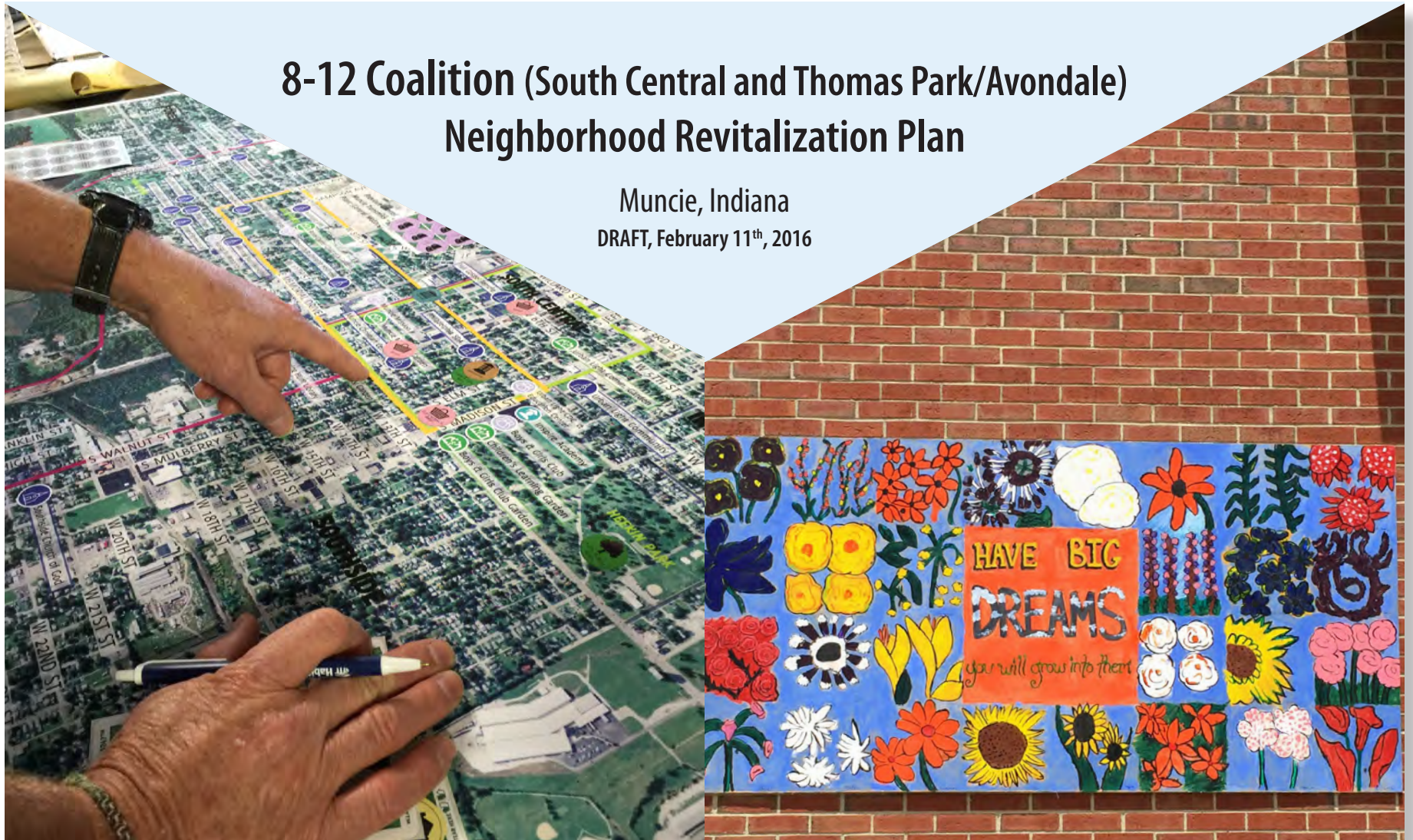


# 8-12 Coalition (South Central and Thomas Park/Avondale) Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Muncie, Indiana

DRAFT, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016



*Convened by Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity, supported by Vectren Foundation and Habitat for Humanity International*

# 8-12 Coalition

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## Steering Committee

Josh Arthur, Avondale UMC, *Resident*

Lindsey Arthur, Muncie Habitat for Humanity, *Urban Light CDC, Resident*

Jena Ashby, Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity

Frank Baldwin, *Muncie Mission*

Sarah Renee Beaver, *Resident*

Emilie Carpenter, Urban Light CDC, *Resident*

Andrew Draper, Urban Light Community Church, *Urban Light CDC, Resident*

Leslie Draper, Inspire Academy, *Resident*

Angelia Gordon, Urban Light CDC, *Resident*

Dori Granados, Urban Light CDC, *Resident*

Craig Graybeal, *ecoREHAB*

Mark and LeiAnne Lloyd, *Residents*

Micah Maxwell, *Boys & Girls Club*

Lezlie McCrory, *Resident, South Central Neighborhood Association President*

Ray Montagno, *Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity*

Tom Moore, *Vectren Foundation*

Annette Phillips, *PathStone*

Chris Reid, *Indiana Academy, Resident*

Wes and Sherry Russell, *Residents*

Heather Williams, *Building Better Neighborhoods, Ball State Univ. Office of Community Engagement*



HFHI provided staff and consultant support to Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity in its neighborhood revitalization program. Neighborhood Revitalization allows affiliates to serve more families by responding to community aspirations with an expanded array of products, services, and partnerships, empowering residents to revive their neighborhoods and enhance their quality of life.



Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity has convened the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy on behalf of the residents, neighborhood associations, and organizations that together form the 8-12 Coalition. The work is being supported by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI's) Neighborhood Revitalization Program.



Vectren Foundation is deeply committed to supporting local initiatives that bring people, organizations and talent together to revitalize the communities it serves. The Foundation has provided a range of support for this initiative, including financial assistance, outreach, and making connections within and across communities.



Teska Associates, Inc. was asked by the project sponsors to facilitate a local planning process over the Fall of 2015. Teska Associates is an urban planning, community development, and landscape architecture firm. Teska has worked with Habitat for Humanity International and local affiliates in over a dozen communities throughout the U.S.



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# 1 Vision

## *Developing a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*

Over the past several years, there has been a concerted effort to focus on reinvestment in the city's neighborhoods. From the Muncie Action Plan (MAP) to the resources at Ball State University, neighborhood-driven planning has become an important tool to bring residents, organizations, and businesses together toward a common agenda.

Just as Muncie's residents, organizations, and local leaders have changed over the past several years to recognize the need for neighborhood redevelopment, so has Habitat for Humanity. Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity is changing, as many other affiliates are around the country, to focus on Neighborhood Revitalization (NR). While Habitat will remain committed to its core strengths in building and rehabbing single-family housing to provide pride in ownership for families, it recognizes that it can't go it alone. Habitat needs partners and a coordinated strategy with residents, organizations, local officials, and businesses to restore pride in ownership on a neighborhood scale.

Neighborhood Revitalization is the process by which Habitat works with its partners to make this long-term change happen. Habitat aims to measure progress over time, be humble in its approach, and work in partnership with the community on a range of strategies that will show demonstrable improvement in housing stability, perception of residents, neighborhood opportunity, and a ladder for success.

As a core principle of Neighborhood Revitalization, the effort brings together all of the connections, people, and places in a coordinated way to develop a local plan that is based on what each individual, organization, official, or business is committing to do, and a framework for working together over time. A plan is not simply a list of projects or a wish list, it is a common work plan that will frame our work over the next three to five years. It will adapt to circumstances, opportunities, and challenges along the way, but it will provide the grounding and common path to measure how we are doing, what progress is being made, and what is left to do.

As a kick-off of this process, an intensive three-day workshop was held on September 30 - October 2, 2015. These three days were packed with meetings, from one-on-one interviews, to tours of local partners' programs, to Steering Committee meetings, and an open-invitation community meeting. This was followed by another set of meetings on November 10 - 12 to refine the plan, secure commitments, and reach out to more residents to develop a common work plan that will guide our work and a meeting on December 14 to review progress and refine an organizational structure for the coalition.



*Lindsey Arthur leads a session on Neighborhood Revitalization at a community meeting at Avondale United Methodist Church.*

## ***The Vision:***

8-12 Coalition residents come together to inspire each other to promote a vibrant, authentic, diverse, friendly community that is safe, family-oriented, and provides opportunities for youth and adults to pursue their dreams.





## 2 Neighborhood Revitalization Focus Neighborhood

The focus neighborhood for this neighborhood revitalization effort lies between W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, E. Memorial Drive (W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street) on the South, S. Perkins Avenue on the west and S. Madison Street on the east and encompasses portions of the Thomas Park/Avondale and South Central Neighborhood. The area was specifically chosen to bring residents from Thomas Park/Avondale and South Central together to address common challenges. Given this geographical area, the steering committee for this focus neighborhood is called the 8-12 Coalition. While each neighborhood has its unique character, there are a number of organizations which serve both areas and can work in concert with residents to build on local strengths and address the challenges head on.

There are 541 households with 1,742 residents who live in the area, a decline in population of 15% since 2000. The neighborhood is currently 32% owner-occupied housing, 45% renter-occupied, and 23% vacant housing units. The approach of Neighborhood Revitalization is to build on local assets and strengths, while addressing challenges that have led to population decline.

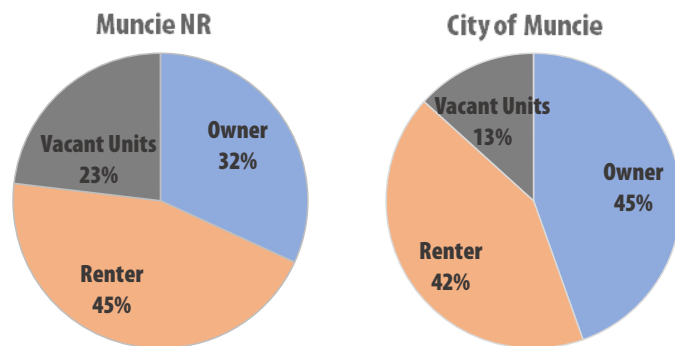


Figure 1: Housing Tenure 2010

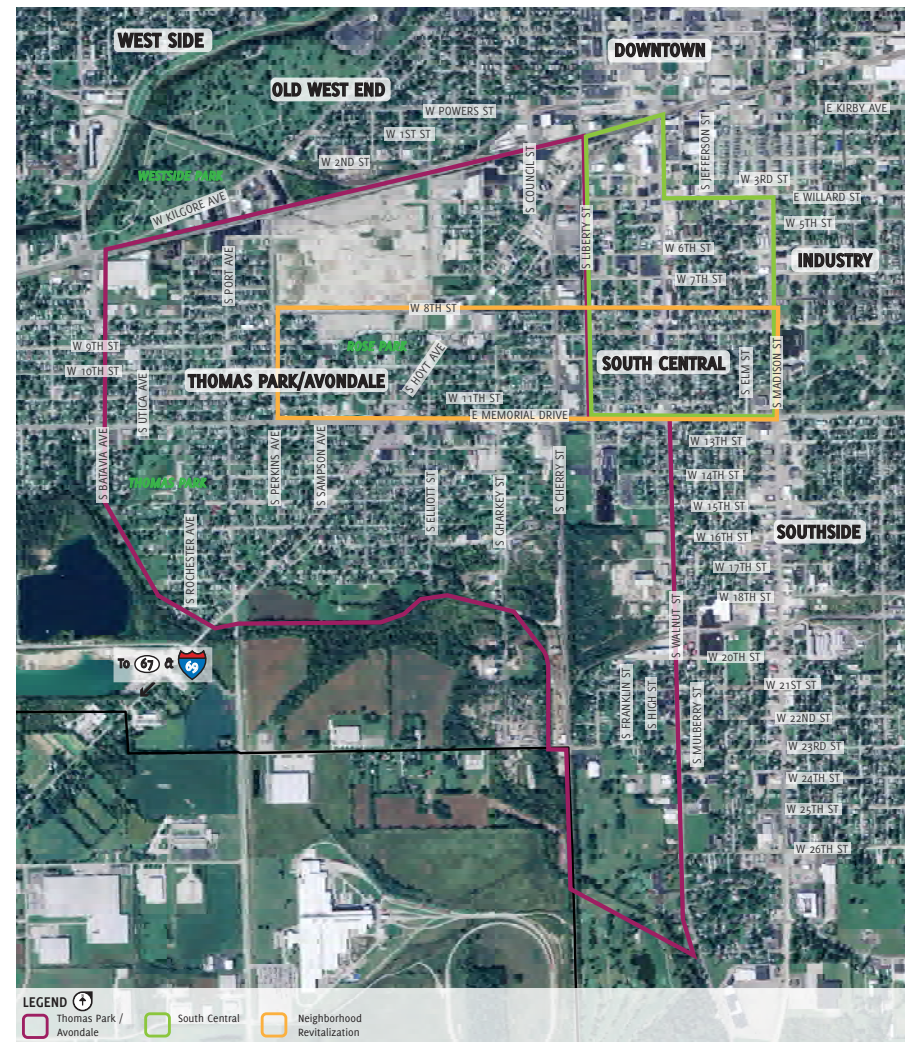


Figure 2: Location Map

### 3 Asset Map

Neighborhood Revitalization uses an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. This means that we build our plan based on the area's strengths rather than focusing solely on solving problems. By understanding what works, we can craft strategies unique to the area that are likely to have much stronger buy-in and support from the community. The asset map shown on page 5, shows some of the key organizations area such as Muncie Mission, Boys and Girls Club, Inspire Academy, Urban Light CDC, Habitat for Humanity and Ross Community Center, as well as retail stores (shown by a shopping cart), homes that have been rehabbed ore repaired (shown with a yellow house) and churches (shown by a blue steeple). The asset maps were created through participation in a variety of meetings with the Steering Committee and residents at community meetings.

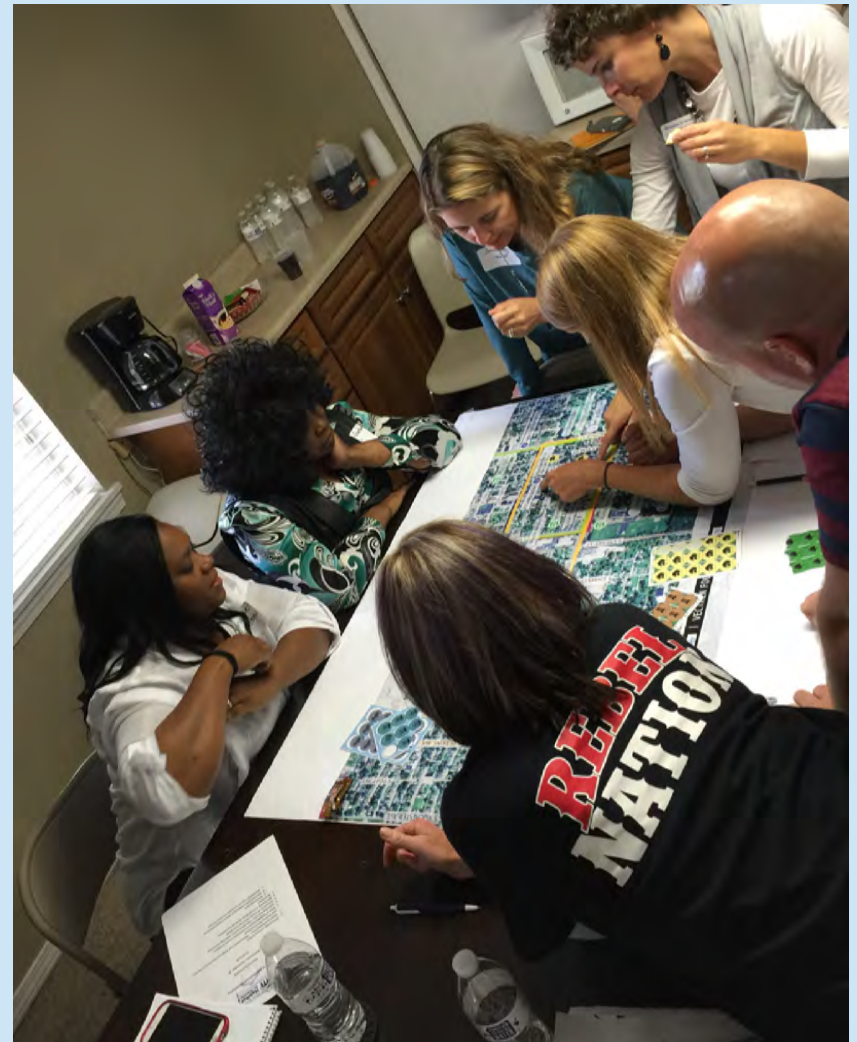
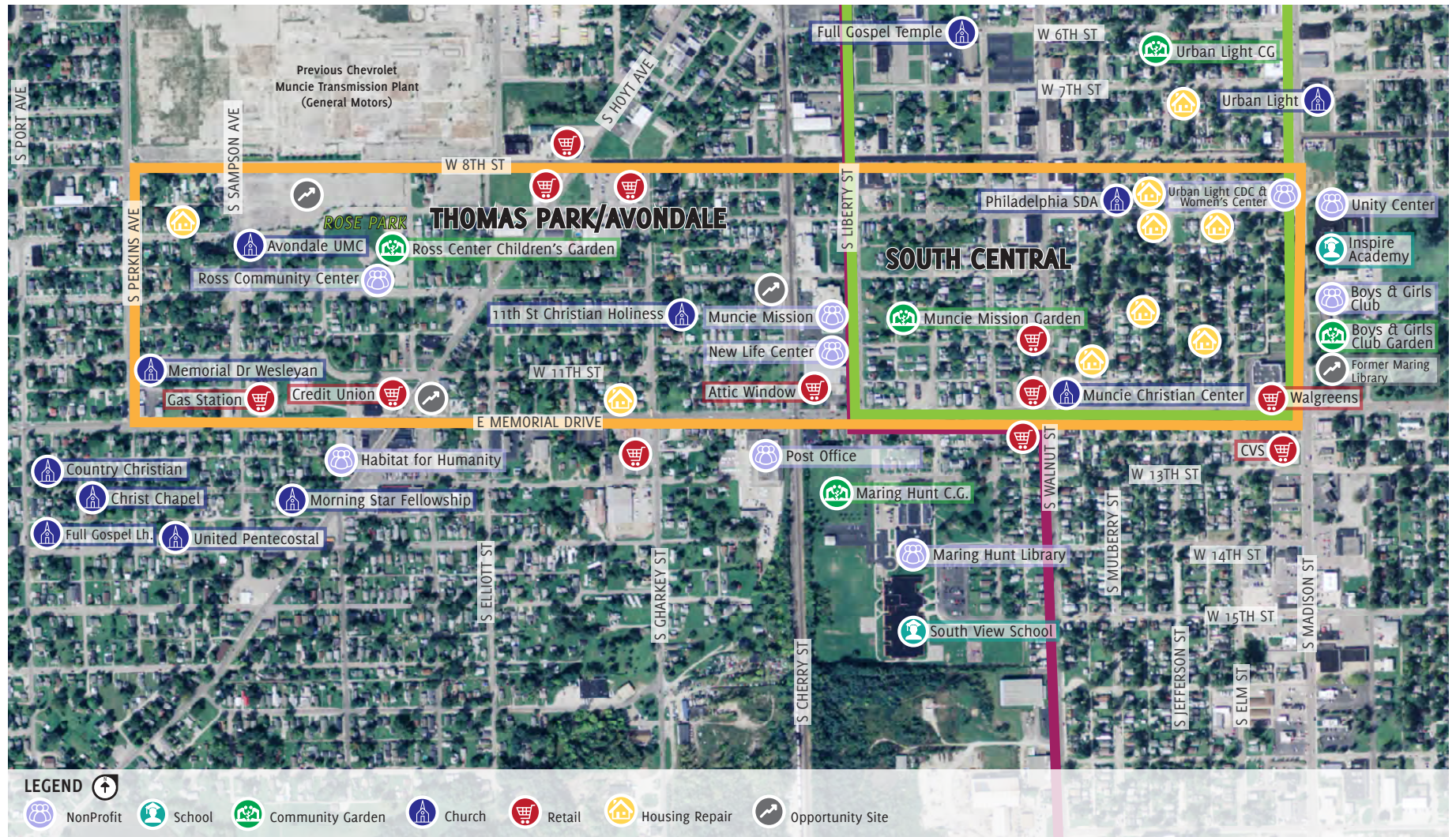


Figure 3: Steering Committee members locate assets on the map of 8-12 Coalition.



# Community Assets





## 4 Recent Planning Efforts

### Muncie Action Plan

The City of Muncie is fortunate to have been engaged in two major planning efforts over the past several years: the Muncie Action Plan (MAP) and the Building Better Neighborhoods Program at Ball State University. MAP is an independent, grassroots, citywide initiative that has built a culture of good planning in the city and consensus around priorities. The vision of MAP is:

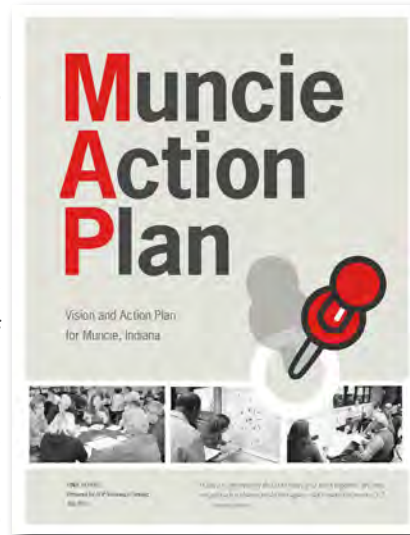
**“We seek to be a community which respects diversity, manages resources effectively and efficiently, and works together to provide an attractive, desirable place for individuals, families and businesses.”**

MAP initially set out five initiatives:

1. Linking Learning, Health, and Prosperity
2. Fostering Collaboration
3. Strengthening Pride and Image
4. Creating Attractive and Desirable Places
5. Managing Community Resources

The principles laid out in MAP are very relevant to the 8-12 Coalition, which is made up of established neighborhoods in the core of the city that require redevelopment and reinvestment:

1. Infill development and redevelopment will take priority.
2. Underutilized industrial sites will be strategically redeveloped.
3. Areas will be reclaimed and held for redevelopment.
4. Downtown and commercial districts will have a mix of uses.
5. Future development & redevelopment will include open space.



6. Development of residential areas will have strong neighborhood qualities.
7. A broad range of housing types, price levels, and ownership options will strengthen community identity and housing choice.
8. The appearance of neighborhood and commercial districts will promote positive attitudes of safety and community pride.
9. Places will be better connected to improve connections to street, pedestrian and bike networks.
10. Streets will be welcoming places for people while safely accommodating automobiles.
11. Entryways to Muncie will be attractive.
12. Quality design matters.

Of the thirteen initial priority projects determined by community preferences, four are most relevant to 8-12 Coalition:

- Develop a Council of Neighborhoods to build and support capacity of neighborhood organizations. MAP has been providing technical assistance and training to each of the neighborhood organizations in the City, including those serving South Central and Thomas Park / Avondale.
- Develop a city brand identity and marketing campaign. The City has moved forward with several initiatives to improve its brand image, through signage, downtown improvements and marketing efforts. In a similar vein, it will be important for South Central and Thomas Park / Avondale to improve the image at the neighborhood level by building on the strengths and pride evident among residents of these neighborhoods and being able to communicate that brand citywide and beyond the City of Muncie to attract reinvestment.
- Promote importance of education: MAP has been focusing much of its efforts on improving education at all levels, from Pre K through public schools and through higher education.
- Promote community-based neighborhood enhancement programs: MAP's leaders see citywide efforts as providing support to local initiatives led by residents and community-based organizations.

## South Central Neighborhood Action Plan

The second major effort has been led by Building Better Neighborhoods and urban design studios at Ball State University. As part of these initiatives, neighborhood action plans have drafted for a number of areas of Muncie, including the South Central neighborhood in 2012. The plan set out a number of recommendations in the following areas:

### Initiatives

1. **Education and training** – including early learning, K-12 tutoring, homeownership and maintenance classes, financial literacy, adult fitness and senior health and safety.
2. **Health and safety** – including attracting a health clinic, safety education, establishing a local food market, and fostering a neighborhood crime watch.
3. **Housing and land** – including reusing vacant lots and securing vacant homes, removing and restoring blighted structures, increase homeownership, and acquiring properties through a land bank.
4. **Identity** – including beautification, wayfinding, and signage, promoting neighborhood events, creating gateways and community artwork, and creating pocket parks.
5. **Public infrastructure** – including sidewalk and utility improvements, street lighting maintenance, green infrastructure, and transportation improvements.
6. **Social Support** – including youth, adult, and senior activities and programs to engage the community in social concerns.

The plan is well researched and provides case studies and contact people for each idea that was presented. These ideas were taken into consideration by residents in defining priorities in this Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.





## Energy Plan Studio

Over the summer of 2015, an Energy Plan Studio urban design studio at Ball State University developed a draft Energy Plan for 8-12 Coalition. As part of the studio, students collected information on each parcel of the focus neighborhood. In the Types of Property map, light green signifies vacant property, dark green shows single-family homes, purple represents commercial properties, yellow is city-owned property, light blue are mobile or manufactured homes, and dark blue are apartment buildings.

This information can inform strategies to determine which blocks need the greatest support and focus on rehab and repairs. It also shows commercial and vacant properties along Hoyt Avenue that can be reinvested in as a gateway to the downtown.

### Legend

	Vacant Property		Office Building		City owned
	Commercial Stores		Mobile or Manufactured Home		Public Library
	Restaurants		Light Manufacturing		Car services
	Parking Lots		Bank		Apartment Complex
	Other Residential Structures		Religious Organization		Family homes

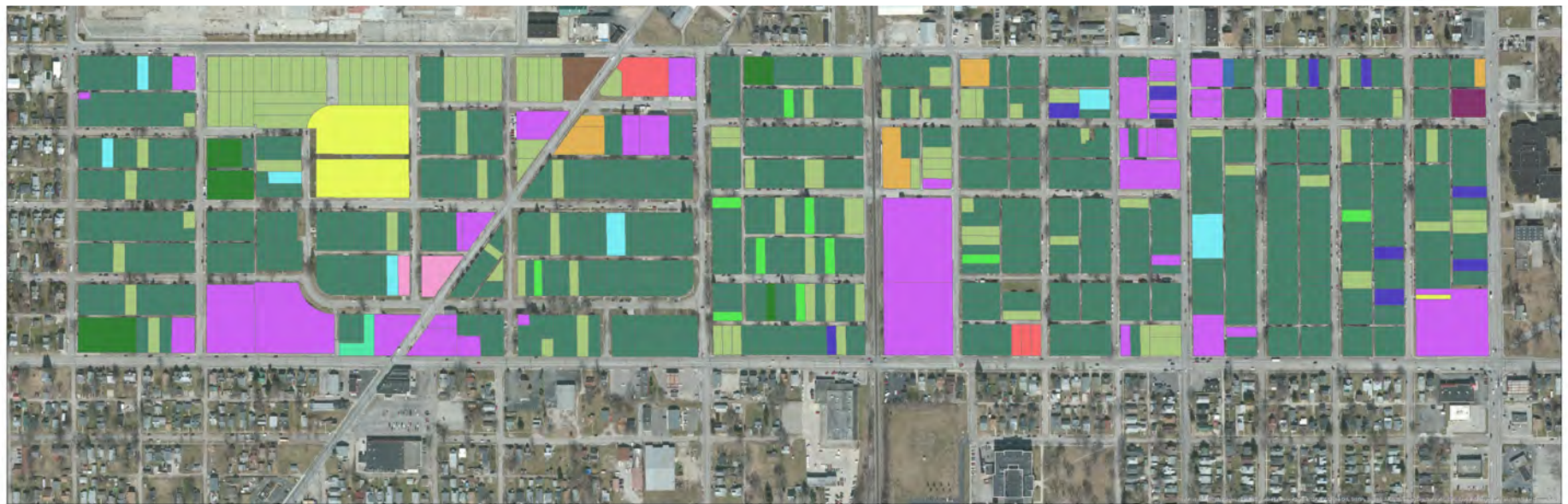
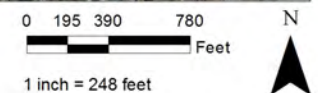


Figure 4: Types of Properties, South Central/Thomas Park-Avondale Energy Plan



The second map, titled Home Repair Group Need, illustrates the assessed value of each property, from red and orange representing lower values (and are typically single family homes which need repair) up through yellow and green which represent higher values. Blue properties are the highest value and are typically larger commercial properties.

The map confirms the general observations collected during asset mapping, that the areas that had more housing rehab, particularly those in the western and eastern portions of the area, have led to greater housing value.

The core area near the center of the study area has the lowest value per home, and likely the greatest ongoing need for housing improvements.

## Legend

### Assessed Value

<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span>	1,000 - 30,000
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	30,001 - 50,000
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	50,001 - 85,000
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	85,001 - 300,000
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color:blue; border:1px solid black;"></span>	300,001 - 1,917,800
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span>	Owner Occupied

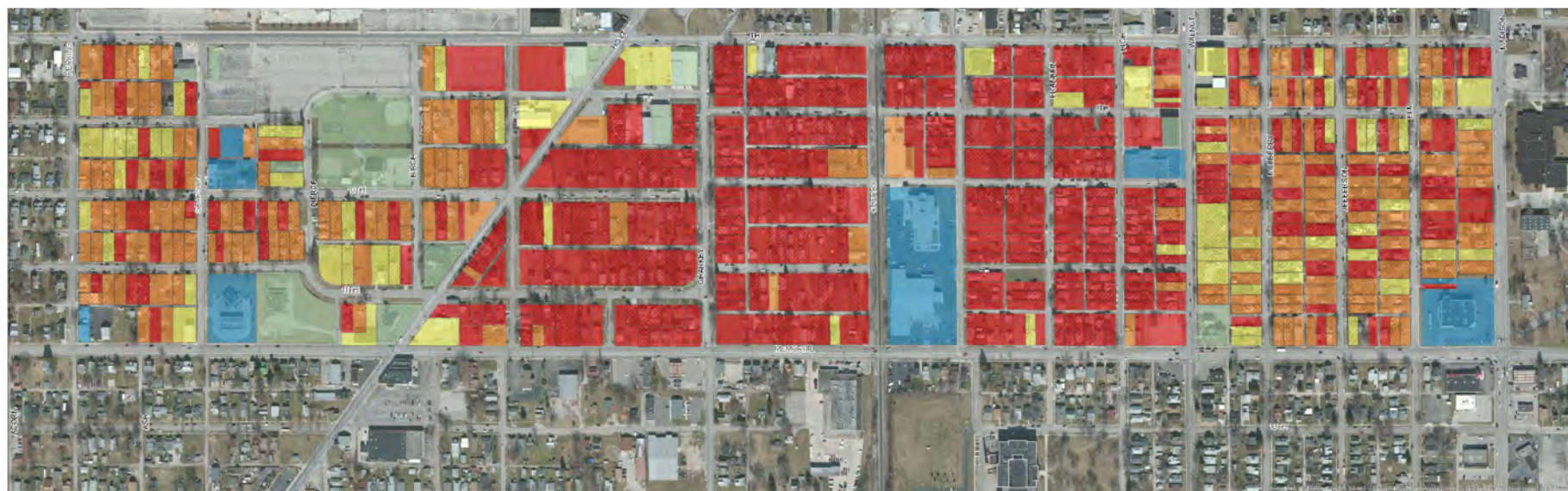
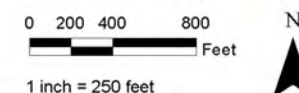


Figure 5: Home Repair Group Needs, South Central/Thomas Park-Avondale Energy Plan








## 5 Key Issue Areas/Work Plan


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Based on all of the information that was reviewed during two sets of three-day visits that included meetings with individuals, small groups, two community meetings, and several Steering Committee meetings, the following key issue areas were determined to be the most important priorities to organize our work:

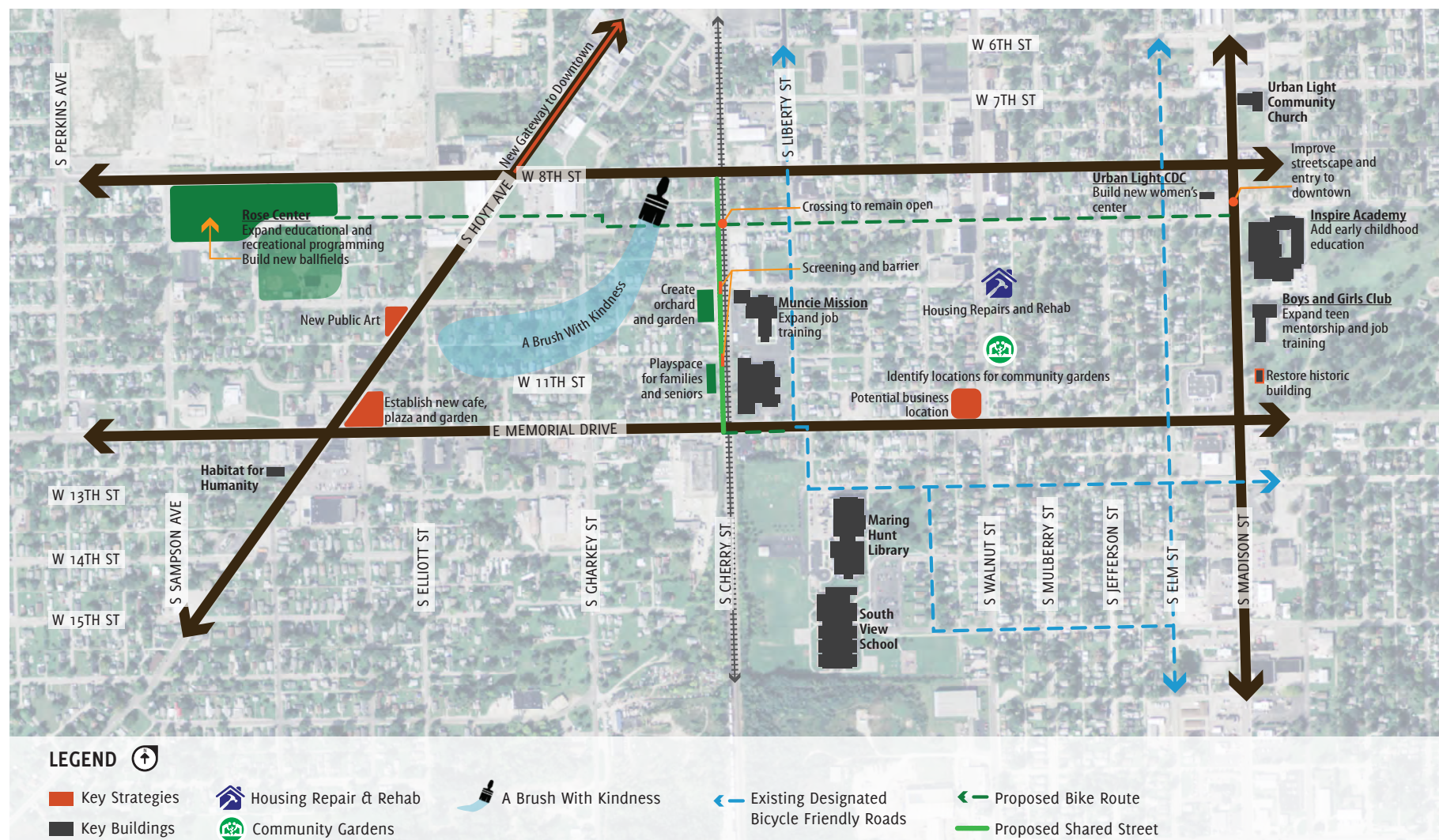
 **Business Development and Employment** – The common thread that has held the greatest challenges to most households is the need for better jobs, income growth, education and workforce training to access these jobs. The closing of the Chevrolet transmission plant meant thousands of jobs were lost over time that have never been fully replaced. At one time, you didn't need a college education or even a high school degree to get a good job. Now, new jobs that come require higher skills. With limited retail choices within the neighborhood, hard earned money of the residents is not recycled – it leaves the community on a daily basis. A Neighborhood Revitalization strategy will need to connect residents to jobs, and support the creation of new jobs.

 **Beautification** – The 8-12 corridor is a key gateway into Muncie. Google Maps will take you straight up S. Hoyt Avenue up to downtown Muncie, where tens of millions of dollars have been spent bringing jobs, improved streetscapes and a new hotel. Being so close to downtown is a key advantage to revitalize commercial corridors along Hoyt, Madison and Walnut Streets. The closing of rail crossings has brought up significant concerns of residents, who now feel isolated from their surroundings, but the new “quiet zone” can be turned into an advantage through neighborhood beautification efforts that can restore property values.

 **Housing** – Close cooperation among four housing organizations – Muncie Habitat for Humanity, EcoRehab, Pathstone, and Urban Light CDC, have led to a concerted effort to rehab and repair housing for the past several years. These efforts are starting to pay off as the housing units they work on become shining lights on their blocks. For this progress to spread, the housing market will need to be stabilized with a range of strategies so that homeowners have the confidence that if they fix up their home, their property value will increase. With a large number of rental properties, strategies will be needed to work with both landlords and tenants to improve property maintenance and responsibilities in the neighborhood.

 **Services** – There are a number of organizations committed to improving access to important services including recreation, youth services, and help to individuals and families that need an outstretched hand. Through greater coordination, joint fundraising, and evaluating impact over time, these services can increase to provide the support structure and opportunities needed for youth, adults, and families.

## Community Strategies







## Business Development and Employment

The top priority for residents was to expand economic opportunity and family stability. This was expressed through a variety of channels, from supporting the creation of locally-owned businesses, expanding workforce development needs, to attracting retail development and restaurants to the area, especially along the commercial corridors that lead toward downtown.

### Key drivers:

1. There is a need for more jobs and locally-owned businesses in 8-12 Coalition. There are 33 businesses with 298 employees within the study area. The area is well connected to other parts of Muncie, however, including downtown which is located just to the north. The number one employer is Ball State University, which is located in the northwest portion of the city, but still only a 15 minute drive away.
2. There is a skills gap between residents in the area and the jobs located throughout Muncie. One in three residents aged over 25 do not have a high school or GED degree. In order to qualify for most good-paying jobs, however, is going to require at least a high school, and often a higher education degree. The good news is that there are potential partners to meet the skills gap.
3. There is a significant retail gap between the demand generated by local residents and the availability of local goods and services. In fact, there is only \$3.1 million in annual sales of retail goods, compared with \$6.2 million of demand. This means that 50% of local demand is not being met in the neighborhood, resulting in residents having to leave their neighborhood to buy many basic goods or eat at a restaurant.

#### Top retail gaps include:

• General Merchandise	\$1,180,000
• Food and beverage	\$857,000
• Health and personal care	\$537,000
• Clothing and accessories	\$334,000
• Restaurants	\$157,000

Business Type	Number of Employees	Percentage
Manufacturing	80	27%
Services	68	23%
Retail	66	22%
Transportation	32	11%
Construction	18	6%
Other	34	11%
Education Institutions	0	0%
TOTAL	298	100%

Source: Dun and Bradstreet, 2015

Table 1: Top employers in 8-12 Coalition

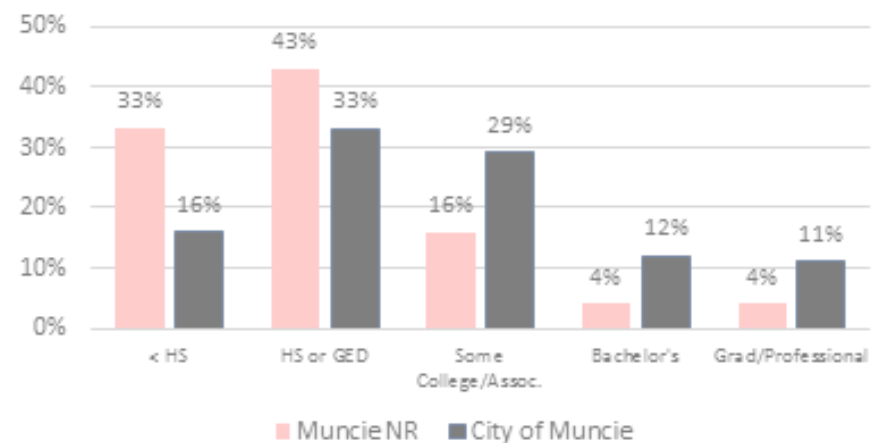


Figure 6: Educational attainment of adults over age 25

## Strategies and Projects

### 1. *Identify business opportunities*

Partner with the City of Muncie to attract economic investment in 8-12 Coalition. This will involve identifying local entrepreneurs, identifying, securing, and rehabilitating spaces (particularly those along Hoyt and Madison), developing business plans for local businesses, and identifying job training opportunities. Focus on attracting a new business, such as a café, to the neighborhood.

### 2. *Create opportunities for teen employment*

Youth involvement in the community will benefit from participating in activities that lead to employment. Muncie Mission reported donations of lots of small equipment such as mowers and see an opportunity for establishing a mowing business. This would provide linkages between mentors and teens, as well as providing educational opportunities.

### 3. *Expand job training programs and expand resources for working families*

As the data demonstrates, there is a need to link local residents to adult education, financial counseling, and job contacts. A joint training program can be established between Muncie Mission and the Women's Shelter. A holistic model called Centers for Working Families should be explored as an evidence-based approach to provide pathways to employment and income growth among individuals and families.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

### Strategy 1: *Attract new business to the community*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Identify opportunities for new businesses to open in Thomas Park/Avondale	<u>Coalition-</u> City of Muncie, BSU, local businesses	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify possible locations.</li> <li>Focus on key sites such as Hoyt and Memorial to attract new businesses</li> <li>Explore the possibility of attracting a café</li> </ul>
Provide support for new businesses	<u>Coalition-</u> BSU immersive class, SBDC/IVY TECH, Ted Baker, Peggy Conova, Innovation Connector	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit BSU to conduct a business plan.</li> <li>Identify training businesses will need to be successful.</li> <li>Provide job training to residents in order to be hired by new businesses.</li> </ul>
Identify, secure and rehab spaces	<u>Coalition-</u> City of Muncie, Housing Development	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify sites and work with owners to get sites ready for new businesses.</li> <li>Identify resources for rehabilitating sites.</li> <li>Rehab spaces based on needs of new businesses.</li> </ul>



### **Strategy 2: Create opportunities for teen employment**

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Create a mowing business.	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Boys and Girls Club, Don Ford	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission BSU students to create business plan</li> <li>• Set up a tool shed</li> <li>• Obtain lawn mowers and trimmers</li> <li>• Service and rehab mowers and trimmers</li> <li>• Develop pricing structure</li> <li>• Train teens</li> <li>• Link teens to education opportunities</li> </ul>

### **Strategy 3: Expand job training programs and expand resources for working families**

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Develop partnerships with employers	<u>Businesses</u> Local manufacturers, Work One	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit businesses to form a business advisory committee</li> <li>• Identify training needs</li> <li>• Match local residents to existing training programs</li> </ul>
Establish joint training program	<u>Muncie Mission and Women's Shelter</u> Hillcroft, <u>Ted Baker</u>	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frame out training program curriculum</li> <li>• Seek funding for program</li> <li>• Begin training</li> </ul>
Explore the creation of a Centers for Working Families to link training, counseling, and benefits	Pathstone, Muncie Mission, Habitat	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify elements of CWF model</li> <li>• Determine which elements of model are needed</li> <li>• Set up individual tracking system to measure impact</li> </ul>

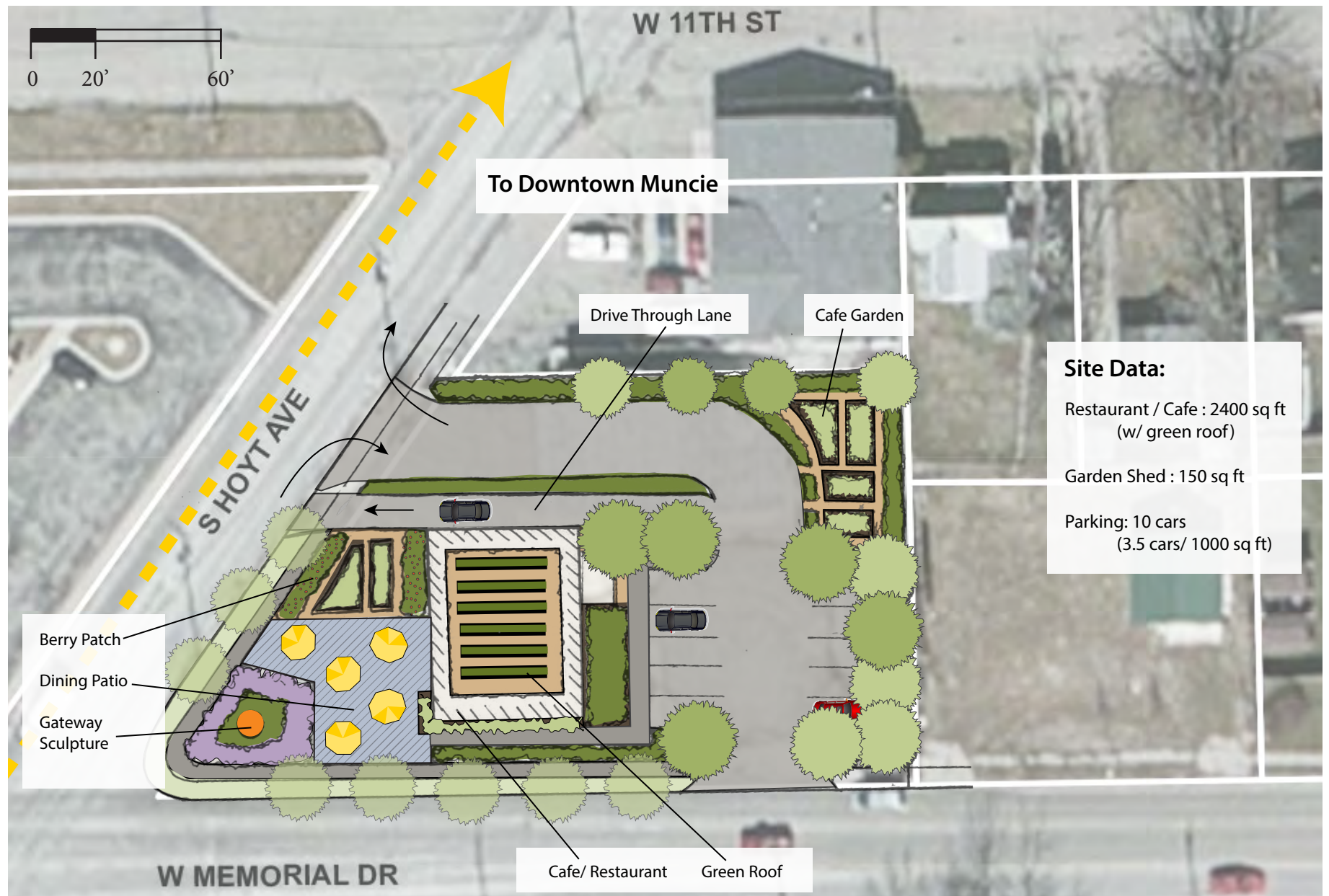


Figure 7: Top priorities expressed by residents was the need to recruit jobs and new businesses. This drawing shows the possibility of a new business, such as a café, at one of the most visible intersections in the area, the intersection of Hoyt Avenue and Memorial Drive. A café can provide new jobs and a social gathering space for residents. It can also be a location to grow food as a demonstration garden for the community.



## Beautification

The 8-12 Corridor is a significant gateway as drivers come into Muncie from I 69 via 67 and S. Hoyt Avenue or up Madison Street to downtown. Recent blocking of the railroad crossings has created a major change in the community, with neighbors no longer being able to cross the rail along most of the streets, creating unattractive dead-end intersections. Beautification efforts can turn the identified problem into a potential opportunity for community pride.

### Key Drivers:

1. Vacant lots, lack of property maintenance, and deteriorating infrastructure add to a perception of property decline. Walking through the neighborhood, it is evident where property owners are fixing up their properties, removing debris, and planting new landscaping. The Urban Light CDC community garden shown below is just one example of the potential of a community-building activity that brings people together as well as creates a visual improvement to the neighborhood.



Figure 8: Urban Light Community Garden

2. The closing of rail crossings has reduced connectivity in the neighborhood. Yet the effort will lead to a quiet zone that could benefit residents and property values in the long term. While the City has long-term plans to make improvements and have reached out to the South Central Neighborhood Association, there is a significant opportunity to involve residents in the design, and implementation of improvements of the crossings. In particular, there may be an opportunity to improve Cherry Street for pedestrians and bikes to create a north-south trail that parallels the tracks and provides crossings at improved intersections that have now become busier crossings.



Figure 9: A proposed replacement of concrete barriers with landscaped treatments by HWC Engineering for the City of Muncie. This drawing, one of three alternatives, shows the use of landscaping and public art to improve the intersection. Note that sidewalks will need to be repaired to make the area more accessible. Cherry Street, located in front of and parallel to the railroad tracks can be improved into a "shared street" for bicycles, cars, and pedestrians.

## Strategies and Projects

1. Create a plan for vacant land. With a vacancy rate of 23% of housing units, and even a greater number of vacant lots, there needs to be a plan to revive these properties for either temporary or permanent reuse. This will likely involve a range of alternative uses from community gardens to orchards, to expansion of side lots of neighboring structures. Steps that will need to be undertaken include: creating an inventory of vacant lots, developing a list of buildings that need to be demolished, identify the end uses of each property, create a list of interested parties, document legal issues of ownership of the properties, and seeking alternative uses such as community gardens and orchards.
2. Improve streetscapes, sidewalks, bike paths, and clean streets. The infrastructure in the neighborhood is deteriorated and needs to be assessed, tied to the City's capital budget, and improved over time. One of the most impactful measures will be to Hoyt Avenue as a gateway to the downtown with streetscape improvements, landscaping, and commercial redevelopment. With the Ross Center located close to Hoyt, there is an opportunity to leverage the resource and expand programming to become a destination not only for the surrounding neighborhoods, but with recreational and educational programming that might appeal to all Muncie youth and families. Other projects include working with the City of Muncie on a sidewalk plan, identify sites for Adopt A Block and recruit volunteers. Finally, the City should partner with local residents for a beautification effort at each of the closed rail crossings, as well as investigate the opportunity for creating a multi-use pedestrian and bikeway on Cherry Street next to the railway in order to improve safe movement of all types of mobility.



*Figure 10: Vacant land along Cherry Street and the railroad can be re-purposed as an orchard and community garden.*



## BEAUTIFICATION

### Strategy 1: *Create a plan for vacant land*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Create an inventory of vacant lots	<u>Habitat City</u>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete physical assessment survey.</li> <li>• Inventory land ownership of vacant parcels</li> </ul>
Develop a list of buildings that need to be torn down from Physical Assessment Survey	<u>Habitat</u> Neighborhood associations, City	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete physical assessment survey to determine conditions of vacant buildings.</li> <li>• Work with City to identify demolition sites.</li> <li>• Identify funding for demolition</li> </ul>
Identify end uses of each property, partners and resources	<u>Neighborhood associations</u> Habitat, Neighborhood Investment Committee (NIC), Boys and Girls Club, City, Inspire	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a list of interested parties to purchase vacant properties.</li> <li>• Determine end use of each property including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community gardens</li> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Commercial</li> <li>- Institutional</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Create community gardens and orchards	<u>Neighborhood associations</u> Property owners, Churches, Neighbors	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify sponsors for each community garden.</li> <li>• Focus on lots along Cherry St in initial stage.</li> </ul>

### Strategy 2: *Improve streetscapes, sidewalks, bike paths and clean streets*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Improve Hoyt as a Gateway to Muncie	City, Neighborhood associations	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop streetscape design for Hoyt</li> <li>• Create branding for Thomas Park Avondale to install along Hoyt</li> <li>• Identify locations for signage, banners, and public art</li> <li>• Conduct a public art competition for installation along Hoyt</li> </ul>
Work with City on sidewalk improvement plan	<u>Neighborhood associations</u> City, Habitat	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct sidewalk condition survey</li> <li>• Identify capital improvement dollars to repair and/or install sidewalks</li> <li>• Focus on paths to Ross Center, Boys and Girls Club, schools, and parks</li> </ul>
Identify sites for Adopt a Block and recruit volunteers	<u>Neighborhood associations</u> Churches, businesses, organizations	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey blocks to identify community leaders</li> <li>• Recruit block captains</li> <li>• Organize block club</li> </ul>
Create a street mural	<u>Neighborhood associations</u> Churches	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify location and work with property owner</li> <li>• Conduct competition to select design</li> <li>• Install mural as a community project with volunteers</li> </ul>
Make Cherry street a shared street and create open spaces on lots	<u>S. Central Neighborhood Association</u> City, Railroad	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize design to replace barriers</li> <li>• Create shared street with new paving and speed bumps</li> <li>• Mark bike route from Ross Center along 8<sup>th</sup> St, south to Memorial Dr to school &amp; library</li> <li>• Improve vacant lots along Cherry St with orchards, playspace, and spaces for older adults</li> </ul>

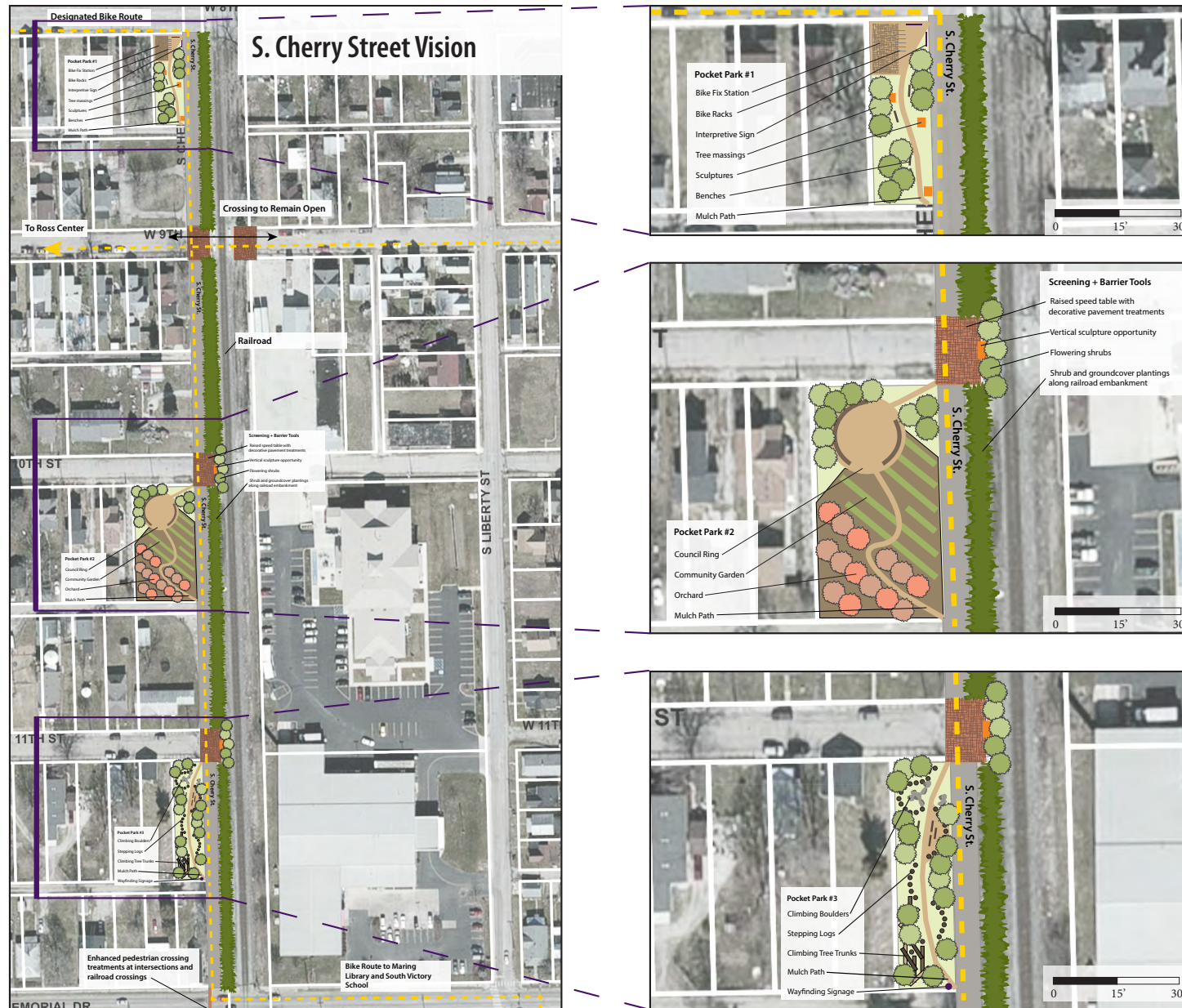


Figure 11: Cherry Street is a narrow street that lies immediately west of the railroad tracks. The street is frequent cut-through for traffic and is in disrepair. The street can be converted into a shared street for bicycles, cars, and pedestrians, and include speed bumps to slow down traffic and offer a connection between 8th Street and Memorial Drive, eventually connecting Ross Center to the west, down to Maring Hunt Library to the south.





## Housing

South Central and Thomas Park / Avondale are home to beautiful older properties. Years of deferred maintenance, however, have left some blocks with vacant homes and deteriorated properties. While progress has been made in the past several years to restore many of these older homes, the confidence to invest in the local market needs to be restored, whether it is a decision for a family to buy a home in the area, or simply to paint their porch or fix a broken window. An important collaboration has been formed between Habitat, EcoRehab, and Pathstone that is resulting in a rehab program combined with energy efficiency and housing counseling. In addition, close coordination with Urban Light CDC is resulting in noticeable changes as homes are rehabbed and families move into the neighborhood. Yet, the need is great, and a stepping up of strategies will be needed to increase reinvestment, rehab more homes, and prevent families from losing their homes.

### Key Drivers:

1. Housing values remain depressed and lag behind the City of Muncie. While this means that it is less expensive to buy a home, it also means that values are so low that making costly improvements like repairing a roof may not result in getting a return on one's investment during the resale of the property.

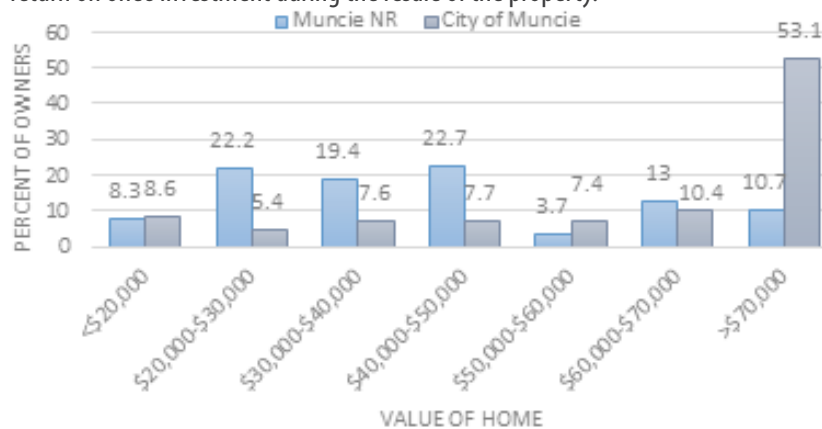


Figure 12: Housing Value for Homeowners

Source- American Community Survey, 2009-2013, Esri 2015

2. Monthly rent is nearly as high as citywide averages, at a median rent of \$459 per month compared with \$531 citywide. This means that households are struggling to pay their rent, as incomes have not been increasing for many low-income households.

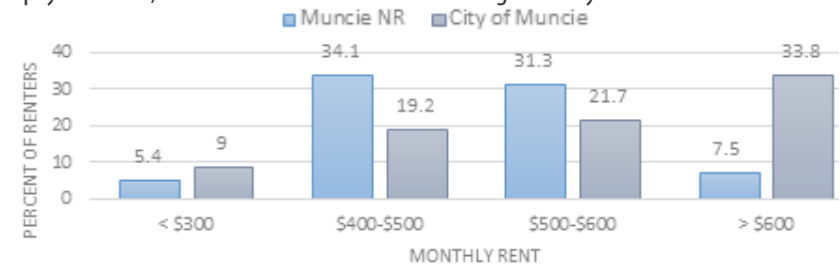


Figure 13: Median Rent

Source- American Community Survey, 2009-2013, Esri 2015

3. Over-two thirds of owners earning under \$20,000 and over 90% of renters earning under \$20,000 face high cost burden. In all, 410 households within the study area face high cost burden. Strategies are urgently needed to provide services, from housing repairs that they cannot afford, to housing counseling to job opportunities to improve household income.

Income Level	% Cost Burdened		% of Total Units		Total # of Cost Burdened	
	Home-owners	Renters	Home-owners	Renters	Home-owners	Renters
Under \$20,000	69%	94%	19%	52%	40	167
\$20,000 to \$35,000	18%	58%	29%	20%	62	63
\$35,000 to \$50,000	9%	0%	35%	0%	77	0
\$50,000 and Up	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>179</b>	<b>231</b>

Table 2: Teska Analysis of HUD Cost Burden Data

Source: Esri, 2015 and Teska Associates

## Strategies and Projects

1. **Identify the needs of each property.** A physical assessment survey is needed to identify all residential properties in the study area and determine whether the home is in good condition, needs minor or major repairs, is vacant and needs gut renovation, or is vacant beyond physical repair and needs to be demolished. The needs for each property will be compared with possible housing programs. Target blocks will be identified for a range of housing strategies in order to maximize visible impact and restore market conditions.
2. **Create a tiered approach to housing rehabilitation.** There are a number of available programs starting with A Brush With Kindness which involves exterior improvements such as painting and minor repairs, critical home repairs which are typically items such as heat or roof repairs, and rehabilitation, which can involve total renovation of a home. Local partners of Habitat, EcoRehab and Pathstone can expand their efforts to reach more homes each year.
3. **Develop new housing.** Habitat is committed to building new housing over time in concert with its rehab and repair strategies. By building new homes, confidence can be raised in the neighborhood, and begin to fill in the “missing teeth” of vacant lots on blocks that are targeted for home repair and beautification.
4. **Code enforcement** is a priority for neighborhood residents and community leaders. Enforcement is needed prior to a home falling into major disrepair, particularly for landlords that may be collecting rent but not making needed repairs. Efforts are needed to educate people on where to go for help if they cannot afford improvements, recruiting responsible landlords to make repairs, and enforcing landlords to maintaining quality rental housing.





## HOUSING

### Strategy 1: *Identify the needs of each property*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Analyze physical assessment survey to identify properties	<u>Habitat</u> Ball State	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete physical assessment survey</li> <li>• Prioritize blocks for rehab</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for new homes</li> </ul>
Board vacant homes in neighborhood	<u>Habitat</u> City, Muncie Mission	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Community Development to board up homes</li> <li>• Engage Muncie Mission residents in boarding up homes</li> </ul>

### Strategy 2: *Create a tiered approach to housing rehab*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
A Brush With Kindness	<u>Habitat</u> Pathstone	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target blocks</li> <li>• Goal: 6 per year</li> </ul>
Home Repair	<u>Habitat</u> EcoRehab, Pathstone	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine financial model</li> <li>• Target blocks for home repair</li> <li>• Goal: 10 per year</li> </ul>
Rehab	EcoRehab Habitat, Pathstone	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise resources to expand number of units</li> <li>• Goal: 3 per year</li> </ul>

### Strategy 3: *Develop new housing*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Build one new home per year	<u>Habitat</u>	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise sponsorships for new homes</li> <li>• Target new homes on same blocks as other housing and community strategies</li> </ul>
Build new rental housing that can transition households to be able to purchase homes	<u>Flaherty Collins</u> Pathstone	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit quality rental developers to expand options for rental housing that fits the scale of the neighborhood</li> </ul>

#### Strategy 4: *Improve multifamily rental housing*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Identify opportunities to renovate rental housing	<u>EcoRehab</u> Habitat	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine financial model and raise resources</li> <li>• Identify building owners committed to neighborhood revitalization</li> </ul>
Expand counseling for renters to become homeowners	<u>Pathstone</u> Muncie Home Ownership, Habitat	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on expanding financial counseling and credit repair</li> <li>• Identify families who can become homeowners over time</li> </ul>

#### Strategy 5: *Code enforcement*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Educate people on where to go for services	<u>Pathstone</u>	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand partnerships with City and other agencies for assistance</li> </ul>
Recruit “good” landlords to make repairs	<u>Neighborhood Associations</u> City	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a program to incentivize landlords to make repairs (e.g. tax incentive, matching program, energy efficiency programs)</li> </ul>
Enforce landlords to maintain quality rental housing	<u>City</u> Neighborhood Associations	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City to focus efforts to improvement code enforcement for health and safety of occupants</li> </ul>

## Services

There are a number of strong organizations in South Central and Thomas Park / Avondale that are deeply committed to serving youth, adults, and families in the community. Organizations including Muncie Mission, the Ross Center, Boys and Girls Club, Urban Light CDC, and the Women's Shelter, local non-profits, churches, and the neighborhood associations are working to provide opportunities and connections to local residents.

### Key Drivers:

1. The neighborhood has more families with younger children than citywide. As shown in the chart below, over 16% of residents are under the age of ten, compared with 10% citywide. Similarly, there is a higher percentage of working-age adults between 25-44 years and between 45 and 74 years. While there is a lower share of 10-24 year olds, this is likely due to the student population at Ball State which has a high percentage of 18 to 24 year olds.

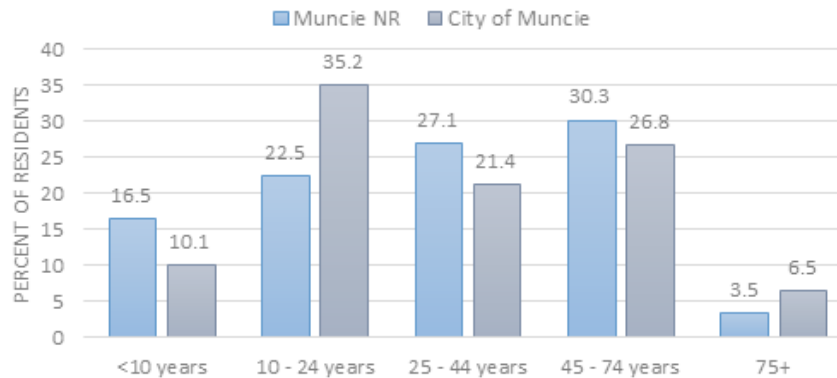


Figure 14: Tenure of Residents

Source: American Community Survey, 2009-2013, Esri 2015

2. The Ross Center, at the western end of the study area Muncie Mission in the center, and Boys and Girls Club, at the eastern end, provide convenient hubs for programs, recreation, and services at various points, all within walking or biking distance. There are opportunities to expand services and upgrade facilities to not only serve local youth and families, but to serve as hubs of activity for the larger community.



Figure 15: Ross Center



## Strategies and Projects

1. Improve and expand programs at the Ross Center. New ball fields, expanded programs, and the possibility for partnership with the Boys and Girls Club can make the Ross Center a year-round activity zone for a variety of sports, recreational, and educational programming. The Ross Center should also work with local schools to create after-school curriculum that reinforces topics taught during the school day.
2. Create a new women's recovery home. The current facility on Madison provides a comfortable living environment, but can serve women more effectively in a new (or rehabilitated) home with adequate space for services.
3. Conduct a community needs assessment. A comprehensive needs assessment is needed to determine what programs are needed, and to tie the programs in the community to research-based programming. The needs assessment should include a household survey, an inventory of current services and capacities, identification of needed services, and partners, and aligning best practices with programs that are delivered in the community. This survey can be conducted as a part of a Residents' Survey that Habitat will coordinate.



Figure 16: Boys and Girls Club of Muncie



Figure 17: Muncie Mission

## SERVICES

### Strategy 1: Improve and expand programs at the Ross Center

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Expand ball fields and open space	<u>Ross Center</u> Ball Brothers Foundation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renovate former GM parking lot into ballfields and open space</li> </ul>
Expand programs	<u>Ross Center</u> Ball State, Schools, Neighborhood associations	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand recreational programming for local residents as well as to attract youth and families from throughout Muncie</li> <li>Create educational programming in coordination with schools</li> </ul>
Create cross-programming	<u>Ross Center, Boys &amp; Girls Club</u> Neighborhood associations	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate programming</li> <li>Share outreach efforts</li> <li>Develop cross-programming at both locations (e.g. sports leagues, educational programs, etc.)</li> </ul>

### Strategy 2: Create a new women's recovery home

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Build or renovate a 5 bedroom home with separate office space	<u>Urban Light Women's Center</u> Coalition	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify possible properties</li> <li>Determine whether rehab of an existing property or new construction.</li> <li>Raise funds for construction and operational expenses</li> </ul>

### Strategy 3: Determine service needs

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Conduct Household Survey	<u>Neighborhood Associations</u> Habitat, Muncie Mission, Churches	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with Habitat to incorporate questions into Resident Survey</li> </ul>
Inventory current services and capacities	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventory all services in neighborhood and determine their tracking system for on-going coordination and evaluation</li> </ul>
Identify needed services	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on survey results and service providers, identify gaps in services and possible funding sources</li> </ul>
Identify partners	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local organizations that can expand to meet gap and possible partnerships with citywide organizations to fill gaps</li> </ul>

#### Strategy 4: *Evaluate services*

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Year	Tasks
Document outcomes, evaluate services	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate data collection and create common reporting for top indicators</li></ul>
Monitor program effectiveness	<u>Muncie Mission</u> Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor effectiveness over time to demonstrate impact and make programmatic changes based on outcomes</li></ul>



## 6 Organizing for Success

**‘Plans don’t move work forward, people move work forward.’**

Functions and roles of the coalition is the heartbeat of a successful neighborhood revitalization program. When the Steering Committee was asked what’s been important for a group to be successful? The answers included:

- Set concrete goals
- Recruit strong leadership
- Ensure a diverse group
- Identify a variety of resources
- Be unrelenting
- Commit to see this through
- Be authentic
- Build trust, accountability and responsibility

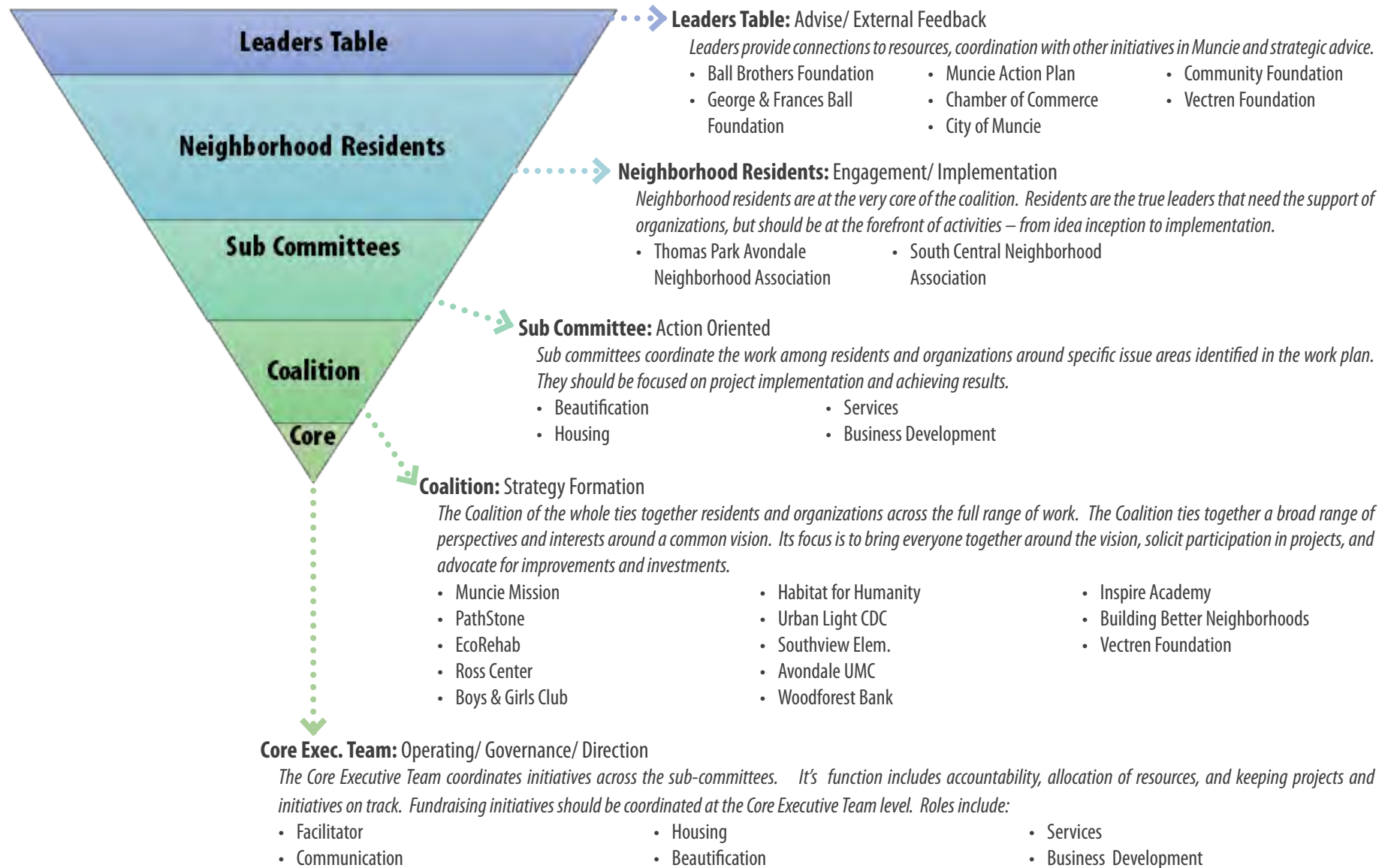
We can all point to efforts in the past that may have had good intentions, but did not have the organizational structure, focus on deliverables, and accountability toward each other to undertake and orchestrate a variety of projects and initiatives and sustain the momentum over time.

Over the course of several meetings, a structure for the coalition emerged with the goals of providing clear accountability, an open process to participate, and strong resident leadership while taking advantage of the interest and resources of local and citywide organizations.



*Figure 18: Steering Committee members at work!*

The 8-12 Coalition NR Strategy depends on creating the simplest structure that will get the job done.  
Preliminary organization elements include:



## 7 Indicators

### Business Development and Employment

Identify business opportunities	Number of businesses contacted Number of business plans completed Number of businesses opened Number of employees hired
Create opportunities for teen employment	Number of youth who complete training and are hired Perception of neighborhood through Resident Survey Education outcomes in school, e.g. attendance, retention rate
Expand job training programs and resources for working families	Number of adults who receive job training How many receive jobs Job retention after three months

### Beautification

Create a plan for vacant land	Number of lots converted to new uses Physical Survey changes over time, e.g. reduction in number of vacant lots and poorly maintained lots
Improve streetscapes, sidewalks, bike paths and clean streets	Amount invested in physical improvements Sidewalks improved (number of blocks)

### Housing

Identify the needs of each property	Physical conditions survey
Create a tiered approach to housing rehab	Number of: A Brush With Kindness Home Repairs Rehab
Build new homes	Number of new homes Condition on blocks
Multi-family rental housing	Number of rental families counseled Number of renters who become homeowners Number of new or rehabbed rental housing units
Code enforcement	Number of code actions that result in repairs

### Services

Improve and expand programs at the Ross Center	Number of youth served in recreation programs Number of youth served in education programs School achievement, e.g. number of students on track
Create a new Women's Recovery Home	Number of women served Number of additional services Success of program graduates, e.g. job placement and permanent housing secured
Conduct a community needs assessment	Number of identified service gaps that are filled Number of households served with new services
Evaluate services	Improved coordination of services Increased effectiveness of new services



## 8 Next Steps

There are two major focuses to near term activities. The first is building out the infrastructure of the coalition and the second is implementing the strategies and projects that have been outlined in the plan that have derived from community input and desires.

The newly named 8-12 Coalition has tremendous capacity of its members and residents. Strong organizations, leaders, and residents are the right ingredients to leverage resources, coordinate action and have a great impact. Now that the coalition has begun to organize, the individual roles, norms, and decision-making elements of the organization will need to be developed and refined. While the coalition is built on many long-lasting relationships, effort will still be needed to build trust and demonstrate additive value to its members who will be asked to devote time and energy to the coalition. Near term steps include:

- Arranging regular meetings of the Core Executive Team and committees to organize and execute projects and programs
- Developing bylaws or a memorandum of agreement to lay out the vision and governance of the coalition
- Holding regular communications with residents and engaging the Thomas Park Avondale and South Central Neighborhood Associations on a continuous basis
- Recruiting a Leaders Table to advise, provide external feedback to the coalition and provide connections between coalition efforts and citywide strategies and resources

During the planning process a number of priorities emerged. These projects meet the goals set by residents and organizations who participated in the planning process and were chosen because these projects were viewed as potentially having the greatest impact to improve the opportunities, safety, and stability of the Thomas Park/Avondale and South Central Neighborhoods. These strategies and projects include:

### Business Development and Employment

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Tasks
<b>Attract new business to the community-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify opportunities for new businesses to open in Thomas Park/Avondale</li></ul>	<u>Coalition</u> , City of Muncie, BSU, local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify possible locations.</li><li>• Focus on key sites such as Hoyt and Memorial to attract new businesses</li><li>• Explore the possibility of attracting a café</li><li>• Recruit BSU to conduct a business plan.</li></ul>

## Business Development and Employment

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Tasks
<b>Create opportunities for teen employment-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a mowing business</li> </ul>	<u>Muncie Mission</u> , Boys and Girls Club, Don Ford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission BSU students to create a business plan</li> <li>Set up a tool shed</li> <li>Obtain lawn mowers and trimmers</li> <li>Service and rehab mowers and trimmers</li> <li>Develop pricing structure</li> <li>Train teens</li> <li>Link teens to education opportunities</li> </ul>

## Beautification

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Tasks
<b>Create a plan for vacant land-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an inventory of vacant lots</li> </ul>	<u>Habitat</u> , City, neighborhood associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete physical assessment survey</li> <li>Inventory land ownership of vacant parcels</li> <li>Work with City to identify demolition sites and funding for demolition</li> <li>Identify uses for each site</li> </ul>
<b>Improve streetscapes, sidewalks, bike paths and clean streets-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve Hoyt as a Gateway to Muncie</li> </ul>	City, neighborhood associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop streetscape design for Hoyt</li> <li>Create branding for Thomas Park Avondale to install along Hoyt</li> <li>Identify locations for signage, banners, and public art</li> <li>Conduct a public art competition for installation along Hoyt</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with City on sidewalk improvement plan</li> </ul>	Neighborhood associations, City, Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct sidewalk condition survey</li> <li>Identify capital improvement dollars to repair and/or install sidewalks</li> <li>Focus on paths to Ross Center, Boys and Girls Club, schools, and parks</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify sites for Adopt a Block and recruit volunteers</li> </ul>	Neighborhood associations, churches, businesses, organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey blocks to identify community leaders</li> <li>Recruit block captains</li> <li>Organize block club</li> </ul>

## Housing

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Tasks
<b>Identify the needs of each property-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze physical assessment survey to identify properties</li> </ul>	<u>Habitat</u> , Ball State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete physical assessment survey</li> <li>Prioritize blocks for rehab</li> <li>Identify opportunities for new homes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board vacant homes in neighborhood</li> </ul>	<u>Habitat</u> , City, Muncie Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Community Development to board up homes</li> <li>Engage Muncie Mission residents in boarding up homes</li> </ul>
<b>Create a tiered approach to housing rehab-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Brush With Kindness</li> <li>Home Repair</li> <li>Rehab</li> <li>New construction</li> </ul>	<u>Habitat</u> , Pathstone <u>Habitat</u> , Pathstone, EcoRehab <u>EcoRehab</u> , Habitat, Pathstone Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 6 A Brush With Kindness blocks per year</li> <li>Target blocks for home repair; complete 10 home repairs on targeted blocks per year</li> <li>Raise resources to expand number of units; complete 3 rehab homes per year</li> <li>Complete 1 new construction per year</li> </ul>
<b>Code enforcement-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate people on where to go for services</li> </ul>	<u>Pathstone</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand partnerships with City and other agencies for assistance</li> </ul>

## Services

Strategies/Projects	Lead, Partners	Tasks
<b>Improve and expand programs at the Ross Center-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand ball fields and open space</li> <li>Expand programs</li> </ul>	<u>Ross Center</u> , Ball Brothers Foundation <u>Ross Center</u> , Ball State, Schools, Neighborhood associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renovate former GM parking lot into ballfields and open space</li> <li>Expand recreational programming for local residents as well as to attract youth and families from throughout Muncie</li> <li>Create educational programming in coordination with schools</li> </ul>
<b>Determine service needs-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct Household Survey</li> <li>Inventory current services and capacities</li> <li>Identify needed services</li> <li>Identify partners</li> </ul>	<u>Neighborhood Associations</u> , Habitat, Muncie Mission, Churches <u>Muncie Mission</u> , Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC <u>Muncie Mission</u> , Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC <u>Muncie Mission</u> , Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, CDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with Habitat to incorporate questions into Resident Survey</li> <li>Inventory all services in neighborhood and determine their tracking system for on-going coordination and evaluation</li> <li>Based on survey results and service providers, identify gaps in services and possible funding sources</li> <li>Identify local organizations that can expand to meet gap and possible partnerships with citywide organizations to fill gaps</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluate services-</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document outcomes, evaluate services</li> </ul>	<u>Muncie Mission</u> , Habitat, Boys and Girls Club, Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate data collection and create common reporting for top indicators</li> </ul>