

**CREATING RECREATIONAL SPACE
IN THE NORTH END:**
A Survey of Residents' Visions and Concerns

Spring 2002

*This report was written by
Jen Barkan, Ann Chen, Alissa Kronovet, and Erin Larkin, in
cooperation with the North End Action Team (NEAT) and the
Community Research Seminar (CRS) at Wesleyan University*

Special Thanks...

We would first like to convey our gratitude to the residents of the North End, particularly those who participated in our focus groups and our survey, for inviting us into your community and your lives. We hope we have done you justice.

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Jen, Ann, Alissa, Erin
May 2002



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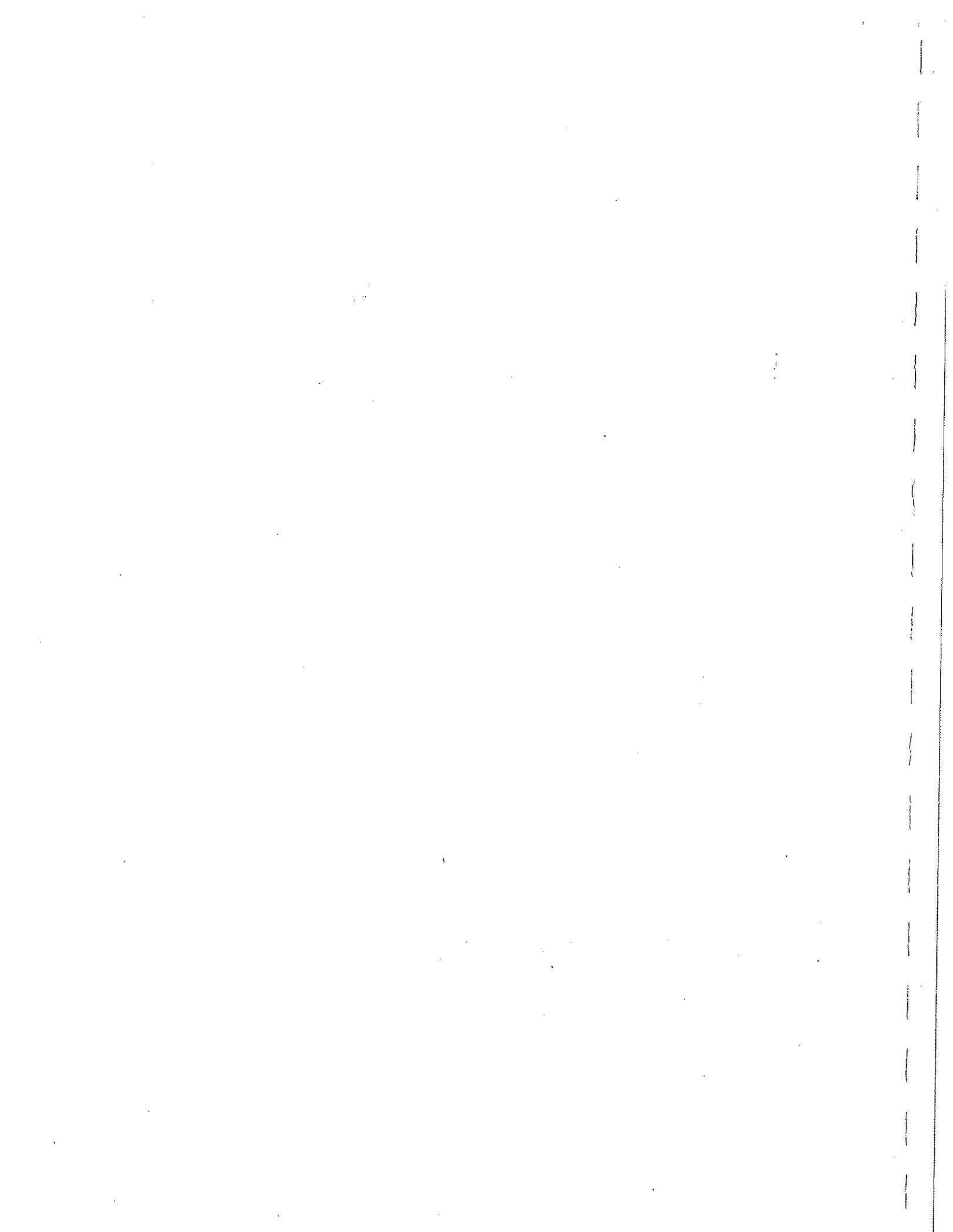
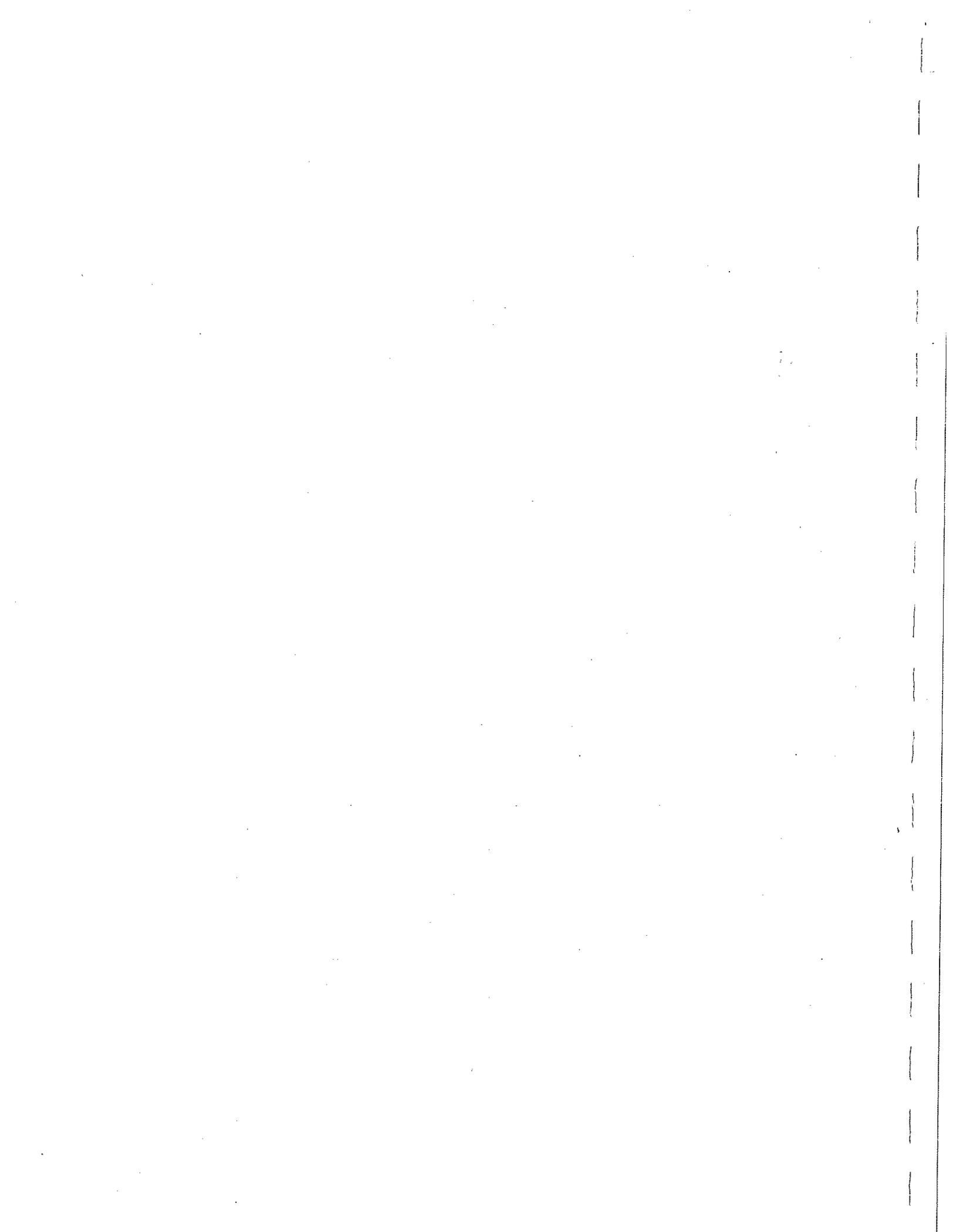


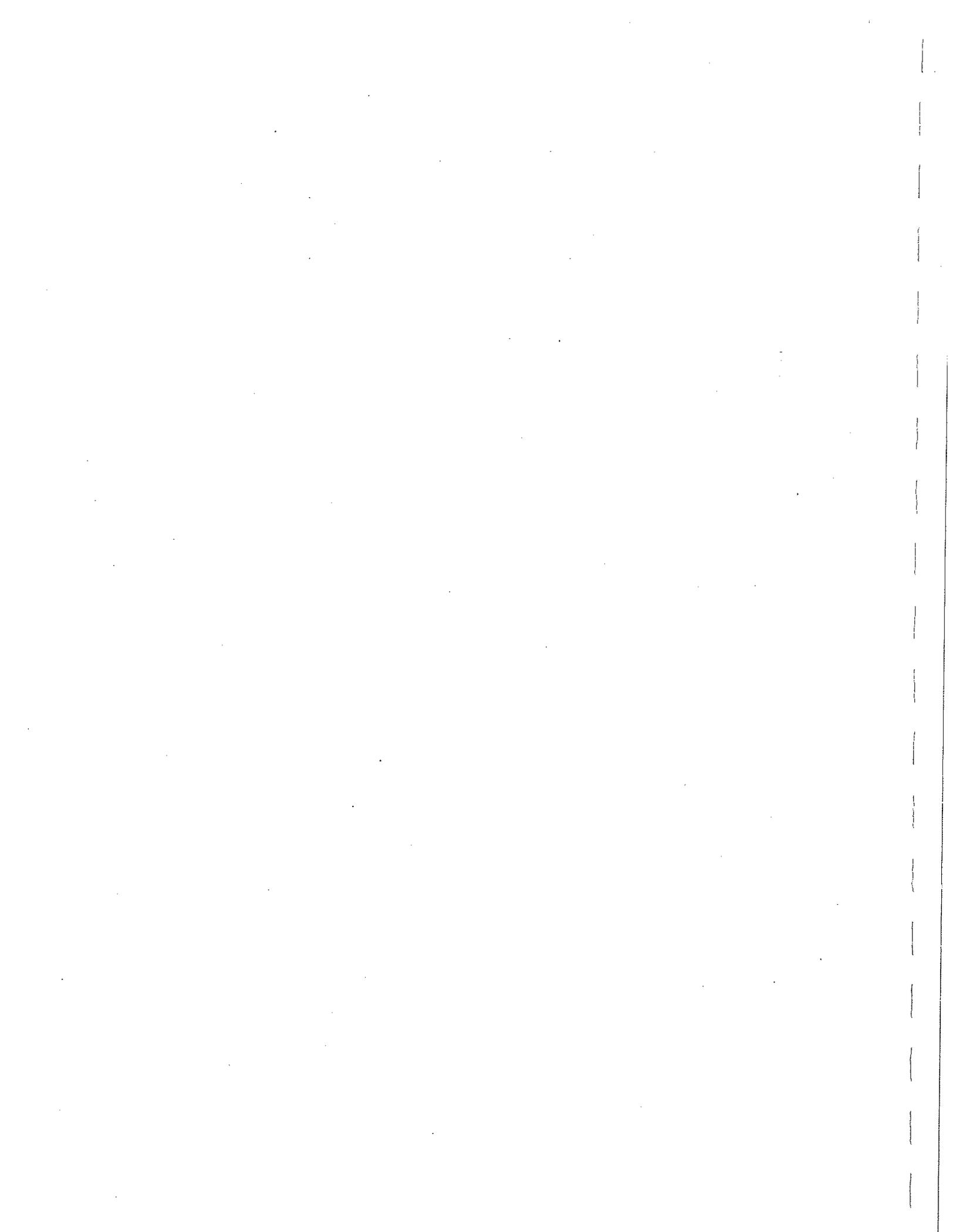
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study was conducted by a team of student researchers at Wesleyan University on behalf of the North End Action Team (NEAT), a grassroots community organization based in the North End neighborhood of Middletown, Connecticut. The purpose of the study was to gather information from North End residents regarding what type of open and/or recreational space they would like to see in their neighborhood.

Methodology

We conducted two focus groups, one with children and one with adults. Using the ideas and comments shared in the focus groups, we constructed a survey that addressed the following themes: activities to be available in the space, the support structures and services necessary to support those activities, and their preferences regarding institutional and community involvement in the space. We then conducted interviews with 64 residents and 8 non-residents in the North End.

Key Findings

Residents clearly indicated that they would like the following to be included in the space: a playground, an area for kids to bike ride, a basketball court, a space for outdoor music performances, grass and flowers, trash cans and recycling bins, a drinking fountain, cookout grills, benches, picnic tables, a shady area, and public art.

Trends in the study:

- The concern for the children in the North End is by no means exclusive to people with children.
- The support for sports facilities was not localized in one particular demographic group, indicating that these facilities have widespread popularity.
- Residents were most interested in participating in festivals/concerts, block parties, and programs for children.
- Residents who lived on Ferry Street had different a perspective on the appearance of the space and which public utilities should be available than those who lived farther from the site.
- An overwhelming majority of residents indicated that seating in the space was very important, specifically to provide for the supervision of children and comfort for the elderly.

- When asked what they would need to feel safe in the space, the three most frequent responses were 1) more police monitoring, a hired security guard, or a partnership of community policing in the area, 2) less drug and alcohol consumption in the area, and 3) keeping the space secure through fences and good lighting.
- Residents had mixed feelings about fences in the spaces; nearly half of residents indicated that fences *do not* contribute to their feeling of safety.
- A majority of residents felt that pedestrian signs, crosswalks, and well-maintained sidewalks were very important to safety in the streets surrounding the space.
- Most residents want an organized group of residents to play a role in legal ownership of the space, whether alone or together with the city.
- Almost all of the responses to our questions about cleaning and maintenance of the space indicated that there is a high level of neglect and misuse of areas in the North End.
- The majority of our sample indicated that *yes*, they would be willing to help organize activities that could take place in this space or in other locations in the neighborhood.

Conclusions

Residents in the North End would not only like an open/recreational space to be created in their neighborhood, they especially desire a space that will serve the community well. With that goal in mind, it is clear that the needs of the children in the North End will have to be given close consideration, that safety in the space is a serious concern, and that the space needs to serve a variety of purposes for a variety of people. The fact that a majority of our sample desired a particular facility or amenity, however, is not a directive for that element to be included in the space. Our study is intended to contribute to a continuing dialogue between those who are involved in designing the space and those who will use it; the needs of the community as a whole should be considered in each stage of the design process. The social interaction and community building that can come with the creation of a recreational community space, is not dependent on the space itself. Residents' willingness to participate in and organize recreational activities should be recognized and utilized as soon as possible.

INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted by a team of student researchers at Wesleyan University on behalf of the North End Action Team (NEAT), a grassroots community organization based in the North End neighborhood of Middletown, Connecticut. The purpose of the study was to gather information from North End residents regarding what type of open and/or recreational space they would like to see in their neighborhood. The creation of such a space is proposed as part of the North End Housing Initiative (NEHI), a redevelopment plan intended to improve the quality of housing in the North End (see *Appendix A* for more information on NEHI).

In order to realize our project, we spoke with nearly 100 North End residents about the following themes: activities to be available in the space, the support structures and services necessary to implement and maintain those activities, and their preferences regarding institutional and community involvement in the space. Our goal was to produce a document that would 1) serve as a tangible representation of North End residents' opinions on these issues; and 2) aid developers and architects in designing a space that reflects the needs and interests of the community.

The North End Neighborhood

Although the North End is geographically contiguous with other areas of Middletown, there are several social determinants that distinguish the North End from the rest of the city. According to both the 1990 and 2000 Census, the North End has had the "highest concentration of low to moderate income households in Middletown and a larger percentage of minorities" (NEAT, 2000) as compared to the city at large for the past decade.¹ Crime in the North End has also increased in recent years, much of it attributable to drug trafficking. In 1996, the Mayor of Middletown convened the Urban Homesteading Task Force to explore (federal) Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Status for the North End.² Although the North End is currently facing a number of challenges, a study conducted by the Yale School of Architecture's Urban Design Team described the North End as "a community of much strength" and indicated that there is great potential for improvement.³ For the NEHI and for this report, the North End refers only to the blocks of Ferry Street, Green Street, Rapallo Avenue and the sections of Main Street and Dekoven Drive that span those blocks. There are approximately 174 housing units in this area.

¹ See page 9 for a full description of how the North End area is represented in the census

² *The North End Housing Initiative (NEHI): A Chronology*, NEAT 2002

³ *The Middletown Report: North End Community Workshop*, Yale Urban Design Workshop, October 1998

The Housing Initiative

Since the early stages of the NEHI, NEAT has advocated for an open and/or recreational space to be included in the development plan. It is their opinion that such a space is lacking in the North End and that NEHI is a prime opportunity to address the recreational needs of North End residents. As the majority partner in the Limited Liability Company (LLC) that will manage NEHI, NEAT's primary role is to ensure that NEHI is first and foremost serving the residents of the North End. NEAT hopes that the data in this report will serve as tangible evidence of the residents' concerns, thereby enabling NEAT to better speak for the community as a whole.

The Site

The prospective site for this space is on the block between Ferry and Green Street, adjacent to the Ferry Street Community Garden and the Community Renewal Team (CRT) building, and between 34 and 36 Ferry Street (see *Appendix B* for map; *Appendix C* for photographs of the space; *Appendix D* for description of the Community Garden).

The lot is currently filled by the abandoned restaurant, Marino's, and a parking lot. East of Marino's is a small, one-story brick storage building and to the North side is the CRT building. Wesleyan has arranged to lease this building, originally the Street Sebastian School, from the City of Middletown to create the Green Street Art Center (GSAC). Working in cooperation with NEAT and the North End community, the GSAC will become a community-owned arts education facility. The choice of this particular site for an open and/or recreational space is in the interest of maximizing the proximity of the GSAC to the Ferry Street Community Garden in order to create a center of community involvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This project was informed by several sources concerning community-based urban development. In this section, we will discuss Peter Parks and Larry McNeil's input on the importance of participatory research in planning; Jane Jacobs, Peter Calthorpe, and other New Urbanist planners' support of open/recreational space in the urban environment; and similar sources concerning specific designs and amenities that facilitate positive social interaction within these spaces. Each of these sources has informed our research project on open space in the North End.

Participatory Research

Peter Parks calls participatory research “a self-conscious way of empowering people to take effective action toward improving conditions in their lives.”⁴ In order to facilitate community involvement in planning, and mobilize around positive social change, Larry McNeil (in a keynote address on “Action for Change”) suggests that it is first imperative to build a base of support, then to research and analyze the politics of the situation, and then finally to mobilize by engaging leaders and community members. By including community members in the planning process, residents feel ownership over their “turf.”⁵ In this view, “architecture and urbanism...become agents of social change and reform.”⁶

Importance of Open Space in Urban Environment

Increasingly, participatory planning of recreational space in the urban landscape is being used as such an agent. The Trust For Public Land—a patron of participatory planning and proponent of open space—advocates for parks and recreational programs, advising that they “stabilize and revitalize distressed communities. For one thing, they provide adolescents with constructive alternatives to anti-social behavior....without accessible and well-maintained places to recreate, there can be no recreation.”⁷

Contemporarily, planners are following a policy that attends to the needs of neighborhoods as community places in their design policy called New Urbanism. According to Peter Calthorpe, a New Urbanist planner, parks and plazas should provide a public focus for each

⁴ Parks, Peter; “What Is Participatory Research?”, pg. 1

⁵ Jacobs, Jane; *The Death and Life Of Great American Cities*, pg. 45

⁶ Katz & Scully; *New Urbanism: Toward An Architecture Of Community*, pg. 11

⁷ Trust for Public Land, <http://www.tpl.org/>

neighborhood.⁸ This work supports Jane Jacobs' advocacy of local planning that focuses on the incorporation of social space into the surrounding neighborhood.

Design can only take on the personality of its neighborhood when the planner is familiar with the neighborhood: its people, places, and activities. Resident input is key to the equation of urban planning because they know from experience "which areas are dangerous and why, which spaces are comfortable, where the traffic moves too fast, and where their children can safely walk or bike or play."⁹ The planners must create a connection with the local residents if they want to build a successful space that will be used and liked by the community.

Design of Open/Recreational Space

According to Calthorpe, open and/or recreational spaces should be located centrally within residential areas. Placing open spaces closer to sidewalks allows those walking by to observe activity within the space so that they feel connected to what's going on. In placing the space near residential activity, it will then become the informal responsibility of local residents.¹⁰ Calthorpe also suggests specific design ideas, emphasizing the importance of nature and usable year-round social spaces. In addition, it is important that the activities in this space encourage community participation.¹¹

The film, "The Social life of Small Urban Spaces," illustrates why certain spaces work while others, although aesthetically well-designed, do not work. In the end, community spaces must be designed with a focus on social interactions and less on abstract theories and principles. This literature makes clear that spaces motivated solely by architectural design principles are not enough to guarantee a successful community space. Certain amenities, such as lighting and seating, are necessary for making a space positive for community interaction, safe, and serving the needs of varying demographic groups.¹²

We drew ideas from these sources to make our study an experiment in participatory planning. From this literature we learned the importance of understanding the realistic needs of a high-density, urban neighborhood in need of a safe, open, recreational space. We hope that this report will be substantive proof of these ideas in action.

⁸ Calthorpe, Peter, "Parks, Plazas, and Civic Places", pg. 90

⁹ Project For Public Spaces, pg. 35

¹⁰ Calthorpe, pg. 91

¹¹ Calthorpe, pp. 91-93

¹² Project For Public Spaces; "How to Turn A Place Around", pg. 61

METHODOLOGY

With participatory planning in mind, we used several different methodological approaches to gain an understanding of the needs and wants of the community. We began with some background research on the issues surrounding open space planning in urban areas and the specific issues in the North End. We assembled a bibliography of relevant articles and historical sources on the North End and NEAT. We further familiarized ourselves with the neighborhood by attending NEAT meetings and NEAT-sponsored activities. From this, we wanted to get a sense of how NEAT interacted with the neighborhood and how the residents used the area. The Middletown city planner, Munro Johnson, also led us on a tour of the area to further increase our geographical understanding of the space. In addition, we made independent observations of the space to further our understanding of the social dynamics of the North End.

In our first phase in field research, we developed a general sense of how residents already use the space and their ideas of how the space could be improved. We intended to use the information gathered during this phase to construct a survey that would reach a larger sample of North End residents. We conducted two focus groups, the first with children from the neighborhood (see *Appendix E* for children focus group format). Our purpose with this group was to gather information on how and where the children spend their free time in the neighborhood and also what they ideally wanted to see. The children were all participants in a NEAT-sponsored dance class. Most of the children were residents of the three-block area we were studying, and others lived elsewhere in the North End. The children's input was useful in developing the content of our survey. Our second focus group was with adult residents of the larger North End who we contacted from phone lists provided by NEAT. Our objective was the same: to get an idea on the current use of the space and to generate ideas for our survey (see *Appendix F*).

From these focus groups, we gathered data for our second phase in field research, which consisted of door-to-door and street interviews (see *Appendix G* for survey format). We were looking for subjects who were 15 years or older, intending to only interview residents; however, we ended up interviewing non-residents as well (see *Appendix H* for further discussion on non-

residents). Interviews were always conducted in pairs, either two members of our group or one partnered with a NEAT organizer. The surveys took between 10 to 45 minutes to conduct after which we handed out literature about NEAT and their upcoming events. We also collected names and phone numbers from those residents interested in learning more about NEAT, but kept this information separate from our survey data (see *Appendix I* for discussion of methodological challenges).

SAMPLE

We surveyed 72 people in the North End, 64 of whom were residents of either Ferry Street, Green Street, the south side of Rapallo Avenue, Dekoven Drive between Ferry and Rapallo, or Main Street (*Figure 1.1*). Throughout the report, we discuss responses of the residents only, unless otherwise noted (see *Appendix H* for a discussion of non-residents, and *Appendix J* for more detailed demographic information).

The length of time residents in our sample have lived in the North End ranged from two months to 57 years, with a mean of eight years. The 31 women and 33 men in our sample range in age from 15 to 71 years, with a mean of 40. Sixty-four percent of these residents have children.¹³ Racial composition of our sample is shown in *Figure 1.2*. Fifty-nine point four percent of residents are employed.

Figure 1.1 - Street of Residence

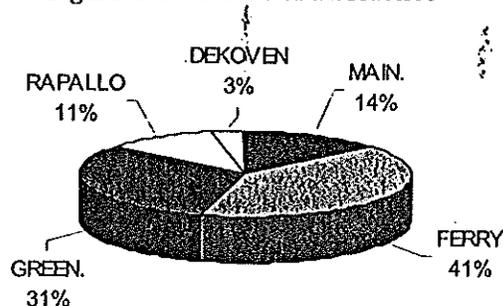
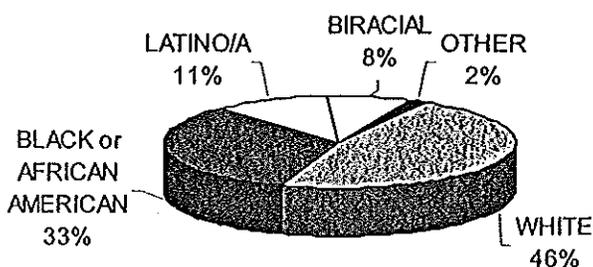


Figure 1.2 - Race of Residents



In order to ensure that our sample did not significantly misrepresent the composition of the North End neighborhood, we compared the demographic data collected from residents with official numbers from the 2000 Census.¹⁴ We found that our sample under-represented Latino/as and women, especially women in their fifties. We see an over-representation of men, especially those in their forties and

sixties. There appears to be an over-representation of people with children, though it is difficult to compare our definition of caring for children with the census statistics. All other demographic categories were very close; no employment data were available (see *Appendix J*). Intra-sample analysis revealed that any imbalances were insignificant to this study

¹³ Throughout this report, we consider people to "have children" if they either have biological children or have others' children in their care. We did not ask respondents to specify their status beyond this.

¹⁴ This study's focus area is part of U.S. Census tract 5416, block group one. In addition to Ferry, Green, and Rapallo, this block group includes everything east of Main Street between William Street to the south and the Arrigoni Bridge to the north (see map, *Appendix K*). Thus, residences on Main and Dekoven south of Washington are included in the census data, along with data for the neighborhood north of Rapallo and the Route 9 entrance, including Portland Street and St. John Street. Other roads are included in this block group, but are mainly zoned commercially.

ANALYSIS

As noted in the introduction, our survey asked residents about three main categories: *use of the space*, including facilities and activities; *support structures*, including appearance, utilities, and safety; and *roles and responsibilities*, including ownership, maintenance, and involvement in organizing. The body of this report follows these three sections. We preface our analysis with a broad discussion of children in the neighborhood, explaining why their ideas and needs are an appropriate framework for understanding the importance of an open/recreational space that serves the North End community.

Understanding Our Analysis

There are certain terms referenced throughout our analysis that must be clarified. When we refer to *residents*, we mean the 64 residents in our sample; percentages given are out of 64, unless otherwise noted. We use the phrases *having children* or *people/residents with children* to refer to those residents who responded *yes* to the question "Do you have or care for children?" In shaping our survey, we did not anticipate the structure of care-taking in the North End and consequently found it difficult to keep track of our respondents' care-taking status. We acknowledge, therefore, that there may be inconsistencies in this data. For additional discussion of methods and assumptions relevant to our analysis, see *Appendix L*.

CREATING A SPACE FOR CHILDREN

Children are a vital part of every community. The collective well being of the children in a given neighborhood has a tremendous impact on the quality of life in that community. If you were to take a walk through the North End on any afternoon, you would surely see dozens of children finding play spaces in the nooks and crannies of the streets and sidewalks that are hardly noticeable to the less inspired eyes of adults. The children of the North End turn handrails into jungle gyms, cement stoops into bike ramps, and for the duration of a sunny afternoon, the streets into their playground. While these children exude vibrancy and creativity, their energy does not erase the fact that they currently do not have a safe place to play and that much of their time spent outside is unsupervised. NEAT has identified the specific needs of children as central to the revitalization of the North End and worked intensively to develop programs that support and advocate for the well-being and positive development of children. Discerning how an open and/or recreational space in the North End could best serve children has thus emerged as one of the primary goals of this study.

Let the Children Speak

The Children's Focus Group

As mentioned in our methodology, we held a focus group with 12 children from the North End, in which we discussed 1) what types of recreational activities the kids currently engage in; 2) what spaces in the North End they use for these activities; and 3) their understanding of which spaces in the North End are and are not safe. Their responses and ideas informed our survey and revealed that these children have an acute awareness of the limitations of the recreational facilities currently available to them.

The Dekoven Playground

One afternoon, not long after our focus group with the kids, one member of our research team spoke with a group of six children, five boys (+/- 7 to 10yrs) and one girl (+/- 4yrs), in the playground of the Nehemiah Housing building on Dekoven Drive. When asked what they liked and disliked about the playground, the first comment made by a child was, "Someone wrote sexy on the swing." Perhaps Anthony¹⁵ only intended to provoke a reaction from the researcher with his expository remark, but his was only the first in a laundry list of unsettling comments that revealed that only these children are truly familiar with the misuse of the Dekoven playground.

¹⁵ All of the names mentioned in this report are aliases.

One of the older children, Jason, commented that they need to take down the slides because people “pee down them and then trick little kids into sliding down.” He also mentioned that people only use the water table to drown animals and noted that when they play football, people get “tackled into the cement and there is broken glass in the grass.”

His most astute observation, however, was that the “park never really closes” because people just hop the fence at night. Speaking of that same fence, however, he mentioned that when the park closes too early they have to play in the parking lot behind their house; he felt this lot was an unsafe place to play. When asked what could be done to make the Dekoven playground and the area next to the community garden safer, Andre replied, “put lights to see,” adding that his teacher said that “Green Street used to be peaceful until the bullies showed up.” The researcher inferred that his teacher felt “bullies” was a child-appropriate word for people involved in criminal activity. Jason, on the other hand, felt that nothing could be done to make the area safer. He said his parents don’t let him go to Ferry Street because there are too many drug dealers. He can’t play basketball because the only hoop in the neighborhood is in the backyard of a friend who lives on Ferry Street

An Aside...

The only basketball hoop in the North End was in the backyard of a Ferry St. resident, attached to a large tree. Children from the neighborhood would gather there daily to use the hoop.

One afternoon during our study, the tree fell, nearly injuring several children and destroying the basketball hoop.

Community garden organizers cut up the tree and are using it to border the garden, but the hoop has not been replaced.

When asked what would be the number one thing that they would want in the park, the tone of the conversation became a little more optimistic. The first three comments came spouting from all directions - “keep it open later,” a “basketball court,” “trees to climb on.” Aisha, the younger girl, said that she likes to climb on the bars and that we should put more “girl stuff” in the park. David wanted a basketball court and a “big football field.” Marvin wanted more swings for the kids and a “race track for bikes,” and Jason added that it would be really cool if they had one of those “spinning things,” like a merry-go-round.

With barely any prompting these children, and those who participated in the focus group, spoke of safety, access, and misuse of the space as well as inadequate facilities, offering clear suggestions for how the space could better meet their needs. These themes are not only the basis of our study, but our discussion with these children clearly indicates that their input is key in understanding how the residents, and specifically the children, of the North End will tangibly interact with the proposed space.

Care-taking in the North End

To effectively discuss how North End residents responded to questions concerning the relationship of children to an open/recreational space in the neighborhood, it must be understood that many of the caretakers in this neighborhood are either single parents, friends of parents, or some variation of a non-nuclear family. There are a high number of residents who have children that are not in their care, and a comparable number of residents who are caring for children that are not biologically their own. As previously mentioned, for the purposes of this analysis, we will describe any persons who indicated that they either have biological children or have children in their care as *having children* or *people/residents with children*.¹⁶

The Perspective of Residents with or without Children

In considering the importance of children's relationship to the space, we feel the perspective of people with and without children differ enough to warrant comparison. People with children have an interest in the specific needs of children, in contrast to a more general understanding, that informed their responses to our survey. That said, we found that the concern for the children in the North End is by no means exclusive to people with children. Sixty-four percent of respondents have children, yet 80% of all respondents felt it was very important for children to have a place to play. When asked what would be the number one thing that would most make you want to spend time in the space, 16 respondents said *kids having fun*, four of whom do not have children. We received a wide variety of responses to this question, but *seeing kids having fun* exceeded every other response by more than 10 respondents, indicating that there is a community consciousness about the needs of children.

*"I can't say what I want most,
I have to say what I want most for the kids"*
-A North End parent

We could cite altruism, goodwill, or perhaps even a desire to impress the interviewer as the reason why non-parents indicated concern for children, but the more plausible theory is that there is an observable need amongst the children of the North End for a safe recreational environment—a need so strong that even people who may have no direct contact with children are aware of it simply because they see these children in their neighborhood everyday. This

¹⁶ We asked residents, "Do you have or care for children?" We inferred that those who answered yes and are not biological parents either have a child living in his/her home, are the primary guardian for the child, or are responsible for the child's well-being on a consistent basis. We acknowledge that there may be inconsistencies in this data.

collective consciousness has the potential to become a network of collective responsibility. Nearly 70% of people *without* children and 93% of people with children indicated that they were interested in participating in programs for children, and 40% of people with children indicated an interest in organizing those programs.

The needs of children and their caregivers will be investigated throughout this report in an effort to characterize what facilities, support structures, and institutional and community involvement are required for the space to best serve the children of the North End.

USE OF THE SPACE

PLAYGROUND FACILITIES

Thinking about the specific needs of children, we asked residents whether they would like to see a playground in the space and how important it was that the playground have an area designed specifically for very young children. Residents with children were much more likely than those without children to say that they definitely wanted a playground, and also more likely to say that an area for very young children was very important (see *Figure 2.2*). Several residents noted that the playground on Dekoven Drive is poorly located for supervising children and also not maintained by the city as reasons for including a new playground in this space. Several of the participants in our focus group also observed that the Dekoven Drive playground has no play structures that are suited for small children. Other residents, however, questioned why a new playground should be built so close to an existing playground.

Figure 2.1 - Would you like to see a playground in the space?

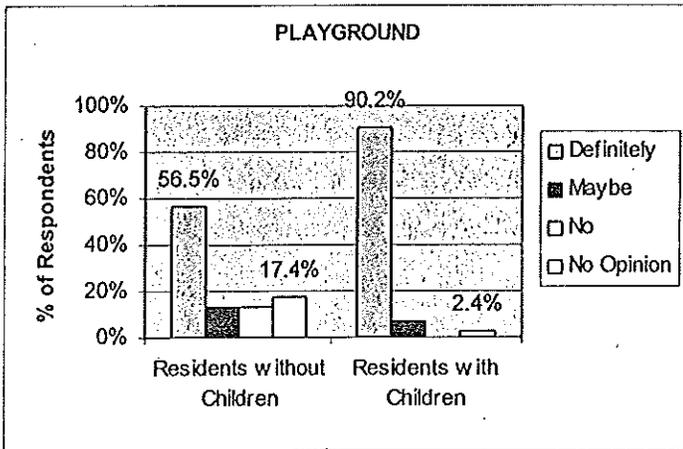
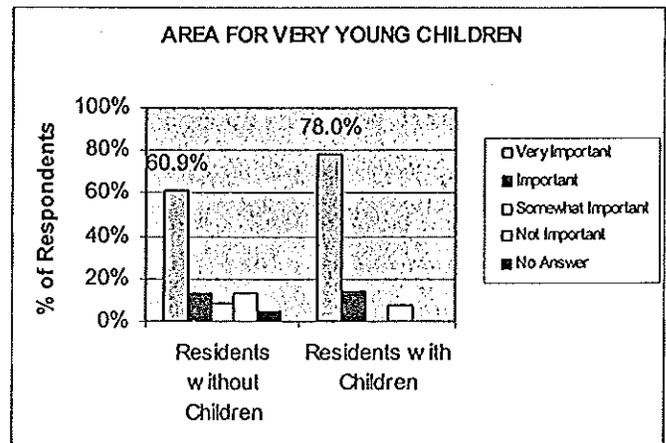


Figure 2.2 - How important is it to you to have an area designed specifically for very young children?



Residents without children were also more likely to have no opinion on the creation of a playground. A possible explanation for this is that residents without children are unfamiliar with the specific play needs of children and did not feel they could give an informed answer.

SPORTS FACILITIES

Drawing primarily from ideas given by participants in the adult focus group, we asked respondents whether they would like to see, and whether they would use, the following sports facilities in the space: a basketball court, a volleyball net, a field for sports like football or soccer, a bike riding area for kids, and an area for skateboarding and/or rollerblading/skating. We found that a basketball court and a bike riding area were equally favored above the rest, particularly amongst people with children. When asked which sports facility they would want the most, the overwhelming favorite was the basketball court across all demographic categories. There were few correlations between anticipated use of a facility and desire to see that facility; the majority of respondents are strong supporters of facilities that they know they will not use.

Facilities for Children

Residents with children were strong supporters of all sports facilities, but an overwhelming majority said they would definitely like to see a basketball court (85%) and an area for kids to bike ride (88%). One resident commented that a basketball court would be a good place for teenagers and several residents commented that an area for kids to bike ride was especially needed because the kids currently either ride in the streets, where it is clearly unsafe, or can't ride at all because there are too many cars driving by.

A basketball court and an area for bike riding were also favored by those who value having a place to play outdoor sports. Of those who felt it was important or very important for people of *all ages* to have a place to play outdoor sports, 87% definitely want to see a basketball court and 87% want to see a bike riding area for kids.

Facilities for Everyone

The support for sports facilities was not localized in one particular demographic group, indicating that these facilities have widespread popularity. The seventy-eight percent of residents who definitely wanted a basketball court and the 78% of residents who wanted an area for kids to bike ride was proportionately distributed amongst all racial groups and by street of residence. Women wanted each of the facilities more than men by a very small margin, particularly in the case of a bike riding area; this can be attributed to the fact that more women in our study have children than men. Although a basketball court and an area for bike riding were the most popular facilities, the majority of residents still said they definitely wanted to see each of the other facilities. A field for sports like football or soccer was the third most popular facility (69%), followed by an area for skateboarding and/or rollerblading/skating, and then a volleyball net. Residents noted that a volleyball net would get torn down and that there is not enough space for a field as reasons why they were less inclined to support these facilities.

Table 3.1 - Sports Facilities: Would you like to see each of the following in the space...

	Definitely	Maybe	No	No Opinion	No Answer	Total
Basketball Court	78.1%	6.3%	9.4%	6.3%		100.0%
Volleyball Net	60.9%	12.5%	20.3%	6.3%		100.0%
Field Area for sports like football or soccer	68.8%	10.9%	15.3%	1.6%	1.6%	100.0%
Area where kids could bike ride	78.1%	10.9%	9.4%	1.6%		100.0%
Area where kids could skateboard or rollerblade/skate	65.6%	7.8%	20.3%	6.3%		100.0%

Although residents were equally likely to say they definitely wanted a basketball and an area for kids to bike ride, when asked which one facility they would want the most, a basketball court emerged as the clear favorite.¹⁷ Nineteen of the 47 people asked (40%) said they would most want a basketball court, twice the number of people who said an area for bike riding.

*When asked which sports facility they would want most,
40% of residents said a basketball court – twice
the response for any other facility.*

Sports Facilities as Social Spaces

The gap between the percentage of respondents who want sports facilities and those who said they would use them shows that the majority of residents support the creation of facilities that they know they will not use (see Table 3.2). The lowest frequency of people who definitely wanted any of the sports facilities was 61%, for a volleyball net. Yet only 40% of respondents said they would use a basketball court, which 78% of respondents definitely wanted to have.

Table 3.2 - Sports Facilities: Which of these sports facilities would you use?

	Yes	No	Total
Basketball Court	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Volleyball Net	35.5%	64.5%	100.0%
Field Area for sports like football or soccer	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Area where kids could bike ride	26.6%	73.4%	100.0%
Area where kids could skateboard or rollerblade/skate	22.2%	77.8%	100.0%

¹⁷ A portion of our sample was not asked which facility they would want the most or which facilities they would use because we decided to include these questions after we had already begun interviewing.

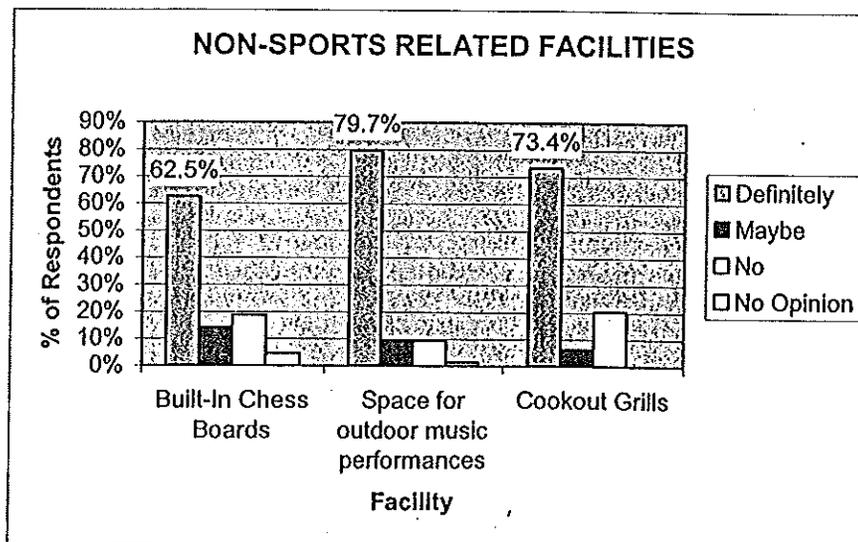
There are at least three possible explanations for this data: 1) We did not interview anyone below the age of 15 and therefore missed the primary group of people that would use these facilities; 2) This is another example of the collective consciousness about the well-being of children. Residents are responding to the apparent need for these facilities and responding on behalf of the children; or 3), residents see these facilities as serving a function beyond their direct use. A basketball court is not simply a place to play basketball, but a place for people to gather and also a source of entertainment. In providing a natural opportunity for groups of people to engage in spontaneous activity, sports facilities serve a social function for the community.

NON-SPORTS RELATED FACILITIES

We also asked residents about facilities that provide space for non-sports related activities; specifically, built-in chess boards, a space for outdoor music performances, and cookout grills (see Figure 4.1). A space for outdoor music performances was the most popular of the three with nearly 80% of residents saying they would definitely like to see this facility included in the space. Several residents commented that they have enjoyed the summer concerts in the herb garden (on the corner of Main Street and Green Street) and would attend more if they were offered. There were, however, concerns that an outdoor music space would bring too much noise to the area. A majority of residents (63%) also said they would definitely like to see built-in chess boards in the space.

Seventy-three percent of residents were in favor of cookout grills, several expressing a desire for a picnic area. A number of residents commented that they enjoy having cookouts during the summer and would make use of a space equipped with a grill and picnic tables. Other residents did express concern that grills would be vandalized or improperly maintained and suggested that the space should have a picnic area, but that individuals should bring their own grills.

Figure 4.1 - Non-Sports Related Facilities: Would you like to see the following in the space...



Although residents over the age of 35 showed strong support for both sports and non-sports facilities, we found they tended to want each of the facilities less than residents under the age of 35. While 90% of residents under the age of 35 said they definitely wanted a basketball court, only 73% of residents over the age of 35 said the same. The numbers were similar for an outdoor music space—90% of residents over the age of 35 said definitely in contrast to only 75% of residents. Although the gap between age groups is considerably smaller for certain facilities, such as built-in chess boards, residents above the age of 35 still wanted each facility less than those under the age of 35. There are three possible explanations for this data: 1) It is possible that the facilities we asked about are not the facilities that people over the age of 35 want. When we look at residents' interest in participating in organized activities, however, we find it is more likely that, 2) older residents are more skeptical about public facilities and nervous about encouraging large groups of people to congregate in space, and 3) residents over the age of 35 typically have lived in the North End longer than residents under the age of 35 and are disillusioned about the neighborhood. Fifty-six percent of residents over the age of 35 have lived in the North End for 5 years or more, in contrast to only 20% of residents under the age of 35.

PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES

Thinking ahead to potential uses of these facilities, we asked residents if they would participate in the following organized recreational activities if they were offered in the North End: exercise classes, intramural sports leagues, public art projects, the community garden, flea markets or tag sales, block parties, program for children, and festivals or concerts. Residents were most interested in participating in festivals/concerts, block parties, and programs for children (*see Figure 5.1*); there were no noticeable differences between age groups

Activities for All Ages

Residents over the age of 35 were proportionately interested in participating in each of the activities indicating that their reluctance to support both sports and non-sports facilities is not due to lack of interest in recreational activities. Older residents, in fact, have a variety of interests that can be provided for by the space – they may simply be afraid that the facilities will be misused when unsupervised and are more inclined to participate in organized activities.

Social Activities

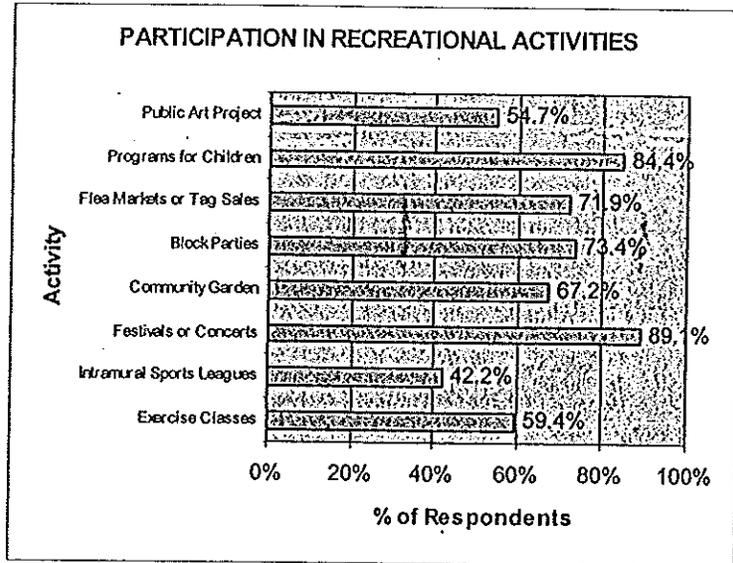
Residents of all ages expressed considerable interest in participating in festivals/concerts and block parties, both activities that encourage lively social interaction amongst neighbors. An overwhelming majority of residents, 89%, were interested in participating in festivals or concerts

and 73% said they would participate in block parties. Several residents commented that they had enjoyed previous block parties in the North End, hosted by NEAT, and would like to have more.

Figure 5.1- Would you participate in the following recreational activities if they were offered?

Programs for Children

As mentioned earlier in this report, residents' interest in participating in programs for children reflects the community's consciousness about the needs of children. Nearly 70% of people without children and 93% of people with children said they would participate in programs for children. With flea markets as the only exception, people with children were more likely to say they would participate in each of the recreational activities, suggesting that organized activities would present an opportunity to involve people with children, with their children, in the space.



Current and Future Participation in the Ferry Street Community Garden

In comparing the data on current participation in the already existing community garden with that of residents who are interested in participating in the garden, we find that there is definable population of residents interested in participating that are not currently involved. Residents with children and those who live on Ferry Street were more likely to have been involved in the garden (see Figure 5.2). Residents with children were *twice as likely* to have been involved in the garden, either themselves or through their children. Fifty-four percent of Ferry Street residents have been involved, either themselves or through their children, in contrast to only 24% from all other streets combined.

Fifty-four percent of those residents who have *not* previously been involved in the garden expressed interest in participating. The demographics of this group *did not* match those residents who are already participating in garden activities (see Figure 5.2); they did not tend to have children or live on Ferry Street. This data suggests that NEAT is reaching only a portion of North End residents who are interested in participating in the community garden. This is partially

explained by the fact that both the NEAT office and the community garden are on Ferry Street, that NEAT has intentionally tried to direct resources toward the children in the neighborhood, and that the garden, to an extent, requires long-term involvement. The community garden has been one of NEAT's most successful endeavors, with consistent community participation. If these participation trends are present in the garden, we can hypothesize that the participants in other NEAT programs are also only representative of a portion of those interested; additional outreach is required to reach residents without children and those who do not live on Ferry Street

Figure 5.2 – Current Involvement in the Comm. Garden

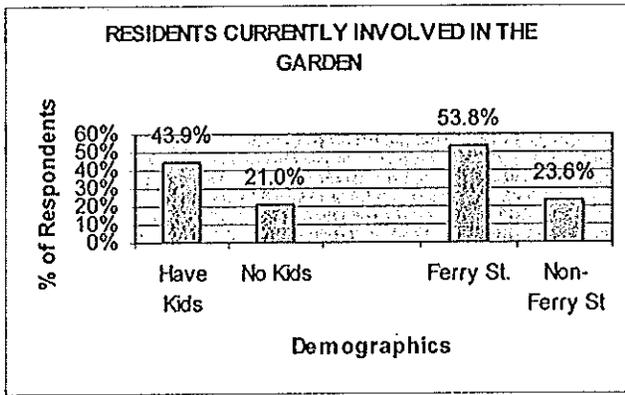
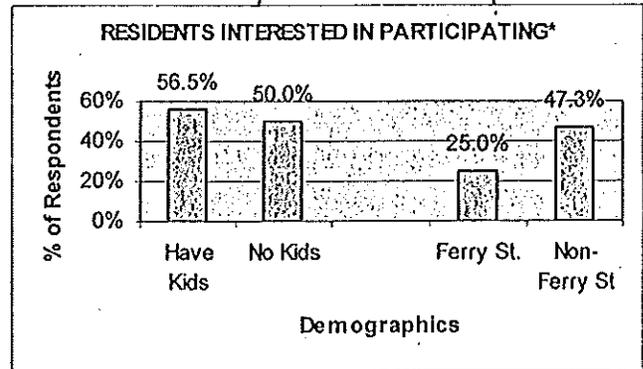


Figure 5.3- Interest in Future Participation in the Comm. Garden



*This graph shows the demographics of residents who were interested in participating, but had not previously been involved in the garden.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

APPEARANCE

Respondents were asked to answer several questions regarding the appearance of the new space. These questions included: the possible expansion of the adjacent Ferry Street Community Garden into the space, what their preferences were for trees, plants, flowers, and grass, their desire for public art, and importance of and preferences for seating in the space.

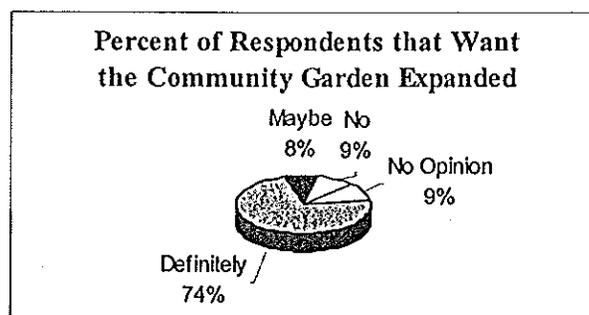
Residents living on Ferry Street or Green Street, those next to the proposed site, had different opinions than those living on Main Street, Dekoven Drive, and Rapallo Avenue. Opinions also varied according to whether or not residents had children. But more often than not, community members agreed on what they wanted in the space, regardless of their demographic group.

Expansion of the Ferry Street Garden

The Ferry Street Community Garden is located to the East of the proposed site. The possibility of expanding the garden along with the creation of the space was proposed to the residents. While only a third of residents are involved in the Community Garden, almost two-thirds of residents want to see the garden expanded.¹⁸ Several respondents were enthusiastic about becoming more involved in the garden if plots were available.

Although residents of Ferry Street are the closest in proximity to the Ferry Street garden, the most involved in the garden,¹⁹ they also make up the majority of residents who stated that they did not want to see the garden expanded.²⁰ The residents' experience with the space and greater familiarity with the proposed site may explain their hesitancy to expand the garden. Since the development of a garden is a gradual long-term project, one resident mentioned that the expansion of the garden would destroy the progress they have recently made in the garden.

Figure 6.1 – Expansion of the Community Garden



¹⁸ 92.2% of residents were aware that the garden exists.

¹⁹ 55% of street, with second highest rates of 16.7% on Green St. and Rapallo Ave

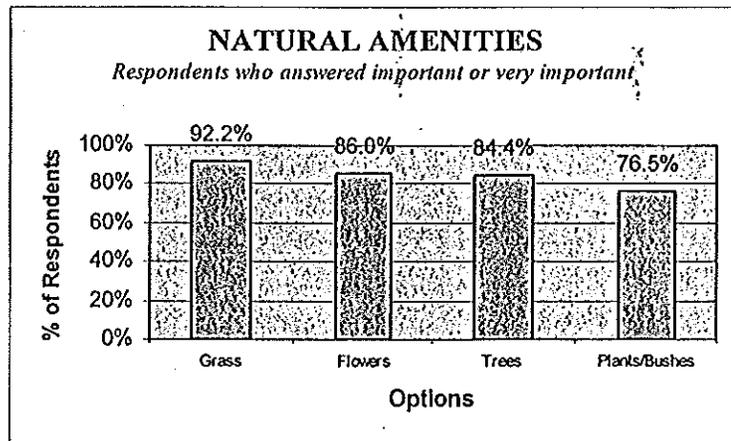
²⁰ 50% didn't want garden expanded, as opposed to other rates of 39% (Green St.) and 33% (Main St.).

Natural Amenities

Most residents wanted grass and flowers in the space (64% indicating that these options were very important); the order of preference was grass, flowers, trees, then plants or bushes. Regardless of the order, a significant majority of residents think of natural amenities as important in the open and/or recreational space.

One resident commented that trees were important in order to teach children about nature. Another stated that flowers were important to break out of the “city mode.” Two residents showed concerns that plants/bushes could be dangerous because people could hide in them, making the space unsafe. The data echo these comments, as plants/bushes were the least desired natural amenity in the space.

Figure 6.2 – Natural Amenities: How important is it that each of the following be in the space...



Shade

A majority of respondents thought that it was very important to have shade in the space (60%). A proportion of three residents to one indicated that trees were their preferred source of shade to human-made sources, such as canopies, or overhangs. One respondent remarked that the breeze from trees was irreplaceable.²¹

Several respondents pointed out the importance of shade for elders. One resident, a 70-year-old woman said, “I won’t be out there unless there’s shade.” Youngest and oldest respondents were the most likely to state that shade was very important. Other respondents remarked that shade would be important in areas where parents were sitting to supervise their children.

²¹ Interestingly, 78% of residents from Main St. responded that shade was very important, this being the highest rate of response. Residents on Main St. often indicated a higher rate of desire for amenities and utilities. This could be because of consistent social activity of residents on Main St. (people going in and out of stores, hanging out on the street etc.), the lack of seating and shade, and cracked sidewalks along this avenue. Additionally, residents on Main St. tend to spend recreational time along this avenue with non-residents, rather than other places in the North End where only residents of those streets tended to spend time.

Public Art

Eighty-six percent of residents interviewed would like to see public art (i.e. murals or sculptures) in the space. Concerns from residents on this topic were that the art would be vandalized or covered in graffiti.

Seating

Seating in this space is a priority for an overwhelming majority of residents. Ninety percent of residents think of seating as very important. Seating would allow community members to spend time off of sidewalks in a space that is their own. Several residents commented on the need for a safe space in which to spend time outside, parents wanting to watch their kids while they play, while kids wanted the same thing for themselves and their parents.

The most desired types of seating in the recreational space were picnic tables and a grassy lawn. This trend clearly integrates desires of having a field in the space, thus emphasizing the possibility of making the space multi-purpose. Residents explicitly said that they did not want moveable chairs in the space, many commenting that moveable chairs would be stolen, preferring a picnic area because they felt that seating should be stationary and locked down in the space. One resident said that "Chairs got four legs, but they're gonna leave on two."

Figure 6.3 – Seating: How important is it that there be seating in the space?

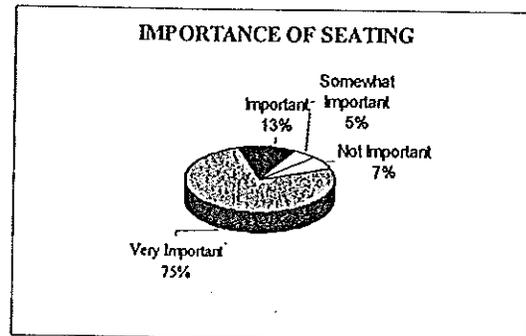
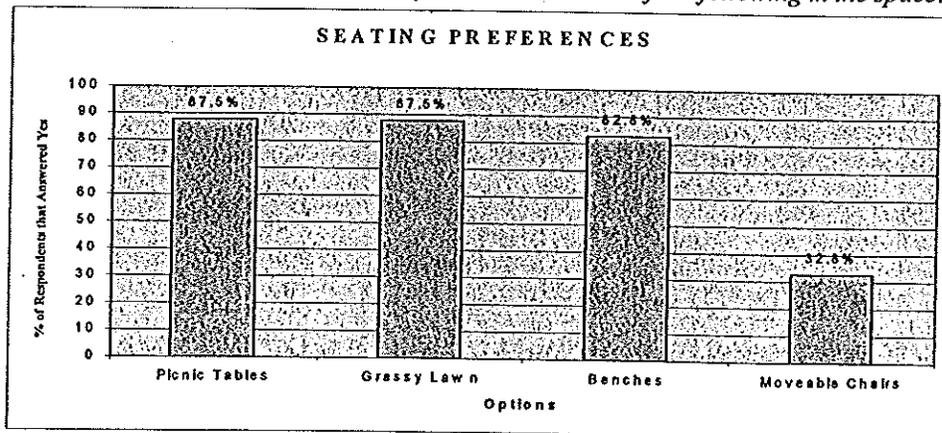


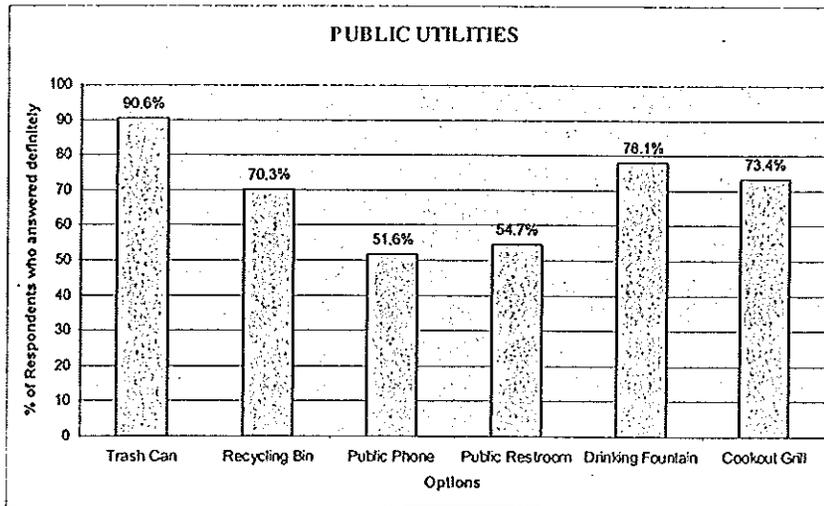
Figure 6.4 – Seating Options: Would you like to see each of the following in the space...



UTILITIES

Utilities in this space would act as a support system to the activities, appearance, and the safety of the space. They range from public utilities that maintain the space, to services that allow for more comfort within the space. We asked residents whether or not they would like to see the following public utilities in the space: trash cans, recycling bins, a public restroom, a drinking fountain, and cookout grills. Residents were also asked about various seating options. Overall, residents appeared to have very strong opinions about what they do and do not prefer. There were also similar visions as far as different streets preferring different amenities.

Figure 7.1 – Public Utilities: Would you like to see each of the following in the space...



Trash Cans

An overwhelming majority of residents (91%) saw a need for trashcans in the space. When asked for suggestions as to how to keep the space clean, thirteen respondents volunteered that trashcans were crucial to maintaining the space. (*see p. 32 for more on cleaning*)

Recycling Bins

When asked about recycling bins, 70% of residents indicated that they would definitely like to see them in the space, although some respondents were skeptical that the community would use them. Some residents expressed that recycling bins would hinder certain residents' habits of picking up cans and returning them for a deposit and others laughed at the prospect of people attending to recycling.

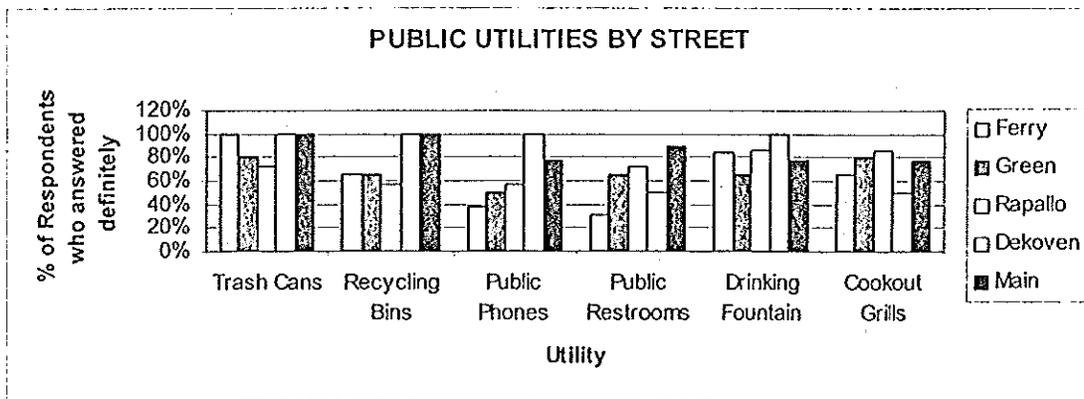
Public Phones, Restrooms, Drinking Fountains, and Cookout Grills

When asked about their preferences for public utilities to service resident use of the space, half of the residents (51%) definitely want a public phone. Several mentioned that even an

emergency phone or calling button (such as the one on Main Street) could be useful in the space. But many other residents expressed concerns that a public phone would either be broken, or be used for drug dealings. The results varied according to street, probably because residents did not want strangers coming so close to their homes on a consistent basis.

Residents on Ferry Street consistently showed less of a desire than residents on other streets for most of the utilities. This dynamic holds true in regards to desire for a public phone (39% want it, while 50% do not), a public restroom (31% stated that they wanted one, while 46% did not), and cookout-grills (65% versus an average of 85% on other streets). Regardless, 55% of residents said that they definitely want a public bathroom in the space.

Figure 7.2 – Public Utilities: Would you like to see each of the following in the space...



Ferry Street residents did not have this same low response rate concerning drinking fountains in the space (85%), indicating that utilities they see possibly being abused were less desirable so close to their homes. It could be postulated that Ferry Street residents do not want the other public amenities for the same reason. People say that many hallways in North End housing smell like urine and residents have voiced their opinions that people already urinate on their property. Furthermore, they point out that the CHC already has restrooms available and that these could be expanded or used for events that might take place in the new space. Although residents of Main Street were enthusiastic about such amenities, Ferry Street residents seemed unenthusiastic about the possibility of strangers coming into the neighborhood, specifically into their backyards to find public amenities that potentially could be poorly maintained, vandalized, or used for illegal activities.

Nevertheless, data indicates that residents of all streets want both a drinking fountain (78% of residents interviewed) and cookout grills (73%). People mentioned the need to keep these grills permanently attached to the ground, or else they would be stolen. One resident suggested that someone could run the cookout grill and a concession stand in the space.

SAFETY

When asked what respondents would need to feel safe in the space, the three most frequent responses were 1) more police monitoring, a hired security guard, or a partnership of community policing in the area, 2) less drug and alcohol consumption in the area, and 3) keeping the space secure through fences and good lighting. Some community members responded that they already feel safe in the space, although in regards to the safety of kids they agreed that something had to be done. Many people wanted "someone to be available in case of emergencies," others wanting a monitor to watch unattended children and protect against strangers in the space.

Lighting

A majority of residents (84%) feel that it is very important or important for the space to be well lit. Some residents wanted the lights to be old fashioned like other parts of Middletown. Several residents commented on the benefits of low lighting rather than obtrusive lighting in the space. Interestingly, Main Street residents were the most frequent proponents of lighting in the space (100% of Main Street residents interviewed), and Ferry Street residents were the least frequent (58%), affirming the dynamic that was recognized in other sections concerning expansion of the garden, public phones, restrooms, and sidewalk maintenance. Another reason for this trend could be that bright lights would disturb residents who are trying to sleep.

Fences

The issue of fences is complex, and further research should be done in the community before a decision is made. Although a majority of respondents stated that they would like fences in the space (45 v. 14), only a slight majority of residents indicated the importance of fences as contributing to their feeling of safety (56%).

People wanted fences so that the space could close at night. Other thought it was a good way to keep children safe from running into the streets. Some suggested that there should be a fence around the entire perimeter of the space to keep drugs, animal litter, and "unwanted visitors," such as the homeless and drug dealers, out of the space. Others mentioned that parts of the space could be fenced off depending on their function, such as around the biking area for kids, or around the sports facilities to keep balls from going into the streets. Several residents worried that fences alone would not be sufficient, suggesting that they should be in conjunction with police patrol or monitoring by a security guard.

When prompted to picture what the fences could look like, more respondents thought of them as high gates, while others mentioned that they could be decorative and low, or that bushes could act as dividers of the space from the street.

Ninety-two percent of residents thought that there should be a closing time for this space. The two most popular closing times for the space are at dusk (32 respondents said before dark), or in the evening (20 said 8 or 9 o'clock). Respondents who suggested this closing time also tended to mention that the closing time could be later in the summer, and earlier in the winter. The data show that perhaps this topic should be further investigated. It also should be considered whether a fence would be necessary in order to close the space.

Fourteen people stated that they did not want fences in the space. Some of these respondents were worried that fences would make the space less welcoming. Others commented that fences would give people a reason to leave children unattended. Some residents felt that fences made them actually feel unsafe, scared, or caged in. Men, ages 40-50 comprised the majority of those who said that fences do not contribute to their feeling of safety. Some male respondents associated fences with jail, or being trapped. One man said that fences made him want to "split, run."

Street Safety

A majority of residents thought that pedestrian signs (e.g., Children at Play, Pedestrian Crossing), crosswalks, speed bumps, and well-maintained sidewalks would be very important to this space. Both residents with and without children agreed on the importance of pedestrian signs, some commenting that traffic control was important for the safety of children in the area. Many residents commented that cars tend to zoom down the streets, heading to Route 9.²²

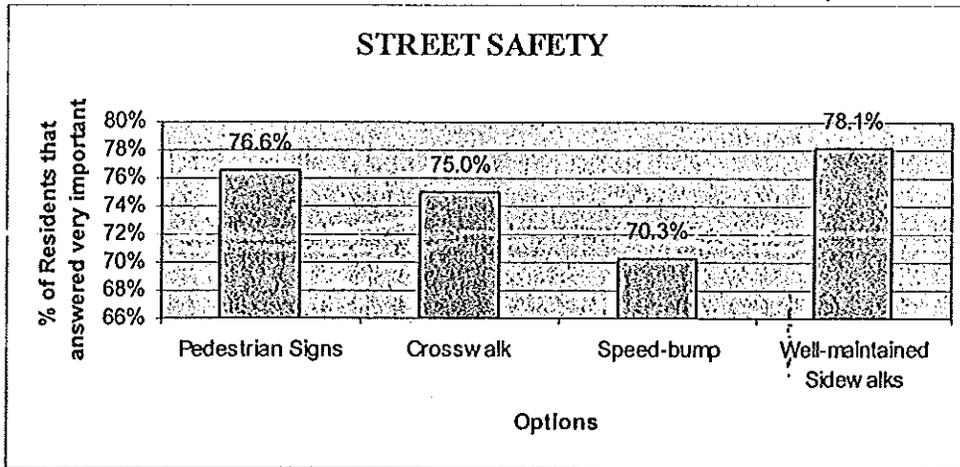
Although many have little faith that signage or a speed bump would be implemented or heeded by automobile drivers, the desire was still present. One resident mentioned that a slower speed limit should be implemented in the North End, and one resident suggested having a crossing guard near the Ferry Street Garden, signaling its importance for children in the area.

Seventy-eight percent of residents stated that well-maintained sidewalks were very important for this space. Residents commented that the sidewalks in the North End were not well maintained, although the rest of Middletown's were. Respondents also made this observation regarding trees, benches, and flowers along Main Street

It is dangerous to leave the sidewalks as they are. Reasons for repair, according to residents, were that kids need good sidewalks for bike riding, and that it is unsafe for people walking on the street. One man commented that he has fallen and cut himself several times in the North End, tripping over cracks in the pavement. He was concerned for the elderly, and people of all ages.

²² NEAT's petition for pedestrian signs in the North End is still pending, yet most residents view this as very important to their community as a way to address a serious problem.

Figure 8.1 – Street Safety: How important are each of the following in contributing to your feeling of safety in the space...



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In this section we address ownership, responsibility, and involvement in regards to a North End recreation area. We combine residents' comments with their replies to direct questions about who should own, make rules for, and clean the proposed space, to which we offered the options: *the city of Middletown, an organization of North End residents, and both*. Yet it is not just legal ownership and formal responsibility that matter, but also the idea of *taking ownership* – how the community envisions itself being involved in and accountable for the proposed space.

Beyond a summary of the best uses of a recreational area in the North End, it is imperative to consider who will control what aspects of the space. Who will make decisions, respond to concerns, continually devote resources to cleaning and maintenance, and develop programming? Will the space be created and regulated *in reference to or in spite of* residents' views as presented in this report?

In looking at the responses, we can begin to construct an idea of how North End residents see the city and the community balancing roles and responsibilities for this space.

Legal Ownership

Most residents want an organized group of residents to play a role in legal ownership of the space, whether alone or together with the city (*see Figure 9.1*). Close to a third of residents wanted to put full ownership in the hands of an organization of North End residents. Groups more likely to choose *just the organization* include residents under age thirty, those who've lived in the North End for four or less years, people of color, and those employed part-time (for detailed breakdown of responses, see *Appendix M*).

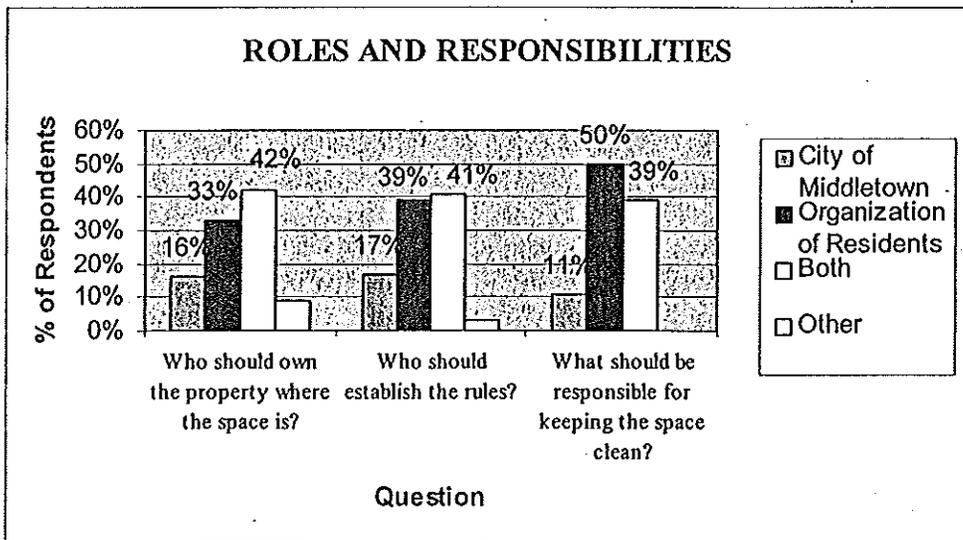
A number of residents expressed anger and frustration at the lack of concern the city of Middletown has exhibited in addressing the needs of the North End. Several residents commented that public agencies should put as much work into this neighborhood as they put into other parts of Middletown, especially the downtown district. Respondents noted negligence in tasks like cutting grass on public land, physical maintenance of streets and sidewalks, and regulating street safety with signs or other means. Concerns with the city police department's lack of attention to and respect for the North End were also raised. Comments included complaints about slow responses to urgent calls for help and officers who sit in their cars rather than actively patrolling the neighborhood. Together, these experiences help to explain why many North End residents are hesitant to give their space to city control; only 16% of residents wanted

the city alone to have legal ownership rights. Though the city clearly has far more resources than a community group, residents have not seen fair or adequate use of those resources.

Although respondents voiced skepticism about the city, many were equally uncertain about the community's ability to take control. This could explain the popularity of legal ownership by *both* the city and an organization of residents. People may view this arrangement as a catch all, a way to ensure checks and balances between the two parties, neither of which has a perfect reputation. One person, however, raised the concern that dual ownership would take too much communication and nothing would ever get done.

Skepticism about the organization of residents may arise from years of hearing about various plans to make improvements the neighborhood without seeing significant changes; this helps explain why only 25% of residents living in the North End for five or more years preferred to see legal ownership in the hands of only the organization. Residents may also recognize that ownership by the organization would require a real time commitment, and don't see themselves or their neighbors able to spare any more time out of their already busy schedules to deal with the logistics that property owners must handle.

Figure 9.1 – Roles and Responsibilities: Who should own, make the rules for, and clean the space...



Establishing and Enforcing Rules

Opinions about which party should be responsible for setting the rules is closely split between *the organization* (39% of residents) and *both* (41%). People without children, white people, men, the unemployed and those with part-time jobs, and people who've lived in the North End for a year or less were more likely to choose just the organization.

Understanding residents' perspectives on rule-making involves similar issues to those discussed under ownership. Skepticism about the two parties involved and an understanding of who has resources and time are relevant here as well. Several residents commented that the herb garden adjacent to the Community Health Center at the intersection of Green and Main is open far less often than they would like. Seeing that the rules in this city-owned property do not meet community needs and interests may have contributed to the small number of residents who selected the city alone (17%).

In addition to deciding upon the rules for the recreational space, how these rules will be enforced must be considered. Residents voiced concerns about the importance of discouraging destructive and unsafe behaviors in the proposed recreation area, suggesting signs, police and/or community monitoring, and tougher enforcement of penalties. Refer to the section on *safety* (p. 27) for a more thorough discussion of ideas for regulating behavior in this space.

Cleaning and Maintenance of Space

While the type of picnic tables or playground that will be in the space is important to its appearance, the cleaning and maintenance of the space is integral to its long-term preservation and success. The initial appearance of the space will attract people to the space, but it is the cleaning and the maintenance that will determine if people will continue to use the space. It is important, then, to discuss cleaning and maintenance in the same category as ownership and involvement of the space. Residents were asked who they thought should be responsible for cleaning the space, if they would help in the cleaning of the space, and if they had any suggestions on how the space could be kept clean.

The issue of cleaning and maintenance first came up during the adult focus groups, but concern over this issue was reinforced during our door-to-door and street interviews. We gathered that residents were frustrated with the littering in the North End. Almost all of the responses indicated that there is a high level of neglect and misuse of areas in the North End. Equipment from the Ferry Street Garden has been stolen. As mentioned previously in the *Children* section, people urinate on the slides and broken glass litters the streets, sidewalks, and playground. People tear down street signs and trash piles up on street corners. Some residents with children are afraid to let their children play in the streets for fear of the broken glass. During the focus group, one resident mentioned that cats have been using the woodchips in the

playground as a litter box, creating an unpleasant smell that makes the playground not only unsanitary but also uninviting.

The lack of cleanliness can create numerous other problems that the neighborhood must then take care of. For example, one resident complained about the family of skunks that always appears around springtime. The residence of these skunks can be attributed to the garbage that sits on the sidewalks and under the porches. Wild animals are attracted to the prospects of free easy food. Thus, the community not fully taking responsibility for cleaning the area increases the amount of wild animals in the area and decreases the attractiveness of the neighborhood.

Although residents and non-residents are partly responsible for the physical appearance of the North End, the city of Middletown has also failed in its responsibility in maintaining the public facilities and utilities. Lack of maintenance by other institutions and agencies has also contributed to the deterioration. For example, the public phones in the area have been broken by users but have remained broken because no repairs have been made. The woodchips in the playground on the corner of Ferry Street and Dekoven Drive, although misused, have never been replaced. What we gathered from all this information is that there is an upkeep problem in the North End, on the part of the city and residents.

When asked who should be responsible for cleaning the space, residents' responses were split between *organization* (49% of residents) and *both* (40%). The majority of residents (76%) responded positively when asked if they would help clean the space. To generate further discussion on ways to improve cleaning, we asked residents if they had any suggestions on how the space could be kept clean. Residents replied that people should be responsible for their own litter, some indicating that rules should be enforced by the community, a guard, or by fines and penalties. Other suggestions included community clean-ups like those that already exist in the North End, that the city could hire community members, or that kids could volunteer to learn about personal responsibility of property and community places. Many residents feel that those who use the space should clean the space.

There was a decrease in those who chose *organization* as the length of their residency in the neighborhood increased. However, those who lived there longer were more likely to favor *both* to be responsible for cleaning. Similarly, residents who lived on streets further away from the garden and the NEAT office were less likely to choose *just an organization* to be responsible for cleaning and more likely to choose *both*. From this information we can conclude that despite how long or where residents live, there is an overwhelming majority for some form of community involvement in cleaning and maintaining the space.

Resident Involvement

The final component to ownership of the space is looking at how residents see *themselves* fitting into the picture, not only through membership in an organization that has a formal role in owning or governing the space, but through direct involvement in organizing specific activities. This information can be used by NEAT to determine what kind of projects might attract more people to become involved in the organization, and also indicates the neighborhood-wide desire to be involved in the realization of this space.

Earlier, we discussed residents' interest in participating in exercise class, sports leagues, public art projects, community gardening, flea markets and tag sales, block parties, programs for children, and festivals or concerts. We also asked if they would be willing to help *organize* any activities, and if so, which ones. The majority of our sample (69%) indicated that *yes*, they would be willing to help organize activities that could take place in this space or in other locations in the neighborhood. An even larger majority is apparent if we combine *yes* and *maybe* responses (see Table 9.1).

Women, people of color, younger people, people with children, employed people, those living in the North End less than five years and those living on Ferry and Green Streets were the mostly likely to say that *yes*, they would be willing to help organize. Residents of streets other than Green and Ferry were the most likely overall to respond *maybe*.

We asked residents which of the suggested activities they would most want to help organize, allowing them to select as many as they wished. A few of those respondents who were willing to help organize declined to specify particular activities, indicating that they would have to 'wait and see.' Residents were most interested in helping to organize festivals or concerts (23 people), children's programs (21), and intramural sports leagues (20) (see Figure 10.1). These were also the activities within which the highest percentage of potential participants were willing to help organize (see Figure 10.2).

Table 9.1 - Organization of Recreational Activities by Demographics

		YES	NO	MAYBE	other/ no response	TOTAL
TOTAL n=64, 100%		68.8% (44)	9.4% (6)	9.4% (6)	12.5% (8)	100% n=64
BY GENDER:	female	77.4	9.7	9.7		n=31
	male	60.6	9.1	9.1		n=33
BY RACE:	white	53.3	13.3	16.7		n=30
	people of color	84.8	6.1	3.0		n=33
BY AGE:	under 20	100.0	0.0	0.0		n=4
	20 - 34	87.5	0.0	6.3		n=16
	35 +	59.1	13.6	11.4		n=44
BY KIDS:	have kids	78.0	4.9	7.3		n=41
	do not have kids	52.2	17.4	13.0		n=23
BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS:	unemployed	66.7	16.7	4.2		n=24
	employed	71.1	5.3	10.5		n=38
BY YEARS IN NORTH END:	4 and under	81.3	3.1	6.3		n=32
	5 +	56.3	15.6	12.5		n=32
BY STREET OF RESIDENCE:	Ferry	73.1	19.2	3.8		n=26
	Green	75.0	5.0	5.0		n=20
	other	55.6	0.0	22.2		n=18

Figure 10.1 - Would you be willing to help organize any of the following recreational activities ...

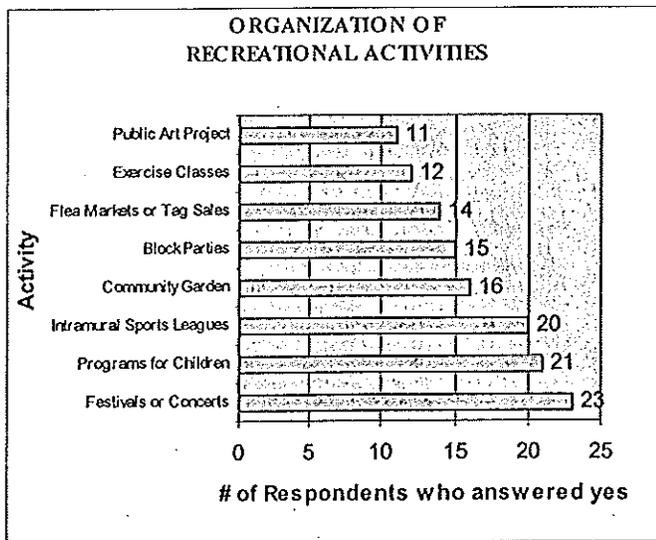
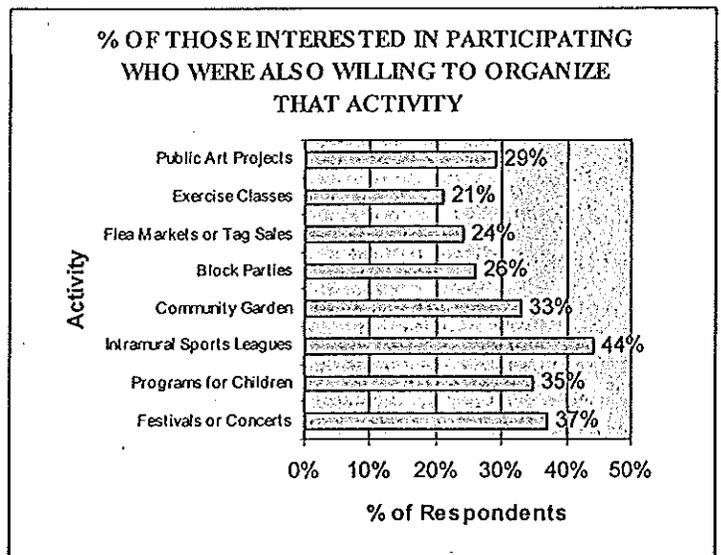


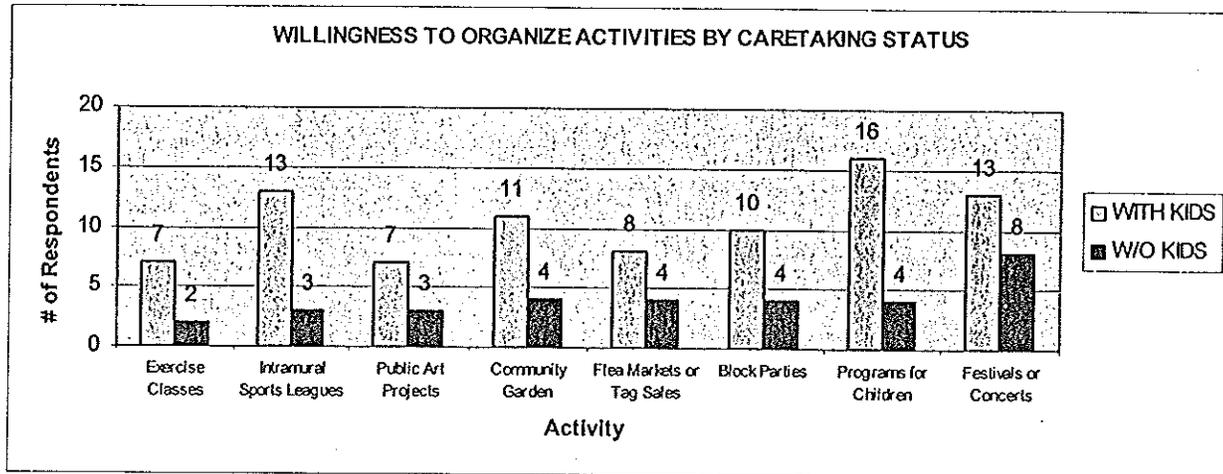
Figure 10.2



While residents with children predictably had a high level of interest in organizing children's programs, they also showed higher interest in organizing overall (see Figure 10.3). Additionally, there was far more variance amongst their answers than in the answers of residents without children. This is further support for our earlier discussion of parents' and caregivers' greater understanding of *specific* needs of children, and perhaps, the, for activities for the neighborhood as a whole.

People without children were twice as likely to want to help organize festivals or concerts than they were any other activity. This is important to note, after so much focus on the needs and interests of children; festivals and concerts have the potential to involve more people without children in community activities.

Figure 10.3 - Organization of Recreational Activities by Care-taking Status



CONCLUSION: VISIONS AND CONCERNS

Summary

This report is based on information gathered from two focus groups and 64 interviews in the North End. A majority of residents supported the creation of an open/recreational space in their neighborhood – an area where they could come together and interact as a community. Interest in this space was not concentrated in any particular group, but rather spanned all demographics. People were genuinely interested in participating in our survey, and very willing to discuss their ideas and concerns about these issues. A centralized open and/or recreational space in the North End could be the catalyst for community-based revitalization.

Residents' Visions

Children and Activities

Residents voiced overwhelming support for the creation of an open space that serves the needs of children. The majority of residents agreed that children in the North End need a secure space to play, where they are safe from traffic and where their parents or guardians can watch them easily. Despite the existence of a playground in the North End, a more centrally located playground in the North End is desired. A playground in the proposed open/recreation space should include equipment for younger children. Parents and children expressed interest in having seating areas placed around the play space so that parents can watch their children and vice versa. A basketball court was the most desired facility in the survey, with a place for children to bike ride coming in second. Festivals or concerts were the most popular activity that could take place in this space.

Appearances and Utilities

There was a strong interest from residents to expand the Ferry Street Community Garden and to put grass, flowers and trees in the space. Public art was highly supported. Residents recommended seating areas that are permanently attached in the space, along with built-in chessboards, picnic tables and cookout grills. Trash cans should also be prevalent throughout the space. Residents believe that the areas should be well lit at night, without being so bright as to bother neighbors. While the majority of residents wanted to see fences in the space, almost half said that fences do not contribute to their feeling of safety, indicating that more discussion is needed on this issue.

Ownership and Involvement

Residents supported a balance of responsibilities between the city of Middletown and an organization of North End residents, with clear support for active involvement by community

members. The majority of residents were willing to help to organize activities that could take place in the space.

Residents' Concerns

The issue of safety emerged as the principal concern of North End residents. While lights and fences can be tools for creating a safe space, residents emphasized that the space must be actively monitored. Residents want a mutually respectful relationship with the Middletown Police Department, in which both parties cooperate to create a safe neighborhood. Community policing was suggested as a model for this endeavor.

Researchers' Suggestions

In reviewing the visions and concerns voiced by North End residents and considering how to make maximize the potential of this space, we offer the following suggestions:

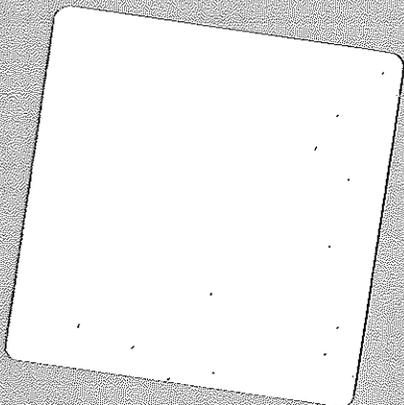
Based upon the resident's opinions and the physical limitations of the proposed site, a multi-use space appears to be the best option to maximize the space and the facilities that can be offered. This space should try to meet the needs of the children while also providing services for adult residents.

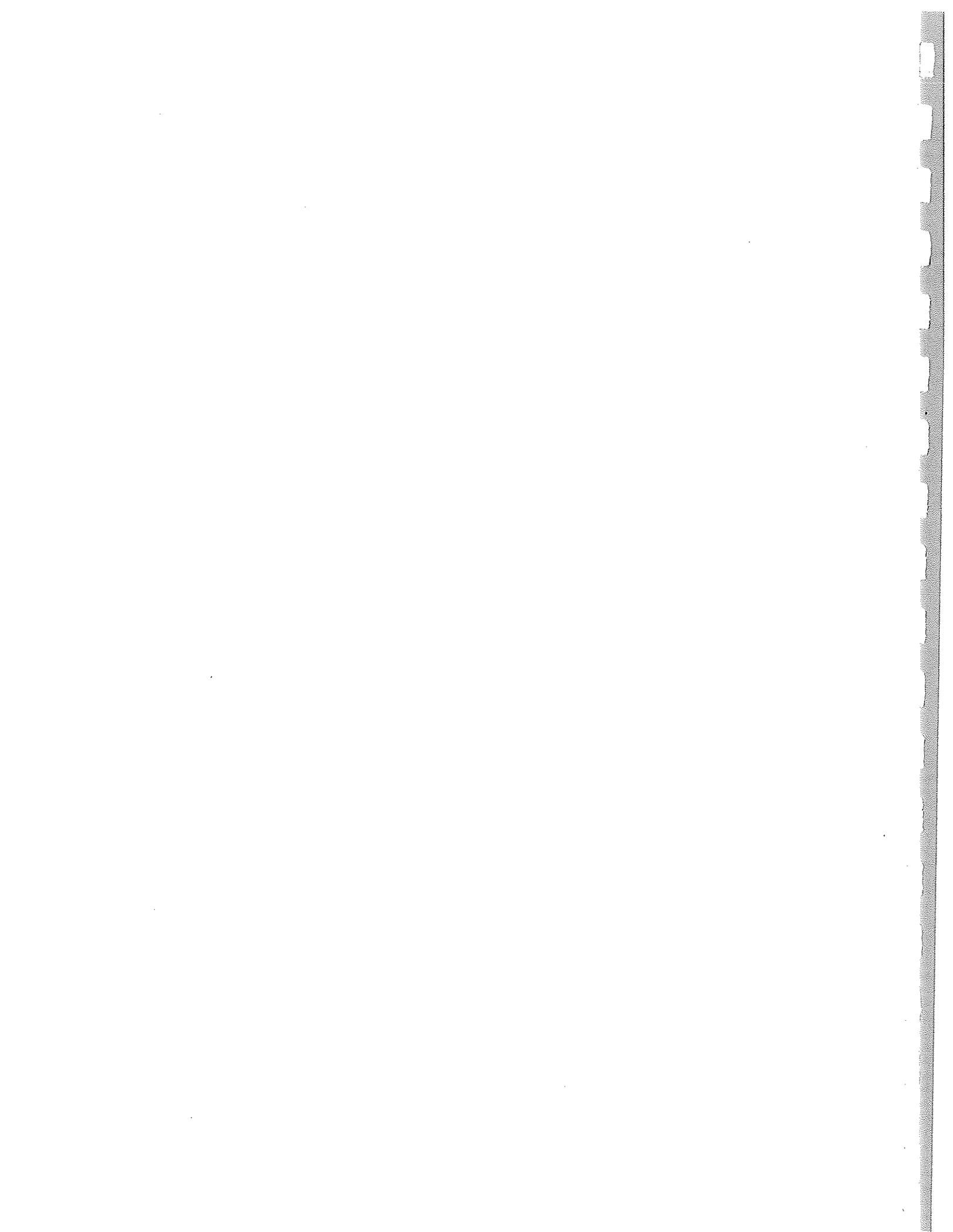
Although most of the residents suggested that the community organization should be responsible for cleaning and that they would be willing to help out, we suggest that the city should still be responsible for the larger maintenance jobs that require skilled workers, such as repairs of facilities and equipment and the maintenance of the grounds. Residents should, however, take collective responsibility for how their actions affect the quality of the space.

Throughout the design process, planners and residents should maintain an open dialogue. The needs of residents should be the primary focus of those involved in designing the space. The voices of non-resident stakeholders, however, must also be considered. Although not fully addressed in this report, it will be imperative for all parties involved to recognize the existing role of non-residents in the North End and their future roles as participants in the space.

Conclusion

This report illustrates the visions, needs and concerns of a sample of North End residents. The fact that a majority of our sample desired a particular facility or amenity, however, is not a directive for that element to be included in the space. The neighborhood and its residents are continuously changing; our study is intended to contribute to a continuing dialogue between those who are involved in designing the space and those who will use it.





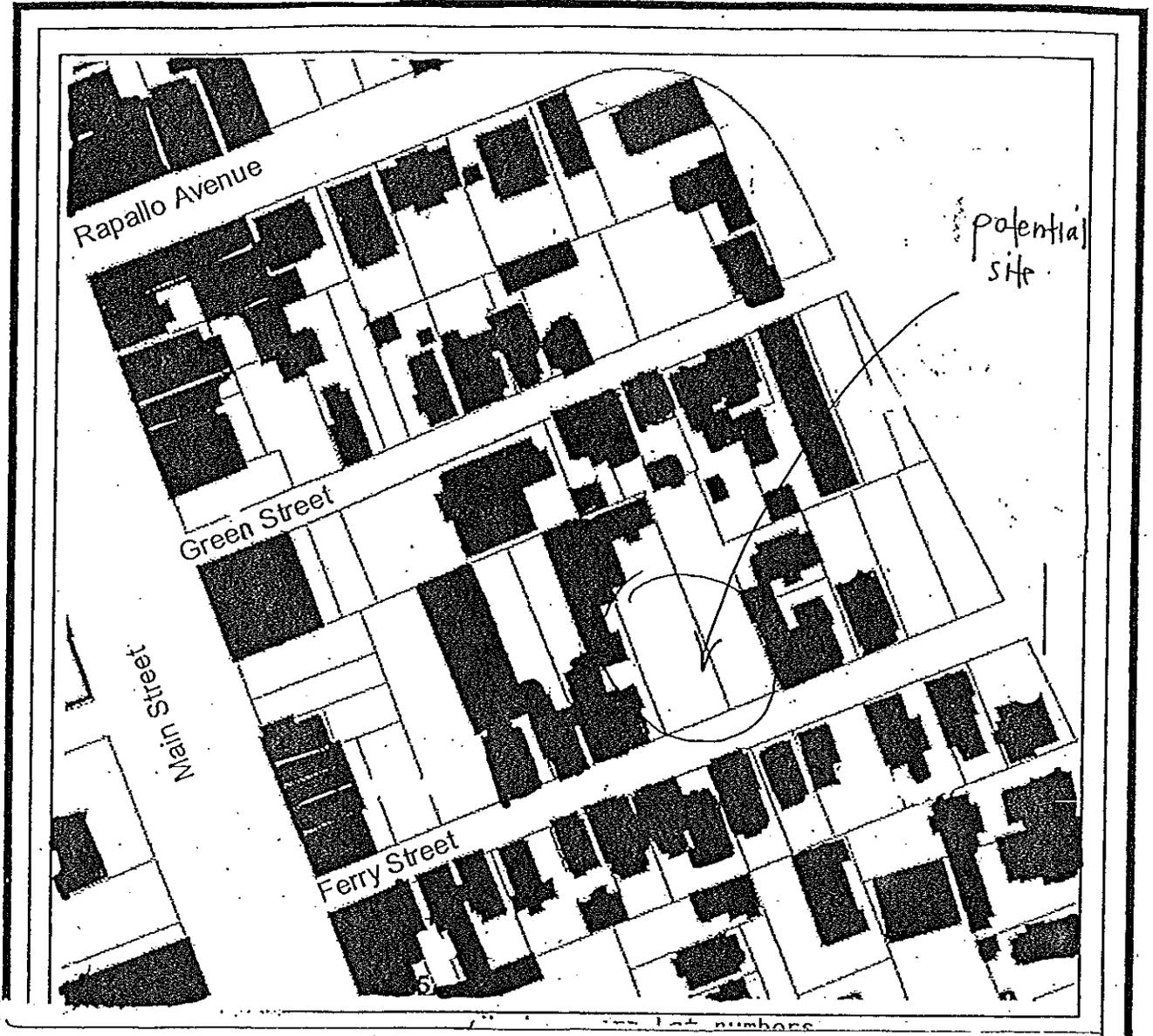
APPENDIX A: The Development of the North End Housing Initiative (NEHI)

In response to the urban decay rampant in the North End through the mid-1990's and specifically the drug-related murder of a local teen in 1997, the North End Action Team (NEAT) was established by neighborhood leaders and volunteer organizers in order to "define, communicate, advocate, and invest in policies and programs that would direct a movement for grassroots revitalization that would emanate from the neighborhood" (NEAT Grant Application, 2000). Since its inception, NEAT has specifically worked to draw public attention to the quality of housing in the North End. In an effort to improve housing in the North End, NEAT co-sponsored a neighborhood planning workshop (called a "charette") by the Yale School of Architecture's Urban Design Team. In 1998, NEAT formed a Housing Committee to develop the first version of the North End Housing Initiative (NEHI), which was greatly informed by the findings of the Yale charette. Since that time, NEAT has formed partnerships with four non-profit housing agencies – The Connection Fund, Inc., Nehemiah Housing Corporation, Inc., Northern Middlesex Habitat for Humanity, and Alderhouse Residential Communities, Inc. – all of whom are managing partners in the Limited Liability Company (LLC) that will oversee NEHI. The LLC will also be advised by Wesleyan University, Liberty Bank, and the City of Middletown Office of Planning, Conservation and Development. As the majority partner in the LLC, NEAT's primary role is to ensure that NEHI is first and foremost serving the residents of the North End.

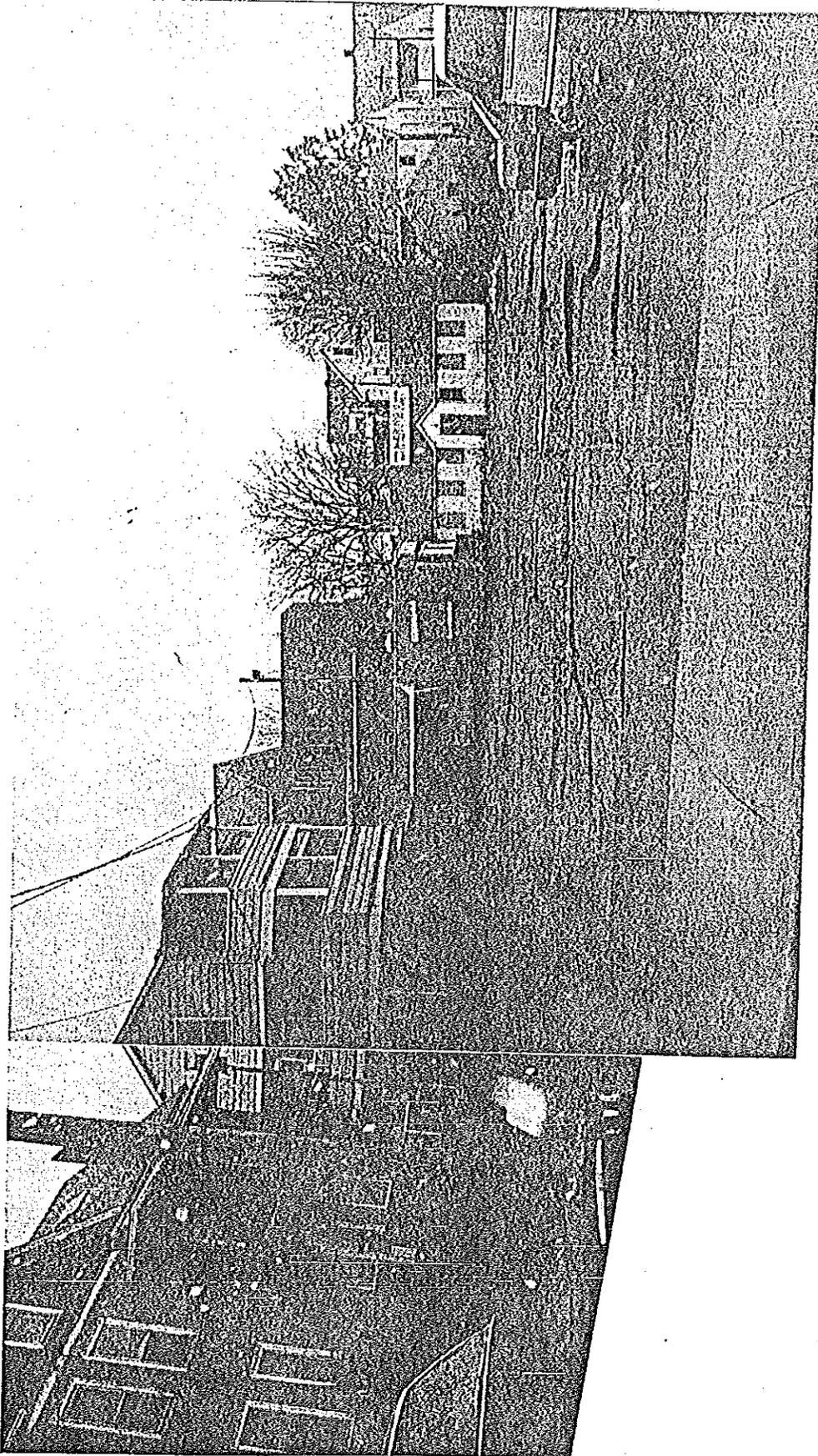
The primary goals of NEHI are to effect the following in the North End:

1. Improve the quality of affordable housing through renovation and new construction
2. Encourage a mixed-income community
3. Deconcentrate poverty
4. Increase home ownership

APPENDIX B: Map of the North End



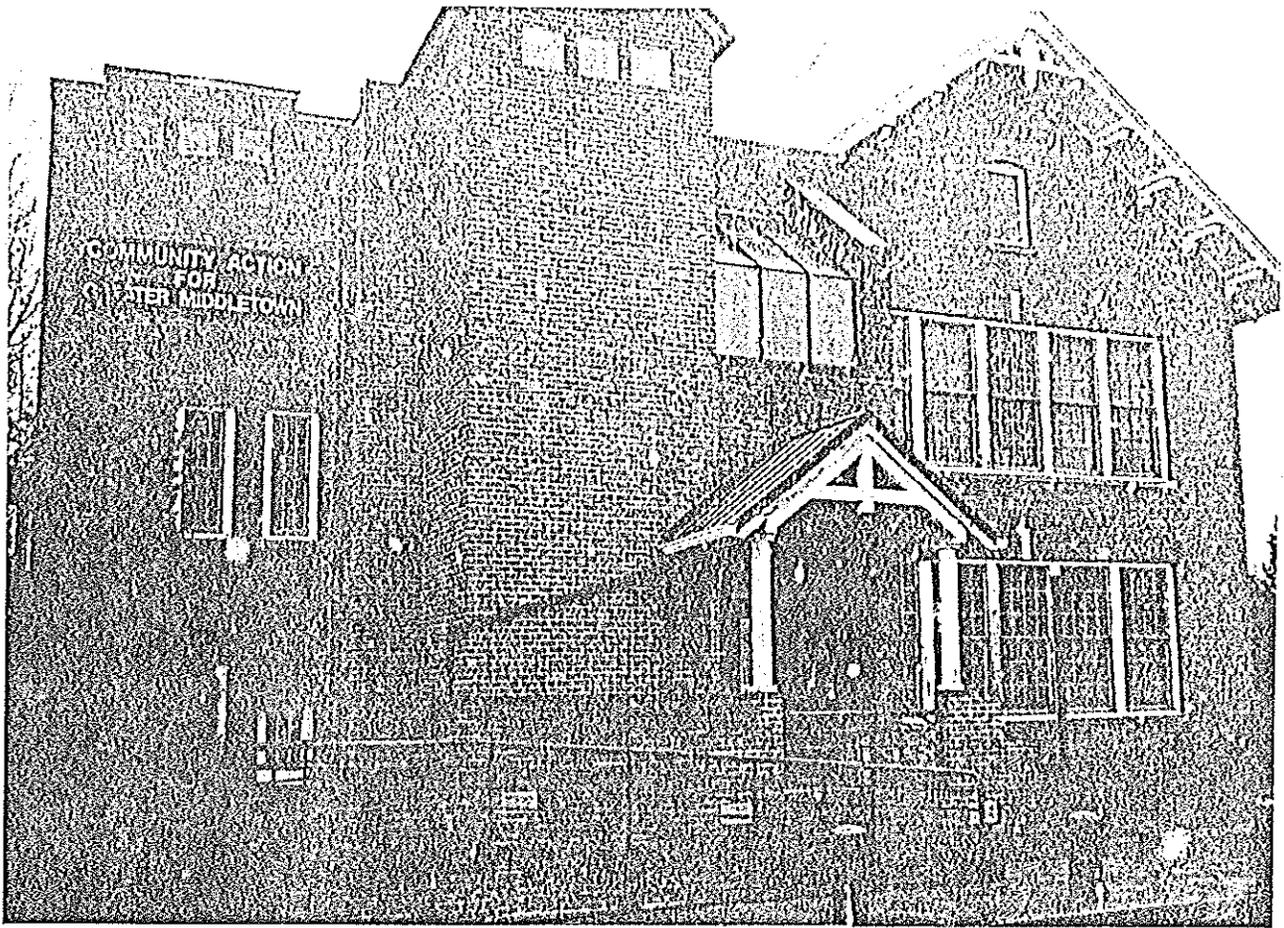
PPENDIX C: Photographs of the Proposed Space



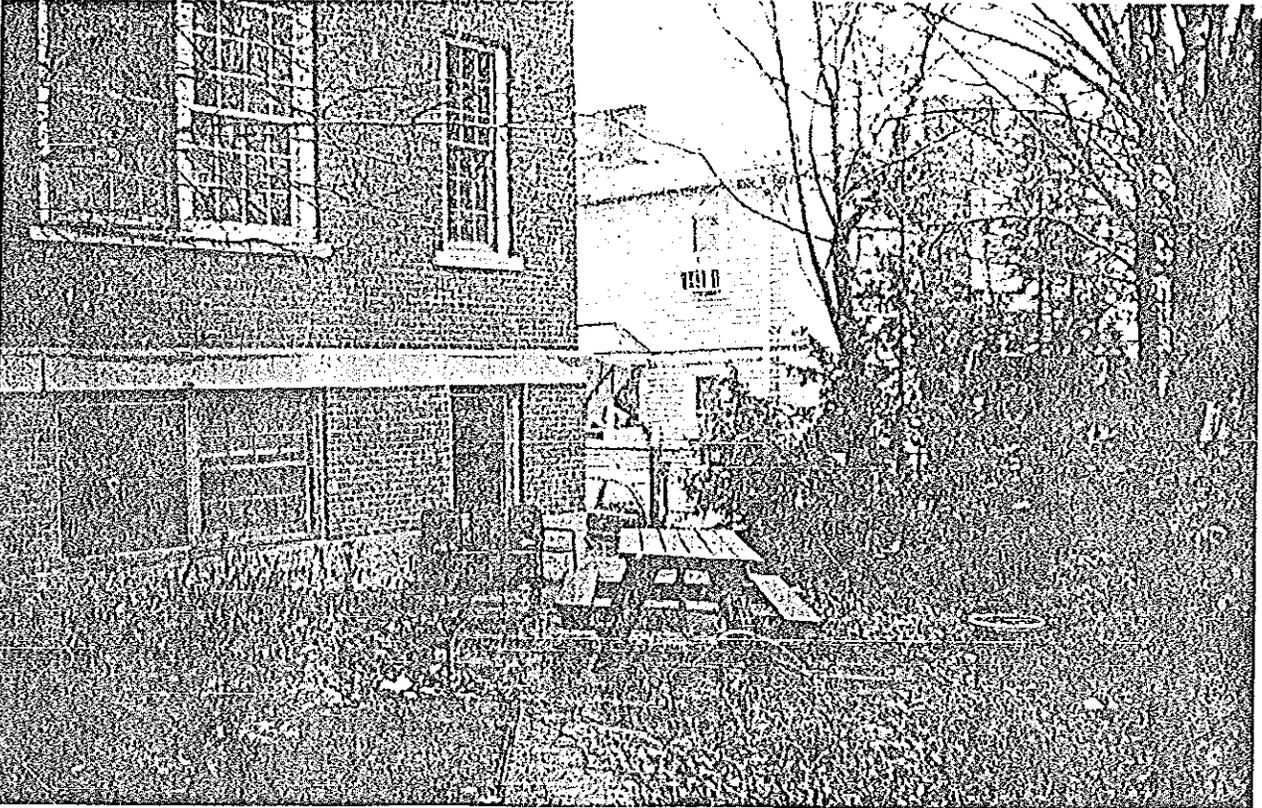
The proposed site: currently occupied by a parking lot and an abandoned restaurant, the Ferry St. Community on the East (to the right of the parking lot), the future Green St. Arts Center to the North (the large brick building in the background).



The Ferry St. Community Garden, across the street from the NEAT office and bordering the East side of the proposed site.



The Community Renewal Team (CRT) Building, future site of the Green Street Arts Center (GSAC), as seen from the Green St. entrance.



The courtyard behind the CRT building, adjacent to the North side of the proposed site.

APPENDIX D: The Ferry Street Community Garden: a history by Lydia Brewster

The Ferry Street Community Garden began, modestly, in the summer of 2000. The initial organizing effort was undertaken by NEAT organizers and Wesleyan student Mina Halpern. Mayor Thornton and the City Planning Department agreed to loan the abandoned, city-owned 46 Ferry Street lot, requested by NEAT, that had been the site of a recent demolition for use as a garden. The first summer was spent cleaning up garbage, overturning the soil, and having topsoil, donated by Wesleyan, deposited on the plots. A small band of gardeners established plots and the lot was dramatically improved.

In the spring of 2001, NEAT decided to use the garden as a major organizing tool. It invested most of its grant dollars, earmarked for staffing, into hiring a 20-hour a week organizer to get the garden into topnotch condition, recruit children and adults, and initiate children's programs and events to take place in the garden. Numerous arts programs, a bike safety workshop, and a series of evening picnics generated tremendous interest among neighbors; the site had gone from a garbage strewn lot to one that could be defined as defensible space.

In August of 2001 the first Ferry Street Community Garden Party attracted nearly 100 guests, including the Mayor and city and community leaders. North End children conducted tours of the garden, residents acted as hosts, and Wesleyan Vice President Peter Patton announced Wesleyan's commitment to develop the Green Street Arts Center. Many community leaders expressed surprise that the neighborhood had been able to transform a neglected property into a thing of beauty and were gratified to see North End children and adults demonstrating pride in their achievement. Since that event it has become more difficult for the city to maintain its aloofness regarding the conditions, both positive and negative, present in the neighborhood.

Following the Garden Party, the Middlesex County Community Foundation suggested that NEAT apply to them for funds to support its activities. Wesleyan has expanded its outreach and partnership to the neighborhood through initiating both arts programs and funding to encourage North End children to develop an interest in the arts.

This summer NEAT will increase its organizing staff hours to 60 hours to further expand the newly created Arts-in-the-Garden program. The FSCG has quadrupled in participation since last year and, at present, the Garden Committee is the most active NEAT committee. The city has willingly provided new topsoil and mulch for the garden and Wesleyan has agreed to match funds for summer arts programs to be offered on Wednesday evenings. The second annual FSCGarden Party is scheduled for August 14th with the North End's own NEAT NOTES, a children's *a cappella* choir, featured as performers.

APPENDIX E: Children's Focus Group Format

I. Introduction

- Give your name and do something so everyone gets acquainted!
- We are working with NEAT on a plan to improve housing in the neighborhood.
- We want to talk with you guys about what you do in your free time and listen to your ideas on what we can do to improve the outdoor space/play space/recreational space in the neighborhood
- **Ground Rules:**
 - Be Respectful – give everyone a chance to speak, listen to each other and the facilitators, and no insults!
 - Be Honest – don't be afraid to say what you want to say
- Name and contact information from each child
- Tape recorder consent form

II. Brainstorm of how & where they spend their free time

All of the kids responses in this section should be charted on the dry erase board

- *What do you guys do in your free time?*
Specific prompting questions:
 - what do you do after school
 - what do you do when it's really hot outside
 - what sports do you like to play
 - do you ride bikes? Rollerskate? Skateboard?
- *Where do you guys do these activities?*
Prompt them for specific locations as much as possible – street names, corners, trees etc.

Sample Chart:

<i>Activities we do in our free time</i>	<i>Where we do them</i>
ride bikes	In the parking lot next to the comm. garden, up and down Ferry St.
play b-ball	School gym, YMCA
play with my friends	At my house, playground on DeKoven

- To complete the list, ask:
Do you ever leave the NE to do things in your free time? Where do you go?
- *Are there activities that you guys like to do that you can't do in the NE? What are they?*

Notes/Suggestions

-wear nametags?

-depending on the group, you might want to go around and have each person offer one activity until they all agree everything has been covered

-don't discount or dismiss their responses just because they don't fit our category of outdoor recreational activity. Put them on the chart and then ask the kids whether they think they should be mapped. i.e., I play video games in my free time, I babysit my younger brother.

-keep track of this information on a separate chart or piece of paper

III. Map the places they spend their free time

- *Introduce the map*
 - explain that the map only includes the North End
 - can anybody find where we are right now on the map?
- Put stickers, labeled with the activities they named, on each of the locations where they indicated they do those activities.

IV. Introduction to specific space

Keep track of all the info from this section on new chart

- We've labeled all these different spaces that you guys use in your free time, now we want you guys to think about one particular space.
- *What's in this space?*
Follow-up questions:
 - do you guys ever use/play in this space? Why? Why not?
 - what do think is this good about this space? Bad?
 - what do you like/dislike about the community garden?
- *Using your imagination, what could we do to make this space better?*
 - what types of things could we put there?
i.e., b-ball, rollerskating, grassy area

V. Safety

Keep track of this info on new chart

- *Think about the space we've been talking about, do you feel safe or unsafe there? Why?*
I feel safe/not afraid when _____
I feel unsafe/ afraid when _____
- *What would make you feel safe in that space?*
- *Think about the other places on the map, in which of these places do you feel most safe? Unsafe? Why?*

VI. Conclusion

- Summarize briefly what each of the activities/questions we worked on
- Give them the opportunity to say anything they didn't get the chance to say
- Explain how we're going to use the information they shared with us

Thank them for all their help and tell them how important they are to our research!

Notes/Suggestions

-you might want to let 1 or 2 people find their own house to get them comfortable with the map

-you might want to have the kid that said the activity put the sticker on

-if they don't mention it, suggest the community garden

-they might bring up the topic of safety as a reason for why the space is "bad," if so, discuss it

Suggestion List:

-outdoor performance space
-skateboarding/biking ramps
-b-ball
-rollerskating
-playground equipment - sandbox
-pathways
-expanding the community garden
-picnic tables
-benches
-trees/flowers
-grassy area

-you might want to have the kids put SAFE/UNSAFE stickers on the map

APPENDIX F: Adult Focus Group Format

I. Introduction

- Give your name and do something so everyone gets acquainted!
- We are working with NEAT on a plan to improve housing in the neighborhood.
- We want to talk with you guys about what you do in your free time and listen to your ideas on what we can do to improve the outdoor space/play space/recreational space in the neighborhood
- We're going to bring the ideas you guys generate in this group to the rest of the community to get their feedback.
- **Ground Rules:**
 - Be Respectful – give everyone a chance to speak, listen to each other and the facilitators, and no insults!
 - Be Honest – don't be afraid to say what you want to say
- Name and contact information from each participant
- Tape recorder consent form

II. Use of existing space

A. Make map of area

- where you live
- Green Street school
- river
- main st.
- Green St., Ferry, Rapallo
- favorite place/least favorite - individual

B. Compare original maps to real map

- processing questions about their maps in comparison to real map

C. Place themselves on real map using stickers (1 big map?) Where do they already spend their recreational time?

- where do you live
- where are you on a rainy day
- it's really hot outside, where are you?
- where do your kids play

Transition: What types of recreational activities would like to do that aren't available to you in the NE? Recreational needs of their kids?

Do you ever leave the area to do recreational activities?

→ We're trying to design a space that will meet the needs of the community

III. SERVICES & DESIGN of Specific Space

A. Introduction to prospective location

B. Community Garden

What could make the community garden better?

C. What could we put in this space that would make it a good outdoor space?
What would make you want to spend time there?

What types of things would you want to do in this space that you can't already do?
Have you ever seen an example of a good space? What did you like most about it? Least?

IV. SAFETY

What would you need to feel safe in this space? During the day? At night?

What would make you feel safe letting your kids play in that space? During the day? At night?

-connector between the two streets

Other spaces on the map that they consider Safe/Unsafe

Can you envision another location where we could put a recreational space?

IV. OWNERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT in space

How space can be owned:

-city owned

[see Lydia]

Who would you want to own this space?

If the park was run by a neighborhood organization, would you want to be involved?

Ideas for how the community could be involved?

What could the neighborhood do to ensure the space stays safe?

INTRODUCTION

- Hi – I am ...
- We are working with NEAT on a plan to improve housing in the neighborhood
- NEAT and the housing committee are hoping redesign the area between the community garden, abandoned pizza place, and CRT to become an outdoor recreational space
- We are talking with residents to get their input on what they would like to see in that space
- All the ideas we have come from other NE residents

1. How long have you lived in the North End? _____

2. Do you want there to be an outdoor recreational space in the North End? Y N

*****GENERAL*****

3. How important is it to you to have a place near your home to comfortably spend time outside?

→ very important → important → somewhat important → not important

4. How important is it to you to have seating areas in this space?

→ very important → important → somewhat important → not important

5. Which of the following seating options would you like to see in the space?

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| a. Benches | Y | N |
| b. Moveable chairs | Y | N |
| c. Picnic tables | Y | N |
| d. Grass—lawn | Y | N |

Other suggestions? _____

*****CHILDREN*****

6. Do you have or care for children under age 12? Y N

a. how many / ages?

7. Do you have or care for children over age 12? Y N

a. how many / ages?

8. How important is it to you to have a place for children to play?

→ very important → important → somewhat important → not important

APPENDIX G: Survey

9. Would you like to see a playground?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

10. How important is it to have a play area designed specifically for children under 5?

- very important important somewhat important not important

*****SPORTS*****

11. How important to you is a place for people of all ages to play outdoor sports?

- very important important somewhat important not important

12. Would you like to see...

a. a basketball court?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

b. a volleyball net?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

c. a field for sports like football or soccer?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

d. an area where kids could bike ride?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

e. an area for skateboarding or rollerblading/rollerskating?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

13. If any, which of these do you want the most? _____

*****ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT*****

14. Would you like the space to have...

a. built-in chess boards

- definitely maybe no opinion no

b. a place for outdoor music performances?

- definitely maybe no opinion no

c. public art? *[for example, a sculpture or mural]*

- definitely maybe no opinion no

APPENDIX G: Survey

***** APPEARANCE *****

15. Have you been involved with the Ferry St. community garden? Y N → Kids have
If No →
a. Are you aware that there is a community garden on Ferry St? Y N

16. Would you like to see the garden expanded?
→ definitely → maybe → no opinion → no

17. How important is it to you to have the following in the area?
a. Trees?... → very important → important → somewhat important → not important
b. Plants? ... → very important → important → somewhat important → not important
c. Flowers?... → very important → important → somewhat important → not important
d. Grass? → very important → important → somewhat important → not important

18. How important is it to you that there is shade in this space?
→ very important → important → somewhat important → not important
a. Would you prefer:
→ Trees → Man-made shade (canopies, covered play space, umbrellas) → Both

*****UTILITIES*****

19. Of the following utilities, which would you like to see in the space?
a. Trash cans? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion
b. Recycling bins? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion
c. Telephone booths? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion
d. Public bathroom? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion
e. Drinking fountains? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion
f. Cookout grills? → definitely → maybe → no → no opinion

*****SAFETY*****

20. What would you need to feel safe in the space?

21. How do you think the space should be lit?

a. How important is it that the space be well lit?
→ very important → important → somewhat important → not important

APPENDIX G: Survey

22. How would you feel about fences in the space?

a. Do fences contribute to your feeling of safety? Y N

23. How important are each of the following in contributing to your feeling of safety in the streets around the space...

- a. Pedestrian signs *[like children at play, pedestrian crossing]*
 - very important
 - important
 - somewhat important
 - not important
- b. Cross walks
 - very important
 - important
 - somewhat important
 - not important
- c. Speed bumps
 - very important
 - important
 - somewhat important
 - not important
- d. Well-maintained sidewalks
 - very important
 - important
 - somewhat important
 - not important

*****OWNERSHIP & MAINTENANCE*****

24. Who do you think should own the property where the outdoor space is?
→ City of Middletown → Organization of North End Residents → Both

25. Who do you think should establish the rules for how the space can be used?
→ City of Middletown → Organization of North End Residents → Both

26. Who do you think should be responsible for keeping the area clean?
→ City of Middletown → Organization of North End Residents → Both

27. Would you be interested in getting involved in an organization of NE residents that could be responsible for maintaining this space? Y N

28. Do you have any ideas for how the space could be kept clean?

29. Do you think there should be set hours for this space? *[hours it should be open]*
Y N

a. If Yes, when should the area be closed? _____

*****INVOLVEMENT*****

30. If the following recreational activities were offered in the North End, which ones would you or participate in: be involved in organizing:

- exercise classes
- intramural sports leagues
- public art projects
- community garden
- flea markets or tag sales
- block parties
- programs for children
- festivals or concerts

a. Would you be willing to be involved in the organization of those activities? Y N
If Yes, which? (check above)

31. Do you have any concerns about this outdoor space? What worries you about the creation of this space?

32. Are there any ideas you have for the space that you didn't have a chance to talk about?

*****DEMOGRAPHICS*****

- If you don't mind, we'd like to know a little about you
- Remember that no one but the research team will have access to this information.

32. Gender M / F

33. Age _____

34. What is your race or ethnicity?

- Black or African American
- Latina/o
- white
- east Asian
- south Asian
- middle eastern or Arab
- pacific islander
- other _____

35. Are you currently employed? Y N

If Yes →

- part-time
- full-time
- more than one job
- one job more than 40hrs/wk

If No →

- seeking full-time employment
- seeking part-time employment
- not currently seeking employment

***** THANK YOU!!!! *****

AND THEN THERE'S NEAT...

APPENDIX H: Non-Residents

In the second phase of our field research, we intended to survey as large a sample of North End residents as possible. As discussed, we conducted door-to-door interviews and also approached people who were outside on Ferry St., Green St., Rapallo Ave. and Main St. For this latter group, there was no way to tell before we spoke to them if they lived in the Ferry-Green-Rapallo area. We decided to complete the interviews with those eight people who indicated they *did not* live in the neighborhood, but *did* spend a significant amount of time there. A conflict arose when NEAT became aware that we had conducted interviews with non-residents.

The research team discussed the issue amongst ourselves and sent an email to Lydia Brewster, the lead organizer for NEAT, to explain our position (*see the email below*). Essentially, we felt that non-resident input was important to our research because they too spend time in the North End, and probably will spend time in the recreational space that is planned to be created between Ferry and Green Streets. From a sample of eight we cannot make any conclusions about the needs of non-residents, but it is interesting to note who these eight were, and why they might be concerned about the future of the North End. First of all, at least two of the eight live in other parts of the North End, west of Main Street. Seven of the eight have children, many of them living in the Ferry-Green-Rapallo neighborhood; several non-resident respondents also had other family members living in the area. In addition, three of the non-residents we spoke with are involved with the Ferry St. Community Garden, indicating a true concern for open space in the North End.

Lydia Brewster's main concern about including non-residents was over fairness to other non-resident stakeholders, including business owners and landlords. We did not agree with this reasoning, as explained in our email. We decided not to include non-residents in the analysis because 1) the sample is so small and 2) we agreed that the intent of the project is to voice residents' ideas and concerns, as the Housing Initiative is primarily aimed to satisfy and enhance residents' quality of life in the North End.

To ignore the issue of non-residents spending time in the North End is to ignore the reality of the neighborhood. It would also be wrong, however, to understand non-resident input as equivalent to that of residents, as non-residents do not pay rent in the area, and can more easily leave the neighborhood if problems arise. Trying to include non-residents' voices, while prioritizing the wants and needs of residents, clearly poses a dilemma which NEAT and other involved parties will need to address.

Appendix H: Non-residents

Date Tue, 9 Apr 2002 01:28:28 -0700
From Erin Larkin <elarkin@mail.wesleyan.edu>
To Lydia Brewster <lwbrewster@aol.com>, piscopiellom@aol.com
Cc Rob Rosenthal <rrosenthal@mail.wesleyan.edu>, Chelsea Anne <ckoehler@mail.wesleyan.edu>, neat@mail.wesleyan.edu
Subject Survey Subjects

Dear Lydia,

We are glad that you are feeling more comfortable with our decision to only include persons who either reside in or spend a significant amount of time in the North End in our study, but we would still like to take the opportunity to explain our reasoning because we too have debated the issue.

Per our methodology, we have only intentionally sought out people whom we believe to reside the North End. In the course of the last two weeks, however, particularly as a result of doing street interviews, it has become apparent that there are a significant number of people who do not live in the North End but who spend a substantial amount of time in the area. For the purposes of comprehensively surveying how people might use an open space in the North End, it would be irresponsible to ignore an entire population of people that spends time outside in the exact area we are examining.

Although this constituency of non-residents spans a variety of demographics, including individuals whom we have highly recommended to NEAT as potential organizers, there is a particular population of young, African-American men who are generally visible either on Ferry St. or Green St. on any given afternoon that has caught our attention. Although we have no personal evidence that these men are involved in drug trafficking, we would be naïve to ignore the comments from other residents. Practically every person we have interviewed has expressed concern about the potential for drug activity in the space and many have referenced these men. Whether or not these men live in the area or are involved in criminal activity, however, they are undeniably a part of the community and they will affect this open space. Their desire for a basketball court or a place to hang out outside is no less valid than anyone else's preference. Whether the architect chooses to design the space to meet the needs of this particular demographic is a separate question. We should also note, however, that simply because the behavior of these men disturbs the community, our research thus far indicates that their desires for the services or design to be provided by the space do not necessarily differ dramatically from those of other residents.

Our decision not to interview persons with only a legal or financial investment in the North End has two bases. Firstly, one of the primary functions of the data we produce is to serve as a tangible evidence of the voice of the people - the North End community. Landlords and business-owners already have a considerable voice in the Housing Initiative. They each have very separate and individual interests and do not need a survey to represent them. Secondly, if we were to interview landlords and business owners that do not live in the North End, there is no question their answers would skew our data. Every other person we have interviewed has answered based on his/her personal understanding of how the space could be used. Those with solely a legal/financial interest in the space would answer in the interest of protecting their own investment and this would discord with our intention to develop a sense of how the community will tangibly interact with the space.

All of our interviews thus far have yielded very salient data and we truly feel these interviews in particular will only add to our final report. Please let us know if you still have concerns.

Sincerely,

Erin, Jen, Ann, Alissa

APPENDIX I: Methodological Challenges

We made one major change in methodology during the course of the project, and throughout the process and in hindsight, recognized additional challenges and problems with the methods we chose. We had initially planned to begin our field research by knocking on a random sample of North End residences and conducting open-ended interviews to discuss general ideas about recreational space; the survey topics were to be drawn from those interviews. Upon realizing that this would take far too much time, and that NEAT organizers thought it would be possible to pull together a focus group, we chose to switch our plan. Focus groups were a decidedly more appropriate option, as bringing people together to talk about this was almost definitely more productive than individual discussions. One problem, however, was that all participants were already aware of or involved with NEAT.

The time limitation for this research project necessitated certain methodological decisions that may not have been ideal. It is clear that this type of research is best conducted by people who know and ideally are part of the relevant population. While we made a concerted effort to familiarize ourselves with the North End and its residents, there is no way this could adequately happen in a period of a few months. Most of the residents we surveyed had never seen us before (and identified us as Wesleyan students, with whatever implications that had for them), and the few residents with whom we were acquainted did not know us well; any methods chosen would not have elicited completely open and honest answers.

After the focus group, we chose to develop a survey that would lend itself to quantitative analysis. If the report was to make a clear statement of the neighborhood's interests, we felt that we needed to ask for input on specific questions. We probably should have asked a few more open-ended or *why* questions, but in planning we didn't expect people to be so interested in talking to us, and were worried that the survey would take too much time. Asking more general questions would have been interesting and would have allowed different ideas to be heard; but considering that the topic was not one people were already necessarily thinking about, some directed questioning was definitely called for. More open-ended questions would also have posed a far more difficult task in trying to present an integrated analysis in which all respondents are counted.

Our multiple-choice questions were on scales of importance (*not important, somewhat important, important, very important*) or of desire for an option (*definitely, maybe, no, no opinion*). We recognize that scales are an imperfect measure of opinion; one person's *important* is another person's *somewhat important*. As with any survey, this should not be seen as an objective measure of attitudes and ideas. We thought that this was preferable, however, to asking

respondents to rank the various options in order of preference. A past study in the North End had found that means of questioning to be confusing and unclear to respondents.¹

During the surveying, we realized that some respondents were speaking about their perception of others' needs and interests rather than their own. At times, we tried to reinforce that we were asking what *you* want, but a number of residents still had children's needs in mind (see section on Children, p.11 for more on this issue). This is an inconsistency, as ideas were equally recorded whether the respondent saw the space as primarily for others' use or their own. Yet neither this nor any of the other concerns makes these findings useless; rather, we hope that readers will keep the concerns in mind as they read, and still see the results as indicative of the opinions of North End residents.

¹ *The North End Report: Resident Concerns, Opinions and Suggestions About Their Community*. Spring 1998.

APPENDIX J: Demographics in Detail

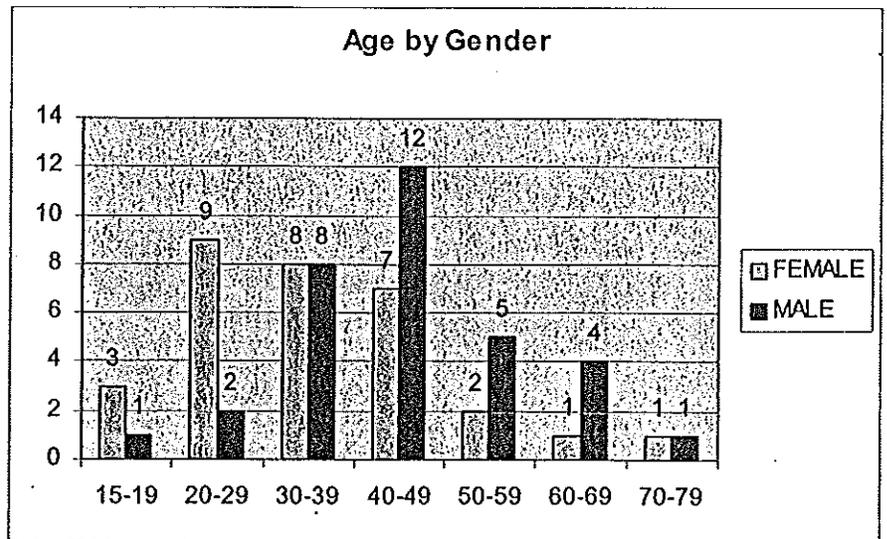
Race. We allowed respondents to self-identify their race or ethnicity, later re-categorizing some for the purposes of analysis. The 64 residents in our sample include twenty-one people who identified as black or African-American; seven Latinos/as, including one who identified as Mexicanⁱⁱ; and thirty whites, including two who identified as Italian-American and four others who considered themselves European-American. Additionally, five residents identified as biracial; two as black and white, two as black and Indian (South Asian), and one as black and Hebrew. One resident identified only as 'other.'

Table i: Demographics of Sample and Census

		SAMPLE	CENSUS
		% of 64	% of 717
GENDER:	Female	48.4	51.6
	Male	51.6	48.4
RACE:	White	46.9	45.6
	People of color	51.6	--
	Black	32.8	28.9
	Latino/a	10.9	18.8
	Biracial	7.8	3.9
	Other	1.6	--
AGE:	15-19	6.3	6.0
	20-29	17.2	15.5
	30-39	25.0	18.5
	40-49	29.7	18.4
	50-59	10.9	10.9
	60-69	7.8	3.8
	70-79	3.1	3.2

Figure i

Age. The age of respondents ranged from 15 to 71, with a mean of 40 years (see *Table i*). The difference between our sample and the census data is less than 4% in all age groups, except for the 40-49 year-old category, which is over-represented by 5.6%. The average age of women was 36 years, versus 43 for men. Ninety-one percent of male residents are age 30 or over, compared to 61% of female residents (see *Figure i*).



ⁱⁱ Two of the surveys with Latinos were conducted in Spanish.

Employment. We asked residents who replied that they were employed whether they worked *part-time, full-time, more than one job, or one job more than forty hours*. One resident identified as *self-employed*.

Residents who replied that they were unemployed could identify as *seeking part-time employment, seeking full-time employment, not seeking employment, retired, in school, on government assistance, or not seeking employment due to disability*. The break down of responses is shown in *Figure ii* and *iii*.

Figure ii

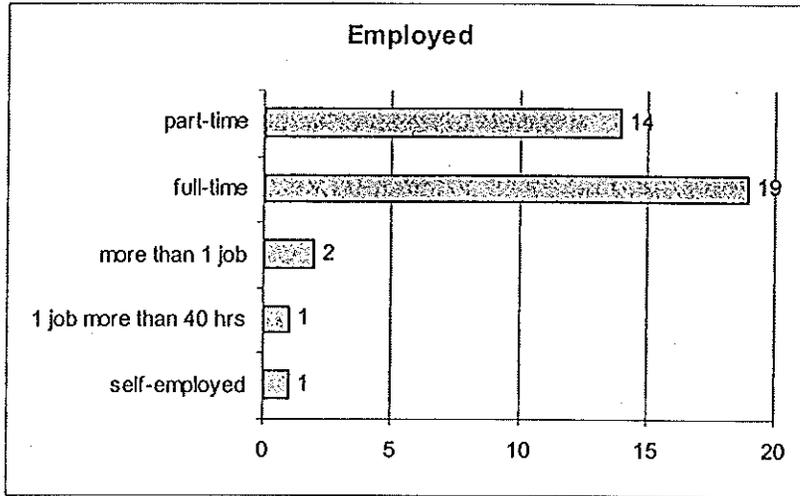
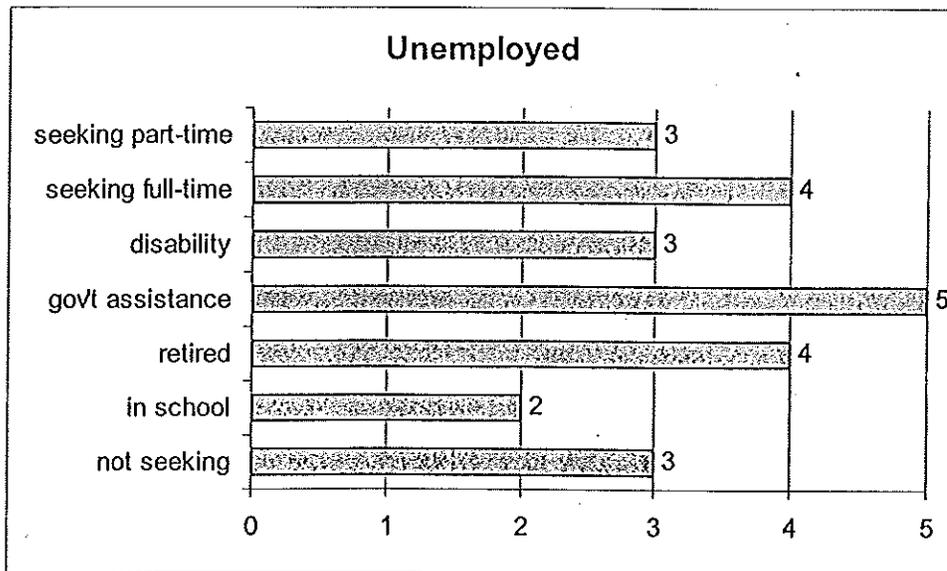


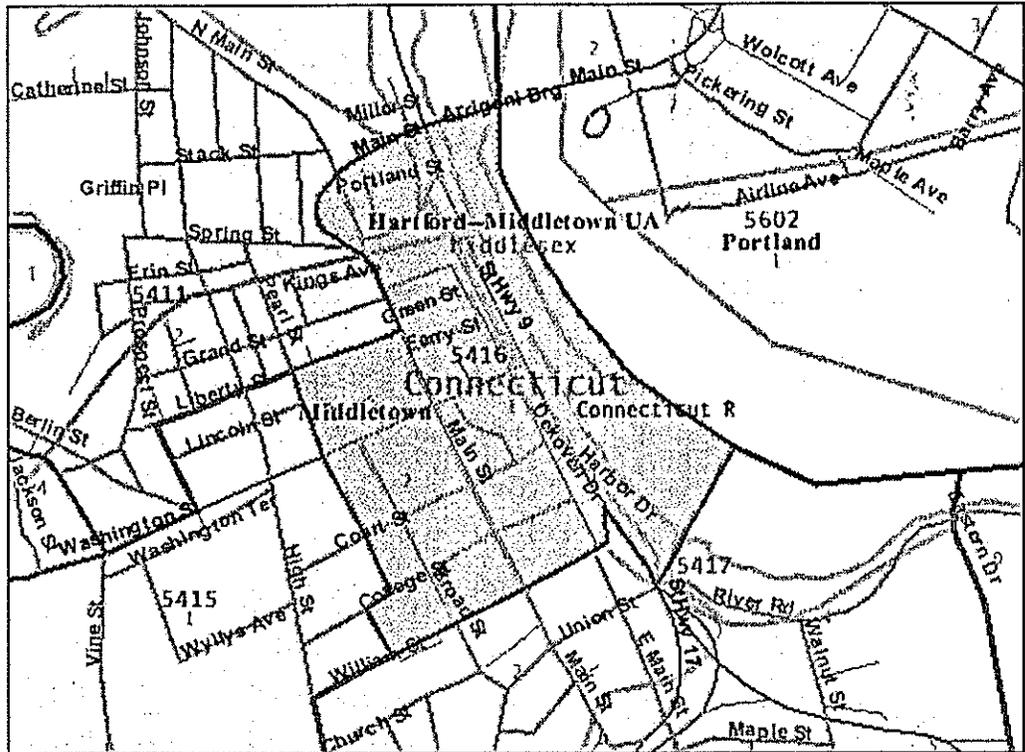
Figure iii



APPENDIX K: Map of Census Tract

Census Tract 5416, Middlesex County, Connecticut; available from <http://www.census.gov/>
 Our survey area is part of *Block group 1*, which is east of Main Street.

- Boundaries**
- State
 - '00 County
 - '00 Census Tract
 - '00 Block Group
 - '00 Block
 - '00 Place
 - '90 UA
- Features**
- Major Road
 - Street
 - Stream/Waterbody
 - Stream/Waterbody



1.6 miles across

Close

APPENDIX L: Understanding our Analysis: Methods and Assumptions

Our survey included both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Throughout our analysis, we combine the qualitative and statistical data relevant to each topic in order to present a full picture of residents' opinions. While we make conclusions about preferences using this data, it is important to note that almost all options for activities and utilities were supported by a majority of residents. This is a phenomenon caused in part by the structure of our survey; we allowed respondents to voice support for each option separately, rather than asking them to prioritize the different possibilities.ⁱⁱⁱ If the variance between majority-supported options is not absolutely indicative of preferences, the overall high levels of interest do, nonetheless, reveal a general support for the creation of some sort of facility in this space.

We discuss residents' willingness to be involved in the space throughout the analysis and more in-depth in the final section. It should be noted that, although high levels of interest were reported, we understand these to be *interest* and not an indication of actual potential for involvement. Residents were not asked to make a commitment while they spoke to us, and thus may likely have been overzealous in their thinking about how much time they could afford to put into organizing. While all community members should be seen as resources with something to add to any community effort, it is clear that many factors, time not least among them, may prevent every interested resident from becoming involved in organizing.

ⁱⁱⁱ A choice based on advice from past studies; see *Appendix I* for more on methodology.

APPENDIX M: Demographic Breakdown for Ownership and Rules

Table ii: Who should own the space?

		CITY	ORG	BOTH	Other/No response	TOTAL
TOTAL:		15.6% (10)	32.8% (21)	42.2% (27)	9.4% (6)	100% n= 64
BY RACE:	<i>White</i>	13.3	23.3	53.3		30
	<i>People of color</i>	18.2	39.4	33.3		33
	<i>Black</i>	14.3	42.9	33.3		21
	<i>Latino/a</i>	42.9	28.6	28.6		7
	<i>Biracial</i>	0	40.0	40.0		5
BY AGE:	<i>Under 30</i>	13.3	53.3	26.7		15
	<i>30 +</i>	16.3	26.5	46.9		49
BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS:	<i>Employed part-time</i>	14.3	50.0	35.7		14
	<i>Employed full-time or more</i>	18.2	27.3	45.5		22
BY YEARS IN NORTH END:	<i>4 and under</i>	15.6	40.6	37.5		32
	<i>5 and greater</i>	15.6	25.0	46.9		32

Table iii: Who should establish the rules for this space?

		CITY	ORG	BOTH	Other/No response	TOTAL
TOTAL:		17.2% (11)	39.1% (25)	40.6% (26)	3.1% (2)	100% n= 64
BY GENDER:	<i>Female</i>	12.9	35.5	51.6		31
	<i>Male</i>	21.2	42.4	30.3		33
BY RACE:	<i>White</i>	13.3	43.3	40.0		30
	<i>People of color</i>	21.2	33.3	42.4		33
BY KIDS:	<i>Have kids</i>	14.6	36.6	46.3		41
	<i>Do not have kids</i>	21.7	43.5	30.4		23
BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS:	<i>Unemployed</i>	12.5	50.0	33.3		24
	<i>Employed</i>	21.1	31.6	44.7		38
	<i>Part-time</i>	14.3	42.9	42.9		14
	<i>Full-time or more</i>	22.7	27.3	45.5		22
BY YEARS IN NORTH END:	<i>1 and under</i>	11.1	50.0	38.9		18
	<i>more than 1</i>	20.6	34.8	41.3		46