

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

*Helping Children, Families, and
Neighborhoods Thrive*

**Quality
of Life
Plan**

Danville
Virginia



OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

*Helping Children, Families, and
Neighborhoods Thrive*



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DANVILLE IS OUR HOME.

Many neighbors have lived here their entire lives. Others have moved here to be closer to family, a job, or to get a new start. Regardless of how we all got here, this is our community. North Danville, Southside, and Westside: these are our neighborhoods.

There are great people and things happening all around us every day, but we also know there are opportunities to make things better.

And we can't do it alone.



Our message to You

We are excited to share this Quality of Life Plan, which reflects the hopes and desires of our neighborhood residents. “Quality of life” means everyone in our neighborhood has a sense of purpose; shares in meaningful relationships; and feels an overall sense of life satisfaction. Some of the strategies we outline in this plan have been talked about for years, while other ideas are newer, emergent, and exciting to consider as possibilities.

This Plan is a start. It is a start to new conversations, new relationships, and new ways of thinking. It should be read as a guidebook, not a rule book. The Plan paints a clear picture of what residents hope to see. And while those hopes won’t change, how we get there may require adjusting our strategies.

We hope that residents, elected officials, nonprofit and business leaders, government staff, and anyone else who spends time in the Opportunity Neighborhoods—whether they live in or outside the Opportunity Corridor—can see in this Plan a role they can play to turn residents’ hopes into reality.

We’re inspired and confident in our future and hope you are, too!



JEAN JACKSON, North Danville



CONSTANCE COVINGTON, Southside



CLYDE MCCOY, Westside



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Danville's Opportunity Neighborhoods

In the summer of 2018, Danville residents in three neighborhoods—North Danville, Southside, and Westside—set out to create a unified roadmap to shape their own future. The result is this Quality of Life Plan, a guide that looks beyond any one strategy, system, or sector and focuses on wellbeing for everyone in the neighborhoods.

THIS QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Residents should be part of the decision-making process in the community where they live, and their voices should be influential in decisions that impact their lives.

A neighborhood with a high quality of life is a place where residents feel they are respected, trusted, empowered to make change, and where everyone is welcome.

Initiatives and neighborhoods are more likely to succeed when residents help design, implement, and shape how they function.

“

Some of our strategies are city-wide. They can't just be for one neighborhood. Each neighborhood needs adequate jobs, green space, and education.

LONGTIME RESIDENT - Westside

”

Because the region's welfare is linked to all who live here, the Quality of Life Plan benefits neighborhood residents and the entire Dan River Region. The three neighborhoods are part of the Opportunity Neighborhoods Initiative, a 10-year effort launched by the Danville Regional Foundation in 2017. This initiative was designed to expand access to opportunity and improve the quality of life in the North Danville, Southside, and Westside neighborhoods, known as the **“Opportunity Corridor.”**

These neighborhoods have many social and cultural assets that contribute to Danville's quality of life, including Old West End and Holbrook Ross's Historic Districts, Constance Covington's Youth Center, Danville Community College, Westmoreland Park, Stonewall Recreation Center, and strong churches. The Corridor also has a rich history, diverse businesses, strong familial and faith-based ties, and deep cultural roots.

However, both current and historic data show that Opportunity Corridor residents have a higher risk for poor health outcomes, are less likely to experience upward economic mobility, and have fewer opportunities to get ahead than others in the region.

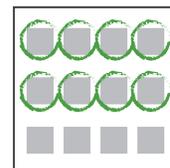
“Quality of life” is a general term that can mean different things to different people. In this case, it is defined as the things that help shape life satisfaction. This includes all aspects of residents' lives, such as housing, education, economic opportunity, safety, physical and mental health, a sense of purpose, community connectedness, and social mobility (otherwise known as changes in one's life circumstances).



Through the Opportunity Neighborhoods Initiative's **eight-month Quality of Life planning process**, which was just as important as the Plan itself, almost **two hundred residents of all ages, as well as other stakeholders, worked collaboratively** to prioritize goals and activities that are important, urgent, and achievable for those living in the Opportunity Corridor. Everything included in the Plan reflects residents' opinions and input; this was an intentional and iterative process that generated new dialogue among neighbors as they led the process and the development of content.

In this Plan, neighbors are equal partners in decision-making processes for issues that are most likely to impact them. This Plan comes from a bold vision shared by residents, nonprofits, local government, and others interested in Opportunity Neighborhoods' wellbeing. It is intended to be **a guide for all sectors and residents to work together to create a truly vibrant corridor: a great place to live, learn, raise a family, worship, work, do business, and visit.**

The document describes actionable steps and the collaboration needed in order to make that a reality.



8
Months



200
Residents &
Stakeholders

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this plan, residents shared their desires to:



Increase communication channels, relationships, and networks between the three neighborhoods and the organizations and systems they operate within in order to create mutual benefits that support workforce strategies and wealth building.



Give young people more opportunities to connect with their community, stay engaged, and have experiences that shape their futures through quality education and meaningful extracurricular activities.



Build from and expand on trusted partnerships and what has already worked for their neighborhoods.

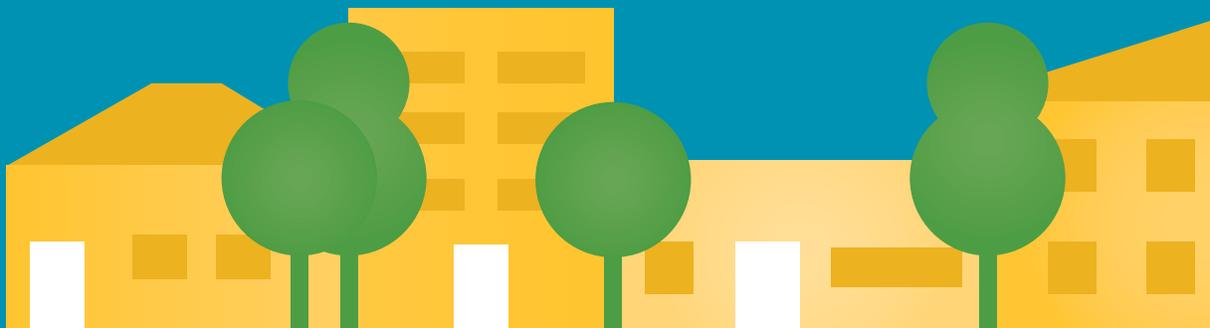


(Re)build trust with organizations and systems that have historically neglected Danville's Opportunity Neighborhoods in order to give more people the ability to succeed by strengthening leadership and civic engagement.



Youth need places to play and ways to keep them busy.

PARENT - North Danville



“

Education is one of the first priorities. Without it, we can't really do anything of the other things we want to get done.

PARENT - Southside

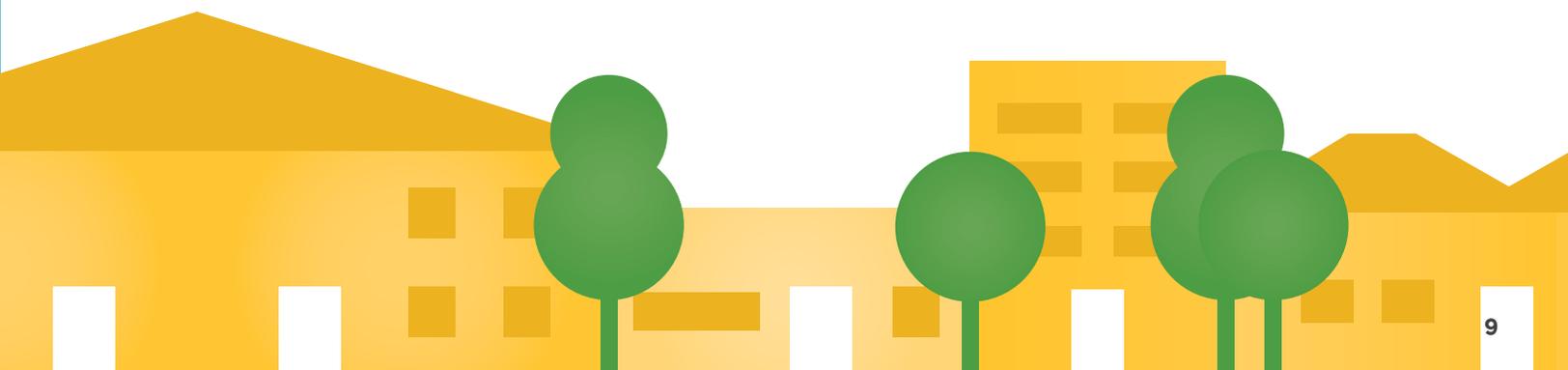
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IT IS UP TO RESIDENTS, LEADERS, AND OFFICIALS TO WORK TOGETHER TO BRING THIS PLAN TO LIFE.

No single organization or individual can accomplish all of the elements of the Plan. Implementation will not happen overnight, and some activities will be easier than others.

And because of the high level of community engagement needed to create a comprehensive Quality of Life Plan that includes everyone's voice, future revisions to the Plan may be needed, especially if and as contexts change and more residents voice their opinions.

When the Plan is implemented, the Opportunity Corridor will be more vibrant, residents will have more opportunities to thrive, and all of Danville will benefit from its impact.



WHY A QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN?

Creating and Aligning What Works for Us

The Opportunity Corridor—Danville's North Danville, Southside, and Westside neighborhoods—has a long history that still impacts residents today. While the Corridor boasts many community groups; assets that serve as prominent Danville landmarks; community and organizations that contribute to Danville's identity, the Opportunity Corridor also has a history of disinvestment and is home to some of Danville's most at-risk populations.

Opportunity Neighborhoods include 29% of Danville's total population and have a higher concentration of African American residents (70% in the Corridor compared to 49% in the city as a whole).

Because of demographics and past segregation, these neighborhoods still experience some isolation and neglect. While many communities within the Dan River Region could benefit from similar Quality of Life planning processes, the Opportunity Corridor would benefit most from extra attention. The Corridor has some of the region's highest rates of concentrated poverty, and those living within the Corridor are more likely to experience low quality-of-life measures.



NOT ALL DANVILLE RESIDENTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES.

When compared to Danville as a whole, the Opportunity Corridor has a:*

- **Higher percentage of people living below the poverty line, including those under 18 years old¹**
- **Higher unemployment rate¹**
- **Higher number of people who rely on public transportation¹**
- **Lower median household income¹**
- **Lower life expectancy and healthy life expectancy²**
- **Lower percentage of people who finished high school¹**

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

² Department of Population Health Data, Virginia Department of Health, 2007-2013; more health-specific data can be found in The Health Collaborative's 2017 Health Equity Report

* More data can be found in each Neighborhood section of the Plan.

Despite such statistics, the Opportunity Corridor is uniquely positioned to reverse these negative trends.

Residents who live there are resilient. In spite of, or perhaps because of, historical decline in this area, many residents have a deeper connection with their neighbors and have created tighter formal and informal networks that they use to share information, navigate systems, and help each other.

In parallel, government agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations must focus more intently in the Opportunity Neighborhoods, where the need is higher. Allocating resources equally throughout the city is not necessary equitable and, in fact, has the potential to worsen some quality-of-life indicators. This Plan is meant to rally residents, agencies, and organizations around the same goals and strategies—developed with and for residents—to change or mitigate many of the poor outcomes that people living in the Opportunity Corridor experience.

This Plan is not intended to supersede or undermine other planning efforts, but to complement them. In many cases, the Quality of Life Plan goals and activities validate or reinforce efforts already identified by other groups, which should lead to natural synergies and partnerships.

The Action Plans avoid being highly specific in order to provide flexibility as residents and other stakeholders identify ways to implement the outlined Goals. Quality of Life planning is a crucial next step to formalize and share the neighborhoods' collective vision. Everyone in Danville can benefit from following the resident-driven Action Plans.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Resident-Led from the Start

The Quality of Life planning process engages people who live and work within the Opportunity Corridor in defining a shared vision for their future.



Planning-Process Timeline

● Summer 2016

DRF Interns connected with residents and other stakeholders to identify underused resources and assets in the Opportunity Corridor.

● Spring 2017

A Community Council was developed to create space for Opportunity Neighborhood residents to learn from each other.

● Summer 2018

A different group of DRF Interns created preliminary Quality of Life Plans and made three general recommendations:

- 1) Capacity building and community involvement;
- 2) Investing in recreation;
- 3) Workforce strategies.

The Opportunity Neighborhoods Initiative, a 10-year effort, officially started in 2017. Over time, the focus on quality of life became clearer. Before the Opportunity Neighborhoods Initiative launched, the Danville Regional Foundation (DRF) focused its attention on many elements of the Opportunity Corridor with the help of residents. In summer 2016, DRF interns explored often-overlooked resources in Almagro, Cardinal Village, Glenwood, Monument and Green Street, North Main Street, Old West End, Schoolfield, Westmoreland, and White Rock by engaging in Asset Based Community Development (ABCD).

ABCD is an approach to community improvement that focuses on the identification of a neighborhood's strengths in order to address its needs. This process identified the resources and assets already available, and those still needed, in order to help residents thrive. This laid the foundation for the Quality of Life planning work.

When equity and inclusion are goals, top-down approaches should sync with grassroots efforts and other activities led by neighborhood residents. This means that Opportunity Corridor neighbors are engaged in any processes and implementation from the beginning. Values were identified to help everyone maintain sight of the main purpose: giving residents a Plan that includes their voices, opinions, and power to implement many of the goals.

The Plan can be viewed as a guide. And while not all residents provided input, the Plan is still an important step in aligning residents and other partners to boost quality of life within the Corridor.

Starting in summer 2018, resident leaders, DRF interns, Healthy Places by Design consultants, and Danville Regional Foundation staff led the Quality of Life planning process. This process focused on listening, sharing, and asking, "What tangible and sustainable steps would it take to increase quality of life for everyone in the Corridor?" Versions of this core question were asked again and again in focus groups, larger community meetings, surveys, and one-on-one conversations. Answers were shared back, modified, fine-tuned and, ultimately, prioritized. The community determined the Plan's goals and strategies, which focus on long-term sustainability.

● August-October 2018

Three Quality of Life planning meetings were held at the Stratford Conference Center and built upon the work from the summer. Meetings included establishing a baseline understanding of Quality of Life planning; prioritizing goal areas that seem most important to residents; and revising or adding input from previous sessions.

● November-December 2018

Three neighborhood-specific focus groups were held at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, and select community leaders, who were otherwise underrepresented in the process, responded to a survey to provide additional input.

GUIDING VALUES

Making Effective and Equitable Decisions

A set of guiding values has been woven throughout the Quality of Life planning process. These values are in line with how we envision that all decision-making can happen in the Opportunity Neighborhood Corridor: **with and for residents at every step of the process.**

ABUNDANCE THINKING

This mindset focuses on what we have; allowing us to see the possible in what already exists, rather than assuming resources are limited. Every neighborhood has unique assets, and success comes from finding and focusing on these as key strengths.

COLLABORATION

Success doesn't happen through the work of one organization or coalition alone, but through on-the-ground collaboration with residents and neighborhood associations as key partners.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Residents and the groups they form are "in the driver's seat" to inform decisions most likely to impact them. This allows work to move forward with robust and ongoing engagement.

CONSENSUS

Dialogue is used as a method to resolve conflict and find common ground.

EVIDENCE

Significant impacts take many years to realize, so benchmarks and indicators of progress are important to inform action, sustain focus, and learn about what is working and what needs adjustment.

EQUITY

Intentionally providing everyone a fair chance to attain their highest potential and acknowledging that people have different needs based on different circumstances and situations.

INCLUSIVITY

Everyone who has something to contribute is welcome at the table, and there are intentional efforts to bring in new voices throughout the process.

INVESTMENT

Change happens and momentum is sustained by prioritizing and lifting up investments in higher-need neighborhoods. Partners commit to community-driven goals and practices.

RELATIONSHIPS

The heart of any collaborative work is building relationships, deepening trust, and recognizing that everyone comes to the table with the best intentions.

SHARED LEADERSHIP

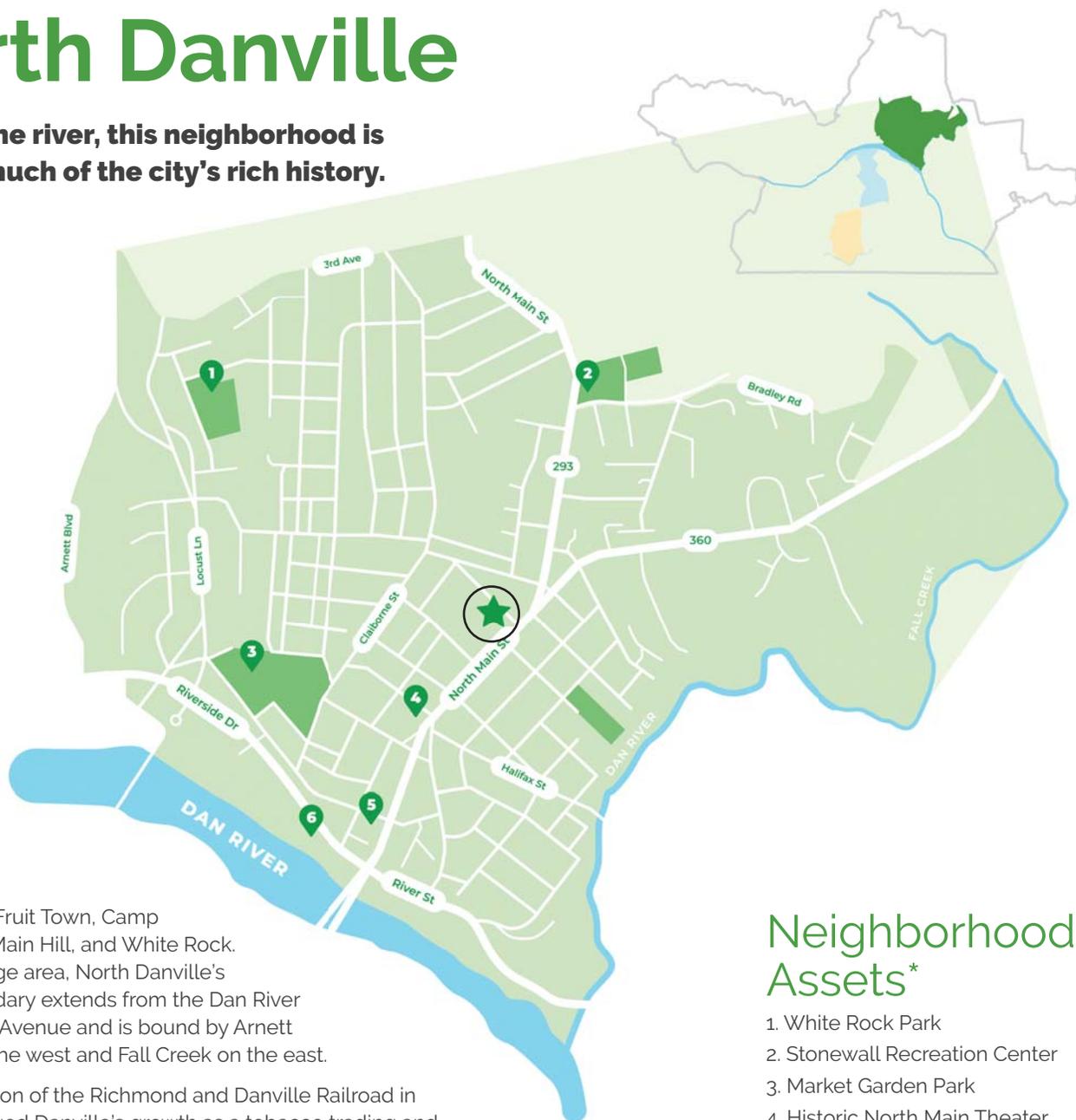
Leaders come in all forms, are passionate about their community, and are willing to work with others to outline a vision, drive results, and share power.



OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS

North Danville

North of the river, this neighborhood is home to much of the city's rich history.



This includes Fruit Town, Camp Grove, North Main Hill, and White Rock. Covering a large area, North Danville's working boundary extends from the Dan River as far as Third Avenue and is bound by Arnett Boulevard to the west and Fall Creek on the east.

The construction of the Richmond and Danville Railroad in 1856 encouraged Danville's growth as a tobacco trading and manufacturing center. In 1839, the Pittsylvania-Franklin Turnpike was constructed north of the Dan River, and initial development gradually began to appear along its borders. That route later evolved into what is now North Main Street in North Danville. Neopolis, an area home to many Victorian homes, is the original site of old North Danville.³

³ Historical Sites, City of Danville, <https://www.danville-va.gov/1182/Historical-Sites>, accessed on February 7, 2019

Neighborhood Assets*

1. White Rock Park
2. Stonewall Recreation Center
3. Market Garden Park
4. Historic North Main Theater
5. Salvation Army
6. YMCA

* The North Danville neighborhood also contains other important community assets such as churches, non-profits, stores, and shops. Note also that the boundaries on this map are not hard or fixed, and are subject to interpretation based on resident experience.



North Danville Big Idea* Infrastructure Project

Opportunity Center and Community School

In a highly residential area of North Danville, there is a growing demand that organizations serving the community should be located in the community. Without a need for a large investment in new infrastructure, Woodrow Wilson Intermediate School is primed to serve as a one-stop shop for organizations and resources that residents want and need. The school is highly regarded and has a prominent presence in the community, which could increase access to many resources for people who live nearby.

* Big Ideas are intended to spark discussion and create excitement about potential within the Opportunity Neighborhoods. These projects and programs are aspirational, with some further along than others. The hope is that they can help residents reimagine their spaces, consider sustainable ways to advance neighborhood goals, and inspire tangible ways to focus energies and bring Big Ideas to life.

NORTH DANVILLE (cont'd)

Residents' Priorities

PRIORITY 1: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

North Danville's assets, ranging from familial ties to faith communities, are just some of the reasons why many families want to remain in their neighborhood. To attract and retain residents, housing and other neighborhood infrastructure need to be attractive and maintained, inside and out. North Danville has a higher percentage (78.9%) of housing valued under \$80,000 compared to the city as a whole (39.1%) and the other two Opportunity Neighborhoods. Residents identified numerous strategies to increase quality housing in North Danville, such as training residents to do home improvement projects, helping them navigate existing resources, focusing on the physical quality of housing, and investing in projects that increase the neighborhood's "curb appeal." North Danville is also uniquely designated as a National Historic Registry site, and some home owners may benefit from government resources to maintain the neighborhood's charm.

PRIORITY 2: EDUCATION QUALITY

Education doesn't just happen in a classroom, and it can be lifelong. There is strong evidence that links educational attainment with future earning potential. North Danville families want to increase their exposure to job and career opportunities for youth and adults. They also recognize that if schools and families can work together with better communication opportunities, it can help shape and accomplish each child's goals. Everyone in North Danville can play a part, and the strategies reflect that, with engagement opportunities for schools and families, as well as for people who may not see themselves as educators.

PRIORITY 3: SAFETY

Safety is not just the absence of crime, but the opportunity for all North Danville residents to move throughout their neighborhood without a real or perceived sense that they may be harmed. Social connectedness and civic engagement in the neighborhood, which are strengthened through faith communities and familial ties, are significant assets that help people feel safe. Environmental characteristics, such as proper lighting, lower traffic speeds, and other infrastructure improvements increase the likelihood that people can safely experience North Danville together. Safety also includes more community groups focused on residents' connections to each other.

PRIORITY 4: YOUTH SERVICES

Outside the traditional school day, residents would like to see more opportunities to keep young people engaged in positive activities and opportunities to identify and cultivate their interests. North Danville residents shared strategies to enable youth to contribute to and learn more about where they live. Residents noted that it will require expertise and assets from both within and outside the neighborhood.

PRIORITY 5: LIVING WAGE JOBS

Having a high quality of life also means not just being free from the stress of financial instability, but feeling in control of one's financial situation. North Danville residents want to ensure that everyone in their neighborhood can cover regular expenses and withstand unexpected ones, such as medical costs, housing issues, or other basic needs. Being able to support a family and save for the future also gives residents the autonomy and flexibility to make life changes that improve their wellbeing. Improving North Danville families' financial situations requires accessible opportunities for higher-wage work, a more highly-skilled work force, and financial education supports.

NORTH DANVILLE (cont'd)

Action Plans

GOAL 1: ALL PROPERTIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED.

1.1 - Make home ownership, renovation/trade skills, rehabilitation, and advocacy trainings easily accessible for residents, including youth.

1.2 - Identify local and state government resources that will help demolish abandoned houses and repurpose vacant spaces.

1.3 - Share homeownership information (like knowing when a home is built) and make it readily available.

1.4 - Create more public art in the neighborhood.

GOAL 2: ALL CHILDREN IN NORTH DANVILLE GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL EQUIPPED TO FOLLOW THEIR PASSIONS.

2.1 - Develop mentorship and programs that connect young people with other community members to build on local knowledge and skills.

2.2 - Create specific spaces and programs that are designated as good learning environments.

2.3 - Increase the number of college prep courses for the neighborhood youth, starting in middle school.

2.4 - Create training facilities, programs, and communication channels that enable face-to-face connections between schools and parents.

GOAL 3: NORTH DANVILLE IS A CLEAN AND SAFE COMMUNITY.

3.1 - Create more opportunities for law enforcement and residents, including children, to build relationships and partner with each other.

3.2 - Improve lighting, create more sidewalks, and slow traffic throughout North Danville.

3.3 - Develop a more formal way, like a resident-led task force, for residents to stay involved in their community's cleanliness, beautification, and safety.

3.4 - Create a resident-informed branding campaign and more beautification projects across the neighborhood.

GOAL 4: MANY DIVERSE, YOUTH-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES ARE LOCATED IN NORTH DANVILLE.

4.1 - Develop youth mentoring programs that focus on the neighborhood's history and cultural grounding.

4.2 - Increase access to parks and play spaces, programs, and infrastructure that reflect the priorities of North Danville's youth and include activities for parents.

4.3 - Recruit new volunteers—from within and outside of the neighborhood—who work directly with youth.

4.4 - Increase the availability of leadership development programs in North Danville.

GOAL 5: ALL NORTH DANVILLE RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES AND/OR ARE FINANCIALLY STABLE.

5.1 - Support a living wage for residents, and include benefits that incentivize healthy options and insurance for all employees.

5.2 - Develop or bring more financial and job training programs into North Danville.

5.3 - Create incentives for businesses that support a living wage to (re) locate in North Danville.

5.4 - Establish and promote vocational incentive programs at Danville Community College to increase work-based skills and education.

NORTH DANVILLE (cont'd)

Demographics

RACE / ETHNICITY - PERCENT OF POPULATION

NORTH DANVILLE

- Black: 71.0%
- White: 26.0%
- Other: 3.0%



CITY OF DANVILLE

- Black: 49.0%
- White: 46.0%
- Other: 5.0%



AGE - PERCENT OF POPULATION

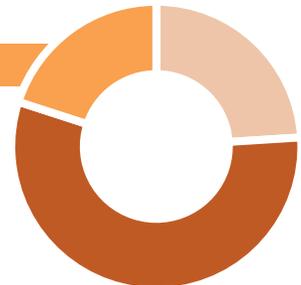
NORTH DANVILLE

- 19 & Under: 25.0%
- 20-64: 55.0%
- 65 & Older: 20.0%

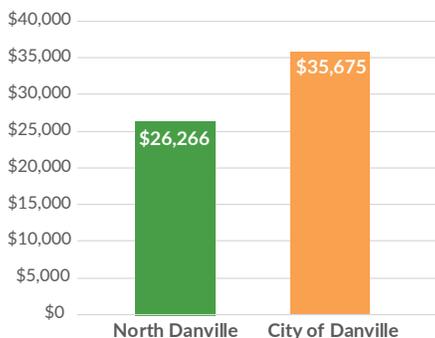


CITY OF DANVILLE

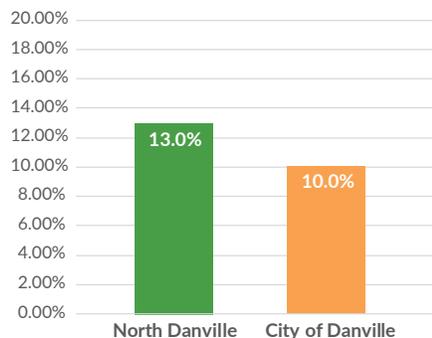
- 19 & Under: 24.0%
- 20-64: 56.0%
- 65 & Older: 20.0%



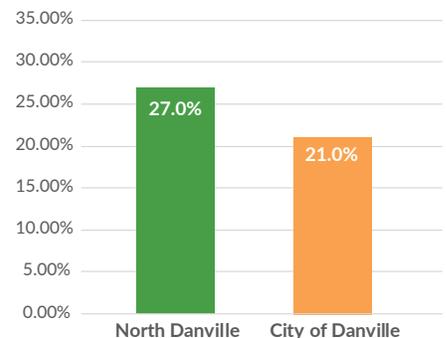
ECONOMICS



AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

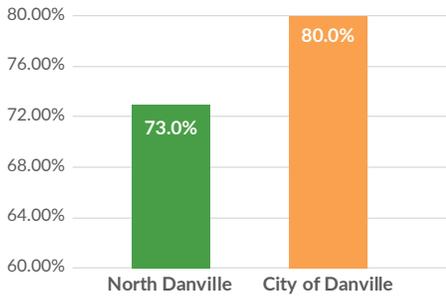


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

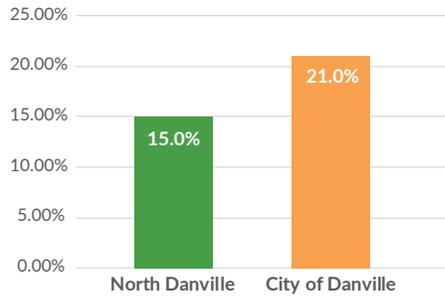


PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LINE

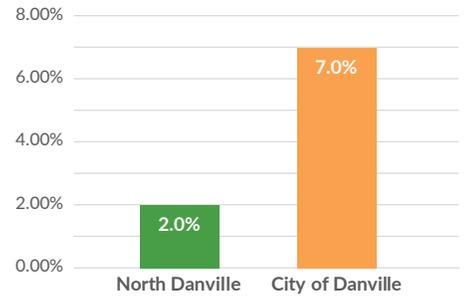
EDUCATION



HIGH SCHOOL OR HIGHER



ASSOCIATES OR BACHELORS



GRADUATE DEGREE

HOUSING

HOUSING PRICES

NORTH DANVILLE

- \$50,000 or Less: 33.2%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 45.7%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 13.8%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 2.6%
- \$200,000 and Above: 4.7%

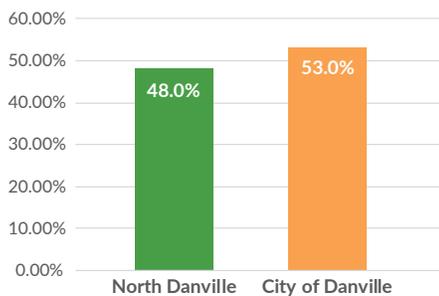


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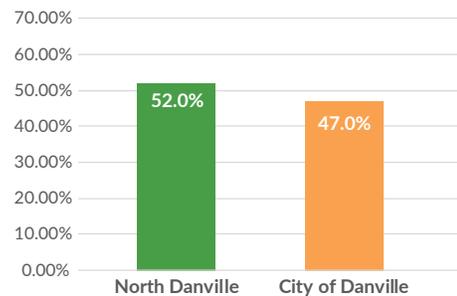
- \$50,000 or Less: 17.0%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 22.1%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 30.9%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 17.5%
- \$200,000 and Above: 12.5%



HOUSING: OWNERS / RENTERS



HOUSING - PERCENT OWNERS



HOUSING - PERCENT RENTERS

OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS

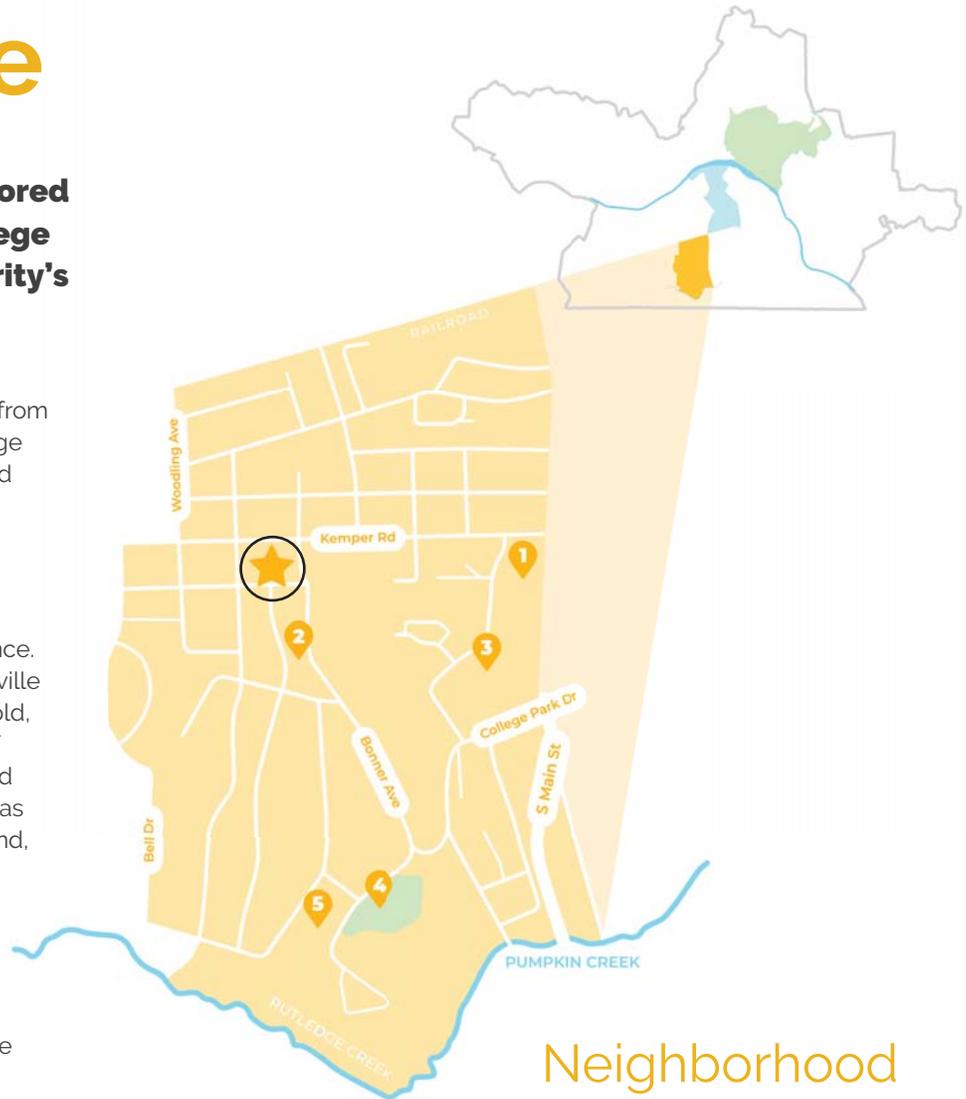
Southside

This neighborhood is a residential community anchored by Danville Community College and Danville Housing Authority's Cardinal Village.

The neighborhood's boundaries extend from the railroad tracks in the north to Rutledge Creek in the south. South Main Street and Wooding Avenue make up the east and western boundaries, respectively.

Southside has strong educational institutions that range from pre-K to a four-year university within walking distance. One of the main anchor institutions, Danville Community College is nearly 130 years old, and its location was the original home of the Danville Military Institute, constructed in 1890. The college's original building was known as the "Castle" because of its grand, castle-like appearance, and it housed prisoners of war during World War II.

The Danville Military Institute became the Danville Technical Institute (1936–1966) before becoming Danville Community College in 1966. And until the late fifties, Danville Community College was only accessible to men in the Dan River region. Afterward, the school reflected the expansion of education to include all citizens, and the institution became an integral part of the region's leaders' vision of growth, training, education and economic stability. The Cardinal Village housing complex opened in August 1959, and reached 100% occupancy six months later. When it first opened, it featured 124 living units in 28 different buildings on 11 acres of land.



Neighborhood Assets*

1. Danville Community College
2. Constance Covington Youth Center
3. Grove Park Preschool
4. Pumpkin Creek Park
5. Danville Health Department

* The Southside neighborhood also contains other important community assets such as churches, non-profits, stores, and shops. Note also that the boundaries on this map are not hard or fixed, and are subject to interpretation based on resident experience.



Southside Big Idea* Infrastructure Project

Southside Community Center

The Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority and partners are working to address the shortage of community recreational spaces in the Southside neighborhood. Young people—around half of whom live below the poverty line—could benefit from such a space in the heart of their neighborhood as a “home base” for meeting and hanging out. This multipurpose center could be developed to include play spaces for athletic competitions and neighborhood events and rented for large gatherings such as family reunions and community meetings.

* Big Ideas are intended to spark discussion and create excitement about potential within the Opportunity Neighborhoods. These projects and programs are aspirational, with some further along than others. The hope is that they can help residents reimagine their spaces, consider sustainable ways to advance neighborhood goals, and inspire tangible ways to focus energies and bring Big Ideas to life.

SOUTHSIDE (cont'd)

Residents' Priorities

PRIORITY 1: EDUCATION QUALITY

Access to quality education plays a role in families' ability to provide their children with the best chance at lifelong financial success. It is especially important in the Southside, which has a higher percentage of people under 19 years old (32.5%), compared to the city as a whole (24.2%). In order to be a successful student, youth must have adequate resources both at school and in their community. These resources include strong communication channels between teachers and parents. Academic success is not only built through traditional education pathways, but also requires learning opportunities beyond the classroom, like mentorship programs and hands-on experiences.

PRIORITY 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Increasing the number of highly engaged residents can directly support safer, more connected, and sustainable neighborhoods. Southside families recognize the power of this need for cohesion and want opportunities to safely and conveniently bond. Facilitating such connections requires more formal and natural spaces for residents to interact, as well as safer routes to get there. When residents have more opportunities to connect, they can begin build trust, exchange ideas, and draw on each other's wisdom.

PRIORITY 3: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A home is a stabilizing factor in many people's lives and should be a family's refuge. Southside residents should all have access to high-quality, safe, and affordable housing in their neighborhood. Maintaining good housing stock within Southside—where less than 1% of all housing built in the neighborhood has been developed in the last two decades—requires a concerted effort from multiple sources. Not only do residents need to know about opportunities for home buying, upkeep, and advocacy, but local officials and decision makers can also better connect with neighborhood issues to understand Southside's unique needs.

PRIORITY 4: YOUTH SERVICES

Outside a school setting, Southside youth want to have opportunities to participate in activities that allow them to explore their interests. The activities suggested by residents involved exploring new activities and interests for youth that are not often presented or readily available to them. These opportunities could include learning more about Southside's history and connecting with others in their neighborhood. Schools, community centers, local government, and local businesses could all play a role in identifying non-traditional and non- school-based engagement strategies for youth.

PRIORITY 5: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Entrepreneurship opportunities allow Southside youth to consider possibilities and explore innovative ideas, non-traditional avenues, and careers that align with their passions. Currently, the unemployment rate is higher in Southside (17.8%) than the city's (10.1%). The soft skills that entrepreneurship trainings offer are transferrable to other personal and professional endeavors. Bringing Southside's youth into such spaces through formal programs allows them to build connections and skills that are useful throughout their lives. It also creates more community awareness about small businesses and also increases civic connections.

SOUTHSIDE (cont'd)

Action Plans

GOAL 1: ALL CHILDREN GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL EQUIPPED TO FOLLOW THEIR PASSIONS.

1.1 - Create training facilities, programs, and communication channels that enable face-to-face connections between schools and parents.

1.2 - Develop mentorship and learning environments that connect young people with other community members (from churches, Danville Community College, and retired educators, etc.).

1.3 - Create specific spaces and programs that are designated as good learning environments.

1.4 - Increase access to the Internet throughout the Southside neighborhood.

GOAL 2: EVERY RESIDENT IS CONNECTED TO AND/OR INVOLVED IN A NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC ACTIVITY.

2.1 - Develop peer-to-peer or mentorship programs for parental engagement.

2.2 - Identify routine ways to work with city staff to improve safe routes to school and develop a walkable community.

2.3 - Develop opportunities for more community connections across all of the Southside neighborhood (e.g., at community centers and other gathering spaces).

2.4 - Develop more walkways to places where residents go.

GOAL 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS AVAILABLE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE.

3.1 - Increase access to a housing education resource hub.

3.2 - Repurpose vacant spaces.

3.3 - Create more public art.

3.4 - Create accessible ways for home-ownership information to be shared with and available to residents.

3.5 - Increase residents' access to home ownership, renovation/trade skills, rehabilitation, and advocacy trainings.

3.6 - Publicize neighborhood tours so that elected officials can observe conditions, report findings to city council, and present recommendations.

GOAL 4: THERE ARE MANY DIVERSE, YOUTH-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES.

4.1 - Increase access to parks and play spaces, develop programs/ infrastructure that reflect the desires of Southside youth, and include activities for parents.

4.2 - Focus programming for youth (both boys and girls) in ways that reflect their needs and desires (like entrepreneurship, robotics, martial arts, a variety of sports, trade, coding, drama/ dance, fashion, food, etc.).

4.3 - Develop programs for youth that focus on the neighborhood's history and cultural grounding.

4.4 - Organize neighborhood-based events for children.

GOAL 5: THERE ARE ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH.

5.1 - Create opportunities for businesses and other sectors to connect with Southside youth to enhance networking that could lead to paid work.

5.2 - Create workforce preparedness programs with a range of skill opportunities for youth and parents.

5.3 - Expose residents and youth to local businesses' services, discuss the skill sets needed, and create apprenticeships and networking opportunities.

SOUTHSIDE (cont'd)

Demographics

RACE / ETHNICITY - PERCENT OF POPULATION

SOUTHSIDE

- Black: 67.0%
- White: 22.0%
- Other: 11.0%



CITY OF DANVILLE

- Black: 49.0%
- White: 46.0%
- Other: 5.0%



AGE - PERCENT OF POPULATION

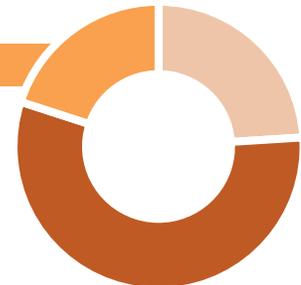
SOUTHSIDE

- 19 & Under: 32.0%
- 20-64: 56.0%
- 65 & Older: 12.0%

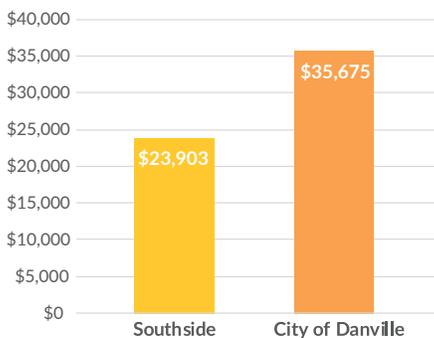


CITY OF DANVILLE

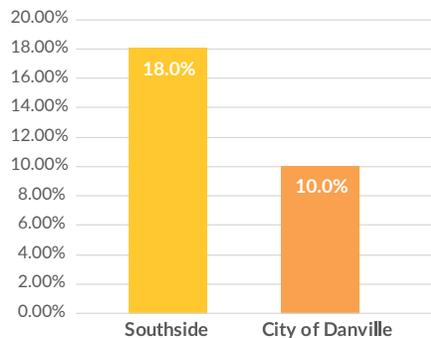
- 19 & Under: 24.0%
- 20-64: 56.0%
- 65 & Older: 20.0%



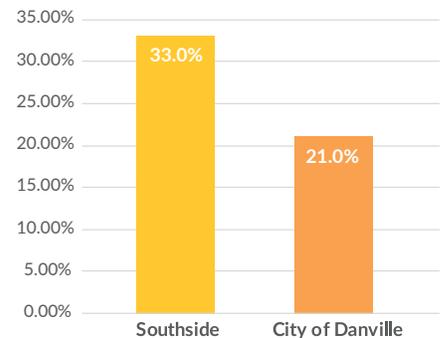
ECONOMICS



AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

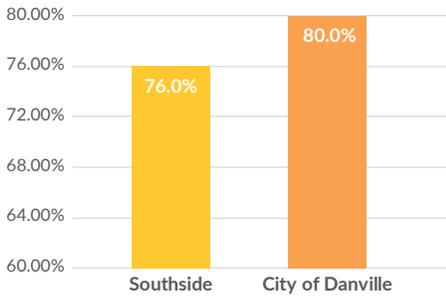


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

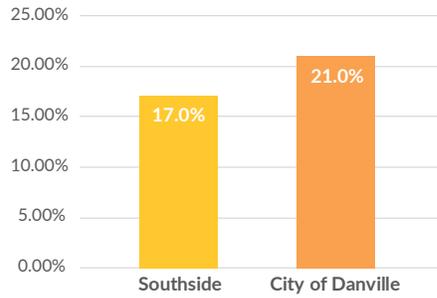


PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LINE

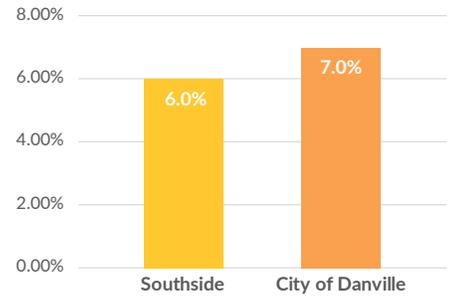
EDUCATION



HIGH SCHOOL OR HIGHER



ASSOCIATES OR BACHELORS



GRADUATE DEGREE

HOUSING

HOUSING PRICES

SOUTHSIDE

- \$50,000 or Less: 32.7%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 20.1%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 41.0%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 4.5%
- \$200,000 and Above: 1.7%

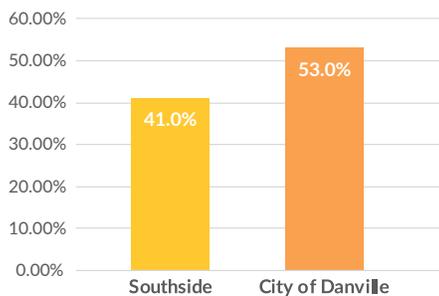


CITY OF DANVILLE

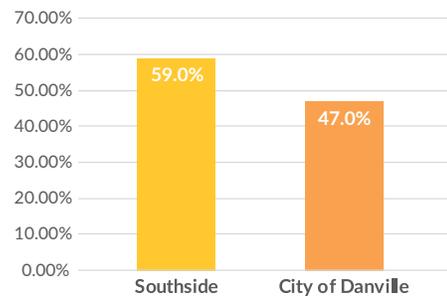
- \$50,000 or Less: 17.0%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 22.1%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 30.9%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 17.5%
- \$200,000 and Above: 12.5%



HOUSING: OWNERS / RENTERS



HOUSING - PERCENT OWNERS



HOUSING - PERCENT RENTERS

OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS

Westside

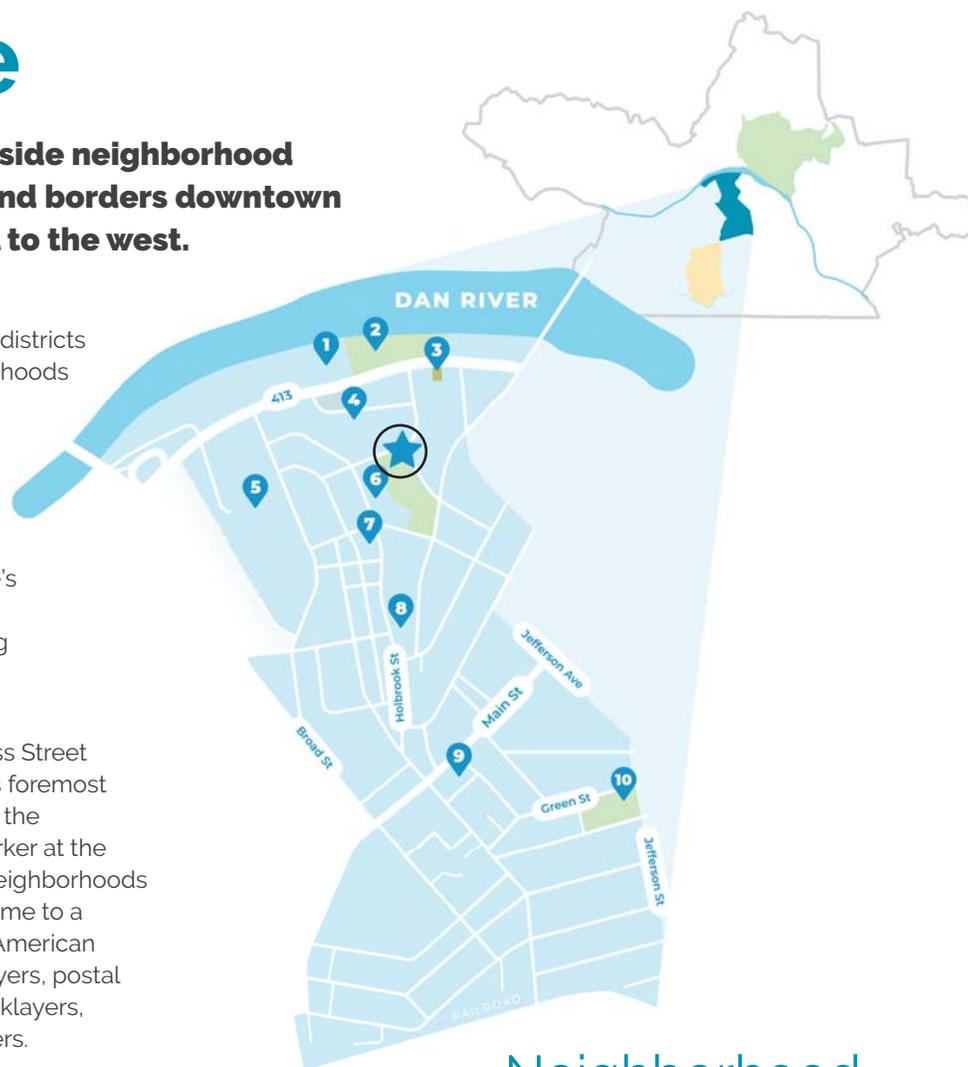
Centrally located, the Westside neighborhood connects to the Dan River and borders downtown to the east and the hospital to the west.

Westside is home to Danville's Historic districts and includes multiple distinct neighborhoods like Cedar Terrace, Westmoreland, Old West End and Green Street.

The Holbrook-Ross Street Historic District which includes Westmoreland consists of Queen Anne and Italianate styles of architecture. Home to Danville's first cemetery on Grove Street, this neighborhood displays a mix of housing and some businesses found in a traditional downtown neighborhood.

By the twentieth century, Holbrook-Ross Street had acquired a reputation as "Danville's foremost black residential address," according to the National Register of Historic Places marker at the neighborhood's entrance. Like many neighborhoods in the US South, Holbrook-Ross was home to a cross-section of classes, from African-American professionals—teachers, ministers, lawyers, postal clerks, dentists, and physicians—to bricklayers, laborers, and tobacco and textile workers.

Also Home to the Old West End, the Danville Historic Districts showcases some of the finest Victorian and Edwardian architecture in Virginia and North Carolina. Many of the old mansions built by the tobacco and textile barons of the late 19th century still stand as testimony to the wealth and power of those industries and to the skill and craftsmanship that have long disappeared from modern building techniques. Local architectural styles include Victorian, Edwardian, Romanesque, and Gothic Revival.



Neighborhood Assets*

1. God's Storehouse
2. Camilla Williams Park
3. M.C. Martin Park
4. Cedar Terrace Youth Center
5. Langston Focus School
6. Danville Headstart Office
7. Williams House
8. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority House
9. Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History
10. Doyle Thomas Park (a.k.a. Green Street Park)

* The Westside neighborhood also contains other important community assets such as churches, non-profits, stores, and shops. Note also that the boundaries on this map are not hard or fixed, and are subject to interpretation based on resident experience.



Westside Big Idea* Infrastructure Project

Westmoreland Park

The Westmoreland School was created in late 1800 as African American public school to served children in the neighborhood. After it closed, it was repurposed as CIC Head Start and the surrounding land served as a public space. This large swath of green space, which sits in the heart of the community, could increase opportunities for safe recreation, arts, events, social connections, and daily community life. The park planning phase happened in 2017, and implementation of those plans could reactivate the space for Danville residents, especially those who live in Westside.

* Big Ideas are intended to spark discussion and create excitement about potential within the Opportunity Neighborhoods. These projects and programs are aspirational, with some further along than others. The hope is that they can help residents reimagine their spaces, consider sustainable ways to advance neighborhood goals, and inspire tangible ways to focus energies and bring Big Ideas to life.

WESTSIDE (cont'd)

Residents' Priorities

PRIORITY 1: EDUCATION QUALITY

Quality education isn't limited to the classroom. Internal motivation, external support, and access to a variety of educational opportunities can put children and youth on a promising trajectory. Almost 26% of Westside residents 18-24 years old did not finish high school, which is double the city's average. The Danville Public School System plays a role, but it is not solely responsible. Westside residents identified programs and new procedures within existing systems to help youth, schools, and parents succeed and grow.

PRIORITY 2: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Along with educational supports, attractive jobs for youth can generate a ripple-effect of readiness, self-reliance, and career exploration. Westside youth want opportunities to connect with local business leaders, hear and learn from professionals about their career paths, and help improve their community. Yet many of these networks have not been developed or are disconnected from Westside youth. Seeing what is possible, having productive outlets, and getting hands-on experience can give young people a sense of hope and create positive, lasting impacts.

PRIORITY 3: HOUSING

Almost 72% of all Westside housing was built before 1960, which is significantly more than 47% in all of Danville. Westside residents are not necessarily interested in housing strategies that just include building new homes, but rather strategies that focus on existing assets. This includes repurposing empty spaces, knowing how to find programs and funding to support and encourage homeownership (two-thirds of Westside residents are renters) and to advocate for and "own" the spaces where they live. This includes building relationships between renters and owners, taking care of all Westside properties, and reimagining overlooked spaces.

PRIORITY 4: YOUTH SERVICES

Residents see that engaging youth in positive activities keeps them learning, growing, and out of trouble. Increasing access to a diverse range of activities may take nontraditional forms that expand beyond parks and recreation to other areas of interest like history, culture, and skill-building. The strategies that residents identified also included youth in the process of selecting what they want, sharing power with the implementers, and having a role to lead such efforts.

PRIORITY 5: HEALTHY LIVING

Westside residents, on average, are older (25.1% over 65 years old) than residents in the city as a whole (with 19.7% over the age of 65) and the other two Opportunity Neighborhoods. Many Westside residents want to age in place and access healthcare and healthy options where they live. They see that public transportation and other reliable transportation modes can help older adults feel connected and help all residents get where they need to go. Investing in diverse health-promoting activities also offers people a variety of activities—for all abilities and ages—right where they live. The Westside neighborhood boasts infrastructure, vast green space, and underused amenities with the potential to create a healthier Westside neighborhood.

WESTSIDE (cont'd)

Action Plans

GOAL 1: ALL CHILDREN GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL EQUIPPED TO FOLLOW THEIR PASSIONS.

1.1 - Create programs for parents that include opportunities for shared learning to increase their engaged involvement.

1.2 - Magnify specific spaces and programs that are designated as creative, safe, and fun learning environments.

1.3 - Create more accessible communication channels between parents and schools/teachers.

1.4 - Establish scholarship programs specifically for children in the Westside area.

1.5 - Expand or develop mentorship program(s) that connect youth with others from the community.

GOAL 2: THERE ARE ESTABLISHED CAREER-READINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH.

2.1 - Create a program that exposes young people to different sectors and creates pathways to new relationships with mentors.

2.2 - Expose residents and youth to local businesses' services, discuss the skill sets needed, and create apprenticeships and networking opportunities.

2.3 - Expand/sustain existing job creation programs and create other career-development initiatives that focus on skill development, vocational careers, and career advancement.

2.4 - Local nonprofits, for-profits, and government create or enhance their focus on youth from Westside.

GOAL 3: ALL PROPERTIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED.

3.1 - Create clearer understanding and transparency around home ownership and neighbors' ability to advocate for better management of blighted properties.

3.2 - Expand and increase accessibility to home ownership, renovation, and advocacy trainings for residents.

3.3 - Hold property owners accountable and create opportunities for them to support each other to keep the neighborhood beautiful.

3.4 - Repurpose vacant spaces (for example, with community gardens).

3.5 - Create more public art in the neighborhood.

GOAL 4: THERE ARE MANY DIVERSE, YOUTH-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES.

4.1 - Focus programming for youth (both boys and girls) in ways that reflect their needs and desires (like entrepreneurship, robotics, martial arts, a variety of sports, trade, coding, drama/dance, fashion, food, etc.).

4.2 - Develop programs for youth that focus on the neighborhood's history and cultural grounding.

4.3 - Increase access to parks and play spaces, develop programs/infrastructure that reflect the desires of Westside youth, and include activities for parents.

4.4 - Organize neighborhood-based events for children.

GOAL 5: THERE ARE DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AND ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY LIVING.

5.1 - Expand reliable transportation options that connect to living-wage jobs.

5.2 - Create places in Westside for information about healthcare, prevention, and other health-related issues.

5.3 - Create more community gardens and increase access to healthy food options.

5.4 - Create more home health care options that allow residents to age in place, and develop training for residents that focuses on aging.

5.5 - Increase opportunities to be active for people of all ages and abilities.

WESTSIDE (cont'd)

Demographics

RACE / ETHNICITY - PERCENT OF POPULATION

WESTSIDE

- Black: 72.0%
- White: 22.0%
- Other: 6.0%



CITY OF DANVILLE

- Black: 49.0%
- White: 46.0%
- Other: 5.0%



AGE - PERCENT OF POPULATION

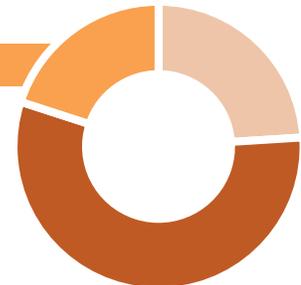
WESTSIDE

- 19 & Under: 23.0%
- 20-64: 52.0%
- 65 & Older: 25.0%

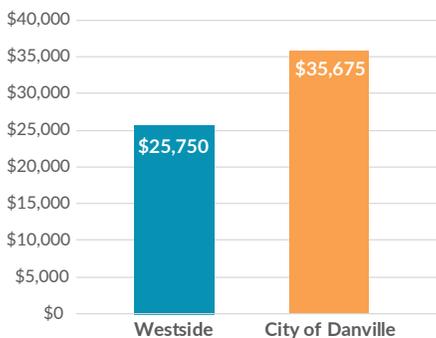


CITY OF DANVILLE

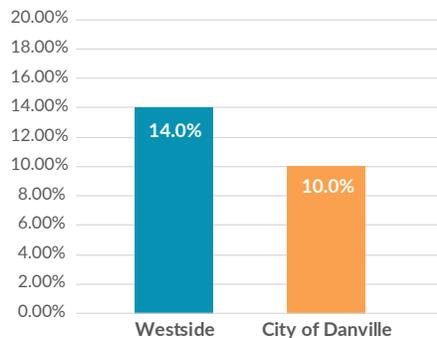
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- 65 & Older: 20.0%



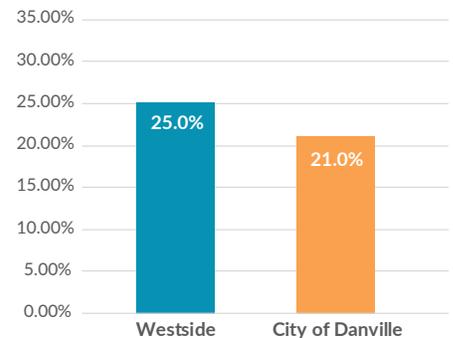
ECONOMICS



AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

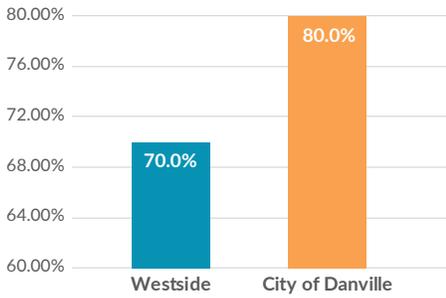


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

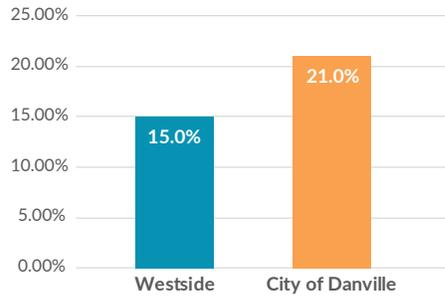


PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LINE

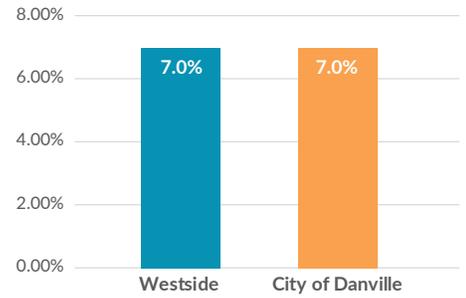
EDUCATION



HIGH SCHOOL OR HIGHER



ASSOCIATES OR BACHELORS



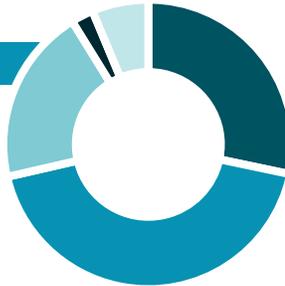
GRADUATE DEGREE

HOUSING

HOUSING PRICES

WESTSIDE

- \$50,000 or Less: 28.3%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 43.1%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 19.8%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 2.5%
- \$200,000 and Above: 6.3%

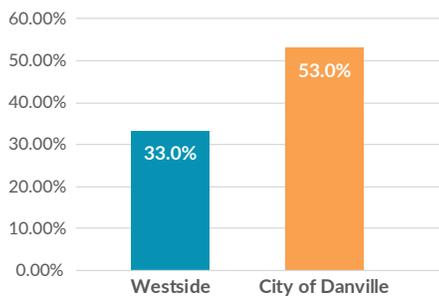


CITY OF DANVILLE

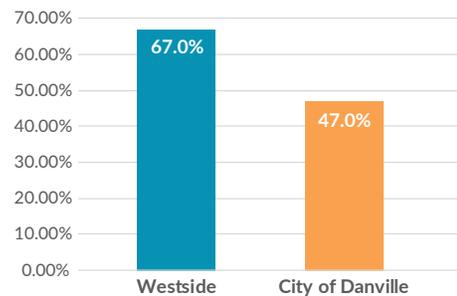
- \$50,000 or Less: 17.0%
- \$50,000-\$79,999: 22.1%
- \$80,000-\$124,999: 30.9%
- \$125,000-\$199,999: 17.5%
- \$200,000 and Above: 12.5%



HOUSING: OWNERS / RENTERS



HOUSING - PERCENT OWNERS



HOUSING - PERCENT RENTERS



BIG IDEAS

Programmatic Projects

The next pages present Big Ideas that are intended to spark discussion and create excitement about potential within the Opportunity Neighborhoods. These projects and programs are aspirational, with some further along than others. The hope is that they can help residents reimagine their spaces, consider sustainable ways to advance neighborhood goals, and inspire tangible ways to focus energies and bring Big Ideas to life.

You can also view **Big Ideas Infrastructure Projects** in the North Danville, Southside and Westside sections of this report.



Opportunity Youth Works Program

Such a program would give a number of children an opportunity for paid work experience through summer employment, internships, or apprenticeships that could advance their careers. Creating or expanding a youth works program helps teens who are interested in developing work experience within their own community.



Big
Idea

#5

Mentorship

Expanding opportunities for all children, especially young boys, to connect with positive role models—not just those in their neighborhood but throughout Danville—is a strategy that could address many of the goals outlined by all three of the Opportunity Neighborhoods.



Big
Idea
#6

Neighborhood Leadership Training and Development Opportunities

Leaders already exist within the Opportunity Neighborhoods, and there are many who are still undiscovered. A training and development opportunity could create a groundswell of other residents who are ready to lead. Neighborhood leadership training deepens personal skills while allowing residents to learn about community development principles and navigate advocacy pathways.



Family Success Coaches

Family success coaches could serve as bridges that connect residents to community resources and develop self-sufficiency. Like community health workers, these coaches could be available for families that need extra support to get back on their feet or achieve their goals. Examples of coaches' roles include financial skill building, career and job planning, homeownership training, and navigating barriers to success.



Big
Idea

#8

Colorful Communities and Arts Programs

Art installations and mural walls like those seen downtown and in Southside could serve as inspiration or points of pride for the Opportunity Neighborhoods. Commissioned public art made by neighborhood artists for local residents is beneficial in many ways: public art is accessible to everyone, helps establish an attachment to place, and can increase social connectedness. Art can also transform a neighborhood's environment, address safety issues, and provide an outlet for creativity and healing.



Big
Idea

#9

Afterschool for All

Many afterschool providers exist within the Opportunity Corridor. However, not all children receive quality out-of-school time for positive extracurricular activities or support with school work. Creating a formal network of outlets for afterschool opportunities could help families, youth, and everyone in the network by allowing youth to pursue their passions and interests.



Big Ideas are intended to spark discussion and create excitement about potential within the Opportunity Neighborhoods. These projects and programs are aspirational, with some further along than others. The hope is that they can help residents reimagine their spaces, consider sustainable ways to advance neighborhood goals, and inspire tangible ways to focus energies and bring Big Ideas to life.

Big Ideas: Infrastructure Projects

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- 2. Southside Community Center 23
- 3. Westmoreland Park 29

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- 6. Neighborhood Leadership Training and Development Opportunities 37
- 7. Family Success Coaches 38
- 8. Colorful Communities and Arts Programs 39
- 9. Afterschool for All 40

DEMOGRAPHICS

	North Danville	Southside	Westside	Opportunity Neighborhoods	Danville Total
POPULATION (% OF TOTAL)	6,574 (15.7%)	3,636 (8.7%)	1,938 (4.6%)	12,148 (29%)	41,911 (100%)
RACE / ETHNICITY					
Percent White	26.0%	21.9%	21.6%	24.1%	45.7%
Percent Black	71.4%	66.7%	72.3%	70.1%	49.2%
Percent Other	2.6%	11.4%	6.1%	5.8%	5.1%
AGE					
Median age	42.1	34.3	47.6	40.6	40.7
19 and Under	24.9%	32.5%	23.0%	26.9%	24.2%
65 and Over	19.7%	12.6%	25.1%	18.4%	19.7%
ECONOMICS					
Living below Poverty Line	26.7%	33.0%	25.3%	28.4%	20.6%
Under 18 living below Poverty Line	40.2%	45.0%	35.1%	41.2%	31.1%
Household Income	\$26,266	\$23,903	\$25,750	\$25,476	\$35,675
Unemployment rate, 16 years and over	12.9%	17.8%	13.5%	14.4%	10.1%
EDUCATION					
High School degree or higher	72.6%	76.2%	70.3%	73.2%	80.8%
Less than High School diploma, 18 to 24-year-old	11.0%	14.8%	25.9%	13.8%	13.0%
High School diploma or equivalency, Over 18 years old	33.8%	30.0%	27.4%	31.7%	28.7%
Bachelors or Associates degree, Over 25 years old	15.2%	16.8%	14.6%	15.6%	21.1%
Graduate degree, Over 25 years old	2.1%	6.2%	7.4%	4.1%	7.0%
HOUSING					
Occupied Housing Units	76.5%	78.9%	72.3%	76.3%	83.4%
Renters / Owners	51.8% / 48.2%	59.2% / 40.8%	67.0% / 33.0%	56.7% / 43.3%	46.8%/53.2%
Built 2000 or later	4.0%	0.1%	3.0%	2.8%	5.5%
Built 1980-1999	6.9%	6.4%	5.1%	6.4%	13.9%
Built 1960-1979	26.0%	36.1%	20.3%	27.6%	33.6%
Built before 1960	63.1%	57.4%	71.6%	63.2%	47.0%
Value less than \$50,000	33.2%	32.7%	28.3%	32.4%	17.0%
Value \$50,000-\$79,999	45.7%	20.1%	43.1%	38.7%	22.1%
Value \$80,000-\$124,999	13.8%	41.0%	19.8%	21.7%	30.9%
Value \$125,000-\$199,999	2.6%	4.5%	2.5%	3.1%	17.5%
Value over \$199,999	4.7%	1.7%	6.3%	4.1%	12.5%



RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to support and achieve the actions outlined in the Plan, there are overarching **recommendations that will help the Opportunity Neighborhood residents** get where they are going faster and will benefit the whole city.



DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN EACH OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOOD.

Neighborhood associations are great platforms for opening discussion, creating alignment, and identifying advocacy efforts. Regardless of whether the group plans to formally incorporate, (as is the case for the Westmoreland Neighborhood Association), developing a neighborhood association can help residents share information, network with each other, and connect with neighbors to work collaboratively.

Organizing in this way can also help strengthen or reinforce individuals' concerns as well as give government agencies and nonprofit partners more channels for working with and for each neighborhood's residents. Neighborhood associations can also join together for cross-neighborhood collaboration.



EMBED OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENT INPUT INTO ALL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES THAT IMPACT THE OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR.

Government agencies and nonprofit partners would benefit from a higher level of community engagement as they develop or modify policies and procedures. One-time surveys, public forums, and events are good, but they are not enough. True engagement means that residents can authentically participate in, modify, and contribute to the planning and implementation of solutions within their communities.

This might include residents helping to develop initiatives, write grants, and lead (as well as be compensated for leading) formal efforts. Making such practices a norm can shift residents' roles from simply being informed or consulted about changes to being valued and collaborative colleagues. This builds trust, shares leadership, and has mutual benefits for neighborhoods and organizations.



TRACK AND COLLECT ADDITIONAL DATA IN THE OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS.

As residents and others implement the action steps in this Quality of Life Plan, it is important to know what works, what needs modification, and what needs support. Universal or blanket approaches may intend to serve all residents equally, but it was clear in the Quality of Life planning process that the needs and interests of residents in the Opportunity Corridor are unique, and they may require tailored approaches for residents to increase their quality of life. Overlooking this uniqueness can deepen distrust, increase disparities, and perpetuate poor quality of life outcomes.

While census information and Danville-specific numbers are useful, additional segmented data would help reveal hyper-local trends, highlight needs and nuances, and prioritize areas for investment. The Health Equity Report is a good example of collecting information in a new way to better serve those in the Opportunity Corridor, throughout Danville and beyond.

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If you have further questions, ideas, etc. that have not been answered or addressed, we encourage you to reach out.

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Special Thanks to



Content



Plan Architect / Organizer

The logo for MOMENTA features the word "MOMENTA" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a horizontal line underneath.

Design

