



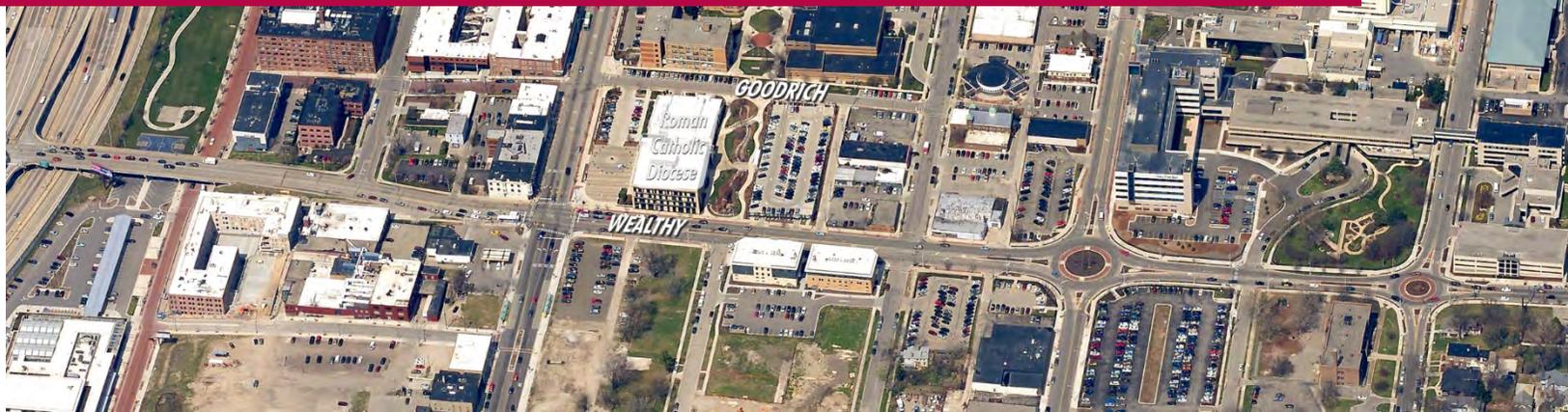
HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY

Final Report

City of Grand Rapids
Design, Development & Community Engagement
Long Range Planning Division

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Planning Department thanks all of the people who live, work and play in Heartside that were a part of this process and made a positive contribution to this body of work; including, but not limited to, the Heartside Neighborhood Association, the Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Project, a host of non-profit agencies, service providers and other neighborhood stakeholders.

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“THE QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY HAS CREATED A SYNERGY WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT I BELIEVE HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED IN A LONG TIME. THERE'S A TRUST THAT'S BEGINNING TO BUILD THAT THE CITY CARES ABOUT THIS AREA AND WILL SEE US THROUGH... GETTING THE SUPPORT WE NEED. FROM A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZING PERSPECTIVE, IT HAS HELPED US FEEL LESS OVERWHELMED WITH THE OUTREACH WE'VE NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH AND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN HELPING US RE-BUILD A SENSE OF MORALE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE.”

- **ALYSHA LACH WHITE**
HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
(PICTURED BELOW)



01

INTRODUCTION TO THE HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY

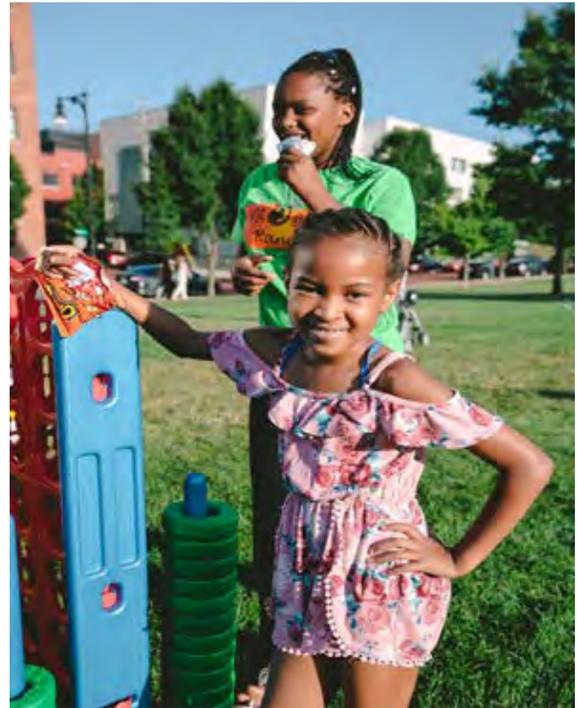
INTRODUCTION

Heartside is a Grand Rapids neighborhood in the heart of Downtown. For many, Heartside is typically not recognized as a destination of choice. The neighborhood has been home to a constant and seemingly ever-growing transient population for decades. It is challenged by criminal activity and untoward behavior. It is also dynamic and vibrant. Heartside is a neighborhood of creatives, renters, developers and social service organizations who all have a unique vision of what this place could be. It is a melting pot of sorts; a neighborhood of dreams deferred and urban renewal coexisting in the same place.

If one looks at the neighborhood through an equity lens, historically the people of Heartside have been bypassed and overlooked; they have not been given the opportunity to “be the change” they wish to see in their own community. Heartside has persisted in the center of the city, despite seldom being provided a platform to build up neighbor voice through authentic, inclusionary involvement in a planning process... until now.

In July 2016, frustrated business owners and residents reached out to the City and organizational partners about lacking infrastructure, public defecation, an increased need for police presence, and a high concentration of crime. The concerns of residents and business owners sparked a request to “jumpstart the process to procure more consistent and equitable resources to better unify the neighborhood, furthering the city’s effort to promote downtown as pedestrian friendly and sustainable.” (See Appendix 2 Business owner and resident letter to the City Commission.)

The Study covers 14 contiguous blocks, spanning from Jefferson Street to Ionia Street and Fulton Street to Wealthy Street. This area was chosen, in part, because it mirrors the focus of a Heartside Resident Satisfaction Survey conducted by Dwelling Place during the Fall of 2016 (Appendix 3). This does not necessarily reflect the entirety of Heartside, but rather the core area of focus.



Heartside population: Often overlooked in Heartside is the presence of families, daycares, and schools that are in the neighborhood.

The City Manager at the time, Greg Sundstrom asked “What would it take for all people in Heartside to not just survive but to thrive?” In response to that charge, the Planning Department initiated a year-long collaborative process in September 2017 called the Heartside Quality of Life Study. Downtown Grand Rapids Incorporated and Dwelling Place also took lead roles in this collaborative effort. This Final Report chronicles a plan “for the neighborhood, by the neighborhood” to blend environmental, economic and social equity goals to promote vitality and sustainability in one of our city’s most unique and diverse neighborhoods.



#HEARTsideSTRONG



#HEARTsideSTRONG IS AN ATTITUDE THAT THE PEOPLE OF HEARTSIDE CARRY WITH THEM. RESILIENCE APPEARS IN MANY COMMUNITIES IN WEST MICHIGAN, BUT FEW NEIGHBORHOODS RESPOND TO COMPLEX COMMUNITY CHALLENGES WITH THE SAME POSITIVITY, STRENGTH, AND TEAMWORK AS HEARTSIDE RESIDENTS.

- BRIAN MOLHOEK
 DWELLING PLACE COMMUNIICATIONS COORDINATOR

Vision Statement

Our neighborhood will be a safe, cooperative place where our diverse interests and lifestyles can coexist with mutual respect.

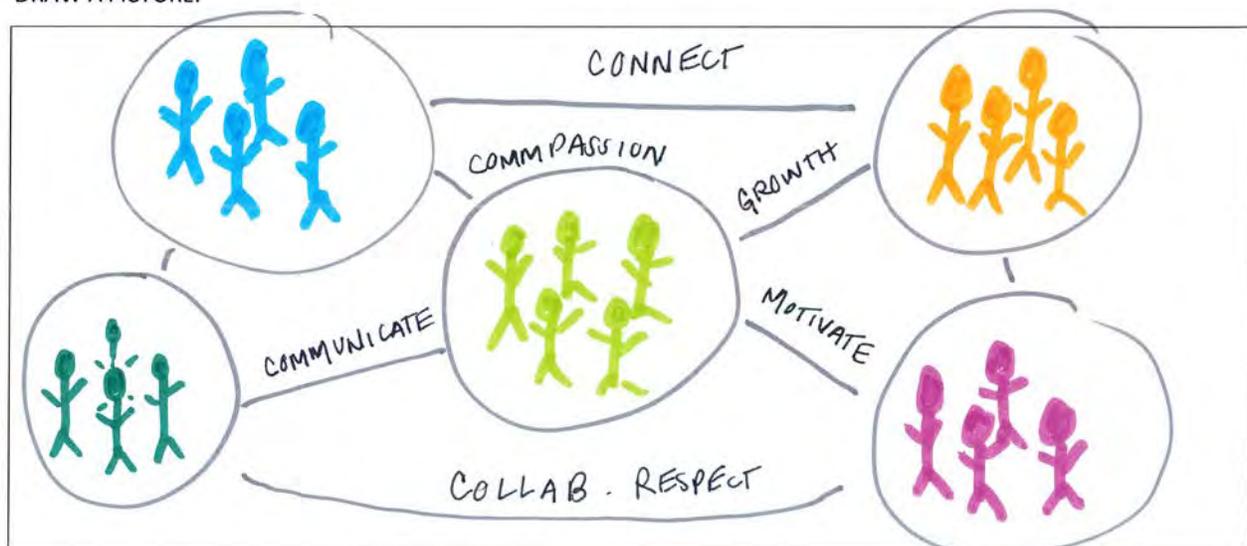
Values

We believe there are shared ideals and resources that are necessary for a daily life of dignity and respect. We are working together to:

- Improve access to housing, fresh food, mental health, substance support, and public restrooms.
- Become a place where there is dignity for those who have a disability, are experiencing homelessness, facing unemployment or struggling with mental illness.
- Build economic and educational opportunities for all people, with an emphasis on supporting women, and people of color, and families.
- Improve our neighborhood so neighbors of all backgrounds can live, work, shop, volunteer, play, worship and proudly welcome guests.
- Improve public and nonprofit services to build equity for all residents.
- Unite in harmony and fellowship.
- Tear down stereotypes.
- Ensure that community engagement is thriving and empathy is evident.

We hope that Heartside neighbors and partners will embrace collaboration to become a welcoming, green, walkable, safe, historic neighborhood where people of all types can live, work and play without judgment based on race, income level, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, ability or education.

DRAW A PICTURE:



Background Information: During the Quality of Life Study Process, neighbors were given a chance to participate in a vision exercise where neighbors could write a statement or draw a picture that depicted their idea of the future state of the neighborhood. They were prompted with the statement: *I envision the Heartside Neighborhood to be a place where...* The vision and values statements are a culmination of their collective responses.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Purpose & Intent

The Quality of Life Study was created to be a multi-layered framework for neighbors, fostering participation and involvement in a way that would not only positively impact experiences based on urban planning and design but that would also produce increased, equitable outcomes for all. Our goals were derived out of the desire to empower the community.

Specific study process objectives were defined at the beginning of the Heartside Quality of Life Study. These were:

- Hear from a wide variety of stakeholders and expand neighborhood voice.
- Develop mutual understanding and create a vision for the future.
- Identify collaborative, community-based solutions.
- Foster community ownership of the process and implementation.
- Improve Quality of Life for ALL who live, work, and play in Heartside.

*"The Quality of Life Study allowed me to have a voice as a resident. Pooling all of our concerns and wishful aspirations for the community in which we live & work was a powerful endeavor!" - **Wilma Banks** (Live Downtown Grand Rapids Resident)*



Who is the “WE” in the Heartside Quality of Life Study?

Who we are:

Heartside neighbors, the Neighborhood Association, Dwelling Place, DGRI, Kendall College of Art and Design, GRPD, UICA, HNCP, City officials and Heartside agency providers, non-profits, and other community stakeholders.

What we are hoping to do:

Be the change we wish to see in our community by implementing a series of Heartside work group final recommendations that were generated directly by neighbors.

Where we are working:

Heartside is a bustling and promising neighborhood in the HEART of Downtown. The Quality of Life Study considered the neighborhood as 14 contiguous blocks from Ionia to Jefferson and Wealthy to Fulton.

Why this work matters:

Building resident voice and improving the downtown dweller experience is vital to our city’s success. Often, Heartside does not receive the attention, support and development it needs to flourish as a neighborhood. The Quality of Life Study is important because how a city is designed and developed directly impacts the way people live, learn, work and play. The study brought people from different walks of life together to advance a mutual interest. The Study’s recommendations will create a more vibrant, safe, clean and welcoming neighborhood for all.





Intended Users

This Final Report is intended for a broad audience of all people interested in the well-being of the people of Heartside and who have a stake in the critical decisions that affect quality of life for those in the neighborhood.

The Heartside Quality of Life Study Final Report is expected to be of interest to residents, neighbors experiencing homelessness, developers, agency providers, non-profits, elected leadership, city staff, funders, stakeholders and community members.

The Heartside Quality of Life Study lists recommendations and measures of success that are a topic of broad interest and detailed in this Final Report. These measures were created by the Heartside work groups specifically intended to aid City staff, policy-makers and other stakeholders as decisions are being made. Assessing progress toward preferred outcomes is important, and should be a continual focus to measure success, ensure accountability and ensure program sustainability.



Quality of Life Study Timeline

The Heartside Quality of Life study was a multi-layered approach to understanding how all people experience quality of life in the neighborhood. The goal was to engage all who live, work or play there through listening, visioning, prioritizing, implementing work groups and, ultimately, seeking and providing resources and support for the neighborhood.

The City of Grand Rapids sought to empower people to not only become a part of the planning process but to actively emulate the change they wish to see in Heartside. Staff was also interested in learning about people-based solutions not only to accommodate the people of Heartside, but to become accountable to them as well. It was important to design a process that enabled residents to provide meaningful input, and for that input to be recognized. So the City of Grand Rapids listened first, then repeated back to the community what we thought we heard for affirmation. When the implementation phase began for the work groups, neighbors were ripe to be involved and felt that they were a part of something. At the conclusion of the work group phase, the value of their participation was demonstrated by celebrating the work they had accomplished.

Achieving Meaningful Outcomes

Through this process it became clear there is a divide between how Heartside residents experience their neighborhood and assumptions about the neighborhood among non-residents. This study is a call for the city and community stakeholders to take the neighborhoods vision and focus on implementation. This work has been complex, involving and affecting many stakeholders with diverse disciplines to create a shared vision of Heartside. However, by being open to listening, authentically exchanging information, supporting the facilitation and formulation of work groups in the neighborhood and the contribution of many collaborative partners a traditionally excluded neighborhood has been effectively engaged and resident voice has risen.

It is our hope that this study serves as the foundation upon which others can build upon the unprecedented neighborhood momentum. Residents have put a substantial amount of energy and effort into creating innovative and viable solutions to better the quality of life in Heartside for themselves and others. With funding, resources, and new and continued partnerships, the project can transition from planning to implementation. We hope you'll join us on this journey as we work together to improve the standard of health, comfort and happiness experienced by Heartside neighbors.

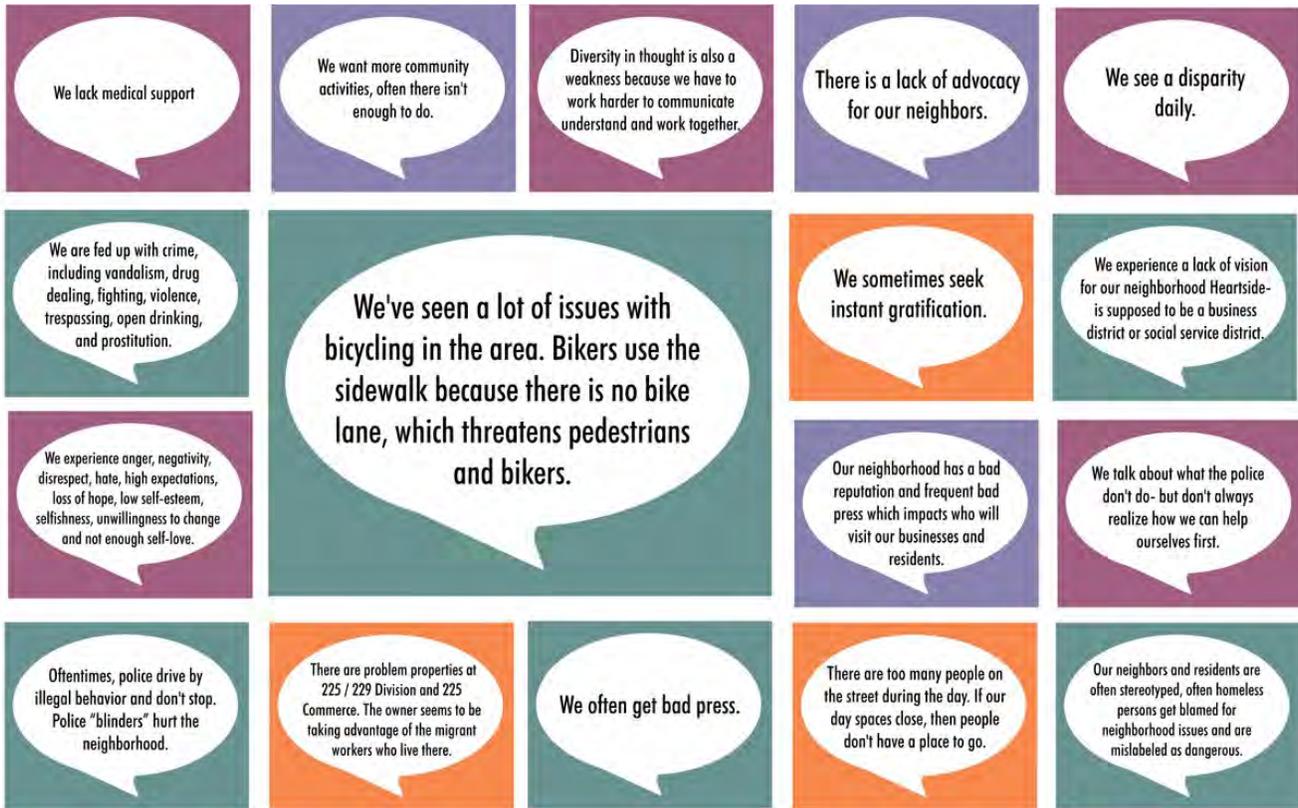
Phase 1: Listening to Hear

In order to create a study that truly reflected the voice of the community, the planning team knew it was critical to take the time to listen directly to residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. The process was also intentionally designed to be inclusive and accessible to all members of the Heartside community. Each meeting agenda called on neighbors to identify Strength, Weaknesses, and Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) and provided time for an open discussion. Listening sessions kicked-off in September of 2017. From meeting with neighbors at Degage Ministries and Mel Trotter, to the executive directors of the Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Project (HNCP), the 14 listening sessions generated an in-depth view of the neighborhood.

| Listening Session Info | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---|------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| DATE | TIME | LOCATION | RESIDENTS | NON-RESIDENT | WORKS IN HEARTSIDE | TOTAL ATTENDEES |
| September 5th | 6-8pm | LaGrave CRC | 3 | 1 | | 4 |
| September 7th | 11:30-1:30 | Gallery Space – 106 Division Ave. | 1 | 9 | | 10 |
| September 12th | 6-8:00pm | Heart of the City Health Center Grand River Room (2nd Floor) | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| September 13th | 11:30am - 1:30pm | Herkimer Community Space Lower Level | 11 | 3 | 2 | 14 |
| September 14th | 11:30am – 1:30pm | Gallery Space – 106 Division Ave. | 2 | 2 | 4 | 13 |
| September 19th | 6:00pm – 8:00pm | Herkimer Community Space Lower Level | 8 | 7 | 8 | 16 |
| September 20th | 6:00pm – 8:00pm | The Weston Apartments - 50 Weston St. | 26 | 2 | 3 | 29 |
| September 21st | 11:30am – 1:30pm | Gallery Space – 106 Division Ave. | 3 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| September 22nd | | Degage | 17 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| September 25th | 1-2:30 pm | Mel Trotter | 21 | | | 21 |
| November 8th | 6-8pm | Live Downtown Grand Rapids Community Listening Sessions 209 Division Park Avenue | 5 | | 4 | 9 |
| November 15th | 8:30-10am | Heartside Business Association | 1 | 10 | 11 | 13 |
| November 30th | 6-8pm | Young Professionals - Luna | 3 | 13 | 15 | 17 |
| TOTALS | | | 104 | 51 | 55 | 197 |

Not shown on schedule: Private meeting with Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Partnership in January, 2018

We were able to listen to, and document, over 200 voices in the neighborhood. Safe spaces were intentionally created for people in the neighborhood to share their stories. Sixty-six pages of notes were compiled, and through analysis themes began to emerge. There were many topics that were repeatedly heard from neighbors, like the need for a Public Restroom along the South Division corridor. People said that they experience food scarcity and they don't feel safe. Phrases were even heard like "there is a lack of advocacy for our neighbors" and "we see a disparity daily".



(See Appendix 4 for additional engagement and interaction materials from the Quality of Life Listening Sessions)

Through listening, the complex nature of Heartside began to emerge. For example, on one side people said that Lucky's Liquor store is a detriment to the neighborhood. Participants noted that liquor sales adversely affect the Heartside community, particularly people that are struggling with addiction. Residents and small business owners spoke about having to repeatedly step over drunkards in their doorways to move about the neighborhood. On the other hand, residents also reported shopping at Lucky's for immediate needs and wished the corner store would expand its offerings.

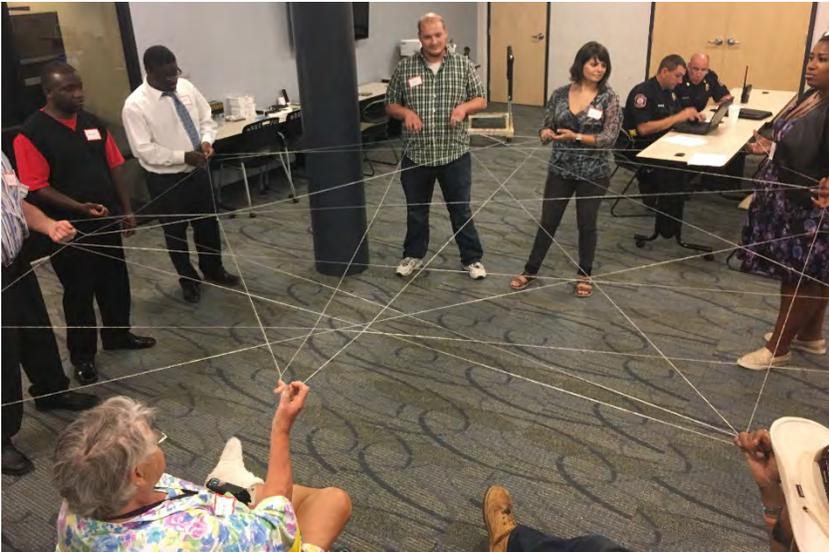


Pictured Left: William Cunningham was a Dwelling Place resident, Peer-to-Peer Support Specialist and valued participant in the Heartside QOL Process. Mr. William passed away on August 10th, 2018. He will be deeply missed.



From the language and tone of discussion, it became apparent that many of the people in Heartside who have been pushing for change were suffering from battle fatigue and had seemingly grown weary of trying to hope for a different result. However, by starting with the listening sessions, everyday people, even in the midst of their troubled realities, began providing positive solutions and invaluable feedback. A tentative hope reemerged.

Intentional active listening was the first building block required for authentic community engagement. Equally important to the data and feedback gathered was the development of relationships with the community based on honesty and trust.



Pictured Left: This icebreaker game is often called “spider web” because at the end of the icebreaker, a large web of interconnected string or yarn will be created. You can use this icebreaker to discuss interdependence on one another, uplifting others, and teamwork.

Read more:

<http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/icebreakers/connected/#ixzz5VdcE7bey>



Pictured Here: As part of the QOL Study efforts the City of Grand Rapids also hosted a 2-Day Info Session with the seven common themes cited as opportunities for growth as the focus areas. During these conversations with community experts we discussed these topics in depth to build more understanding around those community challenges.



Phase 2: Knowledge is Power

NEIGHBOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
2 DAY EVENT

JANUARY 30TH FROM 3PM-7PM
OPEN TO DWELLING PLACE RESIDENTS
SNACKS PROVIDED | RAFFLES | CHILD CARE

JANUARY 31ST - SESSIONS FROM:
9:30-11AM | 12-1:30PM | 6-7:30PM
FREE WITH MEAL PROVIDED
THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
REPORT OUT TO THE
COMMUNITY & HEARTSIDE RESIDENTS

CONNECT
TO LOCAL RESOURCES,
REGISTER FOR PRIZES,
HEARTSIDE LISTENING
SESSION FEEDBACK,
ENGAGE WITH YOUR
COMMUNITY

JOIN US AT 106 SOUTH DIVISION
AVE. GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49506

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
HEARTSIDE BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION
RECOVERY ACADEMY
DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS
GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY
COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTER
VOTER REGISTRATION
GRAND RAPIDS POLICE
DEPARTMENT
DEGAGE MINISTRIES
UICA
HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION
YWCA OF WEST MICHIGAN
KENT COUNTY TAX COALITION

DWELLING PLACE:
LEADERSHIP, PERFORMING &
VISUAL ARTS, COMMUNITY
GARDENERS, PEER TO PEER
SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

The second phase of the Quality of Life Study, the Neighbor Knowledge Exchange was a collaborative effort that brought the neighborhood back together after Phase I and provided an opportunity for attendees to hear a report out on what was gleaned from the initial listening sessions. In this space we were able to say “this is what we think we heard, did we get it right?” Affirmation is important to authentically build resident voice and obtain community buy-in. Additionally, shared knowledge in a community from grass roots to grass tops translates into greater understanding and empathy. The event was paired with a resource fair for Dwelling Place residents, which took place on Day 1. This provided joint outreach to participants, while addressing the needs raised in the listening sessions, and furthered knowledge sharing.

The second day was fully dedicated to the Quality of Life Study work and included three

duplicate report-out sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to share the data that was collected from the previous sessions and engage in new activities related to the Quality of Life Study. These activities included asset mapping (where neighbors were asked to share their skills), fact-gathering on what areas in the neighborhood could be improved, and dot voting activities where participants were asked to vote on the themes that resonated the most with them. These activities provided much-needed information and additional feedback that would ultimately shape the final phases of the study. The themes that bubbled to the top would later become the focus areas of the Quality of Life Work Groups. Common themes included fresh food access, employment in Heartside, Lucky’s Liquor Store, Pekich Park, Mental Health Advocacy and activation of vacant spaces.

THE NEIGHBOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (NKE) EVENT DESCRIPTION



Tuesday - January 30th

85
Dwelling Place
Residents
•
13 Apartment
Communities

17
Organizations
•
25 Volunteers
•
16 Additional
neighbors

Wednesday - January 31th

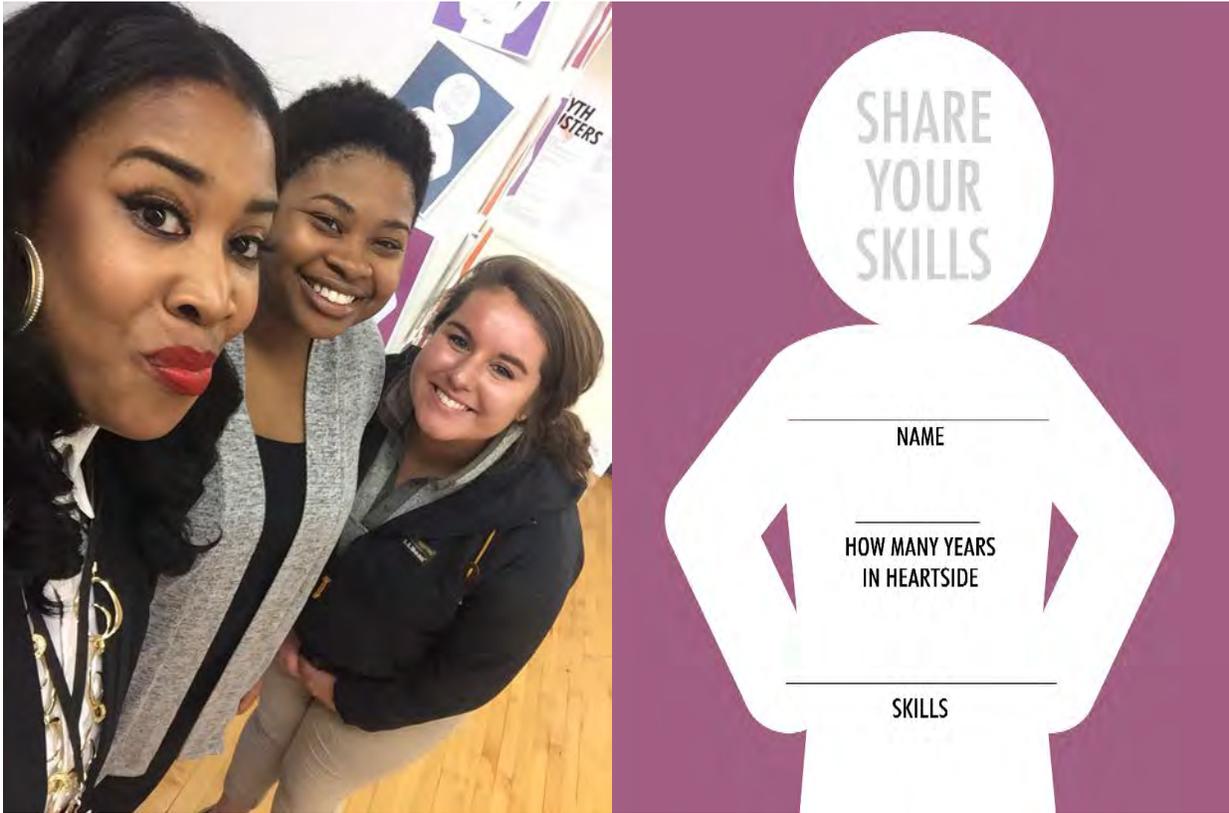
111
Attendees
•
45 Residents
46 Non residents
•
52 Work in Heartside

Overall Totals

189
Individual Attendees
•
Of those 118 were residents,
many residents attended
multiple sessions over the two
days but were asked to vote
only once.

On January 30th Dwelling Place hosted a free open house-style event attended by 85 Dwelling Place residents along with 16 Heartside Residents, Mel Trotter and Degage clients who connected directly to resources in West Michigan while learning directly from peers about getting involved in the community. Thirteen organizations including the City Planning Department participated and shared resources. These included: Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., Heartside Neighborhood Association, The City of Grand Rapids, Downtown Ambassadors, Recovery Academy, Grand Rapids Public Library, The Rapidian and Grand Rapids Community Media Center, Grand Rapids Red Project, Dégagé Ministries, The Rapid, Kent County Tax Coalition, Heartside Ministries, Disability Advocates, 70x7 Ministries, and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts.

The following day, the Planning Department utilized the same location to engage all Heartside residents and community stakeholders in a full day of programming including a report back to the community from the information gathered during the Heartside Listening Session series. Sessions were both an opportunity for reporting out to the community and obtaining additional feedback from new participants engaging with the City for the first time. Incentives for participation, including childcare and meals, were provided both days.



“A LOT OF RESIDENTS SHOWED UP AND WERE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT OUR SERVICES. THE STAFF WERE ALSO VERY FRIENDLY AND ENGAGING WITH BOTH COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND RESIDENTS.”

- **NKE PARTICIPANT**

“IT WAS A CHANCE FOR US AS AN ORGANIZATION TO TALK WITH HEARTSIDE RESIDENTS FROM A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CITY AND SHARE WHAT WE DO AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE. MANY RESIDENTS WHO SEEMED TO ATTEND KNEW THE RESOURCES THEY WERE LOOKING FOR AND IT WAS FUN TO HELP DIRECT THEM. I WAS IMPRESSED THAT THEY RECRUITED SO MANY AWESOME ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES FOR RESIDENTS. IT WAS ALSO A GREAT WAY TO MEET OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. BIG RUSH EARLY ON.”

- **NKE PARTICIPANT**



HEARTSIDE

QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY

2018 MINI-REPORT

OPPORTUNITIES

- We need public restroom options.
- We want to know we have a fair housing system, access to more affordable housing and more accessible shelter beds.
- We want access to healthy, affordable food options.
- Our teenagers and youth need something to do.
- We want focused Healthcare help for alcohol/drug addiction.
- Parking is an issue and we want to find solutions for affordable parking for residents and visitors.
- We want to be more active and participate in job trainings and get jobs.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

- 14 QOL Listening Sessions in Heartside – 203 Total Participants
- Neighbor Knowledge Exchange & Report Back to the Community – 2-Day Event w/ Dwelling Place – 189 Attendees
- Formulation of 7 theme-based work groups based on feedback from the neighborhood & Dot Voting activities.

WEAKNESSES

- We don't feel safe.
- We experience food scarcity.
- Public Urination is a Public Health Hazard.
- Parking is much too expensive for residents and it is hard to come by.
- We often get bad press.

THREATS

- We want a neighborhood that is well lit.
- People don't feel safe visiting us.
- We don't have a clear neighborhood identity.
- If affordable Housing units become condos where will we live?
- There is a lot of bad press about our neighborhood.

STRENGTHS

- Our community is creative and values the Arts.
- Resource Rich in Social Service Agency Providers
- Diversity
- Notable Organizations exist in Heartside
- DGRI Downtown Ambassador presence and assistance on the street.
- We look out for each other!
- We offer each other warm greetings on the streets.
- We value community activities and free activities.
- We work, volunteer and are residents in Heartside!
- We value the walkability and accessibility of our beautiful historic neighborhood.

Phase 3: Many Hands Make Light Work

There were a total of seven Heartside Quality of Life Work Groups developed from the themes voted on at the Neighborhood Knowledge Exchange. Work groups addressed the following themes: At Home in Heartside, Engaged and Employed, Areas of Improvement, Public Restrooms, Neighborhood Building & Activation, Fresh Food Access and Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy. During this phase, a separate work group emerged that focused on reducing the number of emergency medical services calls in Heartside.

Going into the work group meetings, the following Key Considerations were identified for each group to help guide their work:

At Home in Heartside – Identify more affordable housing options, address homelessness and shelter care in Heartside.

Engaged and Employed – Find ways to aid and engage neighbors in securing employment, maintain engagement, and find a healthy work-life balance.

Areas of Improvement – Determine how to positively activate people in the parks as partners, and engage Lucky's Liquor Store owners and management in discussions about the impact of their business on the neighborhood.

Public Restrooms – Provide additional restrooms available to the general public and expand public restroom options within Heartside.

Neighborhood Building & Activation – Develop the Heartside Neighborhood Association to become a formal structure that promotes civic engagement, builds human capacity and serves as a conduit for the facilitation of some Quality of Life Study final recommendations.

Fresh Food Access – Address the lack of access to fresh fruits, vegetables and meat at an affordable price.

Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy – Address the quality of life for neighbors that have addictions and are directly impacted by substance abuse while reconciling new alternatives to provide holistic support for peers in recovery. Because Substance Abuse and Mental Health are intertwined, also contemplate ways to educate the community on mental health to reduce the negative stigma associated with mental illness that exists in the neighborhood.

The overall goal of the work groups was to consider the issues, problem solve, contemplate viable solutions and provide 3-5 final recommendations to improve quality of life in the neighborhood.



Pictured Above: Kevin White led a visioning exercise at a Neighborhood Association Meeting.

Additional desired outcomes from the process included the further development of resident voice and leadership, community-based solutions that the neighborhood would recognize as their own, and overall activation of the neighborhood. The work groups were a great way to invite people in so that the City and other stakeholders could walk alongside them as the neighborhood continues to grow and change.

Participants from the listening sessions and Knowledge Exchange events were invited to continue with the process by serving on a work group. There were over 70 people that chose to remain engaged in Quality of Life Study process and make a positive contribution to this body of work. Additional members were also added based on specific areas of knowledge or expressed interest.

The work groups met bi-weekly for 3 months (May – July 2018) at 307 Division Avenue (in Heartside). At the onset of the work group meetings, each group was provided a common road map for how the group could reach their final recommendations. This toolkit provided engagement tools such as Fist to Five Voting, a draft timeline, exercises for each meeting, and a shared framework for the reports to make sure each recommendation also captured key partners, recommended ownership organizations, and measurable outcomes for every recommendation. Each work group also had two co-chairs to facilitate; generally a professional representing an agency interest and a resident representing the neighborhood.

The culminating event for the end of Phase 3 was a work group celebration where the final recommendations of each group were unveiled. In many instances the work overlapped, it was important to make sure that opportunities for all work groups to mutually weigh in on the entirety of the body of work to avoid silos or conflicting recommendations.

This phase not only yielded great recommendations, it also gave Heartside residents the platform to become neighborhood leaders, an opportunity many had not had before. These new leaders have a contagious enthusiasm that will continue to serve Heartside for years to come. When all people who have a vested interest in creating a shared vision and positive change in their neighborhood are engaged, it inevitably leads to a greater sense of teamwork, support and accountability. Undoubtedly, many of the issues these groups have tackled were complex in nature but large tasks become small when divided among many hands. These small groups of dedicated people have been changing their world one meeting at a time, so much so that five of the seven groups have agreed to continue meeting through 2019 to help support implementation.



Pictured Above: The Public Restrooms work group, memories from the Engaged & Employed Lunch and Learn and members of the Dwelling Place staff photographed hard at work in the neighborhood.



Key Takeaways at a Glance

Fresh Food Access – Address the lack of access to fresh fruits, vegetables and meats at an affordable price

At Home in Heartside – Identify more affordable housing options, address homelessness and shelter care in Heartside

Public Restrooms – Provide additional restrooms available to the general public and expand public restroom options within Heartside

Areas of Improvement – Determine how to positively activate people in the parks as partners, and engage Lucky's Liquor Store owners and management in discussions about the impact of their business on the neighborhood

Engaged and Employed – Find ways to aid and engage neighbors in securing employment, maintain engagement, and find a healthy work-life balance

Neighborhood Building & Activation – Develop the Heartside Neighborhood Association to become a formal structure that promotes civic engagement, builds human capacity and serves as a conduit for the facilitation of some QOL final recommendations

Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy – Address the quality of life for neighbors that have addictions and are directly impacted by substance abuse while reconciling new alternatives to provide holistic support for peers in recovery. Because Substance Abuse and Mental Health are intertwined, also contemplate ways to educate the community on mental health to reduce the negative stigma associated with mental illness that exists in the neighborhood

NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING & ACTIVATION

- Funding to support a position for two years to oversee implementation of final recommendations.
- 10-14 hours weekly to support the completion of the QOL Planning Process. Support the planning work with continuing work groups, attendance at and support of Neighborhood Association building.
- Neighborhood Association acts as an outreach partner with the city of Grand Rapids and DGRI regarding the neighborhood and the association is the mechanism by which official community input and collaboration efforts will be maintained.
- Positive Stories Campaign

AT HOME IN HEARTSIDE

- Increase full spectrum of affordable, subsidized, accessible and market rate housing opportunities and preserve such existing housing that prevents the displacement of residents.

ENGAGED & EMPLOYED

- Implement an Engaged & Employed Lunch & Learn series in Heartside that will kick-off in 2019 that teaches on a variety of topics like trauma-informed employment, resilience building and life-skills.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

- Support the development of public restrooms in Heartside that are temporary or permanent additions to the neighborhood by encouraging the provision of restrooms available to the general public particularly where gaps have been identified. The neighborhood affirmed that a public restroom is needed and desired along the South Division corridor and the corner of Division and Weston was identified as an area with high measurements of public urination/defecation.
- Explore expanded public restroom options within Heartside's city parks. Heartside Park public restrooms should be winterized to increase access year-round.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- Activate Pekich Park by creating new utilities that are valuable resources for Heartside neighbors and activate the park daily including a restroom and/or Mobile Community Center.
- Engage Lucky's owners and business management in a discussion about the impact of the business model on the neighborhood and ask for dedicated efforts to change the corner outside Lucky's Liquor Store.
- Pekich Park should be included in the redesign phase of Heartside Park, per the GR Forward plan.
- Evening Community Officer designated to Heartside and allocated for hours after 5pm.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT, RECOVERY & MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY

- Implement a newly designed Peer support Specialist and Recovery Coach Program in Heartside.
- Mental Health First Aide Heartside Training

FRESH FOOD ACCESS

- City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department expand opportunities for fresh food access to all public spaces in Heartside. For example:

Allowing Farmers Markets in all Heartside Parks: Pekich, Heartside and Veterans Park. Enabling agencies to do formal free food giveaways in additional public spaces. Enable neighborhood parks to become new and more inclusive locations where the YMCA Veggie Van and similar programs can set up to sell or distribute fresh food.

- Support further exploration of the creation and sustainability of a Heartside Food co-op.



HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS & TAKEAWAYS



AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT WORK GROUP MEETING

The neighborhood emphatically stated in the Listening Sessions that Lucky’s Liquor Store, Pekich Park and Heartside Park were all vital “areas of improvement” for the neighborhood. Given that, this group which consisted of city staff, agency representatives, architects, business owners, residents, non-profits and other community stakeholders, focused on issues like year-round activation of parks and programming or working models that address behavioral norms that exist in the neighborhood.

Phase 4: The Future State



Photo by Carbon Stories, courtesy the artist and Urban Institute for Contemporary Art. Seitu Jones

Describe the “future state” of Heartside...

- Businesses and non-profit agencies working together
- Storefront boutiques are thriving
- Individuals experiencing homelessness are able to find housing
- Mental health issues are addressed
- Substance abuse services are readily available
- Everyone is treated with dignity and respect and valued for the gifts they bring
- There is no drug dealing /using taking place.

- Marge Palmerlee
Degage Ministries

Heartside is growing and changing daily. From a bird's eye view, it may not appear that anything is being done to address issues like homelessness, infrastructure in disrepair, loitering, drug activity and public urination, but change is afoot. Although the transition may seem slow, change is made by daily efforts and people working diligently to make regular, positive contributions to the process.

There are a number of opportunities to improve quality of life in Heartside in its CURRENT STATE. In order to bridge the gap between the current state and ideal state, there is a need for more intentional engagement of stakeholders and residents located north of Fulton, the formation of new partnerships between agencies and added economic investment. It will also require flexibility to work within realities of technical limits, budget constraints and time.

The FUTURE STATE of Heartside is a place where everyone can belong. In a vision exercise one participant best described the future state as “a unique blending of diverse groups that co-exist with mutual respect and cooperation to build an inclusive community dedicated to the wellbeing of ALL members... that is respectful and safe for all”.

The Future State of Heartside continued:

Moving forward, support will continue to build by sharing the neighborhood’s and individuals’ narratives alongside facts which can be characterized as “data with a soul.” The work groups have created many sound recommendations that will require additional funding and work effort for implementation.

Key Recommendations

The Heartside Quality of Life Study has provided a rich menu of options to support everyone who lives, works or plays in Heartside. Generally, these projects fall into two categories. The first is major project recommendations. These are larger-scale projects that are anticipated to have significant impact on the neighborhood, but which also require dedication of significant time, resources, and funding. These are presented as the core recommendations of the Neighborhood Action Plan, as outlined below and fully captured in Chapter 3. The second set of projects are much smaller scale, but can be equally impactful in lifting up residents and cultivating the spirit of community. Many of these projects were kick-started by the working groups and provide great opportunities for growth. These projects are discussed by focus area in Chapter 2 and are fully outlined within the work group Goals and Measures, included under Appendix 5.

Key Final recommendations include:

- Provide continued Neighborhood and Quality of Life Study implementation support.
- Complete a restroom pilot to address immediate restroom needs and develop a long-term solution that is sustainable.
- Complete lighting improvements along the South Division Corridor and side streets to improve both the safety and visual character of the neighborhood.
- Consider redesign options for both Pekich and Heartside Parks to best meet community need.
- Complete a Mixed-Use and Housing Market Study for Heartside.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid Training.
- Create a Peer Support Pilot Program.



When dinner becomes art..

Seitu Jones’ “The Heartside Community Meal,” an ArtPrize entry in the time-based category, was a community meal, serving locally-grown food in locally-made bowls in Heartside Park. “Was it art? I’m not sure, and I don’t care. It was beautiful.” We heard repeatedly that neighbors want more community meals like this event.



02

**QUALITY OF LIFE
FOCUS AREAS AND
FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS**

QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS AREAS

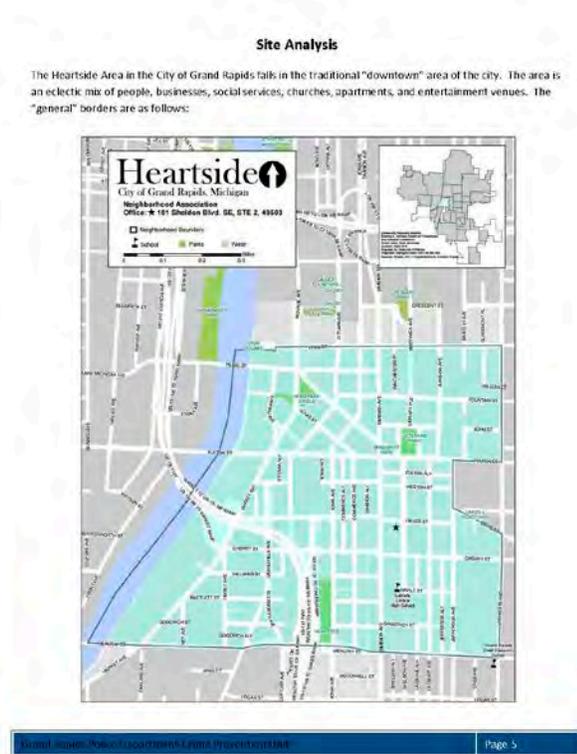
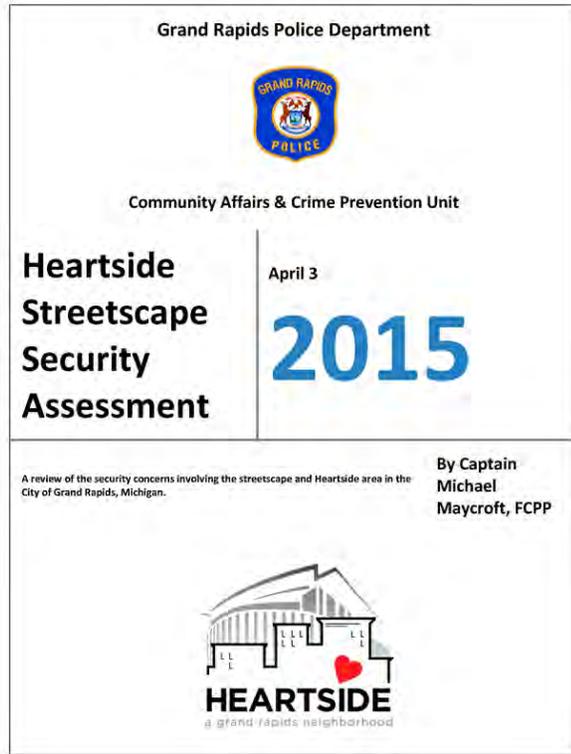


The following sections delve into each of the focus areas comprising the Quality of Life Study, including problem statements that detail the challenge within Heartside, the learning and growth that took place throughout the process, and final recommendations from neighbor-led work groups. We are also proud to share some accomplishments, including early successes that have already been realized through the effort and determination of the working groups, our neighbors and allies.



Pictured above: Street design and building design modifications, including the relocation of the lunch line for God's Kitchen, have changed some of the daily experiences of neighbors in Heartside. Additionally, Dégagé Ministries is currently in the process of relocating their entry for services to Sheldon Street.

Lighting



Problem Statement

One of the critical issues raised in the 2016 Letter to the City Commission and staff was lighting along South Division Avenue in Heartside. In reality, this concern has been documented in archival letters dating back nearly four decades. Lighting in Heartside had also been raised as a significant issue by the Grand Rapids Police Department, with crime data indicating "hot spots" where inadequate lighting correlated to disproportionately high crime rates.

Engagement

A work group comprised of staff from the City of Grand Rapids Planning Department, Engineering and the Executive Office, Grand Rapids Police Department, Dwelling Place, DGRI, and consultants was assembled to evaluate the issue and develop an implementation strategy while the Quality of Life process was underway.

A lighting analysis was conducted. This analysis found that lighting levels were lower than the design minimums under the City's standards. This standard is based on the needed visibility for motor vehicles on the roadway, as well as pedestrians on sidewalks. The analysis also documented pockets of uneven light distribution - essentially creating problematic dark spots. There also currently is not a cohesive lighting style between existing fixtures or pole types. These issues are further compounded by minimal storefront lighting, which can supplement lighting for pedestrians.

Six different design options were reviewed, which included options from the minimum design standards to varying designs for decorative fixtures ranging from more closely spaced pedestrian-scale fixtures to taller fixtures with less frequent spacing. A light fixture was selected for Division Avenue that provides an ornamental twin mast arm design, maximizing lighting for both the roadway and pedestrians.



Recommendations

A street lighting solution was developed that both addressed the insufficient lighting levels and a desire to extend the style fixtures found elsewhere in Downtown to complement Heartside's historic fabric. The City of Grand Rapids and DGRI have developed a plan for the next five years to support an approximately \$1.5 million lighting investment in the Heartside neighborhood.

The first phase is expected to include the area from Fulton Street to Cherry Street, funded by the City of Grand Rapids Capital Improvement Fund and the DDA Lighting Budget. The City is also expected to fund improvements on Sheldon Avenue and a portion of Weston Street as a part of this first phase. Total costs are estimated at approximately \$635,000.

The lighting from Wealthy to Cherry Street will be installed as a part of the larger roadway reconstruction process, beginning in 2019. This work is fully funded, with a contribution from DGRI. Total costs are approximately \$342,000.

The side streets of Weston Street, Oakes Street, Cherry Street, Williams Street, Bartlett Street and Goodrich Street are identified as the final phase. A timeline and funding source have not been finalized. Costs are estimated at approximately \$522,000.

It is recommended that the Neighborhood Association and relevant stakeholders continue to partner in the implementation of this project. This includes participation in design meetings and discussions in the roadway reconstruction project and involvement in future budgeting efforts with the City of Grand Rapids and DDA to lobby for earmark of the funds necessary to complete the unfunded portions of the lighting plan.

Accomplishments

In summer 2018, City of Grand Rapids staff completed lighting repairs and minor improvements. All existing fixtures were cleaned and repaired. In addition, a temporary fixture was installed to improve lighting conditions at Weston and Division, one of the identified crime hotspots.



Pictured Above: Rendering of proposed light fixtures coming to Heartside.

Pekich Park



Problem Statement

Pekich Park is a small pocket park located at the northwest corner of Division and Cherry. The concept for the park was identified through Heartside Mainstreet's Design Charrette with urban design expert Dan Burden in 2000. The design proposed a joint realignment of Cherry Street and creation of the park in the remaining right-of-way. Preliminary funding for the park was identified in 2003, including grant dollars and contributions from the City of Grand Rapids and the DDA. Design work was completed in 2006, and the park opened in the summer of 2010.

Shortly after it opened, efforts were made by DGRI and others to provide regular programming, such as concerts. Due to incidents that occurred at these events, and their failure to meet program goals, those efforts were discontinued. With the exception of occasional events, use of the park is almost exclusively passive.

However passive has not meant quiet enjoyment. Clearly, Pekich Park has become a source of stress rather than a place of enjoyment for surrounding neighbors. Today, the park is sometimes highly congested, with people gathering for long periods of time, both on the seating and along edges of the pavilion and planting boxes. Drug and alcohol use within the park regularly occurs, despite ongoing efforts by the Grand Rapids Police Department. With this, oftentimes there are verbal altercations, fights and regular instances of aggressive panhandling. Because of the heavy use and broken irrigation system, the landscaping is generally in poor condition. Pekich Park is not functioning as intended and contributes to a negative perception of Heartside. [See Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis in Appendix 6.]

Engagement

As the Quality of Life process began, it was expected that Pekich Park was an area of substantial concern and contention. Rather than relying on anecdotal information, hard data was collected to support (or refute) what had been heard, and to begin engagement with the neighborhood. Data collection took the form of a survey that was distributed through a variety of community meetings, peer-to-peer outreach in the park, hard copy delivery to several residential buildings, and by email to residents, service providers, business owners, and others. More than 300 surveys were returned. [See Complete Survey in Appendix 7.]



The survey found that of permanent housing residents, less than half have ever visited Pekich Park. Of those that have visited, about 35% are at the park weekly, with the remainder visiting monthly (13%) or rarely (52%). For those currently without permanent housing, 83% have visited Pekich Park, with more than half (62%) there at least weekly. For many of the frequent visitors, they indicated that they go to the park for social connection. When asked what kept people from using the park, behavioral issues of those using the park were most commonly cited; including physical fights, loitering, drug activity, alcohol use, and disrespectful behavior such as catcalling and profane language. Simply put, non-regular users feel that the park is unsafe. Respondents also indicated a lack of activation, or things to draw them to the space.

Follow-up meetings to the survey were held in August and September including the planning team, City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation, key property owners, and service providers. A Community Meeting regarding Pekich Park was held on October 17, 2017. The agenda included a report back on the survey, an update from the Police Department and review of crime related data, brief presentations regarding best practices around the country related to urban park spaces and crime prevention and facilitated community discussion related to the park and potential solutions. Between September 2017 and January 2018, Planning staff facilitated 14 Quality of Life Listening Sessions in Heartside, with over 200 participants. The issues related to Pekich Park raised in these meetings largely mirrors those also identified in the August meeting.

Recommendations

From this engagement, a set of potential solutions was developed. It is recognized there are physical changes that could significantly shift the use or function of the park, however changes must also be accompanied by behavioral changes and expectations in order to make the park a safer and more welcoming space for all. There is clear sentiment that action cannot wait. Therefore, proposed changes focus on more immediate solutions. These include:

- **Activation** – Activate use of the park space in a way that serves residents and business owners and begins to build a greater sense of community ownership over the space.
- **Flexible Design Seating** – This minor physical improvement could allow for greater activation of the space. The existing “fixed seating” has been identified as a potential limitation on space activation. Creating a more flexible design where seating locations can be shifted or temporarily removed for an

event would allow more creative utilization of the limited park footprint. Movable seating could also work to support other temporary uses, such as a neighborhood food truck festival or sporting game event. Over time, activities like these could change both behavior within the park as well as community perception of the space.

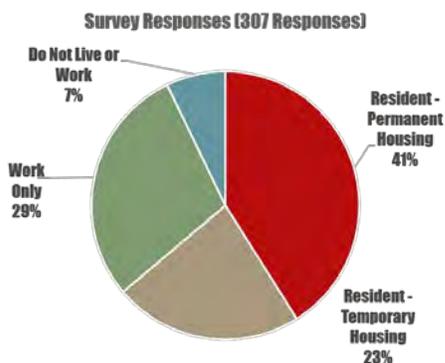
- **Community Info Board** – Install a Community Info Board to help identify nearby community resources as well as to promote upcoming events within the community. Increased education and resource awareness is imperative in Heartside.

These recommendations were provided to the Area of Improvement Work Group for additional consideration and vetting. The Areas of Improvement Work Group also provided additional recommendations related to Pekich Park, which include:

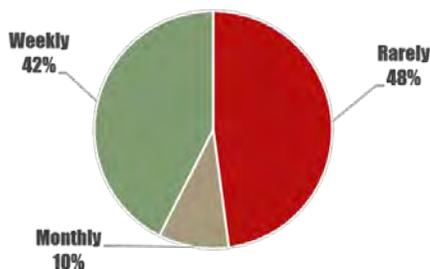
- **Community Gardening** - Begin immediate activation of Pekich Park as a community garden space to improve resident-led maintenance and improvements to the plants.
- **Utilities** - Activate Pekich Park by creating new utilities that are valuable resources for Heartside neighbors and activate the park daily (e.g. water & power).
- **Events** - Activate Pekich Park by creating new events-based activities that will create active uses twice a month including the winter season.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.

SURVEY RESULTS



If Have Visited, Frequency (181 Responses)



PEKICH PARK LIKES, DISLIKES, CHANGE

LIKES

- ✓ Mural
- ✓ Seating
- ✓ Location / Downtown
- ✓ Respite
- ✓ Socialization
- ✓ Design Elements

DISLIKES

- ✓ Loitering / Hangout
- ✓ Feels Unsafe
- ✓ Panhandling
- ✓ Cat-Calling / Language
- ✓ Criminal Activity
- ✓ Small / Overcrowding
- ✓ No Bathroom
- ✓ Indecent Exposure
- ✓ Fighting
- ✓ Smell of Urine
- ✓ Rat Infestation

CHANGE

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Criminal Enforcement
- ✓ Community Garden
- ✓ More Welcoming
- ✓ Restrooms
- ✓ Activation
- ✓ Address Loitering
- ✓ Clean-up - Smell, Trash, etc.
- ✓ Add Seating / Remove Seating
- ✓ Police Presence
- ✓ More Positive Activities / Different Uses
- ✓ Eliminate Park completely

Project Highlight: Pekich Park Info Board



RESIDENTS, CITY STAFF AND EMPLOYEES FROM BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS HAVE COME TOGETHER, FORMED RELATIONSHIPS AND BEGUN BUILDING NEW RESOURCES FOR THE COMMUNITY. IT'S AMAZING TO SEE THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY MEETINGS SHIFT FROM ONE OF PERSON'S FRUSTRATED AND SHARING COMPLAINTS TO BEING EXCITED TO SEE ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING UPDATES AND SOLUTIONS.

- JENN SCHUAB
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT
DWELLING PLACE

Accomplishments

The Areas of Improvement Work Group partnered with Kendall College of Art & Design to pilot a Community Info Board for Pekich Park. The signage was designed by a student team and includes three main display areas: a map of Heartside with community resources, an interactive community feedback board, and a section for posting community events, calendars, schedules and other important community information. The sign was installed in early October 2018 and is located along the eastern edge of the park, along Division Avenue. The pilot sign is expected to remain in place through at least December 2018. Early indications are that the sign has received a positive response. Its location makes it inviting and engaging to those who pass by. It has also helped to create community identity and highlight the amenities of the Heartside Community. People have posted positive messages and use the space to share information of upcoming events. Based on this experience, a permanent installation warrants further exploration.



“HEARTsideSTRONG MEANS THAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS WHOLE, RESILIENT, AND VIBRANT - NOT INSPITE OF ITS EXTRAORDINARY DIVERSITY BUT BECAUSE OF IT”.

- MICHAEL MCCULLOCH, PH.D., AIA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE
KENDALL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

#HEARTsideSTRONG MEANS THAT WE ARE PROUD, WE LOVE OUR COMMUNITY, AND WE ARE GOING TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF OUR COMMUNITY. WE WILL MAKE EVERY PERSON THAT LIVES, WORKS AND PLAYS IN OUR COMMUNITY #HEARTsideSTRONG.

- DANIEL DRENT
DWELLING PLACE RESIDENT

Public Restrooms



Problem Statement

One of the key Quality of Life issues identified through the listening sessions was public urination and defecation. This problem occurs across Heartside, from inside parking garages to business vestibules. This creates a tremendous burden on affected business owners, the Downtown Ambassadors, facility maintenance, and others. It is both a nuisance and public health

issue. Paired with this was concerns expressed by shelter residents and others that there is a lack of public restrooms available for them to use, particularly at night and on the weekends. This can be further exacerbated by mobility issues, making it difficult for individuals to travel to a facility that may be blocks away or uphill. Access to restrooms helps satisfy a basic human need and is important for individual privacy, dignity, and safety.

Engagement

The Public Restrooms Work Group focused on the issue of public urination and defecation along the Division Avenue corridor. A total of 14 people participated during the six weeks of meetings. This group included representation from DGRI, City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation, Planning and Police Departments, Degage Ministries, Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Partnership, Heartside Ministry, Westminster Presbyterian Church, and others. Common themes and problems that were addressed during the meetings included:

- Data collection to understand the scope of the urination and defecation in Heartside.
- Existing public restroom location and availability.
- Safety, cleanliness and maintenance of public restrooms.
- Cleaning of doorways, parks, parking garages and other public spaces.
- Potential future restroom locations.

The Work Group acknowledged that the problem will likely never be solved solely through the provision of more restrooms. Certain individuals, particularly those who are inebriated, may choose not to use publically available restrooms. However, there is also a segment of individuals that simply lack access to restrooms when and where they are needed. Many facilities are open only during daytime hours of the business, limiting options at night or on weekends. During winter months the restrooms at Heartside Park close, further limiting options.

Recommendations

Final recommendations provided by the Public Restroom Work Group are as follows:

- Conduct a baseline measurement of public urination/defecation or other measures that can be used to quantitatively measure the impact of restroom-related improvements in Heartside.
- Create an updated inventory of restroom locations available to the public.
- Encourage provision of additional restrooms available to the general public, particularly where gaps have been identified.
- Pilot a friendly loo restroom program.
- Explore expanded public restroom options within Heartside's City Parks, including consideration of both expanded hours and year-round availability.
- Support development of public restrooms in Heartside (Such as parking ramps, portable) that are temporary or permanent additions to the neighborhood.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.



Pictured Above: Community members of the Public Restrooms Work Group in Heartside.

Accomplishments

Members of the work group and their respective organizations have begun work on several of the recommendations. A template for reporting and monitoring public urination/defecation has been created, with plans to release quarterly reports. However, additional partners in reporting are encouraged. An updated inventory of public restrooms has been created, but will require regular updates. DGRI has also been a strong proponent of supporting public restrooms in Heartside. They have set aside funds towards a restroom pilot and are currently evaluating the best available options for their location, monitoring and upkeep. DGRI has also committed to exploring the friendly loo restroom program. The work group is continuing to meet once a month to monitor progress and the implementation of the recommendations.



Pictured Above: The Heartside Quality of Life Public Restrooms work group discussing 2019 pilot programming.

At Home in Heartside



Problem Statement

The Quality of Life study revealed that the people of Heartside are having issues when it comes to feeling “at home in Heartside”. Affordable housing, homelessness and shelter care were reoccurring themes through the process. Accessing the variety of housing resources and opportunities, or lack thereof, to residents and visitors can be challenging. The Work group learned that people are encountering a number of obstacles to housing stability. These include the cost of rental applications, requirements for multiple applications for housing under a single management company, limited resources for rental assistance programs, and rising rents.

Engagement

The At Home in Heartside Work Group focused on creating solutions for the aforementioned issues. Though the complexities were great, on average eight individuals with great diversity in experience and perspective met bi-weekly to discuss, share information and coordinate efforts. The groups’ composition

Some shared that they have had vouchers expire because they were unable to find viable housing within a specified price range in a timely manner. Following these experiences, these individuals may experience homelessness or may be forced to seek options outside their desired community.

The work group also heard that there are not enough shelter beds, lockers or safe places to store your personal belongings in the area. If a person is fortunate enough to obtain placement for the night, comments were received that the care they receive in some facilities is less than desirable.

included City staff, representation from Mel Trotter, Disability Advocates, Legal Aid, Degage Ministries, veterans, residents and a few others. Common themes and problems that were addressed during the meetings included:

- Developing a housing resource map or other educational tool to be available to residents to assist in identifying opportunities for housing resources.
- Exploring partnerships with landlords, property owners, and management companies in Heartside to make the application process simpler and more efficient for prospective tenants.
- Fostering engagement amongst residents, the City of Grand Rapids, and other parties interested in developing policy regarding rental application fees and processes.
- Voting and civic engagement challenges faced by residents in Heartside. Gathering information to identify the challenges and opportunities to support residents who face barriers to participation in the voting process is needed.
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing to prevent displacement.
- A City study of existing mixed-use developments and vacancies that may provide for additional housing opportunity.
- Fostering engagement amongst residents so they feel welcome to aid in the development of housing policies and procedures.

Recommendations

Final recommendation provided by the At Home in Heartside Work Group are as follows:

- Increase full spectrum of affordable, subsidized, accessible and market rate housing opportunities and preserve existing housing to prevent the displacement of residents.
- Encourage the City of Grand Rapids or affordable housing providers to study current mixed-use developments in Heartside for potential future use as affordable housing. If there are vacancies, partner with developers to renovate or rehabilitate suitable spaces for housing.
- Provide Housing NOW Residential Application Ordinance advocacy.
- Educate applicants on the Residential Rental Application Ordinance rights and complaint process and inform the complainant of the status of their inquiries in a timely manner.
- Work Group will help implement a Housing and Development Review committee for the HNA; this group will review plans for community development and housing opportunities in Heartside; this group will also foster engagement amongst residents, the City of Grand Rapids and other parties interested in developing policy regarding rental application fees and processes.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.

Accomplishments

Some members of the work group and their respective organizations have begun work on these recommendations. The City of Grand Rapids Community Development Department hosted informational meetings about the Rental Readiness Ordinance. The meetings directly aligned with the final recommendation to educate applicants on their rights associated with the Residential Rental Application Ordinance and the complaint process, A Heartside specific informational meeting is anticipated. The Work group agreed to continue to meet through the end of 2018.

IN THE EIGHT YEARS I HAVE BEEN IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, THE PHRASE HEARTSIDE STRONG HAS BEEN USED IN DIFFERENT WAYS AS A BATTLE CRY TO THE REST OF THE CITY - THAT WE ARE LOUD, PROUD AND NOT GOING ANYWHERE. TO ME IT MEANS A VERY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD - THAT I AM IN THIS FOR THE LONG HAUL, AND THAT MY CONTRIBUTIONS MATTER.

- Alysha Lach White
Heartside Neighborhood Association Co-Chair

AT HOME IN HEARTSIDE MEANS...



Submitted By:
Frank and Felisa Pratt
Dwelling Place Residents

- H** - Hope, **Housing**, Help, History, Heritage, Happiness
- E** - Entertainment, Empathy, **Employment**, an Ear for listening, Encouragement
- A** - Awesome, Appreciation, Attention, Adaptive, **Artistic**, Amazing, Accountable
- R** - Recovery, Reality, **Resources**, Results, Responsibility, Respect, Rules, Relationships
- T** - Tough Love, Togetherness, Tools, Teachers, True Love, Trust and **Testimonies**
- S** - Safe, Strong, Social, Shelter, Sacrifice, Support, Sympathy, **Stability**
- I** - Idealistic, Intuitive, Independence, **Individuality**, Informative
- D** - Discovery, **Determination**, Dreams
- E** - EVERYTHING - the Heartside neighborhood means **EVERYTHING** to us because this is has been our experience and where we happily live!

The Quality of Life Study revealed that over time Heartside has had a number of silos. There has been a disconnect between people, passion and potential partnerships. Until now, residents have not been given an opportunity to lend their voice to direct the development of their neighborhood. Support for the Heartside Neighborhood Association that has risen from this Study's work, alongside an inherent desire to advance stabilization of the neighborhood. In the past, the Heartside neighborhood has not received as much media attention, stakeholder listening and action as it has through this process.

The importance of neighborhood activation must be emphasized as well. The neighborhood lacks activation, which means there aren't enough opportunities for genuine gatherings that are "less agenda-focused", where all people can get together to build trust and comradery. Part of the reason it is difficult to bring people together for events is misconceptions, hidden biases and negative stigma that has plagued the neighborhood for generations. Sharing more positive stories, both internally and externally, had to be treated as a community priority in order to change perceptions, engage neighbors, and build stability in the neighborhood.

Project Highlight: Heartside Quality of Life Silhouettes

The work group was able to support and participate in a positive stories campaign that involved window activation in vacant spaces along the corridor. In the "Heartside Quality of Life Silhouettes" project several neighbors were interviewed, and their quotes were placed on large blue silhouettes that filled the windows of three vacant business spaces in Heartside this past fall.



Pictured: Window Activation displays at 106 South Division.

“I THINK A VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD IS ONE THAT IS ACTIVATED. QOL HAS IGNITED AN ENERGY IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT HAS SUSTAINED ITSELF BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL TIMELINE AND INSPIRED RESIDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO WALK ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CHANGE. HEARTSIDE HAS A TEAM OF PEOPLE READY TO GO WHEN THE CITY AND OTHER PARTNERS STEP ON BOARD TO FACILITATE THE CHANGES IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGAGEMENT, BOTH DESPERATELY NEEDED AND NECESSARY TO UPLIFT THIS OFTEN OVERLOOKED COMMUNITY.”

- MALLORY PATTERSON

HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION CO-CHAIR



Engagement

The Neighborhood Building & Activation work group’s engagement efforts included the use of innovative engagement ideas and SMART goals. The creation of a Legacy Binder, sharing more positive Heartside stories, increasing funding for the association, promoting civic engagement, and

building human capacity were goals. Some of the ways the work group managed to achieve these engagement goals is by laying the foundation for resident-led neighborhood events, creating opportunities for collaboration and generating ideas for year-round activation and programming.

The work group also worked diligently to create engagement opportunities with the Heartside Neighborhood Association. Since the inception of the Quality of Life study, the neighborhood association has experienced a spike in participation. Several members of the work group participated in the inaugural Neighborhood Leadership Academy, hosted at the GVSU Johnson Center for Philanthropy. As a result of the completion of the program, the neighborhood was able to receive funding to obtain its 501(c)3 status.

The Heartside Neighborhood Association (HNA) continues to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month and has recently changed their location to the main level of the Harris Building, which is currently occupied by Little Space Studio and Studio D2D - two businesses with long-term commitments to the neighborhood.

The group decided to change locations in an effort to expand outreach to more people in the neighborhood by increasing visibility and being more centrally located. In the past, all meetings were hosted in the Herkimer Community Room which is located on the lower level of a Dwelling Place housing structure on South Division closer to Wealthy Street.

This work group was comprised of the HNA Co-Chairs, a representative from Dwelling Place, City staff and several residents from the neighborhood. The group decided to discontinue their work group meetings in order to reconvene as a steering committee with added input from other neighbors for the design and implementation of the new neighborhood association formal structure.

Recommendations

Final recommendation provided by the Neighborhood Building & Activation Work Group are as follows:

- Create a legacy binder for use by resident leaders forming the neighborhood association.
- Create an annual calendar of outreach and resident engagement for Heartside.
- Allocate funds to facilitate outreach to engage in neighbors in Heartside, North of Fulton and South of Wealthy Street. Funds would support community outreach (food, location, mailings, etc.).
- Request that HNA serve as the outreach partner with the City of Grand Rapids and DGRI regarding neighborhood outreach for projects in the district.
- Create a community committee of 8-10 representatives who receive funding for a positive stories campaign which could include but is not limited to:
 - Activate windows along the corridor to showcase stories.
 - Traditional press coverage for positive events and stories.
- Find support to fund a part-time position for the next two years to support the implementation of the Quality of Life Study.

See Appendix 5 for full Recommendation Matrix.

What does #HEARTsideSTRONG mean to you?

“WHEN I HEAR THOSE WORDS BEING SPOKEN, IT MAKES ME THINK OF HOW RESILIENT THIS COMMUNITY IS. I THINK ABOUT THE INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES RESIDENTS HAVE TAKEN TO ADDRESS THEIR OWN CONCERNS AND HOW THEY HAVE WORKED HARD TO RAISE THEIR VOICE AND DEMAND TO BE HEARD AROUND THE THINGS OUR INSTITUTIONS NEED TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR. HEARTSIDE STRONG IS ABOUT TOGETHERNESS AND BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO CREATE MEANINGFUL CHANGE.”

- MALLORY PATTERSON
HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION CO-CHAIR



***Pictured Left:** Mallory Patterson - Dwelling Place Resident and Heartside Neighborhood Co-Chair at the 2019 Neighbor Knowledge Exchange engaging neighbors.*

Accomplishments

The Neighborhood Building & Activation work group has accomplished many things to be proud of over the course of the year that are directly aligned with some of their final recommendations. The group was able to execute two activation events that engaged the neighborhood further and brought more people together. The first event was the second annual National Night Out, which was taken to a much larger scale. The group was able to move the event location from Pekich to Heartside Park this year and expand to include new activities and a community meal.

The second was the History of Heartside event where neighbors were invited to come sift through old artifacts, listen to a presentation on the history of how the neighborhood has changed over time and were encouraged to share their personal stories of how their families once were, or have become, a part of the community fabric. Both events were done in collaboration with Dwelling Place interns and were well attended. At the end of November, the group hosted two “Coffee with a Cop” sessions. Neighbors were invited to come together and talk community safety, security and policing.

***Pictured Below:** Members of the Michigan Association of Planning West (MAP) took a tour of the Heartside neighborhood and stopped in to learn about services that Degage Ministries provides to members of the community who may be experiencing homelessness.*



Project Highlight: WKTV Voices Project

In hopes of advancing the positive stories campaign even further, resident leader Mark Tagen who lives in The Lofts collaborated with the WKTV Voices Project to help change people's perception of reality in Heartside. WKTV is the Wyoming-Kentwood public access television station and they have a mobile interview program called Voices. Voices owns a mobile studio contained in a restored 1950's Airstream trailer and they record discussions between friends allowing them to share their personal stories. The Voice Trailer made its debut in the Heartside neighborhood in October in the parking lot at St. Andrews Cathedral. There were three interviews conducted that involved many Heartside residents including Annamarie Bullard (DGRI) who interviewed Dennis Sturtevant who has been a long time executive at Dwelling Place and valued stakeholder in the neighborhood. The videos are able to be downloaded from the WKTV sight and are viewable online thru social media at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/102896903468952> or can also be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/wktvvoices>.



Note: To date voices has hosted several additional leaders from the Heartside neighborhood. Please go on-line using the links listed above to hear their stories. For more information please visit: <https://wktvvoices.org/voices-in-heartside/> or see Appendix 10.

Fresh Food Access



Problem Statement

Another important issue related to quality of life that was commonly brought up as a community priority is fresh food access. Currently, there is no access to fresh fruit, vegetables and meats at an affordable price in Heartside. During summer months, fresh produce options are supplemented through produce services brought into the neighborhood and through the community gardening efforts of residents, but this does not reach everyone. It was also learned that there are often limited transportation options available for people to access fresh food outside of the neighborhood. At one point in time, some fresh food options were available at the Downtown Market but most people were not able to pay the higher costs associated with the venue.

Similarly the neighborhood felt that there has been a lack of education and engagement done in the neighborhood around fresh food access. The neighborhood would benefit greatly from education about a variety of sub-topics; like where fresh food opportunities exist and what expiration dates really mean. In a vision exercise in the early stages of this work, one neighbor wrote that they envision the Heartside neighborhood to be a place where “fruits & veggies are cheaper and easier to access than chips & beer.”

Engagement

The Fresh Food Access Work Group began their work by taking time to determine what the actual needs for fresh food access are that exist in Heartside. The group worked to gather more specific feedback from the community conducting a survey of available resources, contemplating what a person needs to access food resources, and determining what IS affordable for the neighborhood.

Some of the short-term goals of this group included increasing opportunities for access to existing fresh food through the expansion of programs operating in the neighborhood, as well as expanding access to food outside Heartside. The group also brainstormed long-term solutions like the creation and sustainability of a Heartside Food Co-op and further consideration of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as a viable option in Heartside's future state.



The work group began engagement efforts that consisted of: education around cooking and healthy recipes, and creative information sharing with residents that involved mapping fresh food access in Heartside and near neighborhoods.

The Fresh Food Access work group consisted of 7 members who are still meeting bi-weekly to continue to push this work forward. Members represent a wide range of perspectives from City staff, residents, agency providers, a neighborhood artist and a student from GVSU who represented the Heartside Gleaning Initiative.

Recommendations

Final recommendation provided by the Fresh Food Access Work Group are as follows:

- Create and disperse a Heartside Fresh Food Access Map.
- Develop an education and PR Campaign to reduce stigmas about accepting free food and increase community empathy around fresh food access.
- Create a resident advocate & education volunteer program in Heartside.
- Develop a program to distribute fresh food in all parks.
- Further explore the creation and sustainability of a Heartside Food Co-op and/or further explore the option of Community Supported Agriculture.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.

Accomplishments

Members of the work group and their respective organizations have begun executing some of the short-term recommendations. A Heartside Fresh Food Access Map was created and has been dispersed in the neighborhood. The map was the end result of several meetings, where members worked together to contemplate, draft and edit a working list of all places where Heartside neighbors can access fresh food at an affordable price. The map was created by Regina Masterson who is a resident and a graduate of Kendall College School of Art & Design. See Appendix 8 for a copy of the most recent version of the Fresh Food Access Map.

The work group is continuing to meet bi-weekly to execute an educational and PR campaign in 2019; and monitor progress and the implementation of final recommendations that have long term goals. The work group is currently engaged in conversations with Spectrum Health Healthier communities program to find additional opportunities for collaboration.

“THE QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY HAS LET ME BECOME A VOICE AND AN AGENT OF CHANGE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENABLED ME TO JOIN FORCES WITH OTHERS THAT HAVE THE SAME PASSION AS I DO.”

- DANIEL DRENT (FRESH FOOD ACCESS CO-CHAIR)



Pictured Above: Zenobia is the Co-Chair of the Fresh Food Access Group which is preparing to launch a Food Box pilot program in Heartside. This program will ensure that senior neighbors, people with disabilities, low-income families and others have greater access to fresh food in the neighborhood.

Project Highlight: Heartside Master Chef

The Heartside Gleaning Initiative (HGI) collaborated with the Heartside Quality of Life Fresh Food Access work group and the Heartside Neighborhood Association to organize the first Heartside Master Chef competition. Several members of the Heartside neighborhood took the time to prepare dishes that were sampled and voted on at one of the neighborhood association meetings, which are traditionally pot luck style. The three recipe winners included a Green Tomato Cake, Basic Chili and Caprese Salad Sticks. Each winner received a prize and were listed as the Heartside winning entries in the Heartside Gleaning Initiative Recipe Book, which is now available for purchase. The HGI “empowers Heartside and surrounding communities to become healthier through increased access to healthy foods and nutrition education”. By working alongside the gleaning initiative the work group has been instrumental in helping provide good food while cultivating community in the neighborhood.



**HEARTSIDE
FRESH
FOOD
ACCESS**

COOKING
COMPETITION

August 21st, 2018

**ARE YOU A MASTER
CHEF WHO LIVES IN
HEARTSIDE?**

THE HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE FRESH FOOD
ACCESS WORK GROUP INVITES YOU TO
CREATE A DISH USING FRESH FRUITS AND/OR
VEGETABLES, THEN BRING ENOUGH TO
SAMPLE AND SHARE TO THE AUGUST
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION!

3 LUCKY WINNERS WILL BE SELECTED AND
YOUR RECIPE WILL BE FEATURED IN THE
HEARTSIDE GLEANING INITIATIVE NEW
COOKBOOK!

DETAILS;
*Tuesday 8:21.28 at the Herkimer Community Room
Lower Level - 309 Division Ave. South*

All interested residents are encouraged to
participate! We will provide paper goods
and sample cups!

#HEARTsideSTRONG

Engaged and Employed



***Pictured Above:** Danielle Rowland, Latricia Sorsbee & Spencer Hush - Members of the Engaged & Employed work group who created and dispersed an Employment Resource Guide in Heartside. This work group has also successfully launched a Lunch & Learn series for people in the neighborhood who need assistance obtaining and maintaining employment.*

Problem Statement

The listening sessions highlighted that obtaining and maintaining employment were problem areas for neighborhood residents. One of the contributing factors to this problem is the fact that there are limited opportunities for job training and job readiness in the neighborhood. For instance, while Guiding Light has an incredible program that offers housing, work force development and a savings program, the program is only open to men. Women living in Heartside would likely also benefit from a program offering this kinds of services.

When people are not able to find the right employment “fit” because of generational barriers,

limited professional networks, a lack of opportunity to develop work communication skills, accessibility issues, or other barriers, it is difficult for them to make a positive impact in the neighborhood as engaged members of their community.

Furthermore, when employers in a neighborhood don’t hire from within that same neighborhood because of stigma and misconceptions about people who may need a second chance at life, the neighborhood can’t rise together and improve quality of life overall.

Engagement

The Engaged & Employed work group met to take a look at these issues and figure out what could be done to change the narrative when it comes to bridging the gap between Heartside employees and employers. The group conducted a rigorous needs assessment to determine resident needs and employer desires. They also took a look at what types of job training opportunities exist and analyzed the gaps by mapping out the current systems in place and how they connect. The work group was able to image better systems through this process.

The work group also spent a substantial amount of time working to understand services, programs and opportunities that exist that can help everyday people out of a rut. This process involved mapping out entities that might provide a stipend for work boots, that may offer bus passes and clothing for jobs and even resources that pay cash on the same day to people who work odd jobs in and around the neighborhood.

The group had discussions around many topics like youth programming, pay rates, trauma informed employment and wrap around services. These discussions were informed by a neighborhood survey that asked Heartside residents if they have had difficulty maintaining employment and if so, what were some of the reasons why these barriers exist.

The Engaged & Employed work group has had five members with representation from Dwelling Place, Degage Ministries, Mel Trotter Ministries, city staff, resident representation, 70x7 and the Heartside Business Association. The group has agreed to keep meeting to execute a Heartside Quality of Life Engaged and Employed Lunch & Learn series in 2019.

Recommendations

Final recommendations have been provided by the Engaged and Employed work group, as follows:

- Completing a Heartside Employer Assessment – Research, evaluate and partner with employers that may offer a wide range of employment opportunities including trauma-informed and felony friendly employment in Heartside and other surrounding neighborhoods.
- Implement an Engaged & Employed Lunch and Learn series in Heartside that will kick-off in 2019. Quarterly series with a variety of topics like resume building and life skills, culminating job fair event.



“HEARTSIDE IS A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS STRONG FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY, WE ARE SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION. WE WORK TO CREATE PLACES FOR EVERYONE, BUILDING A COMMUNITY THAT PROVIDES SUPPORT, EXUDES STRENGTH AND DOESN'T TURN AWAY FROM VULNERABILITY. WE ARE #HEARTSIDESTRONG.”



- JENN SHAUB
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY BUILDING &
ENGAGEMENT, DWELLING PLACE

- Create and distribute a handheld and graphic Heartside Employment Resource Guide that lists all available services and resources that aid neighbors in gaining and maintaining employment.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.

Accomplishments

The Engaged & Employed work group was small but mighty. Over the course of the year they were able to increase communication with several businesses in the neighborhood, better inform the people in the neighborhood of resources available to them with the creation of an Employment Resource Guide, and identify next steps for implementation of a neighborhood Lunch and Learn series.

**Employment
Resource
Guide**

This pamphlet is being provided by the Engaged & Employed Work Group derived from the Heartside Quality of Life Study. The QOL Study was initiated by the City of Grand Rapids Design & Development Planning division in September of 2017.

Design & Development Planning Division
1120 Monroe Ave. NW, 3rd Floor
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

City Contact:
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Heartside
A Grand Rapids Neighborhood in the HEART of Downtown

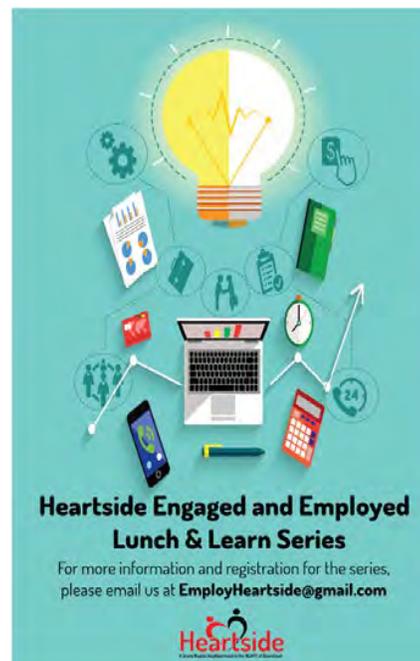
The Resource Guide is a handheld pamphlet that lists available services and resources that aid Heartside neighbors in gaining and maintaining employment. The deliverable was created, printed and has already begun being dispersed in the neighborhood. In the coming months, the group looking to create a similar document in the form of a poster that can be shared with partner agencies in and around the neighborhood.



The Engaged & Employed Lunch and Learn series will begin in January of 2019. There are a total of four sessions that include:

- Employment 101.
- Talk To Me: How to Communicate with Your Employer.
- Work/Life Balance.
- Ready to Launch: An Interactive Job Fair.

Participants who complete all four courses will be added to a certified Heartside Employee Reference List. By offering creative programming, the group is hoping to increase employment and civic engagement in the neighborhood. Upon completion of the aforementioned series, the work group wishes to see the number of employed residents increase with better sustained of length of employment.



Substance Abuse Support, Recovery & Mental Health Advocacy



Problem Statement

Some neighbors in Heartside live with issues of substance abuse and mental illness or are directly impacted by these problems daily. There are a plethora of social determinants of health, including: homelessness, lack of education, unemployment, food insecurity and social exclusion that perpetuate addictions and health disparities in Heartside.

In the listening sessions, we heard that one of the biggest problems in the neighborhood for many people is that there is no continuum of care for people who need a safe and secure place to recover. Furthermore, there is no system of checks and balances for people who are released from the hospital or jail back into the community; there are people being left behind until the next emergency call comes in. The cycle of the “super-user”, therefore, becomes commonplace.

As a result, more tax-dollars are expended on non-emergency calls. Over 16% of total Grand Rapids EMS calls are attributed to Heartside, which is highly disproportionate to our relative area. The work group believes the same people suffer in silence because there aren't enough wrap-around services available in the neighborhood. Imagine being a person who is experiencing homelessness and not having anywhere to go for the bed rest your doctor has prescribed after a hospital visit or a major surgery. How does one cope with experiencing so much stress all at once? Further, how do you improve overall community well-being in an unstable neighborhood that is sick and can't seem to get well?

This issue of substance abuse support, recovery and mental health advocacy is especially complex because while these problems have existed in the neighborhood for quite some time, Heartside still has work to do in order to become a community that is recovery friendly. There are a few agencies and ministries in the neighborhood that work to provide substance abuse support and recovery options, like intensive outpatient programming, but the demand for continued care far outweighs the supply in Heartside. Given recent cuts in funding, many of the Peer to Peer Support programs that aid in relapse prevention have been discontinued. Without continued education and outreach, the neighborhood will be forced to endure public drunkenness, drug abuse and mental health emergencies in Heartside.

In recent years, active drug abuse has become rampant in the neighborhood. Neighbors reported that more and more they are observing encounters where drugs are being sold and used in broad daylight. Drug abuse in doorways, alleys and on street corners is routine. Neighbors reported an increase in sightings where predators from outside the neighborhood intentionally come into the heart of the city and prey on people

struggling with addiction. Social conditions like these influence individual and population health differences which makes improving quality of life in Heartside much more difficult. It is important to address these issues to prevent the neighborhood from becoming desensitized, which will lead to poor outcomes and the deterioration of health and wellness for all who live and learn in the neighborhood. The substance abuse problem that exists in Heartside may be a result of a toxic combination of “poor social policies, unfair economic arrangements and bad politics” but whatever the reason... the neighborhood must not continue to excuse or accept the adverse behavior.

Another community priority for this work group involved mental health advocacy to eliminate stigma and empower people to treat all neighbors with empathy and understanding. Many people in the neighborhood have not been educated about mental illness and how to properly address mentally ill persons with dignity and respect. It became evident that more events and opportunities that create a culture of caring and build community trust need to be created and sustained in Heartside.

Engagement

The Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group averaged 8 regular contributing members and was comprised of resident leaders, social workers, nurses, community health workers, peer to peer support specialists, city staff and other stakeholders in the neighborhood.

Members of the work group acknowledged they would not be able to singlehandedly resolve the underlying causes of substance abuse and mental illness. Therefore, this work group focused on the best ways in which they could help connect their neighbors with the support and resources necessary to place them on a path to success.

The work group analyzed the support specialist and recovery coach trainings that exist in the neighborhood. Dwelling Place offers Peer Support Training for residents, which several of the work group members completed in the Fall of 2018. They also took a look at what educational programming opportunities exist for individuals interested in peer support. As a matter fact, several of the work group members completed a peer support Training offered to Dwelling Place residents in that same year. They all brought their newly acquired knowledge, skills and information back to the work group.

In the midst of this process Recovery Academy, which offered Peer-to-Peer recovery coaching and mental health awareness classes lost its funding. Because members of the work group successfully researched, documented and created a Reference Book that lists local and state requirements to become Peer Support certified, they were able to shift gears quickly and work towards implementing a newly designed peer support specialist and recovery coach pilot program in Heartside which would later become known as Aspire

Academy. This pilot project is currently seeking to secure funding and support from agencies in Heartside and other community partners that might be able to help get the project up and running. See Appendix 9 for more information.

The work group also took part in a survey that was sent out to the neighborhood and asked if neighbors would be interested in a mental health first-aid training in Heartside. A significant amount of neighbors responded by saying they would attend if training was offered. The Mental Health Foundation a/k/a Be Nice was identified as the desired ownership organization. The group discussed offering a 2-day training to City Commissioners, GRPD, agency providers, and all other interested parties free of charge.

The Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group has committed to continuing their work thru fiscal year 2019.

Recommendations

Final recommendations have been provided by the Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group, as follows:

- Implement a newly designed Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Coach Program in Heartside.
- Create a database and map of funding resources for support services, and update annually.
- Research, document and create a reference book that includes and explains local and State requirements to become a certified peer-to-peer support specialist and/or recovery coach in Heartside.
- Provide Mental Health First-Aid Training in Heartside.
- Create and implement regular programming where certified Heartside peer support specialists and peer recovery coaches can service the neighborhood in public spaces with regular office hours.

See Appendix 5 for full Recommendation Matrix.



Pictured Above: Doreen Timmers (Resident) and Susan Meekhof (Neighbor) are part of the driving force behind Aspire Academy, a newly designed Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Coach Program being launched in Heartside.

Accomplishments



This work group has cultivated and empowered three outstanding resident leaders that have made significant contributions to the Quality of Life study overall and the Aspire Academy Pilot Project.

Doreen Timmers is a Dwelling Place resident leader, The Assistant Director of Aspire Academy and serves as co-chair of the work group. She described the Quality of Life study as “an opportunity to share and receive valuable input from the residents in Heartside”. This exchange of knowledge and life experiences has informed the work and redefined measures of success for this group from the inside out. The transformational leadership that has transpired in this group from building resident voice and empowering people that are often overlooked has been an accomplishment within itself.

***Note:** The Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group recognized there was a need to provide Peer-to-Peer Support services in the Neighborhood. As one of their final recommendations to improve quality of life in Heartside, the group began working diligently to establish community partnerships and to begin fundraising for implementation of the pilot program.*

**Aspire
Academy**
“reaching higher”

Areas of Improvement



Problem Statement

While quality of life challenges affect Heartside as a whole, there are a few key locations within the neighborhood that generate a high proportion of the behavioral and safety concerns. Neighbors in Heartside were asked, “What areas of the neighborhood could be improved?” Over and over again, the neighborhood cited Heartside Park, Pekich Park and Lucky’s Liquor store as areas of needed improvement.

Because there is an inadequate amount of activation and community engagement in the parks, they have become gathering spaces for people who may be experiencing homelessness and for predators from outside the neighborhood to engage in criminal activity. Given that, most residents don’t feel comfortable frequenting those parks and are unable to enjoy their intended use. Furthermore, the neighborhood expressed feelings that these parks, in their current state, don’t offer much safety and security for residents and neighbors passing by the parks. Both parks

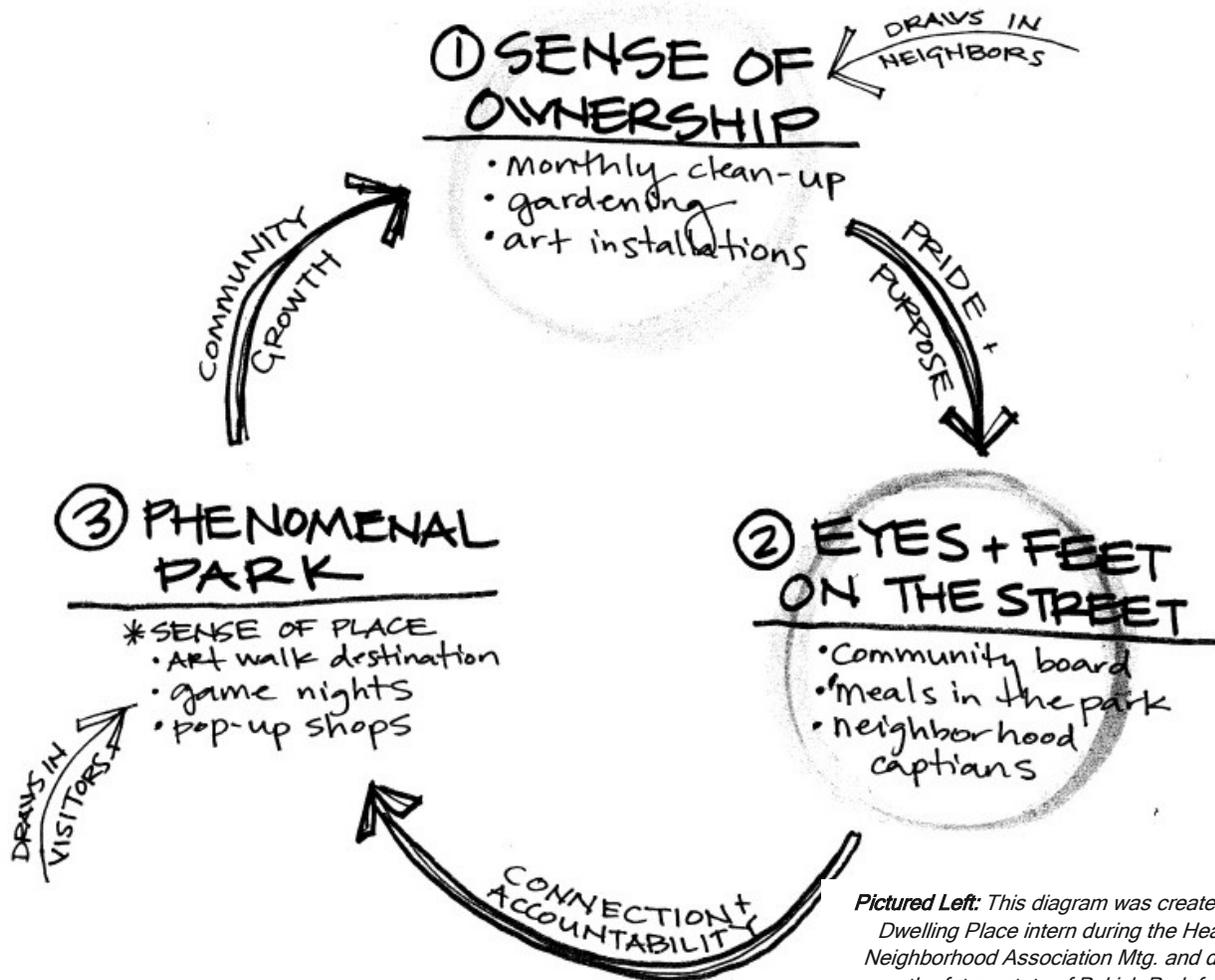
were identified as places where violence and illegal activity is commonplace.

Lucky’s Liquor Store was a point of contention for a number of reasons. It was repeated many times that the corner store is viewed as a detriment to Heartside. The liquor store is located on the corner of Division St. and Weston St. which is currently dimly lit and has been identified as a “hot spot” of disproportionately high crime rates.

In addition, the neighborhood stated there is more public intoxication and urination in the area. People shared stories of experiencing aggressive panhandling, loitering and increased harassment and violence outside of Lucky’s front door. As a result of some of the negative social behaviors associated with the liquor store, most people do not patronize the corner store and opt to go outside of the neighborhood for shopping to meet their basic needs.

The Areas of Improvement work group discussed the strong need to create a paradigm shift to change what behaviors are tolerated in Heartside. In its current state, the neighborhood has too many vacant commercial spaces, with the issues of the neighborhood described in this work plan seen as the barriers to attract new, thriving businesses that could provide needed goods, services and jobs to residents. Residents report not feeling safe and secure

walking the Division corridor, and feel underserved by police. As a result of the number of empty and dark spaces, doorways of vacant spaces become alcoves for loitering and places for criminal activity. These observations became a foundational query the work group grappled with over the course of three months and, in doing so, attempted to answer the question “what is acceptable behavior in the neighborhood”?



Pictured Left: This diagram was created by a Dwelling Place intern during the Heartside Neighborhood Association Mtg. and depicts the future state of Pekich Park from the perspective of the neighbors in attendance.

Engagement

The Areas of Improvement work group focused on the identified problem locations, as well as larger issues surrounding activation and community engagement in Heartside. More than 10 people participated on this group, including representatives from Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD), Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI), Kendall College Art & Design (KCAD), the DGRI Ambassadors, Degage Ministries, the YWCA, Tower Pinkster, The Ruse, Dwelling Place, and multiple departments of the City of Grand Rapids.

Conversations regarding Heartside and Pekich Park began with discussions about intentional use of the parks and how to break down barriers to use the parks in new ways. The work group felt it was important to make sure that these suggestions and ideas for future uses served the neighborhood, rather than people from outside the neighborhood. The group also wanted to make sure that these ideas honored and were inclusive of neighbors who are currently experiencing homelessness. As an example, the group considered ways to cultivate safe areas to “hang out”, recognizing the social value of gathering and separating that from the criminal activities happening in the same space.

One of the immediate engagement efforts for the group was the activation of Pekich Park through the implementation of a community information board. Neighbors repeatedly asked for more information that is visible and readily available to old and new neighbors trying to navigate Heartside. After initial meetings with Planning Department staff, representatives from the Parks & Recreation office and KCAD, the group realized there was an opportunity for alignment that could activate the park while engaging and informing the neighborhood at the same time.

In addition to the aforementioned engagement efforts, the work group also initiated a partnership with the Dwelling Place Gardening Club to activate Pekich Park. A group of resident gardeners came together weekly to do basic gardening in the park which included weeding, planting and basic landscaping. However, the group was unable to continue the activation because of a massive rat infestation that exists in the park. The group has been working with the City of Grand Rapids Parks Department to eliminate the infestation and has been seeking funding for flowers, plants and mulch to reinstate the program in the spring of 2019.

The work group also invited the owners and managers of Lucky’s Liquor store to the table for a series of conversations about the impact of their business in the neighborhood. The invitation from the work group expressed that while they respect their right to operate a business, the corner of Weston and Division was identified as a problem area in the neighborhood that feels unsafe and residents/community members are concerned. Some points of discussion have included taking responsibility for their involvement in the neighborhood, rethinking products for sale, remodeling or rebranding to deter negative behavior and pondering other ways they could work together to address the concerns that arose out of the Quality of Life study.

Recommendations

Final recommendations provided by the Areas of Improvement work group are as follows:

- Begin immediate activation of Pekich Park as a community garden space to improve resident led maintenance and improvements to the plants.
- Engage Lucky’s owners (building and business) in a discussion about the impact of the business model on the neighborhood and ask for dedicated efforts to change the corner outside Lucky’s Liquor Store.
- Add new utilities to Pekich Park to serve as a valuable resource for Heartside neighbors and enable daily park activation including a public restroom and/or a pop up community center.
- Activate Pekich Park by creating new events-based activities that will create active uses twice a month including the winter season: Gardening, Concert Series & Community Meals.
- Implement a program to address behavior along South Division.
- Assign a community officer in the evening designated to Heartside and allocated for hours after 5pm.

See Appendix 5 for the full Recommendation Matrix.

Accomplishments

Since the inception of this work group, agency has been established, partnerships are evident and there has been an increase in programming in park spaces. One success is a collaborative partnership with KCAD, including the implementation of an interactive info board that was installed in Pekich Park. The neighborhood expressed a desire for more information about critical resources and wayfinding in the neighborhood; the info board serves as a creative mechanism for both. It also functions as a way for neighbors to leave information and comments about what they'd like to see in their neighborhood. The sign invites people to: "write it, draw it, create it, and discover it" as a daily engagement tool.

Similarly, the work group also recognized that there are behavioral norms that need to be addressed in Heartside. Given the nature of the neighborhood, there is turnover with whole new groups of people coming in and out regularly. The group wanted to find a way to easily share neighborhood goals and values, and researched of models from across the country for inspiration. The work group came up with a definition to define acceptable behavior, and introduced this statement through inclusion on the community information board within Pekich Park. It reads:

"We thrive in a culture of respect where responsibility is shared to create a clean, safe and inclusive environment for all people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation and age."

Progress was made regarding concerns around Lucky's Liquor. Based on this dialog, Lucky's Liquor increased the price for single serve cans of beer, reduced single-serve beer offerings from 14 to four. and decided to close one hour earlier on Saturdays. Conversations with the store were positive, inspiring and enlightening on both sides. On January 22nd, 2019 the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) revoked Lucky's sale of alcohol. There has been a noticeable difference in the neighborhood since this occurred. The work group has acknowledged that there is a divide in the community about the store. On one hand, it provides goods that are in demand by residents. On the other, many nuisance behaviors and criminal activity noticeably decreased almost instantly.



Note: See Appendix 10 for more Media and Press Coverage web links on the Heartside Quality of Life Study.

Heartside District Emergency Incident Reduction

Problem Statement

Unfortunately, some Heartside residents experience chronic health problems; exacerbated by a lack of preventative care. Those experiencing homelessness, particularly for long periods of time, are often most challenged. Intoxication and mental health challenges can also be contributing factors to emergency incident calls.

Non-emergency incidents in the neighborhood have resulted in increased call volume and emergency-level responses in mostly non-emergency scenarios. All too often, a well-intentioned passersby calls 911 for non-emergency situations - such as a person sleeping on the sidewalk. High call volume, especially for "super-users" (high-frequency, repeat users) limits the ability for the Grand Rapids Fire Department (GRFD) and other first responders to utilize their resources most efficiently. In Heartside, 15 "super-users" were associated with 305 EMS calls last year. Some individuals were seen in excess of 40 times.

Engagement

After a conversation with the Mayor and other city staff members, the Grand Rapids Fire Department (GRFD) hosted two stakeholder meetings in the summer of 2018. The stakeholder meetings yielded several new goals and proposed counter measures in response to the incidents occurring in the neighborhood. These objectives include pre-incident, incident, and post-incident measures. Engagement efforts were also extended out to the Mel Trotter Public Inebriation Center stakeholder meetings and the Behavioral Health and Economic Development meeting hosted by Dwelling Place.



Pictured: Target 8 Same patient different day. GHomeless.org EMS, By: Susan Samples. Posted: Nov 20, 2018 11:06 PM EST / Updated: Nov 21, 2018 09:03 AM EST

An adjunct work group has been formed to continue to work on these issues, not only from the perspective of the Fire Department, but as a collective group that also considers impact on quality of life, police, and other community service issues. The GRFD continues to share relevant learnings with all stakeholders at regular intervals and are continuing to work to ensure countermeasures are meeting original goals.



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- IS THIS PERSON IN DISTRESS?
- IS THIS TYPICAL?
- SHOULD I CALL 911?

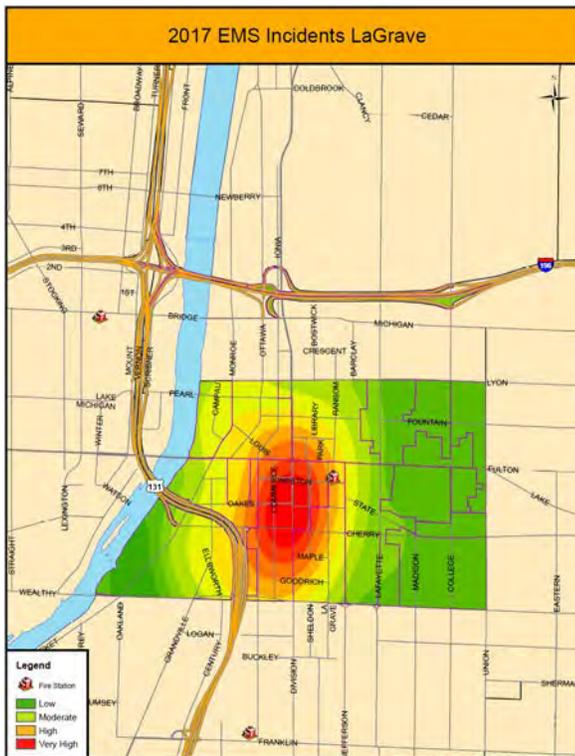
Recommendations

A series of goals were identified during stakeholder meetings. The GRFD was able to categorize the goals as pre-incident, during the incident, or post incident. Based on these goals, a related set of countermeasures have been proposed.

| <u>Pre-Incident</u> | <u>During Incident</u> | <u>Post Incident</u> |
|--|---|--|
| Provide better preventative care | Increased options for non-emergency transport | Post emergency department follow up |
| Provide community education in proper use and activation of the 911 system | Better understand the needs of the patient | Provide access to public inebriate support programs |
| Better management of the heaviest users of the EMS system | Increase information sharing for both medical and non-medical agencies (DDA/GRPD) | Reduction in emergency department visits/repeat visits |

Please note: The proposed countermeasures in the table below correlate to the table in the "Target/Goal(s)" area.

| <u>Pre-Incident</u> | <u>During Incident</u> | <u>Post Incident</u> |
|---|---|--|
| Provide mobile integrated healthcare | Petition KCEMS to allow alternate transport options based on complaint | Inter-agency sharing of incident data - allows tracking and follow up with "super-users" |
| Public Education Campaign - Identifying persons in distress | Improve inter-agency communication - Early identification of true nature of complaint | Support the Mel Trotter Public Inebriate Program |
| Define "super-users" and create a shared database | "Ride Along" app to aid in de-escalation and follow up care | Identify gaps in patient care to ensure continuous improvement of care |



Accomplishments

This work group has successfully defined “super-user” and created a shared database to better inform all parties of those individuals who tend to be repeat offenders and are in the most need of wrap-around services. Identifying these gaps in patient care helps to ensure continuous improvement of care in Heartside. The Heartside District Emergency Call Reduction work group is expected to continue meeting and executing counter measures through fiscal year 2021.

Heartside District Emergency Incident Reduction

Priority Proposed Timeline

Years 2018 - 2021

Plan / Timeline

| Priority Proposed Timeline | | 2019 Quarter 1 | 2019 Quarter 2 | 2019 Quarter 3 | 2019 Quarter 4 | 2020 Quarter 1 | 2020 Quarter 2 | 2020 Quarter 3 | 2020 Quarter 4 | 2021 Quarter 1 |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Support the Mel Trotter Public Inebriate Program | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Public Education Campaign - Identifying persons in distress | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Define "super-users" and create a shared database | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Identify gaps in patient care to ensure continuous improvement of care | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | "Ride Along" app to aid in de-escalation and follow up care | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Improve inter-agency communication | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Inter-agency sharing of incident data | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Petition KCEMS to allow alternate transport options based on complaint | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Provide mobile integrated healthcare | | | | | | | | | |

03

**FINAL QUALITY OF LIFE
RECOMMENDATIONS
AND CONCLUSIONS**

RECOMMENDED NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



The Neighborhood Action Plan summarizes the recommendations of each focus area, including identification of goals, measures, owners and recommended partners. The Neighborhood Action Plan also identifies the status of the project and timeline, including identification of goals that may be ongoing or require periodic updates. Finally, the plan provides a brief overview of funding needs and the potential costs of the project.

The self-starter spirit of the work groups resulted in the creation of relatively “lean” projects – relatively low barrier of entry, little to moderate cost, and the potential for positive impact within the neighborhood. An example of this is the goal around the Fresh Food Access Map, an attempt to connect people to existing resources for fresh and affordable food immediately, giving additional time to organize and fund larger efforts such as a new farmers market or food co-op within the neighborhood.

There are also larger capital improvement projects that have been identified within the plan, such as lighting improvements and permanent public restroom facilities. These projects require high level leadership and commitment, which have been demonstrated by the funding and support of the City and DRGI. However, continued involvement of the neighborhood as these projects are implemented will remain critical, so that resident voice continues to be heard. Ownership of implementation must be shared to produce truly effective and successful results.

Participants of the work groups, the Heartside Neighborhood Association, Dwelling Place, the City and DGRI have each taken ownership of individual pieces of the Neighborhood Action Plan. However, many items are still in need of a final champion with the expertise and capacity to carry the project from concept to completion. Until such time as the Heartside Neighborhood Association can become a fully organized 501(c)(3) entity, additional support will be needed to carry the momentum of the Heartside Quality of Life Study forward into implementation.

Short-Term Recommendations and Framework

Based on the need to both support the existing work of residents and to find additional champions to carry projects forward, we have developed a short-term (two-year) strategy that provides both staffing and seed money to kick-start implementation.

Recommendation #1: Continued Quality of Life Study and Neighborhood Action Plan Implementation Support

The Quality of Life Planning process has unleashed tremendous capacity within the neighborhood, however it needs fostering and care to build sustainability. This can be accomplished through a staff support person resourced with the necessary tools and funds to seed projects. Having someone to continue to provide guidance to the neighborhood and organize their efforts will ensure that the work accomplished through the engagement process is not lost. In addition, there are items that require a higher level of expertise to lead and facilitate. An implementation support person is needed to make these connections and carry the projects from the ideation stage to implementation. This recommendation came out of the Neighborhood Building and Activation work group and has received strong support from all work groups and the planning team.

Staff Resource

The primary role of the staff resource person is as follows:

- Assist residents/volunteers in direct implementation of projects under the Quality of Life Study and Neighborhood Action Plan.
- Organize and manage events as identified under the Quality of Life Study and Neighborhood Action Plan. Seek project sponsors and partners to offset costs of these events.
- Identifying additional partners / owners of specific plan recommendations.
- Explore grants and other funding mechanisms for implementation of larger scale projects under the Neighborhood Action Plan.
- Act as a conduit between residents, the Heartside Neighborhood Association, Heartside Business Association, City, DGRI, and other partners.

The planning team anticipates that this could be either a part-time position or dedicated hours from a full-time position. The ideal candidate would have a knowledge and understanding of the Heartside Neighborhood, experience with community organizing, project management and event planning, and a dedication to equitable engagement of all who live, play and work in Heartside. The recommended budget for this part-time position is \$100,000 for a two-year period.

Seed Money Resource

As noted above, many of the projects developed have the potential to be high on return and relatively low in cost to implement. In many cases, the work product can largely be created by residents and other volunteers, and/or with the support of partner organizations. However, there is not an available pool of funds to support related printing and engagement activities.

As the planning team learned from this engagement effort, residents are eager to participate and get involved; but the value of their time decision to participate must be acknowledged. In addition, there are generally additional costs associated with engagement activities and community events, ranging from food to equipment or venue rental fees. For the staff resource person to be effective, it is recommended, that an

annual budget to support these activities be provided, with the expectation that additional sponsors and partners will be sought to offset costs, as appropriate. Our recommended budget for seed money resources would be \$20,000/year for a total \$40,000 for the two-year period.

The request recommended amount for engagement (non-personnel) resources is \$40,000 for two years. Funding could come from multiple sources, recognizing the continued importance of collaboration in Heartside. The actual staff position and budget could be housed within the City of Grand Rapids under Planning, Community Development, or the Neighborhood Outreach programs of the Executive Office. It could also be hosted by DGRI in relationship with their Downtown Neighbor Network initiative and related Alliance groups.

Recommendation #2: Restroom Pilot

The need for safe and convenient restrooms within Heartside emerged as a key priority. However, it is acknowledged that the construction and long-term operation of restrooms carries significant cost. The Public Restroom work group has recommended action steps to maximize the resources that are available today, gather supportive data, and encourage the expansion of public restrooms in Heartside. Specifically, the work group would like to champion the Restroom Pilot concept that DGRI is currently exploring and to which they have set aside funding. This project includes opening of a temporary restroom facility to better understand community restroom needs, measure utilization and impacts in the adjacent community, and identify operational needs prior to making a longer-term operational commitment. As a part of this, DGRI is encouraged to:

- Prioritize locations on or very near South Division.
- Provide an option that is not seasonally limited and can operate through winter months.
- Focus days/hours to the greatest times of unmet need, specifically weekends and late night.
- Continue to engage the neighborhood and provide regular updates through the Heartside Neighborhood Association.

Recommendation #3: Lighting

Based on the work committed alongside this study, we anticipate completion of the first two phases of the Heartside Lighting Improvement Plan to be completed. These improvements are critical to public safety along the corridor, for both pedestrians and motorists. The decorative fixtures selected make the statement that Heartside is a place worthy of additional investment and recognition as a unique piece of the downtown fabric. We also recommend continued advocacy for the additional funding necessary to complete the Lighting Improvement Plan for the side streets.

Recommendation #4: Park Redesign

Funding has been set aside through the City Parks and Recreation Department for improvements within Heartside Park and Pekich Park. The Areas of Improvement work group recommends that the two parks be considered in tandem, with ample public engagement of neighborhood residents, adjacent commercial property owners, shelter residents, and other park users. Both the Areas of Improvement and Public Restrooms work groups encourage the discussion to include options to winterize the restrooms within Heartside Park, with the understanding that additional funding would be required for any major retrofit or new construction. For Pekich Park, the addition of restrooms, infrastructure repairs, landscape modifications, and other formal recommendations of the Areas of Improvement work group and the Pekich Park focus group should also be considered. Acknowledgment of behavioral challenges should also factor into redesign efforts.

Additional High Priority Projects

Other projects have also been identified as high priority undertakings to support quality of life in Heartside, however, these projects have not been as fully developed as the recommendations above and require additional funding and resources to realize success. It is expected that the support position under Recommendation #1 (above) would assist in securing partners and resources for these recommendations, or that the report sparks interest in others to take ownership of implementation.

Recommendation #5: Mixed-Use Development Study / Housing Market Study

The priority recommendation emerging from the At Home in Heartside work group is to commission a Mixed-Use and Housing Market Study for Heartside. The purpose of this study would be to identify vacant spaces appropriate for the creation of affordable, subsidized, accessible and market rate housing opportunities and preserve the housing that prevents the displacement of residents.

Recommendation #6: Mental Health First Aid Training

The Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group has identified Mental Health First-Aid Training as a short-term priority of the group. This two-day training is intended to provide the tools to improve response and support to those facing mental health crisis, improving safety and outcomes for all involved. Existing providers within Heartside have the interest and capacity to provide this programming but funding is needed to cover the associated costs.

Recommendation #7 Peer Support Pilot Program

The Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy work group has also identified creation of a peer support pilot program as a high-priority target. Peer Support Specialists are neighbors who have been trained to aid others in preventing relapse, although they often serve an even greater support role for those who may have no family, friends or other support network to which they can relate or easily reach.

Neighborhood Action Items

In addition to the formal recommendations of the Neighborhood Action Plan, there is a strong body of work generated by the Work Groups to implement smaller-scale projects that hold potential for positive impact within the neighborhood. As noted above, the Quality of Life Study process has unleashed tremendous capacity within the neighborhood, however it needs fostering and care to build sustainability. Recommendation #1 (above) includes a request for both staff and financial resources to help support these efforts. Examples of these initiatives include:

- Track and document public urination impacts within the neighborhood.
- Develop programs and activities to activate Pekich Park.
- Provide Rental Readiness Program education.
- Creation of a Fresh Food Access public relations and education campaign.
- Organize resident volunteers to deliver fresh food and resources to residents with limitations.
- Creation of an Employment Resource and Education Land and Learn Series to help residents develop job application skills, seek employment opportunities and develop healthy work habits.

The full list of Work Group Goals and Measures, including identification of key partners, recommended success measures, status and timeline are included under Appendix 5.

HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE 2019/2020 ACTIVITY MATRIX

The work program in Heartside for the next 24 months will be:

| Heartside Work Group Title | Proposed Activity | Description | Potential Partners | Completed |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| FRESH FOOD ACCESS | Fresh Food Access Community Kick-off Meeting | Initial meeting for neighborhood volunteers to become familiar with the overall goals and objectives for the increase of access to Fresh Food in 2019. Volunteers will be able to sign up for the neighborhood Resident Advocate program and well as the Food Box Pilot Program. | Heartside Neighborhood Association, Community Food Club, City of GR Planning Dept., Dwelling Place | Projected completion date: February, 21 st , 2019 |
| | Heartside Neighborhood Paint & Sip | Neighbors will gather at the 106 space for an evening of art instruction where attendees will define what fresh food access means to them by painting their version of the My Plate Food Pyramid. The art experience will be led by a neighbor and member of the work group who is a graduate from Kendall College of Art & Design. | Kendall College, Brush Studios, Dwelling Place, Heartside Neighborhood Association | Projected completion date: March, 21 st , 2019 |
| | Heartside Farmers Market Pilot Program | The goal is to host a few Farmers Markets in the neighborhood at both Pekich Park and Heartside Park. The group would ideally like to work with two farmers to start with, one intentionally being a Farmer of color. The group has considered partnering with other agencies to supply food and/or possibly even purchasing fresh food and selling it at an affordable price in the park. The group is expected to focus their efforts on this initiative in early spring. | Heartside Gleaning Initiative, GR Dream Center, City of GR Parks Dept., Community Food Club, Access of West Michigan, YMCA Veggie Van | 2019/2020 |
| AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT | Lucky's Liquor Store Community Conversations | The work group has hosted a total of 5 conversations with the owners and managers of Lucky's Liquor Store. Conversations have been fairly successful. Since its inception the work group has been able to negotiate several quick wins like the increase in pricing on single serve cans of beer and closing one hour earlier on Saturdays. There has also been conversation about rebranding the store. | Work Group Members, Neighbors, Area Business Owners, Lucky's Management, Lucky's Owners, GRPD | Completed |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Pekich Park Activation - Dwelling Place Gardening Club | Dwelling Place has been advocating to DGRI by way of the Goal 2 Alliance to get added funding for gardening supplies, mulch, water, etc. to continue the work of the Heartside Gardening Club. They began their efforts in 2018 but uncovered that Pekich Park had a huge rat infestation which halted the work. The Parks Dept. treated the pocket park this past Fall. To move forward and reinstate the program, residents will need funding from DRGI or the city for the purchase of plants, flowers, mulch, dirt, etc. | City of GR Parks Dept., Planning dept., Dwelling Place Residents, Heartside Neighbors | TBD |
| | Kendall College of Art & Design Masters of Architecture Program Collaboration | Info Board Installation at Pekich Park - Given the timeline and approvals the current sign is not affixed in the Park the way the students intended to ground the sign. They have all of the supplies to finish installing the sign properly but proper final installation is weather dependent. The students have also been working very hard on some great design ideals for a mobile community center. Some of the renderings have been phenomenal and we have seen a lot of overlap in ways some of the infrastructural components of their designs could truly benefit the neighborhood. The students explored various ways to activate vacant or under-utilized space in the neighborhood. The ideals included many different aspects from the implementation of a community space that is also a greenhouse to interesting ways we could better use a parking ramp as a gathering space. | KCAD, Dwelling Place, City of GR Planning Dept., GRPD, Heartside Neighbors | TBD |
| | Pekich & Heartside Park Redesign and Construction | The Parks Dept. has dedicated mileage funding allocated for the redesign and construction of both parks. Winterizing the bathroom at Heartside Park has been a point of discussion for consideration. It will be a costly endeavor that is likely to require most, if not all, of the funds available. | City of GR Parks Dept. | 2019/2020 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| ENGAGED & EMPLOYED | Lunch & Learn Series | Four Sessions over the course of the year hosted at the 106 Space in Heartside. Titles include: Employment 101, Work Life Balance, and a Ready to Launch Mini Job Fair and Talk to Me: How to Communicate with your Employer. Series is limited to 15 participants from the neighborhood and participants who complete all four courses will be added to a certified Heartside Employee Reference List. The goal is to equip neighbors with the knowledge and skills needed to obtain and/or maintain employment in Heartside or near neighborhoods. This initiative is being led by the QOL work group and each session will be facilitated by a partner agency. | Degage Ministries, Heartside Business Association, 70x7 Life Recovery, Dwelling Place, Mel Trotter, City of Grand Rapids Planning Department | January 16 th Completed <u>Remaining Dates:</u> April 17 th July 17 th October 16 th |
| PUBLIC RESTROOMS | Pilot Program | DGRI is currently involved in a Cost Analysis and seeking quotes for the use of a vacant commercial space in the target area on South Division. The space is a Dwelling Place Live/Work Space Unit located near the corner of Division & Weston and directly across the street from Rockwell Republic. | DGRI, Dwelling Place, GRPD, DGRI Ambassadors and other neighboring commercial retail spaces. | In Progress |
| SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT, RECOVERY & MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY | Mental Health First Aid Training | Offer a 2-Day training in Heartside to First-ward Commissioners, GRPD, Agency Providers, Neighbors and all interested parties FREE of charge in Heartside. | Dwelling Place , City of Grand Rapids, Be NICE, work group | Fall of 2019 |
| | Aspire Academy - Newly designed Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Coach program in Heartside | Aspire Academy is intended to be a mental health and substance abuse issue education center located in the Heartside area of Downtown Grand Rapids. Degage Ministries has graciously agreed to provide space to educate the community on weekends (Saturday and Sunday afternoons). They hope to open the doors of Aspire Academy in the spring of 2019. Each day will offer four hour and a half classes ranging from self-esteem to problem solving with practical solutions. Executive Director = Susan Meekhof and Assistant Director = Doreen Timmers | Heartside QOL work group, Degage Ministries, | In Progress |
| NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING & ACTIVATION | Neighborhood Association Steering Committee | There will be a total of 6 meetings where the steering committee which consists of people from both North and South of Fulton will have the following committee goals: Mission, Vision, Values, Boundaries, By-laws, Membership structure, Board structure and Association name. | Neighbors, DNN, Heartside Neighborhood Association | In Progress |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|-------------|
| | Neighborhood Association Events | History of Heartside Pt. 2 , Community-wide Flea Market (likely partnership with DDN), National Night Out with GRPD, Neighbor Knowledge Exchange January 2019, new annual event for selecting board members (Details TBD), Cleansweep with GVSU students, Legacy Binder creation for the perpetuation of the Neighborhood Association. | | 2019/2020 |
| | Heartside/ Downtown Neighborhood Association | The Neighborhood Association is expanding NORTH! Boundaries are 90% likely to go up to Michigan St. We are embarking on this journey where the DNN will act as an umbrella organization for associations in Downtown and other near neighborhoods. The issue of the “white space” or unclaimed territory will now be dissolved into Heartside/ Downtown. Bridging the gap between residents North of Fulton and South of Fulton is imperative. This work will begin as the Steering Committee unfolds and starts working together. | HNA, DGRI, DNN | In Progress |
| AT HOME IN HEARTSIDE | Mixed-Use Development Neighborhood Vacancy Study | The City of Grand Rapids study current mixed-use developments in Heartside for potential future use as Affordable Housing. And if there are vacancies, provide more opportunities to participate in the Housing / Rental Rehabilitation Program. | City of Grand Rapids, DGRI, Assessors Office, Dwelling Place | 2019/2020 |
| | Heartside Residential Rental Ordinance Info Session | Educate applicants on the Residential Rental Application Ordinance rights and complaint process. | Work Group, City of Grand Rapids, Community Development Office | Spring 2019 |
| CALL VOLUME REDUCTION EFFORTS | Task Force Meetings / | Nine proposed countermeasures were identified: Support the Mel Trotter Public Inebriate Program Public Education Campaign - Identifying persons in distress. Define "super-users" and create a shared database Identify gaps in patient care to ensure continuous improvement. "Ride Along" App to aid in de-escalation and follow up care. Improve inter-agency communication. Inter-agency sharing of incident data. Petition KCEMS to allow alternate transport options based on complaint. Provide mobile integrated healthcare. | GRPD, GRFD, Dwelling Place, Mel Trotter, Mercy Health, Spectrum Health, City of GR Various Departments | 2019/2021 |

Mid-Term Recommendations and Framework

By Year 3, we anticipate that the Heartside Neighborhood Association will be fully formed as a non-profit and able to take on a greater leadership role in implementation of the Quality of Life Study. They may wish to take over funding and management of the transitional staff position created or may choose to rely solely on their board and membership. They will also have the ability to directly fundraise through activities, grants, neighborhood match funds, and other sources.

The City of Grand Rapids and DGRI will also likely maintain a key role, particularly in implementation of identified capital improvement projects, such as completion of street lighting improvements.

Recommendation #8: Heartside Park Bathroom

As noted in Recommendation #4, funding has been set aside for park redesign within Heartside Park. One of the key concerns identified by the Public Restroom and Areas of Improvement work groups is that the current restrooms are designed for seasonal use only. Based on information provided to the Public Restroom work group, it appears that the additional restrooms could not be easily retrofitted to allow year-round use. The cost to retrofit or build new restrooms could consume (and possibly exceed) the funds set aside for the park as a whole. And, there are likely other projects within the park that are equally desired by the neighborhood. It is recommended that a restroom be explored as a part of park planning' with understanding that additional funding would need to be identified for implementation.

Recommendation # 9: Mobile / Pop-Up Community Center

The Areas of Improvement work group has identified creation of a mobile or pop-up community center as a priority goal. The intent of this community center would be to further connect residents to the resources available within the neighborhood (and beyond), including the materials and programs that have emerged from the Quality of Life Study process. Options for this community center could include a mobile unit similar to a food truck/trailer that could rotate locations within the neighborhood, or several locations within neighborhood buildings which could be staffed on a rotating basis. Further conceptualization should be developed with the community and potential operation and funding partners to determine the best model of delivery.

Long-Term Recommendations

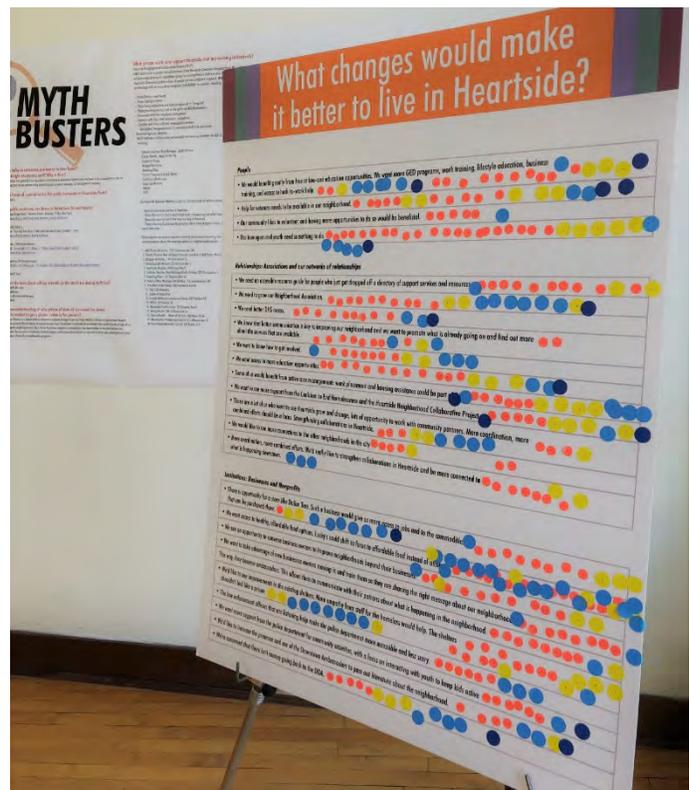
Recommendation #10: Progress Report and Update

We strongly recommend a revisit of the Quality of Life Study in approximately five years to determine what measures of success have been met, priorities that have shifted, and new priorities that have emerged. This could happen as a formal Area Specific Plan under the City's Master Plan or a completely self-led effort of the neighborhood.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

While the Heartside Quality of Life process drew components from our Area Specific Plan processes and other City-led engagement efforts, aspects of this process were unique and intended to test the framework of community engagement. Specifically, planners wanted to explore ways in which to engage residents at a deep, grassroots level. This included reaching those traditionally left out of the process, such as shelter residents.

The process began with an informal committee, including City of Grand Rapids staff from Planning and the Executive Office, DGRI, Dwelling Place and the Heartside Neighborhood Collaboration Project. The team designed a process that included a traditional Steering Committee, community engagement meetings, and the formulation of a short-format report. A six-month process was envisioned. However, the best planning processes are always these that are able to change based on iterative learning.



As the planning team prepared to begin community engagement, the committee identified a need to hire a facilitator who would connect with residents and have the ability to speak with a wide range of stakeholders. Latesha Lipscomb, a resident and business owner who was already active in the neighborhood, was identified as the ideal candidate. She joined the process as lead project manager in June of 2017. The value of having members of the community that have been empowered to engage and lead their neighborhood cannot be understated. In this case, the process gained someone who embraced the project and its outcomes with their very soul. However, this approach does not necessarily represent a cost- or time-saving measure. The realm of local government and policy work comes with a learning curve, as do planning-based community engagement techniques. However, by spending the additional time to “train the trainer” the expertise of someone from the community was built up, providing new skills and an opportunity to lead that extends beyond the timeframe of the planning effort.

Another take-away for the planning team was the need to incentivize participation. This effort was designed to bring people into the process who would not traditionally become involved in community engagement, make them feel comfortable in the space, and take them from observer to contributor. Traditionally, little budget set-aside has been dedicated to food, promotional give-away items, and other incentives such as gift cards. In this case, however, they proved beneficial in many ways:

- A process like this requires a great deal from community participants in terms of their time and efforts, both inside and outside the meetings. They do this without pay, so incentives were a small way to show gratitude for their contributions. As an example #HEARTsideSTRONG branded t-shirts were provided to the leads of the work groups at the final report-out meeting. The residents now wear these shirts with pride and they have become a conversation starter that continues to build recognition within the neighborhood.

- Provision of meals was also a driver for many of the participants, particularly in the early listening sessions. A large number of residents live on limited incomes, so the incentive of a free meal was a real benefit. There is also a culture of coming together around meals in the neighborhood; for example, each Heartside Neighborhood Association meeting provides a potluck style meal for attendees.
- Small drawings at the end also incentivized participants to both show up and stay throughout the meeting. As an example, the team held a listening session within Degage Ministries. At the beginning of the meeting, people were most concerned with making sure they received a ticket for the raffle of the \$10 Subway Gift Cards. However, as the meeting processed, the level of interest in the discussion raised and the planners came away from the discussion with a perspective and understanding that they couldn't have otherwise anticipated.
- A final takeaway is the importance of capturing authentic community voice and understanding that the work does not need to be "translated" into professional jargon to be effective. In fact, retaining the voice of the community and reflecting this back throughout the process has generated an end product that the community owns as their work.

04

APPENDICES

List of Appendices:

1. Guiding Principles
2. 2016 Business Owner & Resident Letter to City Commission
3. 2016 Heartside Resident Satisfaction Survey
4. Community Engagement
 - Heartside Quality of Life Workgroup Survey Feedback
 - Engagement Tools
 - NKE Inquiry Boards / Interaction Materials
5. Work Group Goals and Measures
6. Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis
7. Pekich Park Survey
8. Fresh Food Access Map
9. Aspire Academy
10. Media, Press Coverage and Web Links
 - Where Their Hearts Reside: The Women Who are Transforming the Heartside Neighborhood – Women’s Lifestyle Magazine ·December 2018
 - WKTV VOICES PROJECT LINK : <https://wktvvoices.org/voices-in-heartside/>
11. The Heartside Neighborhood – A Thought Paper by Dennis Sturtevant
12. Heartside Neighborhood Activity Matrix 2019/2021

APPENDIX 1

Guiding Principles

Heartside Quality of Life Vision Statement

Our neighborhood will be a safe, cooperative place where our diverse interests and lifestyles can coexist with mutual respect.

We believe there are shared ideals and resources that are necessary for a daily life of dignity and respect. We are working together to:

- improve access to housing, fresh food, mental health, substance support, and public restrooms
- become a place where there is dignity for those who are disabled, facing unemployment or struggling with mental illness
- build economic and educational opportunities for all people, with an emphasis on supporting women, and people of color, and families
- improve our neighborhood so neighbors of all backgrounds can live, work, shop, volunteer, play, worship, and proudly welcome guests
- improve public and nonprofit services to build equity for all residents
- unite in harmony and fellowship
- tear down stereotypes
- ensure that community engagement is thriving and empathy is evident

We hope that Heartside neighbors and partners will embrace collaboration to become a welcoming, green, walkable, safe, historic neighborhood where people of all types can live, work and play without judgement based on race, income level, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, ability or education.

Heartside Quality of Life Work Groups Guiding Principles

Leadership

We count on residents and community partners to take initiative in working collectively, creatively and aggressively to make it a reality. The early involvement of community stakeholders leads to the identification of a number of community issues. Workgroup participants will focus on shaping shared goals and identifying strategies to guide change in our neighborhood. Transparency of process and the inclusion of neighborhood feedback will be evident, monthly workgroup updates will be shared at Neighborhood Association Meetings and a mid season event. Personal accountability for engagement is paramount to supporting the process and the community.

Partnership

From our social service organizations, faith institutions, for profit businesses, neighborhood association and education institutions to our public safety officials and city departments, we recognize that success can only be achieved through collaborative efforts, relationship building and a shared

vision. No community resolutions will work without having a broad range of partners integrated as workgroup members, committed to carrying solutions forward.

Creativity

Creativity is a neighborhood strength and we recognize the importance of infusing creativity into our problem solving processes. From sharing neighborhood vision to encouraging dynamic meeting processes, we are looking for innovative methods that champion expression and new perspectives.

Access

We are committed to creating a neighborhood that is welcoming for all, from inclusive design decisions to community meetings that are open for participants of all abilities and backgrounds. Heartside is a place for everyone.

Diversity and Inclusion

We want to make sure that our community is welcoming. We value solutions that encourage and promote empathy. Diversity is value and strength in our neighborhood and the inclusion of resident voice regardless of race, religion, ability, age, gender or socioeconomic status is essential when determining solutions. We will work to cultivate empathy for our neighbors and peers.

Community Health

We understand that the health care concerns of the individual can impact the neighborhood as a whole. The maintenance, protection and improvement of the health status of our community is an indicator of neighborhood improvement. Our strategies and solutions understand that limited access to nutrition, mental health and addiction services constitute a public health crisis in Heartside and supportive services are paramount to supporting the well-being of our neighbors.

Advancement and Opportunity

We seek solutions that create economic and educational opportunities for both residents and businesses. Growth opportunities for community members to be engaged, empowered, and employed will increase individual and community wealth.

APPENDIX 2

2016 Business Owner & Resident

Letter to City Commission

To Grand Rapids City Staff, Mayor Bliss and City Commissioners,

The undersigned individuals represent numerous stakeholders engaged in recent discussions related to the street amenities along South Division Avenue. Recently, Commissioner O'Connor spent a day walking the South Division corridor meeting with business owners, while Commissioner Shaffer has met with business owners at the Heartside Business Association. In addition, DGRI staff Annamarie Buller, Bill Kirk and Melvin Eledge, Operations Manager for the Downtown Ambassadors, met with business owners to discuss street infrastructure improvement in May. Through those conversations, and others, we have identified some major concerns that are shared by business owners, residents and building owners along the South Division corridor. The GR Forward plan outlines a series of steps calling for the creation of a more walkable, well lit, South Division Avenue which will help to effectively connect near neighborhoods. If undertaken these actions will begin to address many of the concerns being expressed by residents, local businesses and property owners.

We want to communicate our collective appreciation for the efforts made by the City Commissioners and DGRI Staff to better understand issues that directly affect this vital commercial corridor. We also want to use this opportunity to reiterate some of the most critical concerns, in hopes that resources might be allocated to address these issues as soon as possible. These issues are outlined below:

1. Increasing pedestrian scaled street lighting along the South Division corridor, and side streets leading from South Division to Sheldon and Commerce Avenues.
2. Improving the versatility of parking options along the corridor by adding bike parking along the South Division corridor.
3. Evaluating options for better signage notifying visitors of additional car parking structures just one block away from the corridor.
4. Increasing a visible police presence (preferably a foot patrol) along the South Division corridor during evening, weekend and nighttime hours.

We are aware that the Downtown Ambassadors are already adding trash receptacles and Terracycle (cigarette bins) along South Division Avenue, addressing one of the concerns brought up by business owners and nonprofit leaders. We thank them for the increased coverage and look forward to seeing those amenities in place towards the end of summer.

While none of these issues are new to the corridor, we represent a corridor in the center of a neighborhood that has seen significant growth that we are hopeful will continue. Over the last few years there has been an increase in residential units of housing and today the corridor includes over 500 apartments with 36 transitional housing units and 108 shelter beds. In addition, the South Division corridor is home to over 60 businesses and nonprofit organizations. The overall increase of visitors to the Downtown has resulted in more active use of parking in Heartside and along the corridor, with visitors, residents and business owners traversing the neighborhood at all hours of the day.

Pedestrian scale lighting along the corridor and side streets will soften and improve the pedestrian experience. During conversations with GRPD, assessments conducted by DGRI and discussions with business owners, street lighting was consistently identified as a major concern. Cross streets including Oakes east of Division, Goodrich and Bartlett, west of Division are all in need of improved street lights. It is our hope that the the City would consider, and budget for, adding historic lighting to the entirety of the corridor consistent with other Heartside business districts as seen along Commerce, Jefferson, Grandville, and Ionia streets to connect and unify ALL of the business districts in Heartside. A short term solution is outlined in the GR Forward plan, (pg 152 & 297) calling for development of a lighting plan for South Division Avenue which would emphasize the use of facade mounted LED fixtures, creating an immediately implementable option. We believe both on street and facade mounted options contribute to holistic vision supporting the GR Forward goal 2.1 to “connect Heartside, Heritage Hill and the Downtown Core.”

For future improved street lighting options we request that electrical outlets be automatically added to all newly installed light poles, as well as, consideration given to immediate installation of outlets in existing poles, along with repair of existing outlets. Current public electrical utilities intended to support holiday lights and special event fixtures located in the planter boxes at Oakes and Cherry on Division are not operational and need to be repaired. Until those repairs can be made, the South Division corridor has limited options for obtaining the same caliber of holiday decor seen in other commercial corridors in downtown.

We understand the City's goal to improve the versatility of parking options downtown by adding bike parking in strategic areas. South Division business owners, nonprofit representatives and residents have identified key sites along the corridor as optimal bike parking areas, supporting businesses and residents alike. We would like to request bike parking options be placed at the following locations: in front of the Herkimer Apartments located in the 300 block of South Division, on the corner of South Division and Oakes by Bang Blow Dry and Mos Eisleys, in front of 209 and 205 South Division and at 40 South Division (also serving the Artprize Hub). We also recognize and encourage the addition of bike parking at Verne Barry Place and alongside Woosah Outfitters at 331 South Division. In addition, we would like the opportunity to review and approve options for bike parking structures before installation.

Recent increases in parking meter costs have impacted our visitors, employees and Heartside residents. It is our hope to encourage visitors to utilize additional car parking structures just one block away from the corridor by requesting that the City evaluate options for better signage notifying visitors of that available parking.

Finally, we recognize the unique makeup of the South Division corridor. Regular concerns are voiced about illegal activity taking place along the corridor. While Community Officers Stoke, Stafford and Gizzi have been helpful in addressing some daytime activity, we believe there has been an increase in drug dealing and open intoxication in the evening hours. We request a

substantial and visible police presence (preferably a foot patrol) along the South Division corridor during evening and nighttime between the hours of 7pm and 3am, as well as weekend afternoons and evenings.

Please understand that we are keenly aware of the challenges and costs associated with each request we have made. We are also aware of the importance of Division Avenue as a major thoroughfare through the heart of Downtown and believe the corridor is sometimes overlooked as the very vibrant residential and business community that is it today. It is our hope that this petition might help to jumpstart the process to procure more consistent and equitable resources to better unify the neighborhood, furthering the city's efforts to promote the downtown as pedestrian friendly and sustainable.

The GR Forward plan, Goal 3.1 is to create a more walkable South Division Avenue (page 191). An upgrade in streetscaping is necessary, as sidewalk improvements are inconsistent, the area is lacking pedestrian scaled lighting, trees, and safe pedestrian crosswalks. We recognize that a significant barrier to creating consistency for the entirety of the corridor is that MDOT has some authority in implementing any significant alterations. It has been suggested that consideration be given to removing the US Business 131 designation, and having the City take back jurisdiction of the corridor. We recognize that this would increase City maintenance costs, but this would also allow the City to have more control over how the street network is designed and operated, ultimately increasing tax values. We think that it is time for the City to take ownership and responsibility for improving the district to better serve the city and its' residents.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the concerns raised by businesses, property owners, residents and nonprofit organizations. We hope that the signatures below offer ample evidence for broad based support and will encourage the City Commissioners and City Staff to consider improvements to the lighting and parking infrastructure along the South Division corridor as necessary for improving the pedestrian experience. We believe that all of the requests outlined in our letter are supported by the recently amended *Grand Rapids City Masterplan* as described by the *GR Forward Plan Downtown and Grand River Plan for Action*.

If you have questions about our concerns, a representative committee of this signed parties below are eager to meet with City Staff, the Mayor or Commissioners.

Thank you!

APPENDIX 3
2016 Heartside Resident Satisfaction Survey

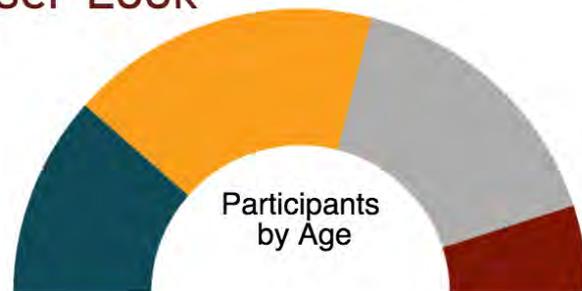
Resident Responses



1,405 residents in Heartside received the Heartside Resident Satisfaction Survey in summer/fall 2016. 232 residents responded to the survey from over 18 apartment communities. In addition, 100 buildings were evaluated for attractiveness, use, maintenance and upkeep. The Heartside neighborhood boundaries were defined as Fulton Street to Wealthy Street and Lafayette Street to the Grand River.

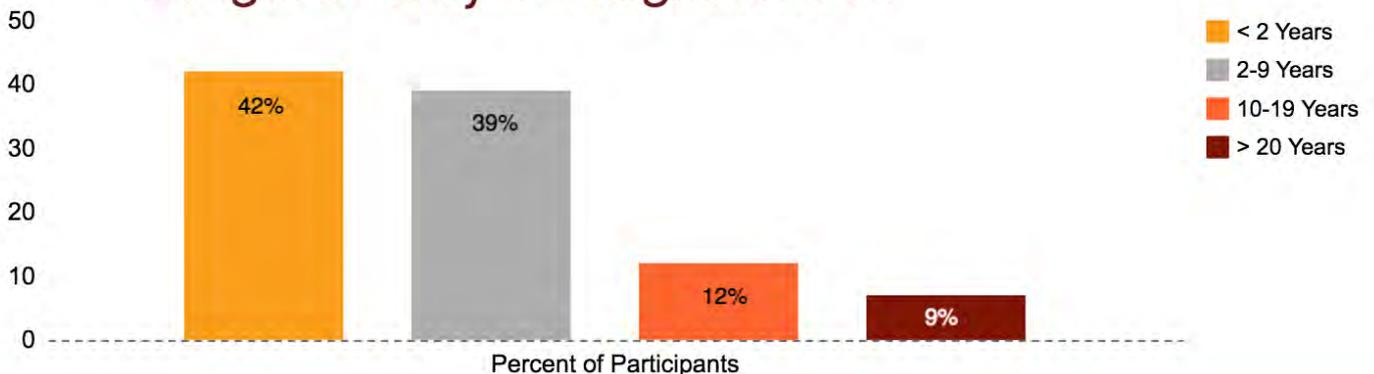
Demographics - A Closer Look

- 49% Female
50% Male
- 100% Renters
- 4% Have Children
96% No Children



■ Age 18 - 34 (23%) ■ Age 35 - 54 (35%) ■ Age 55 - 64 (32%) ■ Age 65+ (10%)

Length of Stay in Neighborhood



Resident Voices

"I enjoy the vibrant community + living in the city!"

"Close to downtown and more affordable"

"I have a short walk to work, the gym and entertainment. The only thing missing is a grocery store."

"After living with others and homeless, I'm very satisfied to finally live alone in a safe environment."

"I'm continuously trying to convince friends to get a place in Heartside, however the demand is high and supply is low."

"There is so much to offer"



Community Services

Participants were asked to identify the community services located in Heartside that were used by anyone in their household in the last year:

+ 100: The Rapid, Grand Rapids Public Library, Cherry Health

+ 50: Dégagé, Mel Trotter, Westminster Food Pantry, Network 180

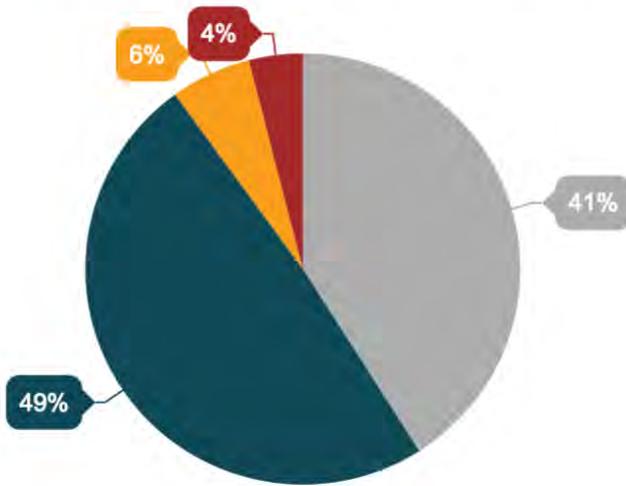
+25: Heartside Ministries, GR Parks and Recreation, Guiding Light, Recovery Academy, Legal Aid of Western Michigan

More than 75% of participants rated fire, police ambulance and trash removal as good or very good. The Grand Rapids Fire Department was rated highest with 88% of residents rating the response as good or very good.

Resident Satisfaction



■ Very satisfied (41%)
 ■ Somewhat satisfied (49%)
■ Somewhat dissatisfied (6%)
 ■ Very dissatisfied (4%)



When asked, "Considering everything would you recommend Heartside as a good place to live?" Residents responded:

40% Definitely would recommend
 43% Probably would recommend
 12% Probably would not recommend
 5% Definitely would not recommend

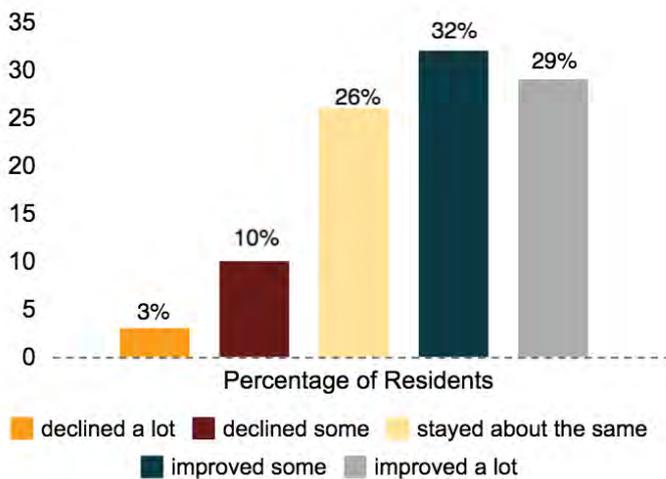
Men and women were equally as likely to recommend the neighborhood.

Parents with kids were 22% less likely to recommend the neighborhood.

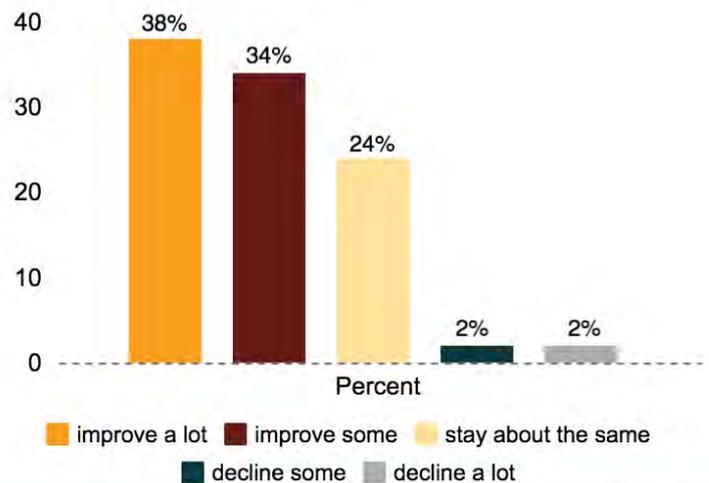
The longer residents stay in the neighborhood the more likely they were to have a positive perspective about change in the future, while gender and age had less impact. People with no children were more likely to say the community will change favorably.

Community Improvement & Potential for Change

Over the last three years the community has....



Over the next three years the community will....



Resident Voices

Resident comments regarding neighborhood satisfaction were sorted and made into a word cloud shown on the right. The words pictured were mentioned 5 times or more. Words that got the most mentions were people 15 and homeless 11.

When grouped by content comments fell into distinct categories: property management, safety, neighborhood upkeep, noise, homelessness, panhandling, loitering, parking, grocery store, transportation, services and employment.



Neighborliness & Willingness to Participate

Percentage of residents willing to work with others to make things happen:



■ Very willing (26%)
 ■ Willing (31%)
■ Somewhat willing (31%)
 ■ Not that willing (12%)



- 21% of residents believe they can make a great deal of positive impact
- 34% believe they can make a fair amount of impact
- 32% thought they could make only some positive impact
- 13% felt they could make little to no positive difference
- Women are more likely to believe they have an ability to make a difference than men and 17% of men living in the neighborhood believe they cannot make a difference
- Women are 16% more likely to become involved than men
- People with kids are slightly more likely to become involved than those without children



49% of Heartside Residents believe their neighbors would be unlikely to help lend a hand in case of an emergency. Only 9% scored their neighbors as highly likely to lend a hand while 43% got an average score.



Neighborhood Safety

Participants were asked to rate how safe they feel walking in the community at night:

- 17% very safe
- 33% somewhat safe
- 30% somewhat unsafe
- 20% unsafe

Overall respondents felt safer in their homes at night. Men felt safer than women walking at night and in their homes.



"Sometimes feel unsafe on street"

"Overall very happy, although sometimes worry about safety, lots of people approaching and asking for money"

"I am grateful I have a secure roof over my head, but sometimes I feel unsafe going from my car to the building at night."

Infrastructure



100 buildings in Heartside were assessed. Of those:

- 1 Multiple-family less than 4 units
- 5 Multiple-family more than 5 units
- 42 Commercial/Office
- 9 Institutional
- 9 Mixed-use without residential
- 27 Mixed-use with residential
- 7 Other

Exterior Upkeep & Maintenance

- 5 buildings still need comprehensive renovation
- 8 were found to have litter or debris
- 6 were vacant

Overall Attractiveness **92%**



92% of buildings assessed were considered very attractive and only 8 buildings ranked as somewhat attractive. None were ranked as somewhat not or very unattractive.



Find out more at dwellingplacegr.org



APPENDIX 4

Community Engagement:

Heartside Quality of Life Workgroup Survey Feedback

Engagement Tools

NKE Inquiry Boards / Interaction Materials

What are the strengths of the Heartside neighborhood?

Stories/Culture

| |
|--|
| • Our community is creative, and values the arts |
| • Diversity and tolerance are two of our biggest strengths. |
| • We are diverse in age, class, race and come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. |
| • The amount and diversity of churches helps us stay connected to God. |
| • We're rising from the ashes because of our ability to adapt. |
| • We live in a caring neighborhood that is driven to support neighbors by giving a helping hand. |
| • We attend meetings with the belief that they will lead to change. |
| • We value: determination, understanding, friendship, humility, integrity, tolerance, gratitude, unity, brotherhood, humility, Integrity, respect and dignity. |
| • We know people who are valued feel empowered to speak up. |
| • We have a long history of helping people. |
| • Empathy is one of our strongest values. We check on our neighbors, believe in one another, have shared and similar experiences. |
| • We offer each other warm greetings on the streets. |

Events/Programs

| |
|--|
| • We value community gatherings like the Heartside community Meal, The City of GR Listening Sessions and National Night out. We attend free activities, in our parks and at Rosa Parks Circle. |
| • We have a variety of events that bring people to the area and Heartside is home to ArtPrize |
| • 311/ 211/ 411 are useful tools |
| • Our Neighborhood has Medical care options and 2 hospitals. |
| • We have a commitment to work together and build relationships. |

What changes would make it better to live in Heartside?

People

- We would benefit greatly from free or low-cost education opportunities. We want more GED programs, work training, lifestyle education, business training, and access to back-to-work help.
- Help for veterans needs to be available in our neighborhood.
- Our community likes to volunteer, and having more opportunities to do so would be beneficial.
- Our teenagers and youth need something to do.

Relationships: Associations and our networks of relationships

- We need an accessible resource guide for people who just get dropped off a directory of support services and resources.
- We need to grow our Neighborhood Association.
- We need better DHS access.
- We know that better communication is key to improving our neighborhood and we want to promote what is already going on and find out more about the services that are available.
- We want to know how to get involved.
- We want access to more education opportunities.
- Some of us would benefit from active case management: work placement and housing assistance could be part of this.
- We want to see more support from the Coalition to End Homelessness and the Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Project
- There are a lot of us who want to see Heartside grow and change, lots of opportunity to work with community partners. More coordination, more combined efforts should be a focus. Strengthening collaborations in Heartside.
- We would like to see more connections to the other neighborhoods in the city
- More coordination, more combined efforts. We'd really like to strengthen collaborations in Heartside and be more connected to what is happening downtown.

Institutions: Businesses and Nonprofits

- There is opportunity for a store like Dollar Tree. Such a business would give us more access to jobs and to the commodities that can be purchased there.
- We want access to healthy, affordable food options. Lucky's could shift its focus to affordable food instead of alcohol.
- We see an opportunity to convene business owners to improve neighborhoods beyond their businesses.
- We want to take advantage of new businesses owners moving in and train them so they are sharing the right message about our neighborhood. This way, they become ambassadors. This allows them to communicate with their patrons about what is happening in the neighborhood.
- We'd like to see improvements in the existing shelters. More empathy from staff for the homeless would help. The shelters shouldn't feel like a prison.
- The law enforcement officers that are listening help make the police department more accessible and less scary.
- We want more support from the police department for community activities, with a focus on interacting with youth to keep kids active
- We'd like to increase the presence and use of the Downtown Ambassadors to pass out literature about the neighborhood.
- We're concerned that there isn't money going back to the DDA.

What changes would make it better to live in Heartside?

Infrastructure: Physical land, property, buildings, Equipment

- We know parking is an issue, and want to find solutions for affordable parking for residents and visitors.
- There are still areas that need infill, South Division and Wealthy, Division and Weston
- We would use a dog park and more pet baggies for dog poop.
- We have lots of open and available commercial spaces.
- We NEED public restroom options.
- We could use signage around the area to direct person to services and utilities.
- Our streetscape could be really beautiful if it was unified, it needs to be maintained so we have clean streets.
- We want to be aware of the decisions reshaping the community over the next few years, including the Sheldon and Division Redesign projects.
- We ask people to be more aware of hardships that location and processes can place on people – especially those who are handicapped
- Housing is a challenge for us, what about a 6 month voucher for housing for the winter months? Or buying homes for homeless? Or converting empty spaces into housing?
- We want to know we have a fair housing system, access to more affordable housing and more accessible shelter beds.
- It seems unfair that housing providers don't accept waivers and tell people they can't move in.
- We want input to create a public restroom, public drinking fountains and need more trash cans.
- There are opportunities to grow more gardens in our neighborhood.

Economic: Productive work of individuals spending power local businesses

- We know 15\$ church is great but it's not enough, we want to be more active and participate in job training and get jobs.
- We want opportunities to embrace our passions.
- A number of our neighbors are looking for housing and work but upward mobility is a challenge
- We would like to see the businesses thrive.
- We want to Figure out how to become a community of diverse community of incomes, abilities and races that comes together and respects each other and do that well.
- We want to improve the success of Avenue for the Arts South Division businesses by helping to funding promotions and marketing for First Fridays.

Stories/Culture

- We want to harness spiritual and mental growth and the power of prayer.
- We want to break through barriers and explore the unlimited alternatives to solving our issues.
- We want to be leaders in the community and stop the hating.
- We want to bridge empathy gaps, learn from each other, build engagement, hold people accountable and give people a helping hand.
- people turn a blind eye don't always look at the issues around them.
- We want to remain hospitable, build tolerance, grow empathy for unique situations and give people who are panhandling a chance.
- We want to change the perception of Heartside

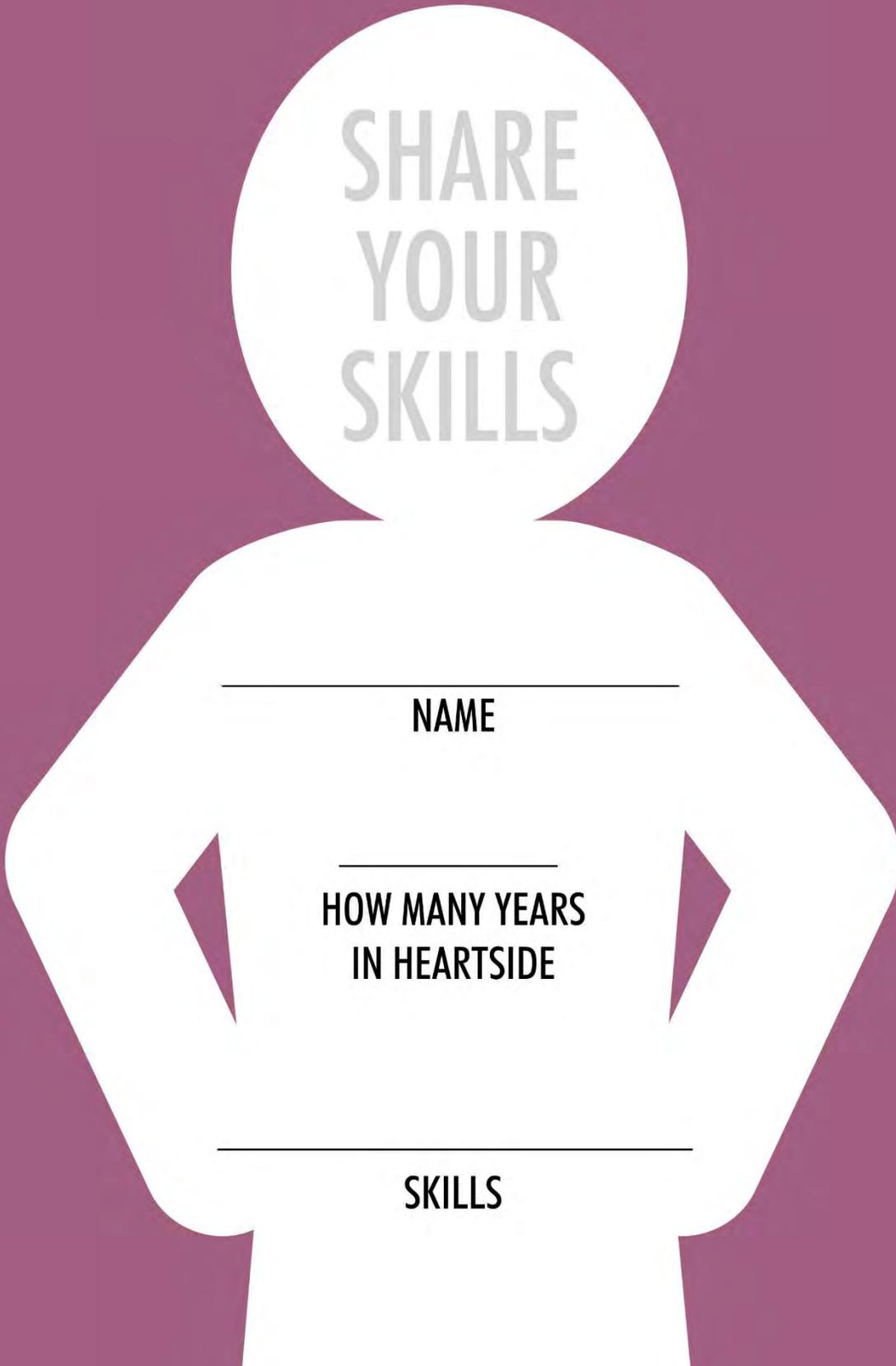
What changes would make it better to live in Heartside?

Events/Programs

- We want to go to more events, more often throughout the year including kid/family friendly options.
- Heartside Park could host more movies.
- We want more opportunities to congregate as neighbors, more spaces to meet together.
- We want to use vacant spaces to solve problems
- We want to see First Fridays and now Tuesdays on the Town grow.
- We want to participate in more events like the UICA Heartside Meal
- We want to help create the programming that takes place in our neighborhood and participate in decision making.
- Our homeless neighbors don't have anything to do. There is a lack of programming and activity.
- We want more access to direct shuttles to shopping options. Like Meijer or Walmart.
- Because the public intoxication room is sometimes full it isn't always open when we need it. (Mel Trotters)
- We want to have access to bike sharing programs even if we don't have credit cards.
- We want to expand access to community Gardens so more residents in the neighborhood can participate.
- We want to have more activities in our parks, Pekich and Heartside.
- We want be more aware of city hall meetings and expect better outreach from the City, so we can provide feedback.
- We want to know more about platforms for filing complaints not covered in the 311 (or the 311 App).

Healthcare

- We want focused healthcare help for alcohol/drugs addiction.
- Some of us still have no access to healthcare services.
- There is no place for us to go if we are homeless and have surgery coming up or to recover afterwards putting us back on the street instead of getting well.
- Not having a late check in at shelters can be hard on us.



**SHARE
YOUR
SKILLS**

NAME

**HOW MANY YEARS
IN HEARTSIDE**

SKILLS

What areas of the neighborhood could be improved?

We lack medical support

We want more community activities, often there isn't enough to do.

Diversity in thought is also a weakness because we have to work harder to communicate understand and work together.

There is a lack of advocacy for our neighbors.

We see a disparity daily.

We are fed up with crime, including vandalism, drug dealing, fighting, violence, trespassing, open drinking, and prostitution.

We've seen a lot of issues with bicycling in the area. Bikers use the sidewalk because there is no bike lane, which threatens pedestrians and bikers.

We sometimes seek instant gratification.

We experience a lack of vision for our neighborhood Heartside- is supposed to be a business district or social service district.

We experience anger, negativity, disrespect, hate, high expectations, loss of hope, low self-esteem, selfishness, unwillingness to change and not enough self-love.

Our neighborhood has a bad reputation and frequent bad press which impacts who will visit our businesses and residents.

We talk about what the police don't do- but don't always realize how we can help ourselves first.

Ofentimes, police drive by illegal behavior and don't stop. Police "blindness" hurt the neighborhood.

There are problem properties at 225 / 229 Division and 225 Commerce. The owner seems to be taking advantage of the migrant workers who live there.

We often get bad press.

There are too many people on the street during the day. If our day spaces close, then people don't have a place to go.

Our neighbors and residents are often stereotyped, often homeless persons get blamed for neighborhood issues and are mislabeled as dangerous.

APPENDIX 5

Work Group Goals and Measures

Heartside Quality of Life Action Plan

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs ⁱ |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| LIGHTING | | | | | |
| Implement Street Lighting Improvement Plan for Heartside including the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Division, from Fulton to Cherry Division, from Wealthy to Cherry Street Side Streets, including Weston, Oakes, Cherry, Williams, Bartlett and Goodrich | Ownership: City, DGRI | Installation of lighting to bring safe lighting levels to the streets and sidewalks. | Short Term HIGH Priority | Project-Based (2-3 year total) | Lighting and Installation Costs (\$1.5 Million, Approximate) Phases A & B funded. Phase C estimated cost \$522,000 – NOT YET IDENTIFIED |
| PEKICH PARK | | | | | |
| 1. Activate use of the park space in a way that serves residents and business owners and begins to build a greater sense of community ownership over the space. | Ownership: Recommended Partners: HNA, City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation, DGRI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular programming and events, with steady to increasing attendance. Use of Park by greater number of residents and visitors. | Short-Term Priority | Ongoing | Administrative and Program Costs (\$\$) |
| 2. Install Flexible Design Seating | Ownership: City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Recommended Partners: HNA, City, DGRI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a more flexible design where seating locations can be shifted or temporarily removed for an event, allowing more creative utilization of the limited park footprint. | Low Priority – Potentially consider with park update in 2019-2020 | Project-Based | TBD |
| 3. Install a Community Info Board to help identify nearby community resources as well as to promote upcoming events within the community. | Ownership: City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Recommended Partners: HNA, City, DGRI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased education and resources awareness is imperative in Heartside. | PILOT COMPLETE Next Steps - Explore Permanent Installation | Project-Based | Design and Construction Costs (\$\$) |
| SEE AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL GOALS RELATED TO PEKICH PARK | | | | | |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs ⁱ |
|---|---|---|---------|---|---|
| PUBLIC RESTROOMS | | | | | |
| <p>1. Conduct a baseline measurement of public urination/defecation or other measures that can be used to quantitatively measure the impact of restroom-related improvements in Heartside.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Creation of database and criteria for collection, reporting from existing partners (Parks, Police, DGRI, Degage). Seek additional partners / reporting by businesses.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – Provide an annual report of available data to determine success in meeting established goals.</p> | <p>Ownership: Jim Talen (database, current); Identify Long-Term Ownership & Update</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Degage, DGRI, City, Reporting Partners</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of shared database. 2. Finding long-term partners to update and maintain database. 3. Achieve a reduction in daily clean-up by 10%. 4. Issue annual report. | Ongoing | Continuing Update – Annual Report | <p>Administrative Costs for Updates, Distribution and Printing (\$)</p> <p>NO DEDICATED FUNDING</p> |
| <p>2. Create an updated inventory of restroom locations available to the public.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM - Identify all current public and private restroom facilities available for use by the general public. In addition to the location/provider, also determine general accessibility (i.e. ground floor near an entrance or tucked away), days/hours of availability, and seasonal or other limitations.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – Create, distribute and promote a restroom guide to all user groups within Heartside, if needed. Continue to maintain this information and update approximately annually.</p> | <p>Ownership: 2A – Westminster Presbyterian (Susan Jennings) will update list w/ support of DGRI (Annamarie Buller) and HNCP (Sue Gilbert) Lists 2B – 211 / HNCP 2C – United Way / DGRI</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Westminster Presbyterian, DGRI, HNCP, Police, City</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct seasonal update of information. (Sustainability) 2. Update the 211 Flyer or other existing information sources to include additional locations identified. 3. Restroom locations identified by signage (by location for all and wayfinding for publicly operated restrooms). 4. Achieve a reduction in daily clean up by 10%. | Ongoing | Continuing Update – Goal Spring / Fall Annually | <p>Administrative Costs for Updates, Distribution and Printing (\$)</p> <p>NO DEDICATED FUNDING</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs ⁱ |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------------|--|
| <p>3. Encourage provision of additional restrooms available to the general public, particularly where gaps have been identified.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM - Analyze the current content to identify areas where restrooms are needed and times when restrooms are most needed.</p> <p>b. SHORT TERM / LONG TERM - Seek out local organizations and businesses that might be able to help support the community's needs for available restrooms.</p> | <p>Ownership: City & DGRI</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase number of available restrooms. 2. Identify gaps based on both location and demand. 3. Make _____ contacts in seeking out additional partners. 4. Achieve a reduction in daily clean up by 10%. | <p>Short-Term Priority</p> | <p>As-Needed</p> | <p>Administrative Costs for Outreach, Update (\$)</p> <p>NO DEDICATED FUNDING</p> |
| <p>4. Pilot a friendly loo restroom program.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Develop recommended criteria for a friendly restroom program and support the sponsor agency in launching this program.</p> <p>b. SHORT TERM - Identify 2 - 4 businesses or organizations in the Heartside neighborhood to participate in this program.</p> <p>c. LONG TERM – Evaluate the success of the pilot program and consider expansion to include additional partners/locations.</p> | <p>Ownership: DGRI</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear Expectation in writing to outline the program so partners and DGRI are on the same page about expectation. 2. 2 - 4 Locations set up 3. Educating public and neighborhood businesses and organizations about the program. 4. Periodic evaluation of how the program is going for the business or Organizational partner. 5. Participants continue program after year one. 6. Achieve a reduction in clean up by 10%. | <p>Short-Term Priority</p> | <p>As-Needed</p> | <p>Administrative Costs and Program Costs/Incentives to Providers (\$\$)</p> <p>PARTIALLY FUNDED</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs ⁱ |
|--|---|---|--|----------------------|---|
| <p>5. Explore expanded public restroom options within Heartside’s City Parks.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM - Heartside Park- Explore the feasibility of winterizing existing restrooms to allow year-round access.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM- Also consider expanding available hours, with the goal to have 24 -hour availability.</p> <p>c. LONG TERM - Peckich Park- Explore the feasibility of creating a new public restroom within Peckich Park, including consideration of design and accessibility, winterizing for year-round access and 24-hour availability.</p> | <p>Ownership: City Parks Department</p> <p>Recommended Partners: City, DGRI, Police</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting Heartside Park open year round for public restroom access. 2. Getting Heartside Park open for 24hour access. 3. Defining the feasibility of adding a restroom at Pekich Park and deciding if it should be pursued. 4. Achieve a reduction in clean up by 10%. | <p>2-3 Year Priority</p> | <p>Project Based</p> | <p>Feasibility Exploration (\$) Engineering/Design and Construction Costs (\$\$\$\$)</p> <p>Potential Partial Funding under Park Improvements</p> |
| <p>6. Support development of public restrooms in Heartside (Such as parking ramps, portable) that are temporary or permanent additions to the neighborhood.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM - Maintain involvement in the physical design and planned operation of public restrooms being developed.</p> <p>b. SHORT TERM – After construction, promote availability of the restrooms to all potential users (including directional signage).</p> | <p>Ownership: Mobile GR, DGRI</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Goal 2 Alliance, HNCP, Police,</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing support and recommendations of restroom solutions identified by Heartside. 2. Implementation of restroom solutions in Heartside. 3. Achieve a reduction in clean up by 10%. | <p>Short-Term Priority for Pilot</p> <p>Permanent Implementation TBD</p> | <p>Project-Based</p> | <p>Short-Term Pilot Operation (\$\$ - \$\$\$) FUNDED (DGRI)</p> <p>Long Term Design and Construction (\$\$\$\$) NO DEDICATED FUNDING</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|------------------|--|
| AT HOME IN HEARTSIDE | | | | | |
| <p>1. Increase full spectrum of affordable, subsidized, accessible and market rate housing opportunities and preserve such existing housing that prevents the displacement of residents.</p> <p>LONG TERM – The City of Grand Rapids study current mixed-use developments in Heartside for potential future use as Affordable Housing. And if there are vacancies, provide more opportunities to participate in the Housing / Rental Rehabilitation Program. (2)</p> | <p>Ownership: City of Grand Rapids, Heartside Housing Providers</p> | <p>4. Study completed and mixed use developments identified.</p> | <p>2 – 5 Year Priority</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Operational – No additional cost.</p> |
| <p>2. Educate applicants on the Residential Rental Application Ordinance rights and complaint process. We additionally request that the City of GR create a process that informs the complainant of the status of their inquiries in a timely manner.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Implement a HNA Housing and Development Review committee to review plans for development and housing opportunities in Heartside; and foster engagement amongst residents, the City of Grand Rapids and other parties interested in developing policy regarding rental application fees and processes.</p> <p>b. SHORT TERM - Advocacy of Housing NOW Residential Application Ordinance</p> | <p>Ownership: Community Engagement, Legal Aid & Partners</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Degage, 211, Fair Housing, Housing For All, Salvation Army, Heartside Neighborhood Association, Senior Neighbors, Urban League, Disability Advocates</p> | <p>1. Complete Survey of applicants. 2. Decrease in the amount of Housing Complaints. 3. Increased agency participation and information dissemination. 4. Increased number of ways the city has informed Heartside Residents and other about the Rental Application Ordinance.</p> | <p>Short-Term Priority</p> | <p>As-Needed</p> | <p>Additional Outreach (\$)</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING AND ACTIVATION | | | | | |
| 1. Short Term: Create a legacy binder for use by resident leaders forming the Neighborhood Association | Ownership: HNA | Creation of Binder | COMPLETE | Regular Update | Operational – No Additional Cost |
| 2. Short Term: Creating an annual calendar of outreach and resident engagement for the Heartside | HNA, HBA | Physical calendar with shared access for workgroup members. | Ongoing | Regular Update | Operational – No Additional Cost If Public Calendar, Administrative Costs (\$) |
| 3. Long Term: Allocating funds to facilitate outreach to engage in neighbors in Heartside, north of Fulton and south of wealthy Street. Funds would support community outreach. | Ownership: HNA Recommended Partners: DGRI/ City of Grand Rapids | 1. Outline of scope and structure of initiatives 2. -Secure funding (initiative based and long-term) | Short-Term Priority | Ongoing | Administrative and Activity Costs (\$\$) CITY / DGRI FUNDING REQUEST |
| 4. Long term: Neighborhood Association acts as an outreach partner with the city of Grand Rapids and DGRI regarding neighborhood. Utilizing neighborhood outreach for official community input and collaboration efforts | Ownership; HNA Recommended Partners: DGRI/ City of Grand Rapids | 1. Designated communication process 2. -Funding and schedule for Newsletter | Ongoing | Ongoing | Administrative Costs for Updates, Distribution and Printing (\$) CITY / DGRI FUNDING REQUEST |
| 5. Long Term: Create a community committee of 8-10 representatives who receive funding for positive stories campaign which could include but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate windows along the corridor to showcase stories • Traditional press coverage for positive events and stories. | Ownership: HNA Recommended Partners: DGRI, local press and businesses | 1. Positive dialogue is recognized more often regarding Heartside by the end of 2019, 2. Strengthened quantity of partnerships for stakeholders in community | Ongoing | Ongoing | Utilize Press / Partnerships (\$) |
| 6. Provide a part-time staff support position, with a minimum 10-14 hours weekly, to support the | Ownership: City of Grand Rapids | 1. On-going workgroups are established. | Short-Term HIGH Priority | Two-Year Commitment | Administrative Position Costs |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <p>completion of the QOL planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the planning work with continuing workgroups ● Attending and supporting Neighborhood Association Meetings ● Implement the short-term action strategies of the QOL Plan | <p>Recommended Partners: HNA, DGRI</p> | <p>2. Liaison would see through the implementation of recommendations and support resident and neighborhood association efforts.</p> | | | <p>(\$100,000, 2-year, part-time)</p> <p>CITY / DGRI FUNDING REQUEST</p> |
| FRESH FOOD ACCESS | | | | | |
| <p>1. Heartside Fresh Food Access Map</p> <p>a. Create and disperse Heartside Fresh Food Access map. This will increase knowledge of Fresh Food access points, define “Fresh Food” and provide a price key on affordable options.</p> | <p>Ownership: Fresh Food Access Work Group (Need Owner for Future Updates)</p> <p>Recommended Partners: City, Dwelling Place, Heartside Gleaning Initiative, HNA, God’s Kitchen, Degage, Heartside Ministry</p> | <p>1. Increased knowledge of available food access locations within Heartside.</p> <p>2. Residents can access fresh food at an affordable price within the neighborhood.</p> | <p>COMPLETED</p> | <p>Update Annually or As-Needed</p> | <p>Administrative, Mapping and Printing Costs for Updates (\$)</p> |
| <p>2. Education & PR Campaign to lead to stigma reduction around free food and increase community empathy around fresh food access.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Signage, Sidewalk Chalk and Resident Stories.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – Collaboration with local artist, agencies and community partners for programming and events in Heartside.</p> | <p>Ownership: Dwelling Place (Arts Resident Engagement Committee)</p> <p>Recommend Partners: Hope College, Kendall College, Heartside Art Gallery, WMCAT, DGRI, UICA, Heartside Neighborhood Association, Healthier Communities</p> | <p>1. A culture that supports healthy eating for all residents.</p> <p>2. Decreased stigma around seeking free or reduced cost food from support organizations, such as food pantries, for residents in need.</p> | <p>Short-Term Priority</p> | <p>Project-Based</p> | <p>Administrative and Production Costs (\$\$)</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|---|---|---|-----------|--|
| <p>2. Create a Resident Advocate & Education Volunteer Program in Heartside.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Create a pilot program to engage residents and neighborhood volunteers through the Heartside Neighborhood Association to increase Fresh Food Access.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – create a support group of volunteers that will increase access by packing free food baskets and making them available to neighbors who attend association meetings. Volunteers would also provide home delivery services to neighbors who are immobile.</p> | <p>Ownership; Dwelling Place, HNA</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Live Downtown Grand Rapids, Dwelling Place, 616 Lofts, Ransom Towers, Klingman & Baker lofts, HNA, fresh Food Access Work Group</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Residents who have limited mobility are better able to access fresh food. Neighbors helping neighbors. | Ongoing | Ongoing | Volunteer-based program, minor administrative costs (\$) |
| ENGAGED AND EMPLOYED | | | | | |
| <p>1. Research, evaluate and partner with employers that may offer a wide range of employment opportunities including trauma-informed and felony friendly employment in Heartside and other surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Employer Assessment - Work group will survey and research Heartside employers build relationships.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM - Work group will also create a running list of employers in which we can provide a referral list of qualified neighbors from an Engaged & Employed applicant pool when a need arises.</p> | <p>Ownership: Engaged and Employed Workgroup, carry-forward TBD</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Praxis, 70x7, First United Methodist Church, the Job Post, Spectrum Health, Office Staffing, Founders Brewing Co., Studio C, Mercy Health, Mel Trotter, Degage, Heartside Small Businesses</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased employment in Heartside. Acquire at least 2 partner employers who are committed to employing people from Heartside. Create a list of 5 potential employers who are in or near the Heartside Neighborhood. | Assessment COMPLETE, Implementation Short- to Mid-Term Priority | As-Needed | Administrative and Production Costs (\$) |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>2. The creation and distribution of a handheld and graphic Heartside Employment Resource Guide that lists all available services and resources that aid neighbors in gaining and maintaining employment.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Resource Guide - Work group will draft a complete resource guide / pamphlet that will be submitted to a City of GR graphic designer for formatting and printing.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – Create, distribute and promote an employment resource guide to all user groups within Heartside, if needed. Continue to maintain this information and update approximately bi-annually.</p> | <p>Ownership: Engaged and Employed Workgroup, carry-forward TBD</p> <p>Recommended Partners: City of Grand Rapids, United Way – 211, Degage Resource Office</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An actual deliverable guide created. 2. Disbursement of Employment Services & Resource Guide to all Heartside Agencies and collaborative Partners. 3. Use of graphic pamphlet online via social media and through other community promotions like fliers or posters. | <p>Resource Guide Complete</p> | <p>Update Bi-annually or As-Needed</p> | <p>Administrative and Production Costs (\$)</p> |
| <p>3. Implement an Engaged & Employed Lunch & Learn Series in Heartside that will kick-off in 2019. Unveil a quarterly series that teaches on a variety of topics like trauma-informed employment, resilience building and life skills.</p> <p>a. SHORT TERM – Schedule – Work Group will create the schedule for the Lunch & Learn Series and complete the planning process for 4 classes.</p> <p>b. SHORT TERM / LONG TERM – Begin hosting the series in 2019 and a neutral venue in Heartside.</p> | <p>Ownership: Engaged & Employed Work Group / City of Grand Rapids Planning, carry-forward TBD</p> <p>Recommended Partners: City, Guiding Light, Mel Trotter, 70x7, Alternative Directions, The Source</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighborhood attendance and participation at Lunch & Learns. 2. Increased education in Heartside about Engagement and Employment. 3. Increased Employment. 4. Survey results that reveal better maintenance of jobs. 5. 4 -6 Employers secured for Heartside Job Fair | <p>Short-Term Priority</p> | <p>Ongoing Program</p> | <p>Administration and Event Costs (\$\$)</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| | | and the final Lunch & Learn. | | | |
| SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY AND SUPPORT | | | | | |
| 1. Implement a newly designed Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Coach Program in Heartside. a. SHORT TERM – Definition and creation of Peer Support Specialist / Peer Recovery Coach pilot Program – Skeleton Framework Plan | Ownership: Dwelling Place Aspire Academy, Cherry Health, or other Recommended Partners: Degage, Dwelling Place, Guiding Light, Mel Trotter, City of Grand Rapids, Cherry Health, Be NICE, WOOD TV 8 | 1. Increased trainings in Heartside. 2. Placement of new support specialists in Heartside 3. Implementation of Programming through Degage 4. Completion of fall 2018 Dwelling Place training. (COMPLETE) | Short Term Priority | Ongoing Program | Administration and Training Costs (\$\$) |
| 2. Annual Funding Map Design and Database creation. a. SHORT TERM – RECOVERY RESOURCE MAP DESIGN - Research and document potential funding resources for work group efforts. b. LONG TERM – Partner with GVSU for Community-wide Funding Asset Map that will provide data on agencies, foundations, etc. that provide funding for Substance Abuse Support, Recovery and Mental Health Advocacy in Kent Co. | Ownership: Recommended Partners: Arbor Circle, Heart of the City, Heartside Clinic, United Way, Eckhart, Heartside Ministries, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Community College, United Way, Substance Abuse Support Work Group | 1. Tangible pamphlet of Recovery Resources in Kent County with a focus Area on Heartside. 2. Completed list of potential Funding sources for work group initiatives 3. Secured partners for collaboration with GVSU & GRCC. | Short to Mid-Term Priority | Periodic Update | Work through University partnership, potential printing and distribution costs (\$) |
| 3. Research, document and create a Reference Book that includes and explains local and State requirements to become a Certified Peer-to-Peer Support Specialist and/or Recovery Coach in Heartside. | Ownership: Recommended Partners: Substance Abuse Support Work Group, Cherry Health Partners | 1. Rough Draft by Meeting Number 4 2. Completed Packet 3. Printed Quantities | Ongoing | Update As-Need | Administrative Costs for Updates, Distribution and Printing (\$) |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|--|---|--|----------------------|---|
| <p>a. SHORT TERM – Research and gather all information that could be dispersed to the community on where to start if a neighbor is interested in making a difference Peer-to-Peer.</p> <p>b. LONG TERM – Disburse to the community and house a Reference Book in the 307 Space for referrals when needed.</p> | | <p>4. At least 3 partner organizations that have agreed to distribute the information or house a Reference Packet at their facility</p> | | | |
| <p>4. Mental Health First-Aid Heartside Training.</p> <p>a. Offer a 2-Day training in Heartside to First-ward Commissioners, GRPD, Agency Providers, Neighbors and all interested parties free of charge in Heartside.</p> | <p>Ownership: Be Nice Mental Health Foundation</p> <p>Recommended Partners: Be Nice, Pine Rest, MSU Extension, Cherry Street Health Services, Network 180, City of Grand Rapids</p> | <p>1. Program Implementation</p> <p>2. Inaugural Heartside graduating class</p> <p>3. Fliers and Brochures for Advertisements</p> <p>4. Public Education Campaign completed</p> | <p>Short-Term Priority – Target September 2019</p> | <p>Project-Based</p> | <p>Training and Material Costs (\$)</p> |
| <p>5. Create and implement regular Programming where certified Heartside Peer Support Specialists and Peer Recovery Coaches can service the neighborhood in public spaces with regular office hours.</p> <p>a. LONG TERM – Example: Placement of a community social worker who has been paired with a peer support specialist in the Public Library or in Heartside Park.</p> | <p>Ownership:</p> <p>Recommended Partners: City of GR Parks & Rec. Dept., Area of Improvement Work Group, Dwelling Place, GRPL, Pine Rest Street Reach, Be Nice, Cherry Health, Guiding Light, Mel Trotter, Degage</p> | <p>1. List of Specialists and Coached committed to participating.</p> <p>2. Program Plan in place</p> <p>3. Balanced ration of male to female Heartside leaders who serve in this capacity</p> <p>4. At least 4 Peer Support activation in one year</p> | <p>Short-Term Priority - Spring 2019 (Start)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Administrative and material costs (\$)</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT | | | | | |
| 1. Short term: Begin immediate activation of Pekich Park as a community garden space to improve resident led maintenance and improvements to the plants. | Ownership: Dwelling Place (2018), future TBD based on funding Recommended Partners: Degage, Parks & Rec Department, City of Grand Rapids, Urban Roots, Downtown Ambassadors, Downtown Market, Local shop/restaurants, Farmers market, Local Volunteers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6 Resident gardeners commit to gardening in 2019 in Pekich Park once or twice a week. 2. Dollars allocated for park plant improvements. 3. Additional Benefits: 4. Cleanliness is improved. 5. Increased public knowledge of gardening and food production. 6. Implementation of a team of resident volunteers. 7. Better behavior in times when gardening is not taking place. | Short-Term Priority | Ongoing | Material and equipment costs, administrative support (\$\$) |
| 2. Engage Lucky's owners, building and business owner in a discussion about the impact of the business model on the neighborhood and ask for dedicated efforts to change the corner outside Lucky's Liquor Store. | Ownership; GRPD, YWCA Recommended Partners: HNA, local businesses, DGRI, Downtown Ambassadors | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of emergency calls outside Lucky's is reduced. 2. No longer identified as problem area by the community. | Ongoing | Ongoing | No funding costs |
| 3. Activate Pekich Park by creating new utilities that are valuable resources for Heartside neighbors and activate the park daily including: | Ownership: City Parks & Recreation, DGRI Recommended Partners: Degage, Mel Trotter, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of emergency calls to Pekich Park is reduced. | Short-Term – Mobile Community Center | Project-Based | Design, construction, and ongoing maintenance costs (\$\$\$) |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|--|--|---|---|----------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Restroom • Mobile Community Center | <p>GRPD, City, DGRI, Mobile GR, Plumbing company, Porta Potty Company, Downtown Ambassadors, United Way Pine Rest Street Reach, Library, YMCA Food Truck, Urban Roots Mobile Classroom, First Aid Station Spectrum Health, Community Media Center, Michigan Works, NGO/ nonprofits in Neighborhood, Downtown Ambassadors, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Walking School Bus</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. No longer identified as problem area by the community. 3. Outreach serving individual who need access to food/other needs. 4. Additional Benefits: Change behavior at the park. Consistent or steady stream of positive use. | <p>Mid-Term (2-5 years) – Restroom Installation</p> | | <p>POTENTIAL PARTIAL FUNDING – PARKS IMPROVEMENTS, DGRI RESTROOM INITIATIVE</p> |
| <p>4. Activate Pekich Park by creating new events based activities that will create active uses twice a month including the winter season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Activations: Concert Series, Live Music Community Meals • Winter activations- Tree Sales / Festival Activities | <p>Ownership: Recommended Partners: Pyramid Scheme, Stella's, Heartside Residents, WYCE, City, Library, Intersection, Degage, Heartside Ministries, United Way, Street Performers, UICA, Mel Trotter, God's Kitchen, Kids food basket, Westminster, HNA, Urban Roots, Dwelling Place Community Gardens, Downtown Market, DGRI, Parks Department,</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No longer identified as problem area by the community. 2. Outreach serving individual who need access to food/other needs. 3. Additional Benefits: Change behavior at the park. Consistent or steady stream of positive use. | <p>Short- to Mid-Term Priority (1-3 years)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Administration, event costs (\$\$) CITY / DGRI FUNDING REQUEST FOR SEED MONEY, ADDITIONAL FUNDING LIKELY REQUIRED</p> |

| Draft / Final QOL Recommendation | Ownership / Key Partner | Measures of Success | Status | Duration | Funding Needs |
|---|---|--|---|-----------------|------------------------------|
| | MooseJaw, Salvation Army Mobile Truck | | | | |
| 5. Pekich Park should be included in the redesign phase of Heartside Park, per the GRForward Plan. | Ownership: City Parks & Recreation, DGRI | 1. No longer identified as problem area by the community. | Mid-Term Priority | Project-Based | Unknown |
| 6. Implement a program to address behavior along South Division. | Ownership: Recommended Partners: DGRI, Local Non-Profits | 1. Reduction in harassment and other negative behaviors along the street and other public places in Heartside. | Mid-Term Priority until further defined | Ongoing | Unknown |
| 7. Evening Community Officer designated to Heartside and allocated for hours after 5pm. | Ownership: Grand Rapids Police Department | 1. Issues taking place after 5pm are addressed by 1-2 Community Police Officers 2. No longer identified as problem area by the community. | Short-Term Priority | Ongoing | Staffing costs (\$\$-\$\$\$) |

¹ Values Where Available / General Scale: \$ (Low Cost, Under \$2,500) - \$\$\$\$ (High Cost, Over \$1 Million)

APPENDIX 6

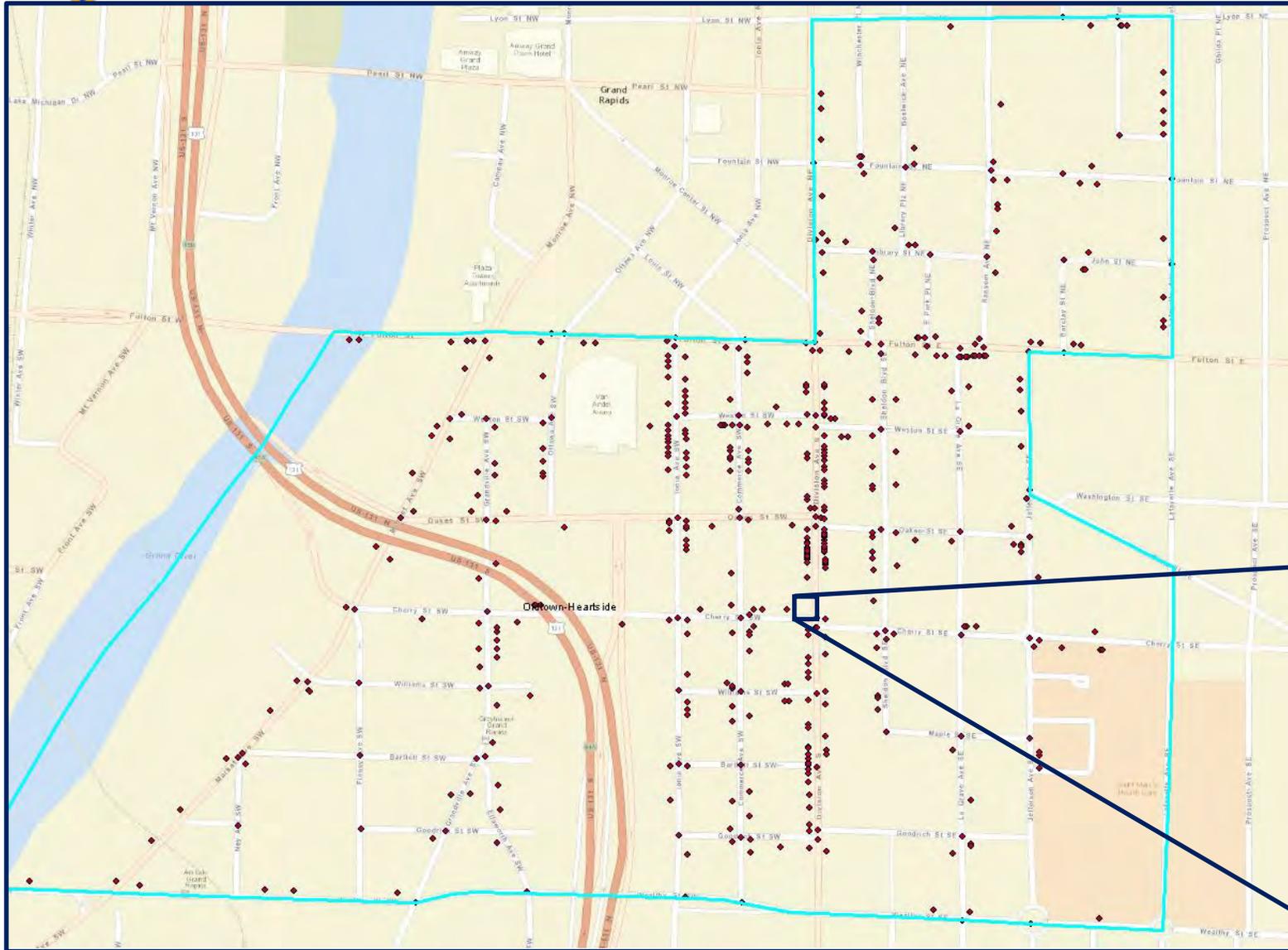
Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis



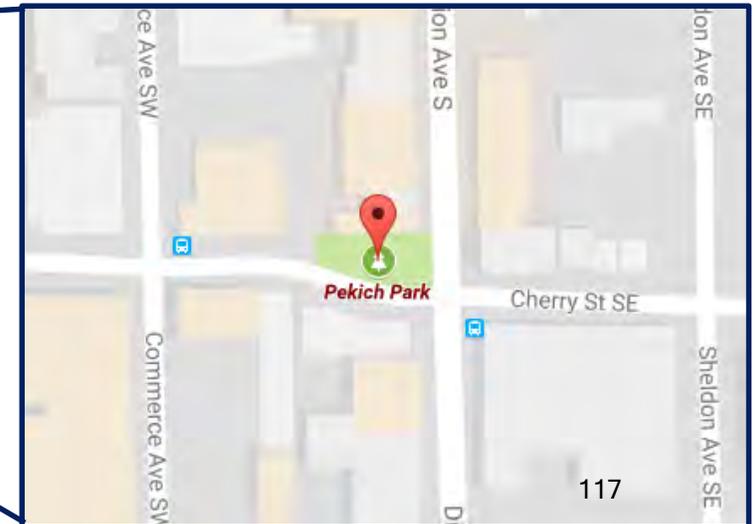
Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis: 1/1/2016 to 9/1/2017



Area Description – Heartside/Old Town



Pekich Park





Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis



Data Summary 1/1/2016 to 8/31/2017

Heartside Neighborhood:

Total Incidents: 10,881
Total Offenses: 11,226
Part I and Part II Offenses: 2,078
Part I Offenses: 861

Pekich Park; 9 Cherry St SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Total Incidents: 1,335
Total Offenses: 387
Part I and Part II Offenses: 134
Part I Offenses: 28

Definitions

Incident: *An event for which police response required a written report. It does not necessarily mean a crime was committed (Examples would include but are not limited to: Agency Assist, Vehicle Tow, Welfare Check, Medical Emergency, Citizen Assist)*

Offense: *The crimes or elements of those crimes required the incident to be reported. Note that multiple offenses can exist within a single incident.*

Part I Offense: *A group of criminal offenses defined by the FBI and reported under the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Summary Reporting System (SRS) defined as: Murder and Non-Negligent Homicide, Rape (legacy & revised), Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Motor Vehicle Theft, Larceny-Theft, and Arson.*

Part II Offense: *Another group of offense also tracked by the FBI UCR and reported through SRS defined as: Other/Simple Assault, Forgery and counterfeiting, Fraud, Embezzlement, Stolen Property, Vandalism, Weapons, Prostitution and Commercialized Vice, Sex Offenses (Except Forcible Rape, Prostitution and Commercialized Vice), Drug Abuse Violations, Gambling, Offenses Against Family and Children, Driving Under the Influence, Liquor Laws Violations, Drunkenness, Disorderly Conduct, Vagrancy, All other offenses not specified in Part I or Part II except Traffic Violations, Suspicion, Curfew Violation and Loitering, Runaway (Under age 18).*



Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis Pekich Park



From 1/1/2016 to 8/31/2017, Pekich Park had 196 incident reports recorded with GRPD not including Informational Reports and Traffic Offenses (to include the towing of vehicles). In addition to the criminal activity, 43 Warrant Arrests were made in, or on the street/sidewalk bordering Pekich Park in the same time period. This indicates that not only is the crime level exceptionally high for a very small area, but the number of people frequenting the area who are wanted for crime is also very high.

The most frequently committed crimes are Assaults, Consumption of Alcohol in Public, Drug related and Noise Violations.

Pekich Park had 7 Emergency Medical Responses in the same time period.

Crimes- Pekich Park Break Down (Double Click to Open)





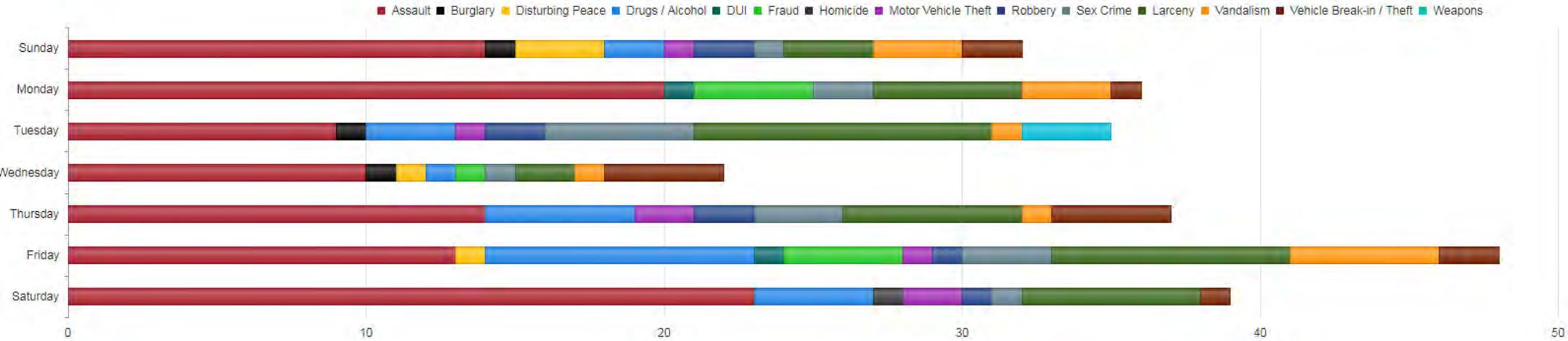
Heartside Neighborhood Crime Analysis



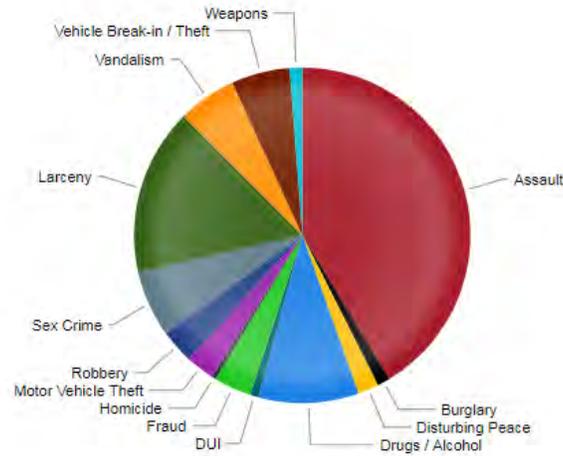
May 1, 2017- Oct 1, 2017 Pekich Park (Area) Crime Breakdown

Pekich Park and all crime within 400ft of Pekich Park

Day of Week Summary



Crime Summary



Note: Due to the number of crimes recorded in the Pekich park area, a 6 month time frame is the data limit.

APPENDIX 7
Pekich Park Survey

Pekich Park Survey

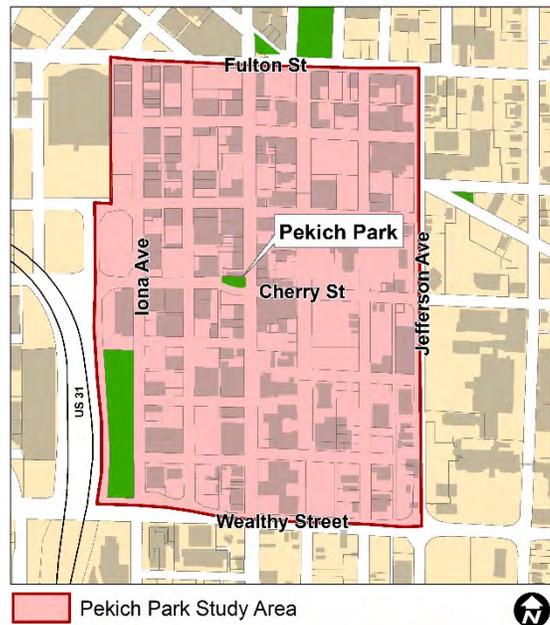
Please help the City of Grand Rapids Planning and Parks Departments learn how people use Pekich Park and identify ways to make it better. Pekich Park is located at the corner of Cherry St and Division Ave in the Heartside neighborhood.

If you complete the survey, you will be entered to win a \$20 gift certificate. Please contact planning@grcity.us or call (616) 456-4100 if you have questions or would like additional copies of the survey. **Please return (mail) by June 30th.**

Where you Stay and Work

1. Do you **stay in** the Heartside neighborhood?
 Yes, in permanent housing
 Yes, in temporary housing or a shelter
 No
If yes, please provide **building name and/or address**:

2. Do you **work or volunteer in** the Heartside neighborhood?
 Yes
 No
If yes, please provide **employer/agency name or address**:



About Your Experience with Pekich Park

3. Have you **ever visited** Pekich Park?
 Yes
 No → If no, why not? _____
→ If no, go to question 8 on the back

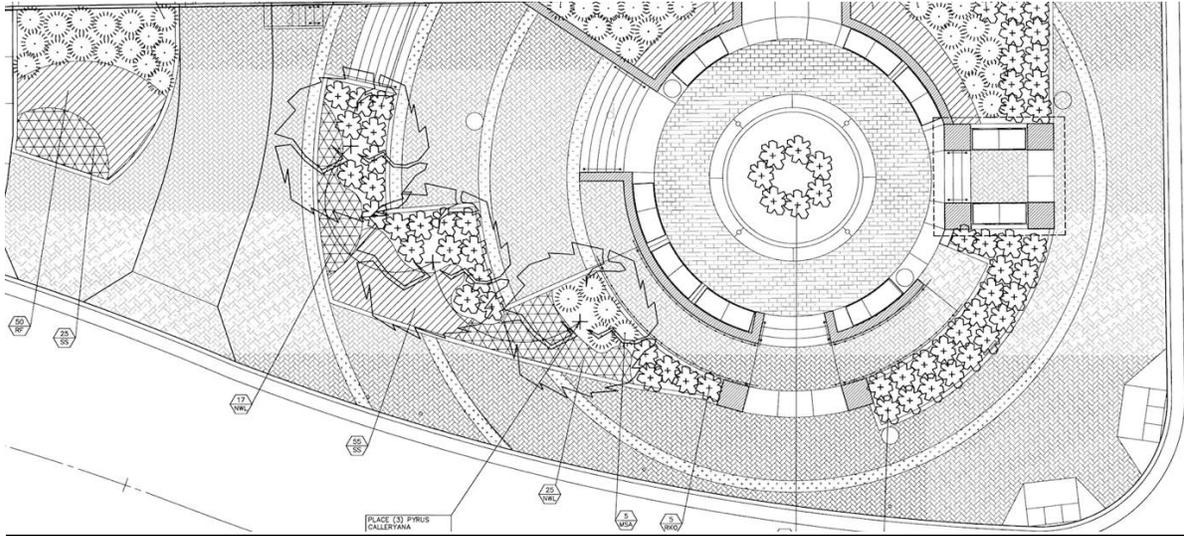
4. **How often** do you visit Pekich Park?
 At least once a week
 Less than once a week, but at least once a month
 Less than once a month → Why don't you visit more often? _____

5. What do you **like most** about Pekich Park? List up to three **things you like**.
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

6. What do you **like least** about Pekich Park? List up to three **things you do not like**.
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7. What would you **change** about Pekich Park? List up to three **things you would change**, and if you would like, draw your suggestions on the map below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



About You

Please help us make sure we are getting input from a diverse sample of people who live and work near Pekich Park. These questions are optional, but your answers would be very helpful to us!

8. What is your **gender**?

Male

Female

Other

9. How **old** are you?

17 years old and under

35-44 years old

65 years old or older

18-24 years old

45-54 years old

25-34 years old

55-64 years old

10. How would you describe your **race and ethnicity**? *Select all that apply.*

Asian or Pacific Islander

Hispanic or Latinx

White or Caucasian

Black or African American

Native American

Other, please specify:

11. What is your **annual income**?

Less than \$10,000

\$25,001 - \$50,000

\$75,001 - \$100,000

\$10,000 - \$25,000

\$50,001 - \$75,000

More than \$100,000

12. **Contact information** (optional, but required for drawing of \$20 gift certificate)

Name: _____

Email: _____

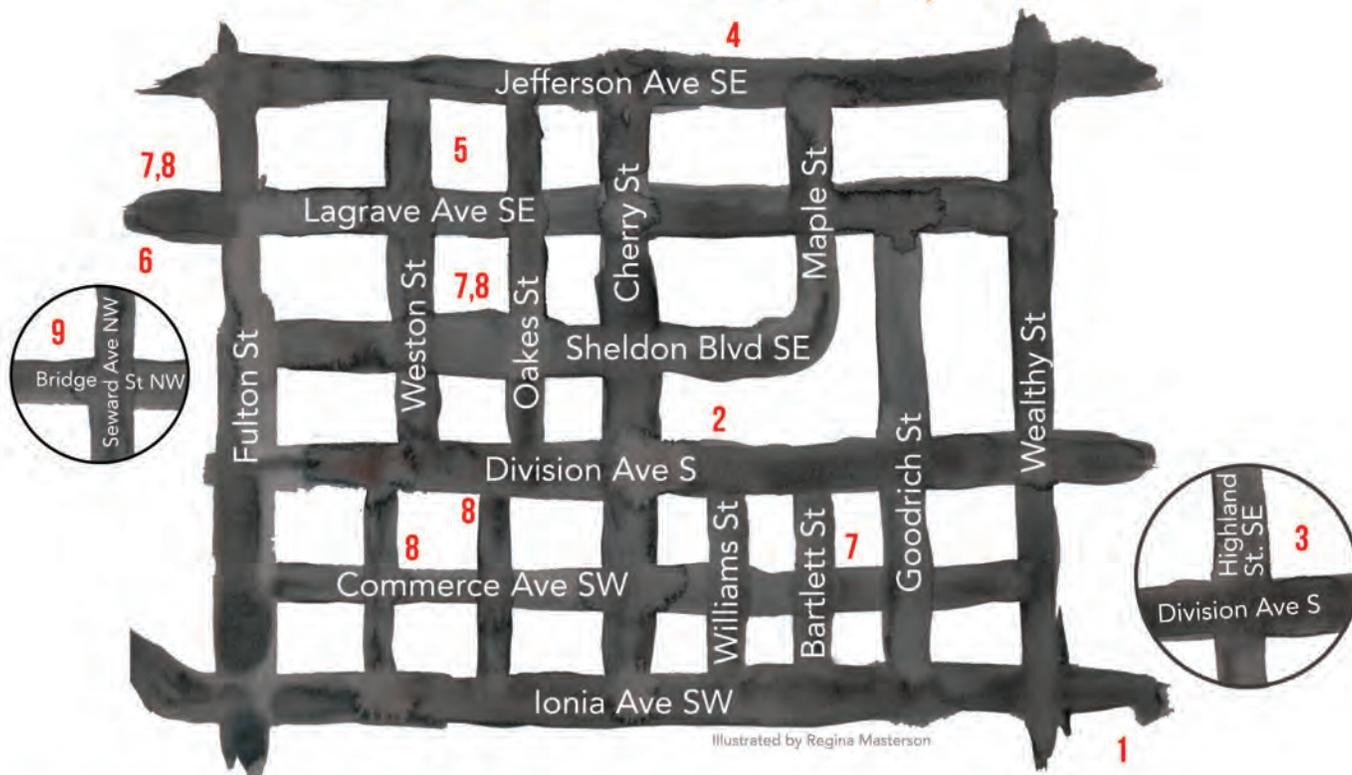
Phone: _____

Mail/Other: _____

Thank you for taking this survey!

APPENDIX 8
Fresh Food Access Map

HEARTSIDE FRESH FOOD ACCESS MAP



1. **Downtown Market** (\$\$\$) 435 Ionia Ave SW: Sunday - Thursday 10am - 7pm, Friday 10am - 8pm, Saturday 9am - 8pm
2. **Heartside Gleaning Initiative** (FREE) Guiding Light - 255 Division Ave S: Saturdays June - October from 3pm to 4pm
3. **Community Food Club** (\$) 1100 Division Ave South 49507: Referral from Westminster Food Pantry required. Open Monday - Friday 10am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm
4. **Mercy Health Cafeteria** (\$) 200 Jefferson Ave SE: Open Daily, 1st floor.
5. **Westminster Food Pantry** (FREE) 47 Jefferson Ave SE: Open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30am to 2pm *subject to resident and income requirements

6. **Park Church / Feeding America** (FREE) 10 East Park Place NE: Open every 4th Wednesday of the month at 5pm
7. **Walmart Bus** (complimentary shuttle): Bus stops at Ransom Tower, Ferguson Apartments, and Commerce Courtyard. *Contact building staff for pick up times
8. **Meijer Bus** (complimentary shuttle): Bus stops Weston Apartments, Ferguson Apartments, Verne Barry Place, and Ransom Towers. *Please note City busses #1 and #15 also stop at Meijer. *Contact building staff for pick up times
9. **Bridge St Market** (\$\$) 613 Bridge St NW 49504: Open daily, 6am - 11pm *Located outside of the Heartside Neighborhood

Access Map subject to change. Contact Organizations to confirm dates, times and fresh food availability.
Created by the Fresh Food Access Workgroup, as a part of the Heartside Quality of Life Study.

APPENDIX 9
Aspire Academy



Why **Aspire Academy**?

Aspire Academy is about people. All who live in and around Kent County with mental health needs and/or recovery issues, regardless of their differences, need to have a welcoming place to belong in our community.

Aspire Academy is about caring support, from staff and students to deal with life's struggles effectively.

Aspire Academy is helping challenged students restore trust in humanity. Aspire Academy moves our community forward with each testimony of how to win at life.

Aspire Academy is an exciting educational program to build a resilient well-grounded life, full of purpose.

Aspire Academy's program challenges one to improve self-esteem and to recognize health pride. This is a by-product of diligently attending classes, applying life skills, growing to be balanced in responsibility and boundaries, and accomplishing a complete course successfully with honors to graduate.

Now **Aspire Academy** students can effectively serve our community.

Susan Meekhof
Director of Operations
Aspire Academy



Mission Statement

Through an empowering mental health education and caring peer support, trust is built, hope is instilled, and life skills are learned.

APPENDIX 10

**Media, Press Coverage
and Web Links**

Where Their Hearts Reside:

The Women Who are Transforming the Heartside Neighborhood

BY KAYLA SOSA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TWO EAGLES MARCUS

JENN SCHAUB



ABBEY SLADICK

ANNAMARIE BULLER



ALYSHA LACH



JOANNA JELKS

For decades, the Heartside neighborhood of Grand Rapids has been seen as a developing area with many residents who struggle with homelessness or a mental or physical disability, or both. The neighborhood makes up a significant portion of downtown, encompassing some of the city's most popular nightlife spots, historical landmarks and the center of contemporary arts.

Within the Heartside neighborhood, there are a handful of organizations that are doing the “boots on the ground” work to help make the area a viable neighborhood for its residents and the rest of the community. Women hold many of the leadership positions within these organizations, and they have something to say about why their hearts reside here.

REGINA BRADLEY

Resident Services Coordinator, Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids

Regina Bradley's day-to-day mission in her work is all things relating to housing stability for the residents of Grand Rapids, specifically those who are homeless and have some form of a disability.

When residents are struggling to stay “on track,” Bradley steps in to provide assistance and guidance to those who are housed through Dwelling Place, from connecting them with a doctor, helping them gain employment and obtain essential household items, addressing issues with neighbors, and helping them keep their apartments clean and safe.

In this work, Bradley has learned to “embrace and celebrate the small things.”

“I work with individuals who come with long histories of trauma from childhood, addictions, health disparities, pain that they carry with them,” she commented. “I had to learn that as much as I may want for someone to change, they just are not ready.”

Bradley said the hardest realization for her was that the people she supports could be her.

“I love the rawness and strength of my Heartside people. Life has hit them hard, and yet they still stand with a story to tell.”

In all of that work, Bradley has learned to remain consistent, roll with the punches and never take anything personally. She hopes to continue to empower people as well as educate others about the Heartside community.

“It's a special place with deep roots, a rugged history and a vibrant future, one I plan to be a part of. It's more important than ever to support and uplift voices who are often left out of the conversation to make sure we grow together, not over each other.” —Mallory Patterson, Co-Chair, Heartside Neighborhood Association

MALLORY PATTERSON

*Impact Producer, Wrinkle Creative
Co-Chair, Heartside Neighborhood Association*

As a resident and local business owner, the neighborhood is close to Mallory Patterson's heart; so much so that she is helping to “lay the foundation” for the new Heartside Neighborhood Association (HNA). The HNA holds monthly potlucks that are open to the public to discuss what's happening in the neighborhood, problem solve and connect.

“The best way to improve a community is to empower its residents to change the things they can, influence the decisions of people who affect their community and raise their voice when it's important to speak up,” Patterson expressed. “I have seen people grow and come out of their shells to make a really big impact on some pressing issues. Sometimes all it takes is a spark.”

Patterson said she gives her time to her neighborhood of more than four years because it's currently at a crossroads; she wants to make sure her community gets the support it needs as the downtown area continues to develop rapidly.

“While I may not always live here, my heart will always be in Heartside,” she divulged. “It's a special

place with deep roots, a rugged history and a vibrant future, one I plan to be a part of. It's more important than ever to support and uplift voices who are often left out of the conversation to make sure we grow together, not over each other.”

The next step for the HNA is to officially make it a 501c3 non-profit to create more opportunities in the neighborhood. Patterson: “Plant the seed, water it and watch it grow.”

LATESHA LIPSCOMB, JD

Community Engagement Project Manager, City of Grand Rapids – Design & Development Planning Division

Latesha Lipscomb works with the neighbors of Heartside to learn about the issues they face and solve them in the best way possible. Many of those problems are complex and require multi-faceted solutions and discussions within the community.

Lipscomb is the project manager for the Heartside Quality of Life Study conducted by the City of Grand Rapids' Planning Department. Additionally, she is a longtime resident and business owner in the neighborhood.

“I have learned that when you give everyday people a platform, even in the midst of some troubled realities, they can and will provide positive solutions as invaluable feedback,” she expressed.

By including the community in the conversation about positive change within the neighborhood, Lipscomb says it has been a “game changer.”

“I have seen the good, the bad and the sometimes ugly growing pains of Heartside over the last few years,” she commented. “This neighborhood is in dire need of continued support, activation and development that takes the pulse of the neighborhood into consideration when critical decisions in design and development are being made.”

ABBEY SLADICK

VP of Communication, Mel Trotter Ministries

Abbey Sladick tries to spread awareness about the people of Heartside and the issues they face, as well as

who they are, by telling the stories of people at Mel Trotter.

“Every day I work to show people in West Michigan, through various mediums, that men, women and children who are experiencing homelessness were created in the image of God and that they have value and talents that make our community a better place,” she said. “There are several goals in sharing these stories: providing healing for the guests, help break down the stigma of homelessness, bring in donations, volunteers and prayer support for the programs and services at Mel Trotter Ministries so we can serve more people.”

Sladick said because homelessness is such a complex problem in our city, she sometimes feels defeated. But when she’s reminded of the partnerships Mel Trotter has made with other organizations in Grand Rapids working on the same issue, she feels hope that we can make a “greater impact, together.”

“I think the greatest impact I can make in my work is to keep the issue of homelessness on the forefront of everyone’s mind, not just during the holidays,” she said.

REV. KELLY VANBROUWER

Associate Director, Heartside Ministry
United Church of Christ ordained minister

At Heartside Ministry, Reverend Kelly VanBrouwer not only does administrative work for the church, but also works directly in the community. She supervises programs and staff, volunteers, fundraising and connecting with other churches. She also oversees the advocacy program, provides free counseling and is the owner of the ministries’ therapy dog, Bean.

VanBrouwer said her favorite part of all her work is the relationships she continues to build with the neighbors. The ministry has seen positive changes through the work it has done, from the free GED program which saw over 55 graduates this year, to the drop-in art studio where anyone can come in to create with paints or pottery and more. More than 100 people visit the ministry’s community room daily, to get out of the weather, use the restroom or grab a cup of coffee. Neighbors can also receive free counseling, dog therapy and resources for anything they might need. Additionally, there is a worship service every Sunday in the chapel. VanBrouwer said she feels called to this service work.

“In these places, I find hope and grace and mercy,” she said. “I barely have to open my eyes to see God incarnate. Every day, I get to be in relationships and create spaces for the people that our society has shoved to the edges. It’s in these people that I find our joint humanity and where I feel home.”

Many of the neighbors experience similar problems, and in working with them, VanBrouwer has seen a “togetherness” form between the community members and a strong resilience within themselves and supporting each other.

“There is a deep understanding that they share with each other that creates this recognition of the humanness in each other,” she explained. “When you need one another to help keep you warm as you try to sleep on a doorstep in the middle of January, you aren’t concerned about their mistakes or their cultural heritage or their sexuality. You recognize the shared humanity in each other.”

JOHANNAH JELKS

Art Gallery & Studio Coordinator, Heartside Ministry

Johannah Jelks operates the art gallery and studio at Heartside Ministry, where many neighborhood residents spend time creating art, whether it’s through the use of fiber arts, ceramics woodworking, printmaking or more. She also hosts Heartside Artists bi-monthly showcases by partnering with local businesses in the area.

“Everything in my work is an extension of encouragement for the Heartside neighbors and artists,” Jelks said. “What I find most challenging is the need for diverse representation in volunteers for the Art Gallery. It is so important for the Heartside artists to receive different experiences and perspectives in the art studio... many of our Heartside artists overcome very difficult challenges using art as a therapeutic expression.”

The studio and gallery is dedicated to providing a space for showing artists’ unique responses to the experiences of their lives, as well as offering guidance and opportunity. The art therapy program “specifically encourages the neighbors to feel open to express themselves whether in grief, stress or start positive new chapters.”

In ArtPrize 10, Heartside artists were able to display their art in an entry titled, “A Family Affair” at Site:Lab and the Heartside Gallery, and interact with visitors about their work.

“This has been a life-changing experience both professionally and personally,” Jelks said. “I have been truly inspired by the neighbors we serve.”

(continued on next page)

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LATESHA LIPSCOMB



MALLARY PATTERSON



REGINA BRADLEY



REV. KELLY VANBROUWER



SUZANNE REININK

JENN SCHAUB

Director of Community Building and Engagement, Dwelling Place

In Dwelling Place's Neighborhood Revitalization Department, Jenn Schaub helps to solve housing problems by working with all the parties involved: residents, organizations and businesses. Dwelling Place oversees about 600 apartment units within Heartside.

One of the most recent projects Schaub has been involved in is getting new lighting on South Division Avenue.

"We've been advocating for better lighting in our neighborhood, and are excited that the City of Grand Rapids has committed to installing new lighting along a portion of South Division in the next year," Schaub said.

Schaub said in order to create solutions for everyone, everyone has to be involved in the conversation.

"Our residents are both tender, fiercely strong and creative," Schaub said. "The buildings in our neighborhood are beautiful and the organizations are full of heart and our businesses are dedicated and unique, so Heartside is extra awesome. We have an amazing history as a neighborhood caring for people and being the epicenter for good in Grand Rapids, and that is what makes us #heartsidestrong."

ANNAMARIE BULLER

Manager of Resident Experience, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. Board Chairwoman, Dwelling Place

At Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc, Annamarie Buller is focused on the conversations around Heartside. She is involved in the Quality of Life Survey and oversees Goal 2 Alliance, a plan to create a Downtown neighborhood. At Dwelling Place, Buller also chairs the Resident Engagement Committee, which helps to ensure that residents of Dwelling Place "can become more involved in leadership roles in their properties and the neighborhoods and cities where they live."

The heart of solving complex issues like those that affect Heartside is through developing and sustaining relationships within the community. Through these relationships, she said she has met and worked with many people who are passionate about making change and committing to the sometimes long and challenging process to actualization.

"...We must stay passionate but also patient, knowing there is always much to be done and there is no one solution that can meet all of the community's needs," Buller said. "Problems like public restrooms, fresh food access and substance abuse...are complicated issues that require multiple collaborators and resources to address fully."

ALYSHA LACH WHITE

Illustrator and Founder/Creative Director of Little Space Studio (111 S Division), Co-chair of the Heartside Neighborhood Association

After the Heartside Neighborhood Association dissolved in 2011, Alysha Lach White, along with Patterson (page 14), is one of the people involved in starting the HNA up again and managing the process of making it an official non-profit. Why does she care so much about this specific community? She says she wants to change the decades-old narrative Grand Rapids residents have been telling or hearing about the Heartside neighborhood.

"Stigma is a tough barrier to engaging people who don't understand our neighborhood and its many layers," Lach White said. "It's hard to get people outside of the neighborhood to shop, experience art and culture, and support fellow downtown neighbors when all they focus on is the homeless and drug activity. Yes, these things are a reality of our area, but we are so much more than that."

Lach White has learned over the years as a small business owner that it is essential to treat each human in the neighborhood with "dignity and respect." When a homeless person approaches her for help, she does her best to offer them the information and resources they may need.

"I try to help as many people as possible understand that though it is uncomfortable for a homeless person to ask for help, whether it be for money or food, you can still greet them pleasantly and be kind," she expressed. "Even if you have nothing to offer but a smile."

Lach White hopes people change their stereotypes or biases about Heartside, and see it as a whole; instead of seeing it only for some of the struggles it encompasses, and also recognize the beauty it contains as a home for many unique individuals. With small businesses, emerging artists, low income and market rate housing, nightlife and shopping located right in Heartside, Lach

White says: "There is so much to appreciate here! Give it a chance with a fresh perspective."

SUZANNE REININK

Human Resources Director, Dégagé

Suzanne Reinink started volunteering at Dégagé 15 years ago with her family. They started out by doing bingo and birthday lunch events, to now offering meals and games on Christmas morning. Seven years ago, Dégagé asked Reinink if she would join the staff as Program Manager, and since then she has taken on other roles.

"We felt and feel strongly that we are called to show God's love by serving and walking alongside others; that everything we have is not for us to keep and hoard, but to share," she said. "This includes our time, talents and treasure."

Dégagé offers both immediate and long-term programs and services for the homeless and disenfranchised people in our community; this includes immediate needs like a shower, laundry, a hot meal and a haircut, to long-term needs, such as the overnight shelter for women experiencing homelessness, called the Open Door Women's Center.

"Our patron advocate is available during the day to assist women in setting goals and searching for affordable housing," Reinink explained. "They are given fresh linens, hygiene services, a hot meal, prayer and vital support during a turbulent time."

Currently, the shelter can hold 40 women, and Reinink said there is usually a waiting list.

"I'd like to see more women's shelters, more temporary shelters/housing for families and young adults," she said.

Dégagé also offers assistance with I.D. services, helping people track down important record documents, like birth certificates and social security cards. The Resource Office gives individuals one-on-one support in the housing process, referrals for health, dental and vision needs, and more. The Dining Room serves over 60,000 meals a year to patrons along Division Avenue. They also offer community vouchers which work as cash for certain goods and services, for people to give to panhandlers in lieu of money.



Kayla Sosa is a multimedia journalism student at GVSU. She's a local freelance writer and enjoys spending time with her husband, her kitty and her family. When she's not writing, she likes to go on nature walks, do yoga and paint.



<https://therapidian.org/placematters-pekich-park-community-conversations> (THE RAPIDIAN)

<https://www.therapidian.org/placematters-building-community-through-active-listening-resource-sharing-heartside> (THE RAPIDIAN)

<https://www.therapidian.org/placematters-quality-life-study-calls-resident-and-community-leaders>
(THE RAPIDIAN)

<https://mibiz.com/news/real-estate/item/25448-new-opportunities-eyed-for-gr%E2%80%99s-south-division-avenue> (MiBiz: West Michigan Business News and Information)

<https://www.woodtv.com/news/grand-rapids/heartside-gets-a-new-pulse-from-passionate-resident/1338400998> (WOODTV 8)

WKTU VOICES PROJECT - <https://wktvvoices.org/voices-in-heartside/>

Same patient, different day: GR homeless clog EMS

WOOD TV 8, Nov. 20

by Susan Samples

<https://www.woodtv.com/news/target-8/same-patient-different-day-gr-homeless-clog-ems/1609746360>
(WOODTV 8)

APPENDIX 11

The Heartside Neighborhood – A Thought Paper by Dennis Sturtevant

THE HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

A thought paper to stimulate conversation about the past, present and more importantly, the future of the Heartside Neighborhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan

June 27, 2018

"If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it." **Abraham Lincoln**

BACKGROUND

In the late 1970's, church and nonprofit leaders in Grand Rapids, Michigan, were concerned about the potential for development south of the downtown area leading to displacement of lower income people who lived in many of the area's older buildings and hotels. There was also growing concern that deinstitutionalization of developmentally disabled and mentally ill adults might result in an increase in homelessness for many individuals if mainstream solutions did not work. The area they were concerned with is today known as the Heartside Neighborhood.

The name "Heartside" was introduced in 1977 when the Heartside Neighborhood Association was formed. The name was selected to emphasize the proximity of the neighborhood to the traditional downtown or "heart" of the city. It was during this period that the City of Grand Rapids was investing considerable resources into the formation and support of neighborhood associations across the city. Chris Galante was its first Director and it operated from a former Hollys Restaurant location on Jefferson Avenue; the present day site for the Westminster Presbyterian Church parking lot.

In the spring of 1978, the Heartside Neighborhood Association requested assistance from the City to prepare an assessment of the area to create a plan to improve it. That plan, completed in September of 1979, became the "Heartside Planning Taskforce Technical Report". The plan offered numerous recommendations for improving the Heartside Neighborhood including a section on housing which suggested the creation of a "housing corporation to meet the immediate and future housing needs in the neighborhood". A study group was formed to consider how this might be initiated calling themselves "The Center City Housing Task Force". The Center City Housing Task Force's study of the Heartside Neighborhood eventually culminated in the formation of Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) community development corporation, in February of 1980.

The term "skid row" had already been in use as a description of Division Avenue and the neighborhood for several decades, well before the Heartside Neighborhood Association and Dwelling Place were formed. Indeed, the presence of social service agencies catering to the "down and out", the homeless and households with untreated mental illness and substance abuse problems had been a fact in the neighborhood for even longer than that. Both Mel Trotter Mission and Guiding Light Mission, for example, have maintained a presence in the neighborhood since the early and middle part of the 20th century when railroad related warehouse work, bars, rooming houses, auto dealerships and cheap hotels were predominant features in this neighborhood's economy. Degage Ministries was formed in 1967 as a coffee and hospitality ministry by a group of Calvin College students and God's Kitchen, which is now a program operated by Catholic Charities, was formerly known as Capitol Lunch; founded on Grand Rapids west side by Catholic volunteers to serve the "down and out" along Bridge Street. It moved to Division Avenue in the 1970s, relocating several times along Division Avenue.

The post WWII development patterns that led to wide scale disinvestment in many inner-city areas only reinforced this neighborhood's reputation as a near downtown haven for inexpensive housing and access to social services. Urban renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s were followed by large-scale changes in Michigan's mental health system in the 1980s, moving clients in the system from state institutions into residential settings in communities across the state. While many clients made a successful transition into community placements, some did not, finding their way to local missions or residing in inexpensive, low quality housing. All of these factors further contributed to the increased focus on Heartside as the neighborhood where the face of homelessness and poverty was most evident for the community.

Over the years since the late 1970's, this unique area of the city has been the subject of numerous assessments and studies. A former Planning Director for the City of Grand Rapids, Bill Hoyt, led a major downtown planning initiative in the 1990s called "Voices & Visions". During that planning process, he described the Heartside Neighborhood as one "with the most diverse mix of land uses of any neighborhood in the city".

THE HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD TODAY

Shifting demographics and renewed interest in urban centers have resulted in the Heartside Neighborhood once again becoming the focus for debate and discussion. The narratives for these discussions are often framed as "either-or" choices between a future for the neighborhood that promotes economic development and a future that protects the most vulnerable residents in the city.

Today, in addition to its reputation as a haven for the poor and destitute, the area is also noted for its thriving entertainment district near the VanAndel Arena, the presence of several large health care and educational institutions, its eclectic mix of arts related venues and an increasingly larger concentration of residential opportunities for varied income levels.

Given the significant investment in affordable housing that we see in the Heartside Neighborhood today and the accompanying affordability commitments in those projects, it is unlikely that further development of the area will lead to gentrification by income as has been seen in some other Grand Rapids neighborhoods. Deed restrictions associated with affordable rental housing projects will prevent owners from converting these apartments to market rate housing for at least 30 years and longer in many cases. While emergency and transitional housing programs offered by the missions and others in the neighborhood are not threatened, neither are they protected by deed restrictions, leaving the decision about their continued presence in the neighborhood with the boards of those organizations.

For all of these reasons, it is likely that social service needs for many of the most vulnerable households living in emergency, transitional and "income restricted" permanent housing will also continue.

What may seem less certain to some is how economic growth will occur in a neighborhood where untreated mental illness, substance abuse problems and even poverty contribute to a higher than average neighborhood incidence of panhandling, public urination, loitering and occasional disorderly conduct. Those concerns raised to the forefront in 2016 when Heartside Ministry, presently located at 54 S. Division Avenue, sought an opportunity to acquire retail store frontage at the corner of Cherry Street and Division Avenue to relocate and expand their programs. Nearby businesses raised concerns about the potential for crowds loitering on the sidewalks and in Pekich Park, also located at that intersection. While the city granted its approval for the move, opposition from businesses resulted in litigation against the City of Grand Rapids. The businesses eventually lost their court case. In spite of this win for the social services organization, Heartside Ministry opted not to relocate to the new location on Division Avenue. Similar criticism has been leveled at Degage Ministries over the years, a reflection of the fact that they are also located on Division Avenue where there has literally been no place for their patrons to gather before or after receiving services except on the adjacent sidewalks and nearby Pekich Park.

These cases and other similar examples illustrate the need for the community to find a workable solution that can address some of the business related concerns while at the same time, taking care not to displace the social service programs that so many downtown residents depend on in this neighborhood.

Amidst all of this, we still see significant opportunities for future development. Increasing income diversity and residential density can contribute to growing opportunities for commercial and retail expansion. The neighborhood's proximity to downtown, its historic character, its flexible zoning for height allowances and the presence of several undeveloped or under developed parcels all contribute to potential for further development.

In most large cities, the healthiest neighborhoods are often seen as those that have achieved maximum density with a good mix of incomes. Those demographics are seen by many as critical ingredients to ensure a strong market for retail amenities and the work force needed to fill positions available within that retail sector. The Heartside Neighborhood has the potential to become one of those neighborhoods.

It's time to imagine a new narrative for Heartside:

- What if there was another narrative; one based on a fresh examination of this neighborhood's current needs and attributes?

- What if this new narrative could be leveraged by a growing alignment of interests within the neighborhood?
- What if the core of that narrative was informed by “best practice” design and planning principles with a goal to ensuring both income diversity and economic development?

AN EMERGING ALIGNMENT OF INTERESTS

Late in 2016, a meeting was convened at Ferguson Apartments to discuss the potential for relocating both Heartside Ministry and Degage Ministries to the Ferguson block where a large surface parking area presently exists. The idea, supported by both organizations at the time, seemed like a practical solution to address design constraints for programs and public gathering spaces along Division Avenue. This idea had a further goal to improve the conditions and outlook for economic development along Division Avenue.

Attendance in that meeting included representatives from many of the largest foundations in Grand Rapids, the City of Grand Rapids, Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. (DGRI), Spectrum Health, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dwelling Place, Mel Trotter Mission, Degage Ministries and Heartside Ministry. Reaction to the relocation proposal was mixed with some calling for a more comprehensive plan for the neighborhood that could incorporate, not just the relocation of these two organizations from Division Avenue, but also plans to address homelessness, mental health and substance abuse issues in a more effective manner. In the year or more that has passed since that meeting, interest in creating a more comprehensive plan has grown.

Existing conditions within the neighborhood and recent actions taken that may affect the neighborhood; suggest that a genuine alignment of interests is more likely today than at any time in the past several decades. Consider the following examples and the opportunities they present.

The City of Grand Rapids Quality of Life Study - The City of Grand Rapids Planning Department has embarked on a series of listening sessions throughout the Heartside Neighborhood to study perceptions and needs of neighborhood residents and businesses. This effort has been expansive with numerous sessions over many months, inclusive of virtually every sector in the neighborhood. This planning initiative is now forming into work groups to use the information gathered from the “listening sessions” to develop some specific recommendations to share with the community. Work group themes include:

1. At Home in Heartside (focus: affordable housing options, homelessness)
2. Public Restrooms (focus: public restroom solutions in Heartside)
3. Areas of Improvement (focus: Pekich Park and Lucky’s Liquor)
4. Neighborhood Building and Activation (focus: supporting the creation of a Neighborhood Association in Heartside)
5. Engaged and Employed) focus: employment and educational options)
6. Substance Support (focus: addiction support network)
7. Fresh Food Access (focus: health food options in Heartside)

This process provides an opportunity to incorporate resident vision and recommendations into a comprehensive planning process to meet changing needs in the neighborhood and community.

Hospitals as Crisis Centers - In meetings with hospital officials at both St. Mary’s and Spectrum Health we hear reports about patients from the Heartside Neighborhood who are frequent users of emergency services. Public inebriation, mental health crises, poverty and the absence of assigned primary care providers for these individuals create an expensive and chaotic approach to the delivery of health care in the community. Exacerbating this problem, is the fact that discharge options are often limited for many of these individuals if they happen to be homeless or are unable to care for themselves in their home following release.

Behavioral Health Services Coordination and Funding – In recent months we have seen increased interest in this issue across Kent County. Announcements of major funding cuts for services by Network 180 late in 2017 have accelerated these conversations. On May 18, 2018 a community convening occurred at the Eberhard Center of Grand Valley State University where several hundred professionals met to learn more about this crisis, including the extent of needs and the funding available to address those needs. Other recent meetings and focus groups have similarly focused on this issue.

These conditions suggest potential opportunities to engage in comprehensive planning with health care systems in and outside of the Heartside Neighborhood to address behavioral and physical health needs in the neighborhood. Mercy Health, Spectrum Health, GVSU Ferguson Clinic, Pine Rest and Cherry Street Health Services, the largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in the state, all maintain a large presence in the Heartside Neighborhood.

A Kent County Crisis Center - Kent County has been studying options for responding more effectively to behavioral health crises across the county. A large percentage of behavioral health crises referrals come from zip codes in close proximity to downtown Grand Rapids. Local hospital emergency rooms and the County Jail have sometimes served as de facto crisis centers for a lack of other options. Kent County is presently considering the potential for building a crisis center near downtown designed to provide a more effective and humane approach to address this need. A program in Oakland County may serve as a model for Kent County to consider in crisis residential care.

If this idea comes to fruition, it presents another opportunity to incorporate a vital resource as a component in a comprehensive plan for Heartside, especially if it could be located in close proximity to many of the health care and social service agencies in the downtown vicinity that work closely with populations most likely to be referred to the center.

The Ferguson Restructuring – Dwelling Place will be restructuring the Ferguson Apartments at 72 Sheldon SE in 2019 and 2020. The Ferguson Apartments building and parking lot were donated to Dwelling Place in 2000 by Spectrum Health, which had just completed its merger at that time. Ferguson Apartments continues to offer affordable apartments for formerly homeless, disabled single adults as well as office and program space for non-profit organizations. Over 16 years since it opened in 2002, Ferguson has offered affordable lease space to several non-profit organizations and educational institutions. When the Salvation Army relocated from the Ferguson building several years ago, Dwelling Place converted their second floor space into 18 additional affordable apartments that now primarily serve formerly homeless veterans. Today, Revive and Thrive uses the kitchen area in this building several days a week to operate a youth volunteer program that prepares and delivers meals to cancer patients and their families. Only GVSU's Nurse Managed Family Clinic remains from the original organizations that leased space in this building. GVSU would like to expand their program at the site to increase their capacity for self-sufficiency.

The restructuring of Ferguson Apartments provides an opportunity to improve and even expand on existing affordable housing options at this site. It also presents an opportunity to reimagine how nearly 15,000 square feet of commercial space within the Ferguson building can be re-configured to meet changing needs in the neighborhood and the community.

Mel Trotter Ministries Program Expansion – In recent months, Mel Trotter Ministries has been exploring a number of new initiatives to address homelessness in the community including:

1. A program to address the need for discharge options for homeless patients. A similar program called the Recuperation Center operated for several years but eventually closed in 2003 for lack of funding.
2. Joint ventures to offer permanent supportive housing in the community, providing more certainty in permanent housing options for households graduating from their existing transitional housing programs thereby reducing occupancy in their shelter programs.
3. Partnering to create innovative social enterprise programs offering alternate employment options for their clients until they are prepared for full employment.

The Spectrum Parking Lot - While Dwelling Place owns the southern half of the Ferguson block, the northern half is surface parking owned by Spectrum Health. The parking serves their clinic at 71 Sheldon SE and other neighborhood groups, as there are more spaces available than their parking needs require. Both Westminster Church and LaGrave Church have used the surface parking for weekend church services and both churches have expressed an interest in participating in future conversations about parking plans for the block. In 1999, this parking lot was identified as the site for a multi-use development project. That site plan included a building to house several non-profit organizations, market-rate town homes, a public gathering space and a parking ramp to meet the needs for the entire development as well as the Spectrum Clinic.

The opportunity to reconsider such a plan with Spectrum Health, taking into account identified neighborhood and larger community needs in 2020 and beyond, could become part of a comprehensive neighborhood plan to address housing, social service and behavioral health needs, adding even further to the potential for economic development along Division Avenue.

LaGrave Church Acquisition of the Seventh Day Adventist Church - LaGrave Church recently shared their plans to acquire the former Seventh Day Adventist Church at the corner of Oakes and Sheldon, immediately across the street from the Ferguson site. They have expressed interest in learning how this facility might be of service to the neighborhood.

If considered as part of this new narrative, LaGrave Church could play a significant role in creating opportunity for use of space within a comprehensive neighborhood plan.

Economic Development on Division Avenue - Division Avenue has many of the necessary ingredients to become a viable extension of the downtown entertainment district. Most of Division Avenue's "turn of the century" historic architecture is still intact and a prevalence of live/work options is present in the many mixed-use buildings along the street. Division Avenue is also within the DDA and DGRI boundaries, making the corridor eligible for funding to support infrastructure improvements (lighting, sidewalks, parking, water and sewer projects, etc.) through public investment as well as marketing and other program support. In fact, the City of Grand Rapids has recently completed plans for more than \$6 million in investment in streets, lighting and other public infrastructure over the next several years, which is presently awaiting final approval from the City Commission.

These are all opportunities that can contribute to economic revitalization of Division Avenue, if incorporated into a larger and more comprehensive development plan for the neighborhood.

One perceived barrier to reaching this goal has been problems associated with loitering on Division Avenue. This has become a sore spot for business interests, especially in this area. It is unlikely to lessen as a concern until the need for gathering on Division Avenue sidewalks before and after receiving social services is resolved.

Degage Ministries recently purchased a parcel at 139 Sheldon SE, immediately east and behind their current location. They plan to move their dining room to that location with the desire to alleviate the loitering at the corner of Cherry Street and Division Avenue. Degage also plans to expand programming within that parcel to increase capacity and to provide an outdoor gathering space along Sheldon Avenue for their patrons in the neighborhood.

The Ferguson Restructuring Plan, referenced earlier, presents another opportunity to address this issue by presenting a potential option for re-location of Heartside Ministry from Division Avenue. Beyond mitigating the loitering problem on Division Avenue, relocation presents an opportunity for designing space to expand programs that meet genuine needs, to share space that will generate cost savings and other efficiencies and to address needs for outdoor gathering space on private property. Thoughtful design for outdoor gathering spaces can enhance the dignity and security of every patron.

HNCP - The Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Project (HNCP), another example of the growing interest in the three C's of Collaboration, Coordination and Cooperation, has acted as a convener around neighborhood issues and concerns in recent years, bringing a new focus on collaboration and coordination among many of the social service agencies located in the Heartside Neighborhood.

The Core Providers Group of HNCP, comprised of executive leadership from Heartside Neighborhood agencies, has expressed an interest and willingness to assist as a convener in support of this new narrative to explore each of these opportunities as part of a comprehensive neighborhood plan.

BROADENING THE CONVERSATION – ALIGNING THE INTERESTS – PLANNING FOR ACTION

There is no single pathway or panacea to address the complexity of needs and issues present in such a dynamic neighborhood as Heartside. The intent of this paper is to generate more conversation about the potential for an alignment of varied interests that may lead to coordinated action that is comprehensive in both its scope and its impact.

It is also important to clearly state that the conversation being suggested is not new. Conversations like these are already taking place in a variety of community meetings, city and church offices, boardrooms, neighborhood gatherings and business meetings across the Heartside Neighborhood and downtown area. This paper suggests a need to "knit" some of these conversations into a coherent and organized agenda for change that resembles something close to a community consensus. Getting to that place will require a concerted effort over many months.

It is probably also worthwhile to suggest that an alignment of interests might be easier to achieve if we create a framework for discussion that focuses on what appear to be two overarching themes in the many conversations taking place across the community. Those themes include concerns about Behavioral Health Needs in the Heartside Neighborhood and Economic Development along the Division Avenue Corridor.

With some risk for misunderstanding, this paper suggests that from time to time, the conditions for substantive change are more fertile than at others. In the Heartside Neighborhood, it is difficult to remember a recent time when the alignment of interests for comprehensive change was more compelling. It is my hope that by disseminating this paper throughout the Spring and Summer of 2018 that interest in coming together might result in a facilitated convening to determine where our common interests intersect within the next several months.

Finding a way to align and leverage those interests is our best hope for truly transformative change in the Heartside Neighborhood.

*“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.” **Martin Luther King, Jr.***

Dennis Sturtevant is the author of this paper. He has served as the CEO of Dwelling Place since 1989. Prior to coming to Dwelling Place, he served as the Executive Director of the Catholic Human Development Office from 1979. He has worked in the Heartside Neighborhood for nearly four decades. If you are interested in participating in dialog about development of a comprehensive plan please reply with an email to dsturtevant@dwellingplacegr.org or call 616-855-0410.

APPENDIX 12

**Heartside Neighborhood
Activity Matrix 2019/2021**

HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE 2019/2020 ACTIVITY MATRIX

The work program in Heartside for the next 24 months will be:

| Heartside Work Group Title | Proposed Activity | Description | Potential Partners | Completed |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------|
| FRESH FOOD ACCESS | Fresh Food Access Community Kick-off Meeting | Initial meeting for neighborhood volunteers to become familiar with the overall goals and objectives for the increase of access to Fresh Food in 2019. Volunteers will be able to sign up for the neighborhood Resident Advocate program and well as the Food Box Pilot Program. | Heartside Neighborhood Association, Community Food Club, City of GR Planning Dept., Dwelling Place | |
| | Heartside Neighborhood Paint & Sip | Neighbors will gather at the 307 space for an evening of art instruction where attendees will define what fresh food access means to them by painting their version of the My Plate Food Pyramid. The art experience will be led by a neighbor and member of the work group who is a graduate from Kendall College of Art & Design. | Kendall College, Brush Studios, Dwelling Place, Heartside Neighborhood Association | |
| | Heartside Farmers Market Pilot Program | The goal is to host a few Farmers Markets in the neighborhood at both Pekich Park and Heartside Park. The group would ideally like to work with two farmers to start with, one intentionally being a Farmer of color. The group has considered partnering with other agencies to supply food and/or possibly even purchasing fresh food and selling it at an affordable price in the park. The group is expected to focus their efforts on this initiative in early spring. | Heartside Gleaning Initiative, GR Dream Center, City of GR Parks Dept., Community Food Club, Access of West Michigan, YMCA Veggie Van | |
| AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT | Lucky's Liquor Store Community Conversations | The work group has hosted a total of X conversations with the owners and managers of Lucky's Liquor Store. Conversations have been fairly successful. Since its inception the work group has been able to negotiate several quick wins like the increase in pricing on single serve cans of beer and closing one hour earlier on Saturdays. There has also been conversation about rebranding the store. | Work Group Members, Neighbors, Area Business Owners, Lucky's Management, Lucky's Owners, GRPD | |
| | Pekich Park Activation - Dwelling Place Gardening Club | Dwelling Place has been advocating to DGRI by way of the Goal 2 Alliance to get added funding for gardening supplies, mulch, water, etc. to continue the work of the Heartside Gardening Club. They began their efforts in 2018 but uncovered that Pekich Park had a huge rat infestation which halted the work. The Parks Dept. treated the pocket park this past Fall. To move forward and reinstate the program, residents will need funding from DRGI or the city for the purchase of plants, flowers, mulch, dirt, etc. | City of GR Parks Dept., Planning dept., Dwelling Place Residents, Heartside Neighbors | |
| | Kendall College of Art & Design Masters of Architecture Program Collaboration | Info Board Installation at Pekich Park - Given the timeline and approvals the current sign is not affixed in the Park the way the students intended to ground the sign. They have all of the supplies to finish installing the sign properly but I think proper final installation is weather dependent. The students have also been working very hard on some great design ideals for a mobile community center. Some of the renderings have been phenomenal and we have seen a lot of overlap in ways some of the infrastructural components of their designs could truly benefit the neighborhood. The students explored various way to activate vacant or under-utilized space in the neighborhood. The ideals included many different aspects from the implementation of a community space that is also a greenhouse to interesting ways we could better use a parking ramp as a gathering space. Because this is so drastically different from the final recommendation for a cart-like or trailer type mobile unit I am unsure of where will go next but this partnership has been amazing and has provided for a great exchange of information about neighbors could experience the neighborhood in the future. | KCAD, Dwelling Place, City of GR Planning Dept., GRPD, Heartside Neighbors | |
| | Pekich & Heartside Park Redesign and Construction | The Parks Dept. has dedicated mileage funding allocated for the redesign and construction of both parks. Winterizing the bathroom at Heartside Park has been a point of discussion for consideration. It will be a costly endeavor that is likely to require most if not all of the funds available. | City of GR Parks Dept. | |
| ENGAGED & EMPLOYED | Lunch & Learn Series | Four Sessions over the course of the year hosted at the 106 Space in Heartside. Titles include: Employment 101, Work Life Balance, and Ready to Launch Mini Job Fair and Talk to Me: How to Communicate with your Employer. Series is limited to 15 participants from the neighborhood and participants who complete all four courses will be added to a certified Heartside Employee Reference List. The goal is to equip neighbors with the | Degage Ministries, Heartside Business Association, 70x7 Life Recovery, Dwelling Place, Mel Trotter, City of Grand Rapids | |

HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE 2019/2020 ACTIVITY MATRIX

The work program in Heartside for the next 24 months will be:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | knowledge and skills needed to obtain and/or maintain employment in Heartside or near neighborhoods. This initiative is being led by the QOL work group and each session will be facilitated by a partner agency. | Planning Department | | |
| PUBLIC RESTROOMS | Pilot Program | DGRI is currently involved in a Cost Analysis and seeking quotes for the use of a vacant commercial space in the target area on South Division. The space is a Dwelling Place Live/Work Space Unit located near the corner of Division & Weston and directly across the street from Rockwell Republic. | DGRI, Dwelling Place, GRPD, DGRI Ambassadors and other neighboring commercial retail spaces. | | |
| SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT, RECOVERY & MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY | Mental Health First Aid Training | Offer a 2-Day training in Heartside to First-ward Commissioners, GRPD, Agency Providers, Neighbors and all interested parties FREE of charge in Heartside. | Dwelling Place, City of Grand Rapids, Be NICE, Work Group | | |
| | Aspire Academy - Newly designed Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Coach program in Heartside | Aspire Academy is intended to be a mental health and substance abuse issue education center located in the Heartside area of Downtown Grand Rapids. Degage Ministries has graciously agreed to provide space to educate the community on weekends (Saturday and Sunday afternoons). They hope to open the doors of Aspire Academy on February 2 & 3, 2019. Each day will offer four hour and a half classes ranging from self-esteem to problem solving with practical solutions. Executive Director = Susan Meekhof and Assistant Director = Doreen Timmers | Heartside QOL Work Group, Degage Ministries, | | |
| NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING & ACTIVATION | Neighborhood Association Steering Committee | There will be a total of 6 meetings where the steering committee which consists of people from both North and South of Fulton will have the following committee goals: Mission, Vision, Values, Boundaries, By-laws, Membership structure, Board structure and Association name. | Neighbors, DNN, Heartside Neighborhood Association | | |
| | Neighborhood Association Events | History of Heartside Pt. 2, Community-wide Flea Market (likely partnership with DDN), National Night Out with GRPD, Neighbor Knowledge Exchange January 2019, new annual event for selecting board members (Details TBD), Cleansweep with GVSU students, Legacy Binder creation for the perpetuation of the Neighborhood Association. | | | |
| | Heartside/Downtown Neighborhood Association | The Neighborhood Association is expanding NORTH! Boundaries are 90% likely to go up to Michigan St. We are embarking on this journey where the DNN will act as an umbrella organization for associations in Downtown and other near neighborhoods. The issue of the "white space" or unclaimed territory will now be absolved into Heartside. Bridging the gap between resident North of Fulton and South of Fulton is imperative. This work will begin as the Steering Committee unfolds and starts working. To date the two people North of Fulton we are on-boarding are Kelli Jo Peltier and Maria Zache. | HNA, DGRI, DNN | | |
| AT HOME IN HEARTSIDE | Mixed-Use Development Neighborhood Vacancy Study | The City of Grand Rapids study current mixed-use developments in Heartside for potential future use as Affordable Housing. And if there are vacancies, provide more opportunities to participate in the Housing / Rental Rehabilitation Program. | City of Grand Rapids, DGRI, Assessors Office, Dwelling Place | | |
| | Heartside Residential Rental Ordinance Info Session | Educate applicants on the Residential Rental Application Ordinance rights and complaint process. We additionally request that the City of GR create a process that informs the complainant of the status of their inquiries in a timely manner. | Work Group, City of Grand Rapids, Community Development Office | | |
| CALL VOLUME REDUCTION EFFORTS | Task Force Meetings / Recommendation Implementation | 1. Nine proposed countermeasures were identified which applied directly to the GRFD.2. Each countermeasure was given a priority based on a priority matrix.Support the Mel Trotter Public Inebriate ProgramPublic Education Campaign - Identifying persons in distressDefine "super-users" and create a shared databaseIdentify gaps in patient care to ensure continuous improvement of care"Ride Along" app to aid in de-escalation and follow up careImprove inter-agency communicationInter-agency sharing of incident data Petition KCEMS to allow alternate transport options based on complaintProvide mobile integrated healthcare | GRPD, GRFD, Dwelling Place, Mel Trotter, Mercy Health, Spectrum Health, City of GR Various Departments | | |



Heartside Neighborhood Association ^{V.1}
105 Jefferson

NOVEMBER 1979

Neighborhood Safety

The success of improving any neighborhood begins by improving the safety of that neighborhood. The Heartside Neighborhood Assoc. has already implemented several programs to improve safety on the streets of Heartside. Specifically, these include the Police Beat Patrol and the WhistleSTOP program.

STREET LIGHTING

To continue meeting the security needs of our neighborhood, Heartside is proposing a project to the Community Development Dept. of the City for improved street lights in the area west of Division Ave. between Fulton and Wealthv. Presently many of these streets have little or no lighting. A ruling from the City on the project is expected in the spring with actual work on the lighting beginning in the summer.



“We are the CHANGE we have been waiting for!”

The City of Grand Rapids Design & Development Planning Division would like to take this time to give a special thanks to every neighbor that lives, works or plays in Heartside that made a positive contribution to this body of work. We hope this Quality of Life Final Report is a reflection of your hard-work and dedication exemplified during this process.

THANK YOU!





HEARTSIDE QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY FINAL REPORT

City of Grand Rapids
Design, Development & Community Engagement
Long Range Planning Division

February 2019

