WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY
OF WHAT PEOPLE THINK IS IMPORTANT IN REDEVELOPING
NEIGHBORHOODS
A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF URBAN AND REGIONAL
PLANNING
BY
EDWARD DIETRICH

DR. FRANCIS PARKER
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
JULY 2008
**Table of Contents**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: The Neighborhoods Study

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 5: Analysis and Results

Bibliography
Chapter 1: Introduction

This study attempts to discover if specific revitalization activities work better than others at improving urban neighborhoods. Local, state, and the federal government spend large amounts of money every year attempting to redevelop inner city neighborhoods, and it usually takes many years for these neighborhoods to make significant progress. Many different activities are used to bring these neighborhoods back, and it makes sense to use the activities that are the most successful early in the redevelopment process. This approach should shorten the redevelopment time and improve the odds for success.

Upon investigating this idea I discovered that it was not known which activities were the most successful at reinvigorating neighborhoods. Upon talking with Dr. Keuhl, a planning professor at Ball State University, on this subject I discovered it is virtually impossible to accurately measure which activities work best. This is because many redevelopment activities are implemented at the same time, and conditions in neighborhoods vary a great deal one from another. The variety of activities and the differences in neighborhood conditions introduces too many variables that can not be controlled making a quantifiable analysis virtually impossible.

There are many different activities that redevelopment uses to revitalize a neighborhood. They target commercial, residential, and in some cases industrial sectors along with infrastructure improvements, beautification, safety, and security, and employment. Knowing which ones to concentrate on or start to have the best chance of success would be a great help to the redevelopment community. The aim of this study is to find out what the residents of inner city
neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment think is important in neighborhoods. What attracts them to these neighborhoods and what keeps them there. It is the hypotheses of this study that redevelopment would be more successful if it focused on what the people living in these neighborhoods think is important. A redevelopment program that began by targeting the most important concerns of the people that live in these communities should be more successful sooner than if other less important elements are targeted.

Trying to determine how well community development is doing has going on for several decades. Traditionally it focused on the output of the agency; how many people participated in home ownership classes and how many residential units were built or refurbished. This approach is basically a count of what has been accomplished. An outside professional usually performs this evaluation. This type of evaluation is still going on and is important since it gives a good cost benefit analysis of an agencies work. But, this type of evaluation does not necessarily equal a successful community. For the past decade or so a different type of analysis has been added. This is called outcome measurement. This type of evaluation asks the question - are people better off. This approach allows the community development organizations (CDO’s) to determine what it will measure to determine its performance. The CDO’s own goals and objectives are used to determine success.

Both of these types of evaluation has it critics. The output approach is seen as not getting at the real issues. Lots of people can be taught home ownership and lots of residential units can be built but if the neighborhood is not any better off what is the benefit. The outcome approach is seen by some as being to easily manipulate. Critics think CDO’s will only choose those elements that
will give the best impression of the neighborhood. It might lead to writing goals that are easy to reach. Most believe the outcome approach is on the right track and it is becoming more popular, but it does link success with its cause. It can say that a neighborhood is getting better and that a CDO is succeeding but it can say why it is succeeding. With the results of this study it is hoped that the beginnings of a strategy of success can be established.

**Redevelopment Programs**

There are numerous programs that are used to revitalize a neighborhood. The most common are outlined below.

**Housing**

Housing projects typically are designed to increase home ownership within a neighborhood and are the most common programs undertaken by non-profit neighborhood agencies. Home ownership is an important element in neighborhood development. The houses in most troubled neighborhoods are rentals and not kept in good condition by their owners. Individuals tend to take better care of property they own versus rented property. Further, home owners move less frequently than renters, and thus contribute to neighborhood stability. There is a variety of housing programs in use today. One of the most common involves buying abandoned homes, fixing them for habitation, then selling them to low and moderate income families. The sale of the home provides the money to purchase other homes and fix them up for sale. If managed well this is a self-sustaining program once started with seed money from the public and private sector. Some non-profits also buy and refurbish apartment buildings and old warehouses to provide apartments.
Many non-profit housing programs also build brand new homes or apartment buildings for sale or lease. This program requires a large up-front investment and is the most ambitious housing program a non-profit can undertake. Such a program can become self-sustaining such as Muncie’s, Blaine School project, undertaken by the Home Ownership and Development Center during 1994-1999. In this project, ten homes were constructed for low-income residents on the old Blaine School site. The homes brought more people into the neighborhood and triggered a modest home-and-yard-beautification movement among neighbors. The Blaine School project was joined by another popular housing project, in which qualified applicants received a grant equal to three fourths of the down payment and closing costs toward the purchase of a home. Funding for this project was provided by a partnership of six local banks, government block grants, and the Lilly Foundation. This was a very successful program. All of the homes were sold and eight of the original owners still live in the homes. This is an example of what public and private partnerships can accomplish. Unfortunately the banks have not been able to provide that amount of money again.¹

Other very popular housing programs provide home ownership education. Many non-profits offer a class that teaches residents budgeting, fiscal responsibility, and how to shop for a home and mortgage. Classes also educate residents about the variety of programs available to help people own their own home. Another housing program provides grants or low-interest loans for fixing up the exterior of a resident's home. The goal of this type of housing program is to improve the look of the neighborhood, and demonstrate community pride.

¹ Personal research for paper
Commercial Development

Fewer non-profits operate commercial programs. The programs are similar to that of housing. These programs include providing grants and loans for building exterior improvements, training programs for entrepreneurs, buying and refurbishing commercial buildings for sale or lease, building commercial buildings, and operating businesses. Some non-profits also work to attract new businesses to the neighborhood. The federal government does not have a program to fund commercial development directly, as it does with the community block grant. Although the block grant can be used for commercial development the amount of money it takes to develop a business usually discourages that use in favor of housing. This gap in fund applicability limits the money available for commercial development. Commercial activity is a vital part of most neighborhoods and the lack of this investment is always a matter of concern with non-profits.

Beautification

Neighborhood agencies almost always operate beautification programs, and these programs come in a wide variety. One of the simplest and most common beautification efforts involves setting neighborhood clean up days and recruiting volunteers to pick up litter, clean vacant lots, and assist the elderly in cleaning their yards. Another type of beautification program encourages (and in some cases, offers funds for) residents to plant flowers, ornamental bushes, and trees in their yards. Some non-profits work with city-planning departments to create ordinances that call for beautifying the streets and sidewalks. Programs to beautify building exteriors are also popular. These programs make the neighborhood more attractive and help to attract new residents and businesses. They are usually inexpensive and can have a strong impact on a neighborhood.
Social Programs

Social programs also take many forms. One of the most common projects is crime prevention. Many non-profits start a neighborhood crime watch if one is not already in place. These groups work with local law enforcement to get more neighborhood patrols. Improving the lighting and reducing the number of screened hiding places also are prime goals of some social programs. If residents do not feel safe in their community the neighborhood is not going to improve, nor will it attract people or businesses. Social programs often bring police and fire fighters together with young people. After school programs, summer sports, and opening a gym at night are all ideas promoted and managed by non-profit social programs. Programs for the elderly are not as common with these non-profits because they are usually operated through other agencies, but non-profits do run them if there is a need.

Employment

When a neighborhood non-profit operates an employment program it is usually in conjunction with the state or city employment department. Neighborhood agencies can operate employment search seminars, application, resume, and cover letter preparing classes, and in some cases collect employment opportunities. Training programs are somewhat more common, and typically are offered in coordination with the local GED program, vocational, or technical school. These programs usually provide general education and computer classes for residents who need basic skills to get a job or to advance into a training program.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

A search of online sources and library catalogs reveals a number of both popular and scholarly publications on the topic of community development corporations (CDC) and organizations. These publications range in focus from histories of the industry, to reports on specific program activities or general operations, to how-to books, overviews of changes in the industry, and tips for finding a job in a CDC. I conducted a review of a number of these texts that seemed most relevant to the topic of the associated project survey. The findings of that review follows.

General Information

Community Development Corporations are typically neighborhood-based 501(c)3 non-profit corporations, with a board composed of residents of the neighborhood, civic leaders, and professionals. According to the web site community-wealth.org as of 2006 there are 4,600 CDCs nation wide developing 86,000 affordable housing units and 8.75 million square feet of commercial and industrial space a year. Community-wealth.org is a project of The Democracy Collaborative and is for the dissemination of information about the wide range of community wealth building activity. This site provides general information, models and best practices, research resources and articles on 20 different sectors within the community-wealth sphere, of which CDCs are just one. It also has a blog and bookstore.
CDC Impact Assessment

The Urban Institute is one of the primary organizations studying the impact, success and failure of community development corporations. Much of this study focuses on how CDCs raise and use their funding. Community Development Corporations usually obtain their base money from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and Home Investment Partnership (HOME) funds from the federal government funneled through the state or local government. CDCs use these funds as ‘seed money’ to leverage funds from other sources such as private foundations, companies and even individuals. Other federal and state grants are sought as well as money from banks through their community reinvestment program. This ability to gather funds from a variety of sources and focus them on a single neighborhood is the foundation CDCs foundation for their success. The following are examples of the results of the Urban Institute’s study of these organizations.

Community Development Corporations and their Changing Support Systems,
Christopher Walker, 2002, The Urban Institute, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, 2100 M Street NW, Washington DC 20037

Walker studied how community development corporations became the primary force in neighborhood redevelopment in the United States during the 1990’s. This study examines the tremendous growth of support community development corporations received during the 1990s. It found that the increased support came from the realization that CDCs are one of the most capable agencies in redevelopment. Walker’s findings show that public
services are fragmented within different levels of government and different departments. CDCs are typically the only agencies taking a comprehensive approach at the neighborhood level, undertaking physical revitalization, economic development, social services, and advocacy activities. As Walker notes, most CDCs offer a rare comprehensive and coordinated program of redevelopment activities.

This study found that during the 1990s CDCs made strong gains in overall numbers, size, outputs, and contributions to neighborhoods. Support for CDCs changed dramatically during the 90s, from a mostly ad hoc and poorly coordinated affair to a more rational, entrenched, and effective system. Walker gives much of the credit to two national intermediary organizations, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and The Enterprise Foundation (Enterprise). With offices in nearly 60 cities these two agencies infused approximately 250 million into CDC projects.

Walker’s study examines CDCs in five sections. He first discusses CDCs as an alternative model for community development, then moves on to an examination of the CDC industry – the organization, projects, and activities. Walker then focuses on the CDC production system – the “relationships among people and institutions that mobilize, allocate, and regulate the land and capital for community development”. The study also examines the capacity-building systems – “the relationships among people and institutions that accumulate and allocate resources to strengthen organizations ability to pursue community development”. Walker concludes his study with an exploration of community development leadership systems.
The Impact of Community Development Corporations on Urban Neighborhoods, George Galster, Diane Levy, Noah Sawyer, Kenneth Temkin, Christopher Walker; The Urban Institute; June, 2005.

This study examined five CDCs known for effective community development. The subject CDCs were: James Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA; Slavic Village Community Development Corporation, Broadway, Cleveland, OH; HOPE Community Development Corporation, Five Points, Denver, CO; Unity Council Community Development Corporation, Fruitvale, Oakland, CA; REACH Community Development Corporation, Belmont, Portland, OR. This study found that CDCs “can indeed spark a chain reaction of investment that leads to dramatic improvements to neighborhoods.” The investigators used advanced economic analysis to show that investments in affordable housing and retail increased property values in some areas by as much as 69%, as compared to the value if the investments were not made. To accomplish this value increase, these CDCs brought together business people, civic organizations, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies. The study finds that this linkage creates a momentum once started feeds on itself.

This cycle starts with the CDC removing the sources of blight that drag down the value of the surrounding properties. They invest in amenities such as new housing, retail establishments, and beautification projects. These investments “demonstrate the profit potential of the neighborhood to the wider marketplace” attracting private investment. Neighborhood residents join the CDC and other agencies in creating self-help activities.
Then the CDCs organize the multiple and simultaneous investments to the best advantage of the neighborhood. This study found that in all five communities, the CDCs played the primary or, at minimum, a very important supporting role in making neighborhoods better.

_The Impact of CDBG Spending on Urban Neighborhoods_, Walker, Hayes, et.al., The Urban Institute Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, Washington DC, 2002.

This study was conducted in response to a request from The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for findings on the effectiveness of the CDBG, (community development block grant) funds on improving the quality of urban neighborhoods. CDBG funds are the primary funds government provides for urban redevelopment. This money comes from the federal government through HUD. HUD has little influence on how the money is spent but they are charged to set performance goals for those neighborhoods that have substantial levels of CDBG funds. To do this, four goals were designated for this study. The first was to “develop a small number of readily available, generally accepted and easily replicable indicators of neighborhood quality of life suitable for an assessment of CDBG impacts.” The second goal was to develop a definition of “substantial” CDBG investments. The third was to recommend alternative standards or benchmarks against which to assess the performance of neighborhoods. The fourth was to “compare the study’s results with local informants understanding of the impact of CDBG on their neighborhoods.”
The study found that large CDBG investments can be linked to improvements in neighborhood quality. The study’s authors also arrived at a definition for “substantial” investment, as the mean expenditure across all census tracts in the cities examined. Results also demonstrated that two indicators can be used to measure some dimensions of neighborhood quality: The median residential loan amount and the number of businesses and employment in the neighborhood. In every city some community development practitioners disputed some of the findings and expressed reservations about the application of a national performance standard for the CDBG program.

This study was viewed as a good first step, but it leaves several problems that need to be addressed. This study did not take into account other funding sources which can provide investment into a neighborhood. Further, it failed to take into account investment before 1994 which would have contributed to the quality of a neighborhood. The whole issue of investment in a neighborhood over time is a tricky. A CDC’s strategy for redevelopment may appear to be more or less successful at certain times depending on the indicators used to evaluate it. This study found that a far more complex and data-dependent system would need to be constructed to accurately evaluate this issue.

**Academic Publications**

A large amount of information on Community Development Corporations comes from the work of college professors and students, which typically is published in professional periodical publications. The topics of these articles, studies, and theses are very broad.
One such article deals with the collapse, downsizing, and merging of CDCs (William M. Rohe, and Rachel G. Bratt Failures, Downsizings, and Mergers among Community Development Corporations, Housing Policy Debate, Vol. 14, Issues 1 and 2, 2003).

This study found that even though CDCs have been growing in size, number and importance in the redevelopment realm, the collapse of these organizations is not uncommon. CDCs are disappearing across the United States and there are “contextual and organizational factors” that lead to their failure. In this article, the authors suggest a series of actions that can help the situation.

Most of the contextual forces are beyond the control of the CDC but understanding the changes that may occur and knowing how to effectively respond to them can mean the survival of a CDC. The primary contextual forces this investigation uncovered are: changing market forces, increase competition for resources, changes in city polices, the role of intermediaries and other funders, the lack of CDC support organizations, and lack of trust. Organizational factors that can lead to CDC collapses include the lack of breadth of the mission, over-reliance on a single funding source, internal management problems, lack of staff or board capacity, communication problems, and the lack of community support. In general, many of the CDCs studied had difficulty hiring or keeping experienced executive directors, or in surviving the loss of a popular charismatic leader. According to this article’s authors, a CDC’s success can lead to its own downfall. As a neighborhood improves the housing market may become so strong that the CDC cannot compete. Also, in some cases the new residents start to protest the low-income focus of
the CDC housing program. Gentrification is a well-known phenomenon, and CDCs need to understand its ability to undermine their operation.

This article gives five general recommendations to help CDCs overcome these difficulties. First, CDCs should develop strategic plans and revise them periodically. These plans should help the CDC anticipate and successfully respond to the changing housing and retail markets in their neighborhoods and the potential increase in competition for resources between them, other CDCs, and other organizations. Second, CDCs should not be narrowly focused in the activities they provide, the geographic area they serve, the housing type, and their funding sources. Specialization was common among those CDCs that collapsed. Third, CDCs should collaborate with other non-profit agencies as well as private companies. This involvement increases a CDC’s flexibility and can broaden its activities making it more resilient to change. Also, the level of trust this can provide can help when a CDC needs assistance overcoming obstacles in the future that might otherwise bring them down. Fourth, the CDC needs to aggressively and constantly develop and nurture its support community. The authors suggested that any city with multiple CDCs should create two types of support organizations. The first would be composed of major public, private, and nonprofit funders and technical assistance providers in the city. The second, a trade association, should be organized by the CDCs themselves, to share knowledge, coordinate activities, and collaborate on projects. The city should also provide adequate core operating support for the CDCs and training opportunities for the staff and board members. City policy makers should assess
the impact of proposed policy changes on CDCs. Fifth, if a merger is to be done it should be carefully planned and be beneficial to both parties.
Chapter 3: The Neighborhoods Studied

The following neighborhoods were selected primarily based on their location within the City of Indianapolis and the presence of redevelopment activity within each one. Each neighborhood has established boundaries and all four are inner city neighborhoods that have suffered economic decline since the 1960’s and 70’s. Since redevelopment started each neighborhood has improved economically and redevelopment activity is continuing. Each neighborhood has a community development corporation (CDC) that has played a part in redeveloping the neighborhood. Some have been more important to the redevelopment than others. Because of their location some of the neighborhoods have had significant amounts of private redevelopment. All four neighborhoods have experienced all the basic redevelopment activities of homeownership programs, housing rejuvenation, beautification, and business development; however, the amount of some of these varies significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood.

Fountain Place

Located southeast of downtown Indianapolis, Fountain Place is centered at the confluence of Shelby and Prospect Streets with the diagonal Virginia Avenue. These streets created a triangle island in the middle of the intersection. The name came from a fountain on the island. For this survey the boundaries of the Fountain Place neighborhood will be Interstate 70 to the west, Fletcher Avenue to the north, South State Avenue to the east, and Pleasant Run Creek and Interstate 65 on the south. This area comprises seven blocks north south and six blocks east and west. This neighborhood is the central section of the Southeast Neighborhood Development, Inc. (SEND), a community development corporation that covers a five square mile area.
Fountain Place has been the center of the neighborhood since the late nineteenth century when rail yards separated the entire south side from the downtown. It became the “downtown” for the southeast side and continued in this role until the 1960’s. Along the streets radiating out from the fountain were a wide range of retail, independent banks, movie/vaudeville theaters, and churches. Between 1950 and 1970, the neighborhood’s original German, Irish and Italian residents moved farther out and people from Appalachian states moved in seeking local manufacturing jobs. In the 1970’s the construction of the interstate highways led to the demolition of hundreds of homes and many businesses and churches and cut a once unified neighborhood into isolated pockets. The neighborhood declined quickly with overall population dropping and the loss of educated and financially stable families to the suburbs. This area was fortunate because one of the first neighborhood assistance centers started in the mid 1970’s, much earlier than in other parts of the city.

The Southeast Multi-Service Center started small home repair and urban design projects. In 1983 this group of residents and business people created the Fountain Square & Fletcher Place Investment Corporation. At the same time another group growing out of the neighborhood churches formed the Fountain Square Church & Community Project attracting hundreds of volunteers from around the region to rebuild affordable homes. These two groups merged to form Southeast Neighborhood Development Inc. (SEND). SEND has invested more than $26 million in affordable housing, commercial renovation, youth development, and green space improvement. They have successfully renovated 85 homes and repaired 400, along with 135 affordable apartments and over 150,000 square feet of commercial space. More than 300 youth have been helped in building their own work skills while helping to rebuild their neighborhood.
SEND has built or improved six parks and planted hundreds of trees. SEND has been one of the most successful community development corporations in Indianapolis.

SEND partners with a wide range of agencies, businesses and individuals to implement their programs. The partners are the City of Indianapolis, INHP, LISC, Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, other grant makers, private lenders, contractors, and many volunteers. The programs SEND operates focus on housing and commercial development. Their commercial program has three major aspects, refurbishing existing space, attracting businesses to the neighborhood, and improving the facades of commercial buildings. They can provide development assistance for redeveloping existing buildings or construct new buildings. They engage in direct surveys of existing businesses and attract businesses they believe would be a good fit for the community. They assist in locating appropriate space for businesses wanting to move into the neighborhood. They assist business owners in the creation of Facade Grant applications, and work with the local Merchants Association to foster marketing partnerships, and coordinate events.

Home ownership is the core value of SEND. A combination of HUD construction subsides and special financing created by Indianapolis Neighborhood Partnership and local lenders enables SEND to provide qualified people an affordable completely refurbished home. Many times the mortgage payment is less than the rental they were paying. Home repair is another way SEND enables people to continue to own their own home. Utilizing funds from the Community Development Block Grant they are able to repair homes enabling the owners to stay in them instead being forced to sell them.
Over the past 20 years the massive infusion of money for development has made a big difference in the neighborhood. In the past eight years, property values have increased 100%, outpacing property increases in the region. There is now a waiting list for the refurbished homes when, in the beginning it was months before a home was sold. There are a small but growing number of new residents with higher education and income levels. Businesses are now jockeying for space in the Fountain Square commercial area. Vitality has returned to the neighborhood with a new library, police station and a new health clinic. There are still problems that need to be overcome, education levels are still low and there is still entrenched family poverty.2

Near North

The Near North neighborhood is located just north of downtown with New York Street. as the southern boundary, Pennsylvania Avenue on the east, Interstate 65 on the west going up to 40th Street to the north. This neighborhood contains Methodist Hospital, the Children’s Museum, a section of the canal and Fall Creek, the main library and memorial park. Crown Hill cemetery creates the northwest corner of the neighborhood. Historically, like today, this area was a mix of residential neighborhoods, light industry, wholesalers, and commercial establishments. The interstate system divided this area as it did Fountain Square. It separated the community from the downtown on the south and from a predominately residential area to the west. For this survey, the neighborhood will be from North Street on the south, Interstate 65 and west, Pennsylvania Avenue on the east and 30th Street on the north.

2 All information was obtained from the SEND web site.
In 1977 the Near North Development Corporation was created with a partnership of local businesses, Methodist Hospital, The Children’s Museum and the Meridian Highland and Highland Vicinity neighborhoods. The goal was to stimulate economic development, promote stability, remove blight and deterioration, and enhance the quality of life for the area residents and employees. In 1979 Near North operated a federally-funded job-training program. The program was housed in a Methodist Hospital-owned building and focused on training youth in clerical, maintenance, and construction skills. The program operated through 1982. A re-evaluation of the program indicated the program should become part of Indianapolis Alliance for Jobs.

In the early 1980’s, the Near North completed the North Meridian Corridor Development Plan resulting in the extension of the Regional Center Zoning Ordinance in 1982. This extension resulted in strong economic development in the area. In 1983 and 1984 Near North helped secure funding to dredge Fall Creek, restore the Meridian Street Bridge and produced a Fall Creek Development Plan. These plans were updated in 1994 and called the North/Fall Creek Plan. The City and other Near North partners in the community committed over $11,000,000 for implementing this plan. The largest percentage of these funds went to improving the infrastructure and housing in the neighborhoods. But, a sizeable amount was spent on refurbishing or demolishing vacant/boarded up commercial structures providing new development opportunities for the community. In 1989 Near North received a $700,000 Office of Community Services grant for the establishment of the Indianapolis Science & Technology Park. Near North was instrumental in acquiring the land and implementing the five million Phase I portion of the Park in 1991. In 1999 Near North sold the Science and Technology Park.
The most active area in which Near North has operated has been housing. They have repaired, rehabbed, or constructed over 400 homes. In 2001 they secured a $2,000,000 revolving loan fund specifically for rehabilitation and construction of owner-occupied housing. This will be leveraged with an additional $1,000,000 for gap funding.

Near North has provided 204 affordable rental housing for moderate to very low-income people. The best example of this was the opening in 1986 of Kenwood Place, a 74 unit apartment complex at 2200 North Illinois Street. Once completed, the complex was immediately fully occupied. In 1992 Kenwood Place was enlarged by an additional 24 apartments. In 1992 Near North completed its first tax credit housing project. The CDC sponsored a $550,000 rehabilitation of two highly visible vacant apartment buildings. Once completed, the building provided eight two-bedroom apartments for low-income housing. In 1994 eleven scattered site rental housing was completed under the tax credit fund providing total refurbished two and three-bedroom rental units. In 1998 they were awarded another 1.5 million in tax credits to develop 19 units of scattered site affordable housing. Once completed all units were immediately occupied. In 2002 Near North acquired Caravelle Commons, a 65 unit section 8 apartment complex. They invested 2.1 million dollars in development and rehabilitation on the building.

Along with several partners Near North developed the 29th/30th Street corridor improvement plan in order to secure community impact grants to implement the plan. The grant was not awarded but the effort did result in the rebuilding of Fire Station 14 and generated a lot of interest in redeveloping these corridors. It also provides the community a planning document to follow as
funds are secured. In 2003, $3 million was spent on this plan "combining housing, environmental redemption, beautification, public safety, business expansion and retention into one package."

In 2002 Near North began remediation of three abandoned gas stations at the corner of 29th and Capital. They have been awarded $300,000 for the projects and though it is still on going one of the sites has made it through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management review process.

In 2000 Near North was awarded a grant from LISC to hire an Economic Development Specialist to entice new retail ventures to the area. This was a cooperative effort with the Mapleton-Fall Creek CDC. This attracted considerable interest from other funders and the program was expanded to "incorporate an innovated urban marketing model through an initiative called FOCUS." The result of this effort Near North and Mapleton-Fall Creek completed an inner city retail development study in 2002. Over the past 10 years the asset base of the Near North neighborhood grew 250% with a current base of $5 million.3

Riley

The Riley area is directly east of downtown Indianapolis and encompasses the popular Massachusetts Ave area and Lockerbie Square historic neighborhood. The Riley Area Development Corporation (RADC) was formed in 1979 as an offshoot of the Lockerbie Ministries Association. Its boundaries are Interstate 70 to the east, Washington Street to the south, Meridian Avenue to the west, and Interstate-65 to the north. All of the area will be included in this survey. The neighborhood is home to 12,765 people with 7,394 households. The

3 All information was obtained from the Near North Development Corporation web site.
median income is $17,731 with 15% of the inhabitants owning their own home and 85% renting. A large amount of subsidized housing is the reason for the high percentage of rentals.

The Riley Area Development Corporation (RADC) operates a home ownership program, refurbishing existing homes and building new homes. Ten single family, three-bedroom, 2.5 bath with attached garage were built on a vacant lot on 11th St. These homes were available to individuals or families whose income falls below 80% of the area median income. These units added a core of homeownership in a largely rental area. In 1997 (RADC) rehabilitated five single-family townhouses located at the corner of 10th Street and Central Ave. called Walter's Corner. The funds for this project came from the HOME Program and Community Development Block Grants. These homes were sold to homebuyers with incomes lower than 80% of the median income of Marion County. In 1995 two single-family vacant homes in the 300 block of East 10th St, were renovated and sold to low to moderate income first-time home buyers.

In the realm of rental property the RADC partnered with Roberts Park Methodist Church and Monument Management to renovate the Davlan Hotel into a 50-unit apartment building. One and two-bedroom apartments are now available to individuals at forty, fifty and sixty percent of median income as well as market rate units. The first floor includes 15,000 square feet of commercial space which includes a Starbucks coffee shop.

In partnership with S.C. Bodner Company, the RADC rehabilitated the Shively-Carter Building into a row of townhouses located just south of Seminole St. on Alabama St. These units were rented at the prevailing market rate for five years and then sold. Funding for this project came from Historic Tax Credits, a loan from Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, and a "Hometown Indiana" grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.
In 1998 a vacant hotel named The Seminole, located at 920 North Alabama Street was renovated into apartments for low-income senior citizens. The hotel consists of 18 one-bedroom units and 15 more units were added from a building on the adjacent lot. Low Income Tax Credits, a local Initiatives Support Corporation loan, Affordable Housing Program Grants and CDBG and HOME funds financed the project. The RADC has had good success partnering with private developers because it encompasses a popular commercial area redeveloping almost solely with private funds. The Riley area has become a popular residential area for those looking to move downtown and into an urban area.

The Riley neighborhood encompasses the popular Mass Ave. Arts District. This is an on-going commercial revitalization project along Massachusetts Avenue from Pennsylvania Avenue to College Avenue. Massachusetts Avenue runs diagonally southwest to the northeast. Small late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings line the street. Most have now been renovated and are occupied with restaurants, bars, art galleries, local theaters, specialty retail shops, and some residents. There are several vacant lots being used as parking lots that are logical sites for future development. This is one of the most active downtown development areas in Indianapolis.

This street was the traditional commercial strip for the neighborhood and was a logical location for development when residential development was established. To give the local residents some input into the future of Mass. Ave, the Riley Area Development Corporation produced a Commercial Development Plan in 1999 titled "Sketchpad for the Millennium." This plan called for the need for more planning and a planning committee was form. This committee included

All information was obtained from the Riley Area Development Corporation web site.
local residents, business owners, and representatives of other community groups. The focus of the planning committee is to allow the local people to have a strong voice in the future of the Mass Ave area before private developers make all the decisions by themselves.

**Concord**

The Concord neighborhood is located south of downtown Indianapolis. The Concord Community Development Corporation (CCDC) covers an area south of Washington St, east of the White River, north of Hanna Ave., and west of Interstate 65 and Madison Ave. This encompasses eight square miles and 14,000 residents. This corporation was formed in 1992 by neighborhood residents to improve the housing and economic conditions on the south side of Indianapolis. The Concord area experienced the typical social and economic problems of urban areas starting in the last 1960’s. It had a high number of abandoned and substandard rental housing units, a lack of retail shops and services, and a high rate of unemployment. To combat these problems the CCDC has developed the following programs.

A home repair program for low to moderate income homeowners is in operation. They use Community Development Block Grant program funds to provide grants to homeowners to stabilize their homes. This program helps improve the housing stock in the neighborhood and keep people from moving out of their substandard housing and become renters. The CCDC also operates a housing restoration program. They purchase houses that have been abandoned. They rehabilitate the house and sell it to low to moderate-income families. When possible the CCDC tries to rehab homes on the same block to increase the impact on the neighborhood. Some of these homes are rented to eligible families. The CDC also builds new homes and rehabs
apartment buildings. They assist new homebuyers in acquiring an affordable mortgage from the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership and using HOME funds to fill the gap in their financing. The CCDC also constructs new homes to sell or rent.

Commercial Development is also an important aspect of their work in the neighborhood. The neighborhood's residents spend enough money to support small local businesses but this money is being spent outside the neighborhood. Local businesses are a primary concern of the neighborhood residents. Meridian St. and Morris St. are identified as priorities for retail development projects. Currently the CCDC is refurbishing the Emrich Building on West Morris Street with plans of leasing out portions to small businesses and an office center with training facilities for a number of social service and community development agencies. Concord CDC also has a commercial façade program for renovation of commercial storefronts along Meridian Street and a program to improve the appearance of commercial buildings. Along with these programs is a commitment to beautification of the neighborhood. The CDC sponsors clean-up days and helps improve the landscape by planting trees, shrubs and flowers.
Chapter 4: Methodology

Why a Survey

A survey was the most effective method for identifying successful redevelopment activities for a number of reasons. As mentioned in the introduction, no direct quantifiable means of arriving at this determination is available. A direct approach would have to determine which activities attracted the most residents, businesses, and shoppers to the neighborhoods, and no existing data describes the number of new residents, businesses and shoppers present in these neighborhoods over a period of years. Changes in property and sales taxes collected over the years would offer some comparative data, but would be insufficient for drawing meaningful conclusions. The reduction of crime might offer a good indicator of the success of a neighborhood redevelopment program, but this information typically is unreliable and quite difficult to obtain. And, even if all of these various types of data were obtainable, attributing changes in these statistics to specific redevelopment activities is extremely difficult. Most neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment will have a variety of programs targeting housing, businesses, beautification, job training, child care, and transportation at any one time, and these programs operate over several years, if not decades. Determining which program or activity is responsible for specific changes or qualities within a neighborhood, such as an increase in housing purchases or new businesses locating in the area, is impossible. There are too many variables and no way of isolating them.

Inner city neighborhoods that need revitalizing are usually in a blighted condition, and bringing them back is a long and difficult task. Most of the commercial activity ceases in these areas, and many commercial buildings are boarded up. The same is often true for the residential areas, with many of the structures boarded up or torn down, leaving large empty areas. Many of the
structures remaining are rented at low rates to people who cannot afford to own a home. These conditions create the quintessential Catch-22 standoff. Residents want to live close to retail shops and services. Commercial enterprises want to locate close to people who can afford to support their shops. Neither group, however, wants to be the first to move into a blighted area. Neighborhoods find themselves caught in a vicious cycle of decreasing livability and increasing crime. The most common approach to this dilemma is to attack it on as many fronts as possible at the same time. As neighborhood improvements evolve, tying them to specific redevelopment activities is quite difficult, given the long-term nature of most programs and their simultaneous efforts and initiatives. This complexity makes traditional types of quantifiable analysis very difficult, and forms the basis for the choice of a survey of residents’ opinions as the most useful approach for conducting this study.

A properly prepared survey allows statistical techniques to be used on the collected data. It is assumed in this study that the statistical techniques will reveal whether there are some redevelopment activities that do work better than others. In order to determine that a redevelopment activity is successful at attracting or keeping people in the neighborhood, we must be able to make a positive correlation between what residents identify as important qualities or activities within the neighborhood and the specific redevelopment activities and outcomes associated with programs that are being undertaken in the area.

There are, nevertheless, disadvantages to using a survey. Survey accuracy depends on the subject’s motivation, honesty, and, in some cases, memory. And, even with a randomly chosen sample, those willing to participate may hold quite different opinions from those of residents
who chose not to answer the questions, thus skewing the results. Survey question answer choices can mean different things to different people. One person’s ‘somewhat important’ choice might not mean the same as some one else’s. In spite of these limitations, however, and even with the potential problems they might trigger, using a survey remains one of the few reliable ways to approach this study.

**Likert Scale**

A Likert scale is a questionnaire that asks people to rate an item using a bipolar scale, meaning a scale that measures from negative to positive. There are usually five to seven possible responses in a Likert Scale. In this study there were five responses, ranging from Not Important or Poor, to Very Important or Excellent. Each response was given a number, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Likert Scales are a commonly used type of questionnaire and allow for a full range of statistical evaluations, including regression analysis. The Likert Scale suited this study very well, because it made it possible for the residents to rate the same items under three different questions. Compiling these ratings makes the results very strong. The repetition of questions insures that items receiving a high average score are important to residents. Regression analysis also allows the study to find indicators of a resident’s opinion of a neighborhood. If there are some key elements that make residents like or dislike a neighborhood regression analysis should uncover them.

**Selecting the Indicators**

Through an Internet search, I was able to gather a large number of projects and programs used to redevelop neighborhoods around the nation. The various programs can be grouped into these
categories: residential building, rehab, ownership, economic/commercial development, beautification, safety and security, and employment programs. Even though these programs are scattered across the country, they share many similarities. These similarities result, in part, from the structures and restrictions of the federal government funding that supports most of the residential programs. I also believe that, over time, the programs that seem to be the most successful are replicated around the country, while the others are discontinued (and, it is important to understand that in the public and private non-profit realm of redevelopment, “successful” first means “inexpensive”). I combined some programs into a single variable, when appropriate. I assumed, for example, that most residents would not understand the various home improvement and affordable housing programs currently being used, so I combined them into the single variable, “Housing.” I explained to participants what this variable covered very briefly, as I asked the questions.

To this group of variables I added what I believe to be common considerations among people who are in the process of choosing where to live. These considerations include house value, neighbors, schools, and parks. These four elements are self-explanatory. The following describes the meaning I applied to the other elements explored within the questionnaire (these are the same explanations I offered to residents, if they did not understand what I meant by a given term:

- **Safety** refers to a person’s physical safety in the neighborhood. The primary concern within this category is not being hit by an automobile.

- **Security** refers to protection from crime.

- **Availability of shops** means having retail stores close by, within the neighborhood.
• **Streets and sidewalks** refer to the presence and condition of these features (within the surveyed neighborhoods, there were a few areas where there were no sidewalks).

• **Landscaping** refers to projects aimed at undertaking obvious efforts to beautify an area. These usually are small decorative gardens, and/or trees, flowers, etc, along streets.

• **Housing** as explained to the residents is the condition of the housing stock in the area. This differs from **housing value** which refers to the stability of the housing prices.

• **Cleanliness** refers to the amount of trash and debris in the streets and other public places, and how quickly it gets cleaned up.

• **Special events** are those events put on to draw the neighborhood closer, but I did not make a distinction between events put on by the CDC or other community oriented groups and specialty groups such as schools, churches, and so on.

I also asked residents if there was anything else they thought was important or they wanted to comment about, in regard to a neighborhood’s desirability. There were only a few responses to this query through out the entire survey.

**Constructing the Survey**

The survey was constructed so that most of the responses would be ratings. Ratings allow higher level of analyses, thus providing more information. Within the survey are three questions with the same twelve items the resident is asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5. According to this ratings scale, 1 is Not Important or Poor; 2 is Not Very Important or Fair; 3 is Somewhat Important or Good; 4 is Important or Very Good; and, 5 is Very Important or Excellent.

The first question asks how long the resident has lived in the neighborhood. If they answered 10 years or less, the respondent was asked to answer question number 2; *Rate the importance of the*
following reasons why you moved into the neighborhood. The answers are: Job, Family, Change in Living Arrangements, Investment, Attracted to Neighborhood, and Other, with space to fill in details for this latter response. These responses represent typical reasons why people move into any neighborhood, and they provide us with a direct reflection of the attractiveness of the neighborhood. The resident is to rate each answer on a scale from Very Important (5), to Not Important (1). This question was designed to start the resident thinking about their neighborhood and what they like about it. CDC’s have been active in every neighborhood for more than ten years. If the resident moved in earlier than that the work of the CDC did not have an affect on their reason for moving into the neighborhood, so I skipped question 2.

Question 3 asks “How important are the following elements in creating a good neighborhood. Rate the following elements using the same scale as above. The elements are: Safety, Value, Neighbors, Availability of Shops, Streets and Sidewalks, Landscaping, Schools, Housing, Parks, Neighborhood. This question asks the resident to think about and rate what is important to them when choosing a neighborhood.

Question number 4 asks the resident to rate the same elements in their own neighborhood Do you intend to remain in the neighborhood for the next five years. If the response is “No,” question 5b is skipped. If the resident responded “Yes,” I asked them to rate the same elements as those rated in Question 3, but with answers as they apply to the resident’s decision to remain in the neighborhood. The last question asked the resident to rate his/her neighborhood from Poor (1) to Excellent (5), with full selections including poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent.


**Conducting the Survey**

Due to my schedule and the somewhat lengthy driving distance to the target neighborhoods, I conducted the survey during the late afternoon on weekdays, and mid-mornings and late-afternoons on weekends. This schedule offered opportunities to reach a broad cross-section of residents in the neighborhoods. I started each neighborhood survey by flipping a coin to determine which street I would survey—heads, the first street at the neighborhood’s edge, or tails, the second street. After this coin toss, I surveyed every other street. I determined which side of the street to survey the same way, with heads directing me toward the left side, and tails the right side of the street. I used a three-sided die to select the house with which I would begin the survey, and I rolled the die for each survey. A one meant the first house, a two the second and so on. At the end of a block, I again flipped the coin to determine which side of the street I would survey through the next block.

No matter what time I surveyed a neighborhood; many residents were not in their homes. So, in order to obtain the number of surveys I wanted within a reasonable amount of time, I stopped this procedure and started going to every house on the block. Since many people were not home, I obtained a random sample in geographic terms. I visited every neighborhood at various times and days to make the survey as random as possible.

At each house I knocked on the front door, and when someone answered, I introduced myself, told them what I was doing, and asked if they wanted to participate. (I also carried a letter from Dr. Keuhl stating I was a student and that my project was sanctioned by the university. I never had to show it to anyone.) If they agreed to participate, I would begin the survey by asking the
first question. If they declined, I thanked them for their time and went on my way. When I explained the survey, I also told them they could stop answering the questions at anytime. I did not keep track of the number of residences I approached, but I estimate for every single survey I completed, I had to approach four to five homes.

Chapter 5: Results of the Analyses

The Mean
Survey data was entered into SPSS. Each potential answer was given a numerical value between 1 and 5. Unimportant and Poor were assigned the value 1, with Very Important and Excellent assigned the value of 5. To find the average, the score from each survey for each item within an individual question series was added together and divided by 100. These average scores for each item from each of the three rating questions were then added together and divided by three. This produced the overall average for each item. Based on this averaging technique, Safety and Security received the highest scores, of 4.0 and 4.1 respectively. The next highest scores were achieved by the items House Value and Cleanliness, at 3.9 and 3.7 respectively. A gap in the mean scores separates these four variables from the remaining eight variables, which clustered around the score of 3.0. The three elements that achieved the lowest scores are Landscaping, which scored 2.82; Schools, which scored 2.81; and Special Events, which scored 2.7. The top four scores—those ranging between 3.7 and 4.1—rank the elements as being very important. Those elements in the middle, with scores around 3.0, rank as somewhat important.

Linear Regression Analysis
Liner Regression analysis attempts to show the relationship between two variables. It answers the question of whether one variable acts on another variable. One variable is considered the
explanatory or independent variable; the other is the dependent variable. The relationship between the variables is established by fitting a linear equation to the data. Regression analysis assumes that the relationship of the data points is linear. To visualize how this assumption works, we can picture a scatter plot with the points all over the graph. Linear regression finds the line through the points that requires the lowest number of moves for all the points to reach the line. The following analysis attempted to find one or more variables that could predict the outcome of the three rating questions used in this survey.

In performing a regression analysis on the results of the first rating question, number 3 - *What variables are most important in a neighborhood*— the variable group of *Schools, Landscaping, Streets, and House Value* is the best predictor of the question. Thus, if these four variables are high, the overall rating question also will be high. However, these variables can only predict 21% of the occurrences. This percentage is not high enough to warrant placing a great deal of significance on these variables.

The results of the second rating question, number 4 – *Rate these variables in your neighborhood*—the variable group of *Safety, Cleanliness, and Special Events* forms the best predictor of the question. This group can predict 61% of the occurrences, which offers a strong predictor and very useful information. If we know a resident’s opinion of these three variables, we can determine that resident’s overall rating of the neighborhood. The relationship revealed here is a positive one; meaning, when the ratings of these three variables are high or good, the overall opinion of the neighborhood also will be good. And, concurrently if these elements receive low ratings, the neighborhood also will receive low ratings.
In the third rating question, number 5b – *Rate these variables on their importance for keeping you in the neighborhood for 5 years or more*--a group of four variables was found to be useful in predicting 34% of the outcomes. While this predictor is not as strong as that for question 3, it does predict a respectable third of the outcomes. The four variables within this group are *Special Events, Neighbors, Shops,* and *Schools.* This group also forms a positive relationship. When these four elements are rated high then the resident is more likely to stay in the community.

**Results and Conclusions**

The scores from each question were added together, to arrive at a final score that can be used to determine what qualities/conditions residents consider to be important for neighborhoods in general. The highest-scoring elements are those that residents have identified as being the *most* important neighborhood qualities or conditions, and thus, should be among the first elements addressed in any redevelopment plan. Because the survey produced no low-scoring elements, however, we know that all of the elements outlined within the survey were considered by participants to be somewhat important, and therefore, should not be ignored by community development organizations.

The high scores of *Safety, Security, Home Value,* and *Cleanliness* are clearly the most important elements for residents living in inner city neighborhoods. Resident concerns regarding the first three of these elements are easily understood. No matter where people live, they want to feel safe and secure. Further, a home is usually the largest investment a person or family will ever have, therefore the security and stability of its value are natural concerns. Most residents want their
neighborhood to be clean, but I think that perhaps the primary reason cleanliness scored so high among concerns listed within this survey is that people equate a clean neighborhood with safety, security, and with stable home values. A clean neighborhood is an indication that its residents care about their community and work to keep it looking good.

Fortunately for residents and community development groups alike, community development programs can be employed to tackle three of the four most important neighborhood elements highlighted by this survey. The primary concern of neighborhood safety in the United States is the protection of pedestrians from automobiles. Good signage in clear view, well-lighted streets, and well-marked crosswalks are examples of efforts commonly used by communities and community development groups to improve neighborhood pedestrian safety. Neighborhood crime abatement falls within the category of efforts aimed at security. Any program that creates activity on the streets can help directly reduce neighborhood crime, as can well-staffed and well-managed neighborhood crime watch programs. The control and maintenance of both of these items fall under the responsibility of the city, but a community development organization can lobby the city on behalf of the neighborhood and make these programs a priority with the city.

Home value is a different issue. All new houses could be built in an inner-city neighborhood, promoting the type of revitalization which has occurred under the guidance of the Mapleton Fall Creek Housing Development Council in Indianapolis, but if the neighborhood becomes crime-ridden and trashy, the value of these new homes will fall. Home value is not something that can be addressed directly through community development programs. At the same time, community development organizations impact communities with every activity and program they undertake.
Making an impact on communities is, of course, the primary goal of all community development organizations. Rising or steady home values is a sign that a neighborhood is stable or improving. Community development groups, therefore, must design and implement all programs with this factor in mind, and carefully consider potential secondary impacts of program initiatives on home values.

As mentioned previously, even the eight lowest-scoring elements; retail shops, housing, streets and sidewalks, landscaping, parks, schools, neighbors, and special events, in this survey received fairly high ratings. As a result, community development organizations cannot afford to overlook or neglect these elements within their program planning.

Much of the findings of the regression analysis reinforce the results of the mean analysis. Since the results of the second question regarding what people think is important in picking a neighborhood could only predict 21 percent of the occurrences there is little to say. It does show that people pick neighborhoods for a variety of different reasons and a community development agency can not rely on only a few elements to make a neighborhood attractive to home buyers.

The results of the third question, which asked residents to rate the elements in their neighborhood, found two of the same elements with the highest mean score in a group of three predictors for 61 percent of the occurrences. These are Safety and Cleanliness. The other element is Special Events. This result indicates that when residents perceive that a neighborhood is safe and clean, and when that neighborhood also hosts special events, residents will have a favorable impression of the area. As residents gave strong ratings to these elements within their own
neighborhoods, one could logically conclude that these neighborhoods are considered by many of their residents to be safe and clean. One could also go on to conclude that the neighborhoods surveyed offer at least some special events. This is an odd mix of neighborhood qualities/conditions, and I have been unable to determine how they work together. I have formed some assumptions, however, based on other survey findings, specifically drawing upon those regarding the importance of neighborhood safety and cleanliness. People want a safe and clean place to live. Special events may contribute to activity within the neighborhood, thus contributing to an increased perception of neighborhood safety. The preparations for neighborhood activities may lead to a cleaner neighborhood. And, without question, special events make the neighborhood a more interesting place to live. In any case, when community developers understand that these three elements can accurately be used as predictors of resident neighborhood satisfaction in nearly two out of three instances, they can use that information when designing and implementing successful development programs. By accommodating these resident priorities early and thoroughly within community development efforts, development agencies can increase the likelihood that a higher percentage of residents will want to stay in the neighborhood, than if these elements are ignored by community development planners and their programs.

The group of four predictors in the fifth question (which ask residents why they are staying in the neighborhood) did not produce strong results. Those results are, however, quite interesting. All four of these variables, Special Events, Neighbors, Shops, and Schools are dynamic, and each requires interaction at a personal level. If a resident has an active community life, he or she is more likely to feel good about the neighborhood. Only two of these variables, Special Events and
Shops, can be directly affected by a community development organization. Special events are a common ingredient in a community development organization’s recipe for revitalizing a neighborhood. The importance of special events is reflected in this set of predictors as well as in question three, which emphasizes the importance of special events on neighborhood resident satisfaction. These events may help give a neighborhood an identity, which may, in turn, make the people feel more a part of the community, and thus increase their desire to remain a resident of the neighborhood.

The establishment and promotion of retail shops within neighborhoods is another element of revitalization that community development organizations have been targeting for years. In most inner-city neighborhoods, retail activity formed a vital part of the neighborhood’s establishment and growth. In many neighborhoods, the retail shops formed a small commercial area that served the needs of the residents, before automobiles became prevalent and the interstate highway system was built. These commercial areas typically are within walking distance of a large number of residences and often make up the heart of the neighborhood. If retail businesses can be reestablished in these areas, their presence also can serve to help keep residents within their community. In this regard, retail areas may serve a function similar to that of special events. They give the neighborhood an identity, and contribute to its sense of place.

Creating good neighbors, however, is a different manner. There is little a community development organization can do to make good neighbors. Community development groups could possibly offer awards for good neighborliness and provide information on how to be a good neighbor; such activities may help to some degree to improve the general environment of
neighborly behavior and social responsibility within a given area. Schools might offer an interesting tool for promoting improvements in communities, as well. Community development organizations can build their influence in local schools by creating development programs aimed at getting parents more involved with their children’s education and by providing after school activities for the students. With good planning and outreach, these efforts might even be aided by outside groups. Nevertheless, making major improvements in community life or social behaviors through the schools is difficult. Most CDC programs are ineffective tools for “improving” neighborly behavior.

In keeping with the findings of this study, community development organizations should launch revitalization programs with neighborhood cleanup activities and with efforts aimed at increasing neighborhood safety and security. None of the four community development corporations reviewed in this study include mention of these two items in any published documentation of past or current community development program activities. Given the extensive descriptions of program activities included in most of these publications, it can be assumed that these organizations would have mentioned efforts to improve neighborhood cleanliness, safety, and security. If these elements were targeted by the metropolitan police and public works departments, I would have expected the associated activities to be described in the overall published descriptions of neighborhood improvements posted or published by the community development corporations, but again, no such information was offered. Going forward, however, if community development corporations follow the recommendations resulting from this
survey, an initial launch of programs aimed at improving neighborhood cleanliness, safety, and security should lay a good foundation for the programs to follow.

From the response to the surveys second question (asking the residents what attracts them to a neighborhood), it is apparent that community development organizations are taking the right approach by launching and implementing several community development programs simultaneously. These efforts make quick headway toward improving multiple neighborhood elements, addressing a broad array of issues that survey participants indicated are important to attracting and keeping them as neighborhood residents. Since no single element queried within this question on the survey received more emphasis than others, it reveals no single, targeted approach that would better serve community development organizations and the residents of the neighborhoods they serve. By trying to improve a broad range of neighborhood qualities and conditions, a community development corporation is on the most likely course for making the neighborhood attractive the largest group of people possible.

The last two rating questions in the survey provide some indicators as to what a community development organization should focus on in order to keep residents in the neighborhood. Residents want a safe environment with stable home values, so they feel protected both physically and financially. They also want to live in a community that hosts a variety of retail shops and special events, so their neighborhood has an identity of which they can be a part. If community development organizations can implement
programs that focus on promoting these elements, the neighborhood should retain residents and become self-sustaining.
Bibliography


Walker, Christopher. “Community Development Corporations and their Changing Support Systems”, The Urban Institute, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, 2002