LIVING ROAD MAP FOR SOUTH CENTRAL ELKHART

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOOD VISION REPORT

WE THRIVE 2040: SUSTAINING ELKHART'S FUTURE

Prepared by the South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team

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FEB 2022

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Rod Roberson
Mayor

City of Elkhart
Mayor's Office

Office of Mayor Rod Roberson
229 S. Second St.
Elkhart, Indiana 46516

February 28, 2022

Dear Neighbor,

We are so excited to share with you the South Central Neighborhood Vision report. This report includes the takeaways from our THRIVE neighborhood meetings. The South Central region of Elkhart is one of the most densely populated residential areas in the city and essential to our future growth and prosperity. The residents of South Central are passionate with a vision for their neighborhood's future that is key to our economic development plan.

This South Central Neighborhood Vision report is another major step in Elkhart's commitment to the revitalization of South Central. We will continue to work with the residents and stakeholders in this area to set up Elkhart's South Central Neighborhood for success for generations to come.

Thank you very much for your investment of time and your commitment to Elkhart.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rod Roberson

PREFACE

The City of Elkhart's THRIVE strategy will strengthen life in Elkhart through updated neighborhood development strategies, housing reinforcement, workforce expansion and training for 21st-century jobs, and creating a living roadmap for a stronger future. By prioritizing engagement with residents—starting with South Central—we will build and execute this vision together.

The Complete Neighborhood Road Map for South Central Elkhart is the result of a community engagement strategy and process that began in September 2021 and concluded in February 2022. The City of Elkhart provided support to a Community Engagement Team that led the process and was comprised of:

- Mark Chupp, JP Graulty, Jordan Wells, from the Community Innovation Network at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH
- Jason Shenk, Watershed Consulting, Elkhart, IN
- Daniela Panetta, Annika Fisher, from Lacasa, Inc., Elkhart County, IN

Three events were held at the Tolson Center as a part of the community engagement process—an informational Launch Event on October 28th, 2021, a Complete Neighborhood Visioning Event on November 20th, 2021, and a Community Summit on January 22nd, 2022. An essential component of the community engagement process was the active participation of resident "Champions" who provided input and feedback prior to and after each event, guided the planning and recruitment process of each event, and assisted with facilitation for the visioning event. We would like to thank the following Champions for their active participation.

- Alexander Williams
- Amanda Kidder
- Ana Lidia Meza
- Andrea Dean
- Anonymous
- Antjuna Coleman
- Bill Lehman
- Derald Gray
- Greg Suderman
- James Shorter
- Jay Little
- Keith Kingsley
- Kendall McGee
- Rev. McNeal Stewart III
- Patty Gorostieta
- Rev. Quinn Brenneke
- Wendell Wiebe-Powell
- Willie Mae Grant

The City of Elkhart was an active partner throughout the engagement process, helping prepare for and providing input at each session. We especially want to acknowledge Dayna Bennett, Kristen Smole, and early on Kacey Jackson for their dedicated work to support and promote this innovative community engagement process. We also want to acknowledge the City's Parks and Recreation Department and Tolson Center staff who assisted with these events.

JACK, JOSEPH AND MORTON MANDEL
SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Community Innovation Network

Watershed Consulting
Elkhart, IN

lacasa
Strong foundations. For everyone.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Elkhart contracted with a South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team to design and facilitate a community engagement process for developing a vision and a set of priorities for a Complete Neighborhood in South Central Elkhart. The community engagement process included three events—an informational Launch Event on October 28th, 2021, a Complete Neighborhood Visioning Event on November 20th, 2021, and a Community Summit on January 22nd, 2022.

The report details the community's vision and priorities in 7 areas identified during the Visioning Event. At the January 22nd Community Summit, residents and stakeholders created a consensus vision for South Central Elkhart in each of the 7 areas. The consensus visions are listed below:

Housing

Participants in the Housing group want to live in a vibrant neighborhood that has a higher percentage of owner-occupied properties. More education and awareness is needed on the community's housing related needs and concerns as well as more advertising of existing resources.

Business & Retail

The Business & Retail group envision a commitment to the triple bottom line—an economic concept where businesses do not focus solely on profit but on their social and environmental impact as well. This vision could include educational institutions and a business training incubator that encourages business models like social entrepreneurship.

Employment

The Employment group wants to see more people of color in management, better representation and awareness of Black local leaders, better technology training, living wage jobs, robust transit to large employment areas, and more business in the South Central neighborhood.

Built & Natural Environment

The Built & Natural Environment group focused on improving infrastructure, green space, and sustainability. They did not have time to reach consensus on a collective vision, but all aspects of their vision can be found in this report.

Recreation, Culture, Children & Families

Their neighborhood vision includes good, local schools that parents are happy to send their kids to. More school-level activities, robust leadership and the presence of colleges were elements that completed their collective vision.

Safety, Legal, Health & Human Services

Addressing behavioral and other challenges children and teens face was an important part of this collective vision. To achieve this vision teachers will also need support in learning how to effectively address "problem" behaviors demonstrated by students and how to assist students facing challenges.

It's All About the People: Connecting, Uniting, and Creating Together

This group believes that the community as a whole must decide how to define South Central. They envision a community that thrives on a welcoming culture where residents feel connected. This includes more active neighborhood associations, more activities people can do together and places where people can share their culture through food, picnics, music, sports, etc. Lastly, it is important that residents be informed about and connected to the various resources, institutions, and organizations in their area.

Each category contained more than the vision statements listed above. The full list of visions for each category can be found starting on page 8 of the report.

After identifying visions, Summit participants identified priorities for each category for the next 1-2 years and organized them by who will be the actor: residents themselves, the City and/or other institutions, or residents together with the City and/or other institutions. At the end of the event, all participants were given the opportunity to vote on their top priorities across all categories. The top for each actor were as follows. It should be noted that there were more votes for the priorities under the City and other institutions. Please see the chart in the report for the complete tally of votes for each priority.

Priorities that residents can do themselves

- Build up, celebrate, and support community leaders instead of focusing on missteps.
- Neighborhood aesthetics/cleanliness; plant flowers and pick up trash.
- Forming block clubs - support community & new members & culture → block parties.
- Beautify alleys; cleanup, add interesting features, better paving lighting.

Priorities to be addressed by the City and other institutions

- Creation of a South Central business and employment hub with an incubator and training.
- Boards that provide information on transportation, services, and resources.
- School board relationship improvement w/ community.
- Make it free for a family member to talk to someone in prison.
- Organization to gather parents to make a plan & act around mental health where people are.
- Creating access to trade schools & colleges from south central neighborhoods.

Priorities to be addressed together

- Broad financial literacy and well-advertised opportunities for homeownership.
- Mend & build the relationship between Elkhart Police Department and the Black community.
- Get word out about resources to support diverse housing options.
- Improved/expanded pathways, trails, sidewalks; more trails, better connection/crossings.
- Mentoring for youth by city departments.
- Benham West development/historic park.

There were 40 priorities total that received at least 1 vote during the summit. All of the priorities, along with a detailed breakdown of votes can be found starting on page 15 of the report.

The report lists a series of community priorities that residents and stakeholders have identified that they believe will create a complete neighborhood and benefit their community. We recommend that the City and other institutions integrate these priorities into their current activity and future plans.

As for things residents can do for themselves, there is currently no formal mechanism for organizing residents across South Central to act upon these priorities. However, there are existing networks of residents who are active in the community that can integrate these priorities into their efforts. Residents are encouraged to consider how they might organize themselves to enact these priorities.

Lastly, existing and new partnerships will need to be cultivated to achieve priorities that involve residents and the City/institutions working together. Sharing power and decision making will be needed to engage with residents in an authentic way.

CONTEXT & PURPOSE

We THRIVE 2040

The City of Elkhart's <u>We THRIVE</u> strategy will align public, private, and community leadership to work together to make specific investments in business, industry, neighborhoods, and people to sustain Elkhart's future.

THRIVE will strengthen life in Elkhart through updated neighborhood development strategies, housing reinforcement, workforce expansion and training for 21st-century jobs, and creating a living roadmap for a stronger future. By prioritizing engagement with residents—starting with South Central—the City and community will build and execute this vision together.

One method to start the process of building a community vision is to consider the concept of a Complete Neighborhood. A Complete Neighborhood is one where all residents have convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life, including diverse housing options, amenities, and experiences. The make-up of a Complete Neighborhood is specific to each community and can only be determined by the members of that community. Utilizing this notion, a process was developed to gather resident consensus on neighborhood priorities for South Central Elkhart.

Community Engagement in South Central Elkhart

The community engagement process included three events—an informational Launch Event on October 28th, 2021, a Complete Neighborhood Visioning Event on November 20th, 2021, and a Community Summit on January 22nd, 2022. Each event built on the previous one, and all data and insights from each event are contained in this report.

The objectives of the Thrive initiative were announced at the Launch event, where participants had the opportunity to hear directly from Mayor Rod Roberson, Director of Development Dayna Bennett, and Economic Development Specialist Kristen Smole, and ask questions about the initiative.
Next, a Visioning Event was held in November where residents could participate in a high-energy, inclusive, and participatory process to achieve the following:

- Learn about what a Complete Neighborhood is.
- Create a collective vision for a Complete Neighborhood in South Central Elkhart that incorporates, includes, and resonates with all communities in the neighborhood.
- Give feedback and input that will be published in a comprehensive report on the residents' vision of a complete neighborhood.

The results of the visioning process set the agenda for the Community Summit held in January where residents and community stakeholders could work together to:

- Leverage community assets and recruit passionate participants into continued engagement with the various aspects of We Thrive and broader community visioning.
- Build on the visioning process to create a collective vision for a Complete Neighborhood in South Central Elkhart that incorporates, includes, and resonates with all communities in the neighborhood.
- Provide input to be published in a comprehensive report on the resident's vision of a complete neighborhood.

Over the course of the three events, attendance by residents, representatives of local organizations, and other stakeholders was encouraged. Throughout the process, the Community Engagement Team maintained a commitment to center the voices of South-Central residents in order to produce a vision that truly resonates with those from the neighborhood. For those unable to attend the Visioning event, online and paper surveys were distributed to collect input on what they enjoy about their neighborhood and what they would like to see changed or added. Information from these surveys and insight gained through one-on-one conversations with residents was alongside the Visioning data to inform the Community Summit conversation topics. Additionally, interpreters attended each event and surveys were translated into Spanish to collect insight from Spanish-speaking residents. 84 post-event surveys were completed, and approximately 30% of those were answered in Spanish.

METHODS

The Community Summit built on the outcomes from the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session held on November 20, 2021. At that event, 37 South Central Elkhart residents and stakeholders met in four small groups and wrote their own individual responses on sticky notes to the question, "If we are successful, what does a complete South Central Elkhart neighborhood look like in 2040?" Members in each group shared their responses and together began to draw their collective vision of a complete neighborhood. This was supported by additional input from 114 residents and stakeholders, who completed surveys and interviews to share a broader view of their visions for a Complete Neighborhood. These responses were added to the event visions and were used to identify the top 7 broad categories that residents believed were core to a Complete Neighborhood vision.

These categories are:

- **Housing**
- **Business & Retail**
- **Employment**
- **Built & Natural Environment**
- **Recreation, Culture, Children & Families**
- **Safety, Legal, Health & Human Services**
- **It's All About the People: Connecting, Uniting, and Creating Together**

The South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team took these categories and developed a World Café process for the Community Summit. 26 residents and 33 community stakeholders participated in the Community Summit, held on January 22nd, 2022. At the summit, participants selected which category they wanted to participate in for each of the 4 rounds of the summit. The 4 rounds were:

1. Identifying existing assets in South Central for the category
2. Developing a 10-year vision for this category
3. Identifying specific priorities that could be accomplished in the next 1-2 years by
   a. Residents themselves
   b. The City and other institutions
   c. Collaborations between residents and the City/institutions working together
4. Round 3 was repeated and residents were encouraged to add their voice to a different category

After the 4 rounds, all of the priorities were hung up at the front of the room, and every resident and stakeholder were given 5 colored dots to vote on their top 5 priorities. Stakeholder's dots were marked so that the engagement team could tell if there was a difference between residents' and stakeholders' priorities. All of the data gathered from the Community Summit is provided in this report, including priorities and the outcome of the voting process.

The South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team would like to acknowledge and thank the summit table facilitators who volunteered their time to support this process and encourage engagement from all participants.

- Jamie Pitts
- Jamison Czarnecki
- Mari Luna
- Terry Mark
- Wendell Wiebe-Powell

DATA

Assets

During the Community Summit, residents and stakeholders identified South Central Elkhart assets in each of the 7 categories. This data is listed first in each category. Other community assets, as defined by residents and other stakeholders, were collected throughout the community engagement process including the Complete Neighborhood Visioning, online and paper surveys, and conversations with the Champions. This data was further supplemented with assets previously identified through an asset-mapping project conducted by Daniela Panetta and Jason Shenk. Assets that were identified outside of the Community Summit are denoted with a *.

Housing

- Local realtors
- Lacasa (i.e., first-time homebuyer presentation, education around credit scores, and financial planning)
- Locally owned rentals
- Homeless housing
- Affordable housing
- Long-term family engagement
- Streets and utilities
- Good housing stock
- Habitat for Humanity builds
- Environmental center
- Parks
- Tolson
- Roosevelt Center*

Business & Retail

- Chamber
- SCORE
- Local financial institutions (i.e., banks, etc.)
- Churches and houses of faith can be incubator for ideas
- Tolson
- Boys & Girls Club
- Faith Mission
- Business courses in Ivy Tech, IU South Bend/Elkhart campus, Tolson, Goshen College
- City & County resources for business development
- People
- Legislators
- Hii Commercial Mortgage Loans*
- Heavy Metal Recycling*
- Jason Industries Inc*
- H&H Trucking Warehouse*
- Dollar General*
- Neal One Shop/AJ Market*
- Sunnyside Food Mart*
- Harold's Chicken Shack*
- Lucky's Donut*
- Compra Mas Supermarket*
- Mike Beauty Supply in Pierre Moran Mall*
- Elkhart Beauty Supply Store*
- Kroger*
- Coco's Restaurante*
- Lawoyne's Taco

Employment

- Robust labor market
- Opportunities for a living wage
- Companies that provide bussing to work

Built & Natural Environment

- Trees (absence of); pretty good tree canopy could be better
- Environmental Center
- Parks and trails
- Curbs and sidewalks
- Bike paths
- Urban farm
- Splash pad/pool
- Pierre Moran track
- Solar panels
- Elkhart River
- Accessibility could be better
- Tolson Park*
- Booker T. Washington Park*
- Third and Park Playground*
- Barnes Park*
- Ullery Park*

- Pierre Moran Park*
- Roosevelt Park and Playground*
- Sterling Park*
- Ox-Bow Park*
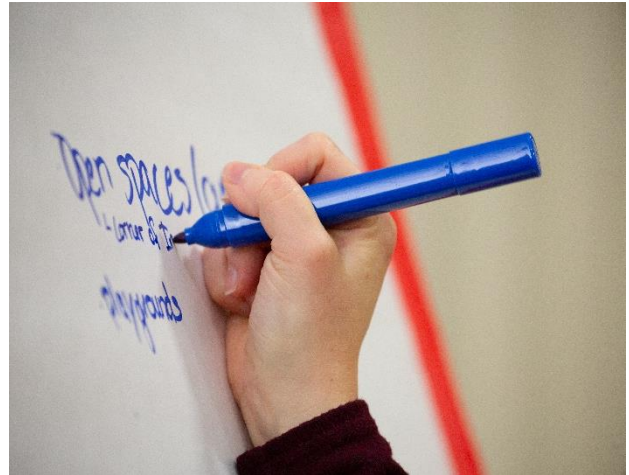
Recreation, Culture, Children & Families

- Open spaces (green spaces, vacant lots), corner of Indiana & Benham; we can build on, which makes it interesting
- Playgrounds (2nd St and Tolson Center)
- Pierre Moran track/campus (sports)
- Pierre Moran Library
- Village Community Center
- Faith Mission
- Elkhart schools
- Housing Authority
- General stores
- Water Tower Place housing
- Maple Heart bike path
- Health Department
- Heart City Health Center
- Minority Health Coalition
- Interurban Trolly
- CAPS for parent education and support
- Belmont Mennonite Church
- Mary Beck School
- Cornerstone Ministries*
- Church Community Services*
- Greater Bethlehem*

- Elkhart Bethany Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church*
- Canaan Baptist Church*
- Church of the Living World*
- Holy Temple Church of God*
- Servants the Streets Ministry*
- Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist*
- Elkhart Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church*
- Unity COGIC*
- First Church of God*
- Church Without Walls*
- Kingdom Seal Ministries Inc.*
- Faith Mission of Elkhart*
- Prairie Street Mennonite Church*
- Agape Missionary Baptist Church*
- Community Missionary Baptist Church*
- St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church*
- Tolson Center—City Lights Volleyball*
- Downtown Elkhart*
- Kelby Love Mural*
- Blaze Day*
- Operation Hope's financial literacy classes (K-12)

Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services

- Neighbors who look out for each other helps safety
- Heart City Health at Pierre Moran
- Parent liaisons in ECS schools connect us with resources
- Village Community Center
- Churches provide & connect resources
- Mothers & grandmothers present with young moms
- Fire stations
- Cohorts where kids stay with teachers at Roosevelt
- Health Department
- Church Community Services—Food Pantry*
- Servants of the Streets Ministry—Food Pantry*
- Indiana Black Expo office*
- Chamber of Commerce*
- Lifeline*
- The Salvation Army*
- English and GED classes*

It's All About the People: Connecting, Uniting, & Creating Together

- Diverse people from various backgrounds and countries
- Good activities to move around and connect
- People committed to relationship building
- Swimming pool in Pierre Moran
- Places people can come and connect
- The library
- Tolson Center
- Aquatics center
- BLM Rally*

These assets served as a foundation for each group to develop a 10-year vision in the 2nd round of the Community Summit.

Vision & Priorities

In the next round, participants were given the opportunity to change categories, and then answered this prompt: Imagine it is 2032 and South Central Elkhart has become the community of your dreams, with everything you need within a 15-minute walk. What is your experience of this area, and how does it contribute to a thriving, complete neighborhood?

Participants in each group started by sharing, listing every component of their vision regardless of any obstacles or barriers. Then at the end of this round, facilitators helped participants identify 1-2 consensus items to serve as a focal point for the group's priorities in the next 2 rounds.

In rounds 3 & 4, participants answered the prompt: Think about the vision from round 2. What are the most important things to accomplish in the next 1-2 years to make this vision a reality?

In these rounds, participants listed their priorities, and categorized the priorities into 3 groups:

- What are things the community can do itself in the next 1-2 years to build towards this vision?
- What are things the city and/or other institutions can do in the next 1-2 years to build towards this vision?
- What are things that the community can do in partnership with the city and/or other institutions in the next 1-2 years to build towards this vision?

After round 4 ended, the newsprint sheets with each group's vision and priorities were hung at the front of the room. Facilitators presented about their group's vision and priorities, highlighting the areas that had a lot of energy during the discussions in each round. Then, each participant was provided with 5 dots to vote on their top 5 priorities. Stakeholder's dots were marked to distinguish between residents' and stakeholders' priorities.

The vision, priorities, and votes are listed for each of the 7 categories below.

Housing

Participants in the Housing group came to a consensus that they want to live in a vibrant neighborhood that has a higher percentage of owner-occupied properties. They also agreed that more education and awareness is needed on the community's housing related needs and concerns as well as more advertising of existing resources.

Additional vision ideas:

- Low-interest loans to improve homes
- Good advertising of existing resources
- Diverse, mixed options, (i.e., larger family homes, affordable 4 bedrooms, luxury)
- Lower barriers
- Senior living that is safe
- Multigenerational
- Housing & amenities

Housing Priorities:

- Broad financial literacy well-advertised for homeownership & more (11)
- Get word out about resources to support diverse housing options (6)
- Financial education/Lacasa increases advertising /City maintenance & repair funds (2)

Suggested priorities that did not receive votes:

- Attend Lacasa education programs
- Residents who have benefitted share the word about resources
- Code enforcement
- Get empty lots to Habitat
- Schools get word out
- Low-interest loan program
- Advertise monthly payment savings (mortgage vs. rent)
- Program for home rehabbing
- Digital ads → social media
- Churches, libraries help & get word out

Business & Retail

The Business & Retail group collectively envision a commitment to the triple bottom line—an economic concept where businesses do not focus solely on profit but on their social and environmental impact as well. They noted that this vision could include educational institutions and a business training incubator that encourages business models like social entrepreneurship which adhere to the principles behind the triple bottom line while providing other trainings that reduce barriers for access.

Additional vision ideas:

- Small business / entrepreneurship training with local cultural sensitivity and for classes dealing with business legal types such as LLC and S. Corp. to also include training on the benefits and methods of developing cooperatives.
- More job opportunities
- Maintaining and growing the business community
- Additional grocery stores (locally owned)
- More grant opportunities/funding startup capital

- More beautification centered around identity (i.e., murals on empty walls
- Branding and actively marketing the identity of each neighborhood and promoting businesses/organizations
- Invest in youth, expand & develop Tolson & surrounding neighborhoods
- Attract different types of businesses to our neighborhoods (not just Dollar General & liquor stores)
- Kroger lot (aka Woodland Crossing) – space more affordable to lease

Business & Retail Priorities:

- Hub w/ incubator and training that is based in South Central and feels comfortable (not intimidating) to local S/C residents; culturally competent & multilingual; sharing expertise between existing businesses; hub organizers build relationships, networks & deep understanding of resources & share/promote, prevent gaps in awareness - need local coffee shops where are gaps in business (15)
- Incubator = training that is triple bottom line culturally competent (equity, social) (3)
- Black owned bank or credit union (3)
- City shares & raises awareness regarding resources e.g., other orgs SCORE, council on aging, better repository for info regarding existing orgs training… (1)
- Information more accessible & available through multiple media sources (1)

Suggested Priorities that did not receive votes:

- Community members SHOW UP!
- Info more available/accessible, e.g., social media → young people
- Connecting to resources that are culturally competent e.g., small business incubators, ed programs, institutions
- Reaching each one's circle(s) of influence/connection
- We are the resource to reach out, each one has a task; resources to reach out through different social media
- Know what we are showing up for, how does it affect & benefit me
- Funding
- Guide - continuously updated imagery that captures imagination/interest

Employment

This group didn't have a lot of participation in rounds 1 & 2, but participants did share about the vision in rounds 3 & 4. All vision ideas are listed below.

- More people of color in management
- Better representations & awareness of black local leaders
- Better technology training

- Living wage jobs
- Robust transit to large employment areas or businesses

Employment Priorities:

- Mentoring for youth by city departments (6)
- Creating access to trade schools & colleges from south central neighborhoods (4)
- Bring Black Girls Code into community (1)
- Business creating summer internships (1)

Priorities that did not receive votes:

- Changing pipeline for schools to ALL kids for internships
- Bring businesses into schools
- Community & City to mentor minority children
- Apprenticeships in areas of future needs
- Decriminalize marijuana * nonviolent low crimes into jobs
- More affirmative action in employment practice overall
- Business incubator in South Central
- Focus on tech

Built & Natural Environment

This group's discussion of visions for the Built & Natural Environment did not reach a consensus about elements to include in a collective vision. All vision ideas are listed below.

- Wilderness area
- More infrastructure for bike paths and bike lanes
- Traffic signals for pedestrians, bikes
- Brownfields redeveloped, positive activity
- Benham West Historical Park (celebrate history and connect to NYCRR)
- Better/safer crossing of RR tracks
- Utilization of alleys
- Tree Board/care for trees
- Green job training
- Improved accessibility for disabled residents

- Snow removal on sidewalks
- Education and awareness of youth & adults regarding healthy native ecosystems
- Developing systems and programs through cities, civic organizations, businesses, etc., that would educate about native plants and provide support for activities that encourage native plants.
- Better stormwater management
- Rain barrel program
- Connectivity between parks and EEC (Elkhart Environmental Center)
- Sustainability education

Built & Natural Environment Priorities:

- Improved/expanded pathways, trails, sidewalks; more trails, better connection/crossings (6)
- Neighborhood aesthetics/cleanliness; plant flowers, pick up trash, more trash containers (5)
- Benham West development/historic park (5)
- Native trees/plants awareness, education, development (provide seeds, plants to residents) (4)
- More Tolson Center development; Green spaces, gathering places (2)
- Park development (Ullery Park) (Dog Park) (Roosevelt Park) (2)
- Beautify alleys; cleanup, add interesting features, better paving lighting (2)
- Preserve Elkhart River natural spaces, river greenway, EEC (Elkhart Environmental Center), Studebaker Park (1)
- Tree preservation/pruning program; help homeowners save trees (1)
- Block parties; collaborate to work on alleys (1)

   Priorities that did not receive votes:

   - Brownfields redeveloped w/ positive activity; DeCamp Blvd, along RR tracks - add native flowers/plants
   - Stormwater management/education; rain barrels, sewer improvements

Recreation, Culture, Children & Families

Participants agreed that their neighborhood vision included good, local schools that parents are happy to send their kids to. More school-level activities, robust leadership and the presence of colleges were elements that completed their collective vision.

   Additional vision ideas:

   - Engaged spaces and programs for kids (i.e., tutoring programs)
   - Partnerships between the community and schools
   - Utilization of Tolson Center as a key piece to community & school partnerships
   - Intergenerational programs/activities (i.e., retired folks read to/tutor elementary students)
   - Mobile library
   - Different types of restaurants and coffee shops (i.e., chicken place, sit down)
   - Focus on art (i.e., art walks, using vacant lots for art/murals, decorating sidewalks/walls)
   - Community gardens where there are vacant lots (i.e., Indiana & 6th)
   - Gathering places (i.e., lounge, after school activities, family nights)

Recreation, Culture, Children & Families Priorities:

- School board relationship improvement w/ community. Have conversation around how to help all school workers be in South Central min wage conversation → ordinance (9)
- Forming block clubs - support community & new members & culture → block parties (5)
- Partnership w/ schools to provide support w/ subs (2)
- Community engagement and recruitment, i.e., recruit staff & teachers who already live in the neighborhood (1)

Priorities that did not receive votes:

- Invest in art walks or other ideas that would attract youth
- Using personal assets (place of business as connectors + resources & influence)
- Resource fair for school related support/programs
- Attract & retain/support educators → all school workers (bus drivers, etc.)
- Focus on appreciation of education (city: incentives; communities: bake cookies, notes of encouragement, tutor support-volunteer)
- Service clubs and/or orgs. Adopt a school & advocate for support for schools (jobs, opportunity barriers-understanding them)

Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services

For participants in this group, addressing behavioral and other challenges children and teens face was an important part of their collective vision. They agreed that to achieve this vision teachers will also need support in learning how to effectively address "problem" behaviors demonstrated by students and how to assist students facing certain challenges. This includes considering the language teachers use when working with these children.

Additional vision ideas:

- Support for parents from trusted sources
  - Keeping kids from being "labeled" or caught up in legal system
- Professional mental health advocates of color
- Connections between parents & resources
- Gun owners talk to each other to reduce guns
- Gun safety trainings

Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services Priorities:

- Build up + celebrate & support community leaders instead of focusing on missteps. → Mentorship program for grassroots leaders that mirrors what a good-old-boy network does for the powers-that-be (leads, tips, practices, connections) (11)
- Mend/build relationship between PD & black community, expand Adrian Riley community liaison (7)
- Make it free for a family member to talk to someone in prison (4)
- Org that calls together parents to make a plan & act around mental health - where ppl already go (Aquatic Center, churches, ECS, Health dept?) (4)
- Every school has at least one social worker (2)
- Research where a community brought guns under control, how did it work? Elkhart PD & resident committee → researchers? ND? (2)

Priorities that did not receive votes:

- Back-2-school night includes more than schools: programs, health, parks, etc.
- Build unity
- Partner between orgs like Oaklawn & ppl with credible life experience & testimony

It's All About the People: Connecting, Uniting, & Creating Together

In this group, participants agreed that the community as a whole must decide how to define South Central. They envision a community that thrives on a welcoming culture where residents feel connected. This includes more active neighborhood associations, activities people can do together and places where people can share their culture through food, picnics, music, sports, etc. Lastly, the group agreed that it is important that residents be informed about and connected to the various resources, institutions, and organizations in their area.

Additional vision ideas:

- More affordable housing targeting diverse communities
- Improving business connections
- Better relationships between landlords and tenants

- Connecting neighborhood watch clubs (online and in person)
- Connecting to various groups of people (various cultures/ethnicities and age groups)

"It's All About the People" Priorities:

- Information boards that provide info on transportation, services, resources, etc. - booklets mailed to residents yearly, resource guild, communication (12)
- Driver's licenses for all in 2022 (4)
- Liaison - person of contact w/ mayor who helps with community event planning (3)
- More social workers on the police force - cultural competency (3)
- Beautification of the area (3)
- Multicultural multigenerational multi-social-class activities and promotion (tech + language access) (3)
- Creating a welcoming & safe community (welcome center/hub) in the south side (3)
- Better broadcasting and communication of community events, services, resources, etc. (2)
- Volunteer opportunities - community members giving back to Elkhart (1)
- Networking - informing ourselves/others about community events (1)

Priorities that did not receive votes:

- Housing, education - vibrant community (shared vision)
- Invest in translators for services - applying to housing
- More support from churches in their own communities and the people they serve - church sponsored community events regardless of denomination
- Showing up/ownership
- Rediscovering ourselves and our communities
- Mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, health awareness - addressing generational trauma
- More active neighborhood associations
- Economic development
- Mindfulness of literacy among different diverse groups, meeting people at where they are at

Ranked Priorities by Who Will Act

The following section takes all of the priorities from the previous section and organizes them by who will be the actor: residents themselves, the City and/or other institutions, or residents together with the City and/or other institutions. ***There is no new information here; it is just reorganized to support ease of implementation.***

Each area is listed in order, with those receiving the most votes first. Any priority that did not receive a vote is not included in this section.

Note: R is for Residents and S is for Non-resident Stakeholders, who also voted.

Priorities that Residents Can Do Themselves

Priorities	Total Votes	R/S Votes	Category
Build up + celebrate & support community leaders instead of focusing on missteps → Mentorship program for grassroots leaders that mirrors what a good-old-boy network does for the powers-that-be (leads, tips, practices, connections)	11	(8-3)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Neighborhood aesthetics/cleanliness; plant flowers, pick up trash, more trash containers[1]	5	(4-1)	Built & Natural Environment
Forming block clubs - support community & new members & culture → block parties	5	(3-2)	Recreation, Culture, Children, & Families
Beautify alleys; cleanup, add interesting features, better paving lighting	2	(2-0)	Built & Natural Environment
Bring Black Girls Code into community	1	(1-0)	Employment
Business creating summer internships	1	(1-0)	Employment
Block parties; collaborate to work on alleys	1	(0-1)	Built & Natural Environment
Networking - informing ourselves/others about community events	1	(0-1)	It's all about the people

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[1] Some sub-points like more trash containers may need support from the City or other institutions

Priorities to be addressed by City/Institutions

Priorities	Total Votes	R/S Votes	Category
Hub w/ incubator and training that is based in South Central and feels comfortable (not intimidating) to local S/C residents; culturally competent & multilingual; sharing expertise between existing businesses; hub organizers build relationships, networks & deep understanding of resources & share/promote, prevent gaps in awareness - need local coffee shops where are gaps in business	15	(12-3)	Business & Retail
Information boards that provide info on transportation, services, resources, etc. - booklets mailed to residents yearly, resource guild, communication	12	(9-3)	It's all about the people
School board relationship improvement w/ community. Have conversation around how to help all school workers be in South Central min wage conversation -> ordinance	9	(8-1)	Recreation, Culture, Children, & Families
Make it free for a family member to talk to someone in prison	4	(4-0)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Organization that calls together parents to make a plan & act around mental health - where ppl already go (aquatic center, churches, ECS, Health dept?)	4	(3-1)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Creating access to trade schools & colleges from south central neighborhoods	4	(2-2)	Employment
Liaison - person of contact w/ mayor who helps with community event planning	3	(3-0)	It's all about the people
More social workers on the police force - cultural competency	3	(3-0)	It's all about the people
Beautification of the area	3	(2-1)	It's all about the people
More Tolson Center development; Green spaces, gathering places	2	(2-0)	Built & Natural Environment

|			
Partnership w/ schools to provide support w/ subs	2	(2-0)	Recreation, Culture, Children, & Families
Every school has at least one social worker	2	(2-0)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Better broadcasting and communication of community events, services, resources, etc.	2	(2-0)	It's all about the people
Park development (Ullery Park) (Dogpark) (Roosevelt Park)	2	(1-1)	Built & Natural Environment
Financial ed/Lacasa increases advertising /city maintenance & repair funds	2	(1-1)	Housing
Preserve Elkhart River natural spaces, river greenway, EEC (Elkhart Environmental Center), Studebaker Park	1	(1-0)	Built & Natural Environment
Tree preservation/pruning program; help homeowners save trees	1	(1-0)	Built & Natural Environment
City shares & raises awareness regarding resources e.g., other orgs SCORE, council on aging, better repository for info regarding existing orgs training...	1	(0-1)	Business & Retail

Priorities to be addressed together

Priorities	Total Votes	R/S Votes	Category
Broad financial literacy well-advertised for homeownership & more	11	(8-3)	Housing
Mend & build relationship between Elkhart PD & black community, expand Adrian Riley community liaison	7	(3-4)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Get word out about resources to support diverse housing options	6	(5-1)	Housing
Improved/expanded pathways, trails, sidewalks; more trails, better connection/crossings	6	(4-2)	Built & Natural Environment
Mentoring for youth by city departments	6	(3-3)	Employment

Benham West development/historic park	5	(5-0)	Built & Natural Environment
Native trees/plants awareness, education, development (provide seeds, plants to residents)	4	(4-0)	Built & Natural Environment
Driver's licenses for all in 2022	4	(4-0)	It's all about the people
Incubator = training that is triple bottom line culturally competent (equity, social)	3	(3-0)	Business & Retail
Black owned bank or credit union	3	(3-0)	Business & Retail
Multicultural multigenerational multi-social-class activities and promotion (tech + language access)	3	(2-1)	It's all about the people
Creating a welcoming & safe community (welcome center/hub) in the south side	3	(2-1)	It's all about the people
Research where a community brought guns under control, how did it work? Elkhart PD & resident committee → researchers? ND?	2	(2-0)	Safety, Legal, Health, & Human Services
Community engagement - recruitment, i.e., recruit staff & teachers who already live in the neighborhood	1	(1-0)	Recreation, Culture, Children, & Families
Information more accessible & available through multiple media sources	1	(0-1)	Business & Retail
Volunteer opportunities - community members giving back to Elkhart	1	(0-1)	It's all about the people

NEXT STEPS

This report has been shared with participants in the engagement process and submitted to the City of Elkhart and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County who sponsored this community engagement initiative. Both entities have agreed to share this report broadly and make it available to all community residents and stakeholders who wish to read it. Initial report findings were presented at an open meeting held at the Tolson Center and online on February 15, 2022.
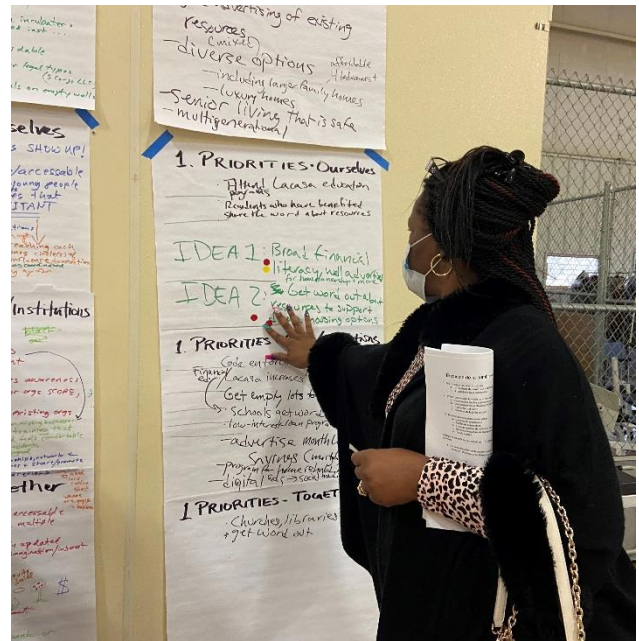
RECOMMENDATIONS

This report lists a series of community priorities that residents and stakeholders have identified that they believe will create a complete neighborhood and benefit their community. Some of these priorities have been identified as things that the City and/or other institutions can do on their own. The South Central Elkhart Community Engagement team recommends that the City and other institutions integrate these priorities into their current activity and future plans. Some priorities can be worked on right away, while others will require planning and securing resources over time. These priorities could help shape the future of South Central Elkhart for years to come.

Other priorities were identified as things that residents can do for themselves. There is currently no formal mechanism for organizing residents across South Central to act upon these priorities. However, there are existing networks of residents who are active in the community. Residents are encouraged to consider how they might work to enact priorities identified in this report. Acting on these community priorities might be a way to engage more residents. In addition, organizing residents to work on some of these priorities could be a role for the new Community Development Corporation. Ultimately, this is an opportunity for development of a resident-led organizing effort that brings together diverse residents and networks of the community for a unified South Central Elkhart.

Lastly, a series of priorities were identified that require residents and the City/institutions to work together. These priorities will require that the City and/or relevant institution(s) engage with residents by cultivating existing and new partnerships in an authentic way. In order to gain traction and sustain these partnerships, everyday residents need to have active roles in shaping this work. Sharing power and decision-making are essential. The better organized residents are (see previous paragraph), the more effective these partnerships will become.

To facilitate this engagement, the South Central Elkhart Community Engagement team recommends the following best practices for authentic resident engagement.

Best Practices for Authentic Resident Engagement

Spectrum of Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) describes a spectrum of public participation from least to most impact that residents can have on public decision-making. It is important for public officials and institutions to be clear what their expectations are for public participation on specific decisions. Naturally, with increased levels of engagement, the public has greater buy-in and support for the resulting decisions.

	INFORM	**CONSULT**	**INVOLVE**	**COLLABORATE**	**EMPOWER**
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

Four Factors that Define Participation and Strategy

Xavier de Souza Briggs, now at the Ford Foundation, wrote two important tool kits that can help guide public officials and communities around engagement and collective action. In *Planning Together: How (and How Not) to Engage Stakeholders in Charting a Course* (2003),[2] Briggs describes four factors that define participation and strategy.

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[2] Available at http://web.mit.edu/cpsproject/images/planning.pdf

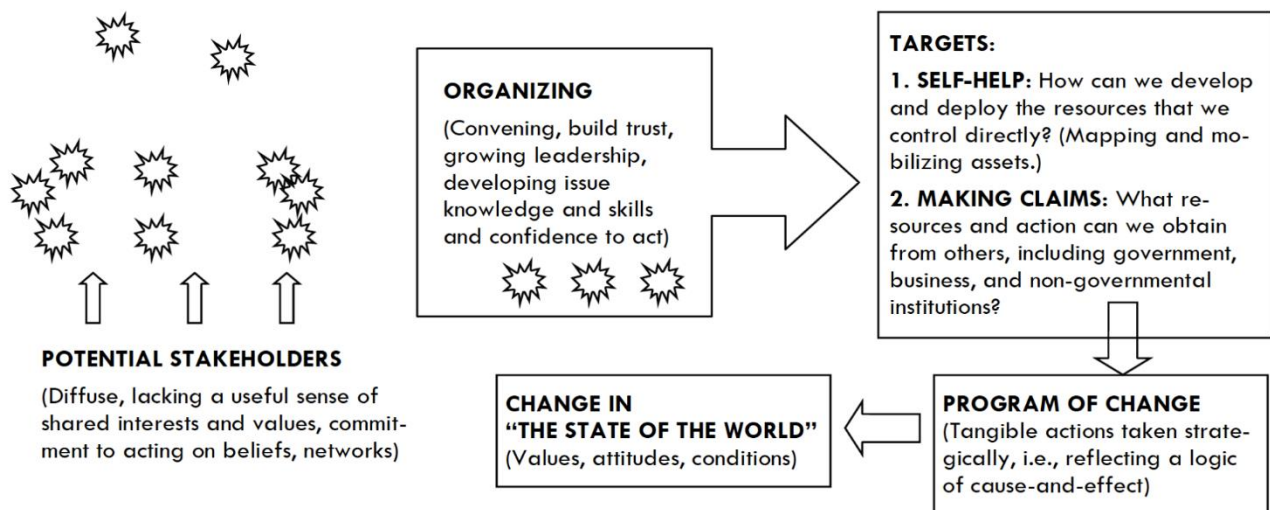Figure 2. Four Factors that Define Participation Strategy and Practice

WHY	**Purposes, given context and timing:** Collectively set a broad vision or issue "agenda" for public action? Develop a strategy around a given, pre-defined issue? Or "participatory design"—design a specific project or program to implement a given strategy?
WHO	**Players and their roles, given purposes:** Who sponsors, who meets, who facilitates, who generates and assesses ideas, who decides? Whose input is advisory and whose binding?
WHAT	**Issue and authority scope, given purposes and players:** What issues are or are not up for decision?
HOW	**Tactics, given purposes, players, and scope:** Organizing the stakeholders and issue agenda, assessing conditions in the world, convening, presenting and getting feedback, deliberating, deciding.

The toolkit goes on to provide practical advice on how to design and manage planning efforts with authentic engagement.

Stages and Targets of Organizing

For communities wanting to act, Briggs wrote a very helpful toolkit, *Organizing Stakeholders, Building Movement, Setting the Agenda* (2003).[3] In it, he states, "Organizing develops and defines collective goals, turning what may be informal and varied private concerns into focused public issues on which people and institutions can act together." The basic model of organizing he outlines is the following:

Figure 1. Stages and Targets of Organizing (Basic model)

ORGANIZING
(Convening, build trust, growing leadership, developing issue knowledge and skills and confidence to act)

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS
(Diffuse, lacking a useful sense of shared interests and values, commitment to acting on beliefs, networks)

TARGETS:
1. SELF-HELP: How can we develop and deploy the resources that we control directly? (Mapping and mobilizing assets.)
2. MAKING CLAIMS: What resources and action can we obtain from others, including government, business, and non-governmental institutions?

PROGRAM OF CHANGE
(Tangible actions taken strategically, i.e., reflecting a logic of cause-and-effect)

CHANGE IN "THE STATE OF THE WORLD"
(Values, attitudes, conditions)

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[3] Available at http://web.mit.edu/cpsproject/strategy_tools/organizing%20stakeholders%202003%20MIT.pdf

Asset Based Community Development

Community organizing requires building trust across diverse stakeholders. Using a community building approach, known as Asset Based Community Development, brings a strength-based approach that fosters trusting relationships. In addition to mapping all types of community assets, this approach sees organizing as "moving repeatedly through a circle of three interacting activities: conversations to discover what people care about, meaningful action upon what people care about, and the connections that grow among people who act together."[4]

A wide variety of South Central Elkhart residents and stakeholders have backgrounds with facilitating and organizing authentic resident engagement. Collaboration with experienced community members can provide valuable guidance for exploring the priorities identified in this report.
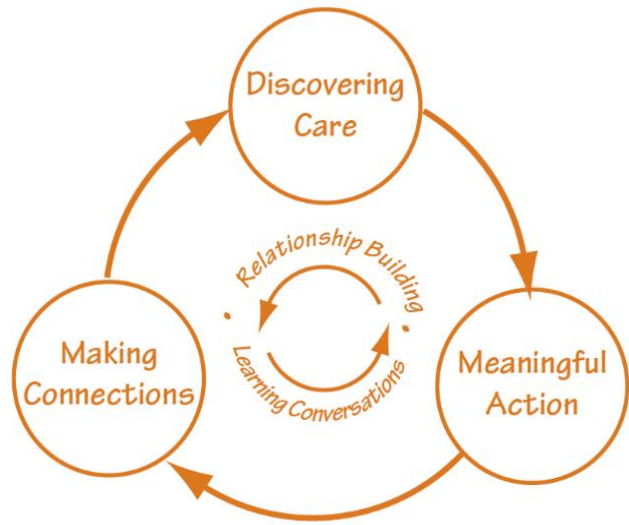
About This Report

This report is authored by the South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team, and it is respectfully submitted to the City of Elkhart and the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, for all South Central Elkhart residents and stakeholders.

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[4] Green, M., Moore, H., & O'Brien, J. (2006). *When people care enough to act.* Toronto: Inclusion Press.

APPENDIX A: VISIONING EVENT DATA

Small Group Shared Visions of a Complete Neighborhood

Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session

During the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session on November 20, 37 South Central Elkhart residents met in four small groups and wrote their own individual responses on sticky notes to the question, "If we are successful, what does a complete South Central Elkhart neighborhood look like in 2040?" Members in each group shared their responses and together began to draw what their collective vision of a complete neighborhood. The following images are the photos of each group's vision with a description that summarizes the collective thinking of the group. The descriptions were written by representatives from each group after the event, in preparation for this report. (Group numbers reflect a commitment to social distancing—there were no Groups 2, 4, or 6).
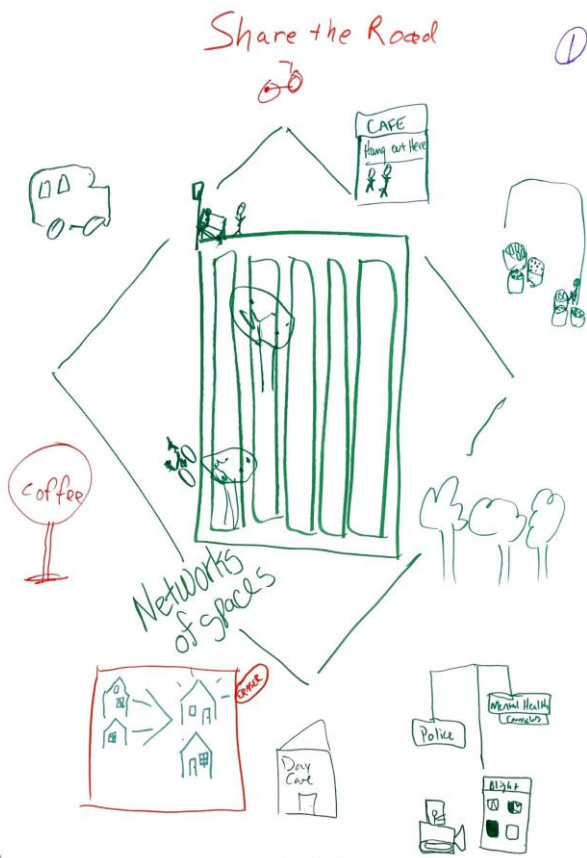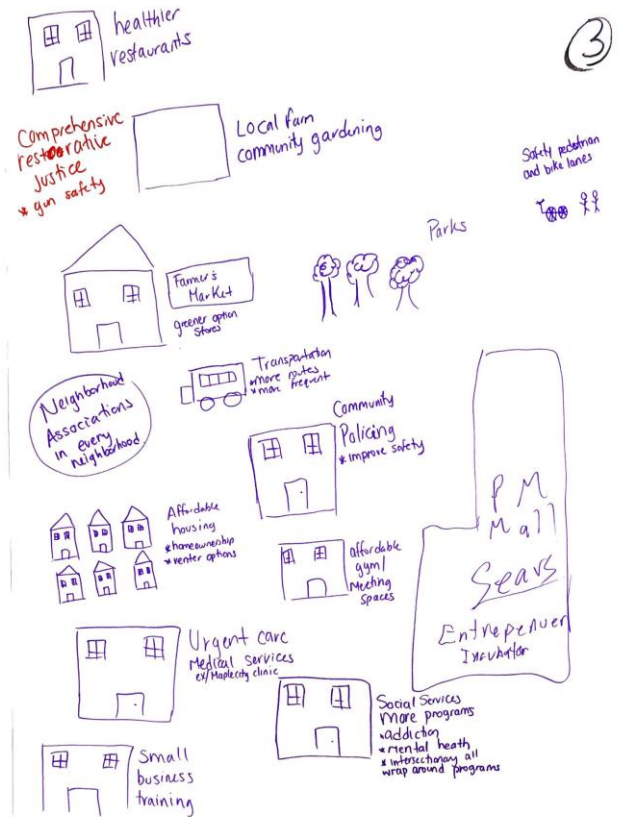

Group 1

Group one's visioning drawing includes green spaces, childcare, law enforcement, coffee shops and cafes, and public transportation. Their vision of green spaces includes community gardens, more wildflowers and trees, and a destination park. Their vision for law enforcement includes better policing and less policing. They also hope for more frequent bus routes, sidewalks, and bike paths. The group had an overarching idea of having a network of spaces. Their drawing emphasizes their desire for people to be able to access the new benefits of a complete community and to have connections across the various new features of South Central.
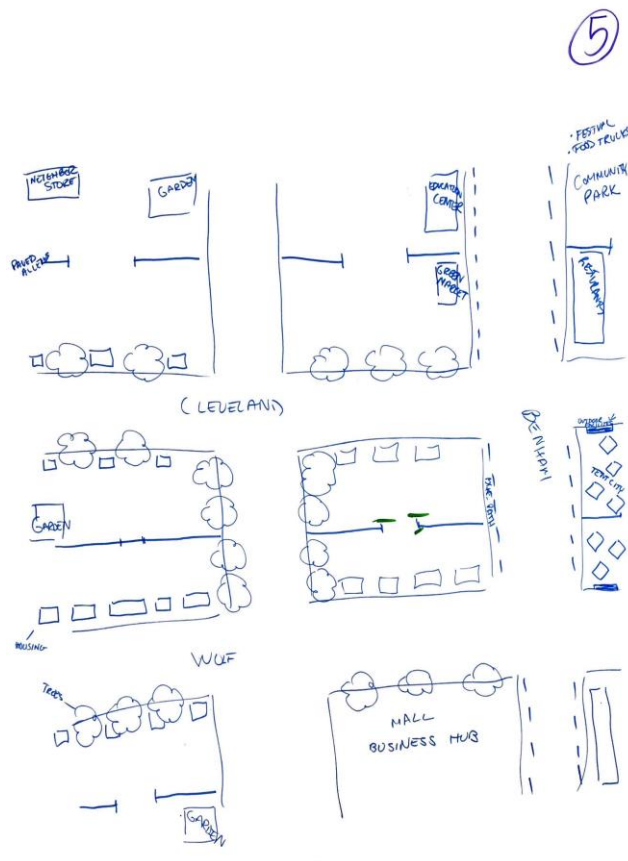
Group 3

Group three's vision for South Central includes healthier restaurants, small business training, entrepreneurial incubator, farmers markets, green spaces that include community gardens and parks. Their vision also includes more transportation routes, bike lanes, and safety for pedestrians, along with affordable gyms, more community spaces and neighborhood associations. Affordable housing, homeownership, and renter options are also within their vision. More medical services like urgent care centers and programs for mental health along with restorative justice programs and a focus on improving relationships between the police and the community are also a part of their vision for a complete neighborhood.

Group 5

After brainstorming individually, group 5 members combined ideas to create their vision of a complete neighborhood as depicted in the drawing above. Their vision includes the addition of greenery and green spaces, including more trees, community and home gardens, and a community park. Along with natural spaces, this group identified the need for bike lanes and clean alley ways. Group 5 also had ideas pertaining to economic development, envisioning restaurants, a neighborhood convenience store, and a green market as essential elements to a complete neighborhood. In their drawing, they included space for a mall and businesses hub where people can find entrepreneurial support to aid in the creation of local businesses. Another service that was identified is an education center. In the realm of housing, this group saw the importance of housing renovations and the creation of new, affordable housing. Their vision also included a designated safe space for those without homes to set up camp and access facilities. Lastly, the group saw opportunities to gather as an important element and identified the community park as a place where food trucks can congregate, and festivals could be held. The importance of acknowledging the neighborhood's history and the displacement of peoples in various ways was also brought up.

Group 7

Group 7 began with the wisdom of elders at the center of the community, surrounded by an accessible range of housing, services, jobs, businesses, and community organizations. Frequent trolley routes connected these spaces – as well to Downtown and beyond. The area around Kroger was envisioned to expand on the ways that it already serves in some of these ways. A welcoming resource center – like what exists on Cassopolis off the Toll Road – but for our neighborhood, serves as a welcoming space that connects people throughout the community. Recreation happens in green spaces and parks throughout, but also a central space that hosts activities (movies, skating, sports, arcade) and becomes a consistent destination.

Data Analysis Methodology

In order to support the City of Elkhart's efforts at implementing a vision for Complete Neighborhoods, the South Central Elkhart Community Engagement Team has solicited and collected responses from residents and stakeholders about their vision of a complete neighborhood for South Central in Fall / Winter 2021. The following data represent all responses collected from 151 residents and stakeholders through the following instruments:

- 6 residents shared priorities at the Cookout held on 10/16
- 9 one-on-one conversations held between 10/12 and 11/29
- 15 Launch Surveys completed on 10/28 and 11/9
- 37 participants at the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Event on 11/20
- 84 post-event surveys completed after the Complete Neighborhood Visioning between 11/19 and 12/20

Prompts

Relevant input from the cookout and one-on-one conversations

- To me, a complete neighborhood consists of …

Prompt from launch survey

- To me, a complete neighborhood consists of …

Prompts from the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session

- What does a complete neighborhood look like in 2040?
- What has changed?
- What has stayed the same?

Prompts from the post-event survey after the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session

- ● What about South Central do you like that keeps you here? Or, what about South Central do you like that you don't want to lose? (ex. diversity of people, home ownership, Tolson Center, local businesses, etc.)
- ● What would make South Central Elkhart the place of your dreams? What is missing from South Central to meet your needs within a short distance from your home? (ex. coffee shop, urgent care, entertainment venue, etc.)

Important Note about this Preliminary Report

Each response is treated the same in this report because all responses were solicited prior to opportunities for group discussion at the events. Therefore, each response indicates a desired component of a complete neighborhood for at least one resident or stakeholder. However, each response should not be given the same weight as participants could share as long or short of a response as they want. Because some participants shared 25-30 ideas, while others shared their top 2-3, these responses cannot be used to determine community priorities and consensus. Nor has there been any process for the community to "vote" on these ideas to date. These items will be covered during the upcoming Community Summit, which will yield a collective vision that includes resident's priorities and resonates with all communities in the neighborhood. This final event is therefore a crucial component of the desired comprehensive report on resident's vision of a complete neighborhood in South Central Elkhart.

Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session Process

During the Complete Neighborhood Visioning Session, participants wrote their own responses to the prompts. These were combined with responses from previous instruments that were randomly prepopulated on flip charts for each group. After spending time in small groups envisioning a complete neighborhood, two small groups then met and shared their visions and began the process of categorizing and organizing their visions and individual responses. The categories in this report build on the organization completed by the participants at the 11/20 event by adding responses from the surveys completed after the event. While most categories that were created on 11/20 remain intact, other categories were created or rearranged to house new ideas and sentiments expressed in the post-event surveys.

Structure of the Data Analysis

This report treats all comments as equal to each other, without distinction regarding where the comment was made. All comments collected in the instruments above are present in this report, and each data point indicates a response from a person. Some responses that expressed the same idea were combined. This is indicated by the parentheses. Some responses contained multiple ideas. Each idea was separated into its own bullet point so that ideas could be easily categorized and combined.

All responses were categorized and subcategorized in order to enhance clarity. Some ideas are expressed in second level bullets. These ideas are equal to the first level bullets and have been placed at the second level to indicate that they are a component of another idea that was shared. Parenthesis for sub bullets and parent bullets represent the number of people who expressed that specific idea or category and have not been combined. For example, two respondents shared the idea "food service," while many more respondents shared ideas like "nice restaurants" and "coffee shop" that are listed as second level bullets.

Each category also contains a topline summary in *italics*. This is meant to quickly capture the most common sentiments expressed in the category as a way of highlighting this information for readers. These summaries DO NOT reflect all or even most responses within the category.

Vision of a Complete Neighborhood

The following statements were shared about participants' vision for a complete neighborhood as a whole.

- A safe, hospitable area where you can mix residential, retail, service and industrial/commercial in such a way that a resident can live a full life within it. A complete neighborhood should resemble a small town contained within and complimenting the larger city.
- Schools, churches, parks, small variety stores & specialty stores, green spaces, cottage-home industries

Housing

Home ownership was an important issue for many participants, including having clear pathways, support, and financing to increase home ownership and assist with home maintenance/renovation. Other participants emphasized affordable housing for all, and the importance of a variety of housing options.

Home Ownership

- Home Ownership (13)
  - Clear communication and financing to provide pathways to homeownership and maintenance assistance (4)
- Better home maintenance (3)
- Renovation of housing/home improvements (3)

Affordable Housing

- Affordable housing for all (4)
  - Including for low income and people experiencing homelessness
- Mixed income, variety of housing (condo, single family, etc.)
- Roosevelt apartments/apartments (2)
- Decent looking condos
- More housing options
- Empty house becoming a home for someone
- Newer apartments that are affordable
- Change building code to allow for tiny houses

General Housing

- Code enforcement for landlords (2)
- Multi-generational housing
- Help to clean streets,
- Homes for ex-offenders
- Mix of rental & owner-occupied housing
- Better housing
- Funding to preserve abandoned houses
- Weatherization

Economic Development

Many participants expressed the importance of increasing the retail options available to residents in the neighborhood, including small businesses, food service options, grocery stores, and farmer's markets. Many also expressed interest in support for entrepreneurs and business startups. Others emphasized the importance of access to more job opportunities.

Retail

- Local Retail Stores (7)
- Small business & shops in the neighborhood (6)
  - Family-owned neighborhood stores "Dollies"
- Food service (2)
  - Nice Restaurants (5)
  - Coffee Shop (5)
    - Affordable coffee shop
  - Soul Food restaurants (3)
  - Restaurant (3)
  - Café (2)
  - More food places to go you different choices
  - Bakery
- Grocery store (4)
  - Farmer's Market (5)
  - Market for local fruit vendors
  - Access to fresh fruits and vegetables
- Local businesses (3)
- Better shopping centers (3)
- Urban Farms (2)
- Mall (2)
- More stores in former Sears building (2)
- Urban stores/business (2)
- Stores/super center closer (Walmart) (2)
- Other retail
  - Hair Cutting
  - Hardware
  - Shops from different countries
  - Pharmacy
- Commercial Businesses
- Local co-op stores and zero-waste stores (bulk ingredients, dispensaries, etc.)
- Get rid of Dollar General & add something cheaper & better people
- Develop strip mall area where Lucky's donuts is
- Variety of stores w/ delivery capabilities w/ efficient deliveries
- Elderly entertainment

Business Hub/Incubator

- Own my own business (2)
- Entrepreneur development/support (2)
- Training, access, resources, networking, referrals
- Micro green business incubators
- A retail, small business, and community services center at several locations (Pierre Morgan/former mall use) (Indiana/Main/Prairie)
- Community kitchen to rent out for small businesses
- More activities with local businesses
- More help with business
- More opportunities for financial growth
- Triple bottom line business training and development,
- Fair loans for black people
- Organization run by residents
- Inova Bank
- Upgrade, improve, and make it easier for business owners to enter spaces like those surrounding Kroger on Hively.

Employment

- Job training (2)
- Local businesses train and hire local youth
- More jobs, More jobs for elderly
- Living wage jobs
- People want to know how they don't need to work 60-70 hours a week
- More minority becoming healthier/wealthier
- Increased union involvement for factory workers
- More variety of jobs
- Community center to help build skills
- Work industry, Elkhart is well recognized of being #1 on job opportunities

Built & Natural Environment

Participants emphasized a need for more bike paths, sidewalks, parks, gardens, and green spaces. Others emphasized the importance of improving the environment, and the need for improved public transportation.

Beautification/Infrastructure

- Bike Paths (9)
  - Safer biking paths (2)
- Better sidewalks / walking paths (8)
- Cross walk signals for bikes (2)
  - Paths connecting green spaces
- More lights (2)
  - Streetlights
- Beautiful alleys
  - Paved alleys (2)
- Clean streets without pollution (2)
- Maintain existing sidewalks, paths, shops, etc. (2)
- Remove/remodel eyesore and vacant buildings & houses (2)
- Fiber for fast internet
- Roads
- Abandoned lots converted to native habitat
- Removal of blight
- Signage
- Cleaner
- Upgrade the streets
- Another bridge
- Tidy yards
- Fill the potholes on 10th and Hively
- Exercise routes

Green Spaces

- Gardens / community gardens, greenways, trees, fruit trees (8)
  - Increasing tree canopy (2)
- Parks (6)
  - Family Park with playground and good nighttime lighting (2)
- Green Space (3)
- Roosevelt School doesn't need all the fenced in area -- could have basketball courts, volleyball nets, tennis court
- Gathering places
- Dog parks
- Have a place to sit down for fresh air

Environmental

- Greener building code (2)
- Removing old trees
- Big Trees
- Change building code so tiny houses
- Green building, etc., are more feasible
- Wildflowers on all (unused) parking strips
- Zero waste stores
- Greener/eco-friendly options
- Fresh produce, easier recycling
- Green manufacturing = the market of the future
- Solar panels,
- Neighborhood group focused on trees (planting new ones)
- Less Trash
- Environmental considerations priorities - clean, safe, non-polluting, native plants & trees

Transportation

- Public transportation (3)
  - Transportation to basic services
  - More buses
    - Buses every 15 minutes
    - More routes and frequency
    - Busses run sooner in the morning and later into the evening
  - Trolley routes to apartment complex, schools, etc. (2)
  - Access to healthcare through public transportation
- Reasonable priced car repair (or no need for cars)
- Gas stations
- More walkable

Community Life & Programming

Participants shared a desire for more options for entertainment, recreation, activities, festivals, and venues. Others emphasized the importance of improving safety in the community. Participants also shared about improvements needed in social services and programming.

Recreation/Culture

- Entertainment (6)
- Tolson Center (5)
  - Community Center
  - Tolson Center to own its own building
  - Basketball Courts
  - Volleyball nets
  - Tennis court
- Activities for kids/teens (6)
- Food trucks (2)
- Outdoor movies (2)
- Neighborhood Events (2)
  - Ethnic Festival (2)
  - Concerts
- Venues
  - Arcades (2)
  - Skating (2)
  - More family spaces (2)
  - Space for family reunions
  - Indoor climbing gym
  - Community kitchens
  - Studios (dance, cheer, etc.)
  - Dance Halls
  - Recording studios
  - Basketball
  - Bowling
- Destination Park,
- Former gun owner anonymous clubs,
- A network of "n-block" or smaller neighborhood centers (these could be churches, other facilities willing to allow this function)
- House gardens
- Green market
- Affordable entertainment screen
- Recreation center for seniors
- Activities for seniors

Safety

- Neighborhood watch teams (3)
- Lower Crime (2)
- Policing
  - Better policing
    - Police respect resident's rights
  - Less police
  - Positive outlook on police
  - More policing
- Restorative justice and conflict management/mediation training from children to adults
- Visitors/helpers for elderly
- Improved public safety community/environment

Legal & Social Services

- Driver's License Access (6)
  - Have driver's license test available in Spanish
- Criminal Legal System
  - Access to more lawyers (2)
  - Ability to appeal a charge, affordably
  - Folks can get a suit to wear if they feel like it even if they have a felony.
  - Better judicial system
  - Better system to help w/ troubled kids
- Homelessness
  - Tent city restroom round house
  - Shelters for people in need
- Access to resources for marginalized groups including ex-felons, & people with DUI's
- More support for the families
- "Community, services and resources that serve the community"
- More community programs
- Reading/storytelling center
- Social Equality
- All services and a thriving cohesive community

Social Interaction

Participants expressed a desire for more community connection, cohesion, trust, and unity. Many participants value the diversity of people and culture in the community.

Networking & Community Building

- Build network of spaces - people
  - Neighborhood associations
  - Neighborhood gathering to get to know one another
  - Neighbors know and trust each other, and celebrate together (block parties)
  - Close connections in neighborhoods active associations in every neighborhood
- Happy engaged people who feel safe and productive while bringing the spirit to their community.
- Invest in the people first otherwise the mindset for the success will not be there.
- Community building up/up bringing, more community involvement (2)
- Paid community organizers
- Making sure people are accountable for actions

Diversity & Equity

- Diversity of people & culture (5)
  - I like living in SC because of the diversity of people
- More unity (4)
  - People coming together
  - Everything is gone, especially the unity

- To have translators and help for Spanish-speakers (3)
- More black owned businesses; or our own community government/control
- Less racism between places of government and the community
- Support for undocumented people

Trust

- Need to meet people where they are
- Rebuilding trust of things being brought back into the inner city that won't be taken away
- Accountability for all people
- Stronger communication

Other

- Wisdom
- Hope needs to be put somewhere else other than facades and streets.
- Feeling of family/community love
- Loud car radio elimination
- Control noise for 4th of July

Children & Families

Participants identified needs to improve schools, and support families with childcare and after school options.

Education

- More Spanish & English classes (2)
- Forest/outdoor public schools
- Resource center to helping Spanish speakers with many issues
- More environmental education
- Cleaner parks and forests and more gardening
- Math and science center
- Better school system
  - Schools that attract, retain, and support good teachers and administrators – providing a great environment for kids
- Activities for kids and adolescents

Child Care

- Childcare facilities – Day care (2)
  - Affordable childcare (2)
  - Quality Odd-hours childcare (3)
- Safe place for kids after school
  - Boys & Girls Club
- In addition to Tolson, more safe gathering places for youth

Healthcare

Participants expressed a desire for more affordable access to healthcare in the community.

Health Care

- Maple city health care center as model
- Health Clinics / facilities (2)
    - More urgent care facilities (4)
    - Accept Medicaid/sliding scale (2)
    - Available evenings & weekends
- More doctors (2)
- Access to healthcare with transportation
- Affordable health and dental care

Mental Health

- Community mental health services in the neighborhood
- Community mental health (not just nonprofits) support for individuals who do this

What Keeps You Here

Many participants are connected to the community because of long-standing ties to family and/or neighbors. Some also feel stuck in the community due to circumstances.

People

- Family keeps me here (13)
- The people (4)
- The mayor (2)
- Many of my neighbors on 1800 Frances have been here for many years. We help each other out. Pierre Moran branch library is a welcoming safe place
- Our church stays here so that we can help be a good neighbor and provide service i.e. weekly meals, food pantry, clothing room, etc. Meeting the needs of our neighbors is most important to us. I personally also live in the neighborhood on the other side of Franklin and only live there because I stayed in the house that my folks lived in for the latter days of their life.

Circumstances & Opportunities

- I'm stuck here (3)
- We lost pretty much everything already (3)
- Don't want to lose what little we do have here

Other

- The Calm
- The area
- Project energy
- Volunteer opportunities

Questions and Concerns

From Online Surveys:

- I personally moved away from the Southside because there is nothing for my kids but trouble
- I moved my children out of the southside for better opportunities, less drama.
- No real solution: "social genocide," Social economic playing fields will never happen on the south side
- They took the main thing when they combined schools
- "Once you in the system... you basically stuck here." -Can't leave-
- Don't go outside nothing but trouble... even by accident.

From paper surveys:

- Will the 2 neighborhood events have a direct impact on how money is spent or how resources are deployed?
- I see a lot of gray hair in the room tonight. Do you have a plan to 20's-40's in the process?
- Housing cost - contractors/banks
- Have you considered ways to prevent current homeowners from experiencing financial burdens (property taxes) they can't afford? Such as freezing property taxes for long-term homeowners until a house is sold?
- Where are places in South Central where new housing is being explored?
- How will housing rehab be addressed?
- What about the other end of the spectrum from Amazon i.e., micro-enterprise development, the backbone of America? And sustainable business/community development; the triple bottom line: equity, economy, environment AKA people, planet, profit

From 1-on-1 conversations:

- Don't box us in or make us feel like we need to stay here. Take it from me, I've been a criminal – we don't like to feel like we're trapped in a place. "To relax, we go to McNaughton Park – not just here."
- If you put a grocery store down by Washington Gardens it'd get torn up cause it's down here.
- People around here don't bike to things.
- People aren't concerned about what's built – if we don't run it. Wal-Mart can come in here – but don't come unless you're going to train somebody to run it.
- Who is on the committee making the decisions for THRIVE? On the south side, we're used to decisions being made by people who don't live here.
- Find something that can get stipends to people. People don't feel like that they're a part of it [THRIVE]. Whether it's good or bad, paying stipends is how you get the people really paying attention (sharing their insights, taking a program or initiative seriously) who you need to be paying attention.

How this data was used

The data in this report was used to identify the 7 broad categories for the Community Summit that was held on January 22nd, 2022. That data has been published in full in the main body of this report.