HEALTH HAPPENS IN NEIGHBORHOODS

The Greater Kansas City LISC Special Initiative Grant:
Impacts of Community Development Investments on Resident Health

Douglass-Sumner
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A growing body of national research supports the premise that geography is a central indicator to the health of a community and the individuals who live there. Neighborhoods with high proportions of low-income individuals and families suffer disproportionately higher rates of health disparities, housing insecurity, lower educational attainment and increased likelihood of being victimized by violent crime.

In 2008, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened the Commission to Build a Healthier America. As part of its work, it examined health disparities in cities, including Kansas City, Missouri, and found that a child born in the Armour Hills neighborhood (zip code 64113) will have the average life expectancy of 83 years, while one born only three miles away in the NeighborhoodsNOW focus area of Blue Hills (zip code 64130), will live to only 69. Over the past ten years, things have not gotten better.

In 2012, Greater Kansas City LISC hired researchers from the Office of Community Health Research at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences to evaluate how our NeighborhoodsNOW program promotes physical activities conducive to improving health indicators. The resulting study, which compared two NeighborhoodsNOW communities with two control groups, found that 47% of the goals identified in the neighborhood’s Quality of Life Plans were “pro-physical activity”.

This data confirmed that intentional, place-based revitalization programs can create an environment conducive to healthy behaviors, and therefore have the potential to improve health indicators of residents. It remains mostly unknown whether residents react to this improved infrastructure by actually changing their behavior.

After nearly 40 years in the field, LISC has a deep understanding of the correlation between resident cohesion and efficacy and the resilience of that neighborhood. More and more research is also emerging that clearly extrapolates the relationships between health, resident connectedness and their feelings about their environment. When positive, families walk more, depend on neighbors in emergencies, and advocate for resources like parks, fresh food and safe streets. In Kansas City, we call that Resident Pride, and we invest time and money in it every day.

In 2017, LISC reached a billion dollar milestone for its investments across the country specifically for building the capacity of neighborhood organizations and community development corporations (CDCs) to improve the ways residents and neighborhood leaders work together and ultimately build that pride one feels for their home, their neighbor and their streets.

NeighborhoodsNOW progress reports indicated that 37.4% of these goals were implemented one year following the development of the Quality of Life Plans.
As a result of this previous research and the growing recognition nationwide that improving the social determinants of health has a greater impact on indicators than access to traditional health services, Greater Kansas City LISC embarked upon two years of community engagement and research to reveal more specifically how residents of low-income neighborhoods in Kansas City are feeling about where they live and how they interact with health-related assets.

Funded by the Health Forward Foundation and the Hall Family Foundation, we believe that the data and conclusions you read in the subsequent reports are very directional to assist community development practitioners, residents and investors strengthen their commitments in people and places so that lifestyles improve and lifetimes expand.

In addition to our funders, we are grateful for the other partnerships we deepened as a result of this scope of work. Collaborating with the health departments of Kansas City, MO and Wyandotte County was especially inspiring, particularly as a reflection of their own aspirations to find opportunities to co-create on impacting health outcomes.

We learned a lot from our experience with the NeighborWorks Success Measures team who brought a high level of credibility to our primary data collection and navigated the dynamics of managing five different neighborhood organizations in building their capacity to conduct in-person interviews with neighbors.
We are thankful for the time, dedication and energy of the community residents who participated in the research, provided feedback and ensured that the resulting report will be a useful, living document that will guide their future revitalization efforts. Finally, our hats off to the Dotte Agency and their passion for community engagement and commitment to producing not only a compelling report, but providing maps and tools that will enable residents to put the data to use as they move forward in their work to create healthy, livable neighborhoods.

We hope you will read this report and be inspired to action. Each of the neighborhoods engaged in this study have identified priority health issues and impact areas. Now comes the hard work of mobilizing neighbors, investors and policymakers to rally the resources and political will to make change. Together, over time, we can build a ‘culture of health’ and achieve health equity across our region.

Stephen Samuels, Executive Director
Ina Anderson, Deputy Director
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Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association
Downtown Shareholders
Blue Hills Community Services
Blue Hills Neighborhood Association
Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council
Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association

We also would like to thank the numerous partners that came together to contribute to this study and development of the report by providing strategic advice, creating the participatory events, developing the maps and the tools, conducting and analyzing research and collecting data.

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Executive Summary

This report reflects the work of over two years of research by Greater Kansas City Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to understand the impact of community development investments, both physical and programmatic, on the quality of life and resident health in the five neighborhoods within LISC’s NeighborhoodsNOW geographic focus areas in Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas.

The aim of this research was to gain an understanding of systemic barriers to healthy neighborhoods, to identify neighborhood health assets and their value, and to foster resident voice and collaboration with the long term goal of building stronger, more cohesive neighborhoods with improved access to healthy eating and active living. The subsequent report and tools are intended to be both an accessible resource for neighborhood residents and organizations, as well as a guide for future collaboration between LISC, their partnering neighborhood organizations and investors seeking to achieve long-term outcomes from data-driven, high impact community investments and new advocacy and policy initiatives that result in healthier communities.

The study was conducted in several phases and completed with the support of funding from the Hall Family Foundation and the Health Forward Foundation. The research was undertaken in partnership with NeighborWorks America, resident leaders and community volunteers, and the Dotte Agency design studio of the University of Kansas. Technical assistance, advising and research analysis were provided by the Kansas City, Missouri Health Department.

Phase I included primary data collection from a door-to-door community survey utilizing NeighborWorks America’s Success Measures Data System to measure resident pride in response to questions related to feelings around home ownership, access to services, safety, neighborhood connections, and a resident’s ability to change or improve their community. Between October 2016 and June 2017, 465 surveys were collected across 5 neighborhoods including Blue Hills, Ivanhoe and Scarritt Renaissance in Kansas City, MO and Douglass-Sumner and Downtown Kansas City, KS.

Community members were engaged in defining the survey area, developing survey questions and trained in survey data collection. Despite best efforts, data collection proved challenging due to a variety of factors including survey length, flexibility of data collection systems and an underestimation of the effort required by groups without prior experience with this type of data collection. Ultimately, only 3 of the 5 NeighborhoodsNOW communities collected enough data to make meaningful conclusions regarding the levels of resident pride in their neighborhoods, including Blue Hills, Ivanhoe, and Downtown KCK.

It was discovered that many people feel connected to their neighbors, feel that their community has improved and expressed confidence that it will improve in the future. A majority of respondents in each community expressed a willingness to work with others in the community. People generally feel their neighbors are friendly. The vast majority of respondents indicated they would continue to live in their neighborhood if they have the choice (See Appendix A: Neighborhood Pride Evaluation Project Synopsis).

The Kansas City, Missouri Health Department further analyzed the survey data to examine measures of Social Capital and feelings of safety in order to identify neighborhood-level predictors of cohesiveness and connectedness. They used straightforward multivariate regression techniques to assess the statistical significance of neighborhood services and amenities, as well as respondent demographics, in predicting their outcomes and only present findings with low odds of being a random relationship. While determinants of why people choose to stay or leave a neighborhood, and what they do for that neighborhood while they live in it, are complicated, they found clear patterns across these three neighborhoods that show:

People care about community spaces: parks, playgrounds, community centers, restaurants and coffee shops. Neighborhoods cannot feel integrated without welcoming, safe places to connect.
Looks do matter. Cleanliness, sanitation and infrastructure repair is connected to overall feelings of safety, connection and satisfaction. Healthy, peaceful neighborhoods begin with attention to environmental design, public works and code enforcement. Recent research from the Health Department shows that neighborhoods in KCMO with high Social Capital have fewer code enforcement complaints, even when controlling for median income or age of housing stock.

Engagement needs to evolve: The traditional models of community engagement are being replaced with innovative ways of meeting neighborhoods where they are. When neighborhoods have agency and residents feel as if their time and energy spent on civic participation matters, the payoff in terms of Social Capital can be huge. (Full statistical analysis and findings by Deputy Director Dr. Sarah Martin are included in the Appendix B: Resident Pride, Social Capital and Community Health).

In Phase II, LISC engaged the Dotte Agency- a Wyandotte County community design studio from the University of Kansas, School of Architecture and Design - to conduct outreach to build upon the survey data through direct community engagement and observation. Each neighborhood’s Quality of Life Plan – their blueprint for neighborhood revitalization- was reviewed to understand existing neighborhood priorities, assets and previous community development investments.

Dotte Agency researchers then met with multiple residents and stakeholders repeatedly over the course of a year, attending neighborhood association meetings, events, and walking the neighborhoods. Through this engagement they gained input to create maps of community assets that impact resident health, and to prioritize health issues on which to take action. The bulk of this report contains context-specific priority health issues and recommendations for each neighborhood. Recommendations for action are based on a literature review of best and current practices from the field.

Phase III included street level walk audits of specific geographic nodes chosen by community members as areas of focus. The Dotte Agency created an audit tool specifically for this purpose and engaged community members in the audits. Results from the audits provide additional data to support and guide future community action to improve health that may include infrastructure, programmatic or policy approaches. It is likely that this report will need to adapt as neighborhood circumstances change and new public health research is made available. For this reason, maps and audit tools are provided so that resident leaders can take part in identifying and measuring outcomes in the future. (Full results of walk audits for each neighborhood are provided in the Neighborhood Audit Summary and Appendix C: LISC Neighborhood Audit Tool).

PRIORITIZE HEALTH ISSUES: DOUGLASS-SUMNER

This report specifically focuses on the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas. Research was conducted in partnership with the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, a voluntary association of active residents. Since 2007, Greater Kansas City LISC has partnered with Douglass- Sumner by investing over $1.2 million to support new housing development and to build its capacity to steward its Quality of Life plan.

Douglass-Sumner residents and stakeholders identified the following Priority Health Issues that are explored in detail within the Douglass-Sumner section of this report:

Health Priority #1: Improve Healthy Housing

Recommendations: Douglass-Sumner homeowners and renters should take advantage of tax benefits and rental subsidies, such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In Wyandotte County, the East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (www.eckan.org) provides weatherization assistance to the elderly, handicapped, and low-income families. These services may include cleaning furnaces, sealing leaks in heating systems and holes in exterior walls, repairing broken windows, and insulating attics and exterior walls. Another local resource is the Historic Northeast Midtown Association (HNMA), which is the Neighborhood Business Revitalization organization contracted with the city to represent Northeast KCK neighborhoods, including Douglass-Sumner. Douglass-Sumner could consider inviting HNMA and a representative from Children’s Mercy Hospital to present at a neighborhood association meeting and share highlights from the Healthy Homes training program for residents to have a better awareness for how they can improve the health of their own homes.
Health Priority #2: Enhance Safety and Physical Activity

Recommendations: A local program that is similar to the PATH trial is Walk WyCo, which is supported by the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County and Healthy Communities Wyandotte. The Walk WyCo program provides resident community mobilizers to lead regular walking clubs in five neighborhood parks that have walking trails, with the closest to Douglass-Sumner being at Heathwood Park, Parkwood Park, and Huron Park. To encourage safety and physical activity within Douglass-Sumner, the development of the Douglass-Sumner Historic Walking Trail could connect with community policing efforts and develop local social marketing outreach materials. To best leverage neighborhood green spaces as community development investments that can improve health outcomes, Douglass-Sumner could work together with LISC and other neighborhood organizations to implement their Historical Walking Trail as part of a larger initiative to increase physical activity and improve resident perceptions of the neighborhoods surrounding Jersey Creek. By connecting to adjacent park, Douglass-Sumner and their community partners can present the Historical Walking Trail as a health benefit to residents through increased access walking trails, while also making physical activity more accessible within the neighborhood itself.

Health Priority #3: Create More Social Connections & Opportunities for Youth Education

At community events organized by the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, creating more opportunities for youth involvement was repeatedly highlighted as a priority among residents. A partner in creating more youth opportunities can be found at Sumner Academy, which has a rich history as an anchor institution within the community. Other organizations in Northeast Kansas City, Kansas can also play a role in connecting youth to each other, their community, and improve their opportunities for better education and health. Youth that are socially connected have a better sense of well-being, while the absence of connectedness is linked to a higher risk of negative health outcomes.

Recommendations: Partners with local youth activities and coalitions that are in Northeast KCK. As an example, one effort underway to prevent youth violence by enhancing social and educational connections for youth in Wyandotte County is ThrYve, which is a collaboration between community health and development researchers at the University of Kansas and local community organizations.

Moving Forward

This report was developed to help each neighborhood chart a way forward for improving health outcomes locally. It is worth noting that key decisions regarding what health issues should be included and prioritized came from neighborhood representatives responding to the feedback already received from previously completed neighborhood plans and resident surveys. While other community health issues exist, these issues are a focus for the neighborhood now.

This report is intended to serve as a reference for potential projects and programs that each neighborhood can choose to pursue. The expected value of this report is that it will make the supporting evidence more accessible so that as the neighborhood evolves, residents can pursue projects that best fit their needs and provides tools to residents working from the bottom-up with partners to affect change in the health of their neighborhoods. The challenge inherent in creating this report was making sure each neighborhood’s report accurately reflected the desires and aspirations of their community. More voices must be a part of the conversation on improving health outcomes in neighborhoods and it is hoped this report can provide value to them as well.

The individual projects and strategies are for each neighborhood to determine, but having supporting evidence can make collaboration between partners more sustainable. Funding sources promoting health in communities is increasing as evidence is building that an individual’s neighborhood has a large impact upon their health. It is for this reason that this report exists, to both demonstrate and propose possible ways that Kansas City communities can improve the health of their neighborhoods. Tackling issues in this report will be the focus of Greater Kansas City LISC and neighborhood organizations and leaders going forward.
In the summer of 2017, Greater Kansas City Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) contracted with Dotte Agency — a Wyandotte County community design initiative out of the University of Kansas, School of Architecture and Design — to provide research and technical assistance on how community development can have an impact upon public health outcomes. LISC wanted to gain a better understanding of how their investments over time ($188 million in the form of loans, grants and technical assistance since 1981) contribute to the health of a community and the individuals who live there.

Over the last decade, LISC had engaged with community leaders representing five neighborhoods across the Greater Kansas City Area as part of their NeighborhoodsNOW initiative: Blue Hills, Ivanhoe, Scarritt Renaissance in Kansas City, Missouri and Douglass-Sumner, and Downtown Kansas City, Kansas. LISC tasked Dotte Agency with developing a protocol for how the community could prioritize public health goals locally. This process was designed to include previous community engagement initiatives, including the most recent Quality of Life Plans (QLP) developed by LISC with community engagement, and the Neighborhood Pride Evaluation Surveys (NPE Surveys), developed by NeighborWorks America for LISC and conducted by partnering neighborhood organizations.

Dotte Agency began by meeting with representatives from the partnering neighborhood organizations to identify where recently completed community development projects, potential community development projects, and perceived barriers to health access existed in the built environment. This was done by mapping neighborhood assets and opportunities, where residents were invited to identify areas of pride or concern on a map, and leave their comments in an open-ended format. Comments received were recorded and helped to indicate where community health priorities existed within the built environment. This process provided a geographic awareness that supplemented the pre-existing data collected by the QLP and NPE Surveys.

A parallel analysis of the collected NPE Survey data was developed by the KCMO Health Department. The goal of their report was to share what, if any, statistical significance existed between questions regarding ‘overall satisfaction’, ‘feelings of safety’, and ‘social capital’ among the residents that answered the surveys. This data gives LISC a deeper understanding of the engagement levels and resident satisfaction within the neighborhoods and how this may alter future approaches to connecting with them.
Community Engagement

The second round of community engagement conducted by Dotte Agency saw neighborhood representatives invited by the partnering neighborhood organizations to participate in ‘Card-Sorting Workshops’. The purpose of these workshops was to make the process of validating key public health issues a participatory exercise. To achieve this, Dotte Agency adapted a public health methodology known as card sorting — a user-centered design technique that helps to prioritize issues that emerge out of what has been heard.

In the card sorting exercise, attending neighborhood representatives were asked to categorize individual cards, each one printed with information that represented some aspect of either the QLP, NPE Surveys, or the comments from the spatial mapping exercise. Whenever possible, information that was included on the cards was written verbatim, or with minimal changes to the text as it appeared in its original format. The cards themselves were neither positive nor negative in tone, but were instead meant to spark conversations about the issue presented, and allow neighborhood representatives to rely upon their own local-knowledge throughout the categorization process.

Critical to the card sorting process was that all issues presented were sourced from previous community engagement efforts that had sought to represent the voice of each community at large; the participating neighborhood representatives were asked to build their categories based only upon what was on the table in front of them. An initial card sort typically resulted in six to eight community development categories that had a common theme, such as ‘Infrastructure’, or ‘Youth Engagement’.

After a group discussion, the remaining categories were narrowed down to three ‘priority issues’, with each issue related to public health outcomes affected by the built environment. The grouping of the individual cards into their initial categories was recorded to better inform which issues the categories were developed to address. The title of each category was co-determined by the neighborhood representatives, and they were instructed to use a verb or an action-word to preface the final three priority issues that they defined.

Photographs of community engagement and the card sorting workshop were taken by Dotte Agency throughout, to both document the process and to ensure accuracy in the categorization of the priority issues as they were sorted.
Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Representatives:
William Boyice Jr.  
Broderick Crawford  
Beverly Eastwood  
Eric Kirkwood  
Beatrice Lee  
Carolyn Lookey  
Lynell Newman  
James Watson Jr.

LISC:  
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Dotte Agency:  
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Matt Kleinmann

ABOVE: Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Representatives engage in a card-sorting exercise to organize neighborhood responses into three Priority Health Issues.

Priority Health Issues:
1. Improve Healthy Housing
2. Enhance Safety and Physical Activity
3. Create More Social Connections & Opportunities for Youth Education

See pages 37 - 39 for the full list of public health and community development issues that were card sorted.
“There are major assets (Sumner Academy and Douglas Elementary) that help to stabilize the area, as well as several churches.”

Douglass-Sumner Survey Response
On November 6, 2017, neighborhood association members and community leaders from the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood came together at the Beatrice Lee Community Center as the neighborhood representatives for the Douglass-Sumner area. Together with LISC staff, Dotte Agency shared that the goal of the meeting was for the neighborhood representatives to examine feedback from resident surveys and previous planning efforts, and then work together to validate three priority issues regarding how community development could best support public health outcomes in Douglass-Sumner. Dotte Agency explained that it would be their role going forward in utilizing the neighborhood’s priority issues as the topics for which they would research peer-reviewed public health journals related to community development. This would then be shared in a report specific to Douglass-Sumner’s priority issues. That report is this document, and its purpose is to be both an accessible resource for neighborhood residents, as well as a guide for future collaboration between LISC and their partnering neighborhood organizations.

1 IMPROVE HEALTHY HOUSING

When the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened the Commission to Build a Healthier America, they brought together a panel of experts to recommend goals and strategies for communities to improve their health and well-being. Their final report included recommendations for how to go about building a healthier community, including: 1) Integrating safety and wellness in all aspects of community life; 2) Creating “healthy community” demonstration projects; 3) Developing a “health impact” rating for house and infrastructure projects that affect the community, and incentivize those projects that have a higher rating; and 4) Ensure that decision makers everywhere have the evidence they need to build health into policies and practices.

When the Commission looked at community level health factors, they emphasized that public health should address the conditions of housing because they saw how homes in poor conditions can cluster together in neighborhoods, which increases poor health outcomes for everyone living in that community. They also saw that these outcomes occurred at a disproportionately higher rate in low-income and minority neighborhoods. The Commission saw that, for there to be successful interventions in housing that could be sustained over time, community members must be engaged from the outset to define their own local health problems and goals, and then help determine the strategies that local government will pursue to achieve those health objectives. A challenge in doing this, however, is that available evidence for specific interventions on the health of entire neighborhoods is limited.

However, there is relatively more evidence available
studying the impact that poor housing conditions can have on individuals. The high cost of housing has been linked to a host of health outcomes, including higher rates of chronic disease, stress, and depression. Where housing is subsidized, research has found that certain household health outcomes improve, such as childhood nutrition. The available evidence suggests that when a household's finances are strained, individuals make trade-offs between their health and their housing costs, which can lead to an overall decline in their health outcomes. While housing subsidies exist for low-income residents, the policies that have been designed to address issues of unaffordable housing on a national level – such as the National Housing Trust Fund – have been largely inadequate in their impact due to limited funding.

One Philadelphia study that surveyed housing affordability and health conditions found that people living in unaffordable housing were less likely to adhere to prescription drug and healthcare recommendations, and that they experience more chronic diseases than similar neighbors living in affordable housing nearby. The researchers also found that people living in unaffordable housing perceived their neighborhoods to be worse off than the average resident. The evidence suggests that people do not find their housing to be unaffordable because they live in higher-cost neighborhoods, but instead that poor neighborhood quality and unaffordable housing are linked together.

The study concluded by recommending homeowners and renters take advantage of tax benefits and rental subsidies, and that other programs – such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – be utilized. In Wyandotte County, the East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation provides weatherization assistance to the elderly, handicapped, and low-income families. These services may include cleaning furnaces, sealing leaks in heating systems and holes in exterior walls, repairing broken windows, and insulating attics and exterior walls. An online version of the required application can be found on the ECKAN website (www.eckan.org).

**Healthy Housing Program**

While there is relatively little research on the effects that housing renovation programs can have on public health, one major study from New Zealand that included almost 10,000 residents in over 3,000 homes provides some compelling evidence. The intervention of improving housing conditions came as a response to an outbreak of meningitis, where one of the strategies introduced included improving the available housing stock as a way of addressing the health epidemic. The goals of the program were to: 1) Improve resident access to healthcare services; 2) Design better homes, build extensions to houses, or create healthier indoor environments; and 3) Provide links to social service agencies for residents.

The Healthy Housing Program first identified a geographic area, and then conducted assessments that were carried out by an expert in housing conditions and a public health nurse. The assessments resulted in a joint action plan for each home, where meeting each family’s needs were the primary concern. This included education on health risks within the home, referrals to local health providers, the installation of insulation to make the home warmer and dryer, modifying the home to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, transferring people from homes that were not adequate, and increasing the number of bedrooms in a home when necessary. The study tracked its success by measuring outcomes for self-rated health, self-esteem, the use of primary care, and reductions in the need for secondary care.

The hypothesis of the Health Housing Program study was that damp, cold, and overcrowded housing conditions promote the spread of infectious and respiratory diseases. The data collected found that, over the seven years of pre- and post- interventions, the rate of hospitalization for 0-4 year-olds was reduced by 11%, and was reduced by 23% for 5-34 year-olds. The conclusion that the researchers made was that a combination of improving housing conditions and increased access to social services can reduce rates of hospitalization in low-income residents. This study represents one of the only clinical studies conducted on the link between housing conditions and health at this scale. What was not a focus of the study, but was still noted by the researchers, is that the improvements to housing conditions were accompanied by improvements to self-reported self-esteem. This suggests that improvements in housing conditions can also lead to increased social cohesion among residents.

There are some resources available to residents of Douglass-Sumner that would like to make their own homes more energy efficient to improve their own health outcomes. The Kansas Housing Resources Corporation...
ABOVE & LEFT: Dilapidated housing and vacant lots can contribute to a neighborhood’s perception of a lack of control in the built environment.

BELOW: Areas zoned commercially but without design guidelines can create unfriendly walking environments for residents and are perceived as unsafe by pedestrians.
BELOW: Maps of Douglass-Sumner highlight where areas are zoned single-family housing in yellow, multi-family housing in brown, commercial in red, and industry in purple.

(www.kshousingcorp.org) provides a list of weatherization resources that can be provided free of charge to eligible residents. Any household with a member that receives “Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits or utility assistance from the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)” is considered automatically eligible. Applicants that are not automatically eligible can still apply if they have a maximum income below 200% of the federal poverty level ($32,920 for a household of 2; $50,200 for a household of 4).

A local resource for the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association to consider contacting is the Metropolitan Energy Center (www.metroenergy.org), which serves the greater Kansas City region. They can provide do-it-yourself training options and a list of rebates and incentives available through local utilities to neighborhood associations and community groups. They also have a list of certified home energy auditors and contractors to assist homeowners in making repairs. Another local resource is the Historic Northeast Midtown Association (HNMA), which is the Neighborhood Business Revitalization organization contracted with the city to represent Northeast KCK neighborhoods, including Douglass-Sumner. HNMA has worked in the past with Children’s Mercy Hospital to provide Healthy Home Assessment resources that can be made accessible to neighborhood associations. Children’s Mercy Hospital also provides training to individuals interested in identifying what features can make a home healthier. Douglass-Sumner could consider inviting HNMA and a representative from Children’s Mercy Hospital to present at a neighborhood association meeting and share highlights from the Healthy Homes training program for residents to have a better awareness for how they can improve the health of their own homes.

**Zoning Policies**

The purpose of having zoning laws to regulate our built environment has historically been to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of a community by separating
out areas designated for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. This has come with some unintended consequences for public health outcomes. For example, grocery stores can only locate in areas that are commercially zoned, which increasingly requires personal transportation to access stores that have consolidated and moved out of urban areas to larger commercially zoned development tracts. Streets that have been designed to accommodate increased rates of driving can lead to a reduction in money spent on repairing broken or non-existent sidewalks and bike lanes for pedestrian use. Suburban sprawl that has built new recreation facilities near new housing developments can lead to increases in deferred maintenance for recreation facilities in older neighborhoods. The cumulative effect of zoning regulations has led to an environment where residents are more separated from the essential services that are needed for healthy living. An alternative to the status quo of single land-use zoning patterns is mixed land-use zoning, where residents can more easily walk to nearby places like grocery stores. Another possible tool are inclusionary zoning policies, which can include a series of tools that require for a certain percentage of affordable housing units be made available in any market-rate housing project.

The history of zoning also includes instances where it has been used for exclusionary purposes. For example, early zoning ordinances in San Francisco prohibited laundromats in residential areas, which was intended to prevent Chinese residents from living in White neighborhoods. A 1974 New Jersey State Supreme Court case saw a local NAACP chapter challenge a town zoning ordinance that made it nearly impossible to build low- and moderate-income housing, which excluded people with low- and moderate-incomes from living there. Other discriminatory zoning policies can include regulations that require minimum lot sizes, minimum house sizes, or a minimum value of construction materials. These policies targeting low-income residents have historically been deployed in specific areas with the intent of excluding low-income African American residents and not low-income White residents.

The challenge in addressing inequitable zoning policies is made clear in the article Zoning, Equity, and Public Health, which was published in the American Journal of Public Health:

“There are great disparities in how successful various communities are in influencing the outcomes of planning decisions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that political power, relative affluence, and property-owner status all affect the amount of influence wielded by a particular community. There are few forums for proactive community planning, and there is nothing within the formal public participation process that requires the city to act on the community’s advice. Thus, the status quo is generally maintained. And the status quo seems to be that M zones, which are typically neighborhoods that are poorer than average and with a higher percentage of minorities and renters than average, get “dumped on,” with very little recourse in the formal structure of decision making.”

For residents of Douglass-Sumner, there are two recent developments that could potentially help address zoning issues in and around their neighborhood. The first opportunity that was presented to all residents of Kansas City, Kansas, was to engage with the Unified Government’s Department of Urban Planning on a zoning code rewriting process, which is expected to be completed by 2019. Public meetings on the KCK Zoning Code Rewrite were held in the summer of 2018. A public survey online with questions was also released with the intent of gathering public feedback.

Many of the questions that were asked in the zoning feedback survey online were less related to the public health concerns brought up by residents of Douglass-Sumner than other zoning issues that are present elsewhere in Wyandotte County. What was included in the zoning feedback survey included policies that could support livestock use in residential areas and the potential to “support high-quality, workforce housing”. Six questions were asked in the survey regarding regulations for AirBnB businesses. By comparison, only one question mentioned zoning as a way to increase food access (Question 28: “Which social justice issues should the Zoning Code address?”). The same question included “affordable housing” to be listed as a concern, but there was no mention of senior housing, cultural amenities, or multi-family housing – all of which were brought up and discussed in the Douglass-Sumner card-sorting workshop. This suggests that a strong advocate is needed to communicate the potential health impacts that zoning can have within the Unified Government and with their consultants as part of their overall zoning code review process and implementation.
The other opportunity for Douglass-Sumner to engage in how zoning impacts their neighborhood health comes is the Northeast Area Master Plan. The Northeast Area Master Plan (www.neamasterplan.com) was completed in October 2018 and approved by the Unified Government in December 2018. One consideration in the Northeast Area Master Plan is determining what zoning designations should be given to the park areas along the northern boundaries of Douglass-Sumner. Currently, those areas are considered as part of the larger Jersey Creek Park areas, linked together by Jersey Creek and open green spaces with trails and sidewalks. However, most of the areas between Walker Avenue and Parallel Parkway, and between 7th Street and 10th Street, are currently zoned for either general or heavy industry (zoning codes M-2 and M-3, respectively). Douglass-Sumner residents could coordinate with other nearby neighborhoods to advocate for a zoning strategy that addresses their concerns, as well as supports their long-term goals as a neighborhood, referencing the areas mentioned above. One question would be whether to rezone these areas to reinforce their current usage as park and green space, or to use the current industrial zoning areas to attract commercial development in the area.

For example, one path that larger cities have taken in rewriting their zoning codes has been to introduce a new zoning code designation known as Industrial Residential Mixed-Use (IRMX) zoning. The IRMX zoning designation does not require that industrial spaces be built, but instead allows for multi-family housing to be constructed in areas previously zoned for industrial use. This can be economically beneficial for an area that would like to spur residential development, as developers can make use of the relaxed requirements typically found in industrially zoned areas to create housing developments above community works spaces in areas where it might not otherwise be possible due to fire code regulations. Artist live/work residences are one example of how IRMX zoning can turn a public health liability into an asset in Douglass-Sumner to build a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood that can attract new residents.

While changes to zoning may not result in any immediate changes for existing Douglass-Sumner residents, this zoning conversation has health implications for all Northeast KCK neighborhoods. Douglass-Sumner residents that are interested in learning more about how zoning decisions could affect their neighborhood should connect with the the Historic Northeast Midtown Association (HNMA) – which is the neighborhood business revitalization organization (NBR) for the Northeast KCK area – to engage the UG Planning Department about the various zoning proposals that were considered as part of the Northeast Area Master Plan. A long-term goal for Douglass-Sumner could be to create a neighborhood environment that is conducive to healthier homes, where air and water pollution is no longer a concern thanks to changes in zoning regulations for the nearby industrially-zoned areas.

**Environmental Justice**

Supporting an agenda for environmental justice, public health research has established links between an individual’s exposure to air pollution and poor health outcomes in surrounding neighborhoods. Evidence shows that living close to highways and heavy industry can lead to higher rates of asthma, lung cancer, and birth complications.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines the principle of environmental justice as:

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no population, due to policy or economic disempowerment, is forced to bear a disproportionate share of the negative human health or environmental impacts of pollution or environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and tribal programs and policies.”
The basis of environmental justice is that the official sanctioning of dangerous environmental conditions has coincided with the exclusion of minorities in positions of authority. As a result, minority communities have been disproportionately burdened by exposure to harmful environmental conditions.

One study from Los Angeles found that it is not a coincidence that minority communities tend to live near pollution. The study used statistical analysis to control for other possible factors to find that minority neighborhoods saw polluting facilities arrived after minority neighborhoods were already established, but that polluting facilities did not attract minority communities to them. The researchers pointed to this evidence as an example where local government policies such as zoning can represent an implicit bias, where low-income and predominantly minority communities are at a greater risk for living near pollution due to lax regulation and environmental health advocacy.

To address this, the researchers recommended a public participation process that could explicitly address issues of environmental justice. Because this process can be exhausting to organize on a case-by-case basis, the researchers proposed that local government adopt a baseline standard that would automatically protect minority communities from any future developments that could negatively impact their health. This process of defining geographic areas that have been historically disenfranchised environmentally, and then using a standardized tool to lift the burden for those communities that otherwise may not have access to the power needed to protect their communities, is known as greenlining. It is a positive alternative to a tool that was historically developed to limit minority homeownership and racially segregate communities known as redlining, and which targeted Kansas City, Kansas neighborhoods, including Douglass-Sumner (Figure 1).

A different study included a series of interviews with residents and recorded them describing the psychological effects that they experienced living close to areas zoned for industrial use. The researchers were interested in learning how living close to industrially zoned areas (like is the case in Douglass-Sumner) could impact residents and their perceptions of their neighborhood. From the eight focus group discussions that were conducted, common themes emerged and centered around the impact that visible pollution has on the identity of a neighborhood (such as the sounds and smells produced by a nearby oil refinery).

Residents interviewed shared their feelings that a stigma comes from living near industrial pollution, as well as other signs of physical disorder such as trash in the streets and vacant lots. Most residents expressed a sense of powerlessness at being unable to address the issue of pollution, which contributed to a sense of apathy in their neighborhood. A recurring theme that the researchers highlighted was that residents interviewed saw the study itself as a form of discrimination, where researchers were funded to study the problem on behalf of the city instead of using that same money to address the problem itself. The study also triggered the fear of displacement, with residents suggesting that if the cleanup of polluted sites were to occur, new housing development would eventually price them out of their neighborhood.

To support residents that have these concerns, a variety of opportunities are available to the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood. As an example, HNMA is currently waiting on approval to be the next national Groundworks USA affiliate, which is a program from the National Parks Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. The mission of the national Groundworks USA network is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Should HNMA receive this designation and become Groundworks KCK, their new status would allow them to access the national Groundworks USA network and bring additional resources back to help address environmental justice issues in the Northeast Area of KCK. Douglass-Sumner could then work with Groundworks KCK to support the building of pocket parks in vacant lots,
address the illegal trash dumping in the area, and develop the historic walking trail -- all of which were key built environment issues that were brought up in the Douglass-Sumner card sorting workshop and could be within the scope of what Groundworks KCK could pursue. Another potential partner for Douglass-Sumner could be YouthBuild KCK, whose campus is located only one mile east of Sumner Academy. The YouthBuild KCK Program is an AmeriCorps program and is part of the United Way of Wyandotte County. They train local youth for up to two years between the ages 16-24 to help them achieve their GED or high school diploma. Their program also promotes hands-on experiences for their trainees to become certified in construction trade skills. Each year, YouthBuild KCK is contracted to build one affordable house with their trainees, who upon graduation can be placed in apprenticeship job training programs. Working with Groundworks KCK and YouthBuild KCK together, Douglass-Sumner could develop a project to revitalize vacant lots in the neighborhood, develop local weatherization assistance programs for seniors, and construct new single-family homes built by local youth.

2 ENHANCE SAFETY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The PATH Trial

The “Positive Action for Today’s Health” (PATH) Trial was an intense study focused on increasing physical activity and safety in low-income and African American communities. The study was funded by the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive, and Kidney diseases, and the researchers identified increasing regular physical activity as an important way to reduce the high rates of chronic disease in underserved communities. For these reasons, the study sought to test an intervention that went beyond providing general health information at the individual-level, and instead developed physical activity intervention strategies for the larger population. The study referenced their use of an ecological model, which is a theoretical approach that assumes that an individual’s health is made up of a variety of larger factors other than just personal behaviors, including social relationships, the physical environment, and public policy.

The study included research from other studies that had sought to enhance physical activity. They included the High Point for Health intervention, which saw an increase in walking among low-income housing residents where there was an improvement in walking access (new walking trails, aesthetic improvements, pedestrian safety efforts, and community walking groups). Another study demonstrated that African-American women that participated in a motivational support program for walking in nearby indoor walking facilities were more likely to stay engaged over 12 months than those not enrolled in the motivational support program. Other studies also highlighted the benefit of using social marketing materials as a tool to enhance the perceptions of walking and physical activity, but the researchers noted that many of those studies lacked supporting evidence to demonstrate an actual increase in physical activity behaviors.

The PATH Trail sought to test the integration of a walking program that was police-patrolled and included social marketing strategies that sought to improve community engagement and perceptions of safety around physical activity. Specifically, the researchers measured whether or not police-patrolled walking clubs with social marketing interventions saw an increase in the rates of moderate to vigorous physical activity versus neighborhoods that received different or no interventions. The three communities included in the study were randomly assigned to either a police-patrolled walking program with social marketing as interventions, a police-patrolled walking program by itself, or just general health information on the benefits of walking.

The study saw 417 residents enroll in the PATH Trial, which recruited a steering committee from local residents and leaders. Local community centers served as neighborhood hubs where walking leaders from the community were trained and led walks on each weekday evening and on Saturday mornings. The police-patrolled walks were patrolled by off-duty police officers that were in contact with the walking leaders. The steering committee also worked with their county officials to address issues related to stray dogs and any physical barriers that were highlighted on the identified walking routes.

For their social media outreach, the local steering committee (which included a community liaison, a program coordinator, the walking program leaders, city leaders, community residents, a local pastor, and the city police) identified the health values that would be used to motivate community members into walking. Five specific messages were developed to promote the
ABOVE: Sumner Academy has a track in excellent condition that could be open to residents through the development of a Joint Use Agreement.

BELOW & RIGHT: Dilapidated and inaccessible sidewalk conditions can make accessing essential health services difficult for residents.
walking programs: 1) Increased safety and accessibility; 2) Improved physical health; 3) Improved mental health and well-being; 4) Self-confidence for engaging in regular walking; and 5) Community connections. These messages were primarily shared through the creation of a 12-month walking calendar. The calendar included photographs of community members walking in the neighborhood, and sought to address the social norms around positive health behaviors.

Other social marketing tools included door hangers and field guides. The door hangers were designed to be personal invitations for new walkers to join the walking programs. The door hangers also included the positive health messages present on the calendar, and highlighted incentives that walkers could earn if they attended five scheduled walks each month (e.g. fans, stress balls, and shopping bags). A field guide was also developed which included the project details and safe walking protocols. The field guides were shared by the walking group leaders to invite friends, neighbors, and families to join the walking programs.

To measure the results of the study, individual-level data was collected before the study began, and then again after 12, 18, and 24 months, with the social marketing component only lasting for the first 12 months. The data collected included accelerometer data, blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, waist circumference, medicine logs, surveys, and a self-reported recollection of walking within the last 4 weeks. All participants were screened at the same time in various community centers in their neighborhoods, and received gift cards after each screening. Other sources of data included walking activity assessments at specific sites to measure whether or not the walking programs demonstrated an increase in observable physical activity in the community.

The study found that attendance for the scheduled PATH Trial walks that were police-patrolled and included social marketing outreach materials saw an increase from 40 to 400 walkers per month. This increase in observed physical activity for these communities was sustained through the 18 and 24 month observation assessments, which was not the case for the police-patrolled only walking program. This suggests that increasing safety and promoting the walking programs together are essential to increasing safety and physical activity in underserved African-American neighborhoods.

One interesting finding from the study was that though the social marketing interventions were ended after 12 months, the efforts to promote the walking programs were sustained by the engaged residents for the duration of the program (up to 24 months). This suggests that the walking program values identified by the steering committee were adopted by the neighborhoods as part of their social norms for positive health behaviors. While the study didn’t directly measure for this outcome, the researchers suggested that this observation could transform how resources for positive health behaviors could increase skills, improve community connectedness, and change the social norms around health within communities.

The results of the PATH Trial suggest that enhanced safety and physical activity is possible in Douglass-Sumner, but it will likely require close coordination between neighborhood leaders, trained program coordinators, and local police. A local program that is similar to the PATH Trial is Walk WyCo, which is supported by the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County and Healthy Communities Wyandotte. The Walk WyCo program provides resident community mobilizers to lead regular walking clubs in five neighborhood parks that have walking trails, with the closest walking clubs to Douglass-Sumner being at Heathwood Park, Parkwood Park, and Huron Park.

To further enhance safety and physical activity within Douglass-Sumner, the development of the Douglass-Sumner Historic Walking Trail could connect with community policing efforts and develop local social marketing outreach materials. The original plans for the Douglass-Sumner Historic Walking Trail were outlined in LISC’s initial Quality of Life Plans Douglass-Sumner, where were later followed up in the 2007 Douglass-Sumner Master Plan. The DASH (Douglas and Sumner Heritage) Project collected oral histories from residents to develop a walking trail with 10 markers that highlighted important events, institutions, and people from the neighborhood.

Building upon the DASH Project, a Douglass-Sumner steering committee made up of neighborhood leaders could work together to identify the values that would motivate residents to be physically active and would resonate within their community, similar to the development of the PATH Trial. Leveraging the success of the PATH Trial as a model, the community values identified by Douglass-Sumner neighborhood leaders could then be turned into social marketing materials.
in the form of Douglass-Sumner Historic Walking Trail scheduled walk calendars, door knocker invitations, and program brochures. This approach could be developed and supported by a collaboration between groups already working on similar initiatives, including the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, LISC, HNMA, Sumner Academy, Dotte Agency, Healthy Communities Wyandotte, and the Walk WyCo program. If the program were to include evaluation, academic and healthcare research partners such as KU Med, Children’s Mercy Hospital, Humana, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Aetna could be invited to support the initiative with funding for social marketing materials and training the neighborhood leaders.

**Green Space & Interpretive Signage**

An opportunity for Douglass-Sumner to have a positive health impact upon its residents is possible through the DASH Project and the Douglass-Sumner Historical Walking Trail. Evidence is building that having more available green space nearby (e.g. public parks, fields, community gardens, trails, etc.) is correlated with positive health outcomes and reduced mortality. While there is little causal evidence demonstrating how projects that increased green space directly improved specific health outcomes, there is ample evidence supporting the development of green spaces to improve general perceptions of health, rates of physical activity, and mental well-being. One study that included survey data from over 8,000 participants found that individuals living in neighborhoods with more nearby green space have significantly lower risks of mental health issues, and an increased likelihood of meeting the recommended levels of physical activity. Another study that surveyed almost 7,000 adult women confirmed that the rate of depressive symptoms and an individual’s poor perception of their general health increased the further someone lived from green spaces.

Issues of race, environmental justice, and health equity should also be considered, as neighborhood proximity to available green spaces can play a role in public health outcomes. In predominantly African-American neighborhoods, brownfield sites and parks in areas with high pollution are often presented as green spaces for recreational use, despite their possible health hazards. A lack of quality green space can also be a factor. One study from Baltimore found that, while mostly African-American neighborhoods had better walking access to parks, they had less park acreage per person than mostly White neighborhoods.

Research like this suggests that building new green spaces within low-income and minority neighborhoods can address some of the underlying health inequalities found in neighborhoods where systemic disinvestment has occurred, and park amenities are either dilapidated or in areas that may otherwise pose potential health hazards.

In Douglass-Sumner, the Jersey Creek Park includes areas that are adjacent to industrially-zoned properties.
The Jersey Creek itself is part of a lawsuit between the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Justice. Addressing the lawsuit, in what is known as a consent decree, involves monitoring and improving the watershed area that includes the Jersey Creek as part of its larger combined sewer overflow network, which is an environmental justice concern for Northeast Kansas City, Kansas.

One approach for residents of Douglass-Sumner to attract community development investments to improve public health outcomes is to frame new green spaces within their neighborhood as a better *health return on investment* than investing in much larger park spaces, which may be inaccessible, possess potential water quality issues, and may be adjacent to land zoned to allow for industrial pollution. By simply investing in parks across the board, limited resources dedicated to larger park investments in sparsely populated areas may further increase the socioeconomic divide in neighborhoods. The alternative is strategic local park investments that are walkable within neighborhoods and can invite community participation throughout the development process.

Developing green spaces in neighborhoods can also improve the perceptions of residents through *interpretive signage*, which is signage that highlights neighborhood amenities, shares local histories, and is designed to improve resident perceptions. One study worked with residents that visited a local park to design signage together, and then evaluated the impact that the signage had on visitors to the park. Participants were asked to help determine the content, language, style, and graphics of the signage. The community involvement added to the original content by including more photos, humor, and physical activity recommendations within the park. The researchers suggested that interpretive signs can be an economical and effective way for enhancing learning experiences in the built environment.

To best leverage neighborhood green spaces as community development investments that can improve health outcomes, Douglass-Sumner could work together with LISC and other neighborhood organizations to implement their Historical Walking Trail as part of a larger initiative to increase physical activity and improve resident perceptions of the neighborhoods surrounding Jersey Creek. By connecting to adjacent parks, Douglass-Sumner and their community partners can present the Historical Walking Trail as a health benefit to residents through increased access walking trails, while also making physical activity more accessible within the neighborhood itself. The design, fabrication, and installation of the Douglass-Sumner Historical Walking Trail signage elements could then pursue funding sources not only for their historical content, but also their potential to improve health outcomes and address environmental justice and health equity issues.

An example of this type of collaborative walking trail signage that promotes health can be found in the *Active Living Trails* project in nearby Heathwood and Parkwood Parks. The project was a small pilot to install bilingual motivational walking trail signs, and was a part of the larger Healthy Community Corridor, which attracted healthcare funding to support community-initiated
park improvements within the Corridor’s geography, which includes Douglass-Sumner. By partnering with some of the local community groups that participated in that initiative – including HNMA, NBC CDC, Dotte Agency, the 20/20/20 Movement, MOCSA, UG Parks and Recreation, and others – the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association could rely upon their technical assistance to support residents co-developing and installing their own signage as pilots to attract larger investments in more permanent DASH Project signage that also promote neighborhood health. By piloting signage designed to celebrate Douglass-Sumner’s rich history, the community can participate and develop appropriate messages that promote community health and improve public perceptions of the neighborhood.

Illegal Dumping

One particular issue that was identified during multiple discussions with Douglass-Sumner residents and community police officers during the community engagement process, and later reiterated at a Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association meeting, was that illegal trash dumping along the western edge of the neighborhood is a pervasive nuisance to residents. A hotspot for illegal trash dumping occurs in areas that are generally undeveloped and industrially zoned, with the most often highlighted location being between 9th and 10th streets, and between Walker Avenue and Parallel Parkway. Adjacent to this area there also exist a number of businesses, including The G.W. Van Keppel Company, McCulley Oil, Ace Foundry, Schuler Auto Group, and BRC Audio Productions.

While there is little public health research that has focused specifically upon the impact that illegal trash dumping can have on the public health outcomes in a neighborhood, a fair amount of research has investigated how negative perceptions of safety develop in neighborhoods when trash is visible. For older adults, perceptions of poor neighborhood safety have been linked to a physical decline in mobility and an increase in baseline inactivity - both of which are strong predictors for high healthcare costs and a poor quality of life.

The impact of visible trash upon perceptions of neighborhood safety and youth violence was explored in one Baltimore public health study, where youth were interviewed about the psychological and physical impacts that visible trash in their neighborhoods has had on them:

“According to one participant, seeing trash and being around it creates “a numbing effect of one looking at trash, one feels like trash, sees other people as trash, and therefore it isn’t hard to injure or kill them.”... When specifically asked about city services such as trash removal and the possible role that trash in his neighborhood might play in the incidence of youth violence, one participant shared that: “Because those services aren’t taken seriously, and they don’t come around here and remove a lot of the trash from alleys and in front of houses... So that kind of creates a hiding spot... a lot of youth stash stuff [drugs and guns] in certain spots. If the city keep stuff clean, I think that it helps [prevent] the youth violence."

Above: Active Living Trail signage developed by local community partners in two parks near Douglass-Sumner could be a model to consider adapting.
In tackling this issue, local government is most often tasked with cleaning up trash in neighborhoods, and around the country there are a few examples of innovative approaches. To combat illegal dumping in Charlotte County, Florida, an Illegal Dumping Task Force Team was created to form a partnership between local law enforcement, the county code compliance office, and environmental protection services. Los Angeles also created an illegal dumping task-force, which included two police officers and 16 police-trained volunteers to monitor frequent illegal dumping sites. In New York City, half of all collected fines for illegal dumping are rewarded to tipsters as a bounty for helping the city reduce illegal dumping activity. As a state, Kentucky implemented the Waste Tire Trust Fund, which charges a $1 fee on all new tires sold to pay for waste management and create a market for recycled tire products. The Pennsylvania Resources Council hosted a “Lens on Litter” photography competition, which helped the agency discover previously unknown sites for illegal dumping. Unfortunately, not even local city employees are immune to allegations of illegal dumping.

To organize the momentum needed to reduce illegal trash dumping, residents are most often tasked with demanding that effective action be taken. As a resource for residents in Douglass-Sumner interested in organizing a movement to hold local municipalities accountable, the best resource for reducing illegal trash dumping in neighborhoods is the Environmental Protection Agency’s Illegal Dumping Prevention Guidebook. In developing a prevention program, the guidebook recommends four key steps be taken:

1. **Leadership and Support from Local Officials:** For prevention to be successful, there must be cooperation between local elected officials and police. Local elected officials can make prevention a priority and allocate additional resources to support monitoring and cleanup efforts. Community policing will need the support of their commanding officers to commit the necessary time to cleanups and resident training on how to respond and prevent future illegal trash dumping. Resident advocates should point out to both elected officials and community police that inaction on reducing illegal trash dumping will reduce the community’s willingness to engage on other issues.

2. **Cooperation Between Authorities, the Community, and Local Industry:** Local authorities involved in public health, public works, code enforcement, and waste management could coordinate with one another to create a “task force” that includes representatives from each department or organization. Realizing that a lack of funding may
be one of the barriers to creating such a task force, local elected officials should consider presenting the task force as a cost-saving measure in reducing a duplication of staff efforts to more efficiently manage the issue. Resident volunteers should also be invited to participate in the task force, which could include providing training opportunities, developing communication strategies for the community, and organizing boots-on-the-ground cleanups of illegal trash dump sites. One possible forum for this type of task force to emerge in Wyandotte County is at Livable Neighborhoods meetings, which regularly brings together various city agencies and authorities with community leaders. A task force could then begin to coordinate with the local industries surrounding illegal dump sites to enlist them as partners in prevention.

3. Take an Integrated Approach: Local government, the community, and industry partners need to work together to plan, implement, and sustain the prevention program. This includes developing site maintenance recommendations, reaching out to involve the community, enforcing targeted sites where illegal dumping commonly occurs, and measuring the success of the program. A more description with examples for each of these strategies is available in the EPA’s toolkit. It also includes a number of community development programs and initiatives that could align with reducing illegal trash dumping to improve public health, including the introduction of signage, better lighting, and landscape beautification.

4. Publicize Success: It is necessary to publicly share the results of the program to build support among local authorities and maintain cooperation between the organizations and individuals involved in the program. It also allows for other communities to benefit from the lessons that have been learned and look for ways to implement their own programs locally. Metrics to track could include the number of cleaned-up sites, fines and arrests, and the costs that were avoided through increased prevention efforts. This strategy will allow for more publicity which in turn makes it easier to budget for and can provide accountability in the program. One example of publicizing success and engaging youth is in the viral hashtag #TrashTag Challenge, which sees communities post their before and after cleanup photos to celebrate their efforts with others around the world.

3 CREATE MORE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND EDUCATION

At community events organized by the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, creating more opportunities for youth involvement was repeatedly highlighted as a priority among residents. A partner in creating more youth opportunities can be found at Sumner Academy, which has a rich history as an anchor institution within the community. Other organizations in Northeast Kansas City, Kansas can also play a role in connecting youth to each other, their community, and improve their opportunities for better education and health.

In talking about connectedness, it’s important to first understand the concept as it relates to youth health outcomes. Connectedness can be defined by how socially close groups are to one another, and interventions that improve social connectedness among youth are a great opportunity to reduce potential health risk factors. Youth that are socially connected have a better sense of well-being, while the absence of connectedness is linked to a higher risk of negative health outcomes. One study found that youth that reported strong connections to their parents had a lower risk for depression and suicidal thoughts, while youth connected to their community had lower levels of anxiety.

Caring Relationships

The University of Minnesota’s Prevention Research Center, as an example, developed a Healthy Youth Development (HYD) paradigm to promote events, experiences, and opportunities that can promote caring, confidence, and competency in youth. Using their HYD paradigm, researchers evaluated a school-based mentoring program with 239 mentors to determine how connected youth improved their health outcomes. The study found that the a quality mentoring relationship improved youth social skills and competency at school, and reduced a mentees’ involvement in bullying or school absences. The study also demonstrated that more connected parental involvement was associated with less risky sexual behaviors among teenagers. The researchers concluded that the connections between youth and adults are foundational for the health and well being of vulnerable youth. Their recommendation was that any program being designed to improve public health
for youth first ask whether or not the program will help to strengthen caring relationships between adults and youth.

There are a variety of opportunities for youth living in Douglass-Sumner to connect locally to programs that promote Caring Relationships. One is the Village Initiative and their Kids’ Kitchen program, which is converting two storefront buildings at the southeast corner of 18th and Washington Ave. in KCK into a free meal site, computer lab, and demonstration cooking space for youth. Their program regularly serves 400 free meals a day to KCK youth, and they intend to make their site a space to connect with local community youth programs through hands-on food activities. Another opportunity is the Learn To Earn program, which is administered by HNMA and offers youth ages 12 to 16 an opportunity to participate in STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Art, and Math) and workforce training. Their recent work engaged youth at the Boys and Girls Club to develop a mural for a boxing club along Parallel Parkway. Additional STEAM programming exists for local youth through the Destiny Bible Fellowship’s STEAM camp for youth, which included summer programming to connect local kids to STEAM-related opportunities across Kansas City.

**Youth Violence Prevention**

In looking for interventions that can increase youth connectedness, researchers in adolescent health have shifted their approach to better understanding how different types of programs might promote well-being in youth. This new perspective sees young people as resources that need to be developed, and not merely as problems to be solved.

One area where research is integrating community mobilization with youth is in preventing youth violence. Where youth violence once focused on an individual’s risk factors, public health has expanded its scope to incorporate additional factors that can affect an individual youth, such as family involvement, academic achievement in school, and violence in the community. This process of research being a collaboration between the community and academia is common in community-based participatory research, which invites participants to help identify needs and co-develop strategies to address public health concerns.

An important effort currently underway to prevent youth violence in Wyandotte County is ThrYve, which is a collaboration between community health and development researchers at the University of Kansas and local community organizations. Funded by a four-year $1.7 million U.S. Health & Human Services grant, the goal of the research is to examine the effect that organizations and agencies can have on reducing youth violence in Kansas City, Kansas. Their program has focused on supporting about 120 youth between 7th and 10th grades by providing them with academic support, employment preparation, financial training, and college readiness opportunities. Additional programs have promoted youth leadership and social skills. Douglass-Sumner can learn more about ThrYve’s involvement in the community by connecting with Dr. Jomella Watson-Thompson at the KU Center for Community Health and Development.

Related to the leadership opportunities that ThrYve offers is the Youth CAB (Youth Community Advisory Board), which is led by the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, NBC CDC, and HNMA. The Youth CAB was formed by residents that participate in the H.E.A.T. CAB (Health Equity Action Transformation Community Advisory Board). *The H.E.A.T. Report* is an examination of where health opportunities do and do not exist in Wyandotte County, and takes on the public health impact felt by poverty, racism, and redlining throughout Kansas City, Kansas, including Douglass-Sumner (Figure 2). The Youth CAB is made up of local high schoolers that are organizing around issues present in the H.E.A.T. Report and that they have identified in their communities, including youth violence, inadequate infrastructure, and public health outcomes. Douglass-Sumner can learn more about the Youth CAB’s efforts in developing youth leadership by connecting with Donna Young at the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County.
References


2. Same as above.


10. Same as above.


19. Same as above.


33. Thr‘Yve: [https://wethryve.ctb.ku.edu](https://wethryve.ctb.ku.edu)

Figures

Figure 1:

The map above and zoomed in to highlight Douglass-Sumner in yellow on the right were a part of an effort by the U.S. government to evaluate the riskiness of mortgages in the 1930s.

To do this, they hired the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation to ‘grade’ neighborhoods. These grades were then used to justify whether or not a home in a neighborhood could qualify for a mortgage.

The corresponding notes for each neighborhood indicate that racism and implicit bias was consistently used to determine these grades. Thus, the maps became known for their ‘redlining’ effect, which introduced systemic racism into how the built environment was developed.

Today, we can be trace where redlining occurred to identify where a lack of home values contributes to a lack of grocery stores, parks, and other community development improvements that can improve health outcomes.

View the Kansas City map at: http://bit.ly/redliningKmap
Figures

Figure 2:

The maps below are a part of a larger project called the H.E.A.T. Report, which was a partnership between the Kirwan Institute and the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County. The report compared the redlining maps of Kansas City to health outcomes today. The area highlighted below features the public health data for Douglass-Sumner.

Explore the interactive maps at online: https://wearewyandotte.com
Card Sorting: Priority Issue #1

IMPROVE HEALTHY HOUSING

Resident quotes from the survey:

“More new houses in the neighborhood.”
“Would like to see more population.”
“The Prairie Fire Project and Downtown Healthy Campus are likely to happen within the next three years.”
“Developers are looking at the avenue to build houses and new homes continue to be built and sold.”

Survey responses to the following questions:

How long have you lived in this neighborhood?
What would be your #1 preference for the type of business or services added to the community?
If something is wrong in my neighborhood, I know that the people who live here will try to fix it.
Do you have convenient access to healthy food choices.
How much do you feel that people in your neighborhood can count on each other when they need help?

Issues identified in previous Quality of Life Plans:

Home Repair Programs
Cultural Amenities
Beatrice Lee Community Center
Multi-Family Housing
Zoning and Commercial Use
Walker Avenue
Grocery Stores
Urgent Care Facility
Single-Family Housing
Elderly in housing that need assistance
Card Sorting: Priority Issue #2

ENHANCE SAFETY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Resident quotes from the survey:

“Crime and other safety issues.”

Survey responses to the following questions:

How would you rate the following public services in your community?

I would recommend my neighborhood to families with children as a good place to live.

I would recommend my neighborhood to seniors as a good place to live.

How would you rate the parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers in your community?

Issues identified in previous Quality of Life Plans:

New sidewalks and stop signs

Illegal trash dumping

Big Eleven Lake

Pocket Park

Vacant Lots

Safe Routes to Schools

Sumner Academy track

History Walking Trail

Neighborhood Signage

Community Policing

Library in the Park
Card Sorting: Priority Issue #3

CREATE MORE SOCIAL CONNECTION, OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH EDUCATION

Resident quotes from the survey:

“We should know each other better, better relationships.”

“Children/Younger generation will grow and help in cleaning the neighborhood”

“We would like to help our community, but sometimes we have a busy life, work.”

“There will be better communication between neighbors.”

“The owner of the neighborhood isn’t doing anything to make changes and to improve the neighborhood”

Survey responses to the following questions:

How connected would you say you feel to this neighborhood?

How willing are you to become involved in your neighborhood by working with others to make things happen?

How likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?

Issues identified in previous Quality of Life Plans:

Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association as a 501(c)3

Youth Neighborhood Improvement Forum

Book Bag Giveaway

Develop Partnerships

ESL Classes

Neighborhood Block Party

HNMA

Local Churches and Pastors

Neighborhood Block Captains

Connecting to Youth and Seniors

Local Capacity
INTRODUCTION

Dotte Agency and representative neighborhood stakeholders have developed ‘sample readings’ of the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood in an area selected by residents and leaders. This customized “Healthy Community Audit Instrument” builds upon the information from discussions and surveys through the NeighborWorks Survey and Community Engagement activities. Measures to assess neighborhood environments are needed to better understand the salient features that may enhance outdoor physical attributes of building and land property; active living, such as walking and bicycling for transport or leisure; and to identify cues of safety within the neighborhood.

There are two key standard, well-recognized surveying instruments that have been utilized in this project: the Active Living Research “PIN3 Neighborhood Audit” tool and the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Toolkit: A Guide for Planning and Designing Safer Streets. The shorter, customized version that we developed for the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood can be found in Appendix C: Neighborhood Audit Tool.

Through the Community Engagement process, Douglass-Sumner representative leaders and residents collectively identified a 9-block area between Oakland to Walker Streets, and 7th to 19th Streets. A neighborhood leader and resident met with Dotte Agency, LISC representatives on February 27th, and May 30th, 2018, to apply the audit in this area. Recent momentum inside and outside of the neighborhood are: 1) recent park improvement at the Jersey Creek Trails (Heathwood Park), 2) walkWYCO regular-walking groups, 3) the New Bethel Church CDC annual 5K Run in May, 4) trimming of overgrowth east of Sumner Academy, 5) the annual district-wide clean-ups in April.

These signs of momentum of institutional investment to make healthy changes to the built environment reveal commitment to the area and contribute to public space improvements.

Moving Forward

The neighborhood audit method is best done with a group of leaders, residents and those that have capacity to share stories, identify and prioritize needs, ultimately aiding in bringing partners to invest and influence policy in the neighborhood. To make small and large changes, it is important to visit and re-visit the area periodically and build others’ interest and awareness of neighborhood needs. Residents, the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association leadership, LISC partners, city planning and public works representatives need to be part of the neighborhood audit process in order to effectively translate needs into action. To build upon these efforts, best results occur when the residents that live within the 9-block area become “block captains” to improve
a continuous form of communication to understand the daily underlying needs of the residents. The neighborhood audit process provides objective analysis of visible signs of change in the neighborhoods. It is best if the neighborhood audits can be done repeatedly: a couple times of year when the seasons show different levels of resident activity and landscaping features (for example, a winter survey and summer survey) and annually to highlight small and large impact changes that happen from year to year.

**Characterizing Neighborhood Property in Health Research**

Over the last couple of decades, studies have been developed to explore the impact of community characteristics on the physical and mental health of residents to better understand population health and health disparities. Direct observation of neighborhood characteristics using an audit instrument relies on more objective measurement to capture many of the comprehensive and detailed environmental characteristics relevant for health.

**Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this primary neighborhood audit was to identify key factors that contribute or detract from a healthy built environment. This customized *Healthy Community Audit Instrument* has been created to build upon the data collected in the past year through the Neighborhood Pride Evaluation surveys and Community Engagement activities.

*A copy of the Healthy Community Audit Instrument can be found in Appendix C.*
RIGHT & BELOW: Douglass-Sumner is a neighborhood that is partially defined by its anchor churches, schools, and surrounding commercial and industrial businesses.

OPPOSITE: Sidewalk conditions vary widely, though a new bikeline on 10th Street shows promise.

PREVIOUS: Douglass-Sumner is made up mostly of single-family residences.
DOUGLASS-SUMNER

Safety

Dates: February 27th and May 30th, 2018

This neighborhood audit tool assess crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), which is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design and relies upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts. Altering the physical design of neighborhoods in which humans reside and congregate in order to deter criminal activity is the main goal of CPTED principles. These principles of design affect elements of the built environment ranging from the small-scale (such as the strategic use of shrubbery and other vegetation) to the overarching build form of an entire urban neighborhood and the amount of opportunity for “eyes on the street.”

We analyzed the survey results through “Health Community Audit Instrument” and arrived at a four-point scale system:

Natural Surveillance: The assessment evaluated the overall condition of the residential doorways that open to outside and how well they are lit; how visible the front doors are from the street; and whether landscaping creates blind spots or hiding spots. Only 10-20% of the porches had lights turned on when surveying this area. Porch light is a welcoming symbol and this additional lighting source can help to deter crime and enhance the overall appearance of the street. Encouraging homeowners to turn their porch lights on from dusk to dawn, and offering grants or shared costs for residents willing to install new porch lights will improve this neighborhood at night. The majority of the front doors are visible throughout the neighborhood area, protected by porches. The majority- 90% of the blocks- are clear of blind spots or hiding spots within the landscape (except in the alleyways which some have overgrowth). Natural surveillance increases the perceived risk of attempting deviant actions by improving visibility of potential offenders to the general public. Natural surveillance occurs by designing the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility of the space and its users, fostering positive social interaction among legitimate users of private and public space. The house lots are narrow and houses close to each other which increases the sense of the presence of neighbors. Potential offenders feel increased scrutiny, and thus inherently perceive an increase in risk.

Territorial Reinforcement: How property lines are defined can encourage interactions with plantings, fences, short walls; and whether the street address is visible from the street with numbers. Approximately 70% of the blocks have property line definition with either plantings, fences or short walls. Many of these fences have ‘no trespassing’ signs and large, aggressive dogs behind the fences. Natural access control could be improved in some of these areas, limiting the opportunity for crime by taking steps to clearly differentiate between public space and private space. By selectively placing entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscaping, natural access control occurs.

Maintenance and Green Space: The assessment evaluated the overall condition of the structures; the general condition of landscaping and whether old automobiles and other vehicles exist in the yards. About 60% of the blocks were evaluated with a ‘good repair’ condition, the remaining 40% in ‘fair’ condition. Maintenance is an expression of ownership of property. Deterioration indicates less control by the intended users of a site and may be perceived as a tolerance of disorder.
DOUGLASS-SUMNER
Active Living

Date: February 27th, 2018 & May 30th, 2018

Identifying Active Living in Neighborhoods: This neighborhood audit tool assesses street-level characteristics that may be related to walking and bicycling. The instrument places emphasis on measuring the walkability of the neighborhood with an understanding of the impact of cars upon that experience. Increasing physical activity is a powerful way to prevent obesity and promote health among children and adults. Across the country, practitioners, advocates and policy-makers are coming together to create healthier communities that support active lifestyles. Children and families are more active when they live in neighborhoods that have sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes and safe streets.

We analyzed the survey results through “Health Community Audit Instrument” and arrived at a four-point scale system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking and Bicycling Amenities</th>
<th>Most favorable conditions</th>
<th>Least favorable conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most favorable conditions</td>
<td>3.5-4</td>
<td>1.0-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Walking and Bicycling Amenities: The assessment, block-by-block, evaluated the overall condition of the presence of sidewalks, their buffer space between the street and the sidewalk, the condition of the sidewalks, shade trees and public lighting. Over 50% of the neighborhood area lack sidewalks—on some blocks there are no sidewalks on either side of the street. Pedestrians were forced to walk in the streets. Where there were sidewalks, many had ill-kept sidewalks where many of the sidewalks have mud, debris and are suffering from uplift by large-tree root growth. Only 30% of the streets have shade trees. Shade trees and plant material offer aesthetic, environmental, social and economic benefits to cities. Most importantly, trees create a comfortable pedestrian environment. 75% of the streets have ‘dangerous/poor/non-existent sidewalk conditions. The sidewalks in the newly developed CHWC housing areas and around Sumner Academy meet the ‘good/excellent’ standard. Sidewalks should be free from cracks, heaving and spalling sidewalks should be replaced. Sidewalks that are in unacceptable condition should be reported to the city. In many cases cracked or heaving sidewalks are present in front of vacant or abandoned properties.

Road Characteristics: The assessment, block-by-block, evaluated the overall condition of the car speed limit, the presence of a shoulder or bike lane and on-street parking. In general, it was unclear what the speed limit for cars was because rarely was there a sign posted on these blocks. Cars traveled at a higher speed along most streets, not slowing down at intersections and making pedestrians feel vulnerable. Throughout the study area, there were no bike lanes and on-street parking was allowed on both sides of the street. During this audit, we saw only one youth on a bicycle. The majority of the street lighting is currently provided using “cobra head” style street lights mounted on utility poles at 25-30’ height, approximately every 100’ on one side of the road (some areas along Oakland, Freeman and New Jersey streets between 9th and 10th Streets were quite dark.) At this time of this audit 70% of the lights were functioning at night.
DOUGLASS-SUMNER

Property

Date: February 27th, 2018 & May 30th, 2018

Over the last couple of decades, studies have been developed to explore the impact of community characteristics on the physical and mental health of residents to better understand population health and health disparities. Direct observation of neighborhood characteristics using an audit instrument relies on more objective measurement to capture many of the comprehensive and detailed environmental characteristics relevant for health.

We analyzed the survey results through “Health Community Audit Instrument” and arrived at a four-point scale system:

Residential Land Use: The assessment evaluated the overall condition of the residential units; presence of porches, borders (fences, shrubs, etc.); boarded, burned or abandoned residential units; and presence of visible security warning signs. There are vacant or abandoned buildings within the selected area where 60% of the blocks had at least one vacant building. In most cases, these properties have been closed and secured and are in various states of disrepair. It has been found in other cities that when several of these properties are clustered together, criminal activity can follow. Most houses, 90% of the blocks, had porches and the presence of borders which positively defines property territories that serves to protect private property, while also playing an important role in image and the aesthetic of the street. The most common type of fence used throughout the neighborhood is chain-link fence, while there are some historic stone, retaining walls. Chain-link, while functional and affordable, provides a harsh, uninviting aesthetic. Many of the stone walls are in need of repair. Ornamental fencing that is a maximum of 4-feet in height should be encouraged.

Public, Residential, Non-Residential Spaces / Aesthetics: The assessment, block-by-block, evaluated the general condition of public spaces; visibly active people; overall conditions of parks and playgrounds; visible dogs, litter and graffiti. While most lots are mowed and seemingly cared for, there are some where trash has collected and overgrowth is happening and better maintenance is necessary. Vacant lots can be repurposed for a variety of community based uses. In the few cases where an abandoned house has been boarded up, these have some visible trash on the property. The Sumner Academy School and adjacent churches are great assets to this neighborhood and the properties that surround the school vary in condition: newly developed Community Housing of Wyandotte County housing to the east of the School have improved the area, while to the east and west of the School are burned and abandoned houses and other over-brush that need to be removed. Soon, the New Bethel Church will be building an addition to the northeast of Sumner Academy which should improve the quality of the neighborhood. At night, the area is lit with road-dominated lighting – and some areas needing improved street lighting to make the area feel safer as it is very dark in much of the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood. There were some dogs on leashes and in fenced in areas, but no stray dogs. Overall, there was some litter in the abandoned lots that should be attended to on a regular basis. There was little visible graffiti. Abandoned sofas, televisions, tires and other large-scale furnishings were scattered throughout the area along sidewalks – a concentrated effort to clean up those would benefit the appearance of the neighborhood. The empty properties near the school building need the greatest attention to remove litter and trim overgrowth to improve the sense of safety and aesthetics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oakland between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oakland between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey between 9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mapping Community Development Assets

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

As part of the Community Engagement process, Dotte Agency worked with neighbors to identify and make visible existing community development investments (physical and programmatic), health assets and ‘problem areas’ through mapping. Large scale maps were then created highlighting areas of previous investment as reported by residents as well as areas for improvement. Priority geographic focus areas were identified and outlined on the map to help direct future change efforts and interventions to improve community health. These maps help to tell the neighborhood’s ‘health story’ and can be a valuable resource in community problem solving. Each map is laminated and includes space for additional comments and data points for future engagement.

In addition, Dotte Agency worked with Assistant Professor Dr. Hui Cai to create ‘cross maps’ to delve deeper into the data and showcase relationships between neighborhood assets.

The goal of mapping is to highlight differences between the needs and the available resources within the community. We have combined key themes such as housing, schools, healthcare, recreation, retails and other community services with the vulnerable populations such as low income households, single-mom, elderly, and poor elderly, family with kids etc. The data we mapped included but were not limited to:

1. Demographics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, education)
2. Poverty and unemployment
3. Food Resources (e.g., Grocery stores, Corner stores, Farmers’ markets, Cultural food stores)
4. Other retail
5. Recreation (e.g., parks, recreation, fitness center, gyms, Public trails, bikeways)
6. Healthcare (e.g., clinic, hospital, and nursing home)
7. Education (e.g. schools and daycares)
8. Community services (e.g. library, daycare, community center, church)
9. Housing characteristics (e.g., age of houses, house vacancy, rental availability, housing)
10. Land use (e.g., residential zoning, non-residential zoning, land bank, vacant lots)
11. Transportation (e.g., sidewalk, trail, car ownership, bus routes, stops, other public transit)

Methods

The study is developed in three phases (Figure 1):

Phase 1: Acquiring and organizing secondary data. The geospatial data comes from various sources, for instance, Geographical boundary shapes and some demographics
In total, 80 base maps and 75 overlay maps were created. For KCK there are 26 overlay maps, and for the KCMO side, there are 49 overlay maps. These maps help to evaluate whether the distribution of current community amenities and housing resources are consistent with where potentially vulnerable population are, such as seniors, high rates of poverty, single moms, and families with kids.

For instance, the northwest corner of Douglass-Sumner and the south east corner of Downtown KCK have been identified as areas with high rate of low-income households and low availability of available rental units. When we overlay the population density with the concentration of houses that were built before 1939, it again showed the southeast corner of downtown KCK as a targeted area to improve. The third overlay maps showed that area has 4-5% of vacant housing, which demonstrated the mismatch between the types of houses that are available and the needs of the low-income population.

On the KCMO side, the center of Scarritt Renaissance was shown as an area with higher concentration of low income household and low availability of rentals. It has also high population density and relatively high percentage of houses that were built before 1939. The area on the west side and to the east side of Ivanhoe has demonstrated as area that has relatively high concentration of low income household and older structures, and the vacancy is low, which indicates the needs for additional housing. While the middle of the Blue Hills showed potential for adaptive reuse or renovations as there is a misfit between available houses and people with needs.

Detailed Community Development Asset Maps can be found in Appendix D.
Kansas City LISC
Neighborhood Pride Evaluation

*Project Synopsis*

Prepared by Success Measures® at NeighborWorks® America

August 2017
INTRODUCTION

Over a period of time, Kansas City (KC) LISC has been investing in five communities with the goal of increasing neighborhood pride. In September 2016, KC LISC began working with Success Measures at NeighborWorks America, to help them and five of their community-based partners plan and implement an outcome evaluation on resident quality of life and community pride in these communities. Success Measures supported LISC and its partners to:

- Design the evaluation process, including selecting data collection tools;
- Create a data collection implementation plan;
- Provide technical assistance to implement the evaluation;
- Prepare baseline evaluation reports;
- Review the evaluation process and plan for next steps.

This report summarizes the planning, implementation, and findings of this evaluation project which ran from September 2016 through June 2017. More details about project activities and timeline can be found at the end of the report on page 11.

PLANNING

The evaluation effort began with an in-person planning session in Kansas City. Success Measures facilitated a conversation for LISC staff to articulate their definition of “neighborhood pride” and the indicators of pride. Sessions with staff from each of the five neighborhood groups were held so they could review and refine those indicators for their specific neighborhood.

The identified indicators of neighborhood pride among residents included the following:

- Satisfaction with the neighborhood;
- Willingness to recommend the neighborhood as a good place to live
- Feeling safe in the neighborhood;
- Strong sense of place, feeling connected to others in neighborhood, and counting on others for help;
- Participation in community initiatives, getting involved, having a voice;
- Positive perception of physical conditions in neighborhood, cleanliness, condition of streets and sidewalks, public spaces and the homes;
- Confidence that the neighborhood is improving
- Access to public services, businesses and services, cultural/art/music events, food choices

The next step was to identify questions from the Success Measures library to serve as a common set used across organizations to measure those indicators. (See the core survey questions starting on page 12.) In addition, each organization had the opportunity to add custom questions of special interest to their particular organization.
Representatives from each of the five neighborhood groups were interviewed to articulate their unique goals. In addition, each group defined the neighborhood boundaries where they would survey the residents and identified the necessary strategies and resources to administer the survey successfully.

LISC and its partners hoped that the baseline data would be used by the neighborhood organizations to build community support for next steps, identify potential areas of focus, develop partnerships and leverage the information to secure additional resources for program implementation. The expectation is that the resident survey will be repeated in three years and will reveal evidence of progress toward increasing neighborhood pride.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted using a random sample of households in each neighborhood; sizes of the neighborhoods ranged from 250 to 3,500 households. Each group hoped to obtain a minimum of 200 completed surveys from selected residents. These factors would ensure that the results were representative of the entire neighborhood. (Using this approach the results would have a 90% confidence level (with 5% +/- interval) of being representative of the perceptions of the entire neighborhood.)

LISC staff secured lists of residential addresses for each neighborhood so that a random sample of addresses for each neighborhood’s data collection could be generated.

The groups employed multiple data collection strategies, including going door-to-door to administer the survey in person, sending the survey via email, mailing paper copies of the survey, inviting specific households to a convening to complete the survey, and connecting with selected residents at community events.

Staff received training and technical assistance to conduct the survey, including strategies for recruiting and training data collectors, publicizing the survey effort and steps for entering the responses into the Success Measures Data System (SMDS). The participating groups had access to all of the Success Measures resources available on the Evaluation Learning Center, a repository of evaluation materials, how-to’s and templates. In addition, identified leads from each community, as well as the LISC project manager, received ongoing technical assistance and support from Success Measures.

The original timeline, which had targeted December 2016 for data collected completion, was deemed too ambitious and was deferred to May 2017.

IMPLEMENTATION

Neighborhood groups found it very challenging to conduct the survey using a random sampling method and to obtain the required number of completed surveys.

Downtown Shareholders was able to implement the survey following the random sample. They obtained 95 responses. While that did not meet their goal, the information is useful and representative (at a 70% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 5%).
Using a variety of methods to obtain responses, Blue Hills Community Services collected 179 survey responses and Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council collected 105 responses. Several of the groups created a hyperlink to the evaluation on SMDS which they posted on their website and/or Facebook page. Several used the email function on SMDS to send the survey to interested neighborhood residents. While the responses are not representative, the information provides both LISC and the organizations with useful information.

Mattie Rhodes Center and Douglas Sumner Neighborhood Association collected 21 and 20 responses respectively, making the information of limited value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Household count</th>
<th>Number of surveys collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Hills Community Services</td>
<td>3093</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council</td>
<td>2711</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Shareholders</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattie Rhodes Center</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Sumner Neighborhood Association</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conducting a sample was an ambitious undertaking given that none of the groups had prior experience doing this type of evaluation effort. Several of the organizations were in favor of the sample survey approach because they believed their strong connections to residents would make the survey effort less burdensome. However, groups underestimated the effort it would take and, in retrospect, believe it would have been better to select another strategy. It is also possible that not all groups were ready for this approach and that a tailored approach for each organization, rather than a common methodology for all five groups, might have been more successful.
FINDINGS

Three of the neighborhoods secured a sizable number of responses by June 1: Blue Hills, Ivanhoe and Downtown Shareholders. Although none of them secured sufficient number of responses for a 90% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, there is still much that can be observed in the data that indicate possible neighborhood direction on the question of pride and connectivity and can assist the organizations and KC LISC in considering future program actions.

The following are some of the key questions and findings with detailed data from this evaluation.

**General Background and Neighborhood Satisfaction**

**How long have you lived in this neighborhood?**

- All three neighborhoods saw a range of answers among respondents to the question of how long they have lived in the neighborhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall, considering everything, how satisfied would you say you are living in this community?**

- When asked about their level of satisfaction with the neighborhood, a majority of respondents indicated they are either “Satisfied” or “Very satisfied”. [Blue Hills=51%, Ivanhoe= 65%, Downtown Shareholders=54%]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KC LISC believes that in a neighborhood exhibiting strong pride residents would rate as Good or Very Good the cleanliness, physical conditions, safety and friendliness.

How would you rate each of the following aspects of this neighborhood?

- Of the factors, friendliness received high ratings across the organizations.
- The physical conditions of the neighborhood generally received lower ratings than safety and friendliness. In Blue Hills and Ivanhoe physical conditions and cleanliness received relatively low ratings. Respondents from Downtown Shareholders rated the physical conditions slightly higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% indicates those responding “Good” and “Very good”</th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness of the neighborhood</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical conditions of the houses</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical condition of the streets, sidewalks and public spaces</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in the neighborhood</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness of their neighborhoods</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?

- In all three neighborhoods, most respondents indicated either “Definitely would recommend” or “Probably would recommend” their neighborhood as a good place to live. [Blue Hills=70%, Ivanhoe=81%, Downtown Shareholders=75%]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely would recommend</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably would recommend</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably would not recommend</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely would not recommend</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you had the choice, would you continue to live in this neighborhood?

- In all three neighborhoods the vast majority of respondent indicated that they would continue to live in the neighborhood if they had a choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sense of Safety**

How safe would you say you feel in each of the following places?

- In all three of the neighborhoods the majority of respondents reported feeling “Very safe” or “Safe” during the day; the percentage of residents feeling safe walking in their neighborhood at night was much lower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% indicates those responding “Very safe” and “Safe”</th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking in neighborhood during day</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking in neighborhood at night</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connection Among Neighbors and Resident Engagement**

Another indicator identified by KC LISC for neighborhood pride are strong connections among residents. The survey included questions asking residents whether they feel connected with the neighborhood, whether they believe that residents can count on each other when they need help, and whether they are willing to become involved in the neighborhood working with others. Another question identified five situations and asked residents how likely it would be that others would help in each of the situations.

How likely would you say it is that people in your community would help out if the following occurred?

- The results from this question suggest that neighbors in Blue Hills and Ivanhoe can count on one another. It is noteworthy that more than 50% of Ivanhoe respondents selected “Very likely” in all five situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% indicates those responding “Very likely”</th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You needed a ride somewhere</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You needed a favor, such as picking up mail</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You needed someone to watch your house when you were away</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An elderly neighbor needed someone to periodically check on him or her</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A neighbor needed someone to take care of a child</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Right now, how willing are you to become involved in your neighborhood by working with others to make things happen?

- In each organization the majority (59% - 66%) of respondents indicated that they were either “Very willing” or “Willing” to work with others to make things happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very willing</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat willing</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not that willing</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much of a positive difference do you feel that you, yourself, can make in your community?

- Across the organizations respondents reported that they could have a positive different in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fair amount</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little or none</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How connected would you say you feel in this neighborhood?

- Across the organizations, most respondents indicated they felt connected to their neighborhood. 44% of respondents in Blue Hills, 68% of respondents in Ivanhoe and 53% of respondents in Downtown Shareholders indicated they feel “Very Connected” or “Connected”.
- 50% of Ivanhoe respondents reported they feel “Very connected”.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very connected</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat connected</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very connected</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all connected</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, considering everything, how much do you feel that people in your neighborhood can count on each other when they need help?

- People in these neighborhoods reported they could count on each other for help.
- 56% of respondents from Blue Hills, 78% of respondents from Ivanhoe and 48% of respondents from Downtown Shareholders indicated they could count on each other “A great deal” or “A fair amount”.
- 39% of respondents in Ivanhoe indicated that people could count on their neighbors “A great deal”.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fair amount</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perception of Neighborhood Change**

Compared to three years ago, how would you say your community has changed overall?

- 40% of respondents in Blue Hills, 56% of respondents in Ivanhoe and 46% of respondents in Downtown Shareholders reported that their neighborhood had “Improved a lot” or “Improved some” in the past three years. Across the three neighborhoods, 30-39% of respondents indicated “Stayed about the same”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved a lot</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved some</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed about the same</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined some</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined a lot</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about the next three years, how would you say your community is likely to change?

- In all three neighborhoods a high percentage of residents expressed confidence that the neighborhood would improve in the next three years.
- 62% of respondents in Blue Hills, 68% of Ivanhoe and 59% of Downtown Shareholders indicated they thought the community would “Improve a lot” or “Improve some”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blue Hills</th>
<th>Ivanhoe</th>
<th>Downtown Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve a lot</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve some</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay about the same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline some</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline a lot</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

Kansas City LISC and their partners decided to implement a community survey, which was an ambitious undertaking. A great deal of effort went into the evaluation, which proved more challenging than anticipated. However, after reviewing their individual results at the conclusion of the process, staff from Blue Hills Community Services, Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council and Downtown Shareholders believed that the survey had provided them with useful information about the current level of neighborhood pride and engagement.

Discussions took place with the groups and with LISC program staff about how the organizations can share their results during neighborhood meetings to see if other residents who did not respond to the survey have similar perceptions. By sharing the results of this data collection with their neighborhood, listening further, and showing residents that the organization respects the input of all residents, future data collection will likely be more successful and easier to implement with a broader participation rate across all populations in the neighborhood.

The survey results, while not representative, provide insight into the perceptions of many people in the three neighborhoods. The results suggest that there is a lot to build on in each community.

Although the findings are not representative of the neighborhoods, it is encouraging to know that so many people feel connected to their neighbors, feel that their community has improved and expressed confidence that it will improve in the future. A majority of respondents in each community expressed a willingness to work with other in the community. People generally feel their neighbors are friendly. The vast majority of respondents indicated they would continue to live in their neighborhood if they have the choice. These and others are all aspects of community pride.

The information collected through this evaluation can be built upon through further outreach and conversation to neighborhood residents. The results can be helpful as a starting point for building programs and strategies to strengthen the neighborhoods. The hope is that the organizations will use the results in program planning and find ways to gather more resident input and engage in further conversation.
Resident Pride, Social Capital, and Community Health:

An analysis and findings by the Kansas City, Missouri, Health Department

The following is a letter from Dr. Sarah Martin, Deputy Director at the Kansas City, Missouri, Health Department:

The Kansas City, Missouri Health Department is committed to redefining the city’s definition of health — the majority of what predicts a person’s length and quality of life is not found in a doctor’s exam room or in our DNA. The most powerful predictor of how long someone will live, and what that life will be like, is where they live.

Neighborhoods are shaped by economic and political forces. As a government agency, the Health Department recognizes that it is our responsibility to understand the consequences of both our historical policies and the decades of failure to reverse those policies. This is why our organization believes that measurement of neighborhood level indicators of well-being is critical to defining success.

The city is focusing on the measurement of Social Capital — the foundational aspects that build a community. Social Capital is the glue that holds neighbors together — it is a function of trust, civic participation, and fellowship. A healthy community is one that is connected, where people look out for each other. A healthy community is also cohesive, a place where residents see themselves as a part of something bigger than just their household; it is a feeling of a powerful identification with the neighborhood.

Partnering with LISC and the Dotte Agency, the Health Department analyzed measures of Social Capital and feelings of safety to identify neighborhood-level predictors of cohesiveness and connectedness in multiple neighborhoods on both sides of the state line. We used straightforward multivariate regression techniques to assess the statistical significance of neighborhood services and amenities, as well as respondent demographics, in predicting our outcomes. We only present findings with low odds of being a random relationship — any association with a greater than 5% probability of being due to chance is not included here.

We present the findings for three neighborhoods below: Blue Hills (KCMO), Ivanhoe (KCMO) and Downtown Shareholders (KCK). The findings are a reminder that the way we develop our cities has significant influence on the wellness of our residents.

What predicts overall levels of satisfaction with a neighborhood?

We explored what neighborhood and individual level characteristics related to a respondents general satisfaction with where they live, focusing on potential determinants with implications for public policy. With so much of our public conversation centering on the benefits of home ownership, interestingly enough renters and homeowners expressed similar patterns of satisfaction.
For all types of residents in Ivanhoe, for instance, cleanliness; affordability; parks; grocery shopping and appropriateness for senior citizens were all significant, positive predictors of satisfaction. All of these predictors are in part a function of government policies relating to blight, housing, infrastructure, density and budgeting. We must ask ourselves as policymakers: are our budget priorities reflective of what actually satisfies our residents and improves their quality of life?

In Blue Hills, we found that the most positive predictor of overall satisfaction was a respondents perception of neighbor friendliness. While government intervention on friendliness might seem strange, it does present a policy opportunity to create more spaces for interaction, support community building and ensure that our community anchors (such as playgrounds, community centers, pools and gardens) are safe, clean places to be.

In Downtown KCK, it was more difficult to tease out consistent patterns of attitudes. As in the other neighborhoods, satisfaction and feelings of safety, cohesion and connectedness were positively correlated. However, neighborhood amenities and perceptions of quality services were not predictive of satisfaction among the respondents — the responses from this group were highly variable, and priorities were not consistent. This illuminates the challenge of governing diverse, integrated communities.

What predicts feelings of safety in a neighborhood?

Feelings of safety are a crucial component of a healthy life; chronic stress and anxiety weakens immune responses and increases the risk of poor mental health. Children who don’t feel safe have a hard time getting enough sleep and concentrating in the classroom. The health and social implications for neighborhoods experiencing high levels of trauma should drive our policy choices and programmatic goals. The last year in the Kansas City region was a troubling one — in KCMO we experienced one of the most violent years on record. Intimate partner violence and assaults due to arguments are on the rise on both sides of the state line. Across all neighborhoods, female respondents were much less likely to feel safe than male respondents, regardless of age. That safety and gender connection was amplified if the respondent had children in the household.

There were many positive predictors of safety across all three neighborhoods that can inform policy and budgeting priorities. In KCK, the higher a respondent rated the quality of emergency services (the Fire Department and Ambulance), the safer they felt. While this aligns with standard budgeting prioritization of public safety, what is most interesting is that satisfaction with the quality of parks, playgrounds, community centers and restaurants was equally predictive of feelings of safety. This finding should urge policy makers to consider the emphasis on “public safety” more holistically.

While satisfaction with emergency services did not significantly predict feelings of safety in Blue Hills and Ivanhoe, there were findings that should be of interest to local policy makers. Once again, perception of friendliness mattered to respondents in both neighborhoods, as did the perception that the neighborhood was a “good value for the price”. In addition, street cleanliness and quality; satisfaction with parks and playgrounds and access to high quality child care were also positively correlated with the likelihood of feeling safe. This underscores the importance — as we saw with the KCK results — of expanding our conventional definition of public safety to include the neighborhood qualities that enhance a community.

What are the determinants of cohesion and connectedness?

Across our neighborhoods, the idea of cohesion (seeing oneself as part of a larger community identity) was more predictive of feelings of satisfaction and safety than the idea of connectedness (seeing oneself as a part of a network of neighbors). In addition to the recurring themes in the rest of the analysis — satisfaction with parks, neighborhood cleanliness and neighbor friendliness — a powerful concept emerges when focusing on Social Capital: agency. Agency is defined in this analysis as the perception that if something is wrong in a neighborhood, the community will come together to try and fix it. The concept of agency was not predictive of the other outcomes, but was significantly positively associated with both connection and cohesion in Blue Hills and Ivanhoe. This connection stresses the importance of civic engagement in assessing community health. When neighbors work together to affect change in their communities, it not only leads to improvements in that community, it can lead to actual improved health for the residents who participate. Research shows a strong
biological connection between participation in civic or faith based groups and improved mental and physical health. Cities and other organizations need to prioritize meaningful, innovative community engagement.

Cities can also improve Social Capital by providing spaces for communities to connect. In Downtown KCK, respondents overwhelmingly expressed that access to something as simple as a coffee shop or lunch restaurant improved feelings of cohesion. This is a striking lesson for those with influence on development decisions. Even small changes to a neighborhood through the incentivizing of certain businesses can have meaningful effects on Social Capital.

Conclusion

Determinants of why people choose to stay or leave a neighborhood, and what they do for that neighborhood while they live in it, are complicated. And yet, there are clear patterns across these three neighborhoods that show:

**People care about community spaces:** Parks, playgrounds, community centers, restaurants and coffee shops. Neighborhoods can not feel integrated without welcoming, safe places to connect.

**Looks do matter.** Cleanliness, sanitation and infrastructure repair is connected to overall feelings of safety, connection and satisfaction. Healthy, peaceful neighborhoods begin with attention to environmental design, public works and code enforcement. Recent research from the Health Department shows that neighborhoods in KCMO with high Social Capital have fewer code enforcement complaints, even when controlling for median income or age of housing stock.

**Engagement needs to evolve:** The traditional models of community engagement are being replaced with innovative ways of meeting neighborhoods where they are at. When neighborhoods have agency and residents feel as if their time and energy spent on civic participation matters, the payoff in terms of Social Capital can be huge.

The Health Department is proud to partner with government agencies, non-profit organizations, the business community and foundations across the region
to shift the public narrative around health. This short analysis provides a window into what is possible when we collectively define health in broader terms. We look forward to expanding on this research and working alongside our local elected officials to implement a policy platform focused on increasing Social Capital and feelings of safety while contributing to neighborhood stability.

Dr. Sarah Martin, Deputy Director at the Kansas City, Missouri, Health Department
### LISC Neighborhood Audit

#### Residential Land Use

1. Subjective Assessment: Is the street walkable?  
   - StrONGLY AGREE  □ | AGREE  □ | DISAGREE  □ | STRONGLY DISAGREE  □  
   
   Notes:

2. Number of residential units per block?  ______  
   
   Notes:

3. Types of residential housing?  
   - Single family □  | Multi-family □  | Mobile homes □  | HUD □  | New-renovation □  
   
   Notes:

4. Overall condition of most residential units?  
   - Excellent □  | Good □  | Fair □  | Poor / Deteriorated □  | Cannot see □  
   
   Notes:

5. Type of most front yards?  
   - None □  | Traditional lawn □  | Landscaped □  | Heavily wooded □  | Mixed □  
   
   Notes:

6. Presence of porches?  
   - None □  | Less than half □  | Half □  | More than half □  
   
   Notes:

7. Presence of borders? (Fences, shrubs, etc.)  
   - None □  | Less than half □  | Half □  | More than half □  
   
   Notes:

8. Presence of visible security warning signs?  
   - None □  | Less than half □  | Half □  | More than half □  
   
   Notes:

9. Any boarded up, burned, or abandoned residential units?  
   - Yes □  | No □  
   
   Notes:

#### Public, Residential, Non-Residential Spaces | Aesthetics

10. Presence of land is vacant or underdeveloped?  
    - None □  | Less than half □  | Half □  | More than half □  
    
    Notes:

11. Overall condition of land is vacant or underdeveloped?  
    - Excellent □  | Good □  | Fair □  | Poor / Deteriorated □  | Cannot see □  
    
    Notes:

#### Public, Residential, Non-Residential Spaces | Aesthetics Cont.

12. General condition of public spaces  
    - Excellent □  | Good □  | Fair □  | Poor / Deteriorated □  | Mixed □  
    
    Notes:

13. Visible people  
    - None □  | Children □  | Youth □  | Adults □  
    
    Notes:

14. People are physically active?  
    - No □  | Yes, children □  | Yes, youth □  | Yes, adults □  
    
    Notes:

15. Public neighborhood park or playground in segment?  
    - No □  | Yes, park □  | Yes, playground □  | Yes, church park and/or playground □  
    
    Notes:

16. Overall condition of park and/or playground  
    - Excellent □  | Good □  | Fair □  | Poor / Deteriorated □  | Mixed □  
    
    Notes:

17. Visible Dogs  
    - No □  | Yes, dog is leashed □  | Yes, dog is out loose □  
    
    Notes:

18. Litter | Amount  
    - None □  | Little amount □  | Moderate amount □  | Considerable amount □  
    
    Notes:

19. Litter | Type  
    - Non-alcoholic cans □  | Alcoholic cans □  | Large items | tires, furniture, appliances □  
    
    Notes:

20. Graffiti | Amount  
    - None □  | Little amount □  | Moderate amount □  | Considerable amount □  
    
    Notes:

#### Transit | Walking and Bicycling Amenities

21. Presence of sidewalk  
    - None □  | one | entire street □  | one | partial street □  | Both | entire street □  | Both | entire street □  
    
    Notes:

22. Presence of sidewalk buffer  
    - None □  | Within 2' of street □  | Between 2'-6' of street □  | Greater than 6' □  
    
    Notes:
### LISC Neighborhood Audit

**Transit | Walking and Bicycling Amenities Cont.**

23. Sidewalk condition
   - Notes: □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor / Deteriorated □ Dangerous

24. Trees shading walking area
   - Notes: □ No trees □ Some trees □ Continuous trees

25. Public Lighting
   - Notes: □ None □ Road oriented □ Pedestrian oriented □ Pedestrian and road oriented

**Transit | Road Characteristics**

26. Speed Limit ______
   - Notes:

27. Presence of a shoulder or bike lane
   - Notes: □ None □ Yes | Soft surface □ Yes | Hard surface □ Yes | Hard surface bike lane

28. On-street parking
   - Notes: □ Not allowed □ Allowed | Restricted □ Allowed | No restrictions

**Safety | Natural Surveillance**

29. All doorways that open to outside are well lit
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

30. Front doors are visible from the street
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

31. Landscaping creates blind spots or hiding spots
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

**Safety | Territorial Reinforcement**

32. Propertylines are defined with plantings, fences, short walls
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

33. Property encourages interaction with low fences, bushes, landscaping
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

34. Street address is visible from street with numbers (5" High, Min.)
   - Notes: □ None □ Less than half □ Half □ More than half

**Safety | Mainenance and Greenspace**

35. Structures painted and in condition of good repair
   - Notes:

36. Weeds abate, trim bushes to 36” high and trees up 7’ above ground
   - Notes:

37. Old automobiles, boats, trailers, and other vehicles in the front yard
   - Notes:

38. Landscaping maintained in good condition
   - Notes:

**General Notes:**
Neighborhood Maps

**RIGHT:** Each neighborhood will receive laminated copies of a Large Neighborhood Map, that are approximately 4’ wide by 5’ to 6’ long.

Each Large Neighborhood Map was stitched together using Google Earth images that present the neighborhood in high-resolution.

Notes that are added came from residents during the Spatial Mapping exercise done by Dotte Agency in the Community Engagement process.

The maps are laminated, and are intended to be living tools that neighborhood leaders and community organizers can use together to highlight areas of opportunity and investment.
Seniors x Parks and Recreation

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK_Fitness
KCK Park
KCK Recreation
KCK_Poverty_65+

1 Dot = 0.8
Poverty_65+_past12M

Over 65
- 8 - 42
- 43 - 80
- 81 - 116
- 117 - 166
- 167 - 267
Age of Housing x Population Density

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK_Poverty_Household_65+
1 Dot = 0.08
• Poverty_65+_past12M

KCK_Housing_builtbefore1939
StructureBuiltBefore1939
• 0 - 43
• 44 - 103
• 104 - 150
• 151 - 235
• 236 - 357

KCK_Population Density
Pop_Den
• 90 - 3317
• 3318 - 6543
• 6544 - 9769
• 9770 - 12995
• 12996 - 16221
Age of Housing x Seniors in Poverty

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK_Demo_Low_income_House

1 Dot = 0.01

Percent

KCK_Poverty_Household_65+

1 Dot = 0.08

Poverty_65+_past12M

KCK_Housing_YearBuiltOwnerOccupied

MediumYearStructureBuilt

1939 - 1942
1943 - 1949
1950 - 1956
1957 - 1966
1967 - 1990

Appendix D: Community Development Asset Maps
Rental Units Available x Seniors in Poverty

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

Appendix D: Community Development Asset Maps
Families x Community Services

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK School
Level
- Elementary
- Secondary
- High School
KCK Daycare
KCK Community Center
KCK Library

Married Couple with Kids
- 9 - 60
- 61 - 117
- 118 - 181
- 182 - 263
- 264 - 423

Appendix D: Community Development Asset Maps
Families x Churches

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK Church
Density
- 0 - 15
- 16 - 31
- 32 - 46
- 47 - 62
- 63 - 77

KCK_FamilywithChildren
Married Couple with Kids
- 9 - 60
- 61 - 117
- 118 - 181
- 182 - 263
- 264 - 423

Appendix D: Community Development Asset Maps
Schools x Single Mothers

Douglass Sumner Neighborhood

KCK School
Level
- Elementary
- Secondary
- High School
- KCK Daycare
- KCK Community Center
- KCK Library

KCK_Single_Mothers
Number
- 0 - 30
- 31 - 71
- 72 - 125
- 126 - 225
- 226 - 387

Appendix D: Community Development Asset Maps
To download the report, please visit: