

Initial People Task Force Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2015

1:00 pm at St. Peter's United Church of Christ

-Intros by Rev. Ferguson and Betty (BJ) Adkins, Co-Leads

- Review of some of Russell's existing conditions data

- 3,723 households with 10,000 household members. Combination of households with children, elderly HOH's, and single persons. Predominately single-female headed households.
- 40% of households have at least one person with a disability
- Strategies included in the transformation plan need to address all household types
- 1,189 children between ages 0 – 5 (232 of those in Beecher Terrace)
- Enough childcare slots for all of these children, however only 50% are actually enrolled. Quality of early childhood providers might need improvement as only 47% are kindergarten-ready. Some children aren't in pre-school as they don't meet eligibility criteria for programs and can't private pay.
- Awareness issues – need expanded communications. People don't know about certain programs that are available.

- Communications

- Not getting meeting notices, need to improve communications
- Discussed Choice Neighborhood/Vision Russell newsletter and Facebook page
 - Sharing newsletter electronically and putting it on website
 - Distribute paper copies, as some people don't have access to electronic media
 - Asking Central and LCCC to post information on their message boards
 - Text information to people via their cellphones
 - Strategies to address current communications, how to get information out NOW and how to develop a communications infrastructure for the FUTURE

- Developing a Transformation Plan to support families

- How much do we want to building on existing initiatives?
- Employment - big issue for Russell
- Have mapped transportation issues, criminal record issues, health issues – near universal health coverage, but high rates of ER use, unmet chronic medical needs, high rates of stress, crime and violence
- Looks at recommendations to address these issues
- What do families need to thrive?

- Review of the People Matrix and Topic Areas (see attached)

- Employment – 2,500 jobs in Russell, but only 100 of them held by Russell residents
- Crime will need to be addressed across all task forces. Will be difficult to affect any other issues and increase interest in moving to the neighborhood unless crime is addressed.

- Looking at the resources out there and leverage funding – how can we work with others currently doing the work? Addressing crime through policy – reentry for example. Beecher's high rate of ex-offenders impacts their current employability – how do we address, and help them transition back into workforce? Programs out there that are addressing youth.
- Education is essential to getting out of poverty; health outcomes poorer for people living in poverty
- 117,000 people enrolled in Medicare in Louisville; issues with keeping people enrolled.
- FoodPort – will improve residents access to fresh foods
- Keeping people in a medical home; get Park DuValle Health Center involved in the conversation. Look at U of L's School of Public Health's work in the area of health literacy
- Talk with service providers and find out what barriers they are facing
- Need task force members to be advisors to us on these issues
- Issues involved with developing the FoodPort are similar challenge as those we're facing with Choice efforts – communications issues and efforts to address them – neighborhood meetings, establishing office hours, hanging out with "Ask me about " signs. Still a challenge to getting information out, and people feeling blindsighted when something has been going on and they don't know about it yet. Love the idea of a coordinated effort, but don't know how it would work. Low number of Russell resident's employed in the neighborhoods jobs is an opportunity to engage in efforts around economic and job development. Have metrics to track hiring from the neighborhood, real efforts to describe what the jobs are and align them with people in the neighborhood. Goal of hiring from the neighborhood and holding themselves accountable. Other development underway in the neighborhood where this could also be the case – hiring construction workers from the neighborhood, as well as permanent employees, and holding them accountable. FoodPort council is working on a Community Benefits Agreement which will address jobs, small business develop, other community benefits including ownership opportunities. Could we use as a generic template in the Transformation Plan, possibility include in the appendix.
- Need to also look at the wages from these jobs – must be living wages.
- Looking at holding community conversations on Saturdays in an effort to get residents more engaged.
- Need to know what we have now, before we start to envision what's possible or needed.
- Asking people for information about who's doing what, graduates of programs, conducting an inventory of existing businesses and finding out about job opportunities and employment needs at those businesses.
- Look at using Block Watch as a building block for neighborhood engagement. Bringing the block watch teams together every so often. Look at doing something like the Network Nights. Methods of establishing informal grapevines, and other ways to get to know our neighbors. Helps create a sense of community, and feeling of attachment to neighborhood goals and outcomes. Also helps to address the individual needs at the block level, and smaller areas, instead of solely looking at broad neighborhood-wide strategies .

- EJP's existing conditions report will include a list of current initiatives underway in the neighborhood.
 - One of the community conversation topics under discussion is crime and safety – perhaps have a neighborhood block watch table there, and sign people up. Focus on more than crime – creating neighborhood cohesiveness
 - Develop models that have long-term sustainable. Grass roots, volunteer support, instead of looking for funding to start something that can't be sustained once funding is gone. Who will own this – how will it get actualized, how do we get it off the ground? Everybody can be successful when money is available (cliff effect) – how do we make this successful for the long term without funds.
 - What percentage of the households in the neighborhood have been long-term renters? Often as vested in community as homeowners. Perhaps we check with larger neighborhood landlords and interview them to find out?
 - Look needs of adults as well as children - adult literacy is an issue – often people need payees because of literacy issues; need to mentor parents.
 - Locating services directly in the neighborhood so people don't need to go downtown. Plymouth Settlement Housing will be empty next year, in early stages of planning now. Might be able to provide some office space to service providers. (Rhae and team will note for further discussion.)
 - Using block watch model as a building block is similar to political system of blocks, precincts and wards. Provides a variety of means to engage and communication – word of mouth, print materials. Communication is a critical part of our efforts.
- Education is pre-birth to life long learning – using senior citizens to mentor younger people. Reading clinics.
- Mobility issues – staff turnover, families moving, children moving around within their families.
- How do we support educational process and early learning – book lending, pre-natal care, brain stimulation early in life.
- Nineteen child development centers in Russell – use to take advantage of the opportunity to prepare children for kindergarten. 1/3 of Russell and Beecher residents currently don't leave high school with a degree. Higher levels of education correlated with higher incomes. Identify approaches to keeping students from dropping out. Identifying Beecher residents in that age group and reach out.
- Tying education to the job skills desired by employers. Employers want:
 - People who are going to be there
 - People who are drug and alcohol free – safety issue
 - People who can work with other people as part of a team, and who can work on their own
 - Someone with basic skills – basic math skills, literate, and the ability to listen to directions and speak to an audience
 - People who represent themselves and their family well
 - Someone who can support the organization well
- Putting nurses and nurse practitioners in school - helps prevent ER visits and keeps kids in school

- Importance of getting the recommendations the TF will make, such as Community Benefits Agreement, into the transformation plan.
- Work with the people who are creating the demand for jobs, (potential employers) and work with the supply side of jobs – (identifying and preparing people to fill the jobs).
- Working through the expungement process is difficult, and people can become discouraged going through the process.
- Is there a list of businesses in Russell? West Louisville Business Association might be working on an inventory.
- FoodPort resurrecting a construction pipeline – there will be competition for people with skills.
- Identifying the jobs that will be available and the people who are available or interested.
- Working with a consortium of groups who know or work with potential employees, for example YouthBuild
- Creating an inventory of jobs in Russell. Work with entities that have the people and help connect them to the jobs. At every public event the FoodPort will hold they will have a place for people to sign up for jobs and to see the inventory of jobs, and for those with small businesses to let others know their workforce needs.
- Workforce plan and connecting people to jobs – either those in Russell or elsewhere, will be part of the transformation plan.
- Look at the supply, demand and policy pieces when developing the big picture strategies.
- MoLo Village is working on re-entry and helping tie people to employment opportunities and means to better their education.
- MoLo programs work on overall package of skills – mental, emotional and basic life skills.
- Look at the mental health and emotional health of community members – baggage or past trauma can prevent people from moving forward.
- Look at holding workshops or developing a certificate program on basic skills – math, reading, job readiness, etc., and having a workforce ready for the jobs coming to the neighborhood
- What average age or grade are people dropping out of school?
- Reading levels are indicators of future success. If you aren't reading at your grade level in 3rd grade, your chances of dropping out of HS are much higher. Working with kids when they are young is huge.
- Informal economy that many Russell residents depend on to make ends meet (doing odd jobs, etc.). What are the already existing skills and ability that people bring from the informal economy that could be transferred to the formal economy?
- When JCPS assistant superintendents were asked during interviews about what they most needed assistance with from U of L, four of the six said they needed help with mental health issues (of students and their families). U of L just opened a mental health clinic at the Nia Center. Prior to that, they'd opened up a pilot clinic at Shawnee – it's doing quite well.
- When looking at service provision, must look at "turf" issues – some people will not cross neighborhoods to get to services, so we need to look at providing them within the neighborhood boundaries.

- Health Department working with JCPS on a resiliency program (Bounce) at Simple. 400+ staff trained in the program. Seeing great success – with both students and staff and faculty, including less turnover which is typically a big issue. Look at replicating the program at Roosevelt-Perry.
- When talking about education, important to remember the importance of a child's home environment. Problems at home are brought to school, and make it difficult for children to learn. They might not be getting support at home or help with the problems they are facing. Tutoring programs can be valuable programs.
- Where would the group like to focus its efforts next? Major themes at this meeting included communication and relationships, social capital, employment and correlation with education, health care, home life for children. Review minutes and decide where to focus.
- Do research in between meetings.
- Have an update about Choose Russell at future meeting. Manfred Reid is leading this new neighborhood association effort.
- By Dec. 1 would like solid recommendations from the TF – whether its 3 or 4 or list of 10. Look at intersections between issues and recommendations with other TFs.
- Hold next meeting at same location, 3rd Monday of the month (Monday, September 21st at 9:00 a.m.
- Discussed upcoming meetings in September, including the walking tour of Russell on Sept. 12th.

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