URBAN PLANNING: SPRINGFIELD’S NORTH AND SOUTH ENDS

Interactive Qualifying Project Report completed in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Science degree at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA

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Abstract

Springfield, Massachusetts is a city that has struggled over the past few decades in terms of its economic growth and development. The goal of this project, sponsored by DevelopSpringfield, was to provide a set of robust solutions for the organization to implement in order to improve the lifestyle of the population of Springfield. Through an analysis of the C-term team’s work and the utilization of participatory methods with the community, this goal was achieved. The results of this project were used to produce a white paper detailing recommendations for possible future initiatives by DevelopSpringfield.
Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our project advisor, Kevin Sweeney, for consistently providing dependable advice and keeping us on track towards our goal. The experience and knowledge he shared with the group was invaluable to the completion of this project, and we are grateful for his constant support.

We would also like to thank our sponsor, DevelopSpringfield, for providing us with this great opportunity to have an impact on this wonderful community. In particular, we would like to thank Jay Minkarah, CEO of DevelopSpringfield, for sharing with us his knowledge and understanding of the current problems in Springfield. Listening to Jay speak candidly about the current state of Springfield was invaluable, and provided us with a lot of insight into areas that we had previously been unaware of.

The graduate students Sayan Sengupta, Wilander Tauro, and Yanling Lin have all contributed to this project through brainstorming sessions, resource sharing, and hands on activities in Springfield. Their efforts helped us realize our project goals, and keep us on track throughout the term.

We would like to thank the Springfield Technical Community College students and their professor Diane Sabato for their involvement in this project. They provided support by gathering primary data for this project, an invaluable asset that provided insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the communities in Springfield.

The New North Citizens Council has also provided us with a plethora of resources and information. We would like to explicitly thank Maria Ligus, Executive Director, for introducing us to many different contacts and inviting us to various meetings. Rosa Espinosa, Program Manager, has also been of great help to our project. She provided us assistance with the North End focus group. She went above and beyond by providing us with some last minute translations and facilitated the conference area for the actual event. Without their help, our North End focus group would not have seen such a large attendance.

We would also like to thank Kelvin Molina for the efforts he put towards our South End focus group. He provided us with members of the community to participate in the focus group, as well as participating himself. This provided us with crucial primary data for our research.

Finally, we would like to thank all the other community members who participated in our focus groups and surveys. They provided us with great feedback for our proposals, as well as some new ideas to include. Without these members of the community generously contributing their time to us, we would have been unable to complete this project.
Executive Summary

Project Goal

Located in western Massachusetts, the city of Springfield has long fell behind the rest of the state in terms of development and economic growth. Subsequently, many foundations have been formed in Springfield to combat these problems and the negative effects that they cause. At the forefront of this development is an organization called DevelopSpringfield. A nonprofit corporation, DevelopSpringfield serves “to advance development and redevelopment projects, to stimulate and support economic growth, and to expedite the revitalization process within the City of Springfield” (DevelopSpringfield, 2016). DevelopSpringfield has partnered with Worcester Polytechnic Institute in order to act as the sponsor for both the 2016 C-term and D-term Pioneer Valley Interactive Qualifying Projects.

The majority of the research in this report was based on the work done in the previous term and the personal observations of the current team through analysis and meetings. The C-term team conducted an anecdotal survey with residents, visitors, and employees of both the North and South Ends of Springfield to evaluate the top problems in the area. The three highest rated problems in both Ends were substance abuse, crime, and low income level. The third and fourth highest rated problems varied by area, with the North listing the lack of job training and housing, and the South listing lack of parking and access to groceries. The objective of this project was to refine a list of solutions to each of these problems generated by the C-term team, as well as suggest other solutions to additional problems that were found in Springfield.
Methods

In order to gather data from the community, several methods were employed. The interviews and surveys of the C-term students were critically analyzed to ensure a full understanding of the purpose for this project. Next, we attended community meetings held by important members of the area in order to establish contacts and introduce ourselves to the community. In-person surveys were conducted with residents to get honest feedback on different areas of interest for Springfield. And lastly, focus groups were held with residents and business owners to get feedback on in-depth solutions to problems that they had identified.

Findings and Recommendations

Blue Light Emergency Systems

Focus group participants expressed that the quick response of police would be an appealing facet of these systems. Additionally, they responded well to the possibility of the systems also having a 311 button that could report and transmit non-emergency issues. The residents also offered insight to the possible problems that could be encountered when implementing a system like this. The most commonly expressed concern was the potential for prank calls as a means to waste valuable police time. An additional follow-up concern was the chance of vandalism to the machines. Participants divulged that they would be willing to see the blue light systems in highly trafficked, and therefore more dangerous, areas. The locations which were suggested included Main Street in the North End and along the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway in the South End “because it’s a confluence of foot traffic, bike traffic, and… crime.”

We recommend that the city use a beta testing method to evaluate the potential success of the blue light emergency systems. From the information and community feedback received, we
feel that the blue light emergency system is a technology worth pursuing. Due to the heavy financial investment needed to institute these systems, we recommend first conducting a beta test in a busy, recreational area. Depending on the success of this test, the systems could later go on to be implemented in other heavily trafficked areas. The team believes that, if it is economically feasible and if the beta test is successful, the city should work to institute the blue light emergency systems throughout Springfield to make it a safer place to live and visit.

**Improved Lighting**

Focus groups participants and survey respondents agreed that the city rated poorly in terms of keeping the region well-lit. Not only did residents agree that many areas were lacking necessary lighting, but they also elaborated on the generally poor upkeep of the existing lighting systems. This makes the area look aesthetically displeasing, in addition to making these places more dangerous to traverse. By expanding the city’s lighting system, the amount of pedestrian traffic at night would increase and make it safer to be out on the street.

We recommend that the city increases its amount of lighting through the institution of LED lights and of structures that light both the streets and sidewalks. Because the citizens of both Ends of Springfield feel that it is unsafe to go out at night due to a lack of lighting, we suggest that this problem be treated with high importance and priority. Residents had many areas that they wished to see more lighting. In the North End, this included Main Street, Jefferson Street, and Morgan Street. In the South End, residents suggested Adams Street, Morris Street, Ashmun Street, Dale Street, Palmers Street, Richiline Street, Mills Street, Lumbard Street, and Arlington Court. In addition to streets, parks were also brought up as areas that need to be brighten as a way to increase safety for pedestrian traffic.
**Beautification**

Community members generally expressed a positive reaction to the idea of beautifying their city, but communicated concerns about general upkeep and vandalism. Surveys and focus group conversations revealed that many residents and business owners are dissatisfied with the appearance of their city. Most residents desired that more flowers and trees be planted as a simple way to brighten the landscape. Overall, the general message received from the focus groups was that the community must take ownership of their city and be willing to collaborate if any lasting changes are to be made.

We recommend that future beautification initiatives primarily utilize residents’ ideas to promote ownership of their efforts and that local organizations head up these efforts in order to ensure that there is both funding and upkeep.

**Community Space**

Residents expressed that a new community space is a much-needed resource, but that it must be affordable and placed in a more convenient location. In both Ends, survey and focus group participants expressed that there is some amount of space available to gather, but usually at a price. This puts a boundary between those who can afford to spend money on such luxuries and those who cannot.

We recommend that multiple smaller community spaces be spread throughout Springfield. These small community spaces should have the essential community programs available, as well as some recreational facilities with an outdoor space. These community centers should gain income by leasing space to a restaurant that can provide catering for events hosted at the location.
Community Resources

Community resources are lacking in means of advertisement and in addressing the basic needs of the city. Some residents that were able to attend our South End focus group cited the cultural divides of the population as a reason for the lack of community engagement. Participants additionally expressed that they felt resources were too far away. The general consensus was that resources should be consolidated into one building that is located much closer to the Main Street area. Citizens that attended the focus groups were very adamant on how the means of advertisement currently used are not convenient for most of the populace, and that many individuals are not able to view advertised material until it is too late, or even not at all. Other residents thought that the city should concentrate on the more basic needs of the city. By starting a dialogue with the community and paying attention to their needs, the city will begin to make the improvements that it needs.

Different methods of advertisement must be explored thoroughly. Using many different advertising methods, the optimal approaches can be determined and utilized. We recommend continuing the efforts towards social media, as well as developing a new weekly newsletter/flyer delivered directly to the mailboxes of local residents. This newsletter should have a consolidation of all available resources and events, as well as some sponsored ads to help offset the cost.

Mentoring Program

Mentoring is an important way to develop the youth of the city and get involvement from all levels of residents. From the focus groups, we found that there is a strong need for mentors for the younger generation. By involving those who have been in similar positions but overcame
their struggles, children in these positions can see that they have the chance to better themselves and keep their lives on track.

There are existing mentoring programs in Springfield such as Mass Mentoring and Therapeutic Mentoring Programs. However, due to the long waitlists for the majority of these, we recommend the institution of more programs. Specifically, we suggest reaching out to local athletes and entrepreneurs from the area that have lived through similar experiences and still succeeded. We also suggest a program such as Project Coach, which gives high school and college students the opportunity to be mentors and leaders. Lastly, we strongly suggest that these programs be free.

Youth Community Cleanup

Community cleanup is a type of program that is commonly used in the schooling systems of countries, such as India, as a way for the youth to get involved in their community and learn about the impact of their actions. Students are assigned a certain area in the community that they are required to keep clean as part of their grade.

Youth community cleanup has the potential to be a dangerous and misperceived project. From the focus groups, it became evident that this program would not work. As a city with a school system “which is already failing,” several of the participants noted that younger children should be focusing on their academics and not a cleaning program. We do not recommend carrying out the elementary school cleanup program because of the danger associated with it.

Adopt-A-Plant

This program was first proposed at a New North Citizens’ Council meeting that we attended. Sayan Sengupta, a graduate student on our team, shared his experience of this type of
program from his home country of India. Local businesses donated plants and flowers to the community, giving residents the opportunity to ‘adopt’ and care for a plant.

We recommend using the Adopt-A-Plant program as the first test for evaluating the potential success of a community garden. A focus group participant gave us the idea of using this smaller program to feed into a larger initiative for the city, a community garden.

We believe that these recommendations, if chosen to be implemented by DevelopSpringfield, will have a profound effect on the community of Springfield. In addition, we hope that these solutions can be of help to any city that is in a similar position as Springfield and is looking to grow and develop its economy, in addition to improving the lives of its residents.
The survey was designed as a group effort by the entire WPI team and then was distributed by the STCC students. The North End Focus group was facilitated by Cameron DeWallace, moderated by Lindsey Andrews, and the minutes were taken by Katie Curran. The South End Focus Groups were facilitated by Nick Porter, moderated by Patrick Bemben, and the minutes were taken by Yahel Nachum. The audio was transcribed by Lindsey Andrews for the first North End focus group, Katie Curran for the second North End group, and Yahel Nachum for the South End focus group. The flyers for the focus groups were created by Cameron DeWallace. The RSVP forms were drafted by Yanling Lin and then edited and translated by Lindsey Andrews.
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1. Introduction

Located in western Massachusetts, the city of Springfield has long fell behind the rest of the state in terms of development and economic growth. Much of this is due to the educational background of the majority of its residents, where only 18.8% of those 25 or older have a bachelor’s degree or higher. As a result, the median household income of residents of Springfield is over $20,000 lower than that of the rest of the state ($34,734 vs $66,768) (“Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). Subsequently, many foundations have been formed in Springfield to combat these problems and the negative effects that they cause. At the forefront of this development is an organization called DevelopSpringfield. A nonprofit corporation, DevelopSpringfield serves “to advance development and redevelopment projects, to stimulate and support economic growth, and to expedite the revitalization process within the City of Springfield” (DevelopSpringfield, 2016).

DevelopSpringfield has partnered with Worcester Polytechnic Institute in order to act as the sponsor for both the 2016 C-term and D-term Pioneer Valley Interactive Qualifying Projects. This report by the D-term team has built upon the work done in the previous term with DevelopSpringfield. Together, the two groups will deliver a comprehensive set of solutions that can be instituted by DevelopSpringfield in the near future. The C-term team has provided a list of possible solutions based on the top problems that they found in the area and we will evaluate these solutions and determine the economic feasibility of each one.

The majority of the research in this report was based on the work done in the previous term and the personal observations of the current team through analysis and meetings. The C-term team conducted an anecdotal survey with residents, visitors, and employees of both the
North and South Ends of Springfield to evaluate the top problems in the area. The three highest rated problems in both Ends were substance abuse, crime, and low income level. The third and fourth highest rated problems varied by area, with the North listing the lack of job training and housing, and the South listing lack of parking and access to groceries. From this survey and face-to-face interviews with business owners, we were able to generate a set of solutions for the D-term team to further evaluate. These solutions included increased street lighting, improved beautification to inspire a sense of community pride, a blue light emergency system, a community center, better-developed community outreach through pamphlets and social media, and a Springfield Pride Campaign. In the South End only, the team also proposed constructing a lighted path from the Basketball Hall of Fame to the new MGM casino and building a parking garage to combat the expressed need for more parking.

The objective of this project was to refine the list of solutions generated by the C-term team, as well as suggest other solutions to additional problems that were found in Springfield. This analysis was done through hands-on work with residents of Springfield. Through the combination of conducting surveys, attending meetings, and holding focus groups, we were able to effectively ascertain the main challenges associated with Springfield, as well as gauge the reaction of residents and business owners to a refined list of solutions. The economic feasibility and potential benefits of the positively-received solutions were evaluated in order for DevelopSpringfield to make the final decision regarding the implementation of these solutions. The ultimate goal of this project was to improve the development of Springfield and make the city a better place to live, work, and visit.
2. Background

Springfield, MA

The city of Springfield, Massachusetts was founded in 1636 by William Pynchon and was the first Springfield to be settled in the New World. It is the third largest city in Massachusetts and fourth largest in New England. The city’s convenient location in central New England led to her early success as a major railroad center (“History and Culture,” 2013). The city grew and prospered, making it well known for its history and innovation. These accomplishments led to a mix of nicknames for the city: The City of Firsts, because of the numerous inventions that came to life in the city’s limits and The City of Homes, referring to the impressive architecture that the city boasts (Forbes, 2015). Springfield is divided into seventeen distinct neighborhoods; this project focuses on the North and South End neighborhoods.

North End

The North End of Springfield refers to three distinct neighborhoods in the community: Brightwood, Memorial Square and Liberty Heights. Over the past century, the North End has been the first home to various nationalities of immigrant, ranging from Greek to Russian. Now, over 80% of the population is of Hispanic descent and many of these residents speak Spanish as their primary language. Approximately seventy percent of this Hispanic population are of Puerto Rican nationality. Other ethnicities with a strong presence in the community include Dominican, Italian, and Russian (McDowell & Seidman, 2005).

The largest employers in the area are Baystate Health, General Dynamics Techsight, and Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance, respectively (“Labor and Workforce Development,”
Despite this, the majority of jobs held by residents are in fast food restaurants, manufacturing, and sales. A vast amount of residents receive some form of government assistance, which adds to the amount of childhood poverty and an increasing unemployment rate. The average household income is substantially lower than the national average, which directly contributes to the extensively high crime and substance abuse problems that are constantly experienced by the community.

The North End has always been considered one of Springfield's most dangerous neighborhoods. The construction of the “Hospital of the Future”, now known as the “MassMutual Wing” at Baystate Health in 2012, helped to change the perception of the North End and also brought more people into the city and the surrounding areas (Kinney, 2012).

South End

The South End is the smallest of the seventeen neighborhoods of Springfield, inhabited by a population of roughly five thousand residents. For many years the neighborhood has been home to a large Italian community. This heritage is still evident through the numerous Italian landmarks and statues as well as many old local businesses in the area. Residents can sample traditional Italian cuisine at popular restaurants such as Red Rose Pizzeria, Frigo’s, and La Fiorentina. However, in the past thirty to forty-five years, there has been a massive increase in the presence of Hispanic culture in the South End. Now, approximately 60% of the total residents are of Hispanic descent. This population shift can be attributed to the construction of Interstate 91 in 1965. The project was responsible for displacing over two-thirds of residents. In the long run, this drove many of the long standing Italian citizens of Springfield who were staying in the neighboring communities to move as well (“Editorial: Tapping potential of Springfield’s Riverfront, 2010).
Currently, only about nine to ten percent of the total population of the South End has acquired a bachelor’s degree or higher. With the absence of quality education, the area has an extremely low annual household income of just under $35,000, a salary far below the national average (“Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). This low household income standard combined with the lack of education has directly contributed to the growing problems and concerns regarding the high rate of poverty, substance abuse, and crime in the area. In 2011, the South End was severely impacted by a tornado, which caused a massive amount of cosmetic and structural damage. The loss of homes and jobs as a result of this tornado led to an increase in crime, substance abuse, and poverty in the area. The rate of murder and rape in the South End has increased so much so that the number of these crimes amount to more than twice the national average (“National Average Wage Index,” 2014).

A major project currently taking place in the South End is the construction of the MGM Casino, which is expected to be completed by Fall 2018. The construction budget is estimated to be about nine hundred million dollars and the casino is projected to bring in an annual income of approximately twenty-five million dollars for the city of Springfield. Many employment opportunities are expected to come from the building of the casino, including three thousand direct jobs and two thousand construction jobs, ninety percent of which will be offered to local residents of the community (“South End Revitalization Plan: Phase 2,” 2013).

**Community Issues**

Once a bustling industrial city, Springfield has started to fall behind the rest of the state over the past few decades, boasting a decline in industry, jobs, and population. In 1960, one-third of Springfield workers were employed by the manufacturing industry. In the decades following, the manufacturing industry in general declined significantly, along with many of the jobs moving
to more suburban locations. As a result, much of the Springfield population was left jobless, without the educational background or skills to be able to succeed in other job fields (Kodrzycki et al., 2009). Even today, only 17.9% of the total population has received a bachelor’s degree and, as a result, an overwhelming 30.03% of the population lives in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2015; “Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). In the past decade alone, the population of Springfield has declined by 3% (“The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008).

Crime

In relation to crime, Springfield is rated the twelfth most dangerous city nationwide (Barbieri, Domnarski, & Cutone, 2011). For every 100,000 people, there are 578.1 crimes committed each year. This is almost double the national average of 294.7. Even just in comparison to the towns nearby, Springfield’s crime rate is vastly higher (“Springfield, Massachusetts, 2016). Additionally, gang-related activity has gained huge traction in the city. This increase has been attributed to a reduction in the employed police force as a result of economic downturn. Additionally, budget concerns led the police department to have to deviate from their successful community policing model. Property holding stakeholders began to rely on police to respond to their calls reporting crimes, while lower income renters with few ties to the area were plagued with a fear of retribution for contacting the police. During the summer of 2009, gang violence became so intense and well-organized that many residents did not even feel safe enough to venture out onto the street. Meetings with local law enforcement established that the issue was the lack of an ability to have 24/7 coverage for each neighborhood. Additionally, general fear from residents promoted an atmosphere of apathy, with calls to police only taking
place when there was an active shooting and not to report activities like drug sales or gang action (Barbieri, Domnarski, & Cutone, 2011).

In October of 2009, Massachusetts State Trooper Michael Cutone worked with local law enforcement of Springfield to introduce the Avghani Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) model to the city. This model had played an essential role for the officer while he was stationed in Iraq, where he served as captain and team commander of Special Forces ODA 944. Cutone used this initiative as a means to rebuild the relationship between local Iraqi infantry and the police, “by teaching basic skills and progressing toward the practical application of those skills in rebuilding the local ability to defend the community and maintain order” (Barbieri, Domnarski, & Cutone, 2011). Due to its success in the Middle East, the COIN model was adapted to law enforcement for city operations. This adaption has allowed Cutone to gather over 60 stakeholder groups in the city of Springfield, where weekly meetings are held in order to ensure that the model stays on track for combatting crime (Barbieri, Domnarski, & Cutone, 2011).

The city has had considerable success with the COIN model when established alongside more community-oriented policing. Law enforcement has made considerable gains since then, with highlights including the development of the C3 Policing Initiative, the establishment of neighborhood walks to allow for relationships with residents, and the provision of counseling mentoring, education, and training for youth formerly involved with gangs (Barbieri, Domnarski, & Cutone, 2011).

Counter Criminal Continuum Policing, commonly referred to as C3 Policing, has been regarded as one of the major successes resulting from the establishment of the COIN model in
Springfield. This mission of this agency is “to detect, deter, degrade, and dismantle criminal gangs and drug dealers” (“C3 Policing,” 2013) Unlike community policing, which involves identifying a ‘hot spot’ of criminal activity and simply flooding officers into that area, C3 Policing focuses on undermining the ability of gangs to operate freely and openly. The goal of this system is to dismantle the gang system and eradicate their roots, and as a result, keep these roots from re-growing. This system relies on a working relationship between police and the community, in order to allow for information to flow freely between the two parties. From its institution in 2009, this policing method has provided positive results for residents, where most surveyed have reported a higher quality of life and an increased feeling of safety (“C3 Policing,” 2013).

**Low Income Levels and Lack of Jobs**

As the industrial base of the city crumbled during the second half of the twentieth century, poverty began to increase steadily. In 1970, 13% of residents lived in poverty (“The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008). As of 2013, that number has increased to 30.3% (“Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). Many residents in this area have trouble finding jobs due to the limitations that come from lacking a high school or college diploma. Case studies have cited that there “appears to be a mismatch between the kinds of jobs people are trained for through government programs and the higher-wage jobs that provide a route out of poverty” (“The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008). Unlike other metropolitan areas which have experienced a growth in the manufacturing, construction, and finance fields, Springfield has lost jobs in these areas and instead grown in the service industry. In general, the services sector does not provide high-wage jobs; as a result,
many workers are forced to take on multiple jobs to be able to provide for themselves and their families ("The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008).

This lack of well-paying jobs has contributed to the overall low income levels in Springfield. The median household income in the city is only $34,731, over $30,000 below the statewide average (United States Census Bureau, 2015). In 2000, unemployment rates were recorded as 6.0% for men and 5.0% for females. When broken down by ethnicity, one can see that these rates varied greatly. For non-Hispanic whites, only 5.0% of men and 4.0% of women were unemployed, compared to 15.0% of men and 13.0% of women of Hispanic descent ("diversitydata.org,” 2016). While job training programs are available for residents, often times, they do not line up with job opportunities in the area. James Morton of the Massachusetts Career Development Institute in Springfield summed this up through his observation that “frequently the demands of the job market change, yet it takes considerable time for training dollars to reach the field to provide the specific training needed to meet the demand” ("The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008).

These prospects continue to seem bleak for the increasing generation, as the quality of education of the Springfield schools are sub par to the rest of the state. For the 2013-2014 school year, 86.1% of students in Massachusetts successfully graduated; in Springfield, this number was only 61.6%. Additionally, the dropout rate in the city is nearly double that statewide (7.2% vs. 3.8%) ("Springfield Special Education Data,” 2014). In Massachusetts, state law mandates that all students enrolled in school take the standardized assessment known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. This provides a way for the state to evaluate the effectiveness of every public school against the general statewide results ("Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System,” 2014). Students are graded based on the Composite
Performance Index, where they can be assigned a score of 100, 75, 50, 25, or 0. The average of all students is taken in order to judge the performance of a school or district (“2011 Glossary of Accountability Reporting Terms,” 2011). In 2014, the cumulative score for all students in the district was 71.4 for English Language Arts and 61.8 for Mathematics. In comparison, the state reported scores of 86.7 and 80.3 in English and Math, respectively (“2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject,” 2014).

Substance Abuse

Springfield has had a problem with substance abuse for many years. According to the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, in 2014 alone, 4,515 people received treatment for substance abuse. Of these people, 50.2% were using heroin, 31.1% were abusing alcohol, 7% were using marijuana, 6.7% were using crack/cocaine, 3.7% were using another opioid, and 1.2% were using some other drug (e.g. PCP, methamphetamine, etc.). These numbers have been relatively steady since 2005 (“Description of Admissions to BSAS,” 2014). However, the statistics only include individuals who have sought treatment; thus, the actual number abusing substances is likely much higher than reported.

Housing

The poverty level in Springfield is very pronounced and visible through the state of its housing. The city is characterized by a large number of rundown houses, empty lots, and abandoned buildings. The median house/condo value as of 2013 was $143,400, nearly $200,000 below the state’s median (“Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). Less than 20% of residents own their home and roughly one-third of renters live in amenities subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Development (“The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America,” 2008).
The high level of poverty in Springfield has led the area to be associated with higher crime rates, lower quality public schools, and poorer quality infrastructure and buildings. As a result, wealthy and even middle-class families and individuals are more likely to migrate outside of Springfield and settle in areas with better services that are more comparable to their income level (Browne et al., 2011). This migration has caused a lack of mid-level housing in Springfield. Once people in lower-income situations begin to make a better living, they are essentially forced to move out of the city if they wish to find a home corresponding to their financial means. This is a problem for Springfield because it stunts the city’s economic growth. However, fixing this problem requires private property owners to take on either an expensive remodeling of current living spaces or totally rebuild new mid-level housing. In an area like Springfield, this is a project that is typically outside of the financials means of its residents.

Cultural Divisions
In comparison to the rest of the country, Springfield is considered to be a rather diverse city. However, the city was not always this way. In 1960, more than 90% of Springfield was Caucasian (Kodrzycki et al., 2009). As of 2013, the population was comprised of 34.4% Caucasian, 40.5% Hispanic, and 20.5% African American (“Springfield, Massachusetts,” 2016). The city contains very strong cultural lines; communities within the North and South Ends are largely defined by their ethnic orientation. Relationships between groups of different ethnicities are largely nonexistent within the city; residents have learned to associate only with those of the same background as themselves.

Community Resources
Many organizations exist within the community as a means to provide guidance to both residents and business owners. For the North End, the New North Citizens’ Council (NNCC) is
the main ally for residents. The mission of this organization is “to provide advocacy, public and human services to Hampden County residents with an emphasis on the Hispanic/Latino community for the purpose of enhancing the preservation and support of the family resulting in the improvement of quality of life” (New North Citizens’ Council [NNCC], n.d.) Neighborhood residents are able to vote for the governing Board of Directors, which is designed to reflect the demographics of the region. This organization, along with acting as a community and individual advocate, offers programs for residents such as Child Care Services, Parent Aid Programs, and Family Support Services (NNCC, n.d.)

One of the greatest allies for business owners in the South End of Springfield is the South End Business Association (SEBA). Comprised of over forty local businesses, the organization aims to encourage business growth and community engagement in order to provide citizens with places to eat, shop, and receive services locally. SEBA was established early in Springfield's history, at a time when South End residents were predominantly Italian. Classic businesses like Frigo’s, Red Rose, and Albano’s Market were among the first businesses to join (South End Business Association [SEBA], n.d.). While SEBA does a lot to promote business and maintain the South End’s heritage, it also causes some tension to occur among new business owners who cater to the growing Hispanic population. A growing problem in the South End is trying to find a way to integrate these two communities to allow both Italian and Hispanic businesses to thrive.

Review of Existing Research

The work of the C-term team for the Pioneer Valley project site comprises a majority of the background research for this project and is regarded as part one of this two-part project. The main purpose of this team’s project was to identify the top problems of the city and possible corresponding solutions for each one.
The deliverables for this team were collected through the creation of an anecdotal survey. The group surveyed respondents on the street and in front of businesses, attempting to gather results from a population that accurately reflected that of Springfield. The survey respondents were given a list of 14 choices of top problems in Springfield and from there provided a numbered rating of their personally identified top five problems from least to most severe. The top problems in both Ends were identified as substance abuse, crime, and low income level. The differences were established with the fourth and fifth highest rated answers, with the North End listing lack of jobs and job training and the South End listing parking and access to groceries (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

**Proposed Solutions**

**Blue Light Emergency Systems**

The C-Term identified blue light emergency systems and increased urban lighting as a means to prevent crime and substance abuse. Blue light emergency systems are most commonly seen on college campuses in the United States, with similar emergency and notification systems present in train stations, walking trails, and beaches as well. These systems are well-known for the blue LED light atop the towers, in addition to the emergency phone mounted on it. The model is designed so that anyone in an emergency can simply walk up to the pillar, press the emergency button, and immediately be connected to local authorities. The Blue Light Systems can also function as a notification system, where one can dial 311 for an informative public announcement recording. This sort of system is used in Malden, Massachusetts to warn beach-goers of dangerous weather conditions. On average, these nine foot tall towers cost about $2,000 and the phones about $500, with additional added maintenance costs. Depending on how many
systems are needed, this has the potential to add up to a considerable amount of money (Newsom, 2014).

However, there are some problems that can be attributed to the emergency systems. The effectiveness of the system is based on its ability to provide an immediate response. If the calls are not answered quickly, the system’s credibility is greatly diminished. Additionally, the necessity for calls to be answered promptly forces officers to be ready to respond at any moment. The police department may potentially need to increase the size of its force in order to deal with this. Lastly, there is a possibility that the systems will be subjected to prank call or vandalism.

In an interview with WPI Police Lieutenant Ellsworth, the success of the Blue Light System at WPI was discussed. Overall, the emergency system received calls that amounted to mostly small incidents or accidental misuse. However, Lt. Ellsworth said that the system “worked when it needed to work,” meaning that the system was useful in the case of a real emergency (M. Ellsworth, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Though the Blue Light system “may not stop the bad guy,” the flashing LED and speakerphone succeeds in drawing attention to the incident (M. Ellsworth, personal communication, March 21, 2016). He also validated the sentiment that the Blue Light systems create a sense of safety simply through its presence.

The C-term team proposed a beta testing of the blue light emergency systems. They suggested placing these systems in dangerous areas and recording its effects on crime in that location. If successful, the blue light systems could be installed throughout the city (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).
Improved Urban Lighting

Springfield has many dark streets due to a lack of street lighting and a poor upkeep of the existing system. Whether or not lighting affects crime is a highly debated topic. In Fitchburg, Massachusetts, a large number of streetlights were turned off in order to save money. Former Mayor, Lisa Wong, stated that crime went down in the six months after she turned sixty percent of Fitchburg’s street lights off. The police chief of Fitchburg also reported that the department received fewer calls reporting drug dealing activity compared to the previous year when the lights were on (Devlin, 2009).

A 2002 study done in London suggested that turning on street lights reduces crime. The study suggested two theories for why this happens. The first is that the increased lighting allows for more surveillance of offenders, and thus they are deterred from committing the crime. The second theory suggests that improving lighting increases community morale and causes residents to take more pride and control of their city. The study went on to evaluate a total of 16 studies done on the subject in both the United States and in Britain. The crime rates of the areas in question were measured before and after streetlights were turned on. Of the eight American studies, four showed that lighting was effective in reducing crime, while the other four showed that lighting was ineffective. These eight studies taken together showed only a 7% decrease in crime. However, the five more recent British studies showed that all five studies were effective and reduced crime by 30%. Additionally, two of the studies showed that the money saved from crime reduction surpassed the money needed to improve the lighting systems. An analysis of all thirteen studies combined showed a total reduction of crime of 20% (Farrington & Welsh, 2002).

Many cities are now choosing to replace current street lights with light emitting diode (LED) lights. A case study in Portland, Oregon estimates that this replacement will have a three
to ten year return-on-investment period depending on the cost and number of fixtures. Unlike the commonly used high pressure sodium (HPS) lights, LED lights have a broader and more uniform white light, which helps to reduce wasted light and energy. While the initial costs of LEDs are more expensive than their counterparts ($155 vs $110), these lights see a 75% decrease in maintenance costs on average and last two to three times longer than standard lights. In addition to these benefits, LEDs are also energy-efficient and will help cities to reduce its carbon footprint (“City of Portland Green Purchasing Case Study,” 2016).

The C-term evaluated areas that would benefit most from increased lighting. They observed that the Riverwalk Path was a very dangerous place to walk at night due to its lack of lighting and, thus, a good area to test the effects of better lighting. They also suggested placing more lights along Main Street to encourage foot traffic to local businesses after five o’clock. Many residents have stated that the businesses in the area close up when it starts to get dark and the city becomes a ghost-town. If businesses were to stay open longer, people would be encouraged to be out on the street more and crime could potentially decrease (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

Beautification

Beautification involves improving the visual aspects of a person, place, or thing. In relation to cities, beautification most often involves planting trees and flowers, repaving roads, and performing general city clean-up. These types of projects are most often taken on by the city council as a means of increasing tourism and commerce (Thompson, 2014).

Beautification of the city was recommended in order to create a more positive community environment and foster a sense of pride towards the neighborhood and city in general.
Specifically, we recommend creating community spaces for people to gather, revitalizing local parks, and adding park benches along certain streets. Another suggestion was to have community artists and children use their skills to paint murals on underpasses or blank sides of buildings as a way to give residents ownership of their community. By making these places look nicer, the perception of Springfield could be altered from an unsafe, rundown area to a beautiful and friendly place to live (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

For the South End only, we propose creating a ‘themed path’ that connects the Hall of Fame and the new MGM casino. They theorized that this would help bring more tourism to the two hallmark locations of the South End and increase attendance at local businesses alongside the path (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016). This idea was not pursued by our team, as we felt that it was outside the scope of what we would be able to complete in a seven-week term.

**Community Center**

The C-Term team did some preliminary research into the idea of a new community center. They suggested that the space could host businesses and offices, specifically those for the police so that they could build a stronger relationship with the community (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

Several community centers already exist in Springfield, such as the YMCA and the Boys & Girls Club. In the South End, plans to build a new community center are being undertaken, as the 2011 tornado destroyed the city’s previous center. However, residents must pay in order to participate, something that the majority of a poverty-stricken city like Springfield cannot afford.
Community Outreach

Workforce development is a crucial part of getting Springfield out of poverty and providing stable and well-paying jobs for its residents. As described in the “Low Income Levels and Lack of Jobs” section above, the majority of the city’s residents do not possess a degree higher than a high school diploma and, as a result, are stuck in low-paying, menial jobs. Job training in the area oftentimes does not lead to a successful job for most of those who attend. A Trade Initiative, that would start in middle or high school, just like a regular vocational program, could be what the younger generations needs to secure an interest in the trades and eventually be able to pursue a career in whatever the individual has taken interest in.

The C-term team evaluated this problem and recommended increasing community outreach. Through pamphlets and social media, people can be more well-informed of opportunities available to them in the community (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

Additional research by our team found that a major issue in community outreach is simply finding a way to reach the entire populace. The cultural divides of the city often keep those of differing ethnicities from interacting, and thus there is a large knowledge gap about events taking place. Additionally, many activities that are already present in the area require fees to participate and many residents do not have the money needed to get involved at their disposal.

Parking

Survey results indicated that lack of parking is currently a prevalent issue in the South End of Springfield. The C-term team suggested three possible multipurpose parking garage models that could be adopted to combat this problem. The first was an adaption that is currently in use at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where a rooftop field sits atop the parking structure. Not only does this provide additional parking, it also addresses the South End’s desire for more
recreational land. For the second structure idea, we drew inspiration from the ‘11 11’ parking garage in Miami, Florida. Described as “unique shopping, dining, residential and parking experience,” the garage features a collection of retailers and restaurants along its base (“11 11,” 2016). This provides a way for the city to increase its consumer base, while at the same time combatting one of its expressed problems. The final idea generated by the team was based off of Kansas City’s Public Library, where the sides of the garage are designed to look like a bookshelf. The title was chosen based off of input from the local community, allowing residents to take ownership of the structure and find a unifying way to represent their city (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

Although parking is currently a prevalent issue in the South End of Springfield, we recognized that the creation of the MGM Casino is expected to bring in a large parking garage that is open for residents to use. If additional parking is still a need for the community, then the team suggested adopting any of these three multifunctional parking structures (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016). Due to this possible resolution to the problem, our team did not consider this to be an area that we should focus our efforts on.

**Springfield Pride Campaign**

The final C-term team recommendation was to enact a ‘Springfield Pride Campaign’ as a way to increase community pride, promote the cultures of the city, and bring in tourism. They stated that this could additionally function as a way to bring together the conflicting cultures of Springfield and bridge some of the ethnicity gaps that are highly prevalent in the community. A specific suggestion that they made was to create a YouTube video with residents detailing what they love about their neighborhoods in order to foster a more positive image of the city (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).
This idea was not heavily researched by the D-term team. We felt it best that members closer to the community look more into this idea, as they would be able to better decide if this was a worthwhile way to increase community pride. We did not feel that we had enough of a personal connection to the community to pursue this idea.

**Additional Proposals by the D-term Team**

Through research and interaction with Springfield residents, we recognized the need for several smaller projects that could greatly help the city to flourish. These proposals include: a mentoring program, the Adopt-A-Plant project, and youth community clean-up.

**Mentoring Program**

Mentoring programs can be used for a variety of goals, including promoting youth development or preparing for education and employment. Most often, these programs provide the greatest number of benefits to ‘at-risk’ youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). In Springfield, 64% of children are forced to grow up in single parent homes (Zill, 2015). Oftentimes, this means that they are forced to grow up without an important role model in their lives. With the already high level of poverty and low school completion rate, Springfield is a prime location for a mentoring program.

Several programs already exist in the city. One is Project Coach, an organization that works to bridge the economic, educational and social divisions facing Springfield youth by empowering and employing inner-city teens to coach, teach, and mentor elementary school students in their neighborhood” (Project Coach, 2014). Smith College undergraduates tutor and give homework help to struggling students, in addition to providing after-school fitness and
health programs. There is also the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization, which provides a one-on-one relationship between mentor and mentee.

While these mentoring programs are in place, there is often a long wait to find a mentor. Other times, heavy fees are involved with the clubs, something that the under-privileged most in need of a mentor are not capable of affording.

**Youth Community Cleanup**

Community cleanup is a type of program that is commonly used in the schooling systems of countries, such as India, as a way for the youth to get involved in their community and learn about the impact of their actions. Students are assigned a certain area in the community that they are required to keep clean as part of their grade. Most often, this is a part of their science curriculum, as it provides a novel method for students to learn about the environment.

As a low-income and under-beautified city, Springfield is the type of area that could benefit from this type of program. Additionally, students will learn to take ownership of their actions and pride in their city.

**Adopt-A-Plant Program**

This program was first proposed at a New North Citizens’ Council meeting that we attended. Sayan Sengupta, a graduate student on our team, shared his experience of this type of program from his home country of India. Local businesses donated plants and flowers to the community, giving residents the opportunity to ‘adopt’ and care for a plant. The adopt a plant program was proposed to give residents the opportunity to take care of their own plant. The people present at the meeting had a positive reaction to the idea, saying that it would not only
beautify the city, but also give residents a stake in the wellness and cleanliness of their community.

**Our Sponsor**

DevelopSpringfield is a non-profit organization which was founded in 2008. It is dedicated to making the City of Springfield a more stable and economically sound city. DevelopSpringfield does this by taking on many projects that directly contribute to rebuilding and redevelopment within the city of Springfield. A few of the projects currently underway include the Mason Square Supermarket Project and the Springfield Innovation Center (DevelopSpringfield, 2016). Jay Minkarah, the CEO of DevelopSpringfield, acted as the team’s contact and direct connection to the company throughout this project. DevelopSpringfield has asked WPI students to, first, identify areas in which the city of Springfield needs the most improvement and, second, generate viable solutions for those areas of need. They expect to be presented with a white paper of several solutions that can be further pursued and implemented in the future.
3. Methodology

The overall goal of this project was to identify the top problems facing the residents of Springfield and provide our sponsor, DevelopSpringfield, with a comprehensive set of solutions to combat each. We used a hands-on approach in order to involve the residents of Springfield and ensure that our analysis of the problems and solutions were an accurate portrayal of their everyday struggles. In order to accomplish this, we adhered to the following list of objectives:

1. Critically analyze the interviews and surveys of the C-term students in order to ensure that we had a full understanding of our purpose for this project.
2. Attend community meetings and introduce ourselves to the community.
3. Perform in-person surveys with residents to get honest feedback on different areas of interest for Springfield.
4. Conduct focus groups with residents and business owners to get feedback on in-depth solutions to problems that they had identified.
5. This chapter further explains the steps taken to achieve these four objectives.
6. Critical Analysis of Previous Work

Since this project was largely based off of the work done by the team in the previous term, we spent a majority of the first week introducing ourselves to their work and the project in general. We did this through a critical analysis of their submitted IQP paper, as well as our own background research on the city of Springfield.
The main findings of the C-term paper were culminated through an anecdotal survey that they conducted on the streets of Springfield with residents, employees, business owners, and visitors. From a list of 14 choices of top problems in Springfield, survey respondents provided a rating of their personally identified top five problems. Both Ends identified the top problems as substance abuse, crime, and low income level. The differences came only with the fourth and fifth highest rated answers, with the North End listing lack of jobs and job training and the South End listing parking and access to groceries (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016).

Through our analysis of this work, we discovered that the survey’s respondents may not have provided a full representation of the Springfield population. The team recorded surveys from only 36 members from the North End and 45 from the South (Feeley, Gad, Nowick, Rao, & Rivas, 2016). Even with the combined total of 81 respondents, the survey results still do not meet the guidelines for effectively representing a population. For a population size of 100,000, the C-term team would have had to gather at least 96 respondents in order to garner a margin of error of 10% and 270 to achieve a confidence level of 90%. The 2016 census lists the population of Springfield as 153,060. Thus, we are unable to conclude that the results of the C-term were accurate. Additionally, our analysis of their survey data showed that 17.6% of respondents in the North and 25% of those in the South were non-Springfield residents visiting. Because of the already small number of respondents, this large portion of visitors may have skewed the results from what we were looking. While how visitors view the city of Springfield is a facet of improving the city, for this project, we are more interested in how we can help its residents. For these reasons, we were a bit hesitant about fully relying on the results that we were given. As a result, we researched more about the city of Springfield and also relied on our first hand results from meetings and surveys to gather our own list of problems that we thought more effectively
represented the city. Although we were unsure of the accuracy of the results that we were given, we still went on to analyze the proposed solutions from the C-term team based on their practicality, financial feasibility, and the expected benefit to the community.

Meeting the Community

Trust between communities and researchers is a necessary facet of a successful project. Many times, residents are suspicious of unfamiliar individuals who come into their community for fear of being analyzed or exploited. Other times, they will only offer a more lackluster version of their reality for fear of a negative perception of their lives or the worry of offending researchers or other community members. As outsiders to the city of Springfield, we felt it necessary to familiarize ourselves with the city, its members, and its challenges. On top of our background research into Springfield, we also attended several different community meetings to gather insight into the work already being done and the community reaction to this work. We felt that this was an important step to establish ourselves within the community and acquaint ourselves with the best way to interact with residents.

Our entire group attended the New North Citizens Council monthly meeting for the urban planning grant on March 24, 2016. At this meeting, participants described their goals for the planning process and established a list of important stakeholders and available funds. Participants got a chance to interact in a hands-on activity, where they discussed the areas of interest of safety, community engagement, beautification, health, economic development, and workforce education and how all of these areas were intertwined. This was helpful in establishing background information for us, as many of these areas are also focuses of our project. In addition to information gathering, this meeting also served as a way for us to
introduce ourselves to important members of the community and opened up the possibility for us to reach out to them in the future.

On March 31, 2016 we attended a Spanish dream session with NNCC Executive Director Maria Ligus, Assistant Superintendent Lydia Martinez, and Springfield Bilingual Organizer Luz Lopez. This gathering served as an open discussion for participants, where they were able to share their feelings about the struggles that come from looking for jobs. Not only did we gain valuable information from residents of the North End, but we were also able to get a general idea of how we should format our focus groups. From this session, we were able to identify several important aspects of having a successful focus group, including providing refreshments, making flyers for the community to establish a greater turnout, and providing a list of ground rules for participants to follow. Overall, the dream session contributed to the success of our focus groups.

The final meeting, hosted by City Councilor Adam Gomez on April 6th, outlined the upcoming construction taking place on Main Street. In attendance were local business owners from the North End, as well as Jose Claudio, a member of the New North Citizens Council. The meeting went over the upcoming $6 million renovation, which is expected to have a large impact on residents and business owners in the area. The new face for Ward 1 of Springfield is being designed to help prepare the community for the influx of MGM Casino visitors upon completion of the project. This meeting provided us with multiple contacts for our focus groups, two-thirds of which attended.

Surveying Community Members

The primary goal of our follow-up survey was to ask more neutral questions, as opposed to the negatively focused survey by the C-Term team. Additionally, we wanted to perform a
survey that was a more representative sample of the Springfield population. The survey consisted of two parts: a collection of demographic questions and a rating of certain aspects of Springfield. This first set of questions would later allow us to divide the responses based on region, ethnicity, age, and affiliation in Springfield, which would enable us to investigate trends between these groups. Participants were asked the region of Springfield that they most identify with (North End, South End, or neither), followed by if they were a resident, business owner, visitor, or employee of Springfield. The next two questions about ethnicity and age were optional, as we did not want to make any participants feel uncomfortable.

![Figure 1: Demographic Questions on Survey](image-url)
The second portion of the survey asked the respondent to rate the following criterion:

- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Access to community space
- Job search resources
- Night-time lighting
- Available parking
- Access to job training
- Quality of public schools
- Substance abuse programs

The ratings available for the user were poor, fair, average, very good, excellent, and not applicable. If the user rated any aspect as either poor or excellent, a follow-up question would ask them to elaborate on their response as an open-response fill-in. We used this as a way for us to learn what the city was doing either very well or poorly.
Surveys were conducted both on the streets of Springfield and on the campus of Springfield Technical Community College. We divided ourselves into groups of two or three, so as to not overwhelm potential participants with our large group and also to get as many survey answers as possible. We engaged possible participants by first introducing ourselves and then asking if they had a few minutes to take a survey that could potentially serve to better their city. If they were willing to take the survey, we then provided a more in-depth explanation of our project. After surveying for hours and only getting a few responses, we realized that if we wanted to accomplish our goal of getting a more representative sample of the population, we would need to enlist the help of the students from Springfield Technical Community College.
Our reasoning for this was that, as residents and students in Springfield, they would know popular places to go and how to relate more to possible participants.

**Conducting Focus Groups**

Focus groups are an important aspect of effective research, relying heavily on successful group interaction. A popular data collection tool, focus groups essentially work as a conversation tool, encouraging members to interact with one another and cultivate an open atmosphere for discussion (Kitzenger, 1994). Conducting focus groups allowed for us to have an organized venue to test out our ideas, while at the same time providing an air of casual conversation that kept ideas flowing freely.

Our focus groups were a major information-gathering source for us. In these hour long sessions, we asked a series of ten questions specifically relating to the challenges we identified and their corresponding solutions. The focus groups were conducted separately in the North and South Ends, due to tensions between the two areas and the presence of different problems in each region. In the South End, we held a focus group with three participants, all of whom were residents or employees of Springfield. In the North End, we had eleven participants attend our first focus group and one attend our second. These groups contained a mix of residents and business owners.

Our group was divided in half for these focus groups, with three members running the North End focus groups and three running the South. Each group member took on a different role in the meetings - either moderator, facilitator, or note taker. The moderator was in charge of introducing each concept and solution, in addition to keeping the conversation flowing. The facilitator's main job was to make sure each guest was comfortable and had the chance to speak
up. He or she additionally verified that the moderator stayed on track and did not skip any important questions. Meeting notes were recorded by the note taker.

We created a PowerPoint presentation to provide a visual aid during the focus groups. The PowerPoint contained a brief introduction of our team and the overall purpose of our project with DevelopSpringfield. It contained slides relating to each of our proposals, including the blue light emergency system, community lighting, beautification, community space, resources, elementary school clean-up, the adopt-a-plant project, and a mentoring program. Each slide also contained a picture to provide a visual representation of our overall goal for each solution.

To ensure that we gathered all information discussed in the focus groups, we used an audio recorder to document the conversations and then later transcribed them. These transcriptions can be found in the appendix of our paper.
4. Findings

Survey Results

The results from our surveys further confirmed our ideas of what the main focuses of our project should be. We obtained a total of 109 survey responses. Out of these responses, 65% identified with the North End, 23% with the South End, and 12% with neither. Participants were able to identify with more than one choice for the next question, which asked if he or she was a resident (78%), business owner (4%), visitor (16%), or employee (9%) in Springfield. The majority of our participants identified themselves as either white, hispanic, or African American, as shown in the figure below.

![Participant Ethnicities](image)

*Figure 3: Graphic representation of survey respondents’ ethnicities.*

While we did not have a large variation in the ethnicities of those who participated in our survey, this was not too concerning to us, as these three ethnicities also make up the majority of the diversity in Springfield. The age range of participants was the next factor that we asked
about. We succeeded in getting a considerable assortment of ages, which are once again pretty similar to the age makeup of the city.

![Participant Ages](image)

*Figure 4: Graphic Representation of survey respondents’ age ranges.*

We believe that we received a fairly accurate representation of Springfield as a whole. By recording each person’s age and ethnicity, we were able to avoid the pitfalls of the C-term team’s survey. While these two questions do not have a pronounced effect on how we are analyzing our data, they do allow us to ensure that our results are representative of the general population, in addition to making sure that we did not miss the opinions of any significant portion of the community.

To analyze our data, we combined the information of all respondents, both North and South End. Based on our initial analyses, we did not observe any significant differences between the responses of the two neighborhoods. Research into the information provided by the previous team showed that both communities are dealing with many of the same issues, and thus will need the same solutions. Additionally, statistical results are strengthened by the number of responses that are received. Therefore, we believe that combining our results will give us stronger support
for the solutions that we provide. By combining the 71 responses from the North End and the 25 from the South End (along with the 13 who identified as neither), we were able to have a combined total of 109 respondents.

The “Surveying the Community” section of our Methodology goes into detail about the questions that we asked and the way that we went about brainstorming these questions. The figure below shows a summary of the responses to our survey.

![Figure 5: Representation of our data in the form of mathematical averages.](image)

In order to mathematically sum up our answers as shown above, we attributed a number to each possible rating: 1-poor, 2-fair, 3-average, 4-very good, and 5-excellent.

These results are remarkably consistent with our background research, and that of the C-term team. Safety and how well-lit at night the city is has been one of our top concerns, and is why looked into the blue light emergency system and increasing the city’s lighting. The low ratings for both of these areas corroborate that these are concerns of the city. The cleanliness of the city, which has the second lowest rating, relates to our proposals for beautification, the
Adopt-A-Plant Program, and the youth-oriented cleanup. Our research into community spaces and resources corresponds to the “access to community space” and “job search resources” aspects. Substance abuse programs seem to rate fairly well with the city, obtaining the highest rating out of all of the areas that were questioned, which was a bit surprising to us. However, we still hope that this area will improve more as others areas of the city, like cleanliness and job search resources, improve. While available parking does seem to be a problem in the city, it is not something that we addressed in this project. As we described in the Background chapter, the MGM Casino, upon its completion, will house a parking structure that is open to residents. This should hopefully ease the parking concerns of the city. Job training and the quality of public school are the two areas of this survey that we did not do extensive research into. We hope that these areas will improve as the result of other factors of the city improving, like the addition of mentoring programs and job search resources.

While the survey did not give us any surprising results, it did help to corroborate that our research into the city and our proposals are on track for dealing with the actual problems of the city. Additionally, these results helped to give us a definite rating of how bad these issues are and how important dealing with them is in comparison to others.

**Solution Development**

By analyzing information gathered through community meetings, survey results, and focus groups, we developed the following findings concerning the improvement of the Springfield community and the factors that may affect their success:
Blue Light System

Community members agreed that the blue light emergency systems could be an effective method for quick police response, but that there is a plethora of challenges that could come as a result.

Focus group participants expressed that the quick response of police would be an appealing facet of these systems. Additionally, they responded well to the possibility of the systems also having a 311 button that could report and transmit non-emergency issues.

The residents also offered insight to the possible problems that could be encountered when implementing a system like this. The most commonly expressed concern was the potential for prank calls as a means to waste valuable police time. An additional follow-up concern was the chance of vandalism to the machines. One participant suggested adding some sort of feature to hold pranksters accountable, such as a video feed or flash photography. Several of the contributors brought up that simply the institution of these systems would convey a negative view of the city. One stated, “What message are we giving people that live there or even passing by throughout the community… that this is such a high crime area that we needed to do this.”

Even without knowing anything about Springfield, visitors could easily form judgements of the danger level of the city just through seeing the blue lights. A smaller consideration that a participant divulged was the chance of an aesthetic objection, which could be fixed by, as he suggested, integrating them into the light posts on the road so that they are more discrete.

Participants divulged that they would be willing to see the blue light systems in highly trafficked, and therefore more dangerous, areas. The locations which were suggested included
Main Street in the North End and along the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway in the South End “because it’s a confluence of foot traffic, bike traffic, and… crime.”

Lighting

**Improved lighting was unanimously agreed upon as a much needed area of improvement for the city.**

Focus groups participants and survey respondents agreed that the city rated poorly in terms of keeping the region well-lit. Not only did residents agree that many areas were lacking necessary lighting, but they also elaborated on the generally poor upkeep of the existing lighting systems. One participant explained how, despite numerous call to the city, several of the largest lights in the city had been burnt out for several weeks and nobody made any effort to fix them. This makes the area look aesthetically displeasing, in addition to making these places more dangerous to traverse. One participant said that “women … [are] scared to walk at night because there’s no lights down there.” By expanding the city’s lighting system, the amount of pedestrian traffic at night would increase and make it safer to be out on the street.

In the North End, residents identified Main Street and Jefferson Street as areas that desperately need more lighting. In the South End, there were several areas mentioned, including Adams Street, Morris Street, and Ashmun Street.
Beautification

Community members generally expressed a positive reaction to the idea of beautifying their city, but communicated concerns about general upkeep and vandalism.

Surveys and focus group conversations revealed that many residents and business owners are dissatisfied with the appearance of their city. Most residents desired that more flowers and trees be planted as a simple way to brighten the landscape. Additionally, focus group participants commended the idea of ‘good graffiti,’ or artwork done in public spaces by and for the local community. This provides a piece of artwork that the community is proud of and feels represented by. One of our participants stated, “We want it to represent who we are and represent Springfield.” Issues arose when participants began to question who would maintain these improvements. A member of the South End group recounted a situation where a local organization planted a group of trees in the area and, within a month, all were either dead or torn up. Another participant followed up by saying that “people with good intentions go in there to provide for the community without really working with the community. They do some clean-up and they walk away, wondering why trees die, why the park is now littered again.” Overall, the general message received from the focus groups was that the community must take ownership of their city and be willing to collaborate if any lasting changes are to be made.

Community Space

Residents expressed that a new community space is a much-needed resource, but that it must be affordable and placed in a more convenient location.

In both Ends, survey and focus group participants expressed that there is some amount of space available to gather, but usually at a price. This puts a boundary between those who can afford to spend money on such luxuries and those who cannot. In the South End, when the topic
of the current community center came up, one participant stated, “There are barriers of affordability that exist. They haven't been as open to the average resident as people expected them to be.” This thought was shared by the other participants in the room, that the community center is there and is being rebuilt, but the community does not feel it does the job. Another participant expanded on this idea by stating, “We’re all crossing our fingers that the new place will be different.” The South End was not as concerned with what the community center provided, but to whom, and at what cost.

The focus group participants did not elaborate much on the actual programs currently available. One participant did express his concerns for what is available to the children, citing that often children’s parents do not have the resources to be able to send them to locations that provide activities such as a boys’ club. Even with a low cost of entry, most children would probably be unable to actively utilize these resources as due to their costs of access. Most often, this limits participation from children from low income families, and these are often the ones that need the most help in terms of places to go after school and keep busy.

Bringing all of this feedback from the South End together, a clear picture of the communities concerns has been seen. The key things wanted in a community center are: low cost or free programs, public access to things like bathrooms, and more activities for children.

The focus group from the North End community concentrated much more on what resources they would like available, as well as problems with transportation. While the North End does have a conveniently located YMCA, the price of admission is quite high, and thus is typically not used by low income families. There exists the desire for a new community space that is located within walking distance of the downtown residents.
Community Resources

Community resources are lacking in means of advertisement and in addressing the basic needs of the city.

Some residents that were able to attend our South End focus group cited the cultural divides of the population as a reason for the lack of community engagement. Their thoughts focused on the opinion that specific racial groups do not wish to work together because of social, economic, and demographic differences. This makes it extremely difficult to plan events and for individuals to be dynamic with each other in a group setting.

Participants additionally expressed that they felt resources were too far away. One participant shared their opinion by saying, “Nobody has transportation. People don’t want to travel too long for it, you know… So there’s a lot of resources but there’s nothing here. Nothing around the neighborhood.” The general consensus was that resources should be consolidated into one building that is located much closer to the Main Street area.

Citizens that attended the focus groups were very adamant on how the means of advertisement currently used are not convenient for most of the populace, and that many individuals are not able to view advertised material until it is too late, or even not at all. Other residents thought that the city should concentrate on the more basic needs of the city. One of the attendees at the North End Focus Group, explained that, “it has to start with basic needs, like child care and walk in clinics, counseling, gun buyback programs, needle exchanges, condom programs. Really elemental, front line, facing the problem.” He elaborated, saying that people have “a natural hierarchy of needs,” that those desperately struggling to feed their family will not have interest in attending city council meetings or participating in park clean-up. By starting a
dialogue with the community and paying attention to their needs, the city will begin to make the improvements that it needs.

Mentoring Program

Mentoring is an important way to develop the youth of the city and get involvement from all levels of residents.

From the focus groups, we found that there is a strong need for mentors for the younger generation. One participant noted that there is a seven year wait for male mentors. Another commented that “when you look at the makeup of the families in the community, there are a lot of single headed households. There are a lot of single moms raising one, two, [or even] multiple children and what happens is that the absence of the male role models in the community has an impact on how especially younger males develop.” Many children in Springfield are forced to grow up without an important role model in their lives, and this makes them more likely to have behavioral issues and fall behind in their schooling. One participant suggested instituting Project Coach, a program that gives college undergraduates the opportunity to mentor high school students, who in turn mentor their elementary level peers. This provides student with the chance to both receive guidance and also return the favor by mentoring younger students. Another participant from the North End agreed with the need for better guidance throughout the city. He stated, “If I were to design a mentoring program, I would start with athletes. Start with successful athletes who have gotten out of the hood and are interested in helping kids do the same. The next level would probably be people that are entrepreneurs.” By involving those who have been in similar positions but overcame their struggles, children in these positions can see that they have the chance to better themselves and keep their lives on track.
Youth Community Cleanup

Youth community cleanup has the potential to be a dangerous and misperceived project.

From the focus groups, it became evident that this program would not work. As a city with a school system “which is already failing,” several of the participants noted that younger children should be focusing on their academics and not a cleaning program. Many believed that it would be seen as more of a punishment, that the children are being forced to perform this task simply because of the state of the community that they live in, which is not something that they can control. Other points drawn from the focus groups concentrated on the types of trash that the students would encounter while cleaning up, such as needles, drugs, and dangerous weapons. Not only are these dangerous materials for children to be interacting with, but they also serve the possibility of influencing the children to use them.

One recommendation from the focus group was to try and incorporate the cleanup idea into a more community-oriented activity. Adults could be required to perform the more dangerous part of the project of cleaning up the garbage in the city. Then, students could have the opportunity to do safer activities like planting a garden or helping to paint. This way, students could still help to beautify their community, but are not put in any danger by doing so.

 Adopt-A-Plant

The Adopt-A-Plant Project has the potential to turn itself into a major beautification effort for the city.

Focus group members were hesitant of the potential success of this program. The South End group mentioned previous attempts of organizations planting trees. Residents did not take
responsibility for caring for the trees and, as result, the garden was dead within a month. Another member in the focus group expressed that a lot of her neighbors would not be able to take care of the plants very well, stating “I know a lot of my neighbors, [and] their plants would be dead.” The group concluded that instead of giving families’ individual plants to care for, community gardens could be created and each family could have a designated plot.

A particular focus group participant took a different approach with this project. He told us, “I think that’s the kind of program that could be a feeder into a bigger issue. Like, hey, look at the success we had with free plants. We want a grant to build a community garden and the reason we think it will work is because 85 families in this 4 block radius all took a free plant.” In this way, a tiny plant adoption process could easily turn into a large way to beautify and improve the community.

Additionally, this focus group participant mentioned the potential success of giving out fruit and vegetable plants in place of flowers. In a city where roughly 30% live in poverty, residents would welcome the chance for a free food resource.

Analysis of Information Gathering Techniques

This project was largely a learning experience for our group. As a result, many of our processes revolved around a system of trial-and-error. We have taken this chance to look back and critically analyze our information gathering techniques of surveying and conducting focus groups to address our learning process throughout the project.

Surveying

On reviewing feedback about the survey that was conducted by the C-Term Pioneer Valley IQP team, it was discovered that there were various objections from the community, in
particular the attendees of the New North Citizens’ Council meeting. One of these objections was that the survey asked “What are the top five challenges in the North [or South] End?” Many attendees at the meeting felt that this question focused only on the negatives of the community. Because the community reacted poorly to a negatively toned survey, the second survey was developed to have a neutral tone. This neutral survey asked “Could you rate the North End [or South End] on these following qualities?” so that we could gather both the positives and negatives of the community. The second objection to the previous survey was the diversity of the people who participated in the survey, as the team did not keep records of the ethnicity of all respondents. It cannot be proven that the first survey was not given to a diverse enough group of participants; however, it also cannot be verified. The second survey contains a much more robust demographics section so as to mitigate future discrepancies of this sort.

There is a lot to be learned about the surveying process from our experiences. The first lesson was that the survey developed to validate the C-Term results took too long for respondents to fill out, and so we lost the chance to get the answers of those who did not have five to ten minutes to spare. A survey with fewer fine-tuned questions is more likely to receive adequate responses because it can more efficiently hold the participant's attention. It was also found that surveying is most successful on warmer days, as people are more willing to stop and talk when the weather is nice. Finally, we believe that we would have had more survey participation if we had offered an incentive, such as a raffle or free refreshments. Participants’ time is valuable; therefore, it is best to have some compensation for taking some.

Focus Groups

There are many things to be learned from the experience of organizing focus groups in Springfield. The most important aspect of planning is spreading awareness of the event very
early, preferably more than a week before the event is scheduled to occur. Email is not the best way to invite community members, as it is not personal and many are simply inclined to treat the invitation as spam and delete it. It is much better to go to community meetings and make one-on-one connections, or go on the streets and hand out flyers. Another crucial element is having a translator if there is going to be a large amount of people who do not speak English. It is important that the translator is a trusted collaborator with the team so they can be prepared to act as an effective and impartial moderator. Lastly, it is essential to use an audio recording device to be able to transcribe the conversations at a later date. Additionally, the device should be centrally located so that it can pick up all of the participants’ voices, not just those in front.
5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, we provide readers with a summary of our key findings and an analysis of the challenges and limitations of our methodology. Based on this evaluation, we make recommendations for further research and implementation by DevelopSpringfield. These suggestions are derived from our experiences through background research and our survey and focus group responses. Other options for improved methodology and recommendations may exist. We believe that these suggestions will help to facilitate a dialogue with the community and put Springfield on the track to improvement.

Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of this project was to provide our sponsor, DevelopSpringfield, with a comprehensive set of solutions designed to promote economic growth and improvement in Springfield. We devised our methodology through a combination of background research, analysis of previous project work, survey responses, and focus group conversations.

Our observations and analysis have determined the following areas as the main obstacles preventing improvement and growth in Springfield: community interest, cultural divisions, and the economic state of the city.

Community Interest and Divisions

We concluded that many of the problems in Springfield exist due to a lack of community involvement and cultural divisions. The largest obstacle to city improvement is getting residents to take interest in and ownership of existing and future projects. With this issue, even ideal and perfect improvement projects will be ineffective at instituting change. Additionally, cultural
divisions between differing ethnicities cause a lack of a community bond. Without a concrete base of solidarity and understanding within the neighborhood, a true and unified community is not possible. As a result, it will be much more difficult for the community to improve as a whole unless these issues are resolved.

The City’s Economy

Aside from a lack of community interest and cultural divisions, a lack of funding availability is a major factor that has contributed to the current state of the city. A large portion of the city is impoverished and, as a result, do not have the economic means to help to improve their city. Most are so focused on their basic needs and providing for their family that they do not have the time or energy to be able to focus on community improvement. Methods to improve education and job availability should be undertaken to help advance the city. As a result of this, needs beyond basics such as food and housing can be addressed.

Assessment of the Methodology

Challenges

Throughout the project, our team faced a few challenges that proved difficult to overcome. The first one that we faced was with our survey. As we described in the “Critical Analysis of Previous Work” section, a certain sample size is necessary for a survey to be deemed representative of a population. Based on our 109 respondents, our survey achieved a margin or error of 10%, which means that our results portrayed that of the population within 10%. We did not meet the criteria for guaranteeing that we provided an accurate sample of the population as a whole. Had we had longer than a term to complete this project, it would have been more likely that we could have collected a larger number of results that would be more fitting for the city. Our survey results were mainly collected through stopping people on the street or outside of
businesses. On average, our survey took about five minutes to complete, and many people simply did not have the time to stop and take the survey. However, allowing the STCC students to perform the survey as well allowed us to get a lot more results than expected, as they knew the city better and could more easily find people willing to take the survey. Additionally, the STCC students had an easier time surveying because the majority of them are bilingual. This was particularly helpful in the North End, where a large portion of the population is Hispanic and Latino.

In addition to the struggles with our survey, we also faced some trouble when trying to get attendees for our focus groups. We reached out to several important members of the community who gave us contacts to get in touch with. The majority of these contacts either did not respond or were unable to find participants willing to attend. The participants that did show up were a result of the few contacts that were able to make connections for us. In addition to these contacts, we also made flyers for the community that detailed the purpose of our focus group, as well as the time and location of all sessions. Despite these flyers being passed out to residents, none showed up as a result of them.

Limitations

We acknowledge that there are limitations to the effectiveness of our work. With only seven weeks to complete this project, we were unable to perform as in-depth of an analysis as we had hoped for a project of this scope. This was particularly evident with our number of survey respondents. Had we had the time, we would have obtained a greater sample population to provide a higher confidence level for the accuracy of our results. Additionally, conducting focus groups was a new experience for all of us, and thus also a learning process. We are hopeful that
our work is still a good source of information for our sponsor, DevelopSpringfield, and provides them with the necessary information to make the needed changes in Springfield.

**Recommendations for Future Initiatives**

Based on our findings, we have created recommendations addressing the areas of concern in the city. Although the root issues are far deeper than what simple project initiatives can resolve, we provide practical suggestions that can begin to improve the economic growth and development of Springfield.

**Blue Light System**

*We recommend that the city use a beta testing method to evaluate the potential success of the blue light emergency systems.*

From the information and community feedback received, we feel that the blue light emergency system is a technology worth pursuing. Due to the heavy financial investment needed to institute these systems, we recommend first conducting a beta test in a busy, recreational area. Depending on the success of this test, the systems could later go on to be implemented in other heavily trafficked areas.

While these systems have had considerable success on college campuses, they have not yet been tested in cities. The functionality of the system and how well it would work in a city like Springfield could be determined using the beta testing. Through a small localized test, the city would be able to identify any serious problems before application was carried out on a larger scale.

Further exploration into the implementation of this product in terms of cost and functionality is recommended. On average, the nine foot tall towers cost about $2,000 and the
phones about $500, with minimal maintenance costs (Newsom, 2014). Depending on how many systems the city decides to implement, this could add up to a considerable amount of money. Therefore, an analysis of the cost strain it may cause on the city should be done to determine if it outweighs the benefits that the system would provide. Since there is no existing research on city implementation, there is no way to exactly know how the costs and benefits will play out, which is why we recommend the beta testing model.

The feedback received from focus groups suggested that the blue light systems be placed in recreational, not residential, areas. One commonly suggested location was the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway in the South End. The path is a high-crime and largely secluded area, with dead ends on both sides and only two entry and exit points. This is the perfect place to perform the pilot test. The city will have to perform data analysis of crime rates before and after the institution of the systems, in addition to surveying the level of safety and satisfaction of visitors.

The team believes that, if it is economically feasible and if the beta test is successful, the city should work to institute the blue light emergency systems throughout Springfield to make it a safer place to live and visit.

**Lighting**

We recommend that the city increases its amount of lighting through the institution of LED lights and of structures that light both the streets and sidewalks.

Because the citizens of both Ends of Springfield feel that it is unsafe to go out at night due to a lack of lighting, we suggest that this problem be treated with high importance and priority. When choosing which light fixtures to install, we recommend replacing current street
lights and adding new fixtures that utilize light emitting diode (LED) lights. As described in the Background chapter, LEDs boast a three to ten year return-on-investment period, a broader and more uniform white light, and a lifetime that is two to three times longer than standard lights (“City of Portland Green Purchasing Case Study,” 2016). In addition to these benefits, LEDs are also energy-efficient and will help Springfield to reduce its carbon footprint.

An additional proposal that we suggest is the use of double-headed models, which have a light about halfway down the fixture that shines directly onto the sidewalk. Some of our focus group participants expressed that they would feel safer if sidewalk lighting was improved, and this will help to combat that problem.

Residents had many areas that they wished to see more lighting. In the North End, this included Main Street, Jefferson Street, and Morgan Street. In the South End, residents suggested Adams Street, Morris Street, Ashmun Street, Dale Street, Palmers Street, Richiline Street, Mills Street, Lumbard Street, and Arlington Court. In addition to streets, parks were also brought up as areas that need to be brighten as a way to increase safety for pedestrian traffic.

**Beautification**

*We recommend that future beautification initiatives primarily utilize residents’ ideas to promote ownership of their efforts and that local organizations head up these efforts in order to ensure that there is both funding and upkeep.*

Through focus group conversations, we found that the most agreed upon beautification efforts focused on planting flowers and trees. A past attempt by the city of adding planters along sidewalks ended in the theft and vandalism of all of the flowers. Therefore, we suggest that the city use hanging planters that can be attached to street lights so as to circumvent these issues. In
order to institute this project, the city will need to design a draft detailing the maintenance plan, mounting system structure, and liability insurance (San Francisco Planning, 2015). This type of project has already been undertaken in San Francisco, and the city can look to their website for more guidance (http://www.sfbetterstreets.org).

We found that, despite a positive reaction to the idea of increased beautification, this positivity did not necessarily carry over into prolonged efforts to carry out these initiatives. Through focus group participation, we observed that past planting projects by the city often failed within a few weeks due to a lack of ownership and poor upkeep.

To overcome this problem, we first recommend that the city holds a community meeting to discuss the changes that residents would most like to see. By doing this, they will be able to take control of the city and ensure that their opinions have a chance to make a difference. Secondly, we suggest that the city either forms a planning committee to recruit volunteers or works with existing organizations in order to safeguard the preservation of the projects. An organization that city council could look to for this is “Keep Springfield Beautiful,” a nonprofit organization whose mission is “to unite and engage all sectors of the community in the creation, execution, and promotion of intelligent, sustainable solutions to fight urban blight.” Projects of this organization include litter and graffiti prevention, recycling, and the beautification of Springfield (Keep Springfield Beautiful, 2015). Additionally, there is the organization ReGreen Springfield, which collaborates “with businesses, community organizations, educational partners and government agencies to promote the reforestation of Springfield, improve growing conditions for trees and engage new allies in tree care and monitoring, education and citizen science” (ReGreen Springfield, 2016). Since this is a volunteer-based institution, citizens who
have a passion for gardening and reforestation can easily get involved and beautify their city at the same time.

**Community Spaces**

We recommend the use of multiple smaller community spaces that provide the basic needs spread throughout the city.

The participants of the South End Focus Group expressed concerns about the existing community center, as well as the plans for when it is rebuilt. We recommend attempting to get involved with the association in charge of the existing community center, and working towards resolving the community’s concerns. If the existing association is not open to addressing these concerns, then the possibility of new community spaces could be explored.

The North End focus groups expressed the need for a new space located closer. The planned space for the New North Citizens Council would help this problem. We are aware of some debate on the location of the new community center, and whether high value real estate is appropriate for its construction. We would recommend using the high value area, as it would be better located in our opinion. As stated before, we find community centers located further away have much less impact.

In both the North and South we recommend the same plan for the community space. Instead of a single expensive community space that provides every service possible, we recommend multiple smaller community spaces in different locations. These spaces need to be centrally located, so that the community can feel their impact and have easy access to them without transportation. They need to be free for those in need and in-expensive to everyone else. The spaces would need open areas for medium to large events, as well as an outdoor space for
the summer. Other resources available should be catering to basic needs, such as daycare, health and fitness programs and education. In each location they should have a restaurant leasing a section in order to provide catering and income. Depending on the budget, other things like recreational facilities and casual gathering locations could also be added.

Using all of the feedback received, it is evident that large community centers do not satisfy most of the community. Especially when the community center charges a large fee for each service. By spreading out multiple smaller community spaces, the impact will have a much broader range instead of falling off in the surrounding areas. This can also help with social, economic, and demographic differences in the communities. Some may not wish to attend events at certain center because of these boundaries, but will hopefully still participate in their local community space.

Community Resources

We recommend consolidating available community resources into one weekly newsletter, testing multiple other advertisement methods, and providing incentives to attend the less popular resources.

With the broad range of community resources already available, we recommend improving the communication between these programs and the community. Many different advertisement programs must be explored in a controlled manner. Specifically, we recommend continuing the efforts through social media, but at the same time creating a weekly community events and resources newsletter. This newsletter would contain free ad space for community events and resources, as well as paid ad space for local businesses on another page. The use of paid ad space will help with the cost while promoting local business at the same time. The word
“Newsletter” is being used to describe it, but it should be formatted more like a collection of colorful flyers. This would catch the eye of more residents instead of being the same newspaper they always receive and probably ignore. These programs could either be managed by a community center, or a non-profit organization willing to take up the task.

Along with introducing new methods of advertisement, we recommend polling at key community resource locations. Questions asking how they heard about this specific resources and their basic demographics should be asked and recorded. This data will drive what mediums future advertisements are distributed on, and help improve knowledge of these programs. Collecting this information will also provide the possibility of ad targeting based on various demographics.

We also recommend adding some incentives to the less popular programs. Offering free raffle entries, or even giving gift cards sponsored by local businesses or large box-stores. This would spread word of these programs and improve the participation.

Mentoring Program

We recommend that more mentoring programs be put in place to provide guidance to the youth of Springfield.

There are existing mentoring programs in Springfield such as Mass Mentoring and Therapeutic Mentoring Programs. However, due to the long waitlists for the majority of these, we recommend the institution of more programs. Specifically, we suggest reaching out to local athletes and entrepreneurs from the area that have lived through similar experiences and still succeeded. We also suggest a program such as Project Coach, which gives high school and college students the opportunity to be mentors and leaders. Lastly, we strongly suggest that these
programs be free. Many of the youth in this area are forced to grow up with only one, or even sometimes neither, parent, and as a result have less guidance and less income in their lives. For these at-risk youth, the ones most in need of a positive role model, the added expense for a mentor is not a feasible option.

Youth Community Cleanup

We do not recommend carrying out the elementary school cleanup program because of the danger associated with it.

This program is not recommended as a viable program for Springfield. While it may work in other safer communities, the city is too dangerous of a place for kids to be out on the streets cleaning. There is too much of a potential for the children to be hurt or forced to interact with dangerous materials, such as knives, needles, and condoms.

Adopt-A-Plant

We recommend using the Adopt-A-Plant program as the first test for evaluating the potential success of a community garden.

A focus group participant gave us the idea of using this smaller program to feed into a larger initiative for the city, a community garden. We first recommend that the city reach out to local nurseries and gardening stores for flower and plant donations. Past attempts by the city at this type of program have shown that local stores are willing to provide these donations.

Depending on the success of the plant adoption program, we believe that this will show if residents are capable and interested in caring for a city-wide garden. City officials should keep track of the residents who take advantage of this program in order to evaluate this interest. Areas with high levels of participation should be given the highest priority for getting a garden. We
believe that this will make participants take ownership of the garden and, as a result, it will be a prolonged and beneficial effort by the city.

A community garden would allow those who want to participate to be given a specific plot within the garden to do as they wish. This will help build ties within the community and be a potential source of home grown food. A potential negative reason against this solution would be that during the winter there would be an unattractive, empty plot of land in the neighborhood. We believe the potential positives of a community garden would outweigh the negatives.
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Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey

Demographics

Which region of Springfield do you identify with?
- North End
- South End
- Neither

Do you identify as:
- Resident
- Business Owner
- Visitor
- Employee in Springfield

What is your Ethnicity?
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islanders
- White
- Do not wish to identify
- Other: 

Age:
- 18-24
- 25-32
- 33-40
- 41-48
- 49-56
- 57 or older

Springfield Qualities

Could you rate Springfield as a whole on these following qualities?

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<th>Safety</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Average</th>
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Could you elaborate on why you feel safety is 
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Could you elaborate on why you feel cleanliness is 
$\{q:\text{QID34/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers}/2\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel access to community space is 
$\{q:\text{QID34/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers}/3\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel job search resources are 
$\{q:\text{QID34/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers}/4\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel lighting at night is 
$\{q:\text{QID34/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers}/5\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel parking availability is 
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job training is 
$\{q:\text{QID34/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers}/7\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel the quality of public schools are 
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Could you elaborate on why you feel the substance abuse programs are 
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Could you elaborate on why you feel cleanliness is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel access to community space is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job search resources are
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Could you elaborate on why you feel lighting at night is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel parking availability is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job training is
$\{q://Q1D3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers/7\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel the quality of public schools are
$\{q://Q1D3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers/8\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel the substance abuse programs are
$\{q://Q1D3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers/9\}$?
**Community Qualities**

Please rate the {q://QID1/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} on these following qualities.

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Could you elaborate on why you feel cleanliness is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel access to community space is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job search resources are
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Could you elaborate on why you feel lighting at night is
$\{q(4:124)\text{ChoiceGroupSelectedAnswers5}\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel parking availability is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job training is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel the quality of public schools are
$\{q(4:124)\text{ChoiceGroupSelectedAnswers8}\}$?

Could you elaborate on why you feel the substance abuse programs are
$\{q(4:124)\text{ChoiceGroupSelectedAnswers9}\}$?
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Could you elaborate on why you feel access to community space is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel lighting at night is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel parking availability is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel job training is
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Could you elaborate on why you feel the quality of public schools are
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Could you elaborate on why you feel the substance abuse programs are
$\{q:QID24/ChoiceGroup/SelectedAnswers/9\}$?
Open Response

What can be done to improve your community?

What can be done to improve this community?
Appendix B: Focus Group

Presentations

North

Welcome!
¡Bienvenido!
...

71
Our Team | Nuestro Equipo

Lindsey Andreas
Mechanical Engineering
Junior

Yadal Nachum
Computer Science
Junior

Katie Curran
Actuarial Mathematics
Junior

Cameron DeWallace
Mechanical Engineering
Senior

Patrick Rembek
Mechanical Engineering
Junior

Nick Foster
Math & Mechanical Engineering
Junior

Our Sponsors | Nuestros Patrocinadores

WPI
DEVELOP
springfield
**Our Project | Nuestro Proyecto**

Working with DevelopSpringfield

Prior work of other students

Significant problems in Springfield

Implementing our solutions

---

**Focus Group**

Duration: 1 hour

All audio will be recorded

None of the names or audio will be published

**Process**

This is an information gathering meeting.

We will ask questions, and let everyone have a chance to respond.

Please respect all opinions.

Once all ideas are shared, we will move onto the next question.

---

**Grupo de enfoque**

Duración: 60 minutos

Se grabará todo el audio

Ninguno de los nombres o de audio se publicará

**Proceso**

Se trata de una reunión de la recopilación de información.

Vamos a hacer preguntas y a permitir que todas las personas respondan.

Por favor, respetar todas las opiniones.

Una vez que todas las ideas se comparten, vamos a pasar a la siguiente pregunta.
Blue Light Emergency System
Sistema de emergencia de color azul claro

Benefits? ¿Beneficios?
Concerns? ¿Preocupaciones?
Issues? ¿Cuestiones?
Locations? ¿Ubicaciones?

Community Lighting
Iluminación comunidad

Benefits? ¿Beneficios?
Types? ¿Tipos?
Challenges? ¿Retos?
Beautification
*Embellecimiento*

Benefits? ¿Beneficios?
Concerns? ¿Preocupaciones?
Locations? ¿Ubicaciones?

Community Space
*Espacio de la Comunidad*

Beneficial? ¿Beneficioso?
Location? ¿Ubicacione?
Type of space? ¿Tipo de espacio?
Community Resources
Recursos de la Comunidad

Awareness?
Types of media?

¿Conciencia?
¿Tipos de medios de comunicación?

Elementary School Clean-Up
Niños de Primaria Limpiar la Ciudad

Opinions? ¿Opiniones?
Beneficial? ¿Beneficioso?
Adopt-a-Plant
Adoptar una planta

Benefits?  ¿Beneficios?
Concerns?  ¿Preocupaciones?
Impactful?  ¿Impactante?

Mentoring Program
Programa de tutoría

Participation?  ¿Participación?
Helpful?  ¿Útil?
Suggestions?  ¿Sugerencias?
General Inquiry | Consulta general

What do you think could be a major improvement to the community?

¿Qué se parece que sería una mejora importante para la comunidad?

Thank you!
¡Gracias!
Welcome!

Our Team

Lindsay Andrews
Mechanical Engineering
Junior

Katie Curran
Acmareki Mathematics
Junior

Patrick Bamber
Mechanical Engineering
Junior

Yahal Nacham
Computer Science
Junior

Cameron DeWallace
Mechanical Engineering
Senior

Nick Porter
Math & Mechanical Engineering
Junior
Our Sponsors

WPI

DEVELOP

springfield

Our Project

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Prior work of other students

Significant problems in Springfield

Implementing our solutions
Focus Group

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Blue Light Emergency System

Benefits?
Concerns?
Locations?
Community Lighting

Benefits?
Types of lighting?
Challenges?

Beautification

Benefits?
Concerns?
Locations?
Community Space

Beneficial?
Location?
Type of space?

Community Resources

Awareness?
Types of media?
Elementary School Clean-Up

Opinions?
Beneficial?

Adopt-a-Plant

Benefits?
Concerns?
Impactful?
Mentoring Program

Participation?
Helpful?
Suggestions?

New Community Center

Thoughts?
General Inquiry

What do you think could be a major improvement to the community?

Thank you!
Flyers
North

DevelopSpringfield Sponsored
Community Focus Group Invite

Please join us for our community focus group Thursday April 14th at the New North Citizens Council Office. This focus group will brainstorm ideas and opinions about current problems in the local community, as well as proposed solutions. All residents and business owners in the North End community are welcome!

This is a great opportunity to have an impact in your community and have your opinions heard. We are creating a presentation that is sponsored by DevelopSpringfield, and we want your thoughts and ideas to help improve the community.

Please RSVP through link, email or phone if you intend to come.

Hope to see you there!

Date: 04/14/16
Times: 11:00 - 12:00
12:30 - 01:30

Refreshments and snacks will be provided

RSVP Link
http://goo.gl/forms/923W1yH606

Location
Gerena German School
Springfield, MA 01107
Main Street Entrance
NNCC Office
Near 3000 Main St.

Please contact us for detailed directions

Contact
Phone: 945 - 392 - 2482 (Nick)
Email: pioneerr@wpi.edu

WPI
Invitación a un Grupo de Enfoque Comunitario

Por favor, únete a nosotros para nuestro grupo de enfoque en la comunidad este Jueves, 14 de abril en la Oficina del Concilio de Ciudadanos del Nuevo Norte (NNCC). Este grupo de enfoque se concentrará en ideas y opiniones acerca de los problemas actuales de la comunidad local y también así como las soluciones propuestas. Todos los residentes y propietarios de negocios en la comunidad del North End son bienvenidos!

Esta es una gran oportunidad de tener un impacto en su comunidad y que sus opiniones sean escuchadas. Estamos creando una presentación que está patrocinado por DevelopSpringfield, y queremos que sus pensamientos e ideas para ayudar a mejorar la comunidad. Por favor confirmar su asistencia a través de correo electrónico o por teléfono si va a venir.

¡Esperamos verle!
DevelopSpringfield Sponsored
Community Focus Group Invite

Please join us for our community focus group Thursday April 14th at Sweeney Strategic Consulting. This focus group will brainstorm ideas and opinions about current problems in the local community, as well as proposed solutions. All residents and business owners in the South End community are welcome!

This is a great opportunity to have an impact in your community and have your opinions heard. We are creating a presentation that is sponsored by DevelopSpringfield, and we want your thoughts and ideas to help improve the community.

Please RSVP through email or phone if you intend to come.

Hope to see you there!
RSVP Forms

North
North End Focus Group Invite

* Required

Language *

- English
- Español

NEXT

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Google Forms
North End Focus Group Invite

* Required

North End Focus Group

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First Name *

Your answer

Last Name *

Your answer

Available Time for focus group *

- Thursday, April 14th, 11:00AM-12:00PM
- Thursday, April 14th, 12:30-1:30PM

Do you identify as *

- North End Resident
- North End Business Owner
- North End Resident and Business Owner
- Other:

BACK  NEXT
North End Focus Group Invite

Grupo de Enfoque

Por favor, únete a nosotros para nuestro grupo de enfoque en la comunidad este jueves, 14 de abril en la Oficina del Concilio de Ciudadanos del Nuevo Norte (NNCC). Este grupo de enfoque se concentrará en ideas y opiniones acerca de los problemas actuales de la comunidad local y también así como las soluciones propuestas. Todos los residentes y propietarios de negocios en la comunidad del North End son bienvenidos!

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¡Esperamos verle!

Nombre de Pila *

Apellido *

¿A qué hora disponibles? *

- Jueves, 14 de abril a 11:00 AM-12:00 PM
- Jueves, 14 de abril a 12:30 PM-1:30 PM

¿Cómo se identifica? *

- Un residente de Springfield
- Un dueño del negocio de Springfield
- Un residente y un dueño del negocio de Springfield
North End Focus Group Invite

Your response has been recorded.

Submit another response

This form was created using Google Forms. Create your own

Google Forms
South End Focus Group Invite

Please join us for our community focus group Thursday April 14th at Sweeney Strategic Consulting. This focus group will brainstorm ideas and opinions about current problems in the local community, as well as proposed solutions. All residents and business owners in the South End community are welcome!

This is a great opportunity to have an impact in your community and have your opinions heard. We are creating a presentation that is sponsored by DevelopSpringfield, and we want your thoughts and ideas to help improve the community.

Please RSVP through email or phone if you intend to come. Hope to see you there!

* Required

First Name *

Your answer

Last Name *

Your answer

Available Time for focus group *

- Thursday, April 14th, 11:00AM-12:00PM
- Thursday, April 14th, 12:30-1:30PM

Do you identify as

- South End Resident
- South End Business Owner
- South End Resident and Business Owner
Transcripts

North End Group 1

Introduction

L: Hi so my name is Lindsey, I’ll be asking the questions. This is Cameron, he will just be helping facilitate and this is Katie she’ll be taking notes. This is the rest of our team, the other half of us is right now in the South End of Springfield also doing the same kind of thing with residents from that end. We’re WPI students working with DevelopSpringfield on this project.

P1: I’m sorry what was it? You’re here for what?

L: We are students from WPI but we are being sponsored by DevelopSpringfield to do this project but this project started last term. A group of students surveyed the community and found a group of problems that Springfield is facing like crime, substance abuse, low income housing and our job is to look at those problems and find solutions for them and approach the community and see how they react to those different solutions.

P: [translates what I said into Spanish; unclear exactly what was said in Spanish due to distance from recording device]
L: So this will take about an hour. Audio will be recorded but none of your names will be published and also the recording will not be in public use. So this is just to get your input on our solutions. We’ll ask questions, let everyone answer and then once we’re done answering, we’ll move on to the next question.

P: [Spanish in the background is unclear]

Blue Light

L: So our first idea is the blue light system. I don’t know if you are familiar with it but it’s used on a lot of college campuses. They’re blue pillars with a LED on top and an emergency push button at the base. So if you have an emergency and you don’t have a phone or it would just take too long to pull it out, you can just run up to one of the systems, press the buttons and a dispatcher will be automatically connected to you through the pillar. So our question for you is whether you think there are benefits to this or if you have any concerns about whether the system could be implemented in certain regions of Springfield.

P: So I think it’s a benefit but what are the possibilities of them bringing it here?

L: Ya so, we would have to do like a Beta testing in like a certain area and see if its worth while for the police to.. Like if there’s a lot of pranks or if it's just if its not working they won’t do it as widespread, but right now we’re just looking at perhaps bringing it in as a test to see if it’ll work. We’re just wondering if you think it's a good idea to even pursue.

P: I think it is.

L: Do you think people would use them?

: Yeah, yeah i think so.

L: Even if … with cell phones, they would still push the button

P: Yeah I mean that’s quicker. I mean if I’m next to it, I’ll press that before calling.

Que esito cree que si eso si ello pone tu cree que tu va a eso primero que usar un celular para llamar nueve once. Te cree que si hay una emegerency ustedes van a usar este el ... de que tiene que tocar el botón o van a usar el celular. [ if you put this in do you think that you are going to use it first or use your phone to call 911. They are asking if you have an emergency, will you use this ...if you have to push the button or use the cell phone]

P: Yo pienso que …. el boton [I think … the button]

[General sound of agreement]

P: They say it’s faster if that's here they’d just press the button

L: What do you think? [referring directly to one of the participants]

P: Definitely.
L: Yeah? What locations in Springfield do you think would be best for this sort of system?

Donde tu cree que, en el sitio, donde pone algo asi [Where do you think, in the city, where would you put it?]

[participant respond in Spanish however it is unclear what they say]

P: She says like in the main streets like on Main St, Jefferson like in those main areas

L: Do you have any ideas?

P: Donde ustedes cree que donde pone la algo asi? [Where do you think they could put this system?]

P: Main… todos el Main [all of Main St.]

P: They say all up and down main street like Jefferson because you know like a lot of things happen up and down those streets.

Lighting

L: Okay. Our next idea is increasing community lighting to increase safety and also beautification. Do you think that would benefit or do you think it wouldn’t really help and why?

P: Tu cree que si pone más luces que eso te va este, como se dice...beneficial. [Do you think that putting in more lights would be beneficial?]

P: Beneficial, mhm. Yo pienso que si. [Beneficial, mhm. I think yes.]

P: Mas luces [More lights]

P: Yeah because if there is more light I mean people are

Cam: Did you mention sidewalk lighting?

P: North End no tiene luces [The North End doesn’t have any light]

P: I mean we all think they’re aren’t any lights down here so that you know a lot of crime happens because you know there’s a lot of areas

P: [In spanish: she says she almost got hit by a car because there isn’t a lot of light] En la chestnut

P: So like in Chestnut there’s no lights like down on the streets. There are a lot of dark areas, like women… women walk down, they’re scared to walk at night because there’s no lights down there.

L: Is it mostly on the sidewalks or on the road too?

P: Mostly on Jefferson. That whole street like from Main St. to Chestnut
P: En Jefferson entanta criminal … [she says that in Jefferson there is a lot of criminal activity because its not well lit]

P: She says that there is a lot of uh bad things happen, crime stuff and like the Jefferson Park because there’s no lights there and that’s where most of the crime starts.

L: Do you think if there were more lighting you would go into those areas? Would that help you feel safer?

P: I think if there's more lights more people are going to be hanging out there so it’ll be safer to go to.

[looks to Spanish speaking attendees]

P: Que sí. [Yes]

P: They say yeah.

Beautification

L: Our next idea is general beautification of the city where that would be community artwork or cleaning up the streets, the trash, putting benches or statues or flower pots. So do you think that would be helpful to Springfield or do you not think that would be and why?

P: Ustedes piensan que si ello empiezo el callejero, si ponen este flore, este retrato, este limpio lo sito que tambien sucio que eso este algo o no [Do you guys think that if we put in flowers, portraits, and clean the places that are really dirty... do you think it would be good.]

P: Yeah..yeah

L: What kinds of beautification do you think would be most helpful to making Springfield more beautiful?

P: Como que eso que tu piense que ustedes quieren bella a callejero. Como va las, como flore, como retrato, este … lo que ustedes piensan? [What are the things that you guys think that you would like to see down here. To see like flowers or pictures. What do you guys think?

P: flores...arboles [Flowers ... trees]

P: Flowers, trees

L: What do you think? What do you think would help Springfeild look more beautiful?

P: Que tu piense? [What do you think?]  

P: More lights, definitely. More illumination. Especially in Main St. More illumination, there is places that the women, the little kids, that they can’t go through because illumination is too poor. More illumination is going to be great yeah.

L: Are there any specific locations where you would like to see like statues or flowers other than just along the main streets?
P: Alguno specifie locations que de cree que ponen la flore o aparte la main street [Are there any other places that you think we could put flowers other than the main street?]

P: All up and down main street I mean the whole, from the mobile all the way down to the cruz street. All the way that whole area needs to be lit up, cleaned up, the roads need to be paved over. I mean the whole north end needs a whole make over I think.

L: Are there any parks or anything that would need it? Any statues or beautification?

P: Like Jefferson right, Jefferson, Main Street

P: Jefferson, ma grande [bigger]

P: Part of the Jefferson is going to be great. Main street

P: And Morgan

Community Space

L: So its been expressed to us that there isn’t a good place for the community to gather and become closer so we were wondering if you also feel that need and you think that creating a space would be beneficial to the community.

P: What was the question again? I know creating the space but…

L: If you think that creating a space would help the community become closer and a more tight knit, safe environment.

P: Okay, so ella pregunta que si creando qué espacio como [Okay so she's asking if creating a space like] like parks and stuff like that?

P: No no si ella … que si hay un sitio mas grande donde nosotros podemos ir a hablar va este va a hablar de la cosas que faltan aca bajo y ustedes cree que si hagan un sitio asi que eso algo que puede majoral este [No no she is asking if there was a bigger space that we can all go to talk and better the community]

P: Como un centro de comunidad si puede ser seguro [like a community center? If it could be secure]

P: Yeah they say yes.

L: What kind of a space would you like to see? Like a banquet hall or a recreational sports center or just any community center?

P: Que clase de espasio quieren ver un sport center o un sitio donde puedan hacer deportes [What kind of space would you like to see? A sports center or a place where you can play sports?]

P: Desportes… [sports]

P: Yeah a sport center would be nice, it would keep them occupied.
L: Where do you think a good place would be to put it so it would be centrally located so that everyone could have access to it?

P: I think, I think I mean it depends in like the summer everyone wants to be outside, nobody wants to be in here you know so it depends on what time of year. If it’s winter then obviously they want to be in a warm place but if it's summer and we’re in here, no one is going to want to come and talk about the problems. They’re going to want to be outside and be comfortable and that way there would be more people who show up.

P: Puede ser un sitio para verano y invierno. [It can be a place for the summer and winter]

P: It can be a place that can be for summers and winters like it can be a place with a pool and it can be a place where you can do something inside for winter time you know something like a gym, a sport…

P: A place where they can go outside

P: Yeah to play ball or

Community Resources

L: So a big thing is we felt that there isn’t a good knowledge of the community resources that are out there just by hearing what people need. But we were at a New North Citizens Council meeting and the amount of resources that were available were just lists upon lists of them in various different sectors so we were wondering if you feel there is a lack of awareness and what could be done to fix that.

P: Que ella fueren un meeting de New North y ella lea que vi al mucho este … como se dice…[She went to a New North meeting and she saw that there were many … how do you say…]

P: Resources… place…

P: Mucho resources pero si ustedes creen que la gente no saben de todas cosas que puedan usar [There are many resources but do you think that many of the people know about all of the things they can use?]

P: También lo que pasa … los resources no están aquí, en este área … [Also, what’s happening … the resources aren’t here, in this area … ]

P: Okay yeah she says yes it can be better for the people in the are all the resources if you can see, they are not in this area they are like in the far away.

P: Nobody has transportation.

P: Nobody has transportation. People don’t want to travel too long for it, you know.

P: Transportation, housing, domestic violence

P: So there’s a lot of resources but there’s nothing here
P: Nothing around the neighborhood.

P: If there’s, you know just to use a women for an example, comes in and she’s a battered woman and she needs help right now, you know, they gotta tell her.

P: Go to this place..

P: You gotta make a phone call and then you gotta go here and they’ll help you out

P: Call 911…

P: Right you know

P: That’s not, that’s not. No you gotta go to a place where you can get the counselor. That you can, if your kids are boarding at the house, go send the kids over there. They’re gonna be safe, they’re gonna travel safe by the area if it’s at night there gotta be a lot of light, a lot of illumination in the street, you know, so the people feel comfortable.

L: Do you think that's a transportation issue or do you think that those businesses should be just in this area in general? That they should be moved.

P: I think they should be moved. We need something around the neighborhood that we can use...that we feel belongs to us, to the people who live in this area

P: Yeah a lot of people here on main street, over on the other side of the highway, the majority of the hispanic people, I mean we need a lot of help. You know, being illiterate

P: People don’t know how to read, don’t know how to write. You know, they don’t know how to use a computer. A lot of people, you know it's incredible to see in this time, you know. Some place that we can be willing to help. That's the main idea.

Elementary School Clean-Up

L: So one of our ideas is that we have a monthly, elementary school clean-up and have the kids be responsible for a certain part of the city and they walk around, they pick up trash, they could maybe plant flowers. So...our...we just want your opinion on that idea.

P: I don’t [shakes his head]

L: You don’t think that’s a good idea?

P: I mean just depending on the area. I mean you got needles, you got you know

P: You got everything you know some people leave the drugs on the street, some people fallen down.

P: I mean it's a good idea but depending on the area.

P: And i think the sheriff department, every two days, they got a group cleaning all the street.
P: Yeah we see it every now and again. They come through and clean. I mean it's a good idea but depending on if its supervised.

P: Yeah and see what the kids pick up.

P: You’re right yeah.

[Translator explains the idea and then discusses with the group that the kids are too young and they are not for working on the streets with the drugs]

P: I explain to them the kids not for work

[In Spanish the group discusses that they would rather see a kid planting a tree than cleaning up]

P: To plant the tree… no no that’s going to be a good idea.

P: They say that they’d rather see a group of adults come in and do the clean up and then the elementary school kids maybe coming in after and doing the painting, planting. You know the clean up, let the adults do it.

P: That’s a good idea yeah

P: Because in this area there’s a lot of drugs and you know not just drugs i mean old houses, they can fall like he said you know and get cut.

Adopt-A-Plant

L: Thank you. Another idea is that we would have an Adopt-A-Plant thing. We would have someone like maybe Lowe’s or Home Depot donate plants, like small potted plants and we would leave them on the sidewalk or somewhere central to the community and you could come pick one up and bring it home and plant it in your own yard. Just for free.

P: Yeah that's a good idea.

L: Do you think people would participate in something like that?

P: Ella dice que tenemos un idea que hay un ... con Home Depot done plantas que esas ponen en un centro de comunidad o en la sidewalk que la persona que tocar una planta para plantar ...[She says they have an idea that they can have ... with the Home Depot to donate plants that can be put in the center of the community or on the sidewalk that a person can take a plant to plant]

P: Yes, it's a good idea.

L: What do you think? [She nodded in response to my question]

[More spanish in the background but the audio was unclear]

P: She said if they could have something for the disability people. That something they could teach to those kinds of person. How to do something with their hands.
P: Like the disabled people where there could be somewhere where they can have somewhere to go because they got a lot of time on their hands. Arts, crafts, things like that.

L: That could maybe tie into a mentoring program

P: Mmmhm

Mentoring

L: We were thinking of having maybe STCC students at the community college or trade professionals or baystate workers come and be paired with a younger kid and teach them either their trade if they’re… if that’s where they come from or just like show them a good example of a work ethic and kind of like be a model for them. Do you think we could get people to participate on both sides of that?

[Explains what Lindsey just said in Spanish]

P: Yeah it’s a good idea. The people, that's an example, that’s an example of the grown people that the kids can follow. You know, and it's a good idea. It’s not a bad. Especially from the college, from the university, they can come, teach the little kids and the people how to do their homework, how to do the… It's not bad.

C: What type of programs they’d like to see?

L: What? You can just ask.

C: Oh so do you guys have any specific types of programs like mentoring programs?

P: It’s like tutoring. Like tutoring for the people, for those kids. Especially for if they need help with math. People that are from, that are going to study the math in the college. And that's going to be good for the students from the college too, because they can teach something. They can learn from both sides. The kids are going to learn and the students from the college are going to learn.

[Participant repeats what he just said in Spanish]

P: Get the kid out of the house for us for a while.

P: And the second, they said the kids are learning and then we get the kid out of the house for a little while. No eating and drinking and playing Nintendo.

General Questions

L: Is there anything else you thought that we didn’t mention that could be beneficial for us to know about ways to improve Springfield?

P: More housing, transportation. Especially this. This is important. Help for the kids outside on the street. Cause i can see lately that it's a lot of kids. Homeless. Asking for 25 cents, asking for 50 cents out on the street. That we need some help with these kids because that's going to be the grown in the future. It’s going to be the adults in the future. And if we don’t do nothing
now they gonna be the next crackhead, the next needle, you know. And then we need help. Definitely, we need help in the North End with the kids.

[Participant speaks Spanish; translation by the translator follows and has been verified]

P: She said that people, they are in shelters in the morning. In the daytime, they gotta be on the street. They only go to have sleep. If they can have something that can be beneficial to them. Something that can teach them how to use a computer. They can send email for work, looking for the job. Some place … that's maybe going to go together with the place for the kids. Something that they can … employ their time in a good way.

P: I mean I see the problem. The problem is there is no transportation.

P: They barely know how to read and write. They dropped out at seven, eighth grade. So they need somewhere where they can start.

P: Yeah some councilor, some advisor. Strong advisor that they can start. Because it's hard for that kind of kids, that kinds of adults. They’re on the streets. They got nothing. What are they doing? Stealing… or doing something wrong.

P: The thing that we missed, the biggest thing is the security. You know, there’s not enough police presence. I mean you see them drive by once maybe every 20 minutes, half hour. You would think that they would be around here all the time. It's a high crime.

P: Ya but it's … you remember … you remember …

[Spanish is spoken and translated]

P: They’re saying that there should be you know cops walking, another one on bikes and just overlapping each other. You know this one went down once and this one’s coming up this way. They did it for a couple of weeks and it worked out. It was good but then as soon as the crime went down a little bit, they stopped doing it. So that’s one of our biggest concerns. That would alleviate a lot of the problems.

L: It's been shown to us that there’s sometimes a mistrust when it comes to the police. Do you think that … that’s true to this community?

P: That there’s what?

L: That there’s a mistrust in the community towards police. That people don’t want to them. Is that true?

P: Ella dice que … que nosotros no confiamos lo policía. Si ustedes cree que eso es verdad. [She say that … that we don’t trust the police. If you think that's true?]

P: Yo cree que pasa … [I think what happened …]

You know what happen? This … the neighborhood on this side, in the North End … they see the drug dealers on the street. They don’t want to see the police around. The people we got
family. We got kids that want to raise kids in a good way, we want to see the police around. Everyone wants to see the city implement good things for the community. But those kind of people they don’t care, if we send the drug to the fourteen years old to the thirteen years old. That’s the kind of people, they don’t want to see the police around. But that’s something that we need, more patrols on the street.

L: Let me see if I missed anything.

P: Is anybody going to hear any of these? You know any of this stuff?

C: Any of what you’re saying? Yeah …

[Participants speak in Spanish about how they want someone to hear what they’re saying]

C: Yeah so we’ll be doing a presentation and a report will be submitted to DevelopSpringfield, as well as, we’ll be doing a presentation in front of … we’re going to be doing one in front of the New North Citizens. I think we’re going to be doing one in front of the New North Citizens big meeting. As well as we’re going to be doing one for the South End. Who was that going to be with again? (to Lindsey)

L: I think it's going to be with Jay Minkarah and …

P: One more thing, there is 900 millions for this .. for the development of Springfield so that when you do the presentation to them, they're going to be funds for that. Because I think there is …

[He says that we will be meeting with people to discuss this and it important for them to help to get the funds for it]

P: Like 900 million, no?

L: For Springfield?

P: Yeah Springfield

L: DevelopSpringfield?

P: For DevelopSpringfield yeah.

L: I think … I don’t know how much it is but it's definitely high.

C: It’s in the millions

P: Yeah

[In Spanish, he talks about the funds that are available and how they have to help us get them because nothing can happen without them. He says we have a good project.]

P: I say that you have a good project on your hands. And that the city have funds. Yeah you're definitely, going to present to the different kind of people like in the city hall, that they
can approve the funds but if we don’t help you … yeah you need the help, you need the help for the community to go to the fund.

C: Yeah and all of the data that we get from the in person experience, all goes into a stronger report. They ask us, you know, like how many people did you talk to and who did you talk to, where did you talk to them. All of these things that go into whether they believe what we’re trying to tell them so it’s good that we go so many people here. We weren’t sure how many people were going to come in. So it's good.

P: Yeah this is the problem. That there is only a handful of us.

C: Well it’s more than we thought and at the meeting last week or … it was last week right? We only go like three or so people right?

P: Yeah we got like maybe four or so people last week. Maybe, the next time, the meeting is at 12:30 again, no?

C: I don’t … which one? For?

P: Today

C: Yeah so there’s one at 12:30 … we know that Ben is going to be coming down there. We’re not sure who else is going to be coming so it might just be an interview at that point.

P: It’s going to be good if you’re going to do something going through the streets and asking the people.

C: Yeah we got surveys going out. We got the STCC students up at the community college, they’re doing some on the street surveys so..

P: But definitely, the people that are here, I think we’re going to help you all that we can.

[Repeats what was just said in Spanish]

P: You going to do a proximo [next] meeting? There’s going to be another meeting?

C: Which one for today?

P: No not for today, in the future.

L: No.. this is our...

C: Focus group meetings? Oh we’re not going to have any more focus group meetings. Not that we have planned right now, no.

L: It's just this and then our final presentation.

P: Okay, in the case that you’re going to do another focus meeting, let us know and they’ll bring somebody with them.

P: He says that there needs to be more awareness like … that you guys … if more people knew that you were having this meeting, like myself. I just found out today and I came last
minute but she says there needs to be people who are going out there saying that there’s a meeting here you need to attend. When they were doing it, they were going everywhere handing out flyers for meetings that the NNCC is doing. And people were showing up because they were prepared but the last minute thing is hard.

P: He’s saying that, you know, that we need to get all different kinds of people from the community, you know, from the church, workers from the young kids to the older people. You know, a lot of us together. Trying to make a change.

P: Trying to make a change in the North End, in the South End. Springfield is our community, we live out here.

L: Okay, I just have two more questions. The first question is do you think that by beautifying and making the city more safe that it would invite more outside people to in and patronize businesses?

[Repeats my question in Spanish]

P: Si yes, va a la cambio [they well see the change]

P: They say yeah because they’re going to see the change. You know people come here and they see the way it looks now and the first thing they say is no …

[Spanish was said and translated below]

P: She says that everybody says they’re gonna change this, change that but nobody ever does it so nobody ever wants to set up shop here because they’re not doing anything.

L: Do you think that there is a high risk that if we do beautify and we do work towards making this city safer that there would be a lot of push-back with vandalism towards the new structures.

[Spanish was said and translated below]

P: I don’t think so.

P: No I don’t think so. People are going to like seeing the neighborhood nice and they’re going to keep it nice. And you can see in this side, in this area, we got bad people pero [but] but we don’t see graffiti. You can see … you can see that all around, you don’t see graffiti. They respect.

[Spanish was spoken about graffiti]

P: No, they don’t think so. If we do a good job, they going to stay like that. They going to preserve the city.

P: Did we talk about lighting?

L: Yeah we did
P: That’s a big big problem down on this end over here. You can see downtown is bright all the time, even the south end and they come to the North End and it’s horrible.

North End Group 2

Blue Light System

*explanation of blue light system*

Beneficial? Hmm….to me it would be a cost-benefit thing. If each station costs like $20,000 or something, I’d be like “I think that money could be spent in better ways.” If each station cost, you know, 1000 bucks, I think it’s closer to being a good solution. Part and parcel, though, the places where these could be used the highest are the places where crime is the highest and that would mean vandalism could be an issue. I mean, how horrible do you think it would be if you pushed a button for help and it doesn’t work. So I would be very interested in who maintains them. And it seems like if you’re going to put that kind of data gathering point, you could do more things than just make it a voice-making call. Cause I know Springfield has invested heavily in Shotspotter, which is a technology that tells police immediately when a gunshot goes off and they respond like immediately. If you go to a C3 meeting, where Cameron and I - were you at the C3 meeting?

C: We were at the meeting on Wednesday here.

Oh right. So I just came from a C3 meeting which is where community police and residents get together and they record every shot fired. So I would think that these data point, these stations could be gathering tons of great information, not just “ok hit the blue button so i can make a phone call.”

L: There’s also systems where you hit a 311 button and it will tell you about like situations going on. Do you think that would be helpful too?

Uh you know I just called 311 actually because the walk signal at the crossing area right by my facilities isn’t working. So kids playing frogger because the walk sign never turns green. So yeah, you know, when trash cans aren’t being emptied or you see syringes on the ground. Yeah, I think that 311 vs 911, it’s probably a good idea.

L: are there any specific locations you think it would be better - like along main street or in the park?

Um, so I would imagine some people would have an aesthetic objection to them. Right? In the historic district people aren’t going to – it’s not going to be as welcomed. If you could just find a way to disguise them, make them statues of William Pynchon or something, founder of Springfield. Um my thought is yes of course parks. And places, um park was, my thinking was with parks, I use the Springfield parks. My thought was are we in a part where it would be more reported like loose dogs or litter or broken street lights, things like that. But, it would be great to have one. I’ll tell you, we had to call 911 the other day and the ambulance couldn’t find us cause we have a bizarre street address. We’re – we have a fairly unique location because our address is 121 west street and it’s right across – I forget have any of you been there? Have any of you seen our boat house?
C: I think we drove near it one time. We drove past at some point.

So there’s 3 bridges in Springfield. Memorial Bridge is the big one. The one southbound is the South End Bridge, the one northbound is the North End Bridge. It’s route 20. And we are at the base of the North End Bridge in Springfield. There’s a bike path there, there’s the street, and there’s a huge gas station next door that is just a problem magnet. Every night the cops are there. So between the fact that there’s a bike path there, that there’s my boathouse is there, that we have, you know, 70 kids coming every day after school. They don’t stay late and, um, there’s an exercise station being constructed right now. It seems like that would be a pretty good place for one of these because it’s a confluence of foot traffic, bike traffic, and there’s crime and there’s garbage. There’s a vacant lot next to us that we just end up telling kids “you got to not walk through it.” But it’s a shortcut. You walk right through it to get to the subway.

C: ok. so what do you think about like down the – there’s a path that goes all the way through, right? So just kinda like on the path itself?

There’s a bike path, yeah. It’s a connected bike-river walkway. It’s actually pretty cool cause it’s uh 4 miles long. There’s like 2 places where the path is interrupted. So normally like on a bike path so every three – like you have to stop and look for traffic. This only has 2 crossings. One is where we are and one is downtown Springfield. Um yes, I would think that’d be a great place to have them. I don’t – it’s probably not the top of the list though. People on that path are moving. Now there is an issue with crime on that path. Now mainly it’s like drug abuse problems, it’s not like you’re being jumped. I don’t think that drug abuse and prostitution is going to be fixed by the emergency poles. But certainly north, certainly Riverfront Park and North Riverfront Park – those are the two big parks on the river. Yeah, uh, I think that’d be great. And if there was some kind of way to do video, some surveillance. You know, I’m not sure if there are some privacy issues but someone calls 911, it’d be great if the person on the monitor could just look at what’s happening, not just, ok send a police car who’s currently chasing a bad guy down to a possible prank. Cause how do you prevent abuse of those things? I mean, it’s a big shiny button. You know, the anecdotal amount of petty vandalism that I see around the city – that would also be my concern. People will just mess with our stuff cause they can. They’re not there to be malicious, you know, it’s just idle stupidity. Weather gets warmer, it’s going to happen more. At least that’s been my observation.

L: right, ok.

I think if you put it in some of the worst areas, it’ll be seen as a joke. Like “oh, let’s waste the police’s time. Let’s hit every blue button. Get all the cops to come then we’ll go, you know, do drugs on the other side of town.”

C: ok. That’s interesting

Do they get used a lot on campus do you think?

L: I think they do. We talked with our campus police and they said that a lot of times they’re not real emergency calls but when they have had real emergencies they’re pretty useful.

C: and on those locations, safety is like a huge priority so even if they’re used like a hundred times falsely, the parents still want them so they’ll still invest in them.
Campuses, yeah I’m sure they’re great. They’d rather take the precaution

C: and I think you said, like on campuses they’re just – they said it’s supposed to be like from one you can always see another one. So there’s a lot of them too

I would think almost if you have them, if the things themselves can’t have video, maybe if there was some video on it. So if the button gets pushed, maybe it could take a flash picture. Kinda like fire alarms, you know, when you pull the thing and there’s like an ink blob or picture or something, you know? That might be a little extreme but

L: holding people accountable for pushing it?

Could be.

Community Lighting

*general explanation*

I think it’s a great idea. Bizarrely, we have a kind of community watch in our neighborhood – I live in Springfield. And uh, this one person who’s just like the street light police person, she take it on her personal shoulders to report every out street light. And a lot of us keep our porch lights on very similarly, thinking someone, if they’re going to do something stupid, it’s going to be to the house with the lights off. But yes, I would love to have that bike path illuminated. People would use it more. So, the chicken and egg, right? Do you put lights where it’s not being used but people are afraid or do you light the places people are going to be and they can be safer? The irony in Springfield right now is 4 of the biggest lights in Springfield are out right now. If you… the Memorial Bridge, the picture that’s been on our logo, right? Memorial Bridge has 4 pillars on it to commemorate 4 acts of war. It was built in 1922, so World War II. There’s a light on top of each of them – 3 are out, there’s only 1 on still. We’ve been calling everyone who will listen to us and it doesn’t look like that good. I’m not saying it prevents any crime but it just doesn’t look good. Um so yeah, I think that, yeah. I’m a big fan of lighting. I can’t think of a downside. I think that some people on our street do object to some of those really bright orange lights and it shines in their windows. But then the neighbors have spotlights shining on our house cause she wants it to look pretty at Christmastime. So yeah, you know

C: so what do you think about the color tone? Do you like the more yellow or the new LED, kinda like very white light?

I think different things have different purposes. Like the Pride parking lot should have the brightest, whitest lights you can make. The bike path, probably similar. I think as you get more residential, you want to tone it down, just aesthetically. Yeah I mean, Springfield, the city has a lot of interesting lighting and lamps. I do notice dark streets and it’s terrible, it’s horrible. Again there’s a cost-benefit part. The electric bills are going to go up, the bulbs are going to be more expensive. And again, maybe it could be multifunction, something they could do besides provide lights, some other benefit in the community.

L: yeah one of the ideas that Jay had, Jay from DevelopSpringfield, is putting the planters, the flowers, to make them look more pretty
C: yeah they hang them from the lamp posts. So they found that the ones on the ground were being vandalized and just stolen for no reason. So they hang them – people can’t reach them.

But someone’s got to water them.

C: well they found – I think they give like tools to the businesses in the area right? And they can water the ones out front

Banners to do advertising or community service type stuff. Holiday related. Or you know, I know Springfield has talked about the free wifi initiative, what a great vehicle to get free wifi in the parks or on the bike paths.

Beautyfication

*explanation*

I think you need to keep the climate in mind. Like my mom lives in Washington D.C. and they do a great job of garden pots and green spaces. Here, well you know, the winters can be brutal. All that salt and sand can make a flower bed into a mud spot. Um, you know and planting trees is something I know the city currently does and I think they probably could do more. Although they talk about taking down trees in other areas where they obscure the light as a security measure. It would be great if there was a way to get – I think that would – I think the beautification would only work if you got some community behind it. Like the city is yours and you can use some of it as a community garden, some of the strips could be aesthetic. But someone would have to step and say “yeah I’ll water this” or make sure people don’t throw trash in there. Cause like at the C3 meeting I was just at the police were talking about how a lot of drug activity we can’t break up but we can take away hiding places. So they’ll watch drug activity and they show up and people scatter but they can see where the stash was. Could be a downside to more planting space – more places to hide things.

L: That’s true.

But murals? Oh yeah. In fact, we’re vying for a mural. We have a gorgeous spot that badly needs a mural. On the down low, I’ve talked to a few people about how to approach this. Should I talk to art teachers in schools? Should I talk to artists? Does the city have someone? We don’t want it to be – we want it to represent who we are and represent Springfield, not some fantasy picture of you know unicorns and rainbows

Community Space

*explanation*

I do think – I think it could solve a lot of problems creating a community space. It would be great if that kind of space happened in buildings that are being underutilized. You know, rather than building something new, unless you’re bulldozing an eyesore. So it could be a great way to do some sort of clean up. And there are plenty of buildings in Springfield which… In fact our boathouse was actually looked at as an opportunity for a community space cause of this gorgeous, huge banquet room that’s completely unfinished. It’s a disaster but it dates back to
1901. It could be beautiful. Every politician or councilor has seen it and gone “oh we’ve got to turn this into a banquet hall.” Well you guys own it. We’re the tenants. Yes I think the places for kids after school with nowhere to go cause problems. And to have programs and the spaces to have these programs. Like there’s this gorgeous boathouse on Forest Park Ave, right next to a public school building and it’s beautiful. It looks like it belongs to Lee George (? ~17:30) and it’s a classic space. And again, this could be a place for, you know, again for people who may not be able to afford internet access to get internet access – there’s so much that’s online now. I have to get my programs – some don’t even have a telephone (? ~17:48). Needless to say getting an email is so not even on their spectrum.

C: so access to technology?

Access to technology, I think that would be a part of that. Like jobs. We call the city now, they say “please visit our website,” they don’t want to take a phone call.

L: where do you think putting those – would just like in places where there isn’t a lot of nice buildings?

I think that would be a great way to attract – I mean it has to be somewhere that people can walk if it’s a poor neighborhood. I think ideally in a historic building. Look, construction isn’t what it used to be. You build a new building now it’s going to look pretty sterile and modern, whereas you have all these historic buildings that are empty or could use that cash infusion. I think that’d be a really cool project. A lot of people would buy in on that, you know, turning a historic building into a community center.

C: in terms of downtown area, kinda like high-value real estate vs. the low value real estate kinda out to the side, which one do you think would impact the community and be better and the pros and cons of each one?

I think it’d be great to keep the high value real estate for commercial businesses. You know, they’ve got the money for it, it creates a tax base. But there should be like a – well Springfield has neighborhoods, people know what they’re called, you know. North End and South End has some specific challenges. 16 acres is very residential and wouldn’t benefit by a community center because the people have churches and synagogues, stuff like that. You know, even if the intended use is not what the place gets built for, you could turn an eyesore into something nice. And you’re going to get critics saying, “oh that money could’ve been spent on something else.” And you just say “oh really, like what? Let’s talk about what. You just got a brand new building in your neighborhood you get to use. You get free internet, technology access. Go find a job”

C: one more question on that one… do you think it would help like bring business in to the local community from outside? So like a lot of Baystate employees don’t necessarily come in and do businesses so

You know I think you’re right, they don’t. they just sort of stay in their offices, go to some restaurants, and then skedaddle. Look, I will say one good thing about big companies like Baystate and MassMutual. Most of the employees understand that civic responsibility is one of their duties, you know. They’re not there to just extract from the community and take off. So, that said, people are part of organizations and nonprofits and everyone wants a good space to
gather and if they knew they could use this then it would put less of a strain on asking their office “oh can we stay open late? I need a conference room” Yeah I could see if properly done being a great thing. Access would be key. You know obviously you can’t have it locked up and oh the guy who has the key needs 48 hour notice or you have to book it 4 weeks out. It should be some – maybe part of it is more structured, part of it is more ad hoc and see how it goes.

L: flexibility?

Yeah

Community resources

*explanation*

well I think there’s a knowledge gap but there’s also a natural hierarchy of needs. If you’re trying to feed your family, who cares that there’s a community meeting down the street where they’ll talk about riverfront cleanup or something. If your kids don’t have shoes or you need to spend your free time going to Savers or Goodwill, who cares that the city’s got a cool website or that the park is having a petting zoo opening. So I don’t think – I wouldn’t say there’s an access problem, but there might be a disconnect between people who are doing it and the people who would or would not utilize it. My wife and I pretty much know about all of the stuff going on in Springfield cause we pay attention and we engage and we have friends and we talk. The people who aren’t connected, I don’t think that a media connection, I don’t think that it’s going to solve the problem. I don’t think that you’re going to reach more, or a lot more people, by having an increased social media presence

L: do you think that the events should be more catered to those people, the things that they might need?

I would think so. I would think that they have a lot more going on. I think that one thing we do well is that we have small events, just like bike week events, Earth day events. Just come down, it’s free. We’re not gonna do a media list, spread the word, tell a friend. Maybe 20 or 30 people will show up, it’s perfect. But that’s very neighborhood-centric. You’re not going to drive across Springfield to ride a free bike on the bike trail. But it probably has to be …it has to start with basic needs, like child care and walk in clinics, counseling, gun buy-back programs, needle exchanges, condom programs. Really elemental, front line facing the problem. I don’t know, that’s my thought. But everyone will take something and turn it around and say “oh that’s not for me. You’re making a judgement. We shouldn’t be helping drug addicts.” But it’d be nice to at least start a dialogue instead of doing nothing.

L: do you think that this local community has good access to the help that they may need? Like a counseling center?

I don’t know, really. I don’t hear a lot of complaints. I think this initiative with the police and the community is certainly moving in the right direction. People trust cops more and don’t see them as…..yeah, that kind of thing can only help. So yeah, I don’t know for sure

C: Do you have any ideas for what specifically….cause you talked about how there’s a disconnect between the people who need the programs and the ones who would go and whether
or not they know about them? Do you think there’s a better way of getting them to attend? Like do you have any ideas on that?

Well we actually struggled with a program that we ran and some of the ideas to get higher attendance were to dangle a carrot, see how the-

C: offer a reward?

Like a $50 gift card to Stop & Shop. If you complete the program, you get a gift card to Foot Locker.

C: and how did that work?

I think, you know, it worked. It got people to stick with it. People were a bit suspicious. Like really, no, this is free.

Clean up

*explanation*

I think it could be misperceived. There is a hazard with cleaning up waste, broken glass and needles. A lot of people object to that, like how thick are the gloves, what happens if... kids are kids. But I do think....this is kind of a different issue but gardening schools is a huge positive. It gives kids a sense of accomplishment, a project that they have ownership for.

C: at like the elementary level?

Yeah I think as long as they have the teachers guiding them. Planting a plant, it’s a good little thing. Some of these kids just have nothing to focus on. Their role models are focusing on other stuff. A lot of the new to the country cultures came from places where they grew up growing plants. I mean farming was a thing for a lot of them, so why disassociate it? Maybe tie it in to the community center. Have an incubator thing where you could actually do gardening during the winter

C: kinda like a community garden?

Yeah like a community garden. Maybe an indoor one

L: do you see a community garden as a good way like during class time, would they give that up?

Yeah that’d be great. Unfortunately, a lot of Springfield schools are under various degrees of observance where they’ve cut art and music because they have to have 2 math classes cause they have to make up some of the deficiencies that they have. That’s the way that they do it – just cut the arts, which kinda sucks. And of course, we’re in a very litigious state right now. There are lawyers right now who comb the courthouse looking for parents with kids and they’ll approach them and say, “is your kid being underserved? Are there things going on at your school that you’re not happy about? Join our class action lawsuit.” And I would love someone....my wife’s a school nurse so I hear about all of this. And I tell her, “you’ve got to have someone leak this to the press or something.” “ah they don’t care.” Because get this – in a classroom right now,
you can’t….I don’t know what they did for you guys when you were in school but when I was in school, when you’re in trouble you get sent to the principal’s office or the guidance office or someone. Now they can’t do that in Springfield because you’re depriving that child of education. They have to stay in the classroom or the lawyers are all over that. They’ll say “you’re depriving this child of education by taking him out of the classroom. Oh the fact that he threw a desk across the room? Sorry, you have to fix that part.” In fact, it’s come full circle. What’s happening is if you have a disruptive student in the classroom, the teacher takes the rest of the class outside cause she can do that and keep teaching them and the one who stays never left the classroom. So in theory he or she is still receiving instruction. How messed up is that? So while I think gardening in schools would be awesome, I think the reality is probably slim to none replacing classroom time with that. You’d have to get some major buy-in from some important counselors and psychologists.

L: is that at all levels of school, elementary and middle?

I’m pretty sure. My wife teaches in middle school. The elementary school she taught at when she was a nurse before tried to pilot a gardening program and the kids who did it loved it. But it didn’t have the critical mass to continue. It ended up being all the teachers paying out of pocket, buying tools, doing the work, learning how to garden then teaching the kids how to garden. You know, reading a chapter ahead.

C: so you think it would be more like an afterschool program?

Well, after school or maybe before school. Kids would show up early to do it. All Springfield kids get free lunch cause the city is like 80% impoverished so how can we….you know only 20% of the kids….just give them lunch. But the nurses are an interesting resource. My wife has always said they’re highly underutilized. They’re educated, health professionals with a lot of time on their hands. They should be running wellness programs. They should be promoting classroom gardening or a school gardening program. They could be the….and if they were against it, they should be looked at seriously because they shouldn’t be a healthcare professional. You’re being given an opportunity to promote wellness in your students. What are you here for?

My wife and the gym teacher were the ones who did that. They were the ones who piloted the gardening issue. They got the custodian to buy in and he brought in some tomato plants. These were kids who were high risk. They were kids who were drug addicted or homeless. You take a starving cat and you give it anything to eat and it’s going to be so grateful, you know, and that’s what they experienced. It got to the point where she had a bowl of fruit on her desk and kids were crazy about the fruit, loved the fruit. And then they took a fieldtrip and the teacher said, “oh for a treat we’re going to go to McDonald’s.” what do you think the kids said? “aw not again. I had that for breakfast, lunch, and dinner yesterday.” So there’s a misperception of what people want vs. what they need. Sometimes you’d be surprised. She can’t keep tangerines on her desk; they’d just be gone in a moment.
I think the people who don’t need it would love it. I’d be all over that. I’d come get some plants. I think that, again, people are…..like one of the kids in our program, he comes so loyally. And he hasn’t got any money, he had to be given some sneakers. And I said, “can I meet your family some time? I’d like to invite them….” and his name’s Gus and he said “oh, no.” and I said why not, and he said his mom works every day. I said “but they’re still invited.” So having the time to go somewhere to pick up a free plant might be fairly low on the list of things to do with what free time you have.

L: do you think if they’re fruit plants? Or if you could grow a tomato cucumbers, do you think they would want that?

I think that might go over a little better. Much more than just hanging potted plants. If nothing else, it would sort of be like, ok we’re trying to bridge some gaps and remove some excuses. This is a free resource for food. If you really don’t want this, we’d love to know why. I could see that.

L: do you think for the people that would pick up the potted plants, that in coming into the community, outsiders would see that people garden and it would make it look more approachable?

Yeah, I could see that. Although our climate doesn’t always allow for stuff outside. There’d be a lot of stuff hanging on porches. And it could have the opposite effect and be like flower pots everywhere. Hopefully they’d be recyclable. I think that’s the kind of program that could be a feeder into a bigger issue. Like, hey look at the success we had with free plants. We want a grant to build a community garden and the reason we think it will work is because 85 families in this 4 block radius all took a free plant. Sounds to me like this is a fertile ground, every pun intended, for a community garden. And that’s when you get someone to pay for bulldozing that crack house and replacing the soil with good soil and, boom, you’ve taken an eyesore and turned it into a nice area. Yeah, that could be the real juice here, to do real-life data collection, not just surveys. You could measure where it’s popular and where it’s not. Let’s put a community garden here. And you can tell people, “the payoff is if this is popular enough, we’ll tear down that vacant building with the big red X on it that says ‘no lives should be risked to save this thing’ and no one’s tearing it down. This is owned by some absentee landlord. You want that to go away? Take your free plant.”

L: incentive

Yeah well, you can’t make people want something, but you can make them want…… You can’t make people do something but you can make them want something. So what do you want? What’s this for you? Besides, you know, free tomatoes

Mentoring Program

*explanation*

It’s something we’ve actually tried to model too because our boathouse we have about 150 members, ranging from retired professionals to kids with no shoes. And it’s very rare to get all those demographics under one building doing the same activity. It’s really quite powerful. So yes, we’re big believers in mentoring. You know, people with resources are stretched really thin.
It’s hard to know who’s got the time to mentor and some may decide their work may be done better elsewhere. But yes, mentoring, yes, in any way possible. We even ran a how to get into college talk. An admissions official talked about the admissions process. We had 8th graders asking the best questions. You know, cause they were tearing down misperceptions. These kids were asking like, “if my SAT scores aren’t high enough, do I have to pay more for college?” You could see how somebody could get told that, right? If your SAT scores are really high you may get a scholarship, so if they’re low you don’t. They think they’re getting penalties. It was great. Their questions were awesome.

And maybe that could be the underlying message of mentoring is….The main takeaway from this for me from this talk was that you can’t start talking about college soon enough. Just make it part of their lexicon. Pointing out that you don’t have to be from a privileged background to go to college. Mentoring is like….ok what is mentoring? Someone who’s had a life experience sharing it with someone who doesn’t. The mission is talking about college. That’s going to help everyone. It’s going to help that student, it’s going to help the community, it’s going to help the city. And we, you know…. The athletic aspect, a nice crossover into that. I’m sure some kids…. “If I have to do this instead of that, what am I missing out on if I’m doing this mentoring thing?” You’d have to find some way to balance that, to keep them from feeling like they were missing out. And probably the kids who need it the most are going to be the hardest to find. Cause one of our kids, his permission slip was signed by his step-grandfather. That’s who he lives with, his step-grandparents. Yeah, no parents, no grandparents. Like how do you reach those people?

C: do you have any idea of who could be reached out to to be a mentor? Like who do you think would be the best….who exactly should be the mentors? Cause we mentioned possibly like STCC students, but they’re college students. They’re not necessarily the best mentors cause they’re still pretty young

I think when you’re in college, mentoring is more like “I don’t have time for that. I need to work. Do my schoolwork and try to make some money.” Who would be the best mentors? I think you’d want some criteria. You’d want to have people who live in the city or at least closely connected. You don’t want someone driving in here or coming in from their job at Baystate one day a week after work to do some mentoring and feel better about themselves. There’s going to be a disconnect. I think you need to find people who are probably…… If I were to design a mentoring program, I would start with athletes. Start with successful athletes who have gotten out of the hood and are interested in helping kids do the same. The next level would probably be people that are entrepreneurs, you know. Not the people who work at Baystate, but the people who started the car repair shop, you know, the electronics shop, the pawn shop…you know, I don’t know. People who are entrepreneurs.

C: like local business owners?

Local business owners. Small-time. You know, this mentoring could be more like internship/mentorship things. And then at some level, you could do a higher level of the big-shot big companies, who are willing to open their minds to hungry people. You know, in my life, you meet successful people and they’re happy to share their story but it’s rare that they’ll broadcast it.

Yeah, great. Those are great ideas. I’d love to see any one of them.
General inquiry

You know, it may not be solvable but we have pretty stark neighborhood borders that are culturally....you know, those lines don’t get crossed. And I don’t have the answer but, unfortunately, you know some people are brought together by a common enemy. I don’t know that we have one of those right now besides poverty and crime and drugs. It’d be nice to see more true multicultural stuff going on, not just talk. You know, the Puerto Rican Parade – awesome. Does this mean it’s just for Puerto Ricans? Does that mean if you’re not Puerto Rican you can’t go? I’m not invited? I can’t play?

And I think light (? ~43:50) is kind of an issue. People look past the 10 beautiful buildings and see the one rundown. I think someone should adopt that project and just get rid of the stuff that is just so horrible that it’s a threat to the safety of people and their neighborhood.

C: now when you say you have these stark disconnects between 2 different neighborhoods is that cultural or kinda like violent crime?

Both. It’s cultural and it’s gangs. My wife tells me that there’s kids....She’s been approached by 7th graders saying “I’d love to get out of a gang but I can’t because I’m afraid I’ll get killed.” I mean, it’s hyperbole some of it, but some of it is real. I don’t know how you can stop gangs. Turn them in to positive gangs. I think it’s true to say that most of the violence in Springfield is gang on gang. If that was gone, the metrics of the city would change drastically. And I think there’s a little bit of....some of the larger companies are a little jaded on how much good can really be done here. They need to be reminded that you are here, you exist here. Like, yeah you could leave, no one is stopping you, but you have to be a better member of the community besides putting a big fence around your building.

L: it’s definitely a mentality that nothing you do is going to help

Right. It’s something like we get a grant and nothing comes of it or results aren’t what you expected. See that didn’t work. So the 800 pound elephant in the room is the casino, right? Pretty much everyone has an opinion about it. No one knows what the truth of the matter will be. People who were negative about it see that the project’s been downgraded cause it’s getting more and more expensive and taking longer to get done. So some people it’s the last straw. Others want to see how it goes. It’s certainly going to create problems and solve some problems

C: what do you mean by it was downsized?

Well it’s purely a perception thing. And the city screwed up the communication on this. Because the original plan showed this like 20 story glass tower. Well the revised plan is a 4 story hotel with just as many rooms, just not vertical because the vertical is very expensive. The number of rooms didn’t change. Actually the casino floor space got reduced a little bit but people see, “oh so you’re already not delivering what you promised. You were going to make us a destination icon and now you’re not going to be able to tell there’s a casino.” There’s going to be a huge marquee on the highway saying what tonight’s show is. But there’s a perception issue, the city bungled that.

I tell my kids “those are going to be your jobs some day when you come home from college. That’s a punishment. You’re going to work at the casino.”
We could use a new boathouse. I think that’d be awesome for the city. Seriously. We’re on the river. Obviously this is our focus, but if you ask people from Springfield, “hey have you ever been on the river?” 90 out of 100 are going to say “no, it’s polluted, it’s dangerous.” We’re on it every day. It’s an asset, it’s an underutilized asset, the river. People fish there. “I heard signs are going to go up telling people not to eat more than 2 fish a month that they pull out of the river.” Really? Migratory fish, the ones that don’t…..anyway. And there used to be 5 boathouses in Springfield. When it was founded, boating was this huge sport. Like 80,000 people would show up for a boat race. There were 5 boathouses, now there’s one. And it’s the only public access to the river in Springfield. And it gets people away from…..just when you’re on the river, the riverbanks are lined with trees. You can’t see the city. You’re like “wow I could be in the middle of Vermont.” It’s really quite amazing. Except for one or two buildings that poke over the top. It really is a release and an escape. Actually there was a plan for a big boathouse in Springfield, I think it was like 20 years ago. And just because no one could agree on it, it just got pulled apart. No one executed it, but they had a plan. It was gorgeous, I’ve seen the drawings.

C: so for more community spaces, you think that a boathouse would be a possibility?

Yeah the boathouses, when we go to other places, they rent themselves out for weddings, they do special events, they open it up to city council meetings, like “come on down use our boathouse.” It’s huge. We have 70 foot long boats we have to store in the basement, gotta have something above it. And beautiful views. Look out our windows. I mean, it’s an escape. And it runs right through the heart of Springfield. It’s there; everyone knows how to get to it. It’s an enormous ….. 10 years ago I would have….nobody wanted a casino. We’re knocking on MGM’s door. They’ve been beaten up by the city a lot, they’re not in a giving mood right now unfortunately. I’m surprised I didn’t talk about that more.

South End

Blue Light System

P1: I think they are a great idea, but you got to look at the bigger picture. What kind of traffic, if it's a bunch of kids it's going to be pushed all the time. And you're going to be getting false calls, and when there’s a real call what are they going to do so “oh it's a hoax again?”

P2: My opinion it's a great idea. How bad would private owners want them for their own businesses or around the area? I've seen that in different areas, not too much in the south. Would it be... like she said?

P1: (Best locations to put them) Riverfront park during the track. You can't see it from anywhere and when you get to the end of the track it's just woods. I can see it there or in the smaller housing complexes. Where it's not on the corner of main street where anybody can push it just because they want to.

P3: I would say that for me the concern is I immediately have is what are we saying by erecting these push buttons. What message are we giving people that live there or even passing by throughout the community when we are creating an environment... without even saying that this is such a high crime area that we needed to do this. So it's almost like you're creating an environment where residents are now living with tons of surveillance cameras. And in an editions to that you are erecting these push button things. What type of an environment are we
creating when in the end of the day is a community, is a neighborhood. I agree with P1 the Riverfront bike trail is not necessarily a community it's a asset, a recreational place where it feels more like a college campus. But within the South end anywhere, my concern would be we are continuing the message of this is a bad place to live so much so that we have to erect these emergency push buttons.

P2: Like in a park there's no phone, I don't even think there's a pay phone anywhere.

P3: Well even the park is visible, its open. The track make sense because there's no line of sight. There's houses that lie in the mesonmy park which is the park in the South End. I mean theres eyes on. Its horrible but if something happens... but the mess we are all trying to create a better place to live.

P1: Just going back to the riverfront. That goes from the South End to the North End. There's so many ins and outs that's something to look into.

P3: And the concern about the riverfront and that community asset is that it is a dead end. And there is no points of access and entry once you get to a certain point in the end where you get to that cul de sac there. So people are not using the asset as much as the city thought because there's just a public safety concern. There's nowhere to run only jumping into the river and that still takes some time to get to. The bush...

P1: No seriously and the big stone thing that there. Well I take my kids and we go all the time but I wouldn't go in the south.

P3: And it does give people a sense of safety to have that available, but I think it's different when you live there. I think for the passerby or the people who do reports or focus groups, and people who are coming in, businesses and other places that don't really live there may go oh I feel better like walking around here at 8 o'clock the morning but for residents I would say it's really not for them

Community Lighting

P1: As a resident I know that the last time that we had the meeting with WW and all those other people, that was one thing that was mentioned was the lights. If you're going down like Adams street there's a path where it's dark. It's just no lamp, never been there. You know oh we're going to tear that up anyways. I can name off streets if you want. Ok: morris street, dales street, Adams street, Ashmun, Palmork in the ends, parts of richilou, richilou place. Down mills street, lumbard street, and arlington quart. There's no fixture for that.

P3: Yea that the limitations that the residents have had on getting them there, because it's not like they are replacing a bulb they're actually putting them up poles with stakes. There's also I've heard many times from residents say that it's not only about the lighting fixture but the lumens. And also the light pollution. Forest park middle school recently did a rehab and they put these cool like fixtures where it really targets toward the area it's intending to light. I think it's in the South End it's just like this ray of sunshine in places. Lighting has been a thing that residents have been concerned about in the past. Along main street they did invest substantially in the historic lighting into the street it's like the old post.
P1: That's what I'm saying on morris street there are those old old posts that they are just like, it looks like a 5 watt

P3: Yea so its like really ancient like I remember when we were kids those were the same stuff. Yea emerson needs lighting too.

P1: But at like dusk the lights go off because the parks are closed and you're not supposed to be there anyways.

Beautification

P2: I was thinking like on my street there's only two building and the rest of the block there's houses but there's a lot of empty space where you could put flowers. A lot of places would benefit but I don't know how long they would last if people need to take care of them.

P1: All throughout the springfield theres big huge pots filled with dirt that used to have plants. They died. I don't know if they could replant. From the light posts they used to have the hanging plants all down the South End. This was 2 years ago then they just suddenly stopped.

P2: They used to... do you remember... down by main street they used to have beautiful plants. They stopped doing it.

P3: Main street along the South End (for some history) was 2-3 years ago substantially rehabbed. There was a lot of cut outs that were put in. You could see crosswalks with more detail. They actually had embedded paintings. So the city invested a couple of years worth of funds through the c3bg process to replant and that happened a couple of years. But then they are not allocating money to that anymore so what we see is empty urns / planters. Huge ones they're empty. I know SEBA has attempted to take on some responsibility and there are some businesses that take on responsibility for the ones that are directly in front of them and that's when they start saying that they are stealing them. And they come up with innovative ways to change their plan style but most of the time they always get stolen. So what you see as a result is empty pots. But in general there is an overall cleanliness that we see on state street. The sheriff's department just the other day in the morning was going down again cleaning up the trash on main street. First Resource which is a big management company, they have their office on seratoga street, they've invested a lot of their personal equity into the maintenance of that area. So if you drive in there it feels a lot cleaner and nicer. But you could see the skeletons of what was main street.

P2: Cleaning up blocks is always welcomed in any community. There's always concerns to is it going to last?

P3: (Why should baystate be the only beautifying place?) So yes we would hope that is but even there people still throw trash on the ground. The big dog park, nobody picks up after their pet. So there is still a need for more of a cultural shift.

P1: I know that regreen springfield they came and they planted by the old gemini site they planted I think 8 small trees. So you have these companies that come and put them in but then who takes care of them? It's kind of like hey remember that tree you put in well it's dead. Like a month later. And they're like oh well people were messing with it and you're like no. What can we do they just come and put it in and I am like who do I call.
P2: When they do stuff like that for the community, who's the one responsible for the upkeep. Is it the community, a couple of people involved. But people really have to get together and keep it beautiful.

P3: If anything it highlights the need for collaboration. I think often times for the South End people with good intentions go in there to provide for the community without really working without the community. They do some clean up and they walk away wondering why trees die, why the park is now littered again. It now makes us think how do we engage and make sure the community there is collaborating. You have to build allies for all of that to stay maintained.

P1: Well it's like could you talk to your landlord? And I said you can talk to them. Because you know as a tenant saying hey I need to water these 8 trees everyday for you know. And they'll say uh no. Yea we gave them approval to do it on our property but it's not our problem. And I'm just like wow.

P2: And possible creating those 4' trees that are blooming. Also to create a safety net around it. So you could add maybe vitamins and minerals.

P1: Artwork is always welcomed. In my culture growing up you saw graffiti. You didn't see the bad graffiti you saw the good one where someone spent a month drawing this mural. Something like that would be good. Especially if the artist is from the community. A lot of people might not tell you but they appreciate something nice. A new piece of artwork is a conversation piece.

P2: I think the artwork should symbolize a piece of the community. They would appreciate it more.

P3: There's two murals now that you can see.

P1: When they did that piece, I think it was done by the church, it was a conversation piece. It was like wow what do you see? And you're at a bus stop talking to a complete stranger about this art.

P3: Anything when it comes to art what we have now isn't culturally connected to the community because it was traditionally an Italian neighborhood. So there's a big old statue in front of McDonald's with an Italian flag hanging off of it and almost 80%- of the people that live there are latinos. Then there's the shebeleface statue in front of Marc Carmel. The community does not necessarily relate to that anymore. It's changed. Thinking about art then the community should be culturally connected to it.

P2: The buckeye is a smoke shop. When they did that piece of artwork they had cameras there and little drinks and stuff. It was a big thing for a couple of months.

P1: You would have conversations around these. You can look at it and someone could come over a complete stranger. You could have a complete conversation.

P2: Spreading the world about art. Appreciating it. Learning how to respect the different cultures.
P3: The places that could benefit from beautification. The first one I think about is the dollar store. it's just so sad.

P1: The old shay cleaners at the corner of mount pilliard street and main street. The old micnere printer, the one that caught on fire, their old building if they're going to be bordered up, then border it up with some...

P3: And also there are a couple of churches on the corner of main and lumbard. There are a couple of churches that are always locked up because they primarily operate in the evenings. I think engagement with them with artists they would buy into it. It is just a locked up.... They still have a big empty facade that you can see as you walk and drive down main street.

Community Space

P2: I focus on children. Whatever they go through life it leaves an impact and their imprinted. Sometimes they don't have the resources to go to the location to have something like boys clubs. Giving them an option as to where in their age they could reach out to.

P1: So in the next 2 years we should have a new community center. It's going to be that recreational, something to host events. I can tell you that we've had a community center but you haven't been able to do anything in there. It's like ok you're going to pay 5 bucks whenever you come and you're going to the basketball. And you're like what else is there to do, I've just paid 5 dollars. They've always charged. Your kind of like well oh.........

P3: It's a trigger for them. It is for a majority of the people who live there who aren't connected in some way shape or form with the South End community center non-profit organization. They've rented space from the city for a dollar a year at the old armory which was damaged from the tornado. Now they're getting rebuilt. That building is still owned by the city. So what's happened is that because it's a non profit they have to have a business model in place that is actually really exclusionary for the people that actually live there. There are barriers of affordability that exist. They haven't been as open to the average resident as people expected them to be. So the community space is a trigger. I just wanted to make sure that I mentioned that.

P1: So yea it's like ok we're going to have a zumba. Ok cool well that extra 10 dollars. I just paid 5 dollars to get in here and then to go upstairs another 10 dollars? To do what? Its really sad. Were all crossing our fingers that the new place will be different.

P3: there's no bathrooms at the park which is the key gathering / green space of the community. Even today you'll see tons of people there. They're going there they're going to take a corner piece and put in the South End community space there. They have promised to have the facility open to the general public if they ever need to use the restroom. That's what the agreement has been but there is history. People have been saying I don't believe you and I don't buy it. In 6 months when they see mud tracks in through the bathroom they're going to stop that further perpetuating this divide.

P1: Same way when they were at the armory and there was a pocket park next to them. They were like you can't use the bathroom here. It's like uh this is a city building. If you call 311 yes you can. Oh no our director said no. So then there's people that go into the old armory or you
go into red rose. So everytime you go to that park your spending 25 dollars at red rose to use the bathroom.

P3: Were putting a lot of pressure to make sure the small gathering space available to the residents of the South End is open and transparent.

Community Resources (Information Gathering Channel)

P1: So I'm aware of all of the community resources. Just about.

P3: But were in a very unique situation.

P1: Im the type of person that even before she got involved she looks out and she knows everything. So we got this and this going on. Oh ok I guess i'll go do that and this. Where I tell my neighbor how do you know about this? Go outside read a sign, read a flyer. There's so much going on. They're doing this they're doing that. It could all be the same thing but nobody wants to come together. Ok lets say community resources, square one has this event. Square one calls will call myself, hey were doing this and we're posting this up. And then lets say the South End Citizens Council, did you know there was a South End Citizens Council? See. Right. So there's a South End Citizen Council that will say hey we're having a focus group and you reach out to a couple of people, this one that one, and the person that is getting back to you is _____ . Because other groups are like oh my people don't want to do that. Or oh I don't know who, we don't service a lot of people in the South End. You know what I mean. There are so many resources out there that you're like, well how do I get. I don't know.

P3: I guess for the benefit of the discussion maybe I could provide a little bit of content where P1 is framing her conversation from. So were involved with the South End through the c3 effort. We do meetings where neighborhood resources come together, residents come together to have conversations on the basis about all the stuff that is available to people. P1, P2, and six other residents are part of a team that is trying to take that information and get the community to hear about it. So when P1 talks about their frustrations they have the intent and the team has the intent to work together and collaborate but there are barriers that exist in the community, both regarding demographic divides, social economic divides. There are a lot of divisions that exist that it makes our work a little more difficult than we would like. But I will say when it comes to community resources, because of the c3 effort there is a gathering place about this information. I send out emails each week about what is happening in the community. There are organizations that are trying to build up and collaborate. The fact that the casino is coming in and the MGM folks are really needing for us to collaborate more in order for their business to be safe because the community next door is an investment. So they're a part of it and a soon as they become a part of it all of a sudden the people out of the woodwork come out. Ahh how have you been I haven't seen you in years. You know because MGM for some reason represents money for a lot of people. So there's a lot of stuff that is happening in terms of community resources and awareness and stuff like that. I would say that we're looking at your questions at type of media, unfortunately we have done a bad job on promoting what we have done. And I think that unfortunately our media outlets that control the message in our city tend to focus on the negative more than the positive. If they focused more on the positive there would be too many stories to report. Even the work we're doing they're are right now planning on a whole neighborfest which is a community festival on anyone, but the residents are planning that. If someone gets mugged
or someone gets run over there'll be five stories in the newspaper about it making sure that they'll post the mugshots. Stuff like that.

P1: I think any form of media... I have to remember you're not from here. Years ago like on the radio 94.7. The local 6 station they used to do like weekly calendars. I don't know if you remember. They were like hey on Tuesday there's going to be uhh farmers market open on certain square or whatever it may be. And everybody knew about it. Now that you're on facebook you know it's like ok. Around here it's like mass, if you don't go on masslive once a day, like everybody goes on masslive. Everybody goes on masslive at least once a day. Either via facebook, twitter, there app, or they even have a snapchat now were younger kids. Literally younger kids you know are like what's masslive? Oh my goodness what's going on? Oh what happened? And they're getting the middle schoolers through...

P3: What's worked well for us has been... is flyers and sometimes

P1: Door knocking

P3: Newsletters, and social media to an extent.

P2: Ive also have been working with parnon, I’ve been a resident... what I’m saying is that I've seen that they, they have, especially moninas, the promotoras. They do like work that... I've heard so many good things about them and I see the efforts and I'm trying to learn and get involved in stuff like that. I believe the medium should go into their South End community and give them more... how would you say it.

P3: Coverage.

P2: more coverage. That would really spread the word.

P3: More positive media.

P2: Because you have like P1 said twitter, facebook, and everybody... you know but sometimes that can tend to speak about the negativity. They focus about the negativity.

P1: We've just started using facebook / twitter. We have a lot of friends but we need more residents. More people that live... like if I’m on our facebook page I'm like oh I'm going to invite everyone of my neighbors. I'm going to do it. You know. And it's like the same thing on our facebook you know what let me add _____ from the reporters. I'm going to add all the key people that I know that just don't focus on the negatives or the numbers. You know what I mean. THat just want to put a story about oh my goodness did you see that guy he walked that old lady across the street. Like that was a month ago. It was literally a blurb but still it was cool. It was something with 1000 comments on something nice... oh he didn't rob her? Oh well thats whats up.

P2: It's just like the casino. When you hear of that certain community there's a casino coming. A lot of people are going to say oh my god more crime oh my god I'm going to move out. I'm leaving the country I don't want to deal with it. You know it has to do with... we had a bad tornado and a hurricane and it really depleted, especially that area. It did a lot of damage there still was... theres still damage. A lot of people are dealing with that impact and just the job
that...but they put so much effort so they need to be back at nans. They need some type of medium.

P1: I just know that every... let's say we're doing neighborfest okay we did the clean up. On my twitter I went... excuse my french ape-$#*! crazy tweeting at every reporter that works for the republican news... I still call it union news. That works for them to remind that them hey something positive is going on. We had 2 people show up and they were there for 20 minutes and they were like click click click bye. And it was like a little blurb. I said that's fine. Little things... if we can get stuff like that once a month then were on the right page.

Clean-up Program

P1: As a parent of children in elementary school, I think it's a great idea, but there are bigger things that the kids at that level of schooling need to focus on. If you put it in the middle school then absolutely. Like if you put it as kind of like an elective or like uh special in a middle school. If you added in like a piece of half an hour a week of community clean up. They go outside and they go around and clean up. Maybe but you would have to kind of like incorporate it with some element of learning. Like I can understand... uh yea I cant see it in an elementary school I'm sorry.

P3: Yeah I'm actually having a reaction to even that picture. Right so then really my immediate reaction is I mean would we ever talk about having this program in the East long meadow school system. So I know... i'll be the first to admit that there is litter in emerson white park but are we now going to engage the educational system which is already failing to make kids look like the sheriffs departments people that clean the streets. So just like I mentioned earlier the other day I saw guys in neon shirts that were doing their community service picking up trash. And is that the pathway that we are telling them that they are going. So even this idea of even having a school clean up in any other grade in our educational system, again that is already failing most of our kids, is a little bit of insulting. That's my take.

P2: I was a little like I couldn't really

P1: I was trying to find a positive and I couldn't.

P3: (How to show the environment matters?) So that's more like gardening. That's different

P1: That's more like they're all on

P3: And I would hate to... I know if I ever drove by a school and they were like that I would stop and find out who was in charge and make sure I wrote to the next school committee meeting. But there are schools like brookings for example that does incorporate elements of cleanliness because what they are doing they're investing in gardening and trash blows in so you have to maintain it, you have to weed it. That's different than a school clean up.

P1: Like with the gardening the community gardens that they have at brookings is a community garden. Thats everything you just mentioned its not like going around with a pitchfork picking up stuff. You know it's learning about the environment and healthy... not healthy living but just everything.
P3: So the picture might have done you a disservice.

P1: Take a picture of a community garden.

P2: They could approach this in different ways. Maybe they could teach them, they can talk more about decisions instead of making them

P1: Can I say something else? Like this picture... you could have a picture like this but have different ethnicities. Just to.

P2: I see a puerto rican there...

P3: That picture should just be shredded. Visually and physically.

P1: So I'm trying to see the bright side of everything.

P2: It's good to try thinking about the positive. Also in certain schools it's safe. You know how people go in their area and can litter. Are they going to be picking up safe things. You are going to have to think about that. Are the parents going to sign off on that?

P3: Needles. I mean that's really what we experience.

P2: It depends on... and you can encounter that in any region, in any area. But let's be realistic here.

P3: And they'll be cleaning up used needles, dirty condoms. They'll be cleaning up dirty diapers. That's what they'll be cleaning up.

P2: The parents are going to say my son got something and they're going to go to court.

P3: So I was... I think the intent isn't lost so I get that we already talked about the need for making sure that the community buys into the place they are living in. And there are going to be ways that we are going to be communicating with our youth about that when obviously the systems that have traditionally taught that, which is the home, that sort of a bit fractured and that's a whole bigger picture conversation about why that is. But the reality is and I get the intent. But it's more about weaving in educational components that's much more than you need to take control of your community by cleaning it up and more than you deserve this and that because you are a human being. So let's work on how to programmatically think about that.

[Lots of apologies saying we did not mean to offend anybody]

P3: But I understand it wasn't intentional. So it's good.

Adopt-A-Plant

P1: I don't want to speak for my entire community but I know I would do something like that. But I wouldn't want to do... I'm not like a green thumb. I don't have a green thumb so my plant would probably die and I know a lot of my neighbors, their plants would be dead. And then it's going to be like, what did we do this for again? Unless there was... it was in like a community space where each family has a little plot not for vegetables or food but plants. Grow a spider plant really quick and you can bring it inside once it's mature enough that you can’t kill it.
P3: You know for me... um... that's great. We are always looking for ideas about what to implement in the community. It is predominantly a latino community and there are roots in our culture that go into gardening and earth. I know that sometimes especially the youth forget that but this is a bridge when you talk about the outside, when you're talking about farms, when you're talking about any of that there is something that I've seen that clicks into people. It reminds them of their abuelita and it reminds them of their trips to puerto rico. So I think something like this in the South End and even the north because I grew up there too would work if done right and done by the right people. And making sure that the whole effort was clear but there's something to be said about how there are cultural connections with the latino community.

P2: They could even do herbs. Plants maybe to cook. Also right?

P1: Herbs and spices and stuff like that?

P2: Yes.

P3: (Something to appreciate nature right?) Which is an issue because I think a lot of the time we forget that. A lot of our systems make sure that you graduate high school, making sure this, this and that, and making sure that your parent has a job and if they don't they get evicted. All that pressure of our system has taken away from all of this...

P2: The nurturing and the little things like that they teach.

Mentoring Program

P2: I personally love this slide because growing up a lot of people didn't have... this never existed. I don't know about every exact community, the mentoring program... it existed but it was limited.

P1: Even now.

P2: Certain areas and even now mentoring whether it's from college... I used to go to college and I never... I went to stcc about a year but I did things on my own. That's why I'm stubborn, I like to learn things on my own but mentoring helps you. It just... a lot of people need this.

P3: When you look at the makeup of the families in the community there are a lot of single headed households. There are a lot of single moms raising one, two, multiple children and what happens is that the absence of the male role models in the community has an impact on how especially younger males develop. So mentorship has always been one of those type of things we always talk about. Broken families, there's a need especially for younger men. Where does that fit in? Mentorship has always been the conversation. (Types of programs you'd like to see?) There's been big brother big sister. Right? Where they have been successful.

P1: Which there is a 7 year wait for males.

P3: Because there's a limited amount

P1: Of male role models.
P3: There's only so many males that are willing to contribute their one hour a month. Or two hours a month?

P1: It's whatever they want.

P3: So there's a need. We only have one school in the neighborhood, the South End middle school there's no elementary schools or high schools. So anyways one middle school and there are programs there for mentorship. They have the ALI, the do things like that. But not everybody takes advantage, their limited to the people that work in that school and in the meantime these elementary kids, well they are going to neighborfest without their parents. So where's your parent? Oh I don't know. And their parent is inside of the apartment complex and the kid is six. So it's like yikes. And they must feel safe but so I don't know. So there's a big need in our community.

P1: As a parent of children that have all had mentors, I appreciated them tremendously. Even though our mentorship was on a therapeutic piece, that's... it doesn't matter, but the thing is in Springfield in the South End there's one... if you look at South End as a whole there's only one company that does mentorship but its the therapeutic needs. Like you said not everybody will qualify for it and this and that and the insurances. Like the big brothers big sisters, they've been great for decades but to try and get your child in there it's like uhh. It's like pulling teeth. But you know what I mean. But if there was a program against stcc, where their doing it for their...

P3: Capstone or something...

P1: Their degree... whatever degree they are going for. Early development of a child, whatever it may be, and they have six months to be a mentor. You know what I mean. And learn about what mentors do or whatever. And have the mentors have their mentees and you never know which direction that child's life will go in just by you mentoring them. And it could be for example, my son is a stubborn little $#*!. But his mentor is like (son) is like I'm just going to take a hammer and break holes in the wall. Well let's go to lowes and build something. And my sons like oh my god I got a toolkit. Dont touch my toolkit. I'm going to go build a birdhouse. You see what I'm saying. Go build your birdhouse. I wouldn't have known that unless... so if we could have something like that in our community. So many parentless children, I don't want to say father, mother, parentless children that are just like oh go outside. And they don't know what to do. Oh no I'm going with my big or whatever it may be it's like they look forward to doing something. They have different outlook on life. That would be amazing.

P3: Not only that but I think that there's also a need for a representation of people who are professionals or have gone to college or have a good career or in a trade that is really respectable. Plumbers you know all these other folks that look like them.

P1: That's exactly what I was saying.

P3: So there's a need there as well to have an example of what they could be or strive for because right now there's a lack of... although we could find them and pull them all the time. But I think the community overall is desperate to sort of see them as reflected in people that are sort of in those positions.
P2: It's funny because I happen to see something like this where they took a whole group of minorities and they got them... it could be anybody or any color... and they put them together and they were told to grab fathers. So they built a mentoring program where there was specific role models.

P1: You know like I'm going to teach you how to tie a tie today. That one?

P2: Yea it was on facebook.

P1: Yea it was just cute.

P2: And then they look up to them and they have different jobs, they have different uniforms and they can relate to them.

P3: Examples.

P2: Yea.

P3: Instead of thinking about their examples, their dads in prisons, their uncles in prisons. That's their examples.

P2: Being exposed to different examples.

P1: So if you could get the colleges that would be great. I don't want to say the older college students cause there are some young ones... but some of the young ones are just like knuckleheads and they're not... they might not be mature enough to be a mentor. Even if they're going to school for it they're still not there. But definitely look into some of the community colleges or the undergrad programs.

P3: There's also something like Project Coach, are you familiar with Project Coach?

P1: Oh yeah.

P3: So the North End has this initiative called Project Coach where they essentially sort of like, they try to solve the issue of lack of mentors by creating mentors within the community. So for example, elementary school students are partnered up with high school students the high school students are the mentors of the elementary school students. The middle schools are mentored by college students and you grow in the system and you play a different role. It's sort of like a full circle where its self sustained in that way. Were trying to create something similar in the South End but again resources and all this other stuff... just things take time.

P1: The closest things...

P3: Project Coach is a great example of a mentorship program.

P1: I can't believe I forgot about that.

General Inquiry

P1: A major part about the community is figuring out more ways... I mean we engage with the community until we're blue in the face but... uh... to get them involved what more do we
have to do? I'm not one to be oh my god here's ten dollars for participating... no. I wish I could change people's mindsets to say you live here come out and be a part and do something.

P3: I just wanna say because you had the lens of economic development so there are a lot of improvements that have happened or are going to be done in the community that's going to make it even more desirable to walk in and live in. Marble street is connecting over to central street so we'll have some more infrastructure improvements there. That those springfield housing authorities are knocked down to provide more space and openness there. So that's one piece and that moving forward and I think the city and other departments have done a good job on making sure they move forward. I think there is still some more work that needs to be done along the main street corridor regarding businesses. I think MGM is going to play a more prominent role in insuring that there's a viable main street business community that's alive and hopefully it represents the need of the community. So that the community can actually touch into that instead of what people are fearing which is gentrification piece where their bringing higher end things. You can't afford to buy a gallon of milk for $8 kind of thing. The other piece when you think about the general improvement piece of the community is that I think that there needs to be, from the city side or other organizations, an improvement on the social construct, on how community does improve from the people's lens. Whether or not the city needs to focus more energy and resources into getting staff in designated to improving the community like they used to back in the 70s, 80s. This investment in the community from that lens has lead to a lot of this discourse and disengagement because in the past you would have planners dedicated to neighborhoods and their jobs were to get feedback from the community, create neighborhood plans where people understood what was happening next. That this investment overall, and were seeing the repercussions of that, now were coming trying to do that and there are issues were having trying to overcome that. I think that that construct needs to be sort of... and that might be a political piece that comes from elected politicians to move that forward. General improvements when it comes to our community I think that's the key one, that infrastructure.

P1: That's exactly what I was trying to say.

P2: So like who thought that the casino would be a major improvement in that specific targeted area. That was the MGM right? So they really thought that would have an impact in the community because we have been in a recession. They're saying three years, I think its been over but it just been hidden. It was depleting, because of all the things going on with the wars, the tornado, the hurricane, and a lot of political things going on. They think that's going to bring a major... you know what I mean so let's see. So maybe we can get help... maybe we should think something like they're thinking but I mean you need funds, but something has to be done for the improvements. And people are trying. They're doing a great job.