

next STEPS SAFE COMMUNITY

In response to the high interest of the community at the August 2, 2012, Community Conversation, Clarkston Development Foundation scheduled a list of dates to discuss next steps and evaluate potential projects or activities in each of the identified focus areas. On December 13, 2012, CDF hosted the third in a series of Next Steps Sessions. The Session focused on the Safe Community.

The evening included a sharing of ideas generated at previous meetings. This report¹ reflects the comments and opinions of the attendees as documented at the Next Steps Session: Safe Community.

Process

Over 30 people attended and divided into small groups based on their interests. Three groups met. While in small groups, participants discussed their visions for a safe community and identified projects for group consideration and implementation. Participants were asked to consider these primary questions:

1. What vision of safety do we have with respect to the topic chosen?
2. What needs to be done generally to achieve that vision?
3. What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?
4. Given the actions identified, what are the specific projects this group can commit to undertaking?
5. What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

Participants met in small groups on the topics below. The numbers of corresponding groups were as follows:

- Bike and Pedestrian Safety (1 group)
- Community Education About Safety Issues (1 group)
- Apartment and Resident Safety (1 group)

Themes

Over the course of the evening's conversation core themes arose. Participants were clearly interested in solutions that were resident-driven, included education, empowered youth, and engaged people to work together. As in previous meetings, participants expressed the need for coordination among stakeholders and capitalizing on existing resources. The themes referenced here are not exhaustive, but are reflective of the types of discussions that occurred throughout the evening.

¹ Report prepared by Clarkston Development Foundation. An appendix is also available for download so that the reader can see every idea written on the easels by each group.

Next Steps: Projects/Actions

Out of these conversations, groups identified the following projects for further consideration and planning:

- Work on stormwater drainage issues to make sidewalks more passable and safe
- Work with CSX to make railroad crossings more safe for all, including being ADA compliant
- Slow traffic on North Indian Creek around GPC
- Empower youth and host Toastmaster event
- Host a community-wide tenant summit to discuss and organize around issues of primary concerns to tenants and landlords

CDF Observations

Safety has different meanings to different people. Each group approached safety from its own distinct perspective. The individual projects mentioned in this report are steps toward a safer community as a whole.

Pedestrian and Bike Safety

What does “pedestrian and bike safety” look like to this group?

- Place where walking is encouraged and cars are in the minority
- Accessibility to crossing at the railroads, including ADA
- Sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the community
- Slow down traffic on Indian Creek
- Continual community education on Pedestrian and Bike Safety
- Improve drainage on roads and sidewalks
- Blinking lights near GPC and near high school
- Road diet on North Indian Creek

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Road diet (Need funding to make happen)
- Crosswalks
- Community education around Pedestrian and Bike Safety
 - Kick off event
 - Apartments distribute info
 - Videos shown with others
 - Connect with resettlement organizations
 - Police do presentation every year
 - Community action to let people know importance of using crosswalks
 - Youth programs
 - Clarkston Youth Initiative group
- Find financing for ADA sidewalk, pedestrians, bikes, and crosswalk
- Pedestrian count
- Perform assessment for North Indian Creek at East Ponce and railroad crossing
- Identify issue on stormwater drainage along roads in Clarkston (North Indian Creek, E. Ponce)
- A returned rental /reward for shopping carts to keep them out of creeks

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Begin making a list of places where stormwater is a problem on roads and sidewalks
 - Take pictures and send them to the group, especially to Dean and Rodney
 - Stormwater Safety Meeting
 - Come to CALI Jan 9 meeting, 12-1 pm, Susan will add to agenda
- Railroads
 - Continue to put pressure on CSX
 - Explore additional ways of putting pressure on CSX
 - Look for ways of improving relationship with CSX
 - Identify who manages the CSX line in Clarkston

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Railroads
 - Find someone who can make something happen
 - Make this whole area a part of CALI
 - Take pictures of people crossing from Clarkston to McClendon
 - Group does the work
- Take pictures of “goat paths”
 - Use google earth
- Find a spot on CALI agenda
 - Brainstorming
 - Get Keith Barker
- Blinking Lights at GPC
 - Make a part of CALI agenda
 - Lower speed limit to 25
 - Ask if other students see problems or answers
 - Survey

Community Education About Safety Issues

What does “community education about safety issues” look like to this group?

- Creation of a family among community members
- Safety, no harassment
- Effective ways to communicate
- Everybody’s perspective is shared, including police and those without internet
- Proactive community-based enforcement of norms
- Respect for other cultures, in an outgoing way (not private)
- Gang-free, drug-free community
- Involvement of parents that is noticed by kids and promotes safe environment for kids
- Self-awareness of behavior in community
- Most high school students will go to college
- Feeling of security in classrooms
- Available counselors in schools
- Proper judgment and accountability in schools
- Gang activity has to stop
- School helps solve individual problems of students
- Support the natural progression of students
- School helps decrease violence
 - Teachers have a stake in the community. This can only be done by involving parents or community advocates
 - Parents can keep the students and teachers accountable

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Active neighborhood watch with the whole community
- Community involvement in a safe community
- An initiative concerned with safety, working in an ongoing way
- A list of trustworthy people you can call about problems you have or see
 - Begin to identify who can be trusted to respond to concerns about safety
 - People you can call and your call will not be lost
- Create more youth activities, more jobs
- Create a one-block “safe zone”
- Involve gang members
- Empower youth with the skills that let them bring change
- Research examples of how other communities have addressed their safety issues
- Involve Youth
 - Create activities, meetings, language classes that bring youth together
 - Organize groups that help those youth who have dropped out or are unemployed
 - Hold events at multiple places
 - Make it fun
 - Join a multicultural youth organization

- Create opportunities for bonding among all cultures
- Different youth groups can work together

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Find funding for re-creating the summer employment program
- Community Education Watch
- Youth empowerment

Given the actions we've identified, what are the projects this group can focus on?

- Youth empowerment
 - Get two groups together
 - Get more youth involved
 - Sports
 - Community newspaper
 - Writing, photography, video, poems, getting press pass

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- When to meet: Clarkston Youth Initiative and the Broadway will meet to discuss ideas on how to collaborate
- How adults can support youth empowerment
 - Make available neighbors and community member's unique skills
 - Training in problem solving, technical skills, fun things like music and performing arts, computer skills, English lang., leadership, dealing w/ peer pressure, public speaking.
 - Youth toastmaster training with Leslie (as part of meeting on 1/13)
 - Second meeting on January, Sunday the 13th, 3:00 p.m., at the Clarkston Community Center

Apartment and Resident Safety

What does “apartment and resident safety” look like to this group?

- Peace - no Fighting
- Friendly community
- Well-lit
- Children cared for
- Clean
- Stable
- Informed and educated about resources
- Secure
- Well-maintained
- Sense of ownership: engaged and involved

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Cooperate and be a good neighbor
- Security for apartments
- Clean-up
- Have conversations
- Form Neighborhood Watch
- Youth involvement
- Translate to address issues
- Be good advocates and mediators
- Educate and train others to respond
- Neighborhood meetings
 - Business
 - Social gathering
- Holding each other accountable
- Youth support and input in apartments
- Provide safe recreation space for youth

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Education in Apartments
 - Train volunteers
- Form Neighborhood Watch
- Cultural Events
 - Share Food, Hospitality
- Organize clean-up crew
- Talk with neighbors
 - Weekly door-to-door

- Newsletter
- CODE Enforcement

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Follow-up meeting – a tenant town hall or summit
 - Youth and adults
 - Need to promote with newsletter and/or social media communication
 - Should be inclusive of various nationalities
 - Each one-reach-one: need to recruit individuals personally
 - Contact land-lords/ owners before next meeting
 - Next Meeting Date: January 10th