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## Green Ring Wayfinding Map

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## Green Ring Wayfinding

Lents is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland, with 43% of people of color. The neighbors are either long-term homeowners, people displaced from North Portland due to the gentrification, and new residents seeking for economic development areas with an affordable price. The Green Ring Wayfinding Map is a community place-making project that improves neighborhood safety, accessibility, and enjoyment through conversations and collaboration across Lents diversity and geography. Physically, the Green Ring is a loop of neighborhood streets and greenways that need upgrades like better crossings, connected paths, sidewalks, and improved signage. Better connections are needed to access popular Lents community spaces, including at least three major parks, the Lents Town Center, two schools, natural areas, and grassroots community projects like the Malden Court Community Orchard and the Community Tool Library. The four legs of the Green Ring include SE Steele St, SE 87th Ave, SE 101st Ave, and the Springwater Corridor.

After three years of focus groups and surveys with the Lents residents, a Green Ring Wayfinding Map is being created to praise the values, branding, and design of the neighborhood. The values came from mapping activities during neighborhood forums, where the residents expressed the problems and the advantages of living in Lents. The urban renewal in Lents Town Center area introduced the branding concept to the neighborhood. The recognition of the landscape and historical aspects reinforced the identity of Lents and the connectivity to the people living there. Portland is known as “a city of neighborhoods” with neighborhood associations, local cultural events, and pedestrian-oriented signs indicating close places to explore. Using the Story Maps platform, from ESRI, we indicated the points of interest and frequent routes within the Green Ring. A partnership between the non-profit Green Lents and Portland State University will bring the Green Ring to life with students and neighbors engaging in leadership actions to advocate for social and environmental justice. So far, three classes from Portland State University aided in the research capacity, working on a storytelling project, tracking the accessibility of the routes, and mapping accessibility. The final design signs of the Green Ring is still being developed based on the current feedback of the Wayfinding Map.

The Green Ring Wayfinding Map informs about the current projects in the area associated with Green Lents. The last achievements included the community organization for an intersection painting at Naya Generation, a Native American affordable housing project, a bike ride with high school interns, a walk with college students, and a GIS workshop for the local youth explore the food desert issue in Lents. The main challenges are to improve the safety and accessibility on the unimproved streets, the illegal campers along the Springwater Corridors, and to reduce traffic speed in neighborhood streets.

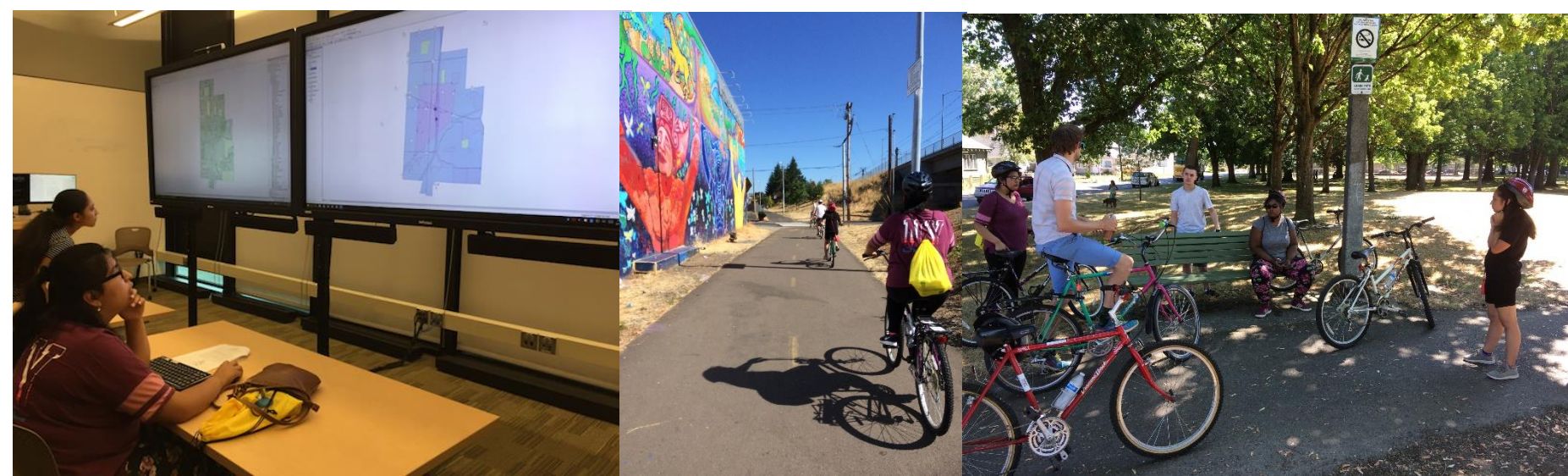


Figure 1, 2 and 3 – GIS Workshop and Green Ring bike ride with Lents Youth Initiative

## Community-based Learning Methods

The partnership between Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) and Green Lents used community-based learning methods. Chase (2002) concluded that bringing *mainstream students* to field experiences that are different from their backgrounds improve their leadership skills and better understand of equity and environmental justice. Grove, Chowdhury, and Childers (2015) discussed the benefits and challenges for community-based methods. According to them, this type of partnership foster the use of new technologies, such as the Story Map. This tool was useful on the Wayfinding design and also easy to access from a smartphone. Still, they explained that the open-ended process of social learning is touches the triple bottom line and is a continuous process.

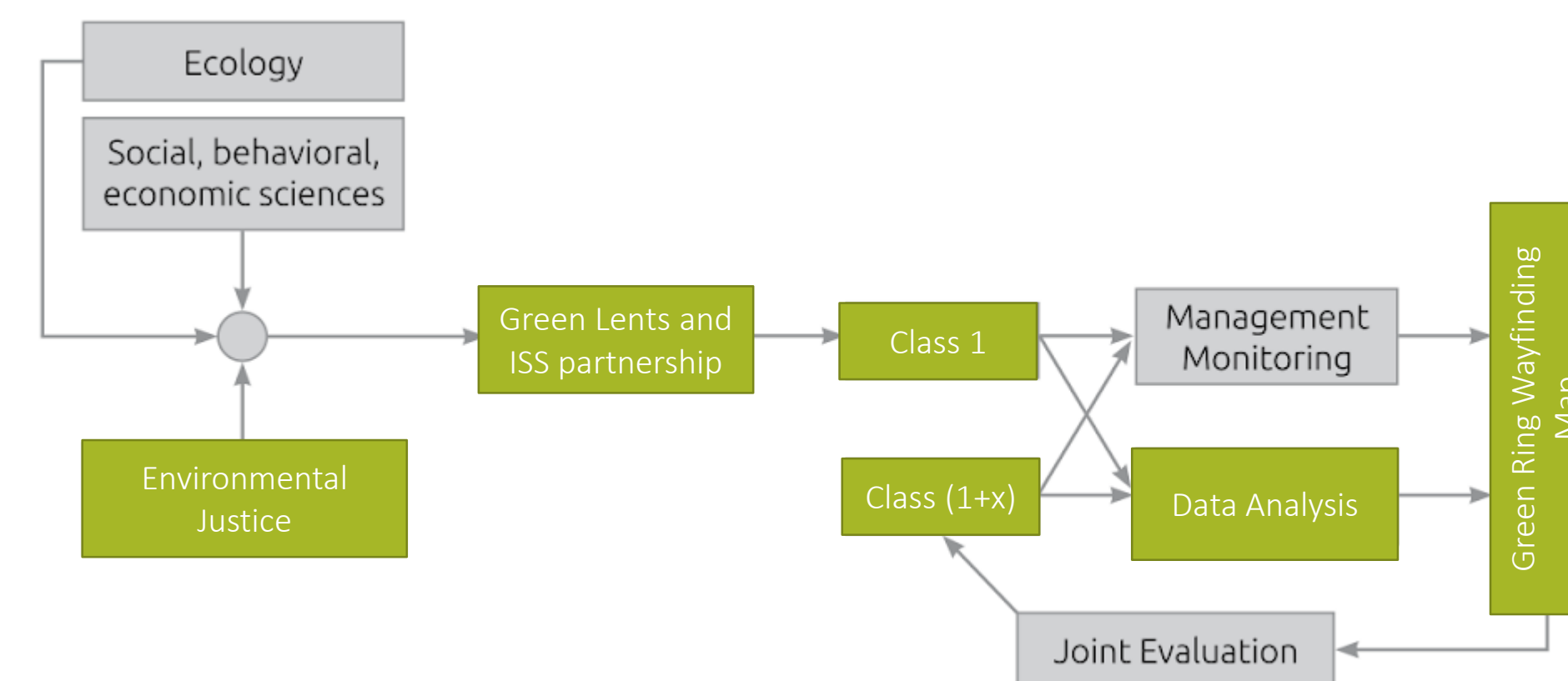
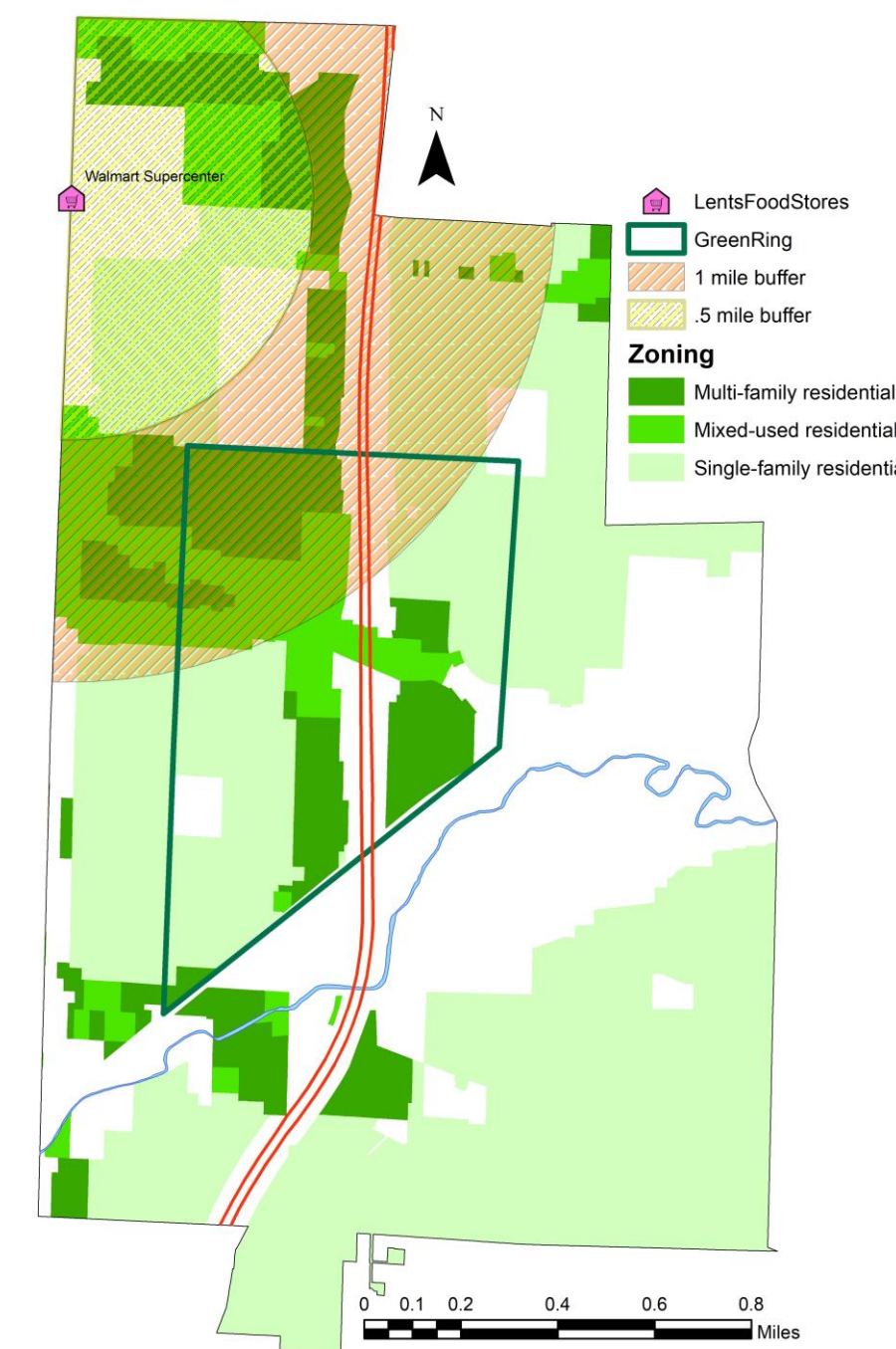


Figure 4 – Community Based Learning diagram adapted from Grove, Chowdhury, and Childers (2015)

## Activities with Lents community



Lents Youth Initiative is summer internship program for teenagers in high school in Lents neighborhood. In 2018, the interns participated a GIS workshop and learned more about the issues on there area, including food deserts, urban heat islands, as well as using digital maps and getting familiar with GIS. Other activities included a bike ride along the Green Ring, helping on community outreach strategies, and tree planting programs.

NAYA Generations is an affordable housing project in Lents neighborhood with a majority of Native Americans residents. Green Lents has been working with NAYA neighbors in an intersection mural to improve safety and praise their culture. The residents and a local artist, also Native American, had worked together in a mural design for the street.

Figure 5 – Lents Food Desert Map from GIS workshop

## Activities with Portland State Students

The partnership between ISS and Green Lents has been happening for the past years, where PSU students support the non-profit projects collecting data and doing community outreach. In the past year, three classes enrolled helped in the Green Ring.

A Public Administration class of Foundations for Community Leadership brought students with different backgrounds to the Lents neighborhood. They did a walk tour along the Green Ring and interviewed residents of the area to understand their issues regarding education, community spaces, community engagement, and environmental projects. The outcomes resulted in storytelling videos and podcasts.

Green Lents team created routes along the Green Ring for Geography students of an Urban Landscapes class. The students walked on the routes and identified accessibility and walkability problems, especially for people with disabilities. Then, this data was coded and merged into a previous dataset, expanding the places that need an extra attention on the Wayfinding Plan. Now, a class of Advanced GIS is assessing ADA-friendly routes, night-friendly routes (with light poles), and areas of interest for investors on the Green Ring.

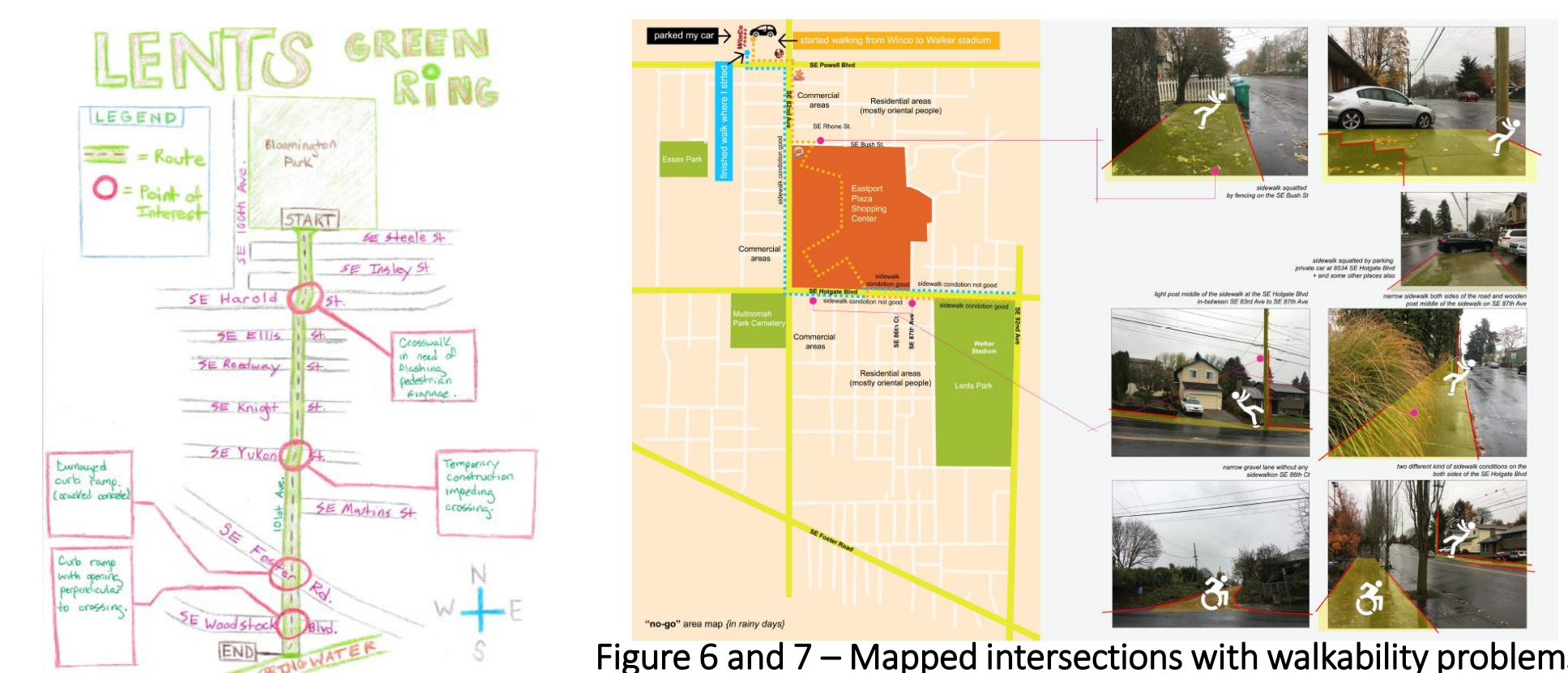


Figure 6 and 7 – Mapped intersections with walkability problems

## Conclusion

The project outcomes have benefited students, institutions, and the population of Lents. The students worked in a real case scenario, improving their capacity to solve problems and to adapt to availability of resources. ISS connected the students, professors, and Green Lents. The people of Lents were heard through the storytelling project and the final Wayfinding Map will aid their accessibility on the neighborhood. Green Lents projects were supported by the community based learning method, reducing the expenses with time and workforce.

SCAN HERE THE GREEN RING STORYMAP



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