2017 Place Matters Mid-Year Report

September 2017

Prepared by: Community Building Institute
Place Matters is Cincinnati’s comprehensive community investment strategy. It is consistent with the LISC Sustainable Communities model.

2017 marks the expansion of Place Matters to two new communities, Newport (Kentucky) and the West End (Cincinnati). There are now seven communities in the Place Matters network: Avondale, Covington, Madisonville, Newport, Price Hill, Walnut Hills, and the West End.

As Place Matters celebrates 10 years of comprehensive community development and broadens its geographic reach, there is an opportunity to celebrate its accomplishments and learn from its challenges.

In the past 10 years, the housing market was relatively stable, then collapsed, and is now regaining strength. While new investment is coming to Place Matters’ communities as they experience an urban resurgence, the economic conditions of many families in those same communities remains challenging. Place Matters must ensure that everyone can benefit from economic growth.

Place Matters remains an approach rooted in comprehensiveness and grounded by community priorities. Lead organizations in each community and their staff build up the capacity of resident leaders, connect community-led efforts with resources, and invest time and energy in communities that have a history of disinvestment.
This report includes **2017 Mid-Year Findings** and **Work Plan Highlights**. The report also makes overall **Recommendations** that apply to the Place Matters initiate and recommendations for each community. The Findings, Highlights, and Recommendations reflect partner and stakeholder focus groups, interviews with lead organizations, and Work Plan report updates that reflect activities and progress between January - June 2017.

Focus groups for each community brought together 10 - 15 people and included residents, business owners, program participants, partner institutions and organizations. We asked each group for their take on what role the lead organizations play in the community, how they are perceived and how they communicate their work, what they do well and not so well, how they have changed, and what impact they have had on the trajectory of the community. Finally, we asked the focus groups how the lead organizations could increase the impact of their work.

There were a few common threads that emerged from conversations in all of the communities: affordable housing, resident leadership, communication, and staff capacity and diversity.

All of the Place Matters communities are experiencing renewed private investment in their housing stock that is driving up prices to record levels. With the rise in prices and the associated growth of investment in market rate housing units, maintaining (and improving the quality of) affordable units becomes even more important. Tools need to ensure that existing homeowners and renters can benefit from the upswing in the market, just as new, higher-income families are attracted to Place Matters’ communities. A regional response to affordable housing is needed to ensure everyone has access to quality, affordable housing, especially individuals and families with low- and very-low incomes.

Whether in operation for decades or newly established, lead organizations must clearly communicate their roles and responsibilities, and the vision of their work, to the community and to partners. Staffing capacity and diversity should then support the work.

Demonstrating the value-add that lead organizations have in comprehensive community development, which often relies so heavily on the work of partners and resident volunteers, should be an ongoing priority for lead organizations. Place Matters partners think positively about the work, but believe lead organizations could better communicate their successes to the local community, to partners, and to potential funders. Lead organizations have to balance looking forward to what they will accomplish while also looking back at their successes.

Residents play a critical role in connecting the work of lead organizations and partner organizations to the local community. In early and new Place Matters communities, the development of resident leadership must be a priority to ensure that residents are driving change in their communities, that they are reflective of the community, and that they allow for and support the growth of new leadership.

**Recommendation**

Engage in regional housing policy decision making to expand the supply of quality, affordable housing.

**Recommendation**

Organizations should ensure staffing levels can provide them with the capacity they need to meet stated objectives. They should also strive to have a staff that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.

**Recommendation**

Clearly communicate organization roles, responsibilities, and vision and celebrate successes.

**Recommendation**

Provide support for resident leadership development.
## Overall Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in regional housing policy decision making to expand the supply of quality, affordable housing.</td>
<td>Clearly communicate organization roles, responsibilities, and vision and celebrate successes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations should ensure staffing levels can provide them with the capacity they need to meet stated objectives. They should also strive to have a staff that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.</td>
<td>Provide support for resident leadership development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Community Recommendations

**Avondale**

**Recommendation**
Develop a year-end report or publication that communicates ACDC’s accomplishments and role in Avondale. Demonstrating and communicating impact is critical.

**Recommendation**
ACDC should continue to support community engagement efforts as its focus shifts to physical development.

**Covington**

**Recommendation**
Identify additional opportunities to build on and improve The Center’s relationship with Covington city staff. Take advantage of opportunities to communicate The Center’s work and role with new City Manager.

**Recommendation**
Engage partners in being ambassadors of the work of The Center. Partner ambassadors would share the work and accomplishments of The Center through their networks to reach a broader audience.

**Madisonville**

**Recommendation**
Work to engage partner organizations, resident-led groups, and new stakeholders in Madisonville to more clearly define and communicate MCURC’s role in Madisonville.

**Recommendation**
Develop a strategy to more effectively communicate MCURC’s role in future physical and real estate development projects in Madisonville.

**Recommendation**
Engage MCURC board members to be active ambassadors for the work of MCURC. Highlight and communicate newly added board members to the broader community.

**Newport**

**Recommendation**
Identify opportunities for small, visible early wins for the new organization.

**Recommendation**
Develop a strategy for communicating early successes after the completion of the Vision 2025 Quality of Life Plan in order to maintain momentum, and the engagement of residents and volunteers.
### Community Recommendations (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Hill</th>
<th>Walnut Hills</th>
<th>West End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a communication strategy to improve internal program-to-program communication at Santa Maria and Price Hill Will, as well as communication between the two agencies and externally to the broader Price Hill community.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Evaluate how the WHRF staff and board members roles’ are communicated to residents at community events and meetings. Staff and board members should be recognized as ambassadors of the WHRF.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop and implement a strategy for tracking program outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Evaluate the effectiveness of events hosted by SM and PHW, including how they are advertised, how people are invited, transportation and location, and expected outcomes for attendees.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Re-engage efforts to connect with Frederick Douglass. Identify opportunities to increase parents’ awareness of the WHRF and what role the organization plays in the neighborhood.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tell the story of both present and past successes of Seven Hills. Involve youth in telling their stories to demonstrate the impact of Seven Hills and market the programs of Seven Hills to other youth in the neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Support the Seven Hills board in building their capacity for fundraising to ensure organizational sustainability.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Identify opportunities for smaller developers and small business owners to support, have access to, and benefit from physical development in Walnut Hills.</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Support the Seven Hills board in building their capacity for fundraising to ensure organizational sustainability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Avondale Mid-Year Findings

The Avondale Comprehensive Development Corporation (ACDC) is the Place Matters lead organization in Avondale. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- 2017 marks a transition year for ACDC. There is new leadership on board and a comprehensive review of work plans, organization priorities, and strategic planning is underway.

- Even with a change in top leadership, partners and residents reported strong connections with individual ACDC staff members. These staff members have been successful in building trust and are viewed as providing a valuable resource to partners. Partners see a more focused staff during the transition.

- Even with a positive impression of ACDC staff, partners report that there is room to grow in recognizing and celebrating ACDC’s collective accomplishments, its work, and its identity in Avondale more broadly. Organizational branding and communication of accomplishments should be a top priority. An accessible, visible office for ACDC is important. Partners report that being more visible and communicating more will lead to increased trust.

- As ACDC works on internal organizational development, it should consider what role ACDC plays in bridging the gap between institutions and residents, and communicating that role clearly with stakeholders.

- ACDC could play a role in better connecting partners to limit duplication of services (for example, coordination of health fair activities into one event instead of three).

Recommendation

Develop a year-end report or publication that communicates ACDC’s accomplishments and role in Avondale. Demonstrating and communicating impact is critical.

ACDC should continue to support community engagement efforts as its focus shifts to physical development.
Avondale Work Plan Highlights

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in ACDC’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. *Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.*

**expanding housing partnerships**

*In the area of housing, ACDC wants to see Avondale become a neighborhood that has quality housing options and curb appeal for residents of various incomes.*

4 Housing Improvement Program applications under review

There are 2 targeted areas for the current phase of AHIP which both support current single family development priority areas identified by ACDC. ACDC is working to increase quality homeownership opportunities for current and future Avondale residents. Ultimately ACDC seeks to develop and bring a variety of home ownership products to market that will support individuals and families seeking homes as low as $80K all the way up to $250K.

3 housing development projects ACDC is actively involved with are moving forward

ACDC has partnered with the Port Authority in an attempt to launch REACH Avondale and to assist with processing land bank applications for properties situated in Avondale. They have also partnered with the Uptown Consortium and plan to bring several new residential developments on line beginning in 2018 and they are working closely with Legal Aid to improve the living conditions at Colonial Village.

9 land bank properties programmed for productive use

ACDC has partnered with the Port Authority in an attempt to launch REACH Avondale and to assist with processing land bank applications for properties situated in Avondale.

**focusing on high school youth**

*In the area of education, ACDC supports the community with an active “Cradle to Career” education program which ensures kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade reading, and provides resources to prepare high school students for college and career training for residents.*

170 students participated in Avondale Assemblies

Through partnerships with the high schools most widely attended by Avondale teens, students are connected to a list various resource providers for education, employment, and health related programming both in writing by monthly resource packets and in person by leadership professionals.

34 Choice families were connected to support services

ACDC focused preschool and kindergarten enrollment efforts with Avondale Choice families to connect to the Early Childhood Education Specialist at South Avondale Elementary.
In the area of income, ACDC envisions a community that benefits from startups and accelerated businesses that are ready to hire from a pool of trained and work-ready residents; with resident-owned businesses supported.

147 residents connected to workforce development training

ACDC has continued to support workforce development partners by integrating communications around programs and jobs into Avondale communications channels. ACDC hosted our annual resource fair “Pitching for Peace” as a way to connect residents to different service providers primarily concerning workforce.

Residents completing workforce programs (new measure, data pending)

ACDC’s community engagement staff works with Urban League Community Access Coaches to connect and monitor Avondale CHOICE residents to leverage workforce opportunities. They also refer residents to SOAR and ACE job readiness programs.

46 youth connected to jobs

ACDC hosted two assemblies of 200+ Avondale students at Withrow and Hughes High Schools and were able to connect students to summer and after school employment opportunities with ArtWorks, Hamilton County Job and Family Services Summer Youth Employment, and Partners for a Competitive Workforce.

In the area of health, ACDC supports residents having excellent or very good health as a result of health-related activities being coordinated, and residents knowing the major health disparities and having access to education and addressing them.

Residents connected with health related activities (data pending)

ACDC Community Engagement staff has used its communication platform and resident organizing to connect residents to Gabriel’s Place activity (Share-A-Meal, Farmers Market) and to further promote health activities through Avondale Active. Staff uses partner programming (Health Expo, Do Right Kids, Avondale Health Fair) to increase resident knowledge and awareness of disparities and they partner with Every Child Succeeds in implementing Mind in the Making and Avondale Family Group.
In the area of community, ACDC uses its communication platform to connect Avondale residents and stakeholders, and ensures that they understand the importance of community engagement in health and wellness, education, safety, building code enforcement, landlord compliance, and tenant’s rights.

20 resident-led projects or events
ACDC staff has focused efforts on training “Know Your Neighbor” liaisons to lead community activities and initiatives with the idea of sustaining activities and efforts without the support of ACDC staff. ACDC Community Engagement staff have been working to identify new residents leaders in Avondale hot spot areas.

200 plus residents engaged in community activities to improve quality of life
ACDC has continued work to increase community engagement, resident team-building, and communication efforts in Avondale to increase involvement in health/wellness, education, and safety efforts.

Communication channels growing to better connect and inform residents
ACDC has continued to lead communication efforts on behalf of the neighborhood focusing the first 6 months on blogging stories from newsletters digitally and rebranding our communication tools.

67 residents participate in active living programs
ACDC continues to collaborate with Hirsch Recreation Center to engage residents in the various physical activities provided at the center. Residents are assembling teams to compete for the Million Step Challenge and Feet in the Street 5K. They have connected many seniors to the Running Club to form groups of people to walk together.

26 residents connected to mental health services
ACDC has connected with Viaquest, Beach Acres, and Children’s to connect residents to mental health education and services.
Covington Mid-Year Findings

The Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington (The Center) is the Place Matters lead organization in Covington. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- Residents and partners clearly see the Center as playing a strong connector role in the neighborhood, whether through real estate initiatives, capacity building with neighborhood associations, or police-community relations.
- The Center staff are recognized as “problem solving ambassadors.” Residents and partners understand that they can come to The Center anytime, feel welcomed, and be connected with the right resources.
- The Hellmann Creative Center is having the impact The Center intended. It is seen as a community gathering space where people from different backgrounds are able to enjoy the space together in a meaningful, productive way. Drastic improvements surrounding The Center in the Westside neighborhood are noticeable, including crime reduction, blight removal, building renovation, and new businesses.
- Residents and partners have developed strong relationships with The Center staff and are conscious of the need for staff succession planning to ensure the critical work of The Center continues in the future.
- Partners collectively recognized that there are still disconnected, underserved, and underrepresented pockets of the population in Covington that few agencies adequately serve. The Center has started to engage the immigrant population in Covington.
- The Center does not “brag” about or communicate their accomplishments often enough. Partners sometimes are not aware that The Center may be the subject area experts in the room.

Recommendation
Identify additional opportunities to build on and improve The Center’s relationship with Covington city staff. Take advantage of opportunities to communicate The Center’s work and role with new City Manager.

Recommendation
Engage partners in being ambassadors of the work of The Center. Partner ambassadors would share the work and accomplishments of The Center through their networks to reach a broader audience.
**Covington Work Plan Highlights**

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in The Center’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. *Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.*

### intentional housing and commercial investment

*In the area of housing, the Center wants to support equitable neighborhood revitalization that is fostered through residential and commercial development, blight removal, and real estate focused creative placemaking.*

**2 housing units completed, 9 underway**

The Center is rehabbing 9 single-family homes via buy/rehab/sell and Homes for Makers and 4 commercial spaces in the Westside. They have completed two Creative Facades this spring, providing $10,000 grants for existing owners.

**$1.55 million in rehabs in Westside underway**

This investment is happening through Homes for Makers and work with partner developers. The Center plays the role of broker in working with small-scale developers to rehab/infill aligned with neighborhood plans. They are working with the new Empower Tools to loan home improvement tools to residents free of charge, helping them maintain their home.

**3,400 square feet of renovated commercial space underway**

High-quality commercial space allows for small business development and expansion, and will ultimately lead to more jobs. The Center will acquire lots, fund raise, and develop Hellmann Plaza for parking and event space. They will also continue leasing commercial space in Hellmann and Pike Star.

### creative solutions tackle kindergarten readiness

*In the area of education, the Center envisions a “learning community” that encourages adult lifelong learning and student involvement in project-based learning in their neighborhood.*

**59 youth are involved in project-based learning**

Center staff partnered with Covington Independent Public Schools’ staff to work with 4th and 5th grade youth in 5 Covington elementary after-school programs, providing project-based youth leadership development programming.

**200 children engaged in kindergarten readiness activities**

Residents have been challenged, and are responding, to identify creative ways to address kindergarten readiness. 4 nano-grants have been awarded by The Center (with a fifth grant pending). Grantees will be empowered to test their ideas for educating and engaging families with pre-k children. The 4 grants are expected to reach approximately 200 pre-k children and their families.
better individualized support

In the area of income, the Center focuses on helping low- to moderate-income residents acquire the financial knowledge and skills they need to become more financially stable.

89 people demonstrating money management skills

Financial education programming has been shaped in collaboration with The Center’s key partners to ensure that it is consistent with partners’ goals of building skills that contribute to employment and financial stability. The Center offers workshops on budgeting/money management at Gateway Community and Technical College, Life Learning Center, Holmes High School, and Notre Dame Urban Education Center. They continue to adjust the curriculum and approach of their financial education workshops to respond to the needs and priorities of our key partners.

649 people accessing VITA services, 200 people receiving EITC benefits

The Hellmann Creative Center proved to be a major asset to the VITA service this year. The transition to a new site contributed to a small reduction in the number of people served, but the new facility was more conducive to hosting 2 creative engagement sessions with customers.

20 people change their resource management behavior

The Center now offers more individualized support for participants after the completion of the workshops to make behavior changes that improve their financial well-being. They are working with 20 individuals for two to six months to help them establish and follow a budget/spending plan and/or a plan to establish credit or improve their credit score.

growing a health-promoting culture

In the area of health, the Center wants to enhance a growing health-promoting culture in Covington that encourages and supports residents efforts to make behavior changes that lead to improved health outcomes.

46 people, 3 schools, and 6 worksites participating in LiveWell

The Center continues to serve as co-chair and works to strengthen LiveWell Covington, expand access to healthy foods and nutrition-based education/economic opportunities, participate in Tobacco Free Northern Kentucky, and increase active physical activity in local parks, trails, and public spaces. Currently 46 community members serve on LiveWell committees. They lead efforts for health-focused policy, systems and environmental changes. Through this work, The Center is helping to expand the number of community-based educational opportunities to develop skills for healthy eating behaviors including home gardening, food preparation, nutrition, and workforce development.
In the area of community, the Center sees residents, resident-led organizations, and partners as the change-makers that lead creative, inclusive projects that can improve the community.

73 community improvement project completed

The Center provides one-on-one mentoring and leadership development services to emerging and experienced resident leaders. They provide leadership development and technical assistance to resident-led groups by researching best practices, promoting cohesion among Place Matters strategies, hosting visioning/planning workshops, and building capacity of groups to manage community affairs and provide staff assistance to neighborhood and citywide associations. They administer Creative Communities and Nano grant programs. The Center also provides technical assistance and project management expertise to 30 resident-led associations with project identification, implementation, and evaluation.

4,039 Covington residents that participate in community events

The Center supports residents and resident-led organizations in hosting events that engage Covington residents. These events help build social capital and community pride, and spark volunteerism.

45 addresses with criminal nuisance ordinance arrests, reducing criminal activities that have a negative impact on quality of life

The Center coordinates closely with Covington Police and Kenton County Police to help residents understand their role in improving safety, following problem-oriented policing methodology.
The Madisonville Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (MCURC) is the Place Matters lead organization in Madisonville. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- Partners view the role of MCURC as connecting with developers and City council and administration and other organizations. MCURC communicates outside of the community and with funders and stirs the pot to get things moving. They also have the staff capacity to support large scale redevelopment efforts.

- Partners and residents would benefit from a clarified understanding of the roles and responsibilities of MCURC. Partners, residents, community council, and all Madisonville stakeholders should have a common set of expectations for MCURC.

- MCURC has several strong partnership and collaborations. Those partners can help share the story of MCURC, its impact, and the vision of its work and the shared vision of Madisonville.

- Redevelopment of Madison and Whetsel continues to progress but at a slow pace that isn’t visible to Madisonville community. MCURC can play an important role in filling the void of information by communicating progress of development projects to the broader community when they are able.

- MCURC continues to engage and bring together the community through events and mini-grants. This years’ mini-grant round will be focused on creative placemaking.

Recommendation

Work to engage partner organizations, resident-led groups, and new stakeholders in Madisonville to more clearly define and communicate MCURC’s role in Madisonville.

Recommendation

Develop a strategy to more effectively communicate MCURC’s role in future physical and real estate development projects in Madisonville.

Recommendation

Engage MCURC board members to be active ambassadors for the work of MCURC. Highlight and communicate newly added board members to the broader community.
Madisonville Work Plan Highlights

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in MCURC’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. *Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.*

**ongoing commercial work; added housing partnerships**

*In the area of housing, MCURC wants to make Madisonville a great location to invest as a homeowner, business owner, investor, or developer.*

**Waiting on New Markets Tax Credit allocations**

The community will be deeply involved in the planning work around the mixed-use development at Madison and Whetsel. In addition to community meetings, MCURC and Ackermann will convene small groups. MCURC will encourage residents to take ownership of advocacy around public space planning.

**Retained two businesses, recruited 3 new businesses**

MCURC provides support and technical assistance to the Business Alliance, which is now meeting monthly and involves both residents and businesses.

**Waiting on City’s NOFA process to start construction on new owner-occupied housing developments**

MCURC develops and partners to develop new and rehabbed housing opportunities across a variety of price points. The NOFA project will include 4 new houses. In addition to development, they look for other partnership efforts to improve the quality of housing stock.

**early childhood focus**

*In the area of education, MCURC advocates for a connection and shared goals between partners and the neighborhood elementary school, John P. Parker School, while Madisonville families increasingly choose Parker as a school for their children.*

**378 students enrolled at John P. Parker School**

MCURC continues to promote the good work taking place at JPP and suggests opportunities for improved school-community relations. Adding a 4th preschool class at JPP provides additional quality preschool seats, available to a variety of income levels.

**11 rated child care programs**

MCURC works to ensure education, especially early childhood partners, are around the table. Madisonville had 11 rated programs as of June 2017. These include 3, Five-Star Rated; 1, Three-Star Rated; 5, Two-Star Rated; 2, One-Star Rated. The goal was 9 for the year. That has been exceeded and more are in the works for 2017.
expanded workforce connections

In the area of income, MCURC helps residents connect with job readiness workshops and employment opportunities.

22 residents receiving employment coaching

MCURC’s role is to promote the job readiness and employment counseling services now available through Cincinnati Works at MEAC. They help to connect Madisonville residents to available services at MEAC, which will lead to an increased number of gainfully employed residents. MCURC’s most significant activity during this period was hosting the “Madisonville Job Opportunity Fair” on May 16. This project came as a result of developing a new relationship with Skanska, the construction management company on the new Dolce Hotel on the Medpace site. The original job fair grew to include 18 employers and 7 agencies.

15 residents increased their net income

Following participation in employment coaching and with gainful employment, residents will see an increase in their net income.

Residents finding employment (tracking pending)

Approximately 50 people attended the Madisonville Job Opportunity Fair but MCURC was unable to track if any attendees were hired as a result of the event. They are working on tracking outcomes from the event.

programming for health

In the area of health, MCURC supports improving resident health by pursuing deliberative policies and implementing healthy programming choices.

Madisonville 5K planned (September 9th)

MCURC’s role is to provide opportunities for Madisonville residents to learn about and participate in opportunities to improve health outcomes on an individual and community-wide levels. MCURC engages churches, block clubs, businesses, and civic groups and encourages the formation of teams to walk or run the 5K together. Four new trainers have been hired to lead the walking and running groups. Tri-State Running Co. offered to have participants join their training program. This means people could participate in training 4 days a week starting in July.

Healthy cooking classes (June 26)

Resident chef Kristen St. Clair received a Strong Cincinnati grant and started a Kids Cooking Camp and will hold adult cooking classes in September.

Cincinnati Health Department participated in 1 event, exposing residents to local resources

MCURC is working with Braxton Cann Health Center to increase their involvement in community events and neighborhood communication efforts. They participated in one event in June and shared the services available at the Health Center.
In the area of community, MCURC supports multiple opportunities to socialize through events and community-building activities and supports resident volunteer leadership positions.

2 applicants for mini-grant projects

MCURC is hosting a new mini-grant round, with an emphasis on creative placemaking.

44 average attendance at community council, 95 community council members

MCURC invites the community to participate and to lead in a variety of ways. MCURC encourages active membership in the Madisonville Community Council (MCC) and include the MCC in every MCURC sponsored event.
Newport Mid-Year Findings

ReNewport is the Place Matters lead organization in Newport. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- ReNewport has a role to play in bringing active neighborhood groups together around common issues and priorities. ReNewport has a role to play in facilitation across groups and breaking down barriers between the groups.

- As they move from planning to plan implementation, ReNewport is looking for ways to support existing organizations and collaborations, which can result in small, visible early wins.

- ReNewport is moving from planning work to plan implementation, which requires re-engagement with residents and partners and reaching out to add new people to expand its reach. ReNewport should provide a clear set of opportunities for both residents and partners on how they can get involved.

- There is an opportunity to partner with schools to engage youth in volunteer activities and to fulfill community service requirements for students while providing a benefit to the community at-large.

- With limited staff, partnerships and volunteer engagement are foundational to the early work of ReNewport. It is also important for ReNewport to define its role and ability to provide capacity and support to collaborations, initiatives, and resident-led projects.

Recommendation
Identify opportunities for small, visible early wins for the new organization.

Recommendation
Develop a strategy for communicating early successes after the completion of the Vision 2025 Quality of Life Plan in order to maintain momentum, and the engagement of residents and volunteers.
Price Hill Will (PHW) and Santa Maria Community Services (SM) are the Place Matters lead organizations in Price Hill. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- Both Santa Maria and Price Hill Will have had success in engaging residents in meaningful, unconventional ways. Santa Maria’s International Welcome Center builds relationships between residents, and between staff and residents, in addition to creating a space for valuable education and information exchange. Price Hill Will’s MYCincinnati program engages 100 youth in music programming that provides opportunities for personal development and social change.

- Internal program-to-program communication, as well as external communication, were recognized by focus group participants as areas that could use improvement at Santa Maria. Internal communication breakdown was mostly attributed to absorbing so many additional programs, and therefore expansion of staff. Parents and residents don’t have a clear understanding of the various programs offered by Santa Maria and who is eligible for the programs.

- Both Santa Maria and Price Hill Will continue to be successful in attracting funding and resources to all reaches of Price Hill. Price Hill Will is furthering its work in Lower Price Hill by providing technical assistance to resident leaders in Lower Price Hill to support business district planning and helped secure funding for improvements. They are also working on a West Price Hill business district plan.

- Santa Maria continues to improve its programming through the use of quality improvement tools. It is taking a comprehensive approach to workforce development and income stability and is connecting families with children in their early childhood program to financial stability services through STEPS (Supporting Transitions to Employment for Families Program).

**Recommendation**

Develop a communication strategy to improve internal program-to-program communication at Santa Maria and Price Hill Will, as well as communication between the two agencies and externally to the broader Price Hill community.

**Recommendation**

Evaluate the effectiveness of events hosted by SM and PHW, including how they are advertised, how people are invited, transportation and location, and expected outcomes for attendees.
Price Hill Work Plan Highlights

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in PHW’s and SM’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.

**attracting investment and redevelopment**

*In the area of housing, PHW and SM support rising property values that attract investment and redevelopment.*

**Increase in average home values (data available 4th Quarter)**

Price Hill Will continues to develop residential and commercial properties in the community. In its Buy-Improve-Sell Program, PHW has sold 2 rehabbed homes so far in 2017, with one presold. They have acquired 2 other homes which are under construction. In the Homesteading Program, PHW had 2 homes in the program and have acquired 1 other home. They also have a purchase pending for a fourth home.

**Cedar Grove housing conditions improve (data available 4th Quarter)**

Price Hill Will fosters and promotes home ownership and pride of place for new residents while inspiring existing homeowners to invest in their properties.

**Residents completing business training (classes planned for 2nd half 2017)**

Price Hill Will will organize two entrepreneurial-education and/or incubator classes and will offer a heavily-subsidized pop-up retail space to one retail business qualified through these classes. They will work with businesses, residents, building owners, and the City to get more retail spaces occupied.

**supporting children and families**

*In the area of education, PHW and SM help ensure that Price Hill children are kindergarten-ready and youth have supports to continue their education, and adults earn GEDs.*

**92% of 168 children participating in Promoting Our Preschoolers demonstrated progress in kindergarten readiness**

Santa Maria convenes early childhood providers/stakeholders, provides home visitation to 400 parents of young children annually, and coaches more than 25 family child care providers. They also coordinate Get Ready for Kindergarten events for incoming kindergartners.

**25 residents earned their GED at Santa Maria and Education Matters**

Santa Maria provides GED instruction at Santa Maria’s Literacy Center West and at Education Matters that can lead to increased employment opportunities.
In the area of income, SM and PHW help families attain economic health through job and housing stability and successfully integrating into the community.

44 residents employed
Santa Maria’s Workforce Development program coaches people who seek employment and want to improve their financial conditions. With workforce databases at LISC and United Way in transition, SM has compiled data manually and is likely under-reporting at this time, but numbers should be more accurate for the year-end report.

16 resident increased their net income, 10 increased their credit score
The goal for all workforce participants is to receive a bundle of three services: financial coaching, income supports (including housing assistance, if needed), and employment coaching. Individuals who receive two or three of these core services are more likely to improve their financial stability and grow their income long-term. Individuals are also linked with other needed services such as GED instruction, health and wellness services, services for their children, etc. The solutions are comprehensive in nature.

441 filed EITC tax returns in tax year 2016
Price Hill Will and Santa Maria led the collaborative EITC/VITA site with PHW staff serving as the site coordinator and SM staff leading the scheduling as well as staff from both volunteering as preparers.

In the area of health, PHW and SM help ensure Price Hill families have access to health services and health foods that improve overall health in the community.

36 blocks active in Healthy Homes Block by Block
The Block by Block outreach program is improving health and child literacy by identifying and connecting the most isolated and vulnerable children and families. In the summer of 2017, Block by Block obtained its 501(c)3 status. They will be exploring options for serving even more families in Cincinnati.
21,500 square feet of additional gardens

In addition to five garden programs in Price Hill, four new projects on vacant land have been created in partnership with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful. One of the new garden sites is a one-acre community garden in partnership with Turner Farm in Lower Price Hill. Its focus will be on the immigrant population. Gardens help residents lead a healthier lifestyle. Next steps include convening groups to work on cooking and nutrition to connect resources to support their efforts.

38 of 80 residents brought chronic diseases under control

The Santa Maria wellness program serves a population that is mostly uninsured and an immigrant population (majority Hispanic). The wellness program helps adults navigate the health care system to ultimately improve their health. Programs offered include bilingual cooking and nutrition classes, mental health services, mindfulness medication, and eye screenings.

implementing change and expanding partnerships

In the area of community, PHW and SM envision a Price Hill that fully embraces its urban and culturally unique community and comes together as one while still celebrating its diversity.

PHW-MY Cincinnati Parent Committee Formed

About a dozen MY Cincinnati parents came together to form a committee which has met regularly since January. They are working on coordinating one event for the end of the year. The committee provides one way for resident to actively engage in determining the future of their neighborhood.

Improved internal and external perception of Price Hill as a great place to live, work, and play (data pending)

To help positively influence the perception of Price Hill, PHW helped create a resident-led young professionals group (Price Hill NOW) of enthusiastic residents that are eager to promote and improve the neighborhood. PHW will also continue to produce and promote events that appeal to the broader region and bring them to the neighborhood.

10 Price Hill Plan action steps underway

PHW is heavily supporting business district planning in Lower Price Hill, resulting in a City-approved plan document. In further support of this plan, PHW helped residents win a major City-funded grant to improve a block of the Lower Price Hill business district (PHW will administer the grant). PHW also completed an RFP and contracting process with the City to create a West Price Hill business district plan.
Walnut Hills Mid-Year Findings

The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (WHRF) is the Place Matters lead organization in Walnut Hills. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

- As every part of Walnut Hills experiences investment, the WHRF is committed to finding ways to keep and increase the quality of affordable housing. The Neighborhood Reinvestment Plan provides the focus and direction for decision making for the WHRF and its partners. Partners saw the WHRF working to defend and address the needs of long-time residents. Subsidies would be needed to create affordable rentals or retail spaces.

- The WHRF has focused less on social media and marketing Walnut Hills over the past year. This change in focus has been noted positively by community partners. Partners recognized an increased level of trust established between the neighborhood and the WHRF over the past few years. Some of this was attributed to a stronger attention to listening.

- The relationship between the WHRF and education partners in the neighborhood could be improved. The WHRF played a part in mediating tensions between residents surrounding the new Spencer school coming to Walnut Hills but there is more work to be done. Partners suggested that the WHRF could host events sponsored by the WHRF at the school. Many parents at the school don’t know who the WHRF is and what role they play in the community.

- With increased development and the complexity of the organizational work plan, staff capacity must be carefully assessed to ensure the WHRF can deliver on expectations. In addition to capacity, the WHRF should strive to increase the diversity of its staff to reflect the diversity of the neighborhood.

Recommendation
Evaluate how the WHRF staff and board members roles’ are communicated to residents at community events and meetings. Staff and board members should be recognized as ambassadors of the WHRF.

Recommendation
Re-engage efforts to connect with Frederick Douglass. Identify opportunities to increase parents’ awareness of the WHRF and what role the organization plays in the neighborhood.

Recommendation
Identify opportunities for smaller developers and small business owners to support, have access to, and benefit from physical development in Walnut Hills.
**Walnut Hills Work Plan Highlights**

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in WHRF’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. *Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.*

---

### be a neighborhood of choice and quality for everyone

*In the area of housing, the WHRF wants Walnut Hills to be a place where people of all income levels have quality housing opportunities.*

**Homeowner toolkit in process**

The homeowner toolkit will help keep long term homeowners in Walnut Hills. The WHRF has applied for two grants, and participated in Habitat for Humanity Rock the Block with 300 volunteers. The homeowner toolkit will involve resident input to ensure that it contains the elements necessary for interested current residents to remain in their homes.

**Financing in process for 45 units of low- and moderate-income housing units**

The WHRF is partnering with The Model Group and the City of Cincinnati to secure a Low Income Housing Tax Credit award for the Scholar House.

**5 REACH homes built and sold**

The WHRF has partnered with the Port Authority on the first REACH homes in Walnut Hills. The homes have been built and sold in the southwest quadrant for about $180,000, well above recent home sales in the area.

---

### engaging the school

*In the area of education, the WHRF wants to strengthen partnerships in Walnut Hills that help Frederick Douglass Elementary School implement their goals. They’d like to make Douglass a hub of diversity.*

**Perception of Frederick Douglass Elementary School becoming more positive**

The WHRF believes as they stabilize affordable housing and reach out to increase parental involvement, the perception of the school will improve. They report that the garden has fostered new and better relationships and opinions of the school.

**Increase the WHRF’s reach by working with parents at Douglass**

The WHRF would like to see the increased involvement of parents in their child’s education. All programs will be designed by parents, facilitated by suggestions from Design Impact and WHRF. The work is still in the planning stages.

**25 high school students engaged in activities as Douglass**

The WHRF continues to support a connection between students from Frederick Douglass Elementary School and Walnut Hills High School through the Douglass garden.
connecting residents with training and jobs

In the area of income, the WHRF envisions residents that are employed with sustainable, career pathway jobs paying a livable wage, preferably in Walnut Hills businesses.

Tracking mechanism for job bank participants
The role of the WHRF is to facilitate the development of the tracking mechanism, and to recruit businesses to participate. The achievement of this measure was a challenge for the WHRF in the first half of the year.

Community Resource Center opened
The WHRF has partnered with Mercy Neighborhood Ministries in opening the Community Resource Center, which provides job readiness training, but the work linking the businesses and the job-ready residents has not happened.

Celebratory job fairs to increase participation in the job bank
Residents will be encouraged to assume leadership roles in the creation of the job fair, as well the design of the tracking mechanism for participants. The Walnut Hills library has agreed to host the job fair. The next step is to secure a teacher who can guide participants through the assessment process and to support each participant through each step of the road to employment.

connecting health activities

In the area of health, the WHRF is focused on making sure residents have access to affordable, healthy food choices, alternatives for active living, and education about their best chance of living healthier, happier lives. They’d also like to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices with opportunities for increased connection between residents.

Develop health strategy
The ultimate goal is for the WHRF to work with partners to create a cohesive, shared roadmap to lead the community to better health. They are currently seeking funding to develop a health strategy.

3 new funding sources for health initiatives
The WHRF sets the agenda, convenes the meetings, controls the finances, and completes reporting for the health collaborative. The collaborative designs, markets, and implements the health programs. They are seeking to move the needle on the effects of eating habits on the residents of Walnut Hills as a primary objective, with active living as a secondary objective.
5 new community-led events to promote health

Walnut Hills had five family cooking classes this past spring, led by a resident. The WHRF promotes two farmer’s market days, with Findlay Market and the Freestore Foodbank, and with Our Harvest planned. They also have a resident-led walking program, training for the Run for the Hills 5K, with regular, well attended evening walking groups on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. They have a new community garden, initiated by a local business, and implemented by residents, and the May Street Urban Orchard is in the works.

creating new communication channels

In the area of Community, the WHRF wants to ensure that Walnut Hills is redeveloped in an equitable manner that actively engages both long term and newer residents of Walnut Hills. Walnut Hills would be a warm, social environment that embraces the diverse population and connects them to each other.

Creating News on the Go

The WHRF will create a jingle representative of the community’s musical creativity. The jingle is needed as easily recognizable notification that the news truck was in the vicinity. News that is mobile that will carry information throughout the entire neighborhood. The jingle will be created by the residents. The truck will provide information from local business, schools, community council, and residents. It will have wifi, snacks, and encourage interaction of residents with each other.

Developing toolkit

The WHRF will support mini-grants of $200 to implement a block party on 5 or more neighborhood streets. Each recipient will be equipped with a Block Party Toolkit to help create the event. The toolkit is now being developed.

Online business directory

The business directory is in the planning stage. It will be a place where residents can find businesses in the community and family-friendly events, job training, and community health resources. The WHRF will develop a website with residents with technology skills. Next they will gather information from area businesses based on their response to a survey.
West End Mid-Year Findings

Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses (Seven Hills) is the Place Matters lead organization in the West End. The following summarizes major findings from the mid-year focus group and activities in the first half of 2017:

▪ As Seven Hills increases its capacity, Seven Hills will need to adopt measures and track outcomes. This will position Seven Hills to be competitive for additional funding opportunities.

▪ The space at Seven Hills has provided start-up opportunities for local entrepreneurs, included a day care and art gallery. Businesses can start out at Seven Hills, build up their business, and then expand into their own space. Seven Hills continues to seek out funding that can add community benefit to their space, like an expanded kitchen that could serve as a teaching kitchen and support food-based West End businesses.

▪ Seven Hills provides opportunities for residents to become leaders and active contributors in the West End. For example, Seven Hills supported Sister Link, a woman-to-woman support group, to connect them with organizations and opportunities that can help turn their great ideas into action. To date, these efforts have resulted in bringing the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market (presented by TriHealth) and creating a history book project to share their stories to the West End.

▪ Refreshed branding, improved marketing, and communication are areas for growth as Seven Hills expands its scope of work to comprehensive community development. This includes making the Seven Hills building more welcoming and accessible for residents that might not be familiar with Seven Hills.

▪ Seven Hills staff capacity and board strength are critical as they expand to tackle comprehensive community development, including housing.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a strategy for tracking program outcomes.

Tell the story of both present and past successes of Seven Hills. Involve youth in telling their stories to demonstrate the impact of Seven Hills and market the programs of Seven Hills to other youth in the neighborhood.

Support the Seven Hills board in building their capacity for fundraising to ensure organizational sustainability.
### West End Work Plan Highlights

This section highlights activities and accomplishments in the first half of 2017, as reported in Seven Hill’s Mid-Year Work Plan update. *Summaries of outcomes developed by leads in 2017 Work Plans are italicized.*

#### developing a housing strategy

*In the area of housing, Seven Hills wants a West End that offers opportunities for current residents to rent and become first-time home owners.*

**1 development partner identified**

Seven Hills will work with partners to identify properties that have been tax delinquent and abandoned that could provide opportunities for new development.

**Housing strategy (in process)**

Seven Hills is working with residents, stakeholders, LISC, CMHA, and others to develop a housing strategy for the West End. The housing strategy will include strategies that can provide homeownership opportunities for current West End residents that are renters.

**West End selected for Cincinnati’s Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP)**

The NEP and Homeownership Center have provided opportunities to develop stronger partnerships with Messer, the City, and Habitat for Humanity. A loan product administered by the Homeownership Center is also providing rehab loans for West End homeowners.

#### supporting youth and parents

*In the area of education, Seven Hills wants West End schools, children and youth to have access to all they need to improve their academic performance and excel in school through strong partnerships.*

**22 parents are better equipped to support their children**

Seven Hills hosts classes (Leadership Scholars, Toyota Learning Center, etc.), trainings (STEPS, West End Community Baby Shower, etc.), and after-school programming (STEPS, Boys and Girls Club, athletics, etc.) for parents and children.

**13 high school seniors have taken advantage of training, support, and employment opportunities**

Seven Hills provides leadership development training and connects students with the Red Cross’ Leadership Development Camp to help teens improve leadership skills, gain focus, and make decisions that lead to a positive future.

**3 adults have increased their educational attainment level**

Seven Hills recognizes the importance of improving the education of parents as a way for families to end generations and cycles of poverty. Adults need additional education, including trainings, degrees, and certifications) so that they can obtain gainful employment.
$connecting residents with local employment$

In the area of income, Seven Hills wants the West End community to know what jobs are available in the community and know the requirements needed to pursue them and are supported in overcoming barriers to finding and maintaining employment.

10 residents obtain employment

Seven Hills is building relationships with local businesses and organizations that will hire West End residents. The Seven Hills’ space can be used for opportunity and employment fairs, trainings, interviews, and as a recruiting site to connect residents with employers. Seven Hills will continue to hire residents to set the standard of building and developing opportunities for West End residents.

5 residents enter training

CityLink (Cincinnati Works, Per Scholas), Urban League, and STEPS are all assisting with the training component for residents.

7 residents join MORTAR

MORTAR trains, equips, and supports residents in the pursuit of entrepreneurship.

creating access to health care

In the area of health, Seven Hills envisions a West End where residents increase their awareness and access to affordable health care and invest and advocate for their families’ health and safety.

1 new health care connection for residents

Seven Hills assists residents in learning information about and having access to affordable health care. They are forming partnerships with local health facilities and doctor’s offices so that the community can be better informed of services available to them. Seven Hills is partnering with Health Care Access Now (HCAN) to be a health care hub and to provide support to expectant mothers and individuals with diabetes.

5 new residents connected with a primary health care source

Seven Hills will help connect residents with primary care service providers. They will host community fairs, boards, and health-centered programs to bring awareness of health care resources and services available and accessible to West End residents.
In the area of Community, Seven Hills sees a West End community that has a consistent variety of arts, culture, and agriculture activities and events that celebrate its rich history, skills, interests, and diversity.

**Hosted 3 community events**

Seven Hills supports more arts-based programming to build unity and a stronger sense of community in the West End. They will identify residents that can help in the development and implementation of additional community events.

**Held 1 story share and history event**

Seven Hills supports story and history sharing events that share personal stories as a vehicle for improving the positive perception of the West End.

**100 received the newsletter**

Seven Hills supports more collaboration and coordination in implementing a successful communication plan so that more residents can be reached and ultimately more residents will participate in any opportunity, from community events to knowing about gainful employment opportunities and how to live a healthier lifestyle.