sexual assault if the supervision in the surroundings is inadequate for the characteristics of the environment.

In addition, homeless people also are attracted to these public settings. Their encampments seemed to be established in the trails' heavy vegetation and under the niches of the bridges (See Figure 3). Thus, this public space includes places for homeless persons, as well as hangout areas for young people, which appeared to be used according to Austin High School's schedule. For example, during the weekend young hangout settings appeared to be unused.

Figure 3. Homeless Camp. This homeless camp was detected in a niche under a bridge very close to the surroundings of Austin High School.

A longstanding principle of Chicago School Sociology is that heterogeneity of population within an environment creates opportunities for deviant behaviors (Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925). Roncek (1981) applied this general idea to high schools, which he found to influence crime in their vicinity. We can expect this to be especially true if a high school is surrounded by unsupervised space. The location of this high school provides good opportunities to escape adult supervision, enhancing the risk of committing deviant behaviors or becoming victims of crimes. We also noted that the area

behind this high school provides extra opportunity for contacts with delinquents, and it is possible that some of the resulting effects influence their future adversely.

Thus, the main purpose of this field study was to identify and map hangout locations around the public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park in order to understand how the surroundings are being used by students. After identifying and mapping youth hangouts behind this high school, we discussed and suggested appropriate strategies to minimize problems in the future.

This research is part of a larger research tradition, linking situational and environmental design to crime and delinquency. That literature is based on a handful of closely related theories, including routine activity approach, opportunity theory, problem oriented policing strategies, and crime prevention through environmental design. Each of these theories considers how to reduce opportunities for crime for particular kinds of places, and/or particular types of crime. “None of the theories attempt to improve human character. Most important, all of these theories seek to block crime in practical, natural, and simple ways, at low social and economic costs” (Felson & Clarke, 1998, p.23). The next chapter reviews prior empirical research regarding youth hangouts, in which attention to how space affects crime was emphasized; followed by a review of related literature, such as a brief summary of the juvenile justice system and crime prevention theories. The following chapters present an overview of the methodology used, the findings of the field study and analyses of the results, and the discussion of conclusions and recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Background Literature

This field study was concerned with youths hanging out without supervision on the public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park. Previous empirical research results show a strong correlation between delinquency and hanging out in settings with lack of supervision. Moreover, according to Bichler, Christie-Merrall, and Sechrest, (2011), places where youths routinely hang out are inextricably connected to networks of co-offenders. Felson and Gottfredson (1984) explained that hanging out increases the risk of exposure to opportunities to commit deviant behavior and victimization. Felson (2006) suggested that studying convergence places where youth hang out for regular socialization away from appropriate supervision are equally as important as studying criminal delinquent locations. A convergence place where peer formation, juvenile socialization, and delinquency occurs is at schools (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Weisman, 2001), or while traveling from home to school and from school to home (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005). In general, the purpose of this section is to provide related prior research in order to understand the risks involving youths hanging out away from appropriate supervision.

Hangouts nearby School Surroundings

The research shows that routine activities around schools foster distinct patterns regarding the movement and behavior of students to and from school (Felson, 2002). According to Murray et al. (2013), multiple studies have examined the crime inside schools and surprisingly, few studies have been done within the surrounding area of

schools. However, these studies show that the areas surrounding schools are associated with high rates of delinquency. The areas outside the school provide juveniles with the opportunity to socialize with friends, away from supervision, which has been found to be a strong factor that increases the risk for engaging in deviant behaviors and victimizations (McGloin, 2012).

The interaction between juvenile delinquency and school schedule is a concern in criminology because many studies found that in most communities, schools are strongly linked to victimizations and juvenile offending patterns (Anderson & Hughes, 2009). Additionally, when analyzing temporal crime patterns it is clear that school schedules shape the routine activities of delinquents (Gottfredson, et al., 2001).

Furthermore, facilities that attract youth from different communities have higher risk to become crime generators (Bichler, Malm, & Enriquez, 2014). According to Bichler et al.'s (2011) research, street segments, where juveniles hangout, with the highest rates for deviant behaviors were found closer to recreational areas and specific facilities such as schools, malls, and restaurants. They explained that these facilities are convergence settings that produce crime because of their environmental characteristics. Several studies found convincing evidence that the characteristics of specific facilities are linked for disproportional rate of crimes (Eck & Weisburd, 1995). Facilities, such as schools, can generate crime by allowing youth to hang out with little or no supervision, around the surroundings of the school before and after school hours (Murray & Swatt, 2013). Furthermore, schools seem to be essential facilities that provide unstructured

socializing with peers, which is conducive to deviant behavior and correlated with high rates of delinquency (Osgood & Anderson, 2004).

Moreover, it is important to understand that the delinquent's spatial awareness emerges while traveling from familiar settings such as recreation sites, school, work, or shopping areas (Brantingham & Brantingham, 2008). According to Bichler, et al. (2011), delinquent behavior opportunities are a byproduct of individuals interacting in familiar places; the patterns of the environmental places where different youths converge in time and space are the key to understand delinquency.

Barker (1968) found that behavior varies depending on the environmental context of places, and pointed out that in order to understand such behaviors it is essential to learn the patterns of the environment or context in which the behavior occurs. According to Bichler, et al. (2011), routine activities shape how criminological patterns form in most environmental settings. Furthermore, according to Osgood, et al. (1996), delinquency rates are higher among juveniles who spend more time in social activities such as "hanging out" with their peers away from adult supervision. They added that the relationship among several deviant behaviors such as several types of illegal substance use, sexual behavior, dangerous driving, and delinquency are strongly correlated with the opportunity for deviance that is found during the routine of unstructured socializing with peers or friends. But this does not mean that the presence of peers or friends is a required condition for deviant behaviors (Erickson & Jensen, 1977); definitely, the required conditions for delinquency are at least one opportunity to do so in the absence of appropriate supervision.

Murray et al.'s (2013) quantitative study found consistent evidence that the presence of a school influences delinquency and crime patterns in their surroundings, and the characteristics of the school structure and locations also have strong relationship to delinquency and crime. Consistently, their study and several more showed that the presence of a public high school had a strong correlation on crime rates in the surroundings, particularly the blocks adjacent to the school. These studies used routine activity theory and social disorganization to explain that schools are generators of delinquency and crime within the community. These results are quite important because they show that delinquency and crime are the effects of unstructured supervision of the routine activities of the students, particularly, around schools, and that these behaviors are not the result of individual motivations, but instead are the result of the environmental context of the surroundings.

Osgood et al., (1996) discussed the importance of hanging out among youth in what they termed "unstructured socializing in the absence of authority figures" (p. 637). This fits well with the finding that a substantial amount of delinquency and crime involves group activities away from appropriate supervision. Osgood et al., (2004) explained schools bring together the same-age groups of youths from 7 am to 5 pm approximately, five days a week, during nine months every year. As a result, schools are the most significant institutions that provide the settings and opportunities for social interaction among youths. Juveniles who become friends with students that are attending the same school are more likely to influence each other's behaviors and attitudes. That is why it is important to consider what kind of friends a juvenile is hanging out with and

how because the interaction between friends may lead each other in the same type of activities that might shift into delinquency if this interaction converges in an unsupervised environment (McGloin, 2012).

Social disorganization explains the differences among communities in rates of delinquency and crime. In essence, it states that crime and delinquency increase when informal social control is ineffective (Shaw, et al., 1942). According to Osgood et al., (2004), social disorganization and unstructured socializing interconnect with unsupervised interactions of juvenile groups, which is the cause of high rates of delinquency. They explained that the characteristics of the environmental context can produce unstructured socializing which involve juveniles spending more time "hanging out" and consequently, the special effect is engaging in delinquency. In other words, when delinquents and non-delinquents are spending lots of time hanging out in an unsupervised environment, like in the case of the students of the Austin High School, the chances for delinquency and victimization are extremely high.

The Importance of Youth Hangouts

Deviant behaviors are often situational and are determined by the opportunities at specific time and environment; and the opportunities emerge from the lack of detection and intervention from appropriate correspondent authorities (Roncek, 1981). Without doubt, it is clear that adolescents away from appropriate supervision increase the opportunity for delinquent behavior. Many studies support that the routine activity patterns that youth get involved with peers is important, because it determines the future of the teenagers which could end in delinquency. For instance, Osgood, et al., (1996) has

found robust evidence that socializing with peers away from home and authority figures is closely related to processes of criminal patterns and delinquent behavior. Additionally, according to Felson, et al., (1984), findings showed that the lack of formal control is linked to the development of gangs; the level of social control, appropriate supervision, is a primary factor in determining the levels of delinquency.

Repeated studies' findings show that juvenile delinquency largely occurs in the company of peers (Erickson et al., 1977). For example, Sutherland's differential association theory, by Edwin H. Sutherland, emphasized that a person commits criminal acts because he or she has learned definitions (rationalizations and attitudes) favorable to the violation of law. According to this theory, criminal behavior is learned. Furthermore, the theory states that "criminal behavior is learned in a process of symbolic interaction with others, mainly in primary or intimate groups" (Aker & Sellers, 2013, p. 79). Thus, such behavior can be learned while interacting with peers in hangout settings.

Hanging out is a very important routine activity, among youth, that can increase the opportunities for deviant behaviors (Anderson, et al., 2009; Felson, et al., 1984; Osgood, et al., 2004; Osgood, et al., 1996). Many studies show adolescents that are hanging out with peers who are delinquents are more likely to commit deviant behaviors. Thus, hangout locations are clearly connected to delinquency because most youth tend to associate with age-related peer groups (Reiss & Farrington, 1991; McGloin, Sullivan, Piquero, & Bacon, 2008; Sarnecki, 2001). If the peer group is mostly composed by delinquents, it is possible that criminal activities will develop, especially if the group is hanging out in a location isolated from appropriate supervision. Therefore, youth

hangouts in the surroundings outside schools without the supervision of the appropriate authorities could contribute to delinquent behavior.

The Need for Local Documentation

In general, the perception that schools provide safe environments, by adults supervising adolescents, is incorrect, because most youth find opportunities for deviant behaviors not only while they are at school, but also while they are traveling between home and school (Gottfredson et al., 2005). For example, according to the study Youth Risk and Behavior Survey (YRBS), done in 2003, during the previous year about 30% were victims of larceny; 29% were given, sold, or offered drugs at school; and 13% were assaulted; and, about one third of school staff reported gang activity occurring on the school grounds (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Additionally, Gottfredson et al., (2001) pointed out that some temporal crime patterns are influenced around school's schedules. For example, during school hours delinquency increases steadily, and then it peaks dramatically between 3 and 4 pm; on the other hand, during the weekends delinquency is very steady through day time, and it peaks at night (Snyder, et al., 2006). It is clear that delinquent behavior can be directly linked to school schedule (Anderson, et al., 2009; Gottfredson, et al., 2005; Kiesner, Poulin, & Nicotra, 2003, McGloin, 2012; Murray, et al., 2013).

Bichler et al., (2011) pointed out that examining the context and the environment in which a deviant behavior occurs is more informative than studying only why the deviant behavior occurs. For instance, people can be influenced to commit criminal activities by the spatial awareness that emerges while traveling from home to school,

shopping areas, work, or recreations facilities (Brantingham, et al., 2008). It is possible that crime targets are selected while traveling to locations commonly used for non-criminal activities. Additionally, the characteristics of specific places can contribute to criminal activities. For example, Bichler, et al., (2011) found that recreation amenities contribute to delinquent activities. Others have explored how delinquents move about in urban space and how they think about and respond to criminal opportunities (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981). Many other studies have found that schools are places that shape delinquent peer associations (Baerveldt, Völker, & Van Rossem, 2008; Fleming, Catalano, Mazza, Brown, Haggerty, & Harachi, 2008). The relationship between schools and delinquent activities is a concern, because in many communities, schools play an essential role in juvenile delinquency and victimization (Anderson, et al., 2009; Gottfredson, et al., 2005; McGloin, 2012).

In summary, there are a variety of physical and social features of places that enhance their attractiveness to offenders. For instance, Roncek (1981) pointed out in his paper "Dangerous Places" that the diversity of a population in an environment creates opportunities for deviant behaviors. He suggested that deviant behaviors are often situational and often are determined by the opportunities at the particular environment and time and that the opportunities emerged from the lack of detection and intervention from appropriate authorities. Additionally, Sherman, Gartin and Buerger (1989) point out that, "predatory stranger offenses, in particular, seem dependent on places where offenders converge with vulnerable victims and low surveillance" (p. 47). Therefore, according to these assumptions Austin High School, which is surrounded by multiple

bridges; multiple trails with neglected surroundings; and across the street from the popular Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake, is a perfect example of a "dangerous place." Having all these places together makes the environment highly risky for numerous crimes due to the excessive diversity of the population.

In conclusion, Felson (2006) pointed out that the convergence locations where adolescents assemble for regular socialization away from appropriate supervision, are equally as important as examining the characteristics of the environment used for criminal activities. Thus, the need for local documentation is essential in order to develop effective crime prevention strategies that target unsafe public locations which interplay with the Austin High School surroundings.

Related Historical Background

The intent of this field study was to understand how the public space surrounding the high school is being used, in order to suggest effective crime prevention strategies in areas of concern closer to the high school with the purpose of protecting students from ending up in the juvenile justice system or even worse ending up being victimized. A brief summary of the origins and development of the juvenile justice system goes as follows: Whitehead and Lab (2013) stated that in early centuries children were considered regular individuals or property. The indifference that youth suffered throughout historical settings can easily be understood. First, the life expectancy of a child was very low with the mortality rate exceeding 50 percent. Therefore, the failure to develop a caring and bonding attitude towards children can be justified as a defense mechanism to avoid the suffering or sorrow that comes with the loss of a child. And,

second, families were very poor, living day by day and were unable to provide for their young, children were seen as a burden to most families.

Whitehead et al. (2013) stated that the methods of handling young offenders started changing in American society in the early1800s, and in the late 1800s the first juvenile courts emerged with the main purpose of helping the youth and not to punish them. The juvenile courts adopted the doctrine of *Parens Patriae*. This philosophy states that the juvenile courts should focus on handling young offenders as parents would handle their own children. The court's dispositions are based on the best interests for the youth. Thus, according to Wizner and Keller (1977), the "juvenile court was conceived as a kind of social welfare agency rather than as an instrument for the enforcement of the criminal laws" (p.1120).

The juvenile justice system's main purpose was to protect the children. Unfortunately, when adolescents are arrested and referred to a correctional facility, the consequences are detrimental. According to Gaudio (2010), correction facilities lack adequate bed space, security, and health care, among others services, and the services that are needed for drug abusers are nonexistent or ineffective. Furthermore, excessive force in juvenile facilities, by staff-on-juvenile, has been documented throughout the country, in addition to the problems of peer-on-peer abuse. Also, Gaudio (2010) pointed out that detention also negatively affects the future of children. Additionally, economists have shown that incarcerating teenagers will reduce their future income and their ability to remain employed. Thus, detention of adolescent offenders effectively is a lifelong

impediment to future success, and this contradicts the concept of rehabilitation, one of the noble goals of the juvenile justice system (Rolf, Farrington, & Petechuk, 2003).

Furthermore, Forsyth, Asmus, Forsyth, Stokes, and Mayne, (2011) stated that the juvenile justice system is getting overloaded with youth delinquents who may have started their criminal careers as children. They found that the age of a juvenile at the time of committing their first criminal offense is a very important factor that could influence his or her future criminal behavior as an adult. Another strong factor that could predict future criminal behavior is the type of offense committed; if the offense were serious, the risk of becoming a criminal as an adult is higher. They also found that the type of disposition or intervention at the time of the offense could prevent the young offender from becoming a criminal in the future. They suggested that early interventions, such as crime preventive programs, yield promising results for reducing later offenses as juveniles and adults. Also, they added, that non-serious delinquency can be best dealt with in programs that include child welfare and mental health systems, parents, schools, and communities and that all these services can be arranged by the schools or juvenile courts.

Additionally, many adolescents are badly affected by multiple negative factors, such as a lack of parental supervision, poverty, peer pressure, social disorganization, anti-drug laws, drug-free zoning laws, inappropriate legal representation, lack or inappropriate rehabilitation treatment, and lack of legislative reforms that truly protect juveniles. According to Gaudio (2010), in order to prevent teenagers from unnecessary placement in the juvenile justice system and injustice, it is necessary to make sure that the

adolescents are enrolled in safer schools. He added that arresting adolescents is detrimental to the adolescents and the consequences are very expensive without increasing public safety. Additionally, for every dollar spent on preventive programs there is a savings to taxpayers (Barnett 1993). Therefore, the effective adoptions, inside and outside schools, of crime preventive strategies are to protect the students from victimization, and prevent students form ending up in the juvenile justice system. But, sadly, it is very concerning that the security implemented in the surroundings outside the schools has been inadequate or neglectful.

Related Crime Prevention Literature

The design and location of Austin High School seems to invite more crime. To understand and evaluate that statement, we review the literature linking design factors to crime risk. The intent of this section is to present a brief summary of the related crime prevention theories that are relevant to the development of crime prevention through environmental design; such theories are, rational choice, routine activity, crime pattern, opportunity theory, crime prevention though environmental design, and problem oriented policing strategies.

During the first half of the 20th century, the concern with the relationship between crime and environment emerged in the United States (Eck, et al., 1995). According to Maltz (1995), contemporary research on the relationship between geographical environment and crime has been developing along two different lines. The first line of this type of research, he explained, concentrates on crime opportunities, initially inspired by the environmental design work of Jeffery (1971) and Newman (1972), in the

geography approach taken by Harries (1974), in the routine activity theory of Cohen and Felson (1979), and in the work of environmental criminology done by Brantingham and Brantingham (1981).

Moreover, Maltz explained, the second line of research on geographical environment and crime concentrates on correlates of delinquency and is based on the research done by Shaw and McKay (1942). Since then the research on delinquency has supported that delinquency develops in areas of high levels of social disorganization and extremely diverse populations. Thus, the social and physical characteristics of the urban environment are critical to explaining the occurrence of delinquency in specific neighborhoods, and if the physical environment attracts large numbers of a diverse population, the greater the chances that delinquency and victimizations will occur in the area (Eck, et al., 1995).

The theoretical underlining of crime opportunities, according to Felson and Clarke (1998), emerged from the combination of the following theories – rational choice, routine activities, and crime pattern. These theories have helped to interpret and explain the importance of places in relation to crime, which, at the same time, influenced in the development of crime prevention efforts. These approaches concentrate on behavioral causes, convergence in spatial, and temporal and spatial patterns of crime (Eck, et al., 1995).

Rational Choice Theory

In criminology, according to Beauregard, Proulx, Rossmo, Leclerc, and Allaire (2007), the rational choice perspective assumes that criminals offend because crime provides the most effective means of achieving desired benefits, such as money, material goods, excitement, prestige, sexual gratification, domination of others, etc. People decide whether or not to commit a crime by evaluating the effort, rewards, and costs involved in alternative courses of action. The offender makes decisions based on the expected effort and reward associated to the likelihood and severity of punishment and other costs of the crime (Cornish & Clarke, 1987; Newman, Clarke, & Shoham, 1997). The main concept suggests that the decision to commit a crime is made after rational consideration of benefits and costs. Nevertheless, routine activities and rational choice theories can be used to describe the behaviors of offenders in relation to crime events which can help to explain the distribution of crime across places.

Routine Activities Theory

The routine activity approach was developed by Cohen and Felson (1979). They identified three main elements of crime opportunity: a motivated offender, suitable target of criminal victimization, and absence of capable guardian. They emphasized that the absence of any one of these elements normally is enough to prevent such criminal activities from occurring. Thus, the presence of a target and offenders is insufficient for crime if a guardian is present. For example, according to Murray et al., (2013), during school hours, administrators and teachers appear to discourage deviant behaviors on school property by providing "guardianship," but, sadly, that would not extend to the

youth activities past school grounds. Thus, they added, since schools are dismissed earlier than most working adults, it is assumed that guardianship is at minimum within the community, allowing juveniles ample opportunities to engage in delinquent behaviors with little chance of detection.

In terms of the routine activity approach, police are not the most likely guardians against crime; instead, criminal victimization is reduced by the presence or proximity of ordinary citizens, including neighbors, friends, family and also strangers (Felson, 1995). In terms of the current research, the public areas nearby the high school include spots where guardians are absent.

Eck (1994) expanded the guardianship concept to specify "place managers," those who look after particular places either informally or as part of their job assignments. Managers have the authority to regulate access to property and the behavior of people who interact in the places (Eck, 1995). Accordingly, Felson (1995) pointed out that a gated community or residential building with a building manager, doorman, janitors, and/or private security officers clearly offered to the residents a high level of security. When no one is hired to carry these types of functions, crime is more likely to occur, and when someone is hired, crime is less likely to occur, because the presence of this type of personnel serves as capable guardians and thus discourage many offenders to commit criminal activities.

Moreover, Felson added that these "place managers" discourage and prevent criminal activities without arrest and punishment. Thus, if juveniles are constantly committing deviant behaviors, this may mean that the environment has persistent low

guardianship as well as ineffective managers. Consequently, accordingly to our present field study, school officials are responsible for supervising the Austin High School building and immediate grounds. However, in the area we are studying, the school officials are not responsible for patrol or supervision, given its location outside the high school property. Although police patrols occur on occasion, currently there are no place managers in this area. This fact makes it very easy for those entering to violate laws and rules with substantial chance to avoid interference.

Crime Pattern Theory

According to Brantingham, et al., (2008), the crime pattern theory is based on local crime patterns, such as the distribution of offenders, targets, and guardians over place and time. These researchers explained this is possible because people engage in routine activities among the spheres of home, work, school, shopping, and recreation. The central idea of this theory is to consider how people and things get involved in crime by considering time and space. Additionally, crime pattern theory has three concepts: nodes, edges, and paths; such concepts refer to places that can generate crime within a place and nearby (Felson et al., 1998). Thus, offenders during normal activities can become aware of criminal opportunities. For instance, this may be the case with Austin High School's surroundings; maybe students choose hangout settings for deviant behaviors while participating in school daily routine activities.

Opportunity Theory

The opportunity theory's main assumption is that opportunity is a necessary condition for a crime to occur, according to Felson et al., (1998), which shifts the focus

away from theories about persons, instead emphasizing elements of the crime situation and the physical environmental that may support criminal activities. They presented their opportunity theory with ten main principles, but only the following principles are relevant to our field study for recommendations:

- **Opportunities play a role in causing all crime.** One required condition for delinquency is at least one opportunity to do so. Deviant behavior opportunities are considered a byproduct of youth hanging out in familiar places. In short, delinquency is influenced by opportunities. But, the opportunities can be removed by simply redesigning of some characteristics of the places and by implementing strategies such as intensive supervision to remove the opportunities to delinquent activities.
- **Crime opportunities are highly specific.** This means that crime preventive strategies need to be tailored to the specific crime. For example, if the students from Austin High School are using the surroundings with heavy vegetation nearby to hang out and use illegal drugs, the effective solution to this specific crime would be to keep the vegetation well-trimmed by surroundings near the school in order to allow for the opportunity of appropriate supervision.
- **Crime opportunities are concentrated in time and space.** Here routine activities and crime patterns are useful to understand hangout locations near Austin High School. Dramatic concentration of hangouts under the bridges and nearby settings according to school schedule indicates that the school schedule could be shaping the routine activities for deviant behaviors. Additionally,

according to Felson, et al., (1998), hangout settings can be defined as "crime generators," "crime attractors," and "crime detractors." For example: hangouts can be "crime generators," because youths may use them for illegal substance use, sexual behavior, and delinquency. On the other hand, hangouts can be "crime attractors," because students and outsiders decide to go there to engage in deviant activities. Moreover, hangouts can be "crime detractors," because the locations may discourage offenders with simple surveillance of the surroundings.

- **Crime opportunities depend on everyday movements.** Delinquents may select places to hangout and engage in illegal activities, either as part of a determined search, or as a chance encounter while engaged in non-delinquent activities (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981).
- **One crime produces opportunities for another.** According to Felson and Eckert's (2015) when deviant behavior is not controlled, it will become a multiplier for other crimes and victimization. For example, if the students at Austin High School engage in underage drinking, away from any appropriate supervision, the crime of underage drinking may disinhibit the users to commit other crimes such as using marijuana or more serious drugs like methamphetamine or cocaine.
- **Crime can be prevented by reducing opportunities.** According to Felson et al. (1998), this principle is based on the routine activity approach which argues that the lack of any one of the three main elements, motivated offender, suitable target, or absence of capable guardian, is sufficient to prevent the occurrence of criminal

activities. Thus, if crime is occurring in hangout settings around Austin High School the simply solution is to adopt crime prevention strategies that enhances appropriate surveillance of the public space.

According to Adelman and Taylor (2007), the most common forms of crime in schools are assaults (physical and sexual) and use of illegal drugs. Thus, opportunities for delinquency might be prevented and eliminated by developing effective supervision strategies and preventive programs based in juvenile activity patterns within the school schedule.

Preventive programs in schools have been implemented in order to have safer schools in our society. According to Adelman et al., (2007), under the policy "No Child Left Behind," the Department of Education signed a law in January 2002 that clearly states that preventive programs must meet specified principles of effectiveness, which include that all children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve. Furthermore, any prevention strategy must have been grounded on scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program to be used will decrease violence and illegal drug use.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Theory

One of the most applied strategies that ensure quality and security in school is: crime prevention through environmental design (Adelman, et al., 2007). Crime prevention through environmental design strategy is based on a simple but important idea, which suggests that in order to prevent some deviant behaviors from occurring, it is very important to construct, maintain, and modify the physical environments in which

people interact (Bechtel & Churchman, 2003). According to this strategy, the participation of governmental agencies is essential, because they can adopt building codes and mandatory inspections to increase environmental security.

Crime prevention through environmental design mostly focuses upon the design of new buildings and places, but it does not eliminate redesign or fix old ones (Felson, 1996). It emphasizes the systematic analysis of criminal activities in particular places in order to modify the environment with designs targeting the prevention of crime.

During the planning and application of strategies that are based on crime prevention through environmental design the characteristics of a place are viewed as an essential key in explaining why delinquents have favorite places for committing criminal activities (Braga, Papachristos, & Hureau, 2012). For example, Kuo and Sullivan (2001) suggested in relation to crime prevention through environmental design that the characteristics of the vegetation surrounding specific public locations are relevant in preventing crime. Additionally, they explained, all plants and trees need to be well trimmed so they do not block visibility for appropriate supervision. For instance, if the vegetation by the surroundings of Austin High School was preserved well-trimmed undesirable behavior will be controlled.

Accordingly, Pease (1999) suggested in relation to crime prevention through environmental design that lighting could reduce crime in dark places, because people may be detected when committing deviant behaviors. For serious crimes, lighting might force offenders to move somewhere else, less serious crimes may be deterred. Additionally, he explained, by increasing the lighting the presence of authority figures

become more visible and thus will prevent crime from happening. For example, poor illumination of streets and trials, located near a major facility such as Austin High School provide an ideal environment for delinquency, violent assaults, illegal use and sale of drugs, and victimizations.

Furthermore, crime prevention through environmental design can be achieved also by redesigning, controlling, and adopting proper supervision of buildings, residential neighborhoods, schools, and business areas. The basic ideas include controlling access to and conducting surveillance on specific areas to reduce opportunities for crime to occur (Fleissner & Heinzelmann, 1996). For instance, by controlling access to Austin High School and conducting intensive surveillance on specific areas the opportunities for crime can be eliminated.

Problem Oriented Policing Strategy

Problem oriented policing is a management style and organizational strategy that promotes proactive problem solving by the police, with the participation of members of the community. It is concerned with addressing the causes of crime and fear as well as many other community issues (Peak, 2012). To accomplish these goals police have adopted the approach of Scan, Analyze, Respond, and Assess (SARA) problem solving model (Ortmeier & Meese, 2010). SARA problem solving model was introduced by John Eck and William Spelman in 1987 to a huge audience of police officers looking for a way to have an impact on crime in their communities. Since then SARA has become one of the best-known acronyms in modern policing (Ratcliffe, 2008).

Problem oriented policing is concerned with addressing the causes of crime and fear as well as other community issues (Ortmeier, et al., 2010). In a brief summary this strategy involves scanning the problem, analyzing of the problem, responding with a solution to the problem, and assessing if the problem was eliminated or if a new strategy needs to be implemented. This process requires the acquisition of detailed information about people involved with the problem, such as offenders, victims, the time and the location of the occurrence, the environment, and the outcomes of current responses.

According to Ortmeier, et al. (2010), scanning and analyzing the problem requires addressing the underlying causes rather than the symptoms of the problem. The analytical process looks at and through the problem. Once the problem is identified, the characteristics and factors that contribute to the problem are analyzed. Thus, in relation to our present field study, by scanning hangout locations near Austin High School and by analyzing them with mapping techniques; their patterns can help to identify underlying causes of problematic hangout settings. The analysis mostly addresses the underlying causes rather than the symptoms of the problematic hangout locations. For example, the underlying causes for the problematic hangout locations are lack of appropriate supervision and neglected environment, and the symptoms of the problem are youth engaging in deviant behaviors.

After the careful analysis of the problem, the following solutions can be recommended: implementation of intense supervision, installation of surveillance equipment, redesigning the environment, and removing problematic areas of concern, such as removing unnecessary vegetation, among other solutions. After the

implementation of these crime preventive strategies, an assessment needs to follow. This assessment evaluates if the response (solutions) was successful in the elimination or reduction of the problematic issues. If the problem has not been successfully addressed, then new responses are recommended. Thus, in relation to this field study, if the underlying causes of the problematic hangouts are addressed, lack of supervision and neglected environment, and the problem is not successfully resolved a new creative approach may be considered. For example, according to Dammer and Albanese (2014), Japan adopted an effective policing strategy in which a very small local police station called a "Koban" is providing to the community members a direct access to the police to address immediate local crime issues. The underlying idea of this concept is that police and public need to work together to solve the underlying causes of crime. Therefore, if a very small police station is built within the immediate surroundings of the problematic hangouts near Austin High School, with the main purpose of prevent crime, maintain order, respect the dignity and rights of the people, crime can be drastically reduced or eliminated.

In conclusion, several crime prevention principles can help to reduce crime opportunities around the surroundings near Austin High School by simply implementing the more appropriate crime preventive strategy to each hangout location in which the youth engage in deviant behaviors. According to Felson et al., (1998), each crime preventive strategy seeks to reduce or eliminate the opportunities for crime for particular kinds of victims, targets, and places. Each idea is concerned with preventing a very specific type of crime. None of these strategies attempt to change human character. Most

importantly, all of these strategies seek to block crime in very practical, natural, and simple ways, and at very low economic costs.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design Used

In this study, according to Maxwell (2008), the research question is at the heart of the design: How would identifying hangout settings, where deviant behaviors occur, be helpful to improve the supervision around these problematic locations and prevent more crimes from occurring?

This field study observed how public space is used by those living, working, visiting, and going to Austin High School. Because this was a qualitative study, the research question tried to understand particular situations or issues by investigating how people use the public space in situations and/or settings in which they interact (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005), such as hangouts, that may influence people to commit deviant behavior. It emphasized how youths from one high school use particular public areas near that school. It also focused on school days, while school is in session or just after school lets out. The goal was to be able to recommend crime preventive strategies that can reduce deviant behaviors and victimizations from occurring. The recommendations are based on the understanding of the settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

This field study explored the public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park. The research was exploratory in the sense that it examined rather generally "What is going on here?" Given that this is not a very specific question; the researcher captures a variety of observations without imposing a rigid structure on it (Bachman & Schutt, 2012). Thus, I observed how this public space is used, such as what

spaces are used to hang out. However, there was a special prior interest in how youths "hang out" informally, outside of school, where they do so, and when such convergences occur. There was also an underlying suspicion that youth hangouts give rise to disproportionate risk of victimizations and offending, even though the research did not directly focused on these events.

This research was "covert" since "the researcher does not reveal her identity as a researcher to those who are observed" (Bachman, et al., 2014, p. 244). Theoretically, covert participation helps the researcher gain entry, without reactive effects, to the settings of study; this type of method should only be allowed in public settings (Erikson, 1967), Additionally, according to Bachman, et al. (2012), "entering the field or the setting under investigation is a critical stage in a participant observation project, as the introduction can shape many subsequent experiences" (p. 203). For instance, in this field study some of the youths in the area noted the researcher's presence and status as an outsider, concealing certain behaviors or exiting the scene as a result. Thus, in order to minimize these reactions, I tried to behave like an ordinary visitor enjoying the outdoors, keeping my identity secret, and attempting to minimize my intrusion.

The population of these public spaces is very diverse. Most visitors dress casually or in sports clothing, often walking the trails with their dogs. I dressed accordingly, wearing sporty clothes, and sometimes walking one of my dogs in order to fit in. I did not carry a professional camera or notebook to take notes. Instead, I used my cellular phone and headphones like any other visitor in the park. I acted as if I was listening to music, making a phone call, texting, or taking pictures of my dog when my dog was with me.

The research was reflexive because it shifted and developed as the study progressed (Bachman, et al. 2014). According to Maxwell's (2008) research design, the sampling, data collection, and data analysis are based and constantly reorganized while reflexing how to answer the research question. Maxwell added that, during qualitative studies, the researcher may modify and reconsider the methods used during the study in response to the development of the findings. Thus, I modified my observational techniques somewhat as the study proceeded. For example, while observing and mapping the public space around the park, I noticed that some locations apparently are used to deal with illegal substances, and that some city police appeared in the area. These findings were duly noted, even though they were discovered as the research proceeded.

Validity pressures usually go simultaneously with the research question, influencing the development of the study (Maxwell, 2008). In this study, validity issues can be raised because this study did not cover all times of day or all days of week. However, our focus was on school days and does not generalize to non-school times. The field study also focused on hangout locations closer to the high school.

This study does not claim general applicability to other schools and other situations. We do claim that the presence of a good deal of unassigned and unpatrolled public space near this particular high school generates a good deal of unsupervised activity, and we document that. We believe, but do not assert, that others will be able to use and apply this analysis in other settings.

Reliability considers whether these measurements would be replicated in other studies in the same place. It is true that hangout patterns vary from day to day, and so

another research project in this same area might not arrive at exactly the same results. In addition, weather conditions greatly affect how the hangout areas are used. However, this research varied in days of week and time of day, in order to minimize the risk that observed patterns were just a fluke. For example, when it was raining some hangout areas were totally inaccessible and also during rainy days most people used only hangout areas that provide shelter from it. Thus, reliability is strongly affected by unpredictable factors such as weather.

Sampling Methods Used

In qualitative research all sampling is purposeful and consists of particular settings, times, or individuals (Coyne, 1997), and involves the choice of where and when to observe, what sources to focus on, or whom to talk to (Maxwell, 2008, Patton, 1990). According to Coyne (1997), in field studies, the researcher must have ideas of where to sample and where the sampling will lead, so the research question can be answered. Furthermore, in field studies it is commonly observable to sample how social interactions adapt over the effects of the arrangements of social settings (Heath & Cowley, 2004). For example, some hangouts around Austin High School are adapted to the interactions of young people according to the arrangements of the public settings. This field study consisted of observations of how people used the settings in relationship to the high school, the public space, and time according to school schedule. Thus, the sampling were the observations of hangouts around the public space closer to the high school.

The study sampling focused more on public spaces that allow youths to conceal their activities, including those that are illegal or delinquent. Greater emphasis was given

to places closer to the high school, which were selected, described, mapped, and photographed. All photographs were taken in fully public places. Approximately five hundred pictures were taken, of which one hundred pictures, approximately, were selected for presentation. Additionally, during each visit most observations were documented with as many details as possible from each location, such as, but not limited to: time, weather conditions, evidence of rule breaking, and how the public space is used.

How the Data were Collected

King, Keohane, and Verba's (1994), recommend to first understand what can and cannot be done in the proposed settings before designing the research. Thus, this field study began with careful exploration of the surroundings of the Lady Bird Lake, Zilker Park, and Austin High School. During this exploration, no observations were collected. All data were collected during October, November, and December of 2014; and January and February of 2015. Only by knowing and understanding the process by which the data were collected, we are able to produce causal inferences and/or valid descriptions (King, et al., 1994). The methods used to collect the information were observations and mapping. According to Kaplan et al., (2005) the main instrument for collecting the data is the researcher's objective observations and understanding of the setting of study.

Observations involved the documentation of how the public space is used, such as where people hang out. Photographs were taken of the surroundings of these areas, including photographs from under the roadways, trails, and tunnels. All photographs have been taken in fully public places. All pictures are mapped in relation to the location of the high school. The pictures that were taken depict areas under roadways, nearest hangouts,

farther hangouts, and heading farther away hangouts. In order to collect all information, multiple visits to the area of study were done randomly.

How the Data were Analyzed

In qualitative research, data analysis is a process that starts as soon as the project begins. It is based on the research question, and continues throughout the complete study (Kaplan, et al., 2005). According to Marshall et al. (2010), qualitative research often comes from real-world observations such as in this project. This type of data is analyzed with a variety of systematic techniques in ways that retain the characteristics documented of individuals and natural settings (Kaplan, et al., 2005). In this study, the data analysis involved the selection of mapping techniques of the area. Observations and photographs have been marked on a map with a description of the area and how this area is used (See Appendix D, and Appendix E).

We used mapping techniques to analyze the data because they are powerful tools for analyzing and communicating information (Harries, 1999). The information in the maps can be emphasized through the choice of three cartographic techniques: point (pattern), line (flow), or area (choropleth). Point maps are appropriate tools when mapping events across the city, line maps show flows of movement of people between specific space, and area maps are best used to show portions of a city within a large-scale map (Groff & McEwen, 2006).

The landmark piece of qualitative research involving crime mapping was done by Shaw and McKay in 1942. They mapped thousands of incidents of juvenile delinquency

and analyzed spatial relationships between delinquency and social conditions in Chicago; under the social environmental science mapping events and variations in social conditions, in cities, can relate to patterns of crime (Harries, 1999).

In this field study, the information gathered was represented in basic maps with red points, each point symbolized the location of a hangout. The choice of this cartographic technique is based on the research question being answered here (Groff, et al., 2006). This technique had been selected because it provides an excellent visualization of the patterns of the hangout locations.

Weisburd and McEwen (1998) suggested that mapping techniques are excellent tools in crime prevention strategies because they help to understand the relationship between places, time, and crime. Thus, the overall flow of movement of people between the high school and public spaces was mapped with the flow map technique too. This technique had been selected because, by identifying the type of temporal pattern of the hangouts in the public space in relationship with the school's daily routine activities, a better understanding of the environment around Austin High School was achieved. Also, it offered an excellent visualizing of where crime preventive strategies can be recommended according to the space and time relationship between the high school schedule and hangout locations. Therefore, in this field study, we were mapping the patterns of youth hangouts according with school schedule and closer to the high school, and anything interesting involving how the public space is used.

Ethical Issues

I have avoided ethical problems by taking no names and photographing no people. Instead, I photographed areas where people are often seen at times when they are absent. Moreover, there is no reasonable expectation of privacy in any of the areas that I entered to carry out this research. None of the information gathered was an intrusion to privacy or raises any reasonable ethical issues. The focus of this study was on general use of this space, not individual subjects. All photographs have been taken in fully public places. No human subjects have being included. Thus, ethical issues such as avoiding deception and potential harm for participants, maintaining privacy and confidentiality for participants, and the requirement of informed consent was not necessary for this field study because this field study was in a public setting (Bachman, et al., 2014). Furthermore, this field study qualified for IRB Exemption because it did not include human subjects, nobody has been interviewed, no interactions with any persons have been initiated at the study site, and the collected data does not bring harm to any individual.

IV. FINDINGS

This field study began with multiple visits to the area for careful exploration of the surroundings between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park. During each visit, the data collected involved observations of how the public space is used, paying special attention to public spaces that are being used to hangout. In general, the public spaces that were considered to provide the appropriate surroundings for committing deviant behaviors and/or victimization were selected for presentation. The information collected were presented, with description of the findings of the area of each mapped settings with the corresponding pictures of the location or hangout settings, as follow: trails and under the bridges conditions, how the public space is used, where people hangout, where homeless camps were detected, and where authorities were detected.

Trails and Under the Bridges Conditions

In this field study three hike and bike trails were detected: Lance Armstrong Bikeway, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, and Lady Bird Lake Trail (See Figure 4.). These trails pass under bridges, at the side of the highways, beside train tracks, at the side of Austin High School, at the side of Lady Bird Lake, and throughout Zilker Park. The trails' surroundings do not have appropreate lighting, most trails have unmanicured/neglected vegetation, many trails are located under multiple bridges with neglected environment and isolated spots.

Figure 4. Map of Hike and Bike Trails. These hike and bike trails lack surveillance, lighting, and also have neglected vegetation. People use them regardless of their conditions. (See Appendix A. Trails and Under the Bridges Pictures, for pictures of these settings.)

During the exploration of this trails, no informative maps or boards displaying rules or curfew hours or schedule or safety tips were observed. For example, the Lance Armstrong Bikeway trail is located behind the high school, and paralel between W. Cesar

Chavez Street and to a train rail. This trail is used by many people every day for different reasons, such as: students that walk to school, young people to hangout, bikers and hikers, and homless people. (See Subchapter, Hangouts in Lance Amstrong Bikeway).

Each bridge provides niches and isolated locations along the trails in which people gather away from appropreate supervision. (See Appendix A. Trails and Under the Bridges Pictures, for pictures of Lance Armstrong Bikeway, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, and Lady Bird Lake Trail and under the bridges surrounding). These pictures have been taken concentrating on the areas under major bridges and trails located closer to the surroundings to Austin Hihg School. In those pictures can be observed neglected environment, such as lack of lighting, and isolated spots, among other neglected issues.

How the Public Space is Used

The Lance Armstrong Bikeway, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, and Lady Bird Lake Trail mostly are used for walking, running, and biking regardless of the condition of the surroundings, such as isolated spots, poor lighting, and neglected vegetation. Some of the high school classes use the Lady Bird Lake and Zilker Park surroundings to enhance their topics of study, including, but not limited to, environmental science, photography, and PE classes. Additionally, every school day, the Lance Armstrong Bikeway and Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail are used by students, who walk or bike, to arrive to school in the mornings; and after school they used these trails again to go back home. Furthermore, during school lunch time, some high school

students walk to the businesses around the area, some use the streets other use the trails or both, Figure 5. shows the overall flow of the students' traveling.

In the morning the students seemed to travel straightforward from home to school, less activity were detected around the hangout settings during this time of the day.

Figure 5. Flow of Movement of People Between High School and Surroundings. Around noon the students travel from school to businesses and hangout settings. Before and after lunch, many students wonder around the public space between the Austin High School, lake, and park.

The trails are used by all kinds of people from different socio economic and cultural backgrounds. High school students, community college students, university students, business people, couples, and whole families visit the park, and many of the visitors bring along their dogs with them. The population that uses the trails is diverse. For example, the ages of the users of the trail varies greatly, from babies in strollers that are been pushed by their parents, to elderly people.

Benches where people stop to rest while they are walking or running are found throughout the trails. The activity of the trails seems to start around 5:00 AM and continued until a little bit after nightfall. The trails can be accessed from many different streets and multiple parking areas. However, the areas for parking have poor lighting and some do not have lighting at all. In addition, these parking areas do not have any kind of security suvellinance.

These parking areas have been used by high school students and visitors to the trails, park, and lake. Although students have different ways of transportation, and not all students use the public parking areas, the students who have their own cars do. In addition, some students are dropped off by parents, other students use the school bus or public transportation, and many others walk or bike from their home to school.

Regardless how the students from Austin High School arrive to school, they will pass through or use the parking areas since many school activities and classes are held in the surroundings of the high school. For example, the school Band practices at the school parking area, many classes use the school surroundings to enhance their topics, such as

Environmental and Photography, and, apparently, PE classes are held at Zilker Park, among other classes.

Figure 6. Map of Parking Areas. Parking areas do not have proper lighting or observable security. (See Appendix B. for more pictures or the parking areas).

No persistent hangout locations around the parking areas were identified during the field study. The parking areas are used by some visitors to warm up before they start walking or running. Some groups of young people, from noon to 1:30 approximately, use their cars to hang out; however, in this study cars were not mapped (See Figure 6, and Appendix B, for more pictures).

Additionally, since the high school is fenced with multiple entrances, some visitors used the curtilage and running track of the high school for different activities, such as warming up before they go walking or running; other visitors use the curtilage of the high school to teach groups of people to exercise (See Figure 7).

Figure 7. Austin High School's Fence. Entrence through the fence into the curtilage of the high school.

Furthermore, Zilker Park and Lady Bird Lake attract visitors from all over the city. Also, in these locations a multitude of events are organized, such as yearly music festivals attracting people from all over the world. For example, some of the main events in Zilker Park are: Austin City Limits Festival, The annual Zilker Park Kite Festival is held the first Sunday in March each year, and the Trail of Lights Event Nights which is held during Christmas Holidays. During each major event the perimeter of Zilker Park is fenced in, and all access to the area is controlled by the company organizing each event. For example, Zilker Park is fenced in for The Trail of Lights Event from October 24 through January 9 (See Figure 8).

Figure 8. Zilker Park is Fenced During Special Events. Zilker Pak is closed and fenced during festive activities, such as The Austin Trail of Lights.

Where People Hang Out

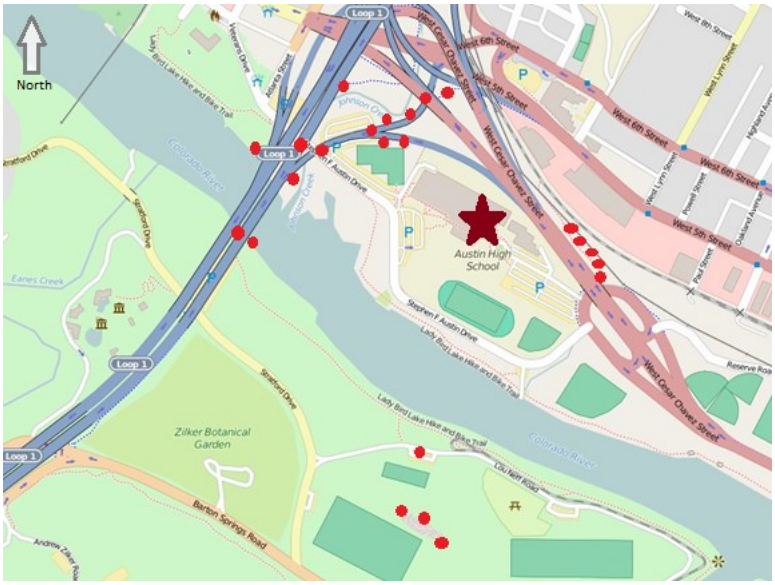


Figure 9. Main Map of All Detected Hangout Locations. All young hangout settings were mapped with red dots. During the following sections each hangout location is described.

The hangout locations that were mapped are presented with red dots in the map (See Figure 9). The hangout locations were detected in the public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park. It was observable how the three main elements of routine activities theory, motivated offender, suitable targets of criminal victimization, and absence of capable guardians (Cohen et al., 1979), can be applied to each identified hangout setting. The isolation of these locations and the absence of adult supervision made the hangouts extremely dangerous. For instance, most of the hangout settings seem to provide the essential elements for committing many types of criminal activities, such as, the use and sale of illegal substances and/or public intoxication,

violent attacks, sexual assaults, bullying, graffiti, and tagging. Furthermore, the hangouts that were detected have high risk for victimizing people that pass through it.

Most of these hangouts are hidden and/or isolated away from appropriate supervision, surrounded by neglected vegetation, without appropriate lighting or none at all, and tagged and/or trashed. While mapping, the area of the focus was on the general use of these public spaces and not on individual subjects. The collected information involves observations of how the public space is used by people for hangouts. When these hangouts are active, the public space is mostly used to hangout, or smoke or drink.

While these hangout areas are active, some of the visitors that used the trails pass through it without stopping. The size of groups of people in the hangout locations varies. For example, at the hangouts can be seen groups of three young males and one young female, groups of two young males and two young females, groups of only young males, groups of two young males, groups of two young females, and loners mostly young males, among others. The groups of people that use the public space to hangout can be seen at hangouts under the bridges and then later at the hangouts behind the high school or in another hangout location.

The collected information was presented as follows: by dividing the mapped hangouts by the locations where they were detected, such as hangouts behind the school, under the bridges, under a roadway, under the pedestrian bridge that crosses the lake, around the lake, and in the park. Descriptions of the areas mapped as hangouts and corresponding pictures to each hangout are also provided.

Hangouts in Lance Amstrong Bikeway

Behind the Austin High School is the street Cesar Chavez, the trail Lance Armstrong Bikeway, and the train rails. The environment in this location has poor lighting or no lighting in some segmens, no supervison was detected or signs of security, such as boards with rules or map of the area, and the vegetation has been neglected. The trail Lance Armstrong Bikeway is located between Cesar Chavez Street and the train rails. This public space passes along the side that is located behind the high school (See Figure 10).

Around this environment, five hangouts were located. One under the bridge, one immediately on the trail, and three more along the neglected vegetation of the trail. Hangout are concealed by neglected vegetation. None of these hangouts appeared to be used by homeless people, though, one homeless camp was detected around the area.

These hangouts are active during weekdays, no activity was detected during weekends. Also, these hangouts seemed to be active only during school schedule. The activity seemed to start around 8 AM and continue until around 6 PM. The location seemed to be used by seveal mixed groups of young people. Moreover, from all of the detected hangout settings these location were the most active from 4 to 6 PM. When it was raining, the young hangout settings did not show activity.

Figure 10. Mapped Hangouts in Lance Armstrong Bikeway. Detected hangout settings were mapped with red dots. These hangouts seemed to be active only during school schedule. Their activities seemed to starts around 11 AM and continued until around 6 PM. But between 4 to 6 PM these hangouts were very active.

Hangouts Right Behind School

Behind the high school in the space between Cesar Chavez Street and the tennis courts, located at the curtilage at the side of the school, two hangouts were detected in the neglected vegetation. These hangouts are active during weekdays, but not during the weekends. The activity appeared to start around 11:00 AM and lasts until 6:00 PM. These hangouts are used by no more than one or two people at a time (See Figure 11).

Figure 11. Mapped Hangouts Behind the High School. These hangouts are used by no more than one or two people at a time.

Hangouts Under the Bridges

The location of the hangout settings that were detected under the bridges are immediately located closer to the side of the high school and under major bridges that are used for public parking area. The hangout that are mapped in the map in Figure 12. is active mostly during noon and after school, it is used by female groups who sit on the logs. This hangout is one of the less prone to delinquent behaviors due to its openness.

Figure 12. Mapped Hangout Location under Bridge. This hangout is mostly used by females who sit on the logs.

Around the previous hangout is a path that leads to a major hangout area. The environment of this locations is surrounded by heavy vegetation that prevents supervision of the location. The activity of this hangout was consistent with the school schedule; during the weekdays the hangout was active, and during the weekends no one seemed to use the settings. The activity of this appeared to start before 8 AM and continue consistently until around 6 PM; this hangout appeared to be used by diverse groups of young people.

Moreover, the hangout appeared to be used for smoking. People who park their car closer to this hangout location went in and out quickly, before getting into their cars or walking to the businesses around the area. Visitors to the park pass throrughout this area without interacting with the users of the hantout. What is more, this public environment is the most active of all the hangout settings from noon to 2 PM, approximatly (See Figure 13).

Figure 13. Hangout 1 on Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail.

Figure 13, Continued. This hangout was identified as being very active from noon to 2 PM. With stedy activity throughout the day.

In the following detected hangout, the activity appeared to start around 11 AM and continued until around 6 PM, with consistent activity during the middle of the day. Also, this location appeared to be active during school schedule. Mostly the activity is during weekdays, no activity was detected during weekends. People spend longer periods of time in these settings. When it is raining, this area is the most visited since provide shelter from it. Additionally, a homeless camp was noticed around this location. During the field study it was found out that the homeless camp site was used by people, mostly by young couples, during day time (See Figure 14).

Figure 14. Hangout 2 on Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail. The activity in this hangout location was during weekdays, no activity was detected during weekends. Groups of people spend longer periods of time in these settings. When it is raining, this area is the most visited since provide shelter from it. Around these settings a homeless camp was detected. This homeless camp is used by young people during day time to hangout.

The following hangout setting was located under multiple bridges. The hangout location is one of the most risky for victimization and deviant behavior because it is totally isolated. No lighting and survellance was detected. It is used mostly by groups of young males. This location seemed to be used by people consistently with the school schedule. The area is most active around noon during weekdays, no activity was detected during weekends (See Figure 15).

Figure 15. Hangout 3 on Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail. This hangout seems to be one of the most dangers, for deviant behaviors and/or suffering any type of victimization, due to its isolated location.

The following hangout setting was located under and in between multiple bridges. This hangout was detected to be used mostly by mixed groups (female and male) of young people. Its activity seemed according to school schedule; it was active during weekdays and inactive during weekends. People who used this setting stay in for long periods of time. It seemed that people used this hangout for smoking and drinking (See Figure 16).

Figure 16. Hangout Between the Bridges. This hangout setting is used by young people persistently throughout the day, no noticeable schedule.

The following hangout area was located under Mopac bridge. This hangout does not appear to have a consistent schedule. People use this hangout any day at any time. The pictures below show the trail and stairs that lead to the hangout under the bridge. This hangout is isolated. This location is used mostly by mixed groups (females and males) with no noticeable schedule (See Figure 17).

Figure 17. Hangout under Mopac Bridge. This hangout is isolated, no schedule was detected.

Hangouts Under Veterans Drive

The following hangout was detected under the bridge on Veterans Drive. This location is used randomly through weekdays and weekends. No distintive schedule hours were detected. When it is raining no one is able to access the area. This area is used by one group of people at a time. No distintive group of people was consistently observed.

This hangout location can be accessed throught different trails. The pictures in Figure 18. demostrate different angles of this hangout area.

Figure 18. Hangout Under Veterans Drive. When it is raining this hangout location is inaccessible.

Figure 18, Continued. This hangout location can be accessed throughout multiple trails.

Hangouts Under Small Bridge at Lady Bird Lake

Under the small bridge that is used by people to pass across the Lady Bird Lake, two hangouts were detected. The inmediate nich under the structure of this small bridge is used as a hangout. The decorative vegetation prevents the view to the hangout's activity. These hangout locations seem to be active during weekdays; no activity was detected during weekends. No apparent schedule was detected. The area is used randomly by young groups of people to hang out. Usually in mixed groups of females and males. It is clear that these groups of young people are using the hangout settings as a shield away from proper supervison. This small bridge is used every day of the year to pass across the lake (See Figure 19, and Figure 20).

Figure 19. Hangout 1 Under the Structure of Small Bridge that Pass Across the Lake. This hangout is under the structure of the small bridge that isused every day of the year to pass across the lake. It was noticed that this setting is used mainly for deviant behaviors. See evidence below.

Figure 19, Continued. Evidence of rule breaking.

Figure 20. Hangout 2 Under the Structure of Small Bridge that Pass Across the Lake. This hangout was detected under the structure of the small bridge that is used to pass across the lake.

Hangouts around Lady Bird Lake

Lady Bird Lake seems pretty stable; the only areas that showed some kind of hangout activities closer to the high school were under these bridges (See Figure 21). The hangouts appear to be active every day of the week, without a consistent schedule. No specific type of group people was identified.

Figure 21. Hangout Locations Around the Lake. Hangout around the lake and closer to the surrounding of the high school.

The lake area appeared well organized by several canoe rental places that are located strategically around the edges of the lake. The main canoe rental is called the

Texas Rowing Center and is located exactly across from Austin High School. The canoe rental administration has strict rules and requirements to rent their equipment. For example, in order to rent a canoe, they required a signed waiver, along with an ID and a credit card. However, more strict rules are enforced when renting to minors. Parents are required to sign a waiver, provide ID, and credit card, among other requirement. Furthermore, these businesses have very strict schedules that among other things, require all canoe renters to return all equipment by sunset

During the year, many people visit The Lady Bird Lake. Some visitors rent canoes, while others use their own or boats to fish in, yet others just visit to fish or enjoy the view. Nonetheless, it does not matter who is visiting or what kind of special activities are going on around the lake, the interaction between visitors, canoe rentals, and local officials seem well managed. This well-managed relationship at the lake is an example of routine activity theory. The theory states that by eliminating one of the three main elements of the theory (motivated offender, a victim or property, and the absence of a guardian) a criminal activity can be eliminated (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Therefore, the lake could be considered a convergence place, but since the canoe rentals can be considered as "guardians," one element is eliminated: the absence of guardian. These businesses may not realize this but while they are enforcing their rules and requirements, they are deterring criminal activity from happening.

Hangouts in Zilker Park

Zilker Park is visited every day of the year by countless people. In the mornings, the area is pretty quiet, then; in the early afternoon, the park shows the most activity.

People visit the park for different reasons, some play with their dogs, others play different types of sports, and others simply lay down on the grass. During the observations of the public space, four persistent hangouts were detected. These hangouts start showing activity around noon and continue until around 6 PM during Monday through Friday. No major activity of these hangouts were detected during weekends. The hangouts around the rock island seem the most persistent and because most of the hangouts are used for smoking, the walls of the rock island are being damaged by the smoke. These hangouts are mosly used by young groups of people. While conducting the observation and mapping of the rock island at Zilker Park, a hangout seemed to be used for the dealing of illegal substances (See Figure 22, and Appendix C).

Figure 22. Hangout Locations at Zilker Park. In this hangout seemed to be used for dealing illegal substances. (See Appendix C. for more pictures).

Locations Where Homeless Camps Were Detected

The homeless camp locations were not mapped in the main map of hangout locations, Figure # demonstrate where the homeless camps are located. The surroundings of Lady Bird Lake and Zilker Park appear to attract various kinds of population, which included homeless people with unknown backgrounds. Many homeless people find shelter within the neglected vegetation that will cover their camps and below bridges that provide little to no lighting (See Figure 23).

Figure 23. Map of Detected Homeless Camp Locations. Locations of homeless camps.

Locations Where Authorities Were Detected

Austin police officers were detected regularly during visits to the area of study in forms of car patrol and mounted patrol. Car patrols were observed passing across the

Veterans Drive, which is also known as Stephen F. Austin Drive. This street passes in front of the high school. Mounted patrols were also observed on the park and around Veterans Drive.

V. DISCUSSION

Conclusions

This qualitative research began with a simple description of the proposed field study, reflecting on the settings, and interpreting them. Then the purposes and means for the research were described, followed by the collection of information, organizing the information, and describing the facts. The data were organized by mapping the identified hangout locations; connections were made between different facts in an effort to document the credibility of these connections (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). This chapter presents conclusions to the findings and how the data was interpreted. Also, it presents recommendations that may improve the problematic hangout areas that were identified.

To reach conclusions of the findings, qualitative methods were useful because they provide a means of answering questions and reaching conclusions that cannot be done using other methods (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). The research question (How would identifying hangout settings, where deviant behaviors occur, be helpful to improve the supervision around these problematic locations and prevent more crimes from occurring?) helped in the development and guidance on how to conduct this qualitative field study, it helped in understanding how to investigate specific hangout areas, where deviant behaviors occur, with the main goal of identifying how to improve supervision in the problematic locations in order to prevent more crimes from occurring. Throughout this field study, the research question helped to keep the focus on the goals of the study. The research question is the component that directly connects an influence on all the

findings of this field study, and the recommendations for improvement are direct responses to every part of the field study (Maxwell, 2008).

The findings show what and why something is happening in the area of study (Kaplan, et al., 2005). Young people are hanging out in public places because it is socially necessary. It is part of the passage from childhood to adulthood in which youth socialize and bond with peers away from adult supervision (Scott, 2002). The main problem is that the surroundings of the environment near Austin High School, where young groups hang out, are extremely unsafe. It is understandable that young people need some kind of privacy to interact with their peers, but when they choose to interact in extremely isolated locations where they may commit deviant behaviors, they also place themselves in dangerous situations. Without doubt, the students of this high school while away from appropriate adult supervision are at high risk of committing deviant behaviors or becoming victims of innumerous crimes. According to Sherman, Gartin and Buerger (1989), predatory offenders, in particular, appear to attack in places where offenders converge with vulnerable people in places without surveillance.

Furthermore, it is normal and common for children to walk from home to school and from school to home. But, in the case of Austin High School, this is relevant information because the environmental conditions that the high school students encounter while walking to and from school are dangerous. According to Felson and Clarke's (1998), the trails that people use in their everyday activities are closely related to where they fall victim to crime. For example, unaccompanied young people are potentially exposed to being victimized while walking through the following neglected areas: Lance

Armstrong Bikeway, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, Lady Bird Lake Trail, and under the bridges and surrounding areas. Furthermore, the Lance Armstrong Bikeway is just behind the high school and it does not have lighting, it has neglected vegetation and homeless camps. Little to no lighting is provided under this trail, adjacent bridge, and surroundings. Frequent exposure to risky situations, such as walking in dark environment, has been thought to be a predictor for criminal victimization. Walking alone in the dark had a significant impact on multiple victimization rates (Rodgers, 1995) (See Figure 24).

Figure 24. Little to No Lighting is Provided Between This Public Space. Little to no lighting is provided around the surroundings of Austin High School.

Mostly hangouts for deviant behaviors are selected by high school students and visitors of the area during common activities (Bichler, Merrall, & Sechrest, 2011). Additionally, the identified hangout locations are extremely isolated, which is an essential element in most criminal activities. Furthermore, when deviant behaviors are not prevented or controlled they may escalate to more serious crimes. Moreover, the problem is that some people increase their chances of becoming crime victims by

committing crimes themselves (Barkan, 2001). According to Felson et al. (1998), one crime produces the opportunities for more crimes, such as smoking and/or underage drinking can lead to the use of more serious drugs.

Furthermore, according to Felson and Eckert's (2015), when deviant behavior is not controlled it will become a multiplier for other crimes and victimization. They state that one crime requires, disinhibits, advertises, entices, sets up, and escalates into another crime; one simple crime starts a victim's chain. For example: if young people are using the public space to hang out for underage drinking, away from any appropriate supervision, then someone committed the crime of purchasing alcoholic beverages for minors beforehand. The crime of underage drinking may disinhibit the users to commit another crime, such as using marijuana or even more serious drugs such as methamphetamine or cocaine. Therefore, the failure of crime control may advertise that the type of behavior is okay, so people may feel enticed to commit the same crime in that same area since they see other people doing it. Then when people use the public space for illegal purposes, it may set up the space for another crime such as assaulting someone to rob their money so that the offender can buy more drugs. Also, it is possible that users of illegal drugs may prostitute themselves in order to obtain the money for the drugs.

Furthermore, it is clear that the surroundings of Austin High School such as the Lady Bird Lake, Zilker Park, and multiple trails are visited by multitude of people. According to Roncek's (1981), the diversity of population in an environment creates opportunities for deviant behaviors. He suggests that deviant behaviors are often situational and often are determined by the opportunities at that particular environment

and time, and that the opportunities emerge from the lack of detection and intervention from corresponding authorities. Fortunately, deviant behaviors can be prevented by reducing opportunities (Felson et al., 1998, p. 23), and by reducing or eliminating the opportunities, the quality of life around the whole environmental surrounding will improve. Increasing awareness of danger in risky locations where redesigning is not possible, and by also increasing surveillance, people will feel safe.

Recommendations

The methods for crime prevention strategies need to be designed according to each situation to be effective. For example, crime preventive strategies that have been implemented inside schools around the nation, which include the participation of the entire community, can be implemented in the surroundings outside Austin High School as well. According to Adelman and Taylor (2007), under the policy "No Child Left Behind," the Department of Education clearly states that all children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve. Through our field study, we found that most of the hangouts with high risk for dangerous situations are located very close to the public space surrounding the high school. Moreover, the students are required to walk from their home to the high school and from the high school to their homes throughout these dangerous settings, which may add limitations to learning and achievement due to the stressful surroundings. Additionally, the students that walk from the high school to the businesses and from the businesses to the high school also are encountering these dangerous situations.

Furthermore, most students who use their own cars for transportation to the high school are mixed with the diverse populations that visit these areas while parking their cars in the public parking areas near the high school. These students may be exposed to all types of predators, including child molesters. This problem may be addressed by redesigning the assigned parking areas by making them exclusively for students. This restructuring can be enforced by mandatory parking permits which need to be noticeably displayed on the front of each student's car during school hours and other extra-curricular activities.

Additionally, according to Adelman et al. (2007), the most applied strategy for crime prevention is through environmental design. First, all the trails around the surroundings of Austin High School, including bellow all the bridges with neglected vegetation, need to keep grass, all plants, and trees well-trimmed, so they do not block visibility for supervision and may discourage people to commit deviant behaviors (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001). Second, installing appropriate lighting around the surroundings of the high school will make it easier to detect people committing deviant behaviors or it will make corresponding authorities, if any, more visible and thus prevent deviant behaviors form occurring (Pease, 1999).

Third, surveillance cameras should be strategically installed around all the trails. The installation of surveillance technology has been proven to reduce crime (Scott, 2002). Fourth, the area could improve if clear rules, truancy laws, and curfew laws were displayed in visible areas, so all visits to the area can be aware of them. Thus, all people who visit the area can be accountable. For example, the police in the city of Dutch visit

schools, when the school year starts, and inform students about rules of conduct that will apply in public places where students are known to congregate (Scott, 2002). Fifth, increase patrol with police officers in uniform assigning them to walk around the area including the areas where the young people hang out (Scott, 2002). Finally, create alternative legitimate public places for youth activities. Young people need entertainment, recreation, and public places to socialize with their friends in a safer environment (See Appendix F, for examples of recommendations). By redesigning the areas under the bridges where the majority of the hangouts were detected, it will help young people hangout in more appropriate surroundings (Scott, 2002).

The benefits of applying crime prevention strategies in the public space between Austin High School, Lady Bird Lake, and Zilker Park are well worth it because it will decrease victimization, decrease deviant behaviors, and serious criminal acts. It will also decrease sexual and violent assaults and decrease the number of addicts in the community. Furthermore, these crime prevention strategies may also decrease the number of dropouts at the high school and transferring high school students to alternative schools. Then, ultimately it will decrease the number of high school students that could end up in the juvenile justice system, which would be a great benefit to society as a whole.

APPENDIX SECTION

A. Pictures of Trials and Under Bridge Settings

B. Map and Pictures of Parking Areas

C. Pictures of Island Rock at Zilker Park

D. Main Map of the Area of Field Study

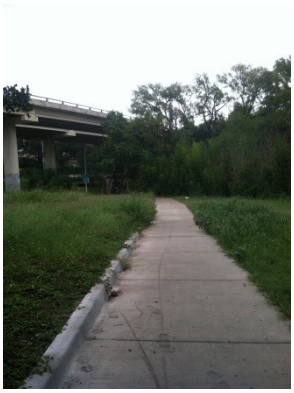
E. Field Note Form

F. Examples of Recommendations

A. Pictures of Trials and Under Bridge Settings

The pictures below show the Lance Armstrong Bikeway, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, and Lady Bird Lake Trail and under the bridges surrounding.

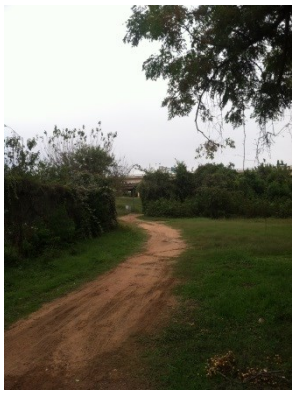
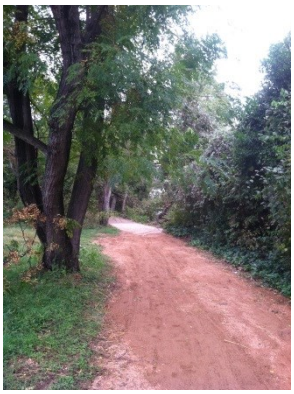
Appendix A, Continued



Appendix A, Continued

Appendix A, Continued

Appendix A, Continued

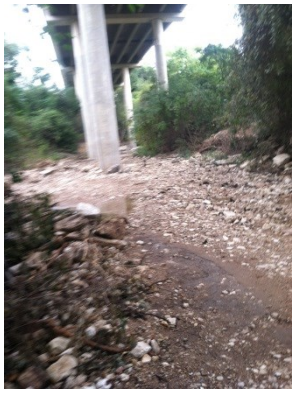
Under the Bridges Pictures






Appendix A, Continued






B. Map and Pictures of Parking Areas

The map and pictures below show the parking areas.

Appendix B, Continued

C. Pictures of Island Rock at Zilker Park

The pictures below show the Island Rock at Zilker Park.

Appendix C, Continued

D. Main Map of the Area of Field Study

Main Map of the Area of Field Study

OpenStreetMap is *open data*, licensed under the Open Data Commons Open Database License (ODbL) by the OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF). The Open Database License (ODbL) is a license agreement intended to allow users to freely share, modify, and use this Database while maintaining this same freedom for others. Retrieved from:

Retrieved from: http://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=15/30.2736/-97.7646

E. Field Note Form

Field Note Form	
Date:	
Time:	
Period of observation:	
Weather Conditions:	
City Police:	
Description of Observations:	

F. Examples of Recommendations

Examples of Recommendations

Retrieved From: http://planphilly.com/articles/2007/05/01/1463

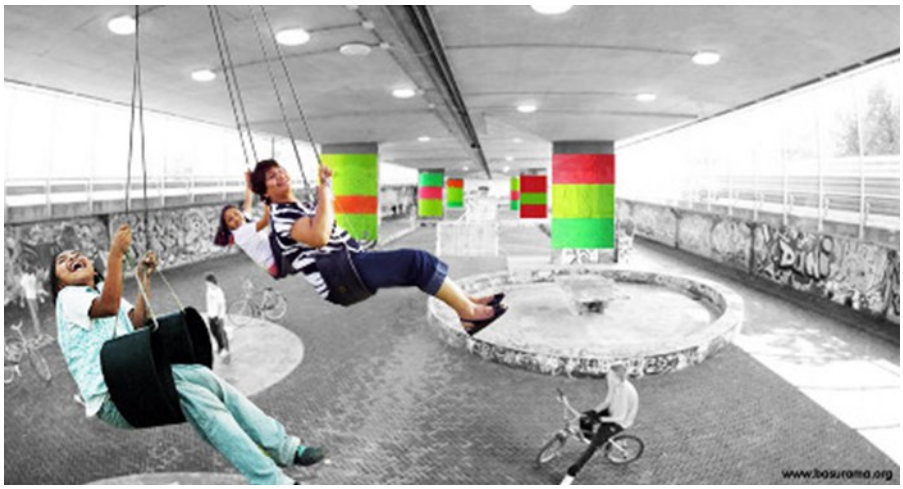
Retrieved from: https://laud8.wordpress.com/2010/10/12/seart-sylvia-park/

Appendix F, Continued

Retrieved from: http://streets.mn/2013/01/23/utilizing-the-space-beneath-bridges/

Retrieved from: http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/futurecapetown/255566/gallery-cape-town-skatepark-under-bridge

Appendix F, Continued



Retrieved from: http://cargocollective.com/UDW2011/Amusement-Park-Under-The-Bridge-Basurama-Asociacion

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