

2013

Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project

July 23, 2013 Draft

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project is engaging residents to improve health and well-being and promote healthier, more vital neighborhoods in Freeport's Third Ward



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project is engaging residents to improve the health and well-being of residents and promote healthier, more vital neighborhoods in Freeport’s Third Ward.

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project began in 2010 with funding from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants awarded to the City of Freeport. These funds have been used to focus on health concerns of residents who live closest to “brownfield” sites Downtown (sites that may be obstacles to neighborhood improvement because of potential contamination). As such, the City used these funds to partner with the Stephenson County Health Department to identify resident health concerns and to identify next steps for addressing these concerns.

Since health is affected by so many factors, this project is broad in nature and looks at factors including economic status; housing; neighborhood infrastructure; community activities and recreation; access to healthcare; education; and access to shopping, transportation, and healthy food.

The Project focuses geographically on the Third Ward—a voting district in the City of Freeport that includes a collection of neighborhoods in and near the Downtown riverfront, which share many of the same neighborhood challenges as well as opportunities.

This report summarizes the work of the Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project, through the following Project phases:

- 1. Identifying Health Issues**
- 2. Prioritizing Health Issues**
- 3. Moving Forward through CAPS:
*Community Activities Partnership
Support***
- 4. Next Steps: Supporting CAPS, Action
Planning, And Measuring Progress**

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project has produced some new, eye-opening data about conditions in the community that directly affect health and well-being, as well as reinforcing already well understood issues. The planning process was a unique one, shifting over time to put more attention into supporting resident leadership and engagement, so that the Project, moving forward, has true buy-in and champions from Third Ward neighborhoods. The result has been the formation of a new citizen group called CAPS (Community Activities Partnership Support) to implement the Healthy Neighborhoods Project and plan for next steps.

Addressing the systemic issues that affect community health, most of them stemming from concentrations of poverty in the Third Ward, has been and will continue to be a long-term, difficult challenge. However, the energy being devoted to this Project through the formation of CAPS holds true promise for making progress to create healthier places and healthier people in the Third Ward.

INTRODUCTION

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project is engaging residents to improve the health and well-being of residents and to promote healthier, more vital neighborhoods in Freeport’s Third Ward.

Report Overview

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project began in 2010 with funding from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants awarded to the City of Freeport. These funds have been used to focus on health concerns of residents who live closest to “brownfield” sites Downtown (sites that may be obstacles to neighborhood improvement because of potential contamination). The City used these funds to partner with the Stephenson County Health Department to identify resident health concerns and to identify next steps for addressing these concerns.

Since health is affected by so many factors, this study is broad in nature and looks at factors including economic status; housing; neighborhood infrastructure; community activities and recreation; access to healthcare; education; and access to shopping, transportation, and healthy food.

This report begins with a summary of the City’s Brownfields Program Initiative that initiated this Project, and a review of relevant studies that laid the foundation for this Project. The report then identifies key health issues that emerged from the Third Ward Health Monitoring survey and Focus Group sessions. The next section describes the process used to involve residents in prioritizing the issues. The report then concludes with a discussion of the strategy for engaging residents and neighborhood leaders through a newly formed “CAPS” group (Community, Activities, Partnership, Support) and identifies next steps for moving forward.

Third Ward Focus Area

The Project focuses geographically on the Third Ward—a voting district in the City of Freeport that includes a collection of neighborhoods in and near the Downtown riverfront that share many neighborhood challenges as well as opportunities. The map on the following page highlights the neighborhoods that make up the Third Ward. Note that the “Third Ward” neighborhood is a sub-area of the broader Third Ward voting district.

[Insert map]

The Project Team

This Project was initiated through a grant written by the City of Freeport Community Development Department. The grant funds were used to involve the Stephenson County Health Department Public Health Administrator. The City and County are also supported by Vandewalle & Associates—the City’s brownfields redevelopment consultant, and Health Systems Research at the University of Illinois College of Medicine - Rockford which participated in the study design and analysis. Throughout this report, the “Project Team” refers to this group. Recognizing the limitations of not having direct leadership from the neighborhood, the Project Team began efforts to transfer ownership of this Project over to resident leaders, which led to the formation of the CAPS neighborhood group in March 2012.

Project Goals and Approach

The City and the County Health Department initiated the Project to bring attention and resources to address health concerns of residents who live closest to “brownfield” sites Downtown (sites that may be obstacles to neighborhood improvement because of potential contamination). Across the country, neighborhoods closest to these historically commercial/industrial brownfield areas are often characterized by disproportionately high percentages of low-income and minority residents, which is the case in Freeport’s Third Ward neighborhoods. These brownfield sites pose threats to public health not only from potential exposure to contamination, but also from secondary effects. Brownfield sites, being significant redevelopment challenges, lead to disinvestment in the surrounding areas, compounding concentrations of poverty and threatening neighborhood and resident well-being. The Project therefore required a comprehensive strategy to address the public health and secondary issues within the Third Ward.

The City therefore used grant funds to partner with the Stephenson County Health Department to identify a wide range of resident community health concerns and then to identify next steps for addressing these concerns with the residents. Community health for this Project relates both to general health issues among residents living in the community, such as issues of asthma, obesity and access to health care; and also relates to the environment of the community itself. As such, community health also includes topics related to the safety, appearance, economic status, housing, neighborhood infrastructure, community activities and recreation, education, transportation, and access to healthy food in the Project area.

The Project team began with the following four overarching goals as part of the comprehensive strategy:

1. Identify neighborhood health concerns
2. Establish goals for addressing health concerns
3. Identify tactics and strategies for addressing concerns, resulting in an Action Plan
4. Engage neighborhood residents in a meaningful way throughout the process

Thus, the final product was originally conceived as a roadmap for improving community health in the Third Ward, both related to environmental factors (i.e. overcoming brownfield and other challenges) and other health concerns including increasing access to health care and knowledge of preventative health care.

As the Project Team progressed through the issues identification process, the Team realized that the fourth goal—engaging neighborhood residents—would need to be prioritized in order to advance the other goals successfully. Without meaningful resident participation, buy-in, and ultimately ownership of this Project, the Healthy Neighborhoods Project would be at risk of being perceived as another plan that does not produce meaningful, visible results for residents, and does not reflect residents' priorities.

Consequently, the planning process was revised to put more focus on engaging residents, developing leaders, and building trust first and foremost. CAPS identified a small number of initial projects to focus on to build this momentum and engage residents. Now that CAPS has been in place for over a year, the group has been able to develop Action Plans for each of its focus projects, which are included in this report.

THIRD WARD FOCUS THROUGH FREEPORT'S BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

This Project focuses on a holistic set of issues that impact community health and well-being in the Third Ward. The issue that helped to launch this Project, through funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), is Third Ward residents' proximity to the concentration of brownfield sites throughout Freeport's Downtown riverfront—the historic center of industrial and commercial activity in Freeport. The EPA defines a brownfield as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

The City of Freeport has had an active Brownfields Initiative since 1999, led by the City and supported by many community partners. The focus of this Initiative has been almost entirely in the Third Ward, simply due to the fact that the greatest number and concentration of potential brownfield sites are located in this historic industrial center along the Downtown riverfront. Though this Healthy Neighborhoods Project began in 2009, improving community health and well-being for Third Ward residents has been a major driving force behind the brownfields program since it began.

In order to move forward successfully with this Healthy Neighborhoods Project, the Project Team, residents, and other stakeholders need to look back on the work undertaken in the Third Ward over the past decade, and to learn both from successes and setbacks. Appendix B of this report includes a detailed synopsis of the City's Brownfields Initiative since it began in 1999. These keys to success from the City's program to date will shape the Healthy Neighborhoods Project moving forward:

- Undertake **proactive and holistic planning**, through a process that is transparent and inclusive. Continually communicate the benefits and resulting implementation progress.
- Support **meaningful, long-term resident involvement** that over time helps empower residents to lead planning and implementation efforts, with the City and partner organizations supporting these citizen-led groups. Be creative in finding ways to involve traditionally marginalized groups.
- Involve a **broad range of community stakeholders**. Prospering Together is proving to be a very effective model for bringing a variety of people and organizations together to leverage limited resources for big results and is becoming a key means of engaging people in the City's Brownfields Initiative.
- Form and nurture local, regional, state, and federal **partnerships**.
- **Maximize return on investment** of limited local resources by strategically pursuing grant funding and financing.
- **Listen to and recognize inevitable frustrations** held by community members, such as in the slow nature of brownfields redevelopment. Learn from these moments to improve the program.
- Recognize that although brownfields are a major obstacle that needs to be overcome, “brownfields” themselves aren't usually the issue at the forefront of community members' minds. Rather, the Brownfields Initiative should be framed around the **issues that are of greatest concern**—which brownfields directly contribute to—such as neighborhood disinvestment and concentrations of poverty.

BACKGROUND STUDIES OF THIRD WARD HEALTH CONCERNS

Introduction

With the City's Brownfields Initiative over a decade old, the Project Team has learned many lessons and used those lessons to inform the design of the Health Monitoring Study component of the Project. One of the most critical lessons is that brownfields and public health both cross a number of interconnected issues including socioeconomic status, transportation, housing, race and ethnicity, education, and the environment. Consequently, in designing the Study, the Health Department and the City evaluated the following background information:

- Demographic data on the Third Ward
- Health studies, including the *Stephenson County Health Assessment* and *Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs (IPLAN)*
- Community Plans for and affecting the Third Ward, including plans focused on brownfields, neighborhoods, City-wide plans

This section summarizes these key background documents that shaped the design of the survey and Focus Groups.

Neighborhood Demographics and Trends

The Third Ward is characterized by a disproportionate concentration of poverty, minority population, single mothers, and children, as compared to the City, County, Illinois, and the U.S (see Table 1). Downtown neighborhoods including in the Third Ward have experienced a considerable (9 percent) population decline since 2000. This population loss is in part the result of closure of the industrial Rawleigh Complex in the 1980s as well as the closure and downsizing of several other local manufacturers, fueling the decline and disinvestment of Downtown neighborhoods. These losses from Freeport's densest, most walkable, mixed-use area, has posed a significant barrier for sustainable redevelopment as new development and investment have dispersed to the fringe. These trends led to concentrations of poverty and disinvestment, particularly among minority groups, which degrades community health and well-being in the Third Ward.



Before: Burgess Battery Brownfield Site



After: Tutty's Crossing

Table 1. Third Ward Demographic Profile

Indicator	Third Ward ¹	City of Freeport	State of Illinois	United States
Population ²	3,487	25,638	12,830,632	308,745,538
Population <5 ²	8.2%	6.7%	6.5%	6.5%
Population <18 ²	26.0%	23.1%	24.4%	24.0%
% Female Population of Child-Bearing Age (Ages 15-44) ²	21.0%	18.1%	20.5%	20.2%
% Female Householder, No Husband with Children <18 ²	15.5%	9.6%	6.9%	7.2%
Percent Minority ²	46.8%	22.9%	28.5%	27.6%
Poverty Rate ³	35.2 ⁵	19.5% ³	12.6% ³	13.8% ³
Per Capita Income ³	12,413 ⁴	\$21,598 ³	\$28,782 ³	\$27,334 ³
Median Household Income ³	\$27,726 ⁴	\$37,039 ³	\$55,735 ³	\$51,914 ³
Median Owner Occupied Home Value ³	41,467 ⁴	\$82,500 ³	\$202,500 ³	\$188,400 ³
<p>Notes:</p> <p>1 The Third Ward is composed of Census Tract 7 and Block Groups 3 and 4 of Census Tract 8 in Stephenson County.</p> <p><u>Data Sources:</u></p> <p>2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census</p> <p>3 American Community Survey, 2006-2010</p> <p>4 American Community Survey, 2005-2009. (Block Group level data will not be available on the 2006-2010 ACS until December 2012).</p> <p>5 Poverty rate calculated for Tracts 7 and 8 as poverty level not available at block level.</p>				

Existing Health Data

The Health Monitoring Study was undertaken to look in greater depth at health issues in the Third Ward than had been done previously. However, existing health studies at the County-wide level provided an important foundation for this Study. The existing studies, particularly the *Stephenson County Health Assessment* (2008) and the *Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs Plan* (2008) identify health concerns that disproportionately impact minority residents in the County, including high rates cancer and low access to health care. The Third Ward has a much higher percentage of minority and low-income residents than the County as a whole as illustrated in Table 1 (nearly double the County's percentage of minority residents and nearly three times the County's poverty rate), and consequently these issues particularly affect Third Ward residents.

Stephenson County Health Assessment

In 2008, the Stephenson County Health Department conducted an assessment of health issues through a survey sent to all households within the County.¹ 29 percent of households returned the survey, and key data shows minority and low-income residents are disproportionately more likely to face health care issues than the remaining respondents. Following is a summary of survey results.

Health Care Access

The household survey found that 4.9 percent of households have no regular source of health care, citing the cost of care (70.1 percent) and lack of insurance (43.8 percent) as the main causes. 18.5 percent mentioned having no health care. Among minority respondents,

- 28 percent of did not receive needed medical care, and
- 53 percent did not receive needed dental care in the past year.

The respondents without regular health care use the Health Department and emergency care at more than twice the rate as survey respondents overall. Further, the inadequate access to health care experienced by the residents of the County is expected to affect chronic disease management adversely, especially for diabetes and hypertension, two conditions for which the County population surpasses the “severe” national benchmarks.

Poverty

In addition to health care access, poverty is another issue affecting Stephenson County, rising from 9 percent in 1999 to 13.7 percent in 2007. At 13.7 percent, poverty in the County is 1.8 percent higher than statewide poverty levels, and 1.1 percent higher than national poverty levels. The eight-year poverty increase among children has been even more dramatic, reaching 22.5 percent in Stephenson County in 2007.

Among prime users of a low-income health clinic serving Stephenson County, and which primarily serves Third Ward residents, poverty is further pronounced, affecting the following:

- 65.5 percent among female-headed families with school-age children,
- 86.9 percent among female-headed families with preschool-age children, and
- 44.6 percent Blacks.²

Unemployment

Unemployment is another condition affecting community health that was particularly pronounced at the time of the Stephenson County Health Assessment in 2008, and continues to be a significant challenge. Unemployment rose to double digits in 2009 and in the early months of 2010, unemployment was 14.7 percent in Stephenson County. As of July 2012, current unemployment rates were at 9.9 percent, above both the statewide rate of 9.3 percent and the United States rate of 8.6 percent.³

¹ 2008 Stephenson County Health Assessment

² 2006-2008 U.S. Census American Community Survey data for Stephenson County

³ “Illinois Unemployment Rate by County, July 2012 – Not Seasonally Adjusted”, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security, Economic Information & Analysis Division

Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs (IPLAN)

In 2008, the Stephenson County 21st Century Healthy Communities Committee initiated a 5-year health assessment and planning process known as IPLAN (Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs). The assessment and planning process for the IPLAN was conducted through extensive participation of community members, partners, and healthcare consumers. IPLAN identifies strategies for community-wide intervention toward priority health issues facing Stephenson County.

The Committee prioritized the current overarching issues and more specific health issues affecting Stephenson County, which are particularly pronounced among low-income and minority communities, including in the Third Ward.

Community Plans Affecting the Third Ward

Community health and wellness is affected by a multitude of interconnected factors, including socioeconomic status, transportation, housing, race and ethnicity, education, and the environment. The following plans address these issues—some, specifically in the Third Ward, and others community-wide. The Healthy Neighborhoods Program builds upon this past work:

- *East Side Revitalization Strategy*, 2007
- *Rawleigh Corridor Plan*, 2007
- *Stephenson County Hazard Mitigation Plan*, Stephenson County, 2008
- *City of Freeport Comprehensive Plan*, 2010
- *Prospering Together Community Strategic Plan*, 2011

IPLAN Critical Overarching Issues

The following seven issues were identified as the greatest contributors to public health issues in the County:

- **Poverty:** rising poverty rates from 9 percent in 1999 to 13.7 percent in 2007
- **Unemployment/Economy:** Current county unemployment rates exceed national and state rates
- **Crime/Child Abuse/Neglect:** increase in cases of child abuse since 1999
- **Critical Health Issues:** Reported tobacco use and alcohol use during pregnancy at higher rates than State levels
- **Premature death among African Americans:** 53 percent of County African Americans die before age 65
- **Obesity:** About 64.9 percent of County adults are considered obese or overweight
- **Low Birth Weight (substance abuse), Teen Pregnancy, Smoking During Pregnancy, Alcohol Use:** Have increased since 1980

IDENTIFYING HEALTH ISSUES: THE HEALTH MONITORING SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

After evaluating demographic trends, health studies, and community plans, the Health Department, working with Health Systems Research at the University of Illinois at Rockford, then designed a survey of Third Ward residents and also facilitated Focus Groups. The results of the survey and Focus Groups were synthesized into nine key issues that affect community health in the Third Ward. This section outlines the issues identification process.

Health Monitoring Survey

Between January and March 2011, the Stephenson County Health Department, in conjunction with Health Systems Research of the University of Illinois at Rockford, developed and administered a neighborhood survey to identify key health issues of Third Ward residents. Health Department staff distributed surveys from January through March 2011 to residents of Freeport's Third Ward,⁴ which includes 1,400 households. 206 residents completed the surveys, representing 14.7 percent of all households. The full survey results and analysis is included as an Attachment to this report.

Respondent Characteristics

Survey distribution and collection was done in several ways, including distribution to Health Department clients, door-to-door canvassing of households, distribution to Freeport Housing Authority residents, and distribution to families of children attending a local elementary school. The means of distribution used for this survey are considered a "convenience" sample as compared to a true random sample that would be generated from a random selection of addresses commonly used for mail-out surveys. The comparison of survey respondent characteristics and Census data shows that within certain limitations the sample can be said to be representative of the Third Ward population.

Neighborhood Issues and Health Problems

Top Neighborhood Issues

In response to one survey question, 53 percent of participants chose sidewalks as a priority neighborhood need, followed closely by neighborhood clean-ups and more teen programs/activities. Almost as high were recreation opportunities, street lighting, and removal of vacant/boarded-up/dilapidated housing. Top needs varied by group:



- Younger persons were more apt to name recreation and teen programs, while ages 40 and older most often identifying physical improvements such as sidewalks and lighting.

⁴ 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates for CT 7 and decennial 2000 Census for CT 8, Block Groups 3 and 4

- African American survey participants put teen programs first, while Whites cited sidewalks as most important.
- Length of residence also mattered with persons at their current address under five years most apt to put recreation opportunities and teen programs above other needs, while longer term residents felt that dilapidated housing removal, neighborhood clean-up, and sidewalks were most critical.



Table 2. Survey Participants' Top Neighborhood Issues

Rank	Neighborhood Improvements: Top 7	Percentage
1	More or better sidewalks	53.4%
2	Neighborhood cleanups	51.9%
3	More teen activities, programs	51.0%
4	Recreational opportunities*	49.0%
5	Better street lighting	47.6%
6	Removal of vacant, dilapidated housing	41.1%
7	More financial assistance for home repair	44.2%

* Includes opportunities such as playgrounds, sports, arts, dance, and fitness

Local Services:

In rating local services, more than two-thirds of survey participants gave excellent/good marks to garbage collection and ambulance service. Third highest ranked, though considerably lower at 46 percent, was access to health services. At the other end of satisfaction with ratings below “fair” were places to shop, recreation, and street conditions. Differences in service ratings emerge by group:

- Twice as many Federal Housing Authority (FHA) residents gave positive marks for neighborhood image, opportunities to get involved, places to shop, street cleaning and street conditions than non-FHA residents.
- Length at current residence also produced significant differences for opportunities for involvement and places to eat out with more short-term residents giving positive ratings than 10+ year residents.



Table 3. Survey Participants' Ranked Neighborhood Services

Rank	Neighborhood Services	Percentage with a rating of "excellent" or "good"
Higher Ranked Neighborhood Services		
1	Garbage Collection	68.4%
2	Ambulance Service	67.6%
3	Access to Health Services	45.7%
Middle Ranked Neighborhood Services		
4	Snow Removal	36.7%
5	Neighborhood Image	35.1%
6	Opportunities Involvement	31.4%
Lower Ranked Neighborhood Services		
7	Street Cleaning	27.5%
8	Places to Eat Out	26.7%
9	Public Transit	26.6%
10	Street Conditions	18.8%
11	Places to Shop	17.0%
12	Recreational, Leisure Activities	13.2%

Basic Household Needs – Safety, Financial Stability, Employment, and Transportation:

Most (63 percent) Third Ward residents feel safe in their neighborhood most or all of the time, especially seniors and long-term residents. Household financial problems are of much greater concern, and have affected almost six in ten (57 percent) survey participant households, with no major differences based on age, race, length of residence, or presence of children in the household. Placing next highest among basic household needs were unemployment (40 percent of all households, though much higher for respondents in their 30s at 64 percent) and lack of transportation (37 percent).

Lack of financial stability is further reflected by the high rates of unemployment among those surveyed. More than one-quarter (28 percent) of survey participants are unemployed, followed by full-time workers (20 percent), part-time (15 percent) and disabled/unable to work (15 percent). Wages earned by full- and part-time workers were most often at the minimum wage level up to \$10.99 per hour. Survey participants named the lack of available jobs as the number one reason for difficulty in getting or keeping employment.



Table 4. Survey Participants' Major Household Needs Not Currently Met

Rank	Household Basic Needs: Top 6	Percentage
1	Financial problems, not enough to live on	57.3%
2	Unemployed	39.8%
3	Without transportation, no car	36.9%
4	Difficulty getting (or have lost) government benefits	23.8%
5	Utilities shut off	18.0%
6	Unable to get credit or mortgage	17.0%

Health Concerns:

Asthma is ranked above all other health conditions among survey participants, affecting 17 percent of survey participant households. High blood pressure placed second, at 16 percent, followed by obesity (12 percent) and untreated dental problems (11 percent). Among age groups, asthma was the most prevalent health condition for children 0-17 and 18-44 year olds, while high blood pressure and arthritis topped the list of health problems for ages 45 years and older.

Among other health concerns, access to dental care proved most problematic with inability to afford dental services affecting 31 percent of survey households, almost twice the level of unaffordable medical care (19 percent) and prescriptions (15 percent). Households least apt to lack dental access were middle-aged adults between 40-54 (44 percent lacked access).



Further, survey participants showed the most interest in dental screenings (43 percent), when asked about classes that might be offered in the Third Ward, followed by high blood pressure screenings (41 percent). Other classes or clinics that drew interest were back problems/chiropractic (29 percent), weight control (27 percent) and smoking cessation (24 percent).

Table 5. Survey Participants' Major Household Health Issues

Rank	Household Health Issues: Top 4	Percentage
1	Could not afford dental care	31.1%
2	Could not afford medical care	18.9%
3	Could not afford prescription medicine	14.6%
4	Alcoholism, drug abuse	9.7%

The household health issues and the household basic needs results of this survey show a very clear correlation with the results of the 2008 county-wide Health Assessment. Both survey results contain issues related to access to health care, dental care, and employment, especially among poor and minority populations.

Health Monitoring Project Focus Group

In addition to the survey, the Stephenson County Health Department, and Larry Williams, Executive Director of the Freeport Housing Authority, led four Focus Group discussions between February and May 2011 to understand Third Ward residents' neighborhood needs and views.⁵ The following description synthesizes and describes the highlights of Focus Group remarks. A more detailed summary of the Focus Groups is included in Appendix A. Topics/issues are mentioned if stated by more than one Focus Group participant.

Positive Aspects of the Third Ward:

Focus Group participants described numerous positive aspects about living in the Third Ward, including a feeling of belonging and neighborliness. Many residents choose to live in the Third Ward because of the concern demonstrated by neighbors, their sense of familiarity with the area, and the quiet atmosphere.

Negative Aspects of the Third Ward:

When asked what they dislike about living in the Third Ward, Focus Group members mentioned frequent flooding, the untidy appearance of some areas, the decayed state of sidewalks, and the City's slow response in repairing streets and fixing potholes. In one Focus Group, participants stated that they felt like "pawns," perceiving that Freeport officials use Third Ward issues to obtain grant funds that are not perceived to impact the Third Ward.

Focus Group members agree that signs of poverty abound in the Third Ward. Poverty is demonstrated by vacant, run-down houses coupled with the poor state of maintenance of many occupied units including overgrown lawns. Many properties show obvious neglect. The use of food pantries by Third Ward residents also signals the level of poverty in the area.

Table 6. Focus Group Cited Positive and Negative Community Aspects

Likes	Dislikes
Feeling of belonging	Frequent flooding
Neighborliness	Untidy appearance of some areas
Close to Downtown	Decayed state of sidewalks
	City's slow response in repairing streets and fixing sidewalks

Neighborhood Service Needs:

Focus Group participants identified several neighborhood services / amenities that are lacking in the Third Ward, including sufficient public transportation, lighting, youth activities, and businesses. Many start-up businesses end up closing due to lack of support by local residents. Focus Group members expressed dismay about the closure of Stephens Market, a Downtown grocery store, several years ago. They also indicated the need for increased police presence in the Third Ward.

⁵ Health Systems Research, an applied research department of the University of Illinois at Rockford, prepared this summary of focus group findings.

Neighborhood Safety

Safety was also a discussion topic. Most Focus Group members feel safe in their neighborhoods; though some admitted they feel safer during daylight hours than at night time. While most are not afraid for their personal safety, that sense of safety does not extend to property. They claimed to be “on guard” much of the time, realizing how often cars are broken into and property damaged. More lighting would lend a feeling of greater safety, they said. Some local residents walk down the middle of the street because of safety concerns, citing that high bushes next to sidewalks can mask potential dangers and make them feel uncomfortable.

Overall Neighborhood Well-Being

According to Focus Group members, three issues affect the Third Ward’s well-being more than other factors: lack of recreational opportunities, abandoned homes, and frequent flooding. Also noted were the lack of accountability/responsibility for property by homeowners and landlords as well as drug sales which Focus Group members have observed.

Asked to name the one most important improvement that could be made in the Third Ward, Focus Group members cited more activities for youth, the need to motivate residents to get involved, neighborhood clean-up, a grocery store located nearby⁶, removal of dilapidated housing, and fixing sidewalks.

Neighborhood Health Needs:

The major health service need identified by participants is more dental care, especially for low-income persons and Medicaid recipients, as most local dentists do not accept Medicaid patients. Other needs include blood pressure screening, after-hours immediate care, and prenatal care. Focus Group members stated that many disabled persons reside in the Third Ward and diabetes is a common health problem. They also expressed the need for a clinic to be based within the Third Ward, perhaps at the Boys’ and Girls’ Club.

Certain barriers prevent Third Ward residents from obtaining health care. Among the most significant are financial constraints, lack of health insurance, and transportation, as well as the fact that some physicians do not accept Medicaid.

Conclusion

Taken together, the Health Monitoring Survey and Focus Groups both reinforced the Project Team’s understanding of a number of issues affecting neighborhood health while highlighting some issues much more than in the past. The Project Team distilled the Survey and Focus Group results down into nine core issues. The process of prioritizing these issues is discussed in the following section.

⁶ In 2012, the City of Freeport analyzed the “food desert” in Central Freeport to illustrate the people affected by lack of access to a grocery store, which is predominated by Third Ward neighborhoods. This analysis is included as Appendix G.

PRIORITIZING HEALTH CONCERNS OF THIRD WARD RESIDENTS

Prioritizing Key Issues

The Health Monitoring Survey and Focus Groups produced a wealth of information about the most pressing issues faced by Third Ward residents that affect community health and well-being. The survey produced quantitative results that identified the issues of greatest importance to residents. These issues crossed a wide variety of areas, including economic status, transportation, and health care access. Because of this diversity of topics addressed by the survey and Focus Groups, the Project Team needed input from Third Ward residents to prioritize issues to focus on first.

The Project Team summarized the key issues identified by residents in the Survey and Focus Groups into nine general categories. The first two issues are overarching and are critical to the success of this Project moving forward. The team therefore identified these as priorities that would need to be advanced in order for any initiative in the Third Ward to succeed:

1. Community involvement: Improved engagement of residents and community partners on developing and implementing neighborhood plans.
2. Communication with residents: Improved communication on neighborhood planning efforts between the City and neighborhood residents

The remaining seven issues cover a range of issues affecting community health. These are the seven issues that the Project Team needed help from Third Ward residents to prioritize. Though advancing strategies to address all of these seven issues is important in the long-term, the Project Team believed that to gain buy-in and involvement from residents, it would be important to focus on no more than three issue areas to gain momentum and visible successes.

Thus, the Project Team held a community meeting on January 25, 2012 (attended by 62 people) both to present the results of the Health Monitoring Survey and Focus Groups and then to prioritize the issues. To prioritize these issues, residents were given three stickers to put on sheets of paper for each of the seven issues. The following is the result of this exercise:

1. Property Maintenance: Removal of vacant and dilapidated buildings, greater support of property owners for property maintenance, and neighborhood clean-ups
2. Neighborhood Infrastructure: Improved neighborhood infrastructure (such as sidewalks, streets, street lights, and landscaping)
3. Community Activities: Greater access to recreational/community activities for youth and people of all ages (for example, playgrounds, sports, arts/crafts, music, dance and fitness)
4. Employment and Training: Greater employment and job training opportunities
5. Health Care: Better access to / affordability of health care and health education to address key issues including asthma, high blood pressure, weight management, and untreated dental issues.
6. Transportation: Greater access to public transportation
7. Shopping: More and greater variety of places to shop

After this exercise, meeting participants were asked to join a discussion group for one of the three top key issues: “Property Maintenance,” “Neighborhood Infrastructure,” and “Community Activities.” City, County, and consulting staff facilitated each group. A summary of the ideas shared in this exercise are included in Appendix F.

Neighborhood Wishes Questionnaire

The January 25th meeting was designed to provide a variety of forums for residents to provide input. The Project Team distributed a Questionnaire which asked “What are your three wishes for your neighborhood?” This question had been asked at a prior county-wide visioning event as part of the Prospering Together Initiative, and was intended to give residents a chance to “think big” about their future vision for the neighborhood. The results, however, were much more short-term in nature, and honed in on specific locations where property maintenance could be accomplished, specific streets to improve, locations of vacant properties, and examples of community activities that are needed. These kinds of responses exposed the need to focus on incremental neighborhood improvements that demonstrate visible progress, while at the same time inspiring residents to develop a longer-term, bolder vision for Third Ward neighborhoods. Further information on the questionnaire results is included in Appendix G.

MOVING FORWARD WITH PRIORITY HEALTH ISSUES: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT (CAPS)

Focus on Neighborhood Leadership and Engagement

Up through the January community meeting, the Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project was led by City and County staff. These staff, however, felt that for this Project to be a success in the long-term, future efforts would need to be led by residents, with the City and County acting as supportive partners rather than as the leaders. As a result, the Project Team spent time focusing on lessons learned from past community engagement efforts in the Third Ward and also on best practices in promoting neighborhood leadership and engagement from other communities across the U.S. With these lessons and best practices in mind, the team then hosted a Focus Group of Third Ward residents in March 2012 to chart out next steps for a resident-driven program to address the priority health issues in the Third Ward. This section describes in greater detail the progress of the Third Ward community engagement strategy.

Engagement Principles

Develop Leadership

Involve Neighbors and Build Relationships

Invest in People

Secure Resources and Form Partnerships

History of Past Resident Engagement Efforts

In designing a program of community engagement in the Third Ward, it is important to reflect back on and learn from past efforts. The following are four examples of past community engagement efforts in the Third Ward that stand out in particular:

- Freedom of Residence (FOR): Initiated in the 1950s, FOR initially focused on enabling African Americans to seek housing anywhere in the City, not just on the East Side where they had been generally segregated up to that point. FOR successfully passed a City desegregation ordinance, and then continued working for many years on other community issues for East Side residents. FOR is known for engaging Third Ward churches, and is widely regarded as an example of effective neighborhood leadership that inspires current residents to become involved.
- Freeport Citizens Environmental Justice Group (2003) – This group came together around concerns for public health from potential exposure to contaminated soil, since the Third Ward contains numerous brownfield sites. This group was somewhat short-lived, but a key lesson learned is that resident groups can be quickly organized and galvanized by important issues which can result in these concerns getting needed attention from the broader community leadership and elected officials.
- Brownfields Initiative Meetings: Since the City began its Brownfields Initiative in 1999, many lessons have been learned about both effective and ineffective strategies for involving neighborhood residents. These lessons are described in greater detail in the Third Ward Focus

through Freeport's Brownfields Program section. A couple key lessons include: 1) formatting meetings / events to give people an opportunity to participate in a variety of ways and encourage meaningful participation, and 2) continually focusing on building trust and improving communication.

- East Side Resident Task Force (2006 – 2008) This group of engaged East Side residents took a leadership role in implementing the 2007 *East Side Revitalization Strategy*. The Task Force invited City Community Development staff to its meetings to promote improved communication and partnership. Unfortunately, the Task Force was not sustained over time. There are likely differing opinions on what led the Task Force to dissolve, relating to the relationship between the Task Force and the City, and how well the Task Force represented the East Side neighborhood as a whole (see the Establishment of Brownfields Initiative: 1999 - 2003 for further discussion).

Key Lessons Learned from Past Engagement Efforts

From these and other experiences in the Third Ward and community-wide, the following key lessons should guide future participation efforts:

- The planning and implementation process should be **driven by residents**, and broadly represent the diverse interests of the neighborhood
- Progress should be visible and continual to **maintain momentum** and interest by the community in staying involved
- Continual focus should be put on supporting the development of **resident leaders**
- Information should be easily available and frequently repeated and programs should be **transparent**
- A **variety of forms** should be used to engage the widest variety of people

Community Engagement Best Practices

In addition to reflecting on lessons from past efforts to engage Third Ward residents, the Project team also studied best practices in neighborhood community engagement to determine the best next steps in the Third Ward for facilitating more sustainable, bottom-up resident engagement and empowerment. In building the community engagement strategy, the Project Team noted three general issues that needed to be addressed within the Third Ward to aid resident engagement. These issues are: (1) Creating resident ownership over the Project, (2) Fostering community participation, and (3) Building trust with the City.

The Project Team then reviewed case studies that shed light on best practices for promoting sustainable community engagement. These case studies included a community organizer, Jim Diers; community facilitator Laurence Sherman; and a case study for neighborhood planning and engagement in East Saint Louis, Illinois.⁷ Key lessons and strategies for community engagement from these three case studies are summarized in Table 7.

⁷ Enhancing the Capacity of Community-Based Organization in East St. Louis, Kenneth M. Reardon, (1998). Organizing and Building Neighbor Power in Seattle: A Profile of Jim Diers, John Forester, (2009). Learning from Practice in the Face of Conflict and Integrating Technical Expertise with Participatory Planning: Critical Commentaries on the Practice of Planner-Architect Laurence Sherman, John Forester, (2011).

Table 7. Community Engagement Strategies from Case Studies

GOAL	STRATEGY	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES	OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES
Strive for equal partnership with community in addressing priorities	Start-off with a small, likely to succeed project that the community can take ownership of	Action-oriented approach; will show that tangible results are possible through the project	There may be limited participation from the community at first	Neighborhood clean-up
Facilitate the development of active community leaders, and/or participation	Establish a “Neighborhood University”	Can help inform community on various issues	May be difficult to secure funding/presenters	Information board/create a neighborhood university
	Create a Community-Based Organization	Supports community empowerment	Potentially time and resource-intensive	
Foster community participation and equal partnership between City and residents	Provide community with the parameters/process of a project, and then let discussions move forward with resident insight and expertise.	Gives community more initiative and ownership of a project	May feel awkward at first, risk that people will not feel comfortable taking initiative	Hold meetings that are more informal, or where agendas are set by/with residents
Be able to have honest and open discussions with community members.	Minimize talking/maximize listening	May allow the community to set their own agenda, become more active participants instead of passive listeners, may get more participants in meetings/activities	Attendees may be expecting City to do more of the talking	During every meeting, City/County staff should minimize talking

Formation of CAPS

Having spent time since the January meeting reflecting on approaches for promoting engagement, leadership, and trust, the City-County Project Team hosted a meeting in March 2012 with a small group of residents had expressed interest in helping to plan next steps. The Project Team set a loose agenda for the meeting and posed questions meant to promote the most participation from residents while the City-County Team spent more time listening. This format was very successful as the participants were energized and motivated to be a part of the Project. That night, the residents decided to form the group CAPS: *Community Activities Partnership Support*. These founding CAPS members also agreed to focus on making quick and visible progress on priority activities to create momentum and encourage greater resident involvement.

Since this first meeting in March, CAPS has been holding monthly meetings and is encouraging broad involvement from Third Ward residents and community partners. To date, the group has made significant progress on its initial priority projects (more detail below in *Initial CAPS Focus Projects*).

Foundations of the Third Ward Engagement Strategy

Over the past year, the Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project has progressed significantly from an initiative driven by the City and County to an initiative with solid buy-in and leadership from neighborhood residents through CAPS. To ensure long-term success in addressing the key health issues in the Third Ward, the City, County, and CAPS leaders will need to work continually to ensure that they are engaging neighbors in a meaningful and ongoing way so that this Project remains something that is championed by the Third Ward neighborhoods and reflects the broad-based goals of these neighborhoods' residents.

Moving forward, the City, County, and CAPS leaders will remain focused on four principles for promoting neighborhood engagement and empowerment, described in the sidebar beginning on this page. These principles were initially identified in the first CAPS discussion in March 2012.

Engagement Principles

1. Develop Leadership

- Support the development of neighborhood leaders; connect with leadership-development resources including trainings
- Ensure that implementation and further planning is led by residents
- Ensure that CAPS leaders reflect the broad-based priorities of Third Ward residents
- Develop a long-term vision and an Action Plan to identify priority projects, next steps, and who is responsible
- Follow through with implementation to show progress

2. Involve Neighbors and Build Relationships

- Use a variety of methods to encourage broad-based involvement (i.e. different ways to invite and involve parents, youth, seniors, etc.) Offer small incentives when appropriate (door prizes, food, etc.)
- Build personal relationships with neighbors, built on friendship and acceptance.
- Continue to make visible progress to maintain momentum. Though strategic and long-term planning is vital to success, avoid the perception of continual planning without on-the-ground results.
- Hold events / parties as much or more than meetings; make events fun and memorable to encourage further involvement.
- Celebrate and promote CAPS' successes to update community residents and also build pride and encourage those involved.

Initial CAPS Focus Projects: Achieve Success and Build Momentum

When CAPS formed in March 2012, the group identified four priority projects that relate to the highest priority issues (property maintenance, infrastructure, and community activities) that could be undertaken right away. Since then, this list has expanded to seven projects. Table 8 on the following page illustrates the progress to date and next steps for these projects. CAPS focus on these specific initiatives has enabled the group to show visible success early on and encourage more neighbors to join CAPS.

3. Invest in People

- Promote respect among neighbors and a sense of belonging in neighborhoods
- Build capacity of residents to address personal and neighborhood issues directly, combating a feeling of powerless.
- Build life skills, leadership and organizational skills through neighborhood projects
- Support education and training opportunities
- Showcase neighborhood talent to build pride and highlight the many assets and strengths in the neighborhoods

4. Secure Resources and Form Partnerships

- Build trust between the neighborhood and supporting organizations (City, County, and other partners). Be transparent and frequently repeat information over time. Hold open and honest discussions with the community.
- Develop an Action Plan with measurable outcomes to demonstrate success—critical for securing support and funding from outside organizations.
- Make the most of resources, skills, talents, and relationships of neighborhood residents.
- Involve a wide variety of partners to promote community buy-in and greater number of stakeholders. See Appendix D for a list of potential partnerships.
- Continue to build the relationship between neighborhood residents and City and County Health Department staff. City and County staff can help identify and pursue resources for implementation.
- Ensure requests for support are organized, compelling, and demonstrate accountability in achieving desired results.

Table 8. CAPS Projects: Accomplishments and Next Steps

PROJECT	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	NEXT STEPS
1. Create a New Third Ward Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established Parks team of CAPS, including Park District ▪ Considered potential park locations ▪ Held meetings to get neighborhood input – still seeking more input before deciding on a location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold a fun event to attract a large showing of neighborhood residents to provide input on potential park locations. ▪ Park team to evaluate and decide on best location ▪ Work with Park District on next steps for park planning and funding
2. Establish a Neighborhood Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified a CAPS member to lead effort, focused within an initial neighborhood (the “Third Ward” neighborhood – not the full voting district) ▪ Involved Freeport Police Department to determine how to establish a new group ▪ Held meetings with neighbors to discuss – have not yet had substantial turnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evelyn?
3. Host Neighborhood Cleanups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Held many successful weekend clean-up days [Daniece - more info on # of clean-ups, who has participated, etc?] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish “1 church 1 block” partnerships – 1 church in 2013, 2 more churches in each following year ▪ Track impact from cleanups to show success ▪ Establish partnerships with at least 4 groups to help support efforts ▪ Ensure residents remain actively involved with all cleanup efforts ▪ Secure more resources for supplies/tools
4. Host Monthly Block Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parties held during the summer months in 2012 and 2013 [I need more specifics] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ??
5. Encourage improved maintenance of properties –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed targeted list of dilapidated properties for demolition [status of demo plans?] ▪ Others? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake a housing conditions survey in late summer 2013 (City’s HUD grant to fund) ▪ Use University of Wisconsin-Madison

PROJECT	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	NEXT STEPS
focus on “Third Ward” as pilot neighborhood		Urban Planning student team to support next steps for pilot neighborhood housing plan in Fall 2013
6. Establish an Indian Heights Home Owners Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Owners Association established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ??
7. Increase Neighbor Participation in CAPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designed and distributed X CAPS yard signs ▪ Held meetings in various locations across the Third Ward ▪ Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ?? ▪ Form partnership with another new Third Ward group – Neighbors United

NEXT STEPS: SUPPORTING CAPS, ACTION PLANNING, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

CAPS has made substantial progress as a new, resident-led organization with limited resources. This section describes suggested next steps to maintain the momentum CAPS has created and help ensure its success moving forward.

Strategies for Moving Forward

Strategy 1: Support CAPS: Develop Leaders and Engage Residents

A critical ongoing focus of this initiative is for CAPS members, the City, County, and other community partners to continue to develop resident leaders and to encourage extensive participation by residents from across the Third Ward so that CAPS remains a sustainable resident-led group over time.

Strategy 2: Make Continued, Visible Progress to Maintain Momentum

Throughout the Healthy Neighborhoods process, many residents have emphasized the importance of continually showing results. CAPS and its partners should continue to demonstrate progress on visible projects to maintain momentum and interest more residents to get involved.

Strategy 3: Continually Set Goals and Monitor Progress

Table 8 in the preceding section describes accomplishments the goals / next steps for the seven priority projects that CAPS has focused on to date. This table is the foundation for a CAPS Action Plan that should be continually reviewed and updated. Keeping an up-to-date Action Plan will help ensure that CAPS members are working together toward shared goals and are monitoring their progress.

Appendix C includes a preliminary Action Model Framework that CAPS may use to identify more specific measurable outcomes from these projects as well as from other neighborhood priorities that become focus areas in the future.

Strategy 4: Secure Resources and Partnerships

Critical to the success of this Healthy Neighborhoods Project will be the involvement of partners who can help bring resources, knowledge, and networks to the table to implement the Action Plan. Appendix D and Appendix E include a list of partnership and funding opportunities.

Conclusion

The Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project has produced some new, eye-opening data about conditions in the community that directly affect health and well-being, as well as reinforcing already well understood issues. The planning process was a unique one, shifting over time to put more attention into supporting resident leadership and engagement, so that the Project, moving forward, has true buy-in and champions from Third Ward neighborhoods.

Addressing the systemic issues that affect community health, most of them stemming from concentrations of poverty in the Third Ward, has been and will continue to be long-term, difficult challenge. However, the energy being devoted to this Project through the formation of CAPS holds true promise for making progress to create healthier places and healthier people in the Third Ward.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A. Third Ward Health Monitoring Focus Group Results**
- Appendix B. History of Third Ward Projects through the City's Brownfields Initiative**
- Appendix C. Preliminary Action Model Framework**
- Appendix D. Partnerships**
- Appendix E. Funding Opportunities**
- Appendix F. Third Ward Community Meeting Summary – January 25, 2012**
- Appendix G. Central Freeport Food Desert Analysis**

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1. Third Ward Health Monitoring Survey Results**

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APPENDIX A: THIRD WARD HEALTH MONITORING FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

As part of the City of Freeport's Brownfields Health Monitoring Study undertaken by the Stephenson County Health Department, two studies were conducted to understand Third Ward residents' neighborhood needs and views: a household survey and a series of Focus Groups. Focus Groups were organized by Stephenson County Health Department, and Larry Williams, Executive Director of the Freeport Housing Authority, led the Focus Group discussions. Health Systems Research, an applied research department of the University of Illinois at Rockford, prepared this summary of Focus Group findings.

Four Focus Groups were held at various Third Ward locations between February and May 2011. The following description synthesizes and describes the highlights of Focus Group remarks. Topics/issues are mentioned if stated by more than one Focus Group participant.

Neighborhood Positive Aspects

Focus Group participants described numerous positive aspects about living in the Third Ward. They mentioned a feeling of belonging and neighborliness. Many residents choose to live in the Third Ward because of the concern demonstrated by neighbors, their sense of familiarity with the area, and the quiet atmosphere.

Neighborhood Negative Aspects

When asked what they dislike about living in the Third Ward, Focus Group members mentioned frequent flooding, the untidy appearance of some areas, the decayed state of sidewalks, and the City's slow response in repairing streets and fixing potholes. In one Focus Group, participants stated that they felt like "pawns" in that Freeport officials use Third Ward issues to obtain funds and grants which end up benefitting other parts of the city, not their area.

Neighborhood Access to Health Care

Health services needed include dental care, especially for low-income persons and Medicaid recipients because most local dentists do not accept Medicaid patients, blood pressure screening, after-hours immediate care, and prenatal care. Focus Group members stated that many disabled persons reside in the Third Ward and diabetes is a common health problem. They also expressed the need for a clinic to be based within the Third Ward, perhaps at the Boys and Girls Club.

Certain barriers prevent Third Ward residents from obtaining health care. Among the most significant are financial constraints, lack of health insurance, and transportation as well as the fact that some physicians do not accept the Medical Card (Medicaid).

Safety

Most Focus Group members feel safe in their neighborhoods; though some admitted they feel safer during daylight hours than at night time. While most are not afraid for their personal safety, that sense of safety does not extend to property. They claimed to be “on guard” much of the time, realizing how often cars are broken into and property damaged. More lighting would lend a feeling of greater safety, they said. Some local residents walk down the middle of the street because of safety concerns, citing high bushes next to sidewalks can mask potential dangers and make them feel uncomfortable.

Poverty

Focus Group members agree that signs of poverty are abound in the Third Ward. Poverty is demonstrated by vacant, run-down houses coupled with the poor state of maintenance, including overgrown lawns, of many occupied units. The use of food pantries by Third Ward residents also reflects the level of poverty in the area.

Neighborhood Services

The Third Ward lacks some important services such as public transportation, adequate lighting, youth activities, and enough businesses. Many start-up businesses end up closing due to lack of support by local residents. Focus Group members expressed dismay about the closure of Stephens Market, a Downtown grocery store, several years ago. They also indicated the need for increased police presence in the Third Ward.

Overall Issues

According to Focus Group members, three issues affect the Third Ward’s well-being more than other factors: lack of recreational opportunities, abandoned homes, and frequent flooding. Focus Group participants also noted the lack of homeowner and landlord accountability/responsibility for property, and noted having observed drug sales in the neighborhood.

Asked to name the one most important improvement, Focus Group members cited more activities for youth, the need to motivate residents to get involved, neighborhood clean-up, a grocery store located nearby, removal of dilapidated housing, and fixing sidewalks.

FREEPORT BROWNFIELDS STUDY – THIRD WARD FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Group Date: 02/16/11

Location: Brewster Apartments

Total participants: 12

Female: 6

Male: 6

Age of participants:

18-40 yrs: 0

>40 yrs: 12

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 9

Black: 3

Throughout the discussion, two participants gave no feedback.

Focus Group General Comments:

General Likes

Clean

Close to Downtown

Quiet

Close to banks and stores

Friendly

Nice neighborhood

Seems safe

Appearance of the neighborhood

General Dislikes

Sidewalks could be in better shape

Lack of playground

Need more stop signs & crosswalks

Curbs are too high/not walker/wheelchair

Potholes in the streets

Bushes on corners too high/hard to see/feel

Unsafe at night

Focus Group Specific Comments:

Health services needed:

Dental and more Medicare/Medicaid dentists

Eyeglasses

Immediate care - closer than ShopKo

Diabetes/blood pressure and cholesterol screenings

Healthy eating program

Community Barriers:

Poor transportation choices

Lack of jobs

Lack of money

Lack of childcare services

Need for a grocery store that is close – such as the Downtown area (people miss Stephens Market)

Focus Group Questions and Responses:

Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?

Everyone said “yes”, but most people agreed not after 7 p.m.

Some participants feel on guard sometimes, in terms of personal safety

Some participants feel concern for property safety, such as cars broken into and car damage

Sub Question: What makes you feel unsafe?

Not enough lighting

People walk in the middle of the street (feel safer as the bushes along sidewalks are too high)

The group consensus was that there were not enough lights and the lights are spaced too far apart from each other.

Do you see signs of poverty?

Yes (everyone)

Sub Question: What are they?

Empty/vacant houses

Overgrown yards

Run-down houses

Hot lunches/food available through churches and other organizations

Food pantries available and they are used a lot (couple people mentioned that those services are not available on the other side of town, by Highland or the hospital)

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), through ComEd heating assistance, is widely used

What services are lacking in the neighborhood?

Neighborhood grocery store (again people mentioned Stephens Market Downtown)

Transportation

Park/neighborhood playground

Community center

Recreation activities

Police presence

What are the issues that affect neighborhood well-being?

Lack of recreation opportunities: no space for kids to play

Abandoned houses

People not cleaning up after their dogs

Observed drug deals

What is the one most important improvement?

Better job of snowplowing so that cleaned sidewalks do not get covered up

Grocery store (Cub Foods is too far and too expensive)

Cab tickets

Decreased cost of city transportation

Need for a centralized location for services/sort of a one-stop shop

Some offices have moved out too far, it would be nice if they could be closer

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Need better sidewalks

Need for increased sense of community:

Entertainment/recreation opportunities

Neighborhood parties

Neighborhood activities/meet & greet/get-togethers

Need for the “feeling of life” to return to the neighborhood.

Need a Neighborhood Watch

There is a lack of “new life” in this City

FREEMPORT BROWNFIELDS STUDY – THIRD WARD FOCUS GROUPS

Date: 3/10/11

Location: Boys and Girls Club

Total participants: 6

Gender: 4 males, 2 females

Race/Ethnicity: 5 African American, 1 white

Age: 1 18-40,

Length of residence: 4 life long Third Ward

5 >40 residents

Focus Group General Comments

General Likes

Great neighbors

Concern for each other and community, we check up on each other

People are honest, helpful (assist with things like snow removal and lawn care)

Crime is down, neighborhood is more peaceful

Most people who live in Third Ward choose to live there

General Dislikes

Flooding is frequent

Third Ward is “pawn” for City. Officials use Third Ward issues to get money/grants but “we never see the money used for our area.” The funds end up benefitting other parts of the City.

Slow response from City for street repairs, fix potholes

Sense of hopelessness, leads to apathy

Infrastructure not good

Low voter participation

Too many vacant homes

H1: Health services needed:

Clinic should be located in Boys and Girls Club building

Offer screenings and prenatal care

Nowhere in Third Ward to go for a quick blood pressure reading

Diabetic clinic

Health information

Many disabled persons live in Third Ward

One man reported that his wife was recently diagnosed with MS

During flood (summer 2010) medical issues and disability did not get addressed

H2: Barriers to care:

Money, finances

No health insurance

Some physicians do not accept Medical Card

Transportation

S1: Do you feel safe in your neighborhood:

Yes (for all), though not all neighborhoods safe

P1: Do you see signs of poverty: Yes, all over

What are they:

Empty and rundown houses

Sidewalks have decayed and no repairs are made, no curb and gutter

E1: Services lacking in the neighborhood:

Businesses. More are needed. Have had start-ups but then they shut down. We do not support each other by using local businesses

Adequate lighting

Education is key

E2: Issues that affect neighborhood well-being:

Flooding

Crime

Basic services

Recreation

O1: ONE most important improvement:

Homeowners (including absentee landlords) held responsible for own property – 2X

Remove dilapidated homes

More community involvement. Get folks motivated

O2: Anything else you would like to tell us:

Perception that nothing will change

FREERPORT BROWNFIELDS STUDY – THIRD WARD FOCUS GROUPS

Date: 4/18/2011

Location: Freeport Public Library Board Room

Total participants: 1

Gender: 1 male Race/Ethnicity: 1 African American Age: <40

Length of residence: former resident of Third Ward and wife has business in Third Ward

G1: Likes

People know each other, watch over each other

Sense of family

G1: Dislikes

Appearance – does not look clean, litter, in need of home repairs, lawns need cutting

H1: Health services needed:

Blood pressure screening

Prenatal care

H2: Barriers to care:

Not knowing where care is located

Inadequate communication – different means of communication must be used to reach people. Use social media, such as Facebook because many people in Third Ward spend lots of time on Facebook. Word of mouth and churches are also effective to spreading information.

S1: Do you feel safe in your neighborhood: Yes personally, but some residents do not feel safe. Property may not be safe.

S2: What makes you feel unsafe:

Large groups of young men hanging around

Reports of break-ins

Observing drug sales taking place

P1: Do you see signs of poverty? What are they:

People who “have,” take care of their things, but if you do not care, things are neglected.

E1: Services lacking in the neighborhood:

Recreation for young persons, sports, arts. “Boys and Girls Club cannot do it all.” Our children are making the wrong choices.

Mentoring – we have a generation of kids growing up without enough parental guidance.

More attention to academics

Entrepreneurial opportunities

Some transportation problems

E2: Issues that affect neighborhood well-being:

Flooding is an ongoing problem

Crime – less often reported than occurs. Sometimes residents feel like crime is expected in “bad areas” so don’t report.

Accountability – landlords need to be held accountable for their properties.

O1: ONE most important improvement:

Attitude needs changing. Don’t accept things as they are. Positive people (or negative) are contagious. Need something for people to aspire to, set bar higher. To a degree, Third Ward residents have to help themselves. People in positions of authority need to show concern.

O2: Anything else you would like to tell us:

Do what you can with what you have NOW. People don’t see action following plans.

FREEPORT BROWNFIELDS STUDY – THIRD WARD FOCUS GROUPS

Date: 05/11/11

Location: Monroe Center, Freeport Housing Authority

Total participants: 23

Gender

Female: 19

Male: 4

Age of participants:

18-40 yrs: 17

>40 yrs: 6

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 10

Black: 12

Hispanic: 1

G1: Likes

Clean (1 person but many disagree)

Parks

Quiet (4 times)

Some playgrounds

Nice neighborhood (5 times)

Seems safe (3 times)

G1: Dislikes

Poor sidewalks

Lack of playground

Need more work to clean up trash

Flooding

Potholes

Not sure to whom to report suspicious activity

H1: Health services needed:

Physicians closer to area. Have to travel across town. Walk-in clinic after hours instead of ER.

Diabetes, blood pressure, and cholesterol screenings

Healthy information

H2: Barriers:

Transportation (7-10 times)

Jobs, lack of job skills

Most services are in other areas of town.

Social isolation, economic instability, crime

S1: Do you feel safe in your neighborhood: Yes (for all), but most people agreed that not after 7 p.m. Don't feel safe due to outsiders or people who don't live in neighborhood.

Personal safety: yes, sometimes, must be on guard

Property safety: sometimes, bicycles, cars broken into, car damage

What makes you feel unsafe:

Not enough lighting, lack security that is visible, if reported there maybe retaliation

People walk in the middle of the street

Many unattended or unsupervised kids and older youth

The group consensus appeared to be not enough lighting and too many nonresidents in the neighborhood. This is where they see trouble occurring. Several people indicated too many potholes and the time needed to repair. People who do not live in the neighborhood come to neighborhood and cause problems.

P1: Do you see signs of poverty: Yes

What are they:

Houses falling apart and run down, some need normal maintenance such as painting, porch repair
Untended yards

Entry into Freeport off of Hwy 75 to Stephenson Street has boarded up and abandoned houses.
Many garbage cans and trash left out.

E1: Services lacking in the neighborhood:

No neighborhood grocery store

Public transportation

Park/neighborhood playground

After school programs for youth

Recreation

Lack of security in area

E2: Issues that affect neighborhood well-being:

Lack of recreation opportunities: where do the kids go to play?

Abandoned houses: what's inside them, why are they boarded-up. See non-neighborhood people around them. Crime, violence, gangs

People not cleaning up

O1: ONE most important improvement:

More activities for kids

Grocery store

Provide after-hour clinic services

Transportation too expensive

Neighborhood clean up

Fix sidewalks

O2: Anything else you would like to tell us:

Need more awareness on what is going on in your neighborhood (neighborhood watch)

What is going to be done with old Boys and Girls Club building?

APPENDIX B: HISTORY OF THIRD WARD PROJECTS THROUGH THE CITY'S BROWNFIELDS INITIATIVE

This Project focuses on a holistic set of issues that impact community health and well-being in the Third Ward. The issue that helped to launch this Project, through funding from the U.S. EPA, is Third Ward residents' proximity to the concentration of brownfield sites throughout Freeport's Downtown riverfront—the historic center of industrial and commercial activity in Freeport. U.S. EPA defines a brownfield as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

The City of Freeport has had an active Brownfields Initiative since 1999, led by the City and supported by many community partners. The focus of this program has been almost entirely in the Third Ward, simply due to the fact that the greatest number and concentration of potential brownfield sites are located in this historic industrial center along the Downtown riverfront. Though this Healthy Neighborhoods Project began in 2009, improving community health and well-being for Third Ward residents has been a major driving force behind the brownfields program since it began.

This section provides a synopsis of the City's Brownfields Initiative, to provide relevant history and context to shape the Healthy Neighborhoods Project as it progresses.

Establishment of the Brownfields Initiative: 1999 – 2003

The City of Freeport has been actively involved in facilitating the cleanup and reuse of brownfield sites since 1999. The brownfields program began after an incident in the 1990s, when two local boys entered the abandoned Rawleigh Complex (the 450,000 square foot vacant industrial complex in the heart of the Downtown riverfront). The boys gathered thermostats and thermometers, and contaminated themselves and their homes with dangerous levels of mercury. This triggered a U.S. EPA emergency response to remove mercury at the boys' homes and at the Complex, beginning in 1999.

This incident heightened the City's awareness of brownfield issues and triggered its involvement in actively facilitating brownfields cleanup and redevelopment in the City. The federal brownfields program, administered by US EPA, had just begun in 1995, so the City of Freeport has one of the state's and the country's longest-running comprehensive brownfield programs.

During this initial phase of the Brownfields Initiative, the City worked to gain control of the Rawleigh Complex and partner with the US EPA and Illinois EPA to undertake assessment, which ultimately (in 2005) resulted in approval by the Illinois EPA for redevelopment to take place, contingent on encapsulating the soil with barriers to prevent exposure to contaminants and maintaining an ordinance to protect citizens from exposure to groundwater at the site.⁸

In these early years of the Brownfields Initiative, the City also negotiated with the property owner of the owner Burgess Battery Plant (another massive riverfront brownfield site with serious

⁸ This approval from Illinois EPA is documented in a draft “No Further Remediation” (NFR) letter which will be amended to become a final NFR letter once the engineered barriers at the site are constructed (currently underway).

environmental contamination) to clean up the site and then began implementing plans for Tutty's Crossing Trailhead at the site (completed in 2003).

Attention to brownfield sites during this time was not only a concern of City leadership. Community residents also began to vocalize concerns about potential health effects that residents living closest to brownfield sites could experience. In 2003, a group of citizens known as the Freeport



Citizens Environmental Justice Group commissioned a study, funded by Freeport's Weed and Seed federal grant program, to evaluate whether contamination on Freeport's East Side was potentially contributing to incidences of cancer. The study identified hazardous substances in the Taylor Park area which they interpreted to exceed state health standards. In response to a call for action to address the area, the City formed a Taylor Park Health and Environmental Task Force to review the study and develop an action plan for addressing any concerns. The Task Force included representatives from the Mayor's office, City Council, the Stephenson County Health Department, environmental and health care professionals, and concerned residents. The Task Force also requested assistance from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which found that the depth of contamination did not pose a public health threat. Although this was positive news alleviating concerns of imminent public health threats, it was really just the beginning for the City's and community's efforts to understand and address brownfield conditions on the East Side.

Strategic Planning, Community Engagement, and Implementation: 2004 – 2009

While immediate health concerns were allayed by the Task Force's evaluation, East Side residents had been equipped with a greater awareness of the potential impact of brownfields on public and environmental health. The community therefore sought a more proactive effort from the City to assess and remediate East Side brownfield sites. In response to the requests of East Side residents in 2003, the City dedicated a portion of a US EPA Brownfields Assessment grant for the development of a prioritization strategy for assessing, cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields both on the East Side. This grant also funded similar environmental assessment and planning in an area on the west side of the river referred to as the "Rawleigh Corridor"—a 17-block area including and surrounding the Rawleigh Complex. Together, this work produced area-wide Phase I Environmental Site Assessments for both areas, followed by the *East Side Revitalization Strategy* (2007) and the *Rawleigh Corridor Master Plan*, both completed in 2007. Together, these plans and area-wide environmental assessments fueled significant progress for the City's Brownfields Initiative and also shined a light on areas the City could improve upon, particularly in building trust with leadership from residents. In addition to these planning processes, the City and its partners continued to make implementation progress at key brownfield sites. The key outcomes are described below.

Implementation Outcomes

- **Tutty's Crossing and CMC Heartland Sites:** During this period, the City advanced designs and funding proposals for the pedestrian/bicycle bridge connecting the sites and for a boat launch. Environmental cleanup was also undertaken at the CMC site.
- **Rawleigh Complex and Corridor:** During this time, the City secured the draft No Further Remediation letter from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. This was a major milestone for the project, greatly positioning the site for redevelopment as it clearly stated requirements for redevelopment, removing uncertainty about remediation requirements the development community faced when considering the site. The City then went through a Request for Proposals process and selected a developer to prepare a development plan for the site. Unfortunately, the plan brought forward by the selected developer proved not to be feasible, but this experience resulted in many important lessons learned for the City and its partners in moving forward with the project. A major lesson learned was that the scale of the project would require more up-front work by the community to bring forward a viable mix of tenants, identify ways to reduce development costs (such as grants for remediation), and focus on the project more as an economic development catalyst than just a real estate project. These lessons then informed the development of the *Rawleigh Corridor Plan* (see subsequent section) in 2007 and the establishment of the Rawleigh Collaboration Team.

East Side Revitalization Strategy (2007) Outcomes

The process for creating this Strategy resulted in a number of outcomes for the City's Brownfields Program:

- **Identified Neighborhood Issues:** The plan identified key issues through a variety of methods including stakeholder interviews, community meetings, a neighborhood survey taken door-to-door, and a windshield survey of neighborhood conditions.
- **Set Goals:** Based on the key identified issues, six priority goals were identified relating to: relationship building between the East Side and the City, housing, brownfields, property maintenance, access to daily needs, and education/training/employment.
- **Prioritized Brownfield Sites:** The area-wide Phase I Environmental Site Assessment evaluated 393 parcels on the East Side, 39 of which were identified to include Recognized Environmental Conditions (e.g. potential for contamination). The *East Side Revitalization Strategy* involved residents in a process to prioritize these sites for the next phase of environmental assessment. The City worked with Illinois EPA to test the sites with the greatest potential environmental concerns. The City has since purchased the site with the greatest environmental concerns along Alum Street and is pursuing funding to clean it up and route the Pecatonica Prairie Path through the site.
- **Created an Action Plan:** The Strategy includes an Action Plan with specific strategies for each of the six priority goals. The City and the East Side Resident Task Force (described further below) used this Action Plan to guide their joint work to implement the plan.
- **Focused on Flooding-related Concerns:** A theme that permeates nearly any discussion of revitalizing the East Side is flooding. The entire developed portion of the East Side is located within the designated Pecatonica River's floodway—the portion of the floodplain containing the river and the adjacent area where the majority of water flow occurs during a flood. The most

commonly voiced concerns regarding are two-fold: 1) concerns about mitigating flood damage and 2) frustrations with the limitations on making improvements to housing on the East Side due to floodplain / floodway regulations. To address these concerns more proactively, the City worked with Stephenson County to procure a state grant to develop the *Stephenson County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*, completed in 2008. The Plan recommends a number of strategies including regular community outreach, improved stormwater management, and pursuing funds to help residents interested in moving out of the floodway with purchase of homes and relocation. The City pursued a grant for this voluntary relocation program that was not awarded, but continues to seek opportunities to fund this Project.

- **Established the East Side Resident Task Force:** One of the most significant outcomes of the Strategy was the establishment of the East Side Resident Task Force in July 2006. This group of engaged East Side residents took a leadership role in implementing the Plan. The Task Force invited City Community Development staff to its meetings to promote improved communication and partnership. Some accomplishments of the Task Force included the City hosting diversity training for City staff, distributing a brochure to East Side residents to clarify floodplain regulations, and in general, establishing a more consistent line of communication between residents and the City. Unfortunately, the Task Force was not sustained over time, holding its last meeting in 2008 [*? Need confirmation*].

There are likely differing opinions on what led the Task Force to dissolve. One reason cited by the City was that the City's liaison who has built the most rapport with residents left the position, and that same rapport was not achieved with other City staff. The City also believed that the leadership of the Task Force changed, over time, to include strong voices from the East Side with clear and valid concerns, but whose concerns may not have been wholly representative of the broader East Side community.

The establishment of the Task Force was definitely a step in the right direction for building the relationship between East Side residents and the City, and although the group was not sustained over time, this experience provided very valuable lessons that are shaping the City's efforts to engage residents meaningfully throughout the Third Ward in the Brownfields Initiative.

Rawleigh Corridor Master Plan (2007) Outcomes

In addition to the East Side, the Rawleigh Corridor has been the other focus area of the City's brownfields program. The corridor includes a 17-block area in Freeport's west riverfront, including and surrounding the 450,000 square foot Rawleigh Complex. As described earlier in this section,



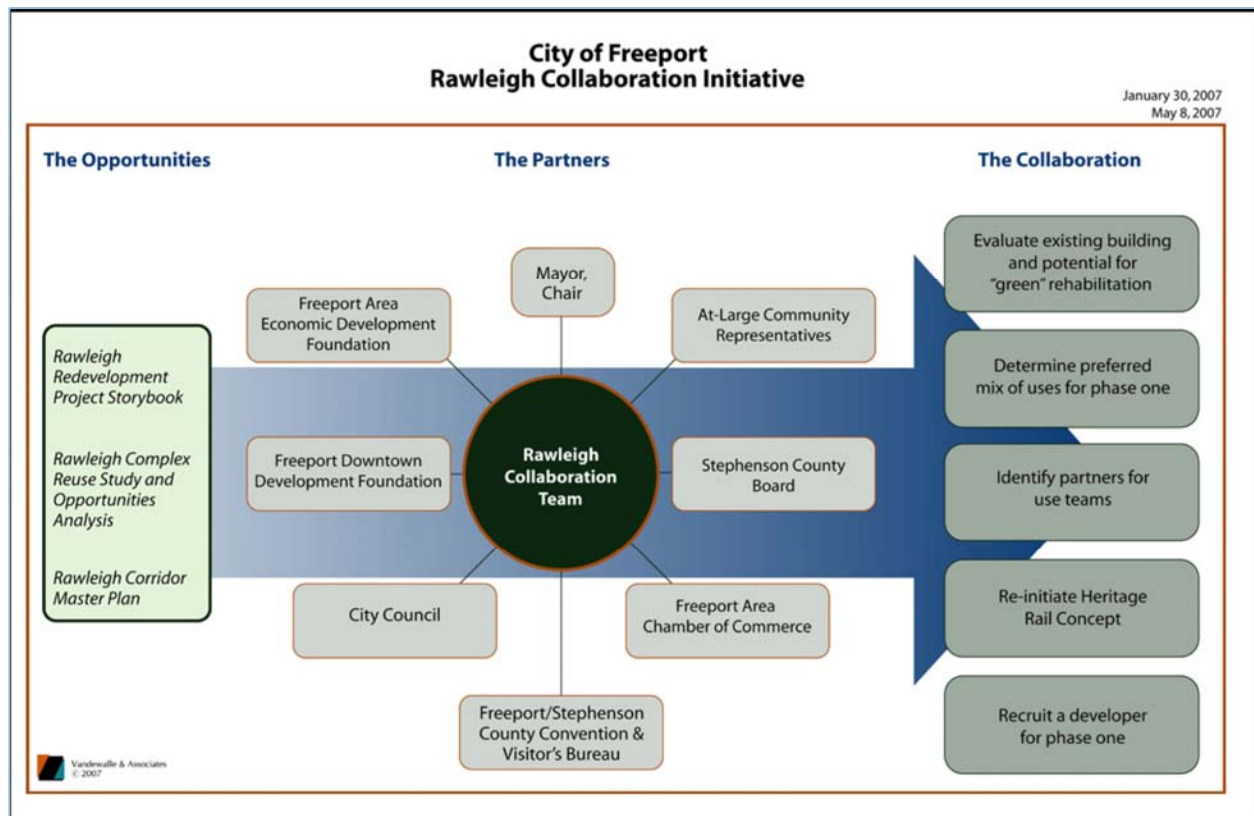
after several years of focus on site control and environmental issues, the City then recruited a developer to prepare a proposal for the project that ultimately was not undertaken. One of the significant lessons learned from this experience was that the community would need to take a more proactive role addressing concerns of contamination and disinvestment in area surrounding Rawleigh in order to be successful with Rawleigh itself. So, with US EPA funding, the City was able to broaden its focus to the broader 17-block riverfront area, the

“Rawleigh Corridor.” The *Rawleigh Corridor Master Plan* (2007) resulted in the following key outcomes:

- **Put Forward a Vision and Plan:** The plan established a vision for Freeport's west riverfront, including identified uses and public improvements, and established a phasing plan to prioritize the City's efforts.
- **Prioritized Brownfield Sites:** The area-wide Phase I Environmental Site Assessment evaluated of the Rawleigh Corridor evaluated 74 parcels, 36 of which were identified to include Recognized Environmental Conditions (e.g. potential for contamination). The *Rawleigh Corridor Master Plan* involved residents in a process to prioritize these sites for the next phase of environmental assessment.
- **Secured Funding:** This plan was followed by a detailed funding strategy, enabling the City to pursue and receive significant funding to advance the Project, including grants from the US EPA for final phases of cleanup at the Rawleigh Complex and adjacent sites for parking, a US HUD grant for streetscape improvements in the corridor, a USDA grant for a business plan for the Food Enterprise Center proposed at Rawleigh, and a US HUD grant to update and broaden riverfront planning efforts.
- **Undertook Public Improvements:** Public improvements that have been constructed include a boat ramp and pedestrian/bicycle bridge at Tutty's Crossing, streetscape on Stephenson Street, plans for the bike trail through Downtown, and advancement of the Pecos River Water Trail for paddlers.
- **Engaged Residents and Key Partners:** The Plan resulted in the establishment of the Rawleigh Collaboration Team (RCT)—an advisory body to the Freeport City Council, bringing together



the private sector, community interests, and the City to redevelop the Complex and Corridor proactively. The RCT was supported by three sub-teams: a Buildings Team (advancing building redevelopment plans and cost estimates), a Food Team (advancing plans for a food business incubator, public market, and restaurants at Rawleigh), and an Arts Team (advancing plans for arts live/work space at Rawleigh). The RCT and its supportive teams made considerable progress on all of these fronts. In addition to advancing a number of plans for the Complex and recruiting additional funding, the RCT brought many community partners into the fold that had not before had a formal role in advancing Rawleigh. However, by 2009, the RCT went on hiatus while City leadership regrouped to determine the next steps for Rawleigh in light of the Great Recession and its impacts on development prospects. Now, in 2012, with a renewed focus on this Project, private sector interest in investment (the City is negotiating a purchase agreement for one of the buildings), and with funding from HUD, the City is re-engaging its community partners in this Project.



Expanding Brownfields to a More Comprehensive Approach: 2010 – Present

Putting a Spotlight on Community Health in Freeport's Brownfields Program

Public health concerns and environmental justice for residents living closest to brownfields have always been a driving force behind brownfield cleanup and redevelopment efforts in Freeport and across the country. However, historically, US EPA grant funds (the predominant funding source for brownfield planning, assessment, and cleanup) have not been used extensively to assess the health issues of residents living in brownfield areas. The federal Brownfields law does enable communities to use up to 10% of US EPA grant funds for “health monitoring” of residents in brownfield areas, and in the mid-2000’s the US EPA began more proactively promoting that grant recipients take advantage of this.

In 2008, Freeport pursued and was awarded three cleanup grants for the Rawleigh Complex. The work plan for these grants included funding for health monitoring of residents within the Third Ward, which initiated this study. The funds became available in late 2009 and work began in 2010. A more detailed description of this process is included in the following sections, but as it relates to the City’s brownfield program, the most substantial outcome has been integrating holistic health concerns more consciously into the brownfields program and adding the Stephenson County Health Department Administrator to the City’s Brownfields Project Management Team.

Freeport's Brownfields Program Today: A Holistic Initiative

Today, Freeport’s Brownfields Initiative has transformed into a central Freeport revitalization initiative, with a focus on assessing and cleaning up priority brownfield sites as a continued strategic focus. In 2011 the City pursued and received a grant from US HUD to advance plans in the Downtown riverfront through the context of sustainable economic development. With this funding, the City’s brownfields program is focused on the following areas:

- **Comprehensive Approach:** The City is working to integrate plans in the Downtown riverfront together, including plans related to economic development, transportation, recreation and parkland, and housing. The City completed its *Comprehensive Plan* in 2010 which also works to integrate brownfield issues into broader community plans.
- **Partnerships:** Key to Freeport’s success is the City’s efforts to engage a variety of community and regional partners. In 2010, a county-wide initiative called Prospering Together was launched to coordinate a variety of organizations involved in community and economic development. A strategic plan was published in 2011 and the many Prospering Together partners and citizens are actively advancing that plan. Prospering Together provides a framework for tapping into partner organizations and citizens to advance Downtown riverfront plans
- **Resident Engagement and Empowerment:** The City and the broader Prospering Together initiative are focused on strengthening opportunities to engage and empower residents in Downtown riverfront planning and implementation.
- **Economic Development Driven:** Brownfield issues are pervasive and difficult to overcome. To be successful, communities have to strategically concentrate their efforts on priority sites that can act as catalysts for surrounding sites. This focus has to go far beyond real estate positioning and rather be focused on a more comprehensive economic development strategy that includes brownfield redevelopment as a core component. This is a fundamental part of Freeport’s Brownfields Initiative today, focusing not only on strategic site assessment, cleanup, and positioning, but also on establishing a food business incubator and public market, a multi-modal station serving Amtrak and other local and regional modes, riverfront recreation, Downtown housing, and strengthening Third Ward neighborhoods.

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APPENDIX C: PRELIMINARY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

Using the prioritized community issues, the Project Team created an initial *Preliminary Action Plan Framework* to aid CAPS members with measuring changes in overall community health, determining organizational goals moving forward, and providing an outline for future Project work. The Action Model is by no means exhaustive, but will help set the stage for more thorough Action Planning development over the next year.

Table C-1: Preliminary Action Model Framework

Neighborhood Issues	Overarching Goals	Indicators for Measuring Change
Community Involvement	Increase participation of residents, partners	# of people at community meetings
		Current population
		# of community meetings/organizations
Resident Communication	Improve communication on neighborhood planning efforts between City and residents	Resident knowledge of current planning efforts
		Meetings and activities attendance
Property Maintenance	Reduce the number of vacant properties	# of vacant properties
		# of days vacant property on market
		Foreclosure rate
		Ownership rate
	Reduce the number of properties in disrepair	# properties with nuisance violations
		# of primary structures in poor condition*
		# of accessory structures in poor condition*
		Amount of new housing construction
		Age of area houses
		# neighborhood clean ups
Neighborhood Infrastructure	Improve the condition of neighborhood streets	Age of roads
		Average pavement condition rating
		Amt of total road investments in area
		# of major structural defects (such as root intrusion, grease blockages, and infiltration issues)
	Improve condition and number of sidewalks	# of safe and accessible sidewalks
		Area walkability scores
		# of recent sidewalk repair programs
	Increase amount of street lighting	Condition of streetlights
		# requests for additional street lighting
	Improve water and sewer service	Age & presence of storm water infrastructure
		Improve trash removal

Neighborhood issues	Overarching Goals	Indicators for Measuring Change	
Community Activities	Increase park space per person	Parks desert data	
	Create a Neighborhood Watch	# of current watch meetings Current area served by watch	
	Host more Block Parties	# of block parties held this year Amount of people at each block party	
	Establish more places for health and fitness	# of fitness programs offered in community Parks desert data Increase in turnout for activities	
	Develop more teen and youth activities		Increase in activities
			Increase in turnout Parks desert data
Unemployment	Improve access to training opportunities	# of current training opportunities	
	Improve access to and readiness for jobs	Unemployment rate Median income Educational attainment # of households where public assistance is a form of income	
Health Care	Improve access to affordable health care	# of free clinics	
		# of uninsured	
		# of clinics that accept Medicare/Medicaid	
	Improve access to affordable dental care	Distance to area clinics	
# of residents, both children and adults without recent dental care			
# of uninsured # of free/reduced fee clinics in area			
Transportation	Improve public transportation access	Cost of rides, waiting time	
Shopping	Establish a neighborhood food retailer	Distances to/accessibility of area food retailers, community gardens	
Safety and Security	Reduce rates of drug use	Rate of drug use	
	Reduce overall rates of crime	Crime rates	
		Police services per capita # police calls	

* definition of "poor condition" TBD

APPENDIX D: PARTNERSHIPS

CAPS, the City of Freeport, and Stephenson County—the core partners in this Project—cannot be successful without the support and involvement of a wide variety of partners. The following is a list of current and potential partnerships that will be focused on to help ensure the success of the Third Ward Healthy Neighborhoods Project. This list is by no means exhaustive; the Project Team always welcomes new partners.

Economic / Community Development Partnerships

- **Neighbors United** – Neighbors United is another newly formed group in the Third Ward, established in fall 2012. The group, sponsored by the Freeport Area Church Cooperative, shares many similar goals with CAPS. Moving forward, CAPS and Neighbors United should identify opportunities for partnership to have greater impact together.
- **Riverfront Enterprise Team** – This newly formed team has been providing input economic and redevelopment planning in Freeport’s Downtown riverfront since fall 2012. The Team will be supported by a variety of topic-area sub-groups of Prospering Together and by CAPS to ensure Third Ward neighborhood concerns are strongly integrated into the work of this group.
- **Prospering Together** is a county-wide initiative to develop a shared vision and goals for Stephenson County for the year 2020, and has resulted in a Community Strategic Plan. Implementation of the plan relies heavily on community partnerships. CAPS is being integrated as an important partner and voice of Third Ward concerns into the Prospering Together process.
- **Northwest Illinois Development Alliance (NIDA)** promotes economic development and participates in county-wide planning through Prospering Together. NIDA will be a key resource for assisting with economic development initiatives taken on by CAPS.
- **Freeport Downtown Development Foundation (FDDF)** is a not-for-profit that focuses on transforming our Downtown for the 21st Century, collaborates with the City in reuse planning and redevelopment of Downtown brownfields and participates in county-wide planning through Prospering Together.

Community Activities and Recreation Partnerships

- **Boys and Girls Club:** With a mission of assisting youth of all backgrounds become responsible citizens and leaders, the Boys and Girls will continue to be a critical partner for project focused on youth in the Third Ward.
- **The Freeport Park District (FPD)** is currently working with CAPS on plans to address the “parks desert” in the Third Ward and will continue to be a critical partner in advancing park and recreation projects throughout the Third Ward. .
- **Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation (FOPRF)** is a non-profit dedicated to preserving, protecting and fostering the vitality of the Pecatonica River. Their enthusiasm for the river makes them an important partner for any efforts related to the river through the Third Ward.

Housing Partnerships

- **Neighborhood Housing Services of Freeport (NHS)** is dedicated to the health of neighborhoods in Freeport through their work to stabilize housing through programs including credit counseling. They are currently hosting an Americorps VISTA volunteer who can support community engagement in the Third Ward.
- **Freeport Housing Authority** manages the federal housing facility on the East Side and is an important partner in reaching that community of residents and focusing on housing and community issues in the Third Ward.
- **Rebuilding Together of Greater Freeport (RTGF)** provides assistance with home repairs and home modifications for low-income homeowners, including the elderly and disabled. Already, they have become a partner in supporting the work of CAPS to address properties in need of repair.

Government Partnerships

- **Stephenson County.** In addition to the Health Department (a leading partner supporting CAPS), Stephenson County as a whole has been and will continue to be a partner in the Third Ward. The East Side neighborhood in the Third Ward is on the edge of the City of Freeport, and parts of the area are outside the City's corporate limits. Some of the brownfield sites identified on the East Side are in the County's jurisdiction. In addition, the County led the development of the *Stephenson County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* that guides floodplain issues the Third Ward. The County also manages a brownfields program which includes cleanup of the Tutty Baker Park site in the Third Ward and establishing a community garden and hoop house on the site.

Education and Training Partnerships

- **Highland Community College (HCC):** HCC will be a critical partner in advancing initiatives to expand Third Ward resident participation in higher education and job training.
- **Freeport School District:** The school district will be a strategic partner in identifying opportunities to expand access to youth programming for the Third Ward.
- **University of Illinois Extension:** U of I Extension's Stephenson County office has been a core leader in the *Food Enterprise Center* project proposed for the Third Ward which will support food business incubation and re-establish food retail in the Third Ward "food desert." More broadly, Extension can be a partner in advancing initiatives in the Third Ward through its program areas focusing on community and economic development and children, families, and seniors.
- **Freeport Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC)** is a resource for job training initiatives in the Third Ward. The IETC pools the resources of workforce development organizations to offer a single point of connection for job seekers and employers in Northwest Illinois regarding education, training and local employment opportunities. Participating parties in Freeport's IETC include the Illinois Department of Employment Security assisted by the Freeport Area Church Cooperative, Freeport Township, Malcolm Eaton Enterprises, and Highland Community College.

Faith-Based and Service Organization Partnerships

- **Third Ward Faith Community:** Church congregations and ministry have and will continue to play an important role in advancing initiatives that promote revitalization in the Third Ward. CAPS is currently working with church leaders to define their roles in CAPS.
- **Freeport Area Church Cooperative (FACC)** is a non-profit organization, comprised of 26 local churches in Freeport, whose mission is to provide emergency food, clothing, and shelter to those in need in Northwest Illinois and to empower the community they serve. For 2012 through 2013, FACC has a VISTA staff member charged with promoting community organization.
- **M.A.D. Men of Freeport** – Founded in 2008, M.A.D. (Making a Difference) Men is composed of volunteers from various faith backgrounds in Freeport with a mission of undertaking various service projects. As such, the group meets weekly to discuss potential projects. They have been involved in such efforts as cleaning up and maintaining a public park and public sidewalks. In the future, they plan to team with CAPS members on Third Ward community projects.

Additional Community Group Partnerships

- **Stephenson County Historical Society:** The Historical Society should be engaged to help evaluate ways in which to promote and celebrate the history of Third Ward neighborhoods as part of CAPS.

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APPENDIX E: FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The table on the following pages is a list of sample types of funding that both the Project Team and CAPS members will consider pursuing. CAPS members will review this list in more detail during the next steps of goal setting and action planning.

Program	Eligible Activities	Projects Covered	Eligible Entities	\$ Type/ Amount	Match
Community/Environmental Health Funding					
Community Health Projects Related to Contamination and Land Reuse and Brownfield Sites ATSDR	Funding to develop new or enhanced community public health initiatives related to brownfields redevelopment, develop strategy to measure and diminish potentially damaging environmental health exposures	Action model creation, beginning implementation	Units of state, local and tribal gov.,	Federal Grant 150,000	None required
Community Transformation Grant Small Communities Program Grant CDC	Funds for strategy development and implementation for (1) tobacco-free living (2) active living and healthy eating (3) evidence-based quality clinical and other preventive services, specifically prevention and control of high blood pressure and high cholesterol (4) social and emotional wellness, such as facilitating early identification of mental health needs and access to quality services, especially for people with chronic conditions and (5) healthy and safe physical environments.	environmental health assessments, data tracking	Local Gov, Tribal Gov, Non-Profits	Federal Grant \$70M for program/ up to \$140K per recipient	None required
Health Impact Assessment to foster Healthy Community Design CDC	Funds to promote evidence-based approach toward community design decision-making through three major activities; (1) improving surveillance related to community design for local data collection; (2) encouraging Health Impact Assessments of policies, program, and projects that will affect community design; (3) supporting evaluation within the field	environmental health assessments, data tracking	Local gov, Tribal Gov, Non-Profits, non-profits, businesses, universities	Federal Grant: Max of \$180,000	None required
Safe Routes to School DOT/FTA	Funding to encourage walking and biking to and from school, to make biking and walking safer, and for the planning, development and implementation of such. All projects require an approved Illinois School Travel Plan	Infrastructure improvements (such as sidewalk repair) and planning projects	Schools, school districts, governmental entities and non-profits	State Grant Amount max is around \$250,000	None required
Choice Neighborhoods HUD	Funding for planning and implementation, focused on housing, neighborhoods, and people	Neighborhoods revitalization plans and implementation funding	Non-profits, local governments, developers and public housing agencies	Federal Grant \$300,000 for planning, \$30M for implementation	Yes, at least 5%

Program	Eligible Activities	Projects Covered	Eligible Entities	\$ Type/ Amount	Match
Environmental Justice Small Grants Program EPA	Funds for projects to develop an understanding of environmental and public health issues, to identify ways to address these issues at the local level, and educate and empower the community. In 2012, proposals encouraged for addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change in communities with environmental justice concerns	Activities to carryout relevant environmental statutes	Local Gov; Non-Profits	Federal Grant \$1.5 m total; up to 40 awards of \$30,000 ~4 per EPA region. Grants for 1 year	None required
Targeted Watersheds Grant Program EPA	Funds to support innovative, community-based watershed approaches aimed at preventing, reducing, or eliminating water pollution. Successful candidates will have a watershed management plan in place and have broad support.	Developing, implementing, and demonstrating: 1) on-the-ground projects to improve or maintain water quality; and 2) organizational and technical capacity building projects	State and local gov, non-profits	Federal Grant Varies by year/funding announcement. Est. FY09 \$11.7m program-wide	25% non-fed match of project cost
Grants for Homeowners IHDA	Zero interest loans for housing repairs, mobility modifications, funding for rental subsidies, in low-income areas	housing loans and rental subsidies	homeowners, renters	State Grant based on need	None required
Childhood Obesity Prevention/Nutrition and Health Grants JR Albert Foundation	Funding for improving access to fresh foods to at-risk populations, prevent childhood obesity, mental and physical health education, and sustainable agriculture	Programs for at-risk populations in nutritional practices and wellness.	Non-profits	Foundation Grant Amount unknown	Not specified
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority	Funding for law enforcement, prosecution and court, prevention and education, corrections, drug treatment, planning, evaluation and technology improvement	Equipment, planning, and educational efforts	Local police forces	State Grant Up to \$20,000	None required
Economic Development					
Brownfields Job Training Grants EPA	Funding to train residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields properties and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field. Seek proposals from eligible entities to deliver environmental job training.	Workforce training	Local Gov, States, Tribal Gov, Non-Profits	Federal Grant Up to 200,000 over 3 years	None required

Program	Eligible Activities	Projects Covered	Eligible Entities	\$ Type/ Amount	Match
Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant EPA	Funding for deliver environmental workforce development and job training programs that recruit, train, and place local unemployed and under-employed residents with skills needed to secure full-time employment in the environmental field, with a focus on solid and hazardous waste remediation, environmental health and safety, and wastewater-related training	Workforce training	Govt, non-profits	Up to \$200K in 2012 (\$2.8M total available)	None required
Healthy Food Financing Initiative USDA	Could include: 1. projects that finance grocery stores, 2. farmers' markets, and other sources of nutritious foods. Should have dual purpose of increasing access to healthy foods and create job and business opportunities in low-income areas	Business incubation - entrepreneurship - food production - food infrastructure	Govt, non-profits, others	Federal Grant: unclear, but amounts near \$800,000 have been granted	Not specified
Community Development Assistance Program DCEO	Includes: \$ to assist for-profits and non-profits in carrying out economic development activities	Economic development projects among low to moderate income communities	Units of local government	State Grant Over 29M allocated for 2012, grants range from 100 to 700K	None required
Community Food Projects Competitive Grants USDA	Could include: 1. community food projects, 2. planning projects, 3. training and 4. capacity building projects	Planning -technical assistance -business incubation -job training	Private, non-profit organizations meeting criteria need	Federal Grant: From 10K-300L	1:1
Convergence Partnership Multi-Sector Partnership	Provides catalytic investments and support foundations to make long-term commitments to: - Promote equity, which includes a focus on benefiting low-income communities, communities of color or other vulnerable populations, and creating leadership and engagement opportunities throughout the policymaking process. - Focus on policy and environmental change strategies instead of programmatic or educational initiatives to promote equity and health. - Create non-traditional partnerships and collaborations in order to effectively create policy and environmental changes and leverage expertise, connections, and funding.	Grant-making strategies	Locally -based Foundations, but local organizations can approach the foundation with grant ideas	\$200K	50%

Program	Eligible Activities	Projects Covered	Eligible Entities	\$ Type/ Amount	Match
JP Morgan Chase Grants JP Morgan Chase	Funding for 1. programming on workforce development, asset building and financial literacy; 2. economic development and affordable housing	Planning, training	Non-profits	Foundation Grant Amount unknown	Not specified
Local Strong Economies Surdna Foundation	Funds to develop regional economic development strategies that integrate workforce training for low-income populations, support entrepreneurial business incubators, asset-building strategies, implementation of workforce development strategies	Creating and implementing economic development strategies that support disenfranchised communities	Non-Profits	Foundation Grant Grants range from 10,000 - 350,000	Unsure
MetLife Grants MetLife Foundation	Funding for programs in health, civic affairs, education, and culture.	Parks development, after school activities	Non-profits. May not be a foundation-based non-profit	Foundation Grant Amounts unknown Amount unknown	Unsure
Promise Neighborhoods Dept. of Education	Funding to support cradle-to-career services designed to improve education among students living in distressed urban and rural neighborhoods	Feasibility plans to improve educational outcomes, or funding to implement these feasibility plans	Non-profits, institutions of higher education, tribal entities	Federal Grant \$500,000 for planning, \$4-6 million for implementation	50% for planning, none for implementation
State Farm Community Development Grants State Farm Insurance	Funding for affordable housing, community revitalization and economic development programs	Economic development projects among low to moderate income communities	Non-Profits, Government entities and Educational Institutions	Foundation Grant Range from 25,000- 100,000	Not specified

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APPENDIX F: THIRD WARD COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY – JANUARY 25, 2012

The Project Team held a community meeting on January 25, 2012 (attended by 62 people) both to present the results of the Health Monitoring survey and Focus Groups and then to prioritize the issues and discuss next steps. This section summarizes the input gained from community residents at this meeting.

Prioritizing Neighborhood Health Issues

The Project Team summarized the key issues identified by residents in the Survey and Focus Groups into nine general categories. The first two issues are overarching and are critical to the success of this Project moving forward. The team therefore identified these as priorities that would need to be advanced in order for any initiative in the Third Ward to succeed:

1. Community involvement: Improved engagement of residents and community partners on developing and implementing neighborhood plans.
2. Communication with residents: Improved communication on neighborhood planning efforts between the City and neighborhood residents

The remaining seven issues cover a range of issues affecting community health. These are the seven issues that the Project Team needed help from Third Ward residents to prioritize. Though advancing strategies to address all of these seven issues is important in the long-term, the Project Team believed that to gain buy-in and involvement from residents, it would be important to focus on no more than three issue areas to gain momentum and visible successes.

After presenting on the survey and Focus Group results at the January 25, meeting, the Project Team gave residents three stickers to put on sheets of paper for each of the following top seven issues. The issues were prioritized into the following order based on the results of this exercise:

1. Property Maintenance: Removal of vacant and dilapidated buildings, greater support of property owners for property maintenance, and neighborhood clean-ups
2. Neighborhood Infrastructure: Improved neighborhood infrastructure (such as sidewalks, streets, street lights, and landscaping)
3. Community Activities: Greater access to recreational/community activities for youth and people of all ages (for example, playgrounds, sports, arts/crafts, music, dance and fitness)
4. Employment and Training: Greater employment and job training opportunities
5. Health Care: Better access to / affordability of health care and health education to address key issues including asthma, high blood pressure, weight management, and untreated dental issues.
6. Transportation: Greater access to public transportation
7. Shopping: More and greater variety of places to shop

Next Steps for Top Three Neighborhood Health Issues

After the exercise to prioritize issues, meeting participants were asked to join a discussion group for one of the three top key issues: “Property Maintenance,” “Neighborhood Infrastructure,” and “Community Activities.” City, County, and consulting staff facilitated each group. The following questions, along with several others, were asked in the small-group format:

1. What role can neighborhood residents play?
2. What can you do?
3. What can we do collectively?
4. Who else should be involved as we move forward (people/organizations)?

The results of the small-group conversations show more specific examples of individuals and organizations that should be involved, locations of specific actions, and ways to involve residents. Responses were then categorized into general concerns, specific concerns, and examples of these concerns. Following is a summary of participant responses.

Table F-1: Resident Concerns / Discussion of Priority Issues:

Issues	Specific Concerns	Examples
Homeowner/Property Maintenance	-Cleaner neighborhoods -Grass cut in summer -Property maintenance -Responsible landlords	-Painted homes -Trash cleanups from yards -Weeding -Clean up trees, limbs, streets
City/Neighborhood Infrastructure	- Better streets, alleys, parking lots	-Fix blacktops -Widen streets, fix streets -Resurface alleys -Redo parking lots -Repair potholes
	-Sidewalks	-Remove lower sidewalks where water settles -Fix sidewalks affordably
	-Vacant buildings	-Houses removed that are vacant -Renovation of Rawleigh Complex
Community Activities	-Playground/Park	-Build a playground accessible for all children in the neighborhood -A park in the Arcade -Playground for young kids -Public park
	-Neighborhood group activities -Help each other -Boat dock access -More places for health and fitness -Activities for young and old	

Issues	Specific Concerns	Examples
Housing	-More affordable modern apartment for singles	
Unemployment	-Employment & training opportunities -Jobs for everyone	
Health Care	-Better access to health care -Affordable dental care -Dentures	
Safety and Security	-Eradicating drug use -Concern over rise of crime and safety and decrease in quality of residents	
Miscellaneous	- Need a Grocery store -Better transportation	-Not a convenience store

Neighborhood Wishes Questionnaire

The January 25th meeting was designed to provide a variety of forums for residents to provide input. The Project Team distributed a Questionnaire which asked “What are your three wishes for your neighborhood?” This question had been asked at a prior county-wide visioning event as part of the Prospering Together initiative, and was intended to give residents a chance to “think big” about their future vision for the neighborhood. The results, however, were much more short-term in nature, however, and honed in on specific locations where property maintenance could be accomplished, specific streets to improve, locations of vacant properties, and examples of community activities that are needed. These kinds of responses exposed the need to focus on incremental neighborhood improvements that demonstrate visible progress, while at the same time inspiring residents to develop a longer-term, bolder vision for Third Ward neighborhoods.

THIRD WARD HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Results of survey taken January 25, 2012: What are your three wishes for your neighborhood?

Homeowner/Property Maintenance:

- Cleaner neighborhoods:
- Grass cut down in summer
- Property maintenance
- More responsible landlords

City/Neighborhood Infrastructure:

- [Better] neighborhood infrastructure
- Improve streets, alleys, parking lots
 - Curbs, potholes, blacktop, widen streets
 - Streets fixed, better street(especially Hancock and Shawnee)
 - Put new streets and curbs on Blackhawk
 - Resurface all alleys
 - Redo the parking lots around Freeport

- Sidewalks
 - Remove the lower sidewalks where water settles
 - Better sidewalks/landscape
 - Fix sidewalks **affordably**
- Vacant buildings
 - Remove houses that are vacant
 - Remove abandoned house 700 block of 14th Ave, Arcade area
 - Renovate Raleigh Complex
- More street lighting
- More careful snow removal
- Address flooding issues on the East Side before all other parts of the City.
- Provide more opportunities for residents to direct City grant spending
- Clean the River
- Fix the bridge on Hancock
- Offer more property management services
- Provide money for exterior home repair.

Community Activities:

- Build a playground/park
- Have an active group that gets together to talk, have picnics/parties, etc.
- The community helps each other
- A boat dock with access to the River and with “picnic” capabilities
- More places to go for health and fitness
- Activities for young and old

Housing:

- More affordable modern apartments for singles

Unemployment

- Employment & training opportunities
- Jobs for all people

Health care:

- [Better access to] health care
- Affordable dental care.
- Dentures.

Change in neighborhood values:

- No drug use
- No drug dealers
- Improved quality of residents: less crime and more safety

Miscellaneous:

- **Grocery store**
 - A grocery store (not a convenience store)
 - An improved grocery store
- **Better transportation**

APPENDIX G: CENTRAL FREEPORT FOOD DESERT ANALYSIS

While not represented on the USDA Food Desert Web site, the proposed Food Enterprise Center would reside in a de facto food desert - in an urban area where food access is low and the amount of households living in poverty is high.

Food Access

The USDA definition of a food desert includes communities with low access to healthy food options. Specifically, USDA defines a food desert as having at least 500 persons and/or at least 33 percent of the target Census tract's population living more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (in an urban area). Currently over 4,400 people in east and central Freeport, within one mile of the proposed Center, have low access to retail food outlets. Moreover, 56% of Census Tract 8 (where the Center will be located), or 1,936 people, live greater than one mile from a supermarket.

Table G-1: Food Access

Food Desert Calculations	#	%
Population within 1-mile of proposed Center, in Food Desert ¹	4,410	45
Total Population within 1-mile of proposed Center ²	9819	-
Population of Census Tract 8 in Food Desert ³	1,936	56
Total Population of Census Tract 8 ⁴	3,323	-
Total population of Central/Eastside area currently Food Desert ⁵	5,232	-

¹The population within 1-mile of the proposed center and in a food desert was calculated by selecting all 2010 Census blocks whose centroid was within 1 mile of the proposed Center site, and which did not intersect with 1 mile buffers placed around all existing full service grocery stores in the area, and summing the 2010 Census population of these blocks.

²The total population within 1 mile of the Center was calculated using Census blocks whose centroid was within 1 mile of the proposed Center, and summing the 2010 Census population of these blocks.

³The population total of Tract 8 in a food desert was calculated by selecting all 2010 Census blocks within Census Tract 8 which did not intersect with 1 mile buffers placed around existing full-service grocery stores, and summing those populations.

⁴The total population of Census Tract 8 was calculated using 2010 ACS 5-year estimates.

⁵Finally, the total central/eastside food desert numbers were calculated by first selecting all 2010 Census blocks in the eastern half of the City of Freeport and adding any blocks outside of the City whose centroids were within 1 mile of the proposed Food Enterprise Center site. From this selection, any blocks which intersected with 1 mile buffers placed around all existing full service grocery stores in the area were removed. Finally the total 2010 Census population of the remaining blocks was summed.

Target Community

According to USDA guidelines, Census Tracts are considered food deserts if their populations have a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater and a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area median family income (in addition to the accessibility requirement). Our Project, while positively impacting regional healthy food accessibility, would focus on an area whose demographics have a median family income that is below 80% of both the City and County poverty levels, and a percent living in poverty that is over twice as large as the City and County percent poverty levels. Moreover, much of the focus area faces poverty-related problems such as lack of transportation, medical care, jobs and high unemployment rates, as illustrated in Table G-3 below from the 2011 Third Ward Health Monitoring Study.

Table G-2: Project Area Demographics

	Tract 8	City of Freeport	Stephenson County
Median Household Income ⁶	\$24,189	\$55,735	\$43,304
At or below 80% of area median income	YES	-	-
% Below Poverty Level ⁷	33.2%	12.6%	13.4%

⁶The median household income numbers were taken from the 2006-2010 ACS for Tract 8, and City and County numbers are from the 2010 Census.

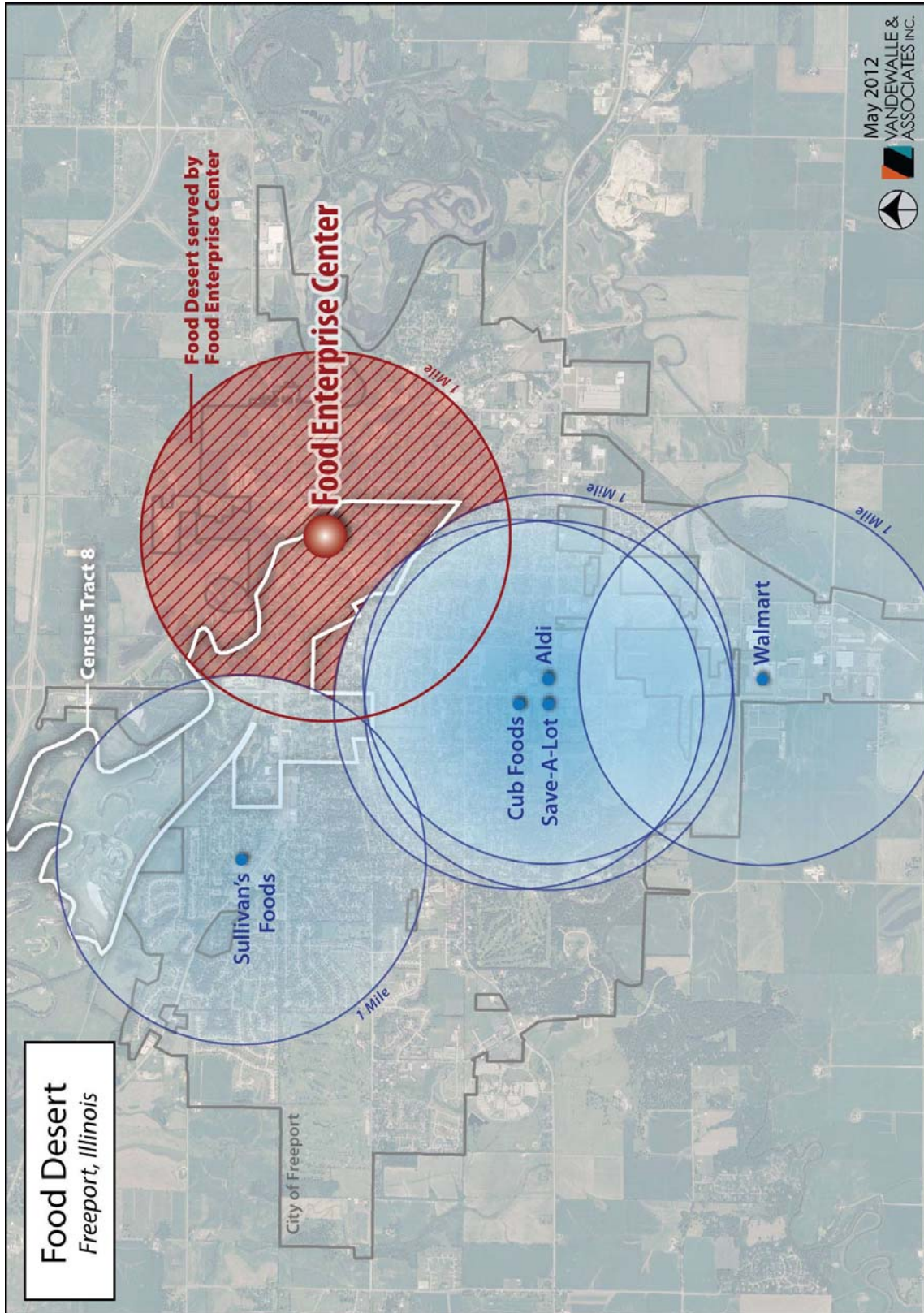
⁷The percent below poverty level numbers were taken from the 2010 ACS Community Survey 5 year estimates, and the 2010 Census, respectively.

Table G-3: Third Ward Health Monitoring Study Key Findings⁸

Third Ward Characteristics	%
Unemployed	57.3
Without Personal Transportation	36.9
With Financial Problems	57.3
Unable to Afford Medical Care	18.9

⁸The Third Ward Health Monitoring Study was undertaken in 2010 – 2011 involving surveys of 206 Third Ward community residents, representing about 14.7% of Third Ward households. This community is located within Census Tract 8.

Figure G-1. Freeport Food Desert



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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Third Ward Health Monitoring Survey Results