

It's been a busy summer, and the Collaboratory group has been quite active. Here's a brief update on the various projects we've been working on.

Last week, Todd F., Ron, Todd N., Sergio, and Gabriella met at PSU, where they focused on several ongoing prototyping projects. Additionally, Todd N., Tomas, Emily, Lisa, Stacey, Gundy, Daniel, and Jerilyn have been working on several exciting projects this summer. The overviews are brief but aim to give you a sense of how our goal of creating relocation planning tools, media, and resources is progressing.

I will reach out in the next few weeks once the semester begins so we can schedule a time to meet and catch up. In the meantime, feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Keep up the good work!

Todd N.

Octagon House Project

We met and reviewed the archive of materials accumulated over the past several years, mostly from a previous NSF project that ended in 2023. The materials include oral histories with the builders and designers, a summary of the post-occupancy interviews conducted by Tomas and Todd N. this spring and summer, and many additional details. Our discussion addressed several important issues and provided the architects (Todd F. and Sergio) with a chance to become familiar with the materials. We also met with Patrick Cleveland, a city official and tribal member in Quinhagak, who was extremely helpful in providing further details on the octagon housing project, foundational issues, and housing more generally.

Action Steps: We have outlined several next steps, including:

- Identifying clear goals in consultation with our partners in Quinhagak, while also providing ethical research guidelines and training.
- Clarifying the overall goals of the project.
- Ensuring that the PSU student working on this project completes CITI training and participates in training with Todd N. before beginning work with the research materials.



Advocacy Reels Project:

Todd N. has been collaborating with Ron on designing social media storytelling strategies that villagers can use to convey the various issues they face in maintaining and repairing their homes. This project stems from work that Todd N. and Tracy engaged in last year, which was reported at the Alaska Anthropological Association meeting in March. The prototype is progressing well, but feedback will be essential in the coming weeks as we complete the first iteration.

Action Steps:

- Finish the draft and meet with Jerilyn to get feedback.
- Present during a charrette/CRP session later this fall.



Strengthening our outer walls and wind resilience

One thing the entire community needs to regularly repair is the level of their homes.

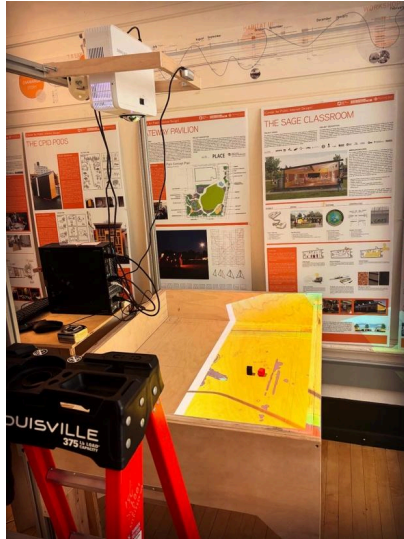


AR Sandbox and Game

The sandbox activity has really developed well. As the pictures show, the PSU team has built a sturdy prototype. They have also modified the gaming system by writing new code and exploring ways to project different images onto the sand, beyond the original idea of showing topography. Gabriella is creating a game that draws on her interests and personal background in Indigenous studies. She is incorporating moon cycles, various foods, animals, and other mythological symbols into the game. Before leaving to work in Alaska this summer, Anthony wrote code for the project, and Ron has been coordinating a new, lighter-weight design for the sandbox.

Action Steps:

- Meet with Jerilyn and Des, a teacher from Quinhagak, to receive feedback on the game's design and potentially hold a charrette on the project this fall.
- Prepare the AR sandbox for presentation at the AIA conference in Fairbanks this November.

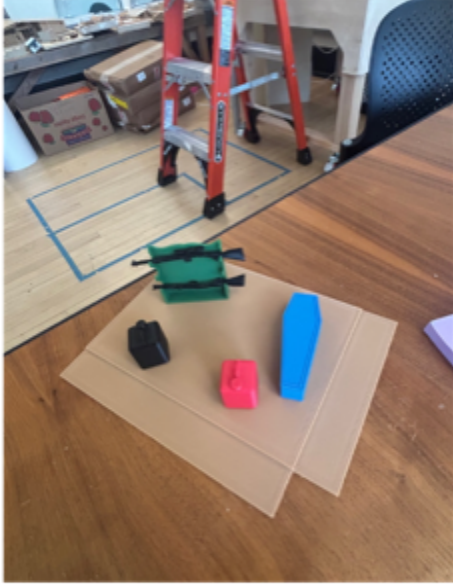


Arctic Entryway Game

Todd N. has been working with Ron to print the 3D game pieces designed by Lisa O., a James Madison University student, a few years ago (Image A). The game pieces can be flat-packed and shipped to communities wanting to visually explore various layout plans for building Arctic entryways. Our current goal is to verify if the 3D game pieces print to the correct size and if the pieces and the game board are functional for our intended purposes. Ron and Todd N. explored this with the pieces printed below and developed several new iterations. Todd Ferry also provided valuable insight about how the doors of freezers or storage containers require space to open and close.

Action Steps:

- Image B: Create a plexiglass game board double or triple the size that can hold a layout of an Arctic entryway underneath and allows for drawing with erasable markers.
- Scale up the activity from designing an Arctic entry (which is not commonly used in the YK-Delta region) to designing a home.
- Create a “design card” to accompany the game.



Images A: 3D printed gun case, gasoline canisters, coffin, board game, and freezers.

Action Steps:

- Todd N. and Ron will continue to iterate on this project, and we hope the Zine that the IDPro class begins this fall will build off of this work.
- We are planning several CRP sessions in fall, and hopefully, we will have an example to present in Fairbanks in November.



Image B: Plexiglass game board for design your dream home project

Tomas' Projects

Literature Review: Tomas has been working on the annotated literature review throughout the spring and summer and is making significant progress. Although we do not yet have a polished draft with all the summaries, we hope to have one ready by early fall, which we will circulate for feedback. Once we finalize the full draft, we will collaborate with VT Publishing, with whom we communicated this summer. They are willing to assist us with the publication process later this fall.

Coding: Tomas and I have developed a summary of the post-occupancy interviews conducted in 2023 with residents of the Octagon homes in Quinhagak. This information is currently being reviewed by Jerilyn for accuracy and will inform the Octagon project, in which we hope to involve a student from PSU this fall.

Oral history article: Todd and Tomas are working on a writing project that focuses on the oral histories of the Octagon House. Tomas has a background in the history of the built environment and has experience working with oral histories, making this a great opportunity for him. This project will also build on the work he did coding the interviews, conducting a literature review, and assisting with the cleanup of the interviews we have been conducting over the past year.

Action Steps: Publish the literature review and draft a draft article.

Collaboratory Website

Emily is currently developing a website to promote our project's work and share the tools we create throughout the coming year. This website will serve as a resource for students, faculty, and community collaborators, providing information on grants and related projects. We plan to launch the site in late fall 2025.

Action Steps: Complete the draft of the website and request feedback from users to develop better strategies for sharing our project.

YK-Delta Housing Resource Guide

Todd and Stacey have started outlining a tool in the form of a housing resource directory to support communities engaged in relocation and related housing projects. This initiative was inspired by numerous comments from individuals expressing challenges in finding contractors and obtaining contact numbers for housing authorities, as well as research emerging from previous and ongoing NSF projects that highlight the various networks formed through housing initiatives.

The goal of this project is to develop a guide in collaboration with Jerilyn and Kari from YK-Delta communities. The guide will be available on a wiki site, allowing for continuous revisions and

updates. While we are still a long way from completing this project, we do have a rough draft that Todd is seeking feedback on from Kari and Jerilyn. Our aim is to hold a CRP session later this fall to discuss further developments.

Action Steps: Gather feedback from regional stakeholders and use that information to make improvements. Next, consider how to create a “living document” that can be easily updated, given the high turnover rates in the positions and agencies mentioned in the resource guide.

Mold Stories

Gundy and Todd worked on this project last spring, collecting images and stories. This summer, Gundy was less available due to the busy season in the north, but the goal is to continue this work with her this fall. In the meantime, Todd began collaborating with Daniel Bird Tobin on developing activities to generate ideas among diverse audiences on how to address and support research on mold in housing. Daniel and Todd previously worked with the Communicating Science program at Virginia Tech, where they created a workshop that encourages participants to engage in storytelling activities about homes and mold. The goal is to create an equitable space at gatherings with rural community stakeholders and experts on mold that invites reflection and the sharing of questions and ideas, ultimately informing research collaborations.

Action Steps: Test workshop activities and conduct additional interviews with experts on mold. Explore the development of design cards or related activities to effectively share information on addressing mold issues that participants are facing in this project.

Food Processing Station

This project is currently on hold while we seek to bring on a PSU graduate student to assist Todd N. and Todd F. with their work.

Staging Area Game

This project has been put on hold as of May 2025. Reschedule for Spring 2026.

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