

## Why Neighborhoods?

### A Place-Based Approach to Impact

**Neighborhoods present themselves as unique opportunities for revitalization.** Any geographic area from urban to rural can be a focus of restoration and activation work though urban core neighborhoods, are often prioritized. They were once vibrant communities that have over time become under or dis-invested. After a period of disinvestment, these neighborhoods tend to show concerning trends of poverty, crime, and poor outcomes in education and health. These trends impact the overall health and vibrancy of the larger community.

Besides having **high rates of poverty**: *(not exhaustive list of the region neighborhoods, SAVI data used<sup>12</sup>):*

- **Tepe Park residents experience significant transportation barriers.**
  - 23% of households do not have vehicle access (8% Vanderburgh County)
- **Jacobsville residents experience high rates of vacant housing, which is often associated with higher crime rates.**
  - 24% of housing in the neighborhood is vacant (10% Vanderburgh County)
- **Glenwood residents are paying large percentages of their income on lower value housing.**
  - 43% of households are significantly burdened by their housing costs (28% Vanderburgh County) on homes of lower median value (\$55,247 vs \$136,100 Vanderburgh County)
- **East End residents are less likely to have a high school diploma, limiting income potential.**
  - 32% have less than a high school diploma (13% Henderson County, 10% Vanderburgh County)
- **Lamasco residents are less likely to own the home in which they live, an indicator of low neighborhood stability.**
  - 28% of housing units are owner occupied (65% Vanderburgh County)

**These neighborhoods, when prioritized with successful reinvestment strategies, will provide a better quality of life for residents, and improve the well-being and attractiveness of the larger region.** The revitalization of dis-invested neighborhoods to improve the infrastructure and quality of life for residents, benefits the neighborhood and adjacent communities and can also have an impact on a region's overall vibrancy and attractiveness to new and existing residents. Place-based considerations are closely related to quality of place and to community and regional efforts to attract and retain talent, to grow a population. When communities are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and residents can engage socially,<sup>10</sup> the community is more likely a place where everyone wants to live, work, pray, and play.

**Placed-Based Strategies are effective ways of working with residents to revitalize their neighborhoods.** Placed-Based Strategies are overarching, multi-faceted, customized plans and activities to help a community thrive. They include infrastructure improvements such as parks and trails, housing development, economic development, and programs to improve the quality of life and access to opportunity for people. They bring to bear the history and systems that influence the neighborhood culture.<sup>7</sup> This wholistic restoration and activation brings focused impact and transformational change to residents and with the involvement of its residents. Successful strategies at the neighborhood level involve a long-term relationship, empowerment-based approach to reversing decades of neglect and disinvestment in neighbors and neighborhoods. A localized community development organization is typically at the center of such efforts. In our region, we are fortunate to have organizations who are committed to seeing neighborhoods thrive, e.g., Community One/Tepe Park, Dream Center/Jacobsville, Audubon Kids Zone/East End Henderson, Renew Church/Lamasco.

Programs by themselves and top-down approaches of deciding what residents need without resident involvement have proven ineffective against long-lasting issues like generational poverty. Successful initiatives are less

***Effective place-based strategies include an Assets-Based Community Development Approach.***

*ABCD is a lens through which to view residents and communities focusing on the assets apparent or latent in a community rather than needs, building from a place of strength, networking, and resourcing residents to be the change they want to see to build a neighborhood from the inside out.*

programmatic or institutional, but instead are rooted in resident engagement and customized for the community located in the place.

**Overall, place-based strategies based on best/promising practices can have long-term impact because they empower communities, encourage collaboration, lead to customized solutions, and can have economic benefits.** Placed-based strategies empower community members to take ownership of their communities and work together to address issues. This can lead to a greater sense of pride and attachment to the community, and a more engaged population. Place-based strategies encourage collaboration between community members, local organizations, and government agencies. This collaborative approach can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions to community challenges. Place-based strategies focus on long-term, sustainable solutions rather than short-term fixes. By addressing root causes and building capacity within communities, place-based development can lead to lasting change and improved quality of life. Place-based strategies can also have economic benefits, as it can help to attract investment and support local businesses, which in turn can create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

When local partners collaboratively invest in a resident-driven, placed-based neighborhood initiative, significant leveraging of financial capital, social networks, and expertise can:

- Break down the complexities and tackle root cause(s) of issues
- Identify a comprehensive—perhaps even cross-sector—approach to tackling those issues
- Generate lasting, transformative change within the chosen community

*“There is an urgency, and opportunity, for local and regional leaders to embrace and advance place-led development that produces better outcomes for more people in more places.” Brookings Institute*

Philanthropy especially, has a unique ability to understand the larger context that exists around problems that allow for a focus on systems change. Philanthropy also has the unique ability to be innovative, make mistakes, and to adapt and evolve and can experiment with bold solutions and catalytic funding opportunities<sup>3</sup>.

Philanthropy’s value in place-based change is its staying power, ability to convene, and the capacity to leverage resources and relationships to sustain the momentum with the end-goal in mind. When this is accomplished in true partnership with communities and partners, the positive result has the potential to affect change for generations to come.

### Place-Based Initiative Examples:

- Strong, Prosperous, And Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC) Initiative. <https://www.sparcchub.org/>
- Purpose Built Communities. <https://purposebuiltcommunities.org/how-we-work/>
- One Northside. <https://onenorthsidepqh.org/>

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-Liz Tharp, Learning & Impact Officer, Welborn Baptist Foundation

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