

# *CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY: NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING TOOLKIT*



by  
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I would also like to use this space to also acknowledge and express deep gratitude to the residents of Prairie Creek Run, more specifically, Susie and Ray Good and Tom and MaryAnn Surface. Their dedication, leadership, and kindness through this process has inspired me. Also, a great thanks to them for trusting me and allowing me access to their stories and sharing pieces of our journey together in this work.

## Executive Summary

This paper offers a Cultural Sustainability-focused toolkit that can be used as a blueprint for future redevelopment community-based work. This toolkit is based on an 18-month summary of a 2-year neighborhood redevelopment plan project in the Prairie Creek Run neighborhood in Indiana. It looks at the researcher's self in work; how to recognize your own bias as a researcher and how to avoid having your bias interfere with the research itself, how to build a mindful rapport with community members, knowing what research and information is needed, and through what lens are you viewing the community you are working with. The toolkit also looks at partnerships; how to define what success looks like among stakeholders, how to recognize a shared vision, and how this has led to collaborative planning. Lastly the toolkit looks at engagement; what ways can you build social capital and what infrastructure needs to exist to make this work more sustainable.

Throughout my research I found,

- Being aware of self in the work or research not only helps you create a practice of learning and recognizing personal bias, but it also protects against potential harm to the community.
- The research process takes many different forms as the engagement with community grows deeper. The researcher moves from learning and interpreting, to building an analysis of that interpretation.
- Building a mindful rapport with the community is essential in this work and the approach to building that relationship is just as important as it can determine the kind of relationship that will be constructed.
- Be mindful of what lens you as the researcher are viewing the community through because the lens can either blind you or enlighten you about the assets and gifts the community holds.
- Assess and recognize what stakeholders are bringing to the project and partnership. Items that require particular attention may include: What are the multiple visions that people may be bringing, what are their power/resources, how they define success, and how all of these points can lead to a collaborative planning space?
- Sustainable engagement includes building social capital for residents and appropriate infrastructure for residents or other stakeholders.

## Overview

This body of work was produced from assessing an 18-month section of a contracted 2-years of work engaged in from June 2019 – December of 2020. Core participants include: Residents from the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood; the author, Daniela Panetta, a Community Building Specialist at Lacasa, Inc.; her partner Andrea Milne, Urban Planner of Dovetail Projects, LLC.; and Natasha Kauffman, Program Coordinator of Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission. This toolkit was written while work is still in progress, but writing from a Cultural Sustainability lens provided a perspective and has gone on to influence the planning process.

This 2-year contract, facilitated by the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission, brought the partners together within the creation of this neighborhood redevelopment plan. Andrea was contracted as the Urban Planner and Daniela was contracted as support and point person for Community Engagement. Daniela was also contracted because her organization Lacasa, Inc. has multi-decade involvement in the redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization of Prairie Creek Run (PCR). The positive perception of Lacasa in the PCR neighborhood was helpful in positioning Daniela as a neutral third party and provided the possibility to build relationships and trust with residents. Community Engagement focused upon identifying the residents' vision for their neighborhood as well as discerning a potential shared vision among multiple perspectives. Also, Daniela's involvement was in facilitating a process that supported residents to come to their own sense of understanding for a vision for the neighborhood. Simply asking the question, "What is your vision for your neighborhood?", would not have been successful because most people when asked this question may not know how to answer right away, so instead, we created pathways for discernment through the multiple resident conversations throughout this plan (See Appendix F).

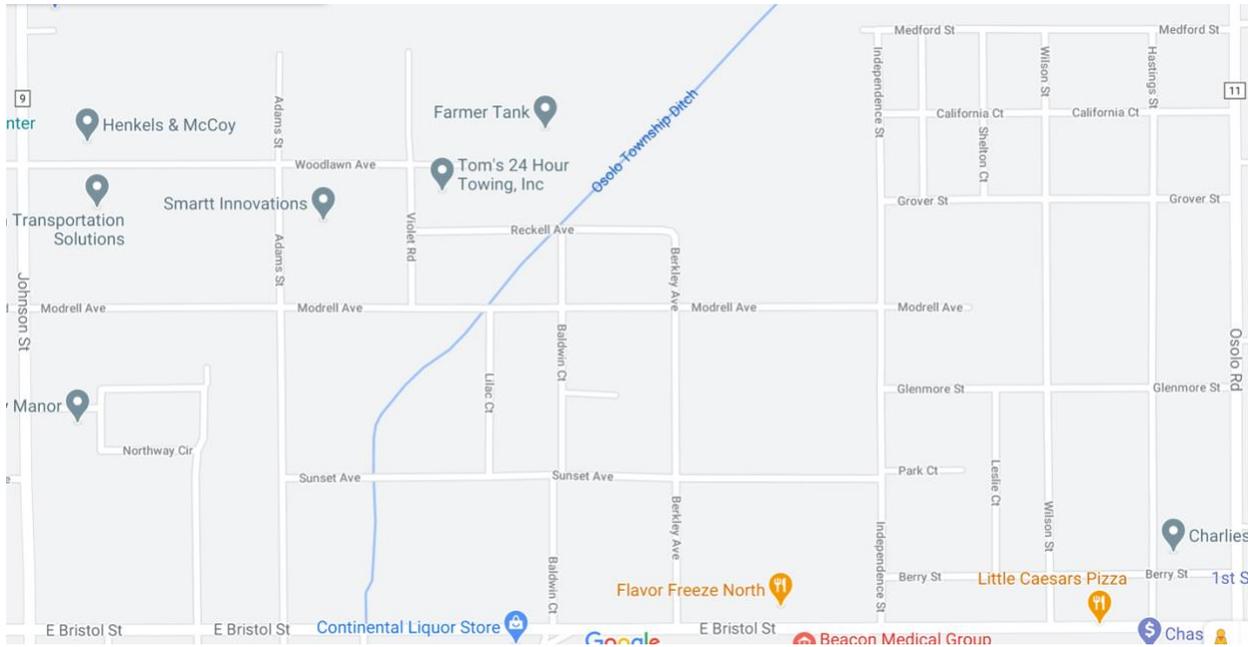
The plan is a culmination of many conversations with residents, as well as with staff of Elkhart County and Osolo Township, to prepare a list of priorities for any future work the Redevelopment Commission considers.

The project goals include the following:

- Document the perceptions, needs, and desires of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood.
- Propose priorities and a plan of action for future work to be completed in the Neighborhood by the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission and staff.
- Inspire community members to have a sense of ownership for their neighborhood to support the sustainability of the improvements.

Prairie Creek Run (PCR) Neighborhood is located in Elkhart County, Indiana and bounded by Johnson Street on the west; East Bristol Street on the south; Osolo Road on the east; and Modrell Avenue, Reckell Avenue, and Medford Street on the north. While this neighborhood is surrounded by the City of Elkhart, the neighborhood itself is not annexed into the city and remains the jurisdiction of Elkhart County" (Milne, 2021, 2). PCR has been designated as needing redevelopment to address the needs and improve the lives of residents. Needs include clean and safe water, a reliable solution for waste (e.g., sewer), clearing of vacant and

structurally compromised homes, and support for improvement of owner-occupied homes. In the early 2000's there was an immediate public health need as black water was found in 10 homes in the area and is what started the Water Utility project. This prompted the Redevelopment Commission (RDC) to talk about how to approach the other redevelopment needs that the neighborhood has. Prairie Creek Run is a low-income area where, as of 2018, 90% of residents have a lower income than the median of Elkhart County (see Demographics section) (Milne, 2021). Support from the RDC is essential for a successful and sustainable future for the Prairie Creek Neighborhood.



### Community Map:

Looking at the map one can see that the area is residential but surrounded by industrial sites, and commercial businesses as well. This could be considered a prime location to access the toll roads, which could be one reason residential, industrial, and commercial are all seen together; quick access for those that live, work and travel through the area. With the accessibility to the toll road, this could be a source of the variety of businesses and services located outside the neighborhood (fast food, towing company, pharmacy, general stores, ice cream, bank, schools, churches, etc.).<sup>1</sup> In conversation with Natasha, Redevelopment program coordinator and Andrea Milne, Daniela learned that this area is designated unincorporated, while being surrounded by the city. On the map, one can see that Osolo Township Ditch runs right through the center of the neighborhood and with water flowing straight to the St. Joseph river. Through further conversation with residents and the county, Daniela learned there was major flooding in the area in the 90's and the "ditch" needed to be dug deeper to help sustain a better/faster flow of water to alleviate flooding. However, through PCR history timeline, Daniela came to understand that the

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<sup>1</sup> Field notes 6/21/19

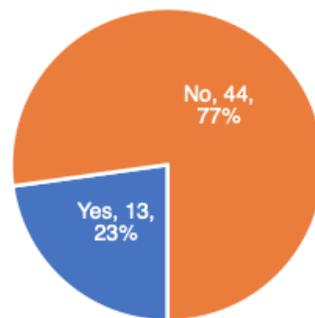
name that this “ditch” was given felt demeaning and the residents moved to rename it Lilly Creek.<sup>2</sup>

### Demographics:

Andrea Milne gathered the demographic information and allowed me access to the data present here. The census data was collected through the US Census database and a household survey (57 respondents) that Andrea Milne created. The focus of the household survey was on collecting opinions and less on demographic data, though some personal questions were asked to put the responses in context (See Appendix E).

As Andrea has reported in the redevelopment plan, “the average respondent to this survey has lived in Prairie Creek Run (PCR) neighborhood for 26 years. However, they did not grow up in Prairie Creek Run and do not currently have family or relatives living in the neighborhood. The average respondent expects to continue living in PCR for at least five more years.” Andrea’s survey also revealed that, “the average respondent expects to continue living in PCR for at least five more years. Twenty-three percent of respondents (13 of 57) grew up in Prairie Creek Run, and 39% (23 of 59) have family or relatives living in the neighborhood. One quarter (11 of 44) of the households who responded include a single parent or guardian. 18% (8 of 45) include a U.S. veteran. 46% (25 of 54%) include a person with a disability” (Milne, 2021, 19-27).

Q3: Did you grow up in the neighborhood?

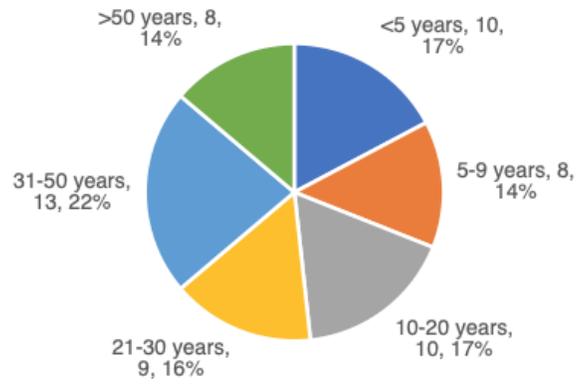


*From the 2019 household survey, 23% of respondents grew up in the PCR neighborhood.*

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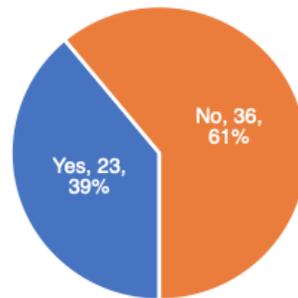
<sup>2</sup> PCR History Timeline and Neighborhood redevelopment plan

Q2: How long have you lived in the PCR Neighborhood?



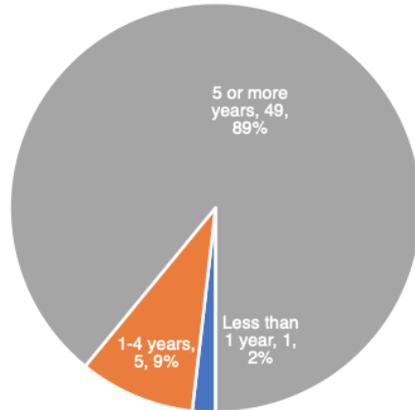
*Variety of responses has been revealed when it comes to how long residents have lived in the PCR Neighborhood.*

Q4: Do you have family or relatives in the neighborhood?



*39% of respondents do have family or relatives in the neighborhood and 61% of respondents do not.*

Q8: How long do you plan to continue living in PCR Neighborhood?



*89% of respondents responded that they plan to live in the PCR neighborhood for 5 or more years.*

(Milne, 2021)

These demographics could be starting to describe the reason an average of respondents live in this neighborhood for a number of years. While only 13 of 57 respondents of the survey grew up in the area, in conversation with a resident that owns a number of property in the neighborhood, it became clear that people that are looking to move into the neighborhood, a majority state they grew up in the neighborhood and are interested in living in the area again.<sup>3</sup> Another important piece of information learned from resident conversations is that the perception is that a majority of residents also appreciate living in the county because there are less rules and taxes than the city.<sup>4</sup> The county laws allow for residents to sustain a certain lifestyle.

According to 1990 Census data for Elkhart County that Andrea pulled for the plan, which provides one perspective into the individuals that live in Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood, Tract 17, Block Group 1 (subsection of PCR), the area had a population of 1,024 people. 96.6% were “White,” 0.8% were “Hispanic,” 2.2% were “Asian,” 0.3% were “Native American,” 13.7% were “Handicapped,” 7.5% were “Elderly,” and 2.9% were “Female-headed Households.” The census data shows that the population in the Prairie Creek Run area increased during the years between 1990 and 2010, similar to the larger Elkhart County region, which could be due to the number of industries in the area like RV factories, which is what Elkhart County is known for and is one of our top industries. However, while the County population leveled off after 2010, the population in Prairie Creek Run declined quickly, which could be due to the crash of the housing market in 2009 and this could be a ripple of that crash in the county (US Decennial Census, Milne, 2021).

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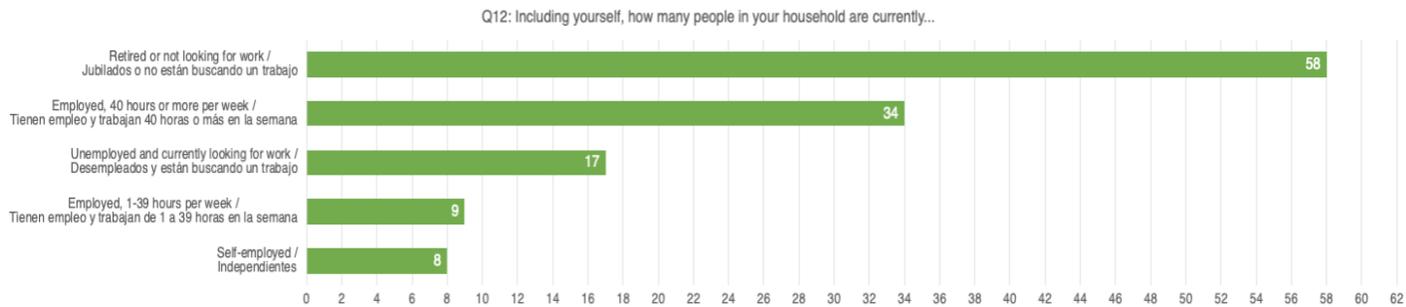
<sup>3</sup> Fieldnotes 7/16/19

<sup>4</sup> Fieldnotes 7/16/19



*The population in the Prairie Creek Run area increased during the years between 1990 and 2010, similar to the larger Elkhart County region. The County population leveled off after 2010, but the population in Prairie Creek Run declined quickly.*

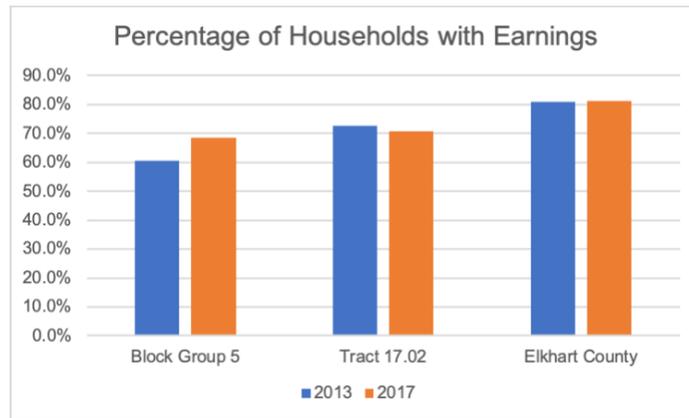
Of the households that responded to Andrea’s 2019 survey (See Appendix E), we learned that over 40% of residents are retired or not looking for work. PCR (block group 5) has 26% of people living with an income below the poverty level as of 2017 (U.S. Census, Milne, 2021).



*From these survey results, it can be understood that there is a variety of financial situations among PCR survey respondents.*

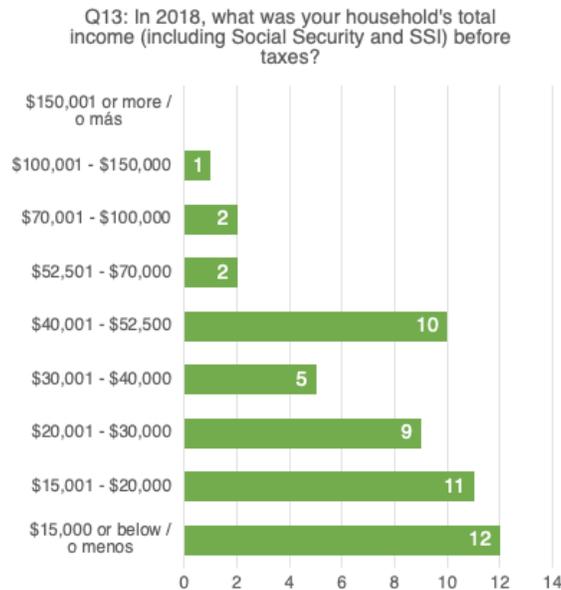
(Milne, 2021)

“While Elkhart County has 14% of people living with an income below the poverty level and 18% of those living in the census tract (Census Tract 17.02) live on these means” (Milne, 2021). Indicating a lower income community and could help us understand that Prairie Creek Run could be considered affordable. “The average per capita income in the Block Group 5 has increased from \$14,530 in 2013 to \$19,183 in 2017, however the average per capita income in Elkhart County is \$23,817 as of 2019. At these estimates, the average per capita income in Elkhart is 24% larger than that in Block Group 5 where the PCR neighborhood is located. In Andrea’s survey of the neighborhood with a sample size of 52 people, we learned that 23% of respondents reported that their household made \$15,000 or less, before taxes, in 2018, while 90% of respondents reported that their household made \$52,500 or less (Milne, 2021).



*Block Group 5 where the PCR neighborhood is located has a lower annual income compared to Elkhart County numbers but the average per capita income in block group 5 has increased \$4,653 from 2013-2017.*

“Of the 2019 Household Survey respondents, 90% had an income in 2018 that was lower than the median income in Elkhart County” (Milne, 2021,19-27).



*A majority of the survey respondents have an income level of 15,000 or lower or between 15,000 - 52,500. (Milne, 2021)*

## Community History & Context:

The area now known as Prairie Creek Run was named by an active group of residents who formed a neighborhood association in late 1993. “Local government had previously referred to this area as part of the Sawmill District, named for the Johnson Sawmill, that was located north of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood and employed many workers in the surrounding area” (Milne, 2021, 4).<sup>5</sup> During an interview, one of the resident’s mentioned that it was when a newspaper article was written referring to Prairie Creek Run as the Sawmill district, that is when the name stuck.<sup>6</sup> In 1993, residents renamed their neighborhood Prairie Creek Run as it was important to disassociate with the general perception that “nothing good comes from the sawmill” (Surface, 2021).<sup>7</sup>

From 1994 Community Focus Fund Application for the Lilly Creek Drainage / Prairie Run Infrastructure Project narrative:

“The County struggled for decades to meet the complex needs of this neighborhood. Efforts to improve the area were documented in newspaper articles dated back to the early 1950’s. For years there were many failed attempts, and few concrete improvements happened. A major shift occurred in 1991 when the County designated the area a neighborhood development area. Since then, county departments including planning, surveying and other Public Services departments have spent more than \$100,000 in the neighborhood.”<sup>8</sup>

The following timeline documents some improvement efforts as mentioned in the Community Focus Fund Application (See Appendix G for more detail).

1990 – Elkhart County submitted an application proposal for Indiana’s Community Focus Fund grant to extend sewer lines to serve the PCR neighborhood.

1990 - 1994 – County submitted a number of applications for relocation and drainage projects. The relocations seemed to start in 1994 and was supported by residents in the Neighborhood Association that was supported by Lacasa.

1991 – Known drainage problems recognized in the Lily Creek area<sup>9</sup>  
Elkhart County prepared a preliminary engineering report to determine which properties were most impacted. The study concluded that major ditch reconstruction was needed to lower the water table in that area and improve the flow of water. Twelve occupied houses would need to be demolished as part of the project. That summer, a task force of city and county officials met to strategize ways to improve the area and submitted a second CFF request, this time for work on the Osolo Ditch and removal of homes located in the Flood Zone.

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<sup>5</sup> Surface interview 9/19/19

<sup>6</sup> Surface interview and field notes 1/23/21

<sup>7</sup> Field notes 1/23/21

<sup>8</sup> Milne, Redevelopment plan

<sup>9</sup> Body of water that runs through the neighborhood

Officially declared Prairie Creek Run to be a Neighborhood Development Area by RDC, a statement written on their behalf, “WHEREAS, the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission after due consideration and study now finds that the “Sawmill Area” has become blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating to an extent that cannot be corrected by regulatory processes or by the ordinary operations of private enterprise without resort to the provisions of Indiana Code 36-7-14 et seq., and that the public health and welfare would be benefited by the redevelopment of urban renewal of this area under Indiana Code 36-7-14 et seq.;

“WHEREAS, at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing stock in the “Sawmill Area” is in a deteriorated or deteriorating condition based upon information provided by and records contained in the Office of the Osolo Township Assessor for the year 1989 [...]” (Milne, 2021, 5).<sup>10</sup>

- 1992 – County received approval from IDOC the permission to use recaptured CDBG funds for an engineering planning study for Lily Creek.  
Lily Creek Study completed
- 1993 – County submitted a Housing Development Fund application for a Neighborhood Planning grant and housing purchase assistance program to be administered by LaCasa. County applied for funds for a grassroots driven neighborhood plan LaCasa of Goshen received a planning grant from IHFA (Indiana Housing Finance Authority) to begin work on neighborhood organization and a comprehensive housing study and plan for the area. County received recaptured CDBG funds to use towards the HDF planning grant with Lacasa. General Neighborhood meeting led by Mark Chupp of Lacasa to begin organization of the neighborhood plan to be developed by the residents. Initial goals set to have a neighborhood cleanup and picnic.
- 1994 – Funds for Lily creek drain project awarded  
Socio-economic survey completed and revealed “85% of homes sampled in the neighborhood did not meet a federal definition of ‘decent, safe and sanitary dwellings.’ Survey also found that 1/3 of homes sampled had one repair need, while almost 40% had multiple repair needs. Survey also showed low incomes, despite high employment rate in the neighborhood. They also found that most people in PCR “like the neighborhood’s peaceful, friendly character, regardless of income or the inadequacy of their home”. Survey showed high ownership % of 65% in the neighborhood. 6 Goshen college students and members of the neighborhood steering community conducted the data collection. Study focused on 186 of the 366 homes in the neighborhood, the sample houses were selected based on being assigned relatively low grades of condition in a 1989 township assessment. The surveys also found that water and housing inadequacies are the biggest issues facing the neighborhood and also very low income (less than 50% the median income in the county)<sup>11</sup>
- 1995 – Competition of drainage work

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<sup>10</sup> Redevelopment plan

<sup>11</sup> Milne, Redevelopment Plan; (South Bend Tribune, 7/8/94).

## Redevelopment projects started

1997 – Residents express disappointment for the lack of cleaning up after the drainage work. In a news article that was written up about the board meeting, Tom Surface complained that the neighborhood had helped to clean up the area with/for the county and they had plans for the greenway that were now two years old. He referenced that they are “holding our area hostage to Simonton Lake.” He said, “We were told it would be completed by 1995, but it is still not done.” “It’s worse than it was then” (Milne, 2021, 18).<sup>12</sup>

2000’s – Black water found in 10 houses along an entire street. RDC started a multiphase project to get interested residents hooked up to water.<sup>13</sup>

2019-21 – RDC contracts Andrea Milne, and Daniela to work together to create a neighborhood redevelopment plan; focusing on talking to the residents and hearing feedback on what they would like to see change.

Throughout the 90’s there is a clear decade of redevelopment work and community engagement and involvement in neighborhood-based conversations. In 2019, the RDC decides they would like a neighborhood redevelopment plan to help guide them through the redevelopment decisions they will later make within PCR. During the 40 plus conversations Daniela had in her Community Engagement role, one sentiment that was brought up by a majority of residents: They are still dealing with some of the same issues.<sup>14</sup> A good example of a structural issue that residents are still dealing with is with trash; littering, trash piles in yards, and material dumping. The trash issue continuously is identified but the structures that lead to these outcomes are not being strengthened or fixed so that this issue can be sustainably solved. Through the neighborhood redevelopment planning process Andrea and Daniela have recognized this issue through physically seeing it and hearing about the issue from a majority of the residents that they have spoken with throughout the 18-month process. To address this issue in the plan and to provide a more sustainable solution, based on resident and Elkhart County capacity, Andrea and Daniela have recommended that county look into working with a waste removal company to negotiate and secure a bulk contract that will provide the residents with waste removal service but at a lower cost (See Appendix H). Andrea and Daniela wanted the recommendations for this particular issue to focus on addressing some of the structural problems vs. just stating the problem exists.

### Key People Throughout this Document:

1. Benny Russo - Osolo Township Trustee 2003 – 2016 that was well known and loved by all neighbors that I have been in contact with, passed away in 2016.
2. Bridget - Past resident of Prairie Creek Run (moved out in 2019). While living in the neighborhood was recognized as the “unofficial mayor of Prairie Creek Run”
3. Tom and MaryAnn Surface - Current Prairie Creek Run residents and steering committee member

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<sup>12</sup> Redevelopment plan; (Goshen News, March 4, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Field notes 6/12/21

<sup>14</sup> Field notes 3/2/20

4. Susie and Ray Good - Current Prairie Creek Run residents and steering committee member

#### 18-month Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan Project Timeline:

This timeline informs the writing and methodology within this toolkit. Each point below shows a completed action that occurred during the planning process and reference to the explained methodology.

- June 2019—Initiated project; determined purpose and objectives (See Discover section and Appendix A)
- July—Started data collection (demographics and history), initiated meetings with Neighborhood Steering Committee (See History and Demographics section)
- August—First neighborhood gathering (introduction to the project); “prepared household survey” (See Appendix B & E) (Milne, 2021)
- September—“Distributed surveys” (See Appendix E for survey) (Milne, 2021)
- October—“Compiled survey data prepared for open houses” (See Discover section) (Milne, 2021)
- November—Open Houses; “compiled notes from many conversations” (See Build Social Capital Section) (Milne, 2021)
- December—“Started summarizing information compiled to-date,” continued conversations with Neighborhood Steering Committee (Milne, 2021)
- March 2020—COVID-19 hits and all work shifts from in-person to zoom, phone calls, emails and/or a hybrid of all communication methods.
- May 2020—“Completed a block-by-block conditions assessment of the neighborhood to document current areas in need of improvement.” (Milne, 2021)
- September—Resident discussion on a topic of concern: Wastewater management
- October—Resident discussion on a topic of concern: Brush management and removal
- October 2020—Roadside Neighborhood Clean-up

## Introduction

The contents of these pages will include an evaluation and assessment of an 18-month planning process where residents, a cultural worker (and the author of this document), an urban planner, and a redevelopment coordinator within county government have come together to create a neighborhood redevelopment plan with the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood. As a way of turning a critical eye to this planning process, I interact with writings from three theorists Tom Borrup, Soyini Madison, and Bau Graves. These individuals' experiences, knowledge, learnings, and recommendations provide me the basis of which I assess and evaluate my own on-the-ground experience. Throughout this toolkit the reader will interact with my critical writing and I want to be clear that the critical writing is not to criticize the work that has gone into this plan, but rather to unpack the experience through a Cultural Sustainability lens.

This evaluative space supported the creation of a Cultural Sustainability-focused toolkit that provides an understanding of what success looks like, what a good partnership entails, and how a focus on defining success and partnership enhances the planning processes in a planning space with multiple stakeholders. I am writing this toolkit for future cultural workers, partners, organizational leadership, and funders as a way to guide them towards an understanding of what it means to be a Cultural Worker, what does this entail, and how this role and set of skills can enhance planning processes.

The case study examples within this body of work grounded and helped me determine what exactly it was I was experiencing, how to articulate it, where Cultural Sustainability has influenced the planning process, and offer recommendations for next steps. The studies also gave me an opportunity to expand on the knowledge and thinking that these theorists provide for the Cultural Sustainability field.

### **Using this toolkit will guide the reader to these outcomes:**

- I will be able to recognize and elevate personal and community assets
- I will understand how to reach a shared vision among diverse partners
- I will recognize the importance in building Social Capital
- I will understand and apply strategies of building trust and relationships building
- I will understand the importance of infrastructure
- I will recognize and understand the importance of being mindful and aware in research and how to apply it
- I will understand the difference between representation and advocacy
- I will be able to identify and analyze power dynamics

### **Why is this toolkit important?**

This analysis seeks to start a critical conversation on how building relationships and trust are essential in neighborhood redevelopment planning. Assessing this process is important because professionally, this will strengthen one's own evaluative and reflexive abilities and will strengthen one's knowledge and skill of knowing how to represent data and how to present the stories that humanize this data in a useful way. For the reader, this toolkit will suggest approaches for community-based neighborhood planning—approaches that make this planning process more democratic—by providing residents the

infrastructure and access to be a part of this planning process. This toolkit also encourages the inclusion of resident voices and a recognition of their expertise within the neighborhood planning process.

## Guiding Toolkits

A toolkit is an outline or blueprint of suggested approaches to a certain body of work. Some could consider toolkits as a step-by-step process that the reader then follows; however, experience indicates that toolkits work best when readers customize their use. I encourage this thinking as you, the reader, make your way through this toolkit. The toolkit and suggested approaches that you are about to explore are Cultural Sustainability-focused and can be used as a guide for a future cultural worker in redevelopment community-based work. However, this could also serve as a guide for readers that are looking to understand this process, the successes, what was discovered, and what recommendations can come from this focused work.

I want to start with analyzing a few toolkits that I have identified as important as I was thinking about my own work. The Community Toolbox of University of Kansas is “an online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. The mission Community Toolbox hopes to promote is “community health and development by connecting people, ideas, and resources” (2020). The toolkits within this database vary from a higher-level step-by-step guidance, for example how to *Develop Strategic and Action Plans*; to toolkits that work with community to provide instructional thought processes, for example in, *Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders* (Community Toolbox, 2020).

The guided toolkits like *Develop Strategic and Action Plans*, provides the reader another perspective in how to approach community-based work. This toolkit views this process through main points or high-level viewing of what should occur during the development of a strategic and action plan.

- Identify who should be in the room and why
- “Describe the vision of the community”
- “State the mission; what is it and why is it important?”
- “State objectives” and “identify strategies”; who is doing what and by when?
- Create action plan (Community Toolbox, 2020)

## 5. Developing Strategic and Action Plans

This toolkit aids in developing a vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plan for the effort.

🏠 Outline

💡 Examples

1. **Convene a planning group made up of individuals from the community affected by the problem or issue and others who are in a position to address it. Identify additional partners and invite them into your strategic planning process.**

**Related resources:**

[Involving Key Influentials in the Initiative](#)

[Involving People Most Affected by the Problem](#)

[Defining and Analyzing the Problem](#)

2. **Describe the vision for the community or initiative (their dreams for how things should be).**
  - a. In a workshop, retreat, or dialogue about the group's vision, capture:
    - i. Dreams for the community or initiative (e.g., safe neighborhoods)
    - ii. What success would look like (e.g., healthy youth)
    - iii. How things ought to be (e.g., caring communities)
    - iv. What people and conditions would look like if things were consistent with that picture (e.g., health for all)
  - b. Review the multiple vision statements.

*List all vision statements proposed.*

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*In this screenshot, the clarity of this guided toolkit for developing strategic and action plans can be seen in the numbered list of actions listed; “convene a planning group ... describe the vision...” (Community Toolbox, 2020).*

The instructional thought processes found within the Community Toolbox provides instruction and guidance on how stakeholders across different sectors can collaborate to make healthy communities. *Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders* starts with a clear indication of the position and intention the author is taking while writing this, which in itself can be instructional to the reader (Community Toolbox, 2020). This toolkit reminds its readers:

- Start the work with intention; “to improve our communities -- to make them places where people are healthy, safe, and cared for” (Community Toolbox, 2020).
- Who are we in this work and what are our capacities; “as community organizers, we know all too well that we can't do it alone?”
- The ability to partner effectively with other individuals and organizations -- both inside and outside the community -- is absolutely essential to doing what we like to call “the work” of building healthy communities” (Community Toolbox, 2020).

## Section 7. Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders

### CHAPTER 1 SECTIONS

Section 1. A Community Tool Box Overview and Gateway to the Tools

Section 3. Our Model of Practice: Building Capacity for Community and System Change

Section 5. Our Evaluation Model: Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives

Section 6. Some Core Principles, Assumptions, and Values to Guide the Work

Section 7. Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders

Section 8. Some Lessons Learned on Community Organization and Change

Section 9. Community Action Guide: Framework for Addressing Community Goals and Problems

Section 10. Using Internet-Based Tools to

Main Section

Checklist

Tools

PowerPoint

Learn how community partnerships, support and intermediary organizations, and grantmakers can collaborate to build healthier communities.

- **A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY (AND SYSTEMS) CHANGE**
- **WHAT MAKES IT WORK: SEVEN KEY FACTORS IN COMMUNITY CHANGE**
- **WHO IS INVOLVED?**
- **A PROPOSED "MEMORANDUM OF COLLABORATION"**

To improve our communities -- to make them places where people are healthy, safe, and cared for -- takes a lot of work. As community organizers, we know all too well that we can't do it alone. The ability to partner effectively with other individuals and organizations -- both inside and outside the community -- is absolutely essential to doing what we like to call "the work" of building healthy communities.

However, these partnerships don't materialize out of thin air. And once they do occur, the players involved aren't always sure of their roles, or how those roles can come together in a manner meets everyone's needs and interests. In short, there's often a knowledge gap, even when everyone wants to work together for the same outcomes.

In this section, we'll try to address that gap. We outline a modest proposal for how three key groups -- community partnerships, support and intermediary organizations, and grantmakers -- might work together to make the most of everyone's investments in the work.

*The Community Toolbox also offers instructional guidance on particular topics like the one displayed here and the variety of others displayed on the left side of the screenshot.*

Both of these toolkits are helpful in providing the necessary steps to getting to an action plan and with my added specialized cultural lens, I am able to bring an understanding and seeing of additional assets, as well as to building relationships. Knowing how to get from a group of community members to an action plan is important. However, what if we match that planning with an inventory of assets, so that when the planning group is thinking about solutions to the problem, it starts from within the community. My Cultural Sustainability approach is to be community-centered, where the community participates in the planning from the onset by identifying priorities and assets.

Tom Borrup, author of, *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Art, and Culture*, lays out a toolkit that guides the reader through "asset-based strategies that mobilizes strengths to leverage change and to overcome deficiencies" (Borrup, 2013, 140). There is a strong focus and goal of strengthening a community with community: "Community is something we do together it is not just a container" (Borrup, 4). He provides applicable worksheets that consist of five steps to community building:

- Step 1: Assess Your Situation and Goals
- Step 2: Identify and Recruit Effective Partners
- Step 3: Map Values, Strengths, Assets, and History
- Step 4: Focus on Your Key Asset, Vision, Identity
- Step 5: Craft a Plan That Brings the Identity to Life

Borrup provides ten case study examples in his section on *Economic and Social Development Strategies* to help guide the reader through how to "Build Strong Economies through Arts" and "Culture and Building Social Connections through Arts and Culture" (2013). Two case studies I

paid particular attention to were *Promote Interaction in Public Space* and *Increase Civic Participation through Cultural Celebrations*.

Through Borrup's case studies a common theme becomes apparent: The point of this work is empowering community members to be partners in this work while also working in a sustainable framework for building communities. Tom Borrup's toolkit and my training in Ethnography provided me guidance as I moved through a discovery process of the community.

*A Toolkit for Visualizing the Results of Mapping Community Assets*, from Case Western Reserve University is another toolkit I have often pulled inspiration from. This toolkit focuses on supporting residents in a hands-on activity that helps them recognize their personal and community assets through a mapping activity. Within this kit I particularly appreciated that while there is still a suggested process laid out, it also intentionally engages the reader in a process that assesses the purpose of the map and makes it clear that "the map should not substitute for engaging the community themselves in discovering their assets" (Case Western University, 2019). I also found the inclusion of visuals to be helpful and what makes this kit more accessible to a wider audience engaging in community-based work.

Each of these toolkits informed my approach to this toolkit design. In sharing my toolkit development process, I seek to demonstrate the discovery process, and show how a shared vision was realized, how this information was analyzed, and how all of this led to secure full community involvement through a Cultural Sustainability lens.

## Discover

Using qualitative methods to recognize and elevate community assets

Identifying expertise in local voices and community members

### Discovering Self and Community

Self-reflection as a personal practice is evaluating, assessing, and defining the person you are—your actions, behaviors, character, and motives. In a professional setting it is taking this knowledge of self and utilizing it to become further aware of situations when your own bias could get in the way of progress. Soyini Madison, author of *Critical Ethnography* writes about engaging in a self-reflective space and how as a researcher you must have a practice of learning and continuing to recognize places where you are drawn to certain problems, questions, and/or directions as this shows your bias, which could deviate from the purpose and focus for the community.

When I was first connected to this neighborhood planning process, I sat down with all stakeholders to hear from them about the location of the neighborhood, the history of the space, the relationship residents have with County government, and organizational history with the neighborhood. With that being the first bits of information provided, I wanted to make sure that while I was absorbing the needed information it was not clouding my perception of the space and people before I even got to the field. While I kept a field journal and recorded what I was hearing, I did not record my thoughts when it came to questioning assumptions and generalizations of the PCR neighbors. As a lesson learned, I would like to intentionally revisit notes and conversations and ask questions like, how was this neighborhood described, what assets were being pulled out, what was an assumption and what needed further clarification?

After a briefing of the project and what was expected as deliverables, I set out an intention to make sure that I would continue to assess and be aware of my own assumptions, my own potential for harm, and be open to seeing what opportunities are possible as I made my way through discovering the neighborhood's cultural identity.<sup>15</sup> My approach for this continual assessment was after a conversation with residents of Prairie Creek Run I would write out field notes and then have check-in points with my partner Andrea. We would both share successes, points of confusion and where this confusion may be coming from, and what we should follow up on for more clarification with residents. This approach that I created for my self-assessment ended up serving both my partner and I in this discovery space because it allowed us to think through uncertainties and would push each other to recognize another perspective. This also helped in our building of a successful partnership.

### Discovering Community

Discovering the community entails analyzing what one can determine from an outward appearance, demographics, discovering people and place, communities and identities, cultural markers, local resources, community history and context, and identifying key people or

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<sup>15</sup> Field notes 5/10/19; I created a plan that included points of self-assessment and how I was planning to recognize community assets when connected to community members.

stakeholders.<sup>16</sup> While reading chapter 2 of Madison’s book, I wondered how her writing can help me understand what discovery means in this community research space? The start of one of her first sections began with “those texts that carry the weight of cultural authority as “reliable knowledge” or “objective information...” which made me wonder if one iterative piece of discovery could be uncovering where cultural knowledge could/can come from (Madison, 2005, 2). I go straight to the community as that main source of cultural authority and knowledge when it comes to their neighborhood. The word “reliable” doesn’t seem appropriate here; the residents, their stories and knowledge of the past – are multiple outside perspectives appropriate here when it comes to talking about their neighborhood? However, I wonder if I have the right to judge what is reliable knowledge when in the form of text and reports? In terms of objective information, all information is going to be influenced by the person that is writing it. Objective information is not what I looked for; my partner and I collected all information available from the Redevelopment Commission<sup>17</sup> and residents and started to piece together the stories where residents then became that final say and authority in what was accurate and what pieces were missing. Everyone perceives a situation from their own point of view and each of those points of view have value in telling a whole story.

To begin building an understanding of the Prairie Creek Run neighborhood, I started by looking at the outward appearance. This included using Google maps as a starting point. The objective was to familiarize myself with the general location and recognizing cultural markers of Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood. With this objective in mind, I recalled Tom Borrup’s, *The Creative Community Builder’s Handbook* worksheets, including especially the Community Asset Inventory, that led me through what to look for or pay attention to (See Appendix J for Tom Borrup’s Asset Inventory worksheet).<sup>18</sup> With Tom Borrup’s work being asset focused, I felt this would be a great tool/framework for which I can discover community assets while also keeping me in line with the intention that was set for this space.

## Building Rapport

Community assets as connectors

Using discovery of community as a tool to encourage clarity, understanding, information sharing, and methods that will encourage meaningful relationship building

Building a rapport, which includes building trust and relationship; researchers and community are learning to understand each other’s perspective and how to communicate with one another. Building rapport, in my experience, is not a linear process where it starts with one connection and leads you to the wider community. It is starting with a few connections that might not always be residents but could lead to a resident connection.

In the redevelopment plan space, I started with what I knew, which was that the Redevelopment Commission was working on a multiphase water project and they were already in contact with a number of residents. Through this connection we<sup>19</sup> were able to arrange a conversation with one

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<sup>16</sup> Goucher College. 2018. CSP: 610 Cultural Documentation course. Fall 2018. My knowledge about discovering community comes directly from this class.

<sup>17</sup> Past grants, contracts for work in the area, and minutes from RDC meetings.

<sup>18</sup> Field notes 6/21/19

<sup>19</sup> My partner Andrea, Program coordinator for RDC and myself

resident of Prairie Creek Run that was known to other neighbors as the unofficial mayor of the neighborhood.<sup>20</sup> While this was a great conversation, the neighbor was moving out of the state so further contact was not an option. Another approach I took towards building rapport was tapping community assets, more specifically, a church located in the neighborhood. Communicating with the pastor about the project and my purpose and intention for the conversation led to him providing me the connection to a group of 4 residents of Prairie Creek Run.

Preparing for this conversation, I referred back to my discovering community process and all other research I had been engaging in.<sup>21</sup> It was important that I entered with clarity on how to approach the main purpose of the plan which was “to find out what (if any) changes residents of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood would like to see” (Milne, 2021). With the non-specific nature of this question, I had to figure out how to start a conversation that would engage residents in a space of informing and for me and my partner to listen. This approach would make building a relationship and trust more obtainable as I was less focused on needing/collecting plan specific information from them right from the entry point. To help with achieving clarity I provided residents with a lay summary document (See Appendix B), and a project goals document that the county, my partner and I did as a way to align partner goals and expectations (See Appendix A). The project goals document started with a statement of intention for our group, which is, “to collaboratively develop goals and objectives for the various elements of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan” (Milne, 2021). The document outlined timeframes, areas where data would need to be collected (e.g., neighborhood wide survey) and communication and engagement points where sharing of the information would occur. The lay summary was important to the residents we met and served, and also aligns with best practices shared by Madison who states that it is important “to assist them [participants] in understanding who you are, what you are doing, and what their role will be in the process” (See Appendix B) (2005, 5). A lay summary is important in this work because it not only provides an explanation of your project, but it also provides a space to intentionally clarify the important role the residents play, their rights to know why you are here, and that a researcher has a responsibility in making this known and clear (Madison, 5). In a reflective interview with Andrea, after she read through this document, she mentioned, “my assumption was that we wouldn’t share all those details (purpose, goals, timeline) at the same level as what we were working with. I figured there would be an internal document and a separate doc that we shared with residents. I really appreciate that this was not your assumption. When you printed out our own working doc to share with the group, I was surprised (and a bit nervous), but then definitely saw the benefit it brought through transparency and relationship/trust building” (2021). However, throughout a number of interactions, the lay summary also seemed to become less affective on its own. What we found most effective as an approach in this space was having the lay summary while also having conversations in real time that would take them through the material and information.

I also wanted to make sure that I provided what residents would need in this kind of space, which was answers and information to questions when they would ask. This is actually why I made sure that those that needed to be in the room, were in the room, a process informed by the

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<sup>20</sup> Field notes 5/17/19; This conversation provided a neighbor’s perspective on neighborhood concerns, the people of Prairie Creek Run, who else would be interested in speaking to us and potentially being involved in neighborhood planning conversations, and from her perspective, the neighborhood was really three separate neighborhoods.

<sup>21</sup> Field notes 6/21/19 and notes from meeting minutes from council meetings from the past. It was these documents that provided an understanding of the history of the neighborhood and what residents have gone through; how they may react to an outsider.

conversations I had with Natasha and through the first resident interview.<sup>22</sup> As an example of this process, I learned through these conversations that there is a very significant water project happening in the neighborhood and that residents are eager for more information. These previous conversations provided me context to what was already happening in the community and how residents would react and/or interact with outsiders. In attendance were 4 residents, two of which are listed in the key people section, Susie and Ray Good. Also, in the room was myself and a colleague from my organization. His knowledge of the county projects, the area and its history made him a great addition to the first conversation. Having my colleague present proved to be a success as residents seemed to respond well to the fact that information and updates on recent county-involved projects, including the water project were available when asked. Through the knowledge I gained by engaging in a discovering community process, this allowed me to activate my knowledge of the community needs/concerns and is what prompted me to understand why having my colleague present would be key to a successful first interaction.

### Advocacy, Representation, and Voice <sup>23</sup>

Responsibility of researcher

Knowing what advocacy means and looks like to community

Madison dedicates a chapter to methods and applications in research. To help break down what she means when referring to methods and applications she includes three case studies. One that resonated with me described an ethical dilemma evident in the transition from field work to writing about the field (2005, 2). The dilemma was in how the researcher could speak about the on the ground experience but also making sure to represent the people in an appropriate and positive way. This study reminded me a lot of the emotions I felt doing discovery work and analysis through fieldwork. I felt a large responsibility given my position in this project and looked to find ways to offer power to the residents (Graves, 2005, 148). I also felt a responsibility to assist the residents in their quest to better their neighborhood in the way they have defined to me. One situation I can recall is sitting with a number of individuals in a room and one individual being from the city. I was referring to the work residents of Prairie Creek Run had been doing and were engaged in; however, some in the room did not know what neighborhood I was referring to. Another person in the room said it is the Sawmill district. This prompted the city representative to react in an unkind way by saying, “oh yeah we don’t want anything to do with that neighborhood.” This is where I felt the responsibility to say something on behalf of the residents and the neighborhood. In the 90’s they worked really hard to change the name of the neighborhood to Prairie Creek Run because The Sawmill District was a name that was not chosen by neighbors, a news reporter labeled this neighborhood The Sawmill District for its close proximity to the Sawmill. However, the Sawmill and those that lived around it had received a negative perception. I kindly corrected her and said that residents would like the neighborhood to be referred to as Prairie Creek Run. In spaces like these is where I want to make sure that I know how and in which way residents would like to be seen and spoken about. However, I don’t know if I should ask myself if there are appropriate times to speak up and when it is not. A shared goal among myself and residents is self-representation however, in spaces like

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<sup>22</sup> Field Notes 5/17/19 and field notes 6/12/19; through these conversations I learned that residents are excited for the opportunity for clean water and had a lot of unanswered questions.

<sup>23</sup> Soyini Madison

this, is it appropriate to take that responsibility? Reflecting on the case study, there are places and spaces where this work can appropriately take on an advocacy role. However, I have learned that in a space where you want to take on an advocacy role to improve the situation, the pieces you end up focusing on in conversation, to prove your argument, are the particular things that a neighborhood may be lacking. This negative focus tends to misrepresent the people and diminishes any work or progress that has been made. It is important to recognize the past and what circumstances cause individuals to seek change, but it is also important to encourage an understanding of the situation and why certain things may be the way they are; “An emphasis on causes leads to an understanding of the roots and reasons of their effects” (Madison, 2005, 6).

### Critical Judgement/Self-Reflection

Within the same methods and application chapter, Madison includes another case study that asks, “How can the researcher include the residents’ experience in the study and tell the truth about the problems without it having negative implications?” (Madison 2005, 10). I, too, wonder how I might now be able to speak about the experience or work without the negative implications that come out of a focus on what is lacking in this space? I appreciate Madison’s method of the “four C’s of criticism: clarity, conversation, contemplation, and consequences,” and I believe this is a great recommendation on how to clarify why it is that the researcher sees a situation as a problem (2005, 11). This creates space for the researcher to check in and conduct a critical self-reflection. Checking our bias and power in these spaces will help the work be described in its own frame rather than one that was influenced by the researcher’s world view.

Madison outlines her self-reflection process and below is a list of action steps to help a researcher move through this self-reflective space:

In a private journal:

1. Identify and clearly state the problem or something that you are having trouble understanding from your point of view.
2. Ask yourself: Is my judgment right? Or do I have the right to judge?
3. Think about how to ask a resident to clarify or provide more information on the issue, so further understanding can be obtained.
4. With more clarity, how can you use this to practice how to talk about this process without misrepresenting and without cutting out the pieces that bring light to the complexities of the work and the productive challenges.
5. Consider consequences of your work (2005, 11).

Madison starts the case study by describing a documentary that she was waiting in anticipation to see as it reminded her of her time in Ghana where she did field research for three years. One piece of this case study that stood out to me was a story shared about when a Ghanaian human rights activist and the author met. Madison offers an opportunity to learn how to be an advocate without ignoring the hardships, but also not focusing simply on the negative. This case study also shows that within a culture there are positives and negatives. The negative while destructive, shows where there are gaps and can encourage social change. She writes,

I thought of the many sacrifices these people make in working for the victims of human rights abuses in their own country: by providing shelter and protection for them, by enlightening their countrymen and-women on the importance of human rights, and by their own political acumen in helping establish human rights policies. They are truly committed, openly condemning abusive cultural practices while simultaneously advocating for economic and social justice in the developing world. I witnessed so many of them being denigrated and condemned by members of their own communities; however, they forged ahead because of their belief in human dignity and self-determination. (2005, 2)

Madison recognizes the difficulty of Ghanaian people's situation, which shows a level of understanding that can be attributed to in-depth conversation and connection that may have happened during the discovery process of field research. She then moves to name their strengths; the assets they possess; they are committed and advocates for economic and social justice.

To put Madison's suggested approach for advocacy to action, I reflect on my in the field experience along with supporting my reflection with contextual research to create a statement of advocacy. The people of Prairie Creek Run, since the late 80's, have dealt with a number of infrastructural and natural disasters. A majority of the individuals that show up at every meeting in present day were also the ones present 30 + years ago still waiting for major infrastructure and a vision for sustaining it. Their commitment and dedication speaks volumes. Their hearts, while hesitant, they still find ways to trust (the process and the practitioners), are kind, and push forward as they work towards a successful future for their neighborhood.<sup>24</sup> The resident's participation is a topic I want to advocate for as this was a point of tension I noticed. On the one hand, I reviewed a news article related to the grassroots-driven neighborhood redevelopment plan in 1993, "Two public hearings were held on [Thursday] June 24, 1993, at 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM". The notice posted in newspapers says the County planned to submit the application "on or about June 25." Both meetings were closed within 15 mins with no attendees in the audience." (Milne, 2021, 6).<sup>25</sup> This quote from the news article represents the residents in a way that implies they didn't participate, yet when I have researched the history of PCR and through oral history interviews (See PCR history and Appendix F), I find an active core group of residents. In addition, while reviewing the history of PCR I find the narrative of the Housing Development Fund Application completed in 1994 stating, "The area also has a high degree of interest and participation by area residents which indicates that the area can successfully be revitalized" (See Appendix G) (Milne, 2021). In reflecting further upon the archived newspaper clipping that reports that there were no attendees at the meeting held, I use my knowledge of the community and look for clues that might help me dispel as a myth the assumption that the residents are not interested in participating, a myth that was contributing to negative perceptions by other stakeholders in the redevelopment process. Key findings that I could highlight include that holding a resident meeting on a Thursday from 3:00PM - 4:00PM, is not a time that works well for individuals that work a normal workday which is from 8:00AM - 4:00PM. Another factor could be the location the meeting was held; was it a place that residents felt comfortable and felt their voices were heard?

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<sup>24</sup> Surface interview 9/9/19

<sup>25</sup> Redevelopment plan

In recognizing this tension, this is where I would see Madison's suggestions for how to self-reflect would fit. **Self-reflective space encourages critical thinking, which helps recognize personal bias and encourages a responsible and accountable researcher.** In advocating for PCR, I need to consider my responsibility and the risk of potentially misrepresenting the people I seek to serve because, "Representation has consequences: How people are represented is how they are treated" (Madison, 2005, 3). The people of Prairie Creek Run have been misrepresented by a newspaper and by those that refer to Prairie Creek run as the Sawmill District. This representation of the Sawmill was a negative one, as MaryAnn Surface told me in an interview, that a local school board member stated, "nothing good comes from the Sawmill."<sup>26</sup> These misrepresentations have dictated how they have been treated. However, they also would not appreciate their story being told in a manner that focused solely on a negative portrayal of their neighborhood. During an introductory event that was used to introduce the project but to also start building social capital, residents led discussions with their neighbors and were adamant that they would allow negative reflection of the neighborhood's history, but they would not allow the conversation to stay stagnant in that negative space.<sup>27</sup> This was a powerful statement as this provided a look into how residents want to be represented and that, like Madison mentions, representation is a balance of both recognizing and acknowledging the hardships but now moving to recognize the momentum changes that are occurring in this very space. During a neighborhood conversation where we focused on uncovering the resident's views on what role should community partners play when collaborating with the neighborhood, MaryAnn Surface responded with, "stop being negative towards us, help us, don't push us down" (2019).<sup>28</sup> In a reflective interview with Andrea, after she read through this document, she mentioned, "Something else I think you did well, and attributed to the residents being able to move on from that negative space, is that whenever Maryann would make a statement about not being negative, you repeated it and encouraged her and the rest of the group to reflect on how they could do that. That's an important skill, to be able to identify and highlight those kinds of sentiments in the moment" (2021).<sup>29</sup>

Returning to Madison's discussion, the documentarian has taken her own interpretation of her time and interaction with the Ghanaian human rights activists and presented it to an audience. This presents a problem because this is how these individuals are now being represented, regardless of if the information was accurate or not. Instead of Madison just drawing a negative claim against this presenter, she took this one step further by talking with the person that presented the documentary and coming to the conclusion that this person is well-intentioned but personally, Madison recognized that she was still upset about the issues that remain. She turned to a self-reflective space in which she developed questions to consider before, during, and after field work because, "we must still be accountable for the consequences of our representations and the implications of our message—because they matter" (2005, 4). Engaging in questions like these can help the researcher check-in and evaluate the purpose and intention behind an action (2005, 4). I wonder if the person that was responsible for the documentary would have engaged in these questions what she would have been able to uncover?

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<sup>26</sup> Field notes 1/23/21

<sup>27</sup> Field notes 7/29/19

<sup>28</sup> Field notes 2019

<sup>29</sup> Personal communication 05/3/21

1. Reflect and evaluate your own purpose, intentions, and frames of analysis as a researcher.
  - a. Why? This will keep you self-aware and ethical in this space.
2. Predict consequences and evaluate your own potential to do harm.
  - a. Why? This is not to scare but to stay aware of when actions, approaches, etc. could potentially have harmful consequences and this is an approach in prevention.
3. Create and maintain a dialogue of collaboration in our research projects between ourselves and Others.
  - a. Why? Collaborating with the individuals that you work with in research grounds your methods. How and in what way would you like to be seen and understood?
4. How is the specificity of the local story relevant to the broader meanings and operations of the human condition?
5. How—in what location or through what intervention—will our work make the greatest contribution to equity, freedom, and justice? (Madison, 2005, 4)

Knowing and self-reflecting on your positionality in research is important because it will show our power, privilege, and biases, which will allow us to stay accountable and act responsibly while in dialogue with others. Reflecting on researchers' position while in dialogue with the community also helps with the recognition of the role of the researchers. Madison questions the researcher's positionality and to further understand the different points or positions that a researcher takes on and customizes the fit of the position they play in a research space. In this space, she engages with Michelle Fine and her thoughts on the three positions of a qualitative researcher; the ventriloquist where the ethnographer just transmits information, stays neutral, and aims to be invisible within text. Another position is where the subjects are the main focus, and the ethnographer is not addressed. Finally, the activism position where the ethnographer takes a clear position and serves as an advocate (2005, 5). Reflecting on the ethnographic space that I engaged in with the Redevelopment Plan, I would say that the positions Fine suggests are all present, but I would define them differently. My experience started in this ventriloquist position, where I just focused on transmitting transparent and clear information and listening as residents and I built trust. Then it transitioned to where residents took main focus and I was present as support, and then finally I came into this space of activism. This space is where trust is built, residents know that you believe and support their position while they also know and appreciate yours. The shift into the advocacy/activism role became apparent to me in many different scenarios but one example is when I was sitting in a meeting with City staff and Prairie Creek Run was referred to as the Sawmill and they wanted nothing to do with the area. This is the moment where I was occupying a space where I needed to be an advocate for the people of Prairie Creek Run. Another example, through the planning process, Andrea and I collaborated on a number of different documents that would go on to inform the plan, for example, the household survey (See Appendix E). My support included looking at the documents and viewing them from a number of different perspectives; is the information is clear, what else is needed to help connect residents to the materials (e.g., translations and explanation to why certain questions are being asked) and referring to the experts in the neighborhood as the main resource. I knew my job as a community building specialist and cultural sustainability consultant in this work was that we need to always keep the resident perspective and voice in mind and question if residents have been asked. Within this analysis, I am taking traditional ethnographic engagement concepts and recognizing the use of them and/or phases within a public service framework. Combining these

two sectors could suggest how redevelopment work and interactions with the community can be approached with sustainability in mind. This could also suggest that ethnography could serve as an important tool to create collaborative and capacity/resident leadership building approaches in community-based redevelopment work.

## Methodology

### Ethnographic Process is the Foundation

The Ethnographic process makes way for foundational work like building trust and relationships and also provides access to critical information. Being aware of these specific foundational points within the process brings you one step closer to appropriate approaches. Madison states, “as a qualitative researcher you must consider how you enter the terrain of your subjects in ways that are appropriate, ethical, and effective” (2005, 4). My role in this planning process involved advising on how to approach communications with residents. However, with my MACS background I knew that it was much more than that, I also knew that I had a responsibility of building a foundation of knowledge of the field space and participants before walking in. With the information that was available, I was able to get a general understanding of the history and how residents may react when an outsider approaches them (See Discovering Community). I was not the main researcher for this project, but often filled an advisory role in this research space – for instance, facilitating collaborative problem-solving among residents who were working to address common issues or priority items, such as water utility assistance. Prior to starting fieldwork or engaging with residents, I asked myself, what would be the best (appropriate, ethical, and effective) approach in gaining entry to the Prairie Creek Neighborhood? (Madison, 2005, 4)

The next few conversations with residents were focused on providing all project information to new attendees (See Appendix A & B) and conducting a series of qualitative oral history interviews where I focused on listening and keeping a field journal. These entries were uploaded to a shared google folder between me and my partner. Aggregate data will be shared in the planning report, which will be submitted to the Redevelopment Commission. I have consent from residents to include their voices through quoted materials in this text. This is one of the ways that my partner and I wanted to ensure that resident information would be kept confidential unless otherwise discussed as going into the plan. This was discussed with the group at each meeting and residents were provided with updates and results, as well as drafts of each research section as it was completed, for example, the results of neighborhood wide survey, the results of the Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and Condition’s assessment, and a first look of the draft plan once compiled. This would go for their review before submitting this to county and they would also be given a copy once finalized.

During a series of qualitative interviews with residents, I heard oral histories and personal narratives on certain events of the past. These conversations also helped paint a picture of how and what residents would like to be involved in.

A shared vision included:

- Residents being able to share in the work of the interview while also having space to take subjects that interested them into a different space (e.g., neighborhood association).
- Residents be treated as partners in this work rather than as mere informants.

Residents identified the following shared priorities:

- Cleaning up the neighborhood
- Sharing an interest in changing the neighborhoods perception

After learning these specific priorities, my work with the plan and my work as a community builder for my organization took two concurrent but separate paths. As I was conducting qualitative interviews and supporting residents in being partners in this work, I was also supporting them in taking these topics of interest to a neighborhood space by connecting this group to resources that would help build capacity for resident leadership.

## COVID-19

Knowing how to communicate best with the Prairie Creek Run neighborhood was another outcome of the discovery process and was established early on in the Neighborhood Redevelopment planning process. Preferred communication methods that Prairie Creek Run neighbors identified included phone calls as a way to contact them and meeting in person for longer discussions. However, when COVID hit, meeting in person became a large barrier. Individuals that had access to internet and capacity to navigate the platform, shifted to using Zoom or other video conferencing applications. However, this shift was not as easy for some of the Prairie Creek Run residents. Some residents in our core group do not have internet, computers, and/or just find zoom overwhelming. Our shift required me to facilitate a zoom call for those that were able and using the phone conference feature for those that didn't have computers or internet, to have a group conversation. While this worked for the purpose of one meeting, this proved to not be a sustainable solution because the capacity needed to keep this option available is not a realistic expectation for anyone. Later in the year, we met at Walker park that is 5 – 7 mins down the road as it was the easiest to space out, however this was only an option when weather permitted it. Meeting indoors was less of an option as our focus was to keep everyone safe. COVID provided a number of barriers but also revealed the gaps in the system when it comes to wanting neighborhood participation. These gaps are needing sustainable locations for the neighbors to meet, having access to internet and technology that would allow for them to connect to others on a consistent basis.

## Recognize Assets

Recognizing a vision for your community is a major step but it can become difficult when there is no connection to a community support system that can help make a vision a reality. In Tom Borrup's book, *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Art, and Culture*, he includes different examples or case studies that describe specific community building strategies that show how a community has come together with a support system to make their visions reality. For example, one case study features The Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre in Minneapolis where every year they offer a parade. Their methodology pulls the neighbors and the theatre staff together to a visioning session that will determine a theme for the parade that would best tell the community's story. The theatre then takes the agreed upon theme and starts to build a story and plan out the different sections and music for the parade. Workshops to help build any structures followed. All through the process; visioning, story board, construction, and performance, the neighbors of the community were recognized for the assets they hold, involved in the planning of how their story will be told, and participated in the performance. The theatre provides needed support and infrastructure that

made this collaborative space happen. To replicate or paying attention to this through the redevelopment lens meant paying attention to:

- **Shared vision** – by including and elevating the community’s assets in this festival they were able to create a foundation or pathway to a larger context where the vision for how the neighborhood can come together on issues of importance to the community could be shared.
- **Shared power/representation** – while the theatre has its focus on the arts, they still have found a way to include the community in the process of community building, performance, and celebrating. Essentially throughout all stages of building their community. The theatre provided the infrastructure and support that was necessary and the community.

The main takeaway from this case study is that the theatre as a community asset recognized the community they were situated in and wanted to provide an avenue or platform where these assets could be elevated and seen as a positive. The theatre found a way to change the narrative; negative to a positive.

## Partnerships

### Stakeholders and Power Dynamic

My experience has shown that building community and community involvement is not the only thing that is needed; infrastructure to do this work is essential for sustainability. In Bau Graves's book, *Cultural Democracy*, he focuses on participation and what infrastructure supports the participation of community members. He argues that institutions meant to encourage cultural activities and community participation may not be inclusive to all communities (2005, 77).

Capacity of communities and the infrastructure that may or may not be present, is a contributing factor to making participation more widely accessible. With Graves in mind, I reflect on the redevelopment plan and one of the main shared visions discovered between the county, myself, and my partner; namely, resident voices need to be heard and their participation is crucial to the development of the plan. As Graves states, "we need participation from participants, not simply on the receiving end of programs but throughout the chain of development" (2005, 77).

However, there are challenges to participation that exist, those can include:

- Understanding the act of participating is power that residents solely hold. They determine what they ultimately will participate in and how much of their time they will give.
- While we might wish to involve residents as partners, their labor and contributions are not compensated, and so it is essential to build value into the participation design. Providing compensation for residents' time, effort, and knowledge is a good example in supporting residents through a planning process.
- Residents participating without a consistent and accessible meeting space lessens the sustainability of these interactions.

### Sustainable Participation Includes

- Have a consistent and accessible neighborhood meeting space
- Build trust and relationships
  - Come to the conversation with clarity, information, and purpose.
  - Pay attention to the conversation residents want to have vs. the agenda
- Find a common community vision or goal
  - What is the community passionate about?
- What resource/s would support residents so participation would be possible?
- Remember, building participation takes place one person at a time (Graves, 2005, 84)

### Asset Inventory/Mapping

This partnership is where we as stakeholders, with our resources and knowledge, collaborate on a resident driven priority. An approach that I used to help recognize assets among residents and partners is through asset inventories/mapping. At this point, a core group of interested residents started to form and we had been meeting and focusing on oral history, history of the neighborhood, concerns from the past and present and the involvement of residents in neighborhood revitalization. Through these conversations, I started to recognize a recurring theme where residents would refer to themselves as not the experts. This is when I realized that

an asset inventory/mapping would be a great way for assets to be recognized and where we could move towards elevation of personal and community assets. I started this process out by guiding the group of residents through a session that focused on pulling out and recognizing the skills, knowledge, and resources in the room and around the neighborhood. To get to the heart of their personal assets I provided questions that were framed around what they were passionate about and built off of that to a space where we all started to recognize each other's assets.

Here I engaged Tom Borrup's Asset Inventory Worksheet, which provides a guide for a community group to engage in a recognition of the community assets. I take that framework from Borrup and use the Asset Mapping toolkit from Community Innovations Network to help support the residents as they recognize their assets and build relationships with their neighbors (See Appendix J and Guiding Toolkits section).

Questions included:

1. What activities (job, family, projects, etc.) fill your day?
  - a. Could you be more specific: (What is your job or what is the project or what family event, etc.)?
2. What activities are ones that you look forward to?
  - a. How many years have you been pursuing these activity/activities and why?
  - b. Would you consider yourself knowledgeable about this particular activity or activities?
  - c. What drives your passion for this/these activities?
3. How much time do you spend on this activity or activities a week?
4. Is this activity or are these activities done alone or with a group of people?
  - a. Who is the group (Family, friends, Coworkers, neighbors, etc.)?
5. Where does this activity or where do these activities take place (home, away from home, a local spot, etc.)?
6. Do you find it important to talk to another or others when it comes to a "community" issue?
  - a. Do you feel like you are able to explain many different sides of the issue?
7. Do people come to you for certain resources?
  - a. What resources?
  - b. How were you aware of these resources?<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Fieldnotes 9/16/19



Tom & MaryAnn Surface interacting with the asset inventory activity; taken September 23, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.001



Susie and Ray Good interacting with the asset inventory activity; taken September 23, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.002

I turned these questions into an interactive activity where I provided residents post-in notes where they would write their answers on and then would post it under the question. My partner and I also partook in the activity and at the end we came together and reviewed and elaborated on the answers. As we all listened and learned more about the people in the room, I also asked that we all go around, if comfortable, and name a few personal assets that they have recognized from their fellow neighbors.<sup>31</sup> For example, a majority of residents present openly recognized one of their neighbors for being an all-around resource to the neighborhood. When she is asked a question by a fellow neighbor, if she knows what the best course of action would be, she answers. But if not, she connects her neighbor with others to figure out the answer. Hearing a majority of residents speaking to her strengths made her emotional and brought the group closer together. The emotional engagement carried through these discussions of personal assets suggests that the asset inventory mapping exercise was a highly effective and meaningful method for engaging participants.

### Building Trust

To have a conversation, like the asset inventory/mapping one, a certain amount of trust had to be built. An approach that I used to build trust or pave the way to build trust was by recognizing the expertise that residents hold and by acting on this belief. The ways I showed residents that they were the experts of their neighborhood was by paying attention to the conversation residents want to have vs. forcing an agenda or the item you want information on. During oral history focused conversations residents had certain things they wanted to talk about and while I am in the space as a cultural worker that is helping support the plan, the last thing I wanted to do was use my position to move the conversation to a topic of my choosing. While this was not the only variable to building trust, I do believe that this was an important one to focus on because of what I learned during the discovering community phase: being heard is important to residents. Other approaches to building trust included, coming to each conversation with clarity, information, access to further information, and purpose. During every conversation, if there was information that residents wanted, like an update on the multiphase water project that the RDC was facilitating, I would make sure to ask the appropriate person and I would either call all the residents or inform them of the update during the next meeting. It was important for residents to have someone to ask and for that someone to be trusted and have capacity to follow up with them.

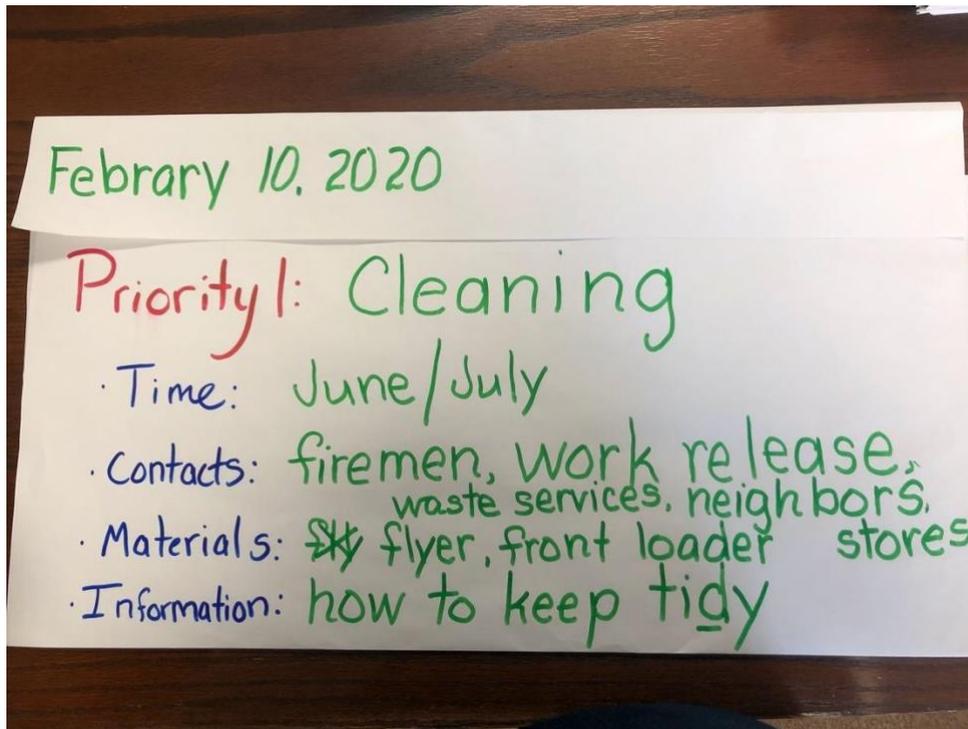
### Resident Driven

Having a process be resident driven could look like a conversation that is brought about by resident interests and priorities and where a stakeholder supports them. During a resident team meeting, Prairie Creek Run residents decided they would like to create priorities for the year and start planning on how to accomplish those priorities. During this conversation, I focused on offering support to residents in getting to a finished product for the session. I did this by guiding the thought process and pulling out the main points that they felt needed determination in that

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<sup>31</sup> Many of the residents present already knew each other

moment to then be able to move on to the next planning step.<sup>32</sup> On a large sheet of paper, PCR residents agreed upon two priorities, cleaning up the neighborhood and conducting a resident led block walk. On this sheet they determined when they wanted to accomplish the priority by, who were the contacts they needed to accomplish the priority, what materials were needed, and what information did we still need to learn before the priority can be accomplished.<sup>33</sup> With these priorities set by residents this is what we (residents and myself) would come together to focus on.

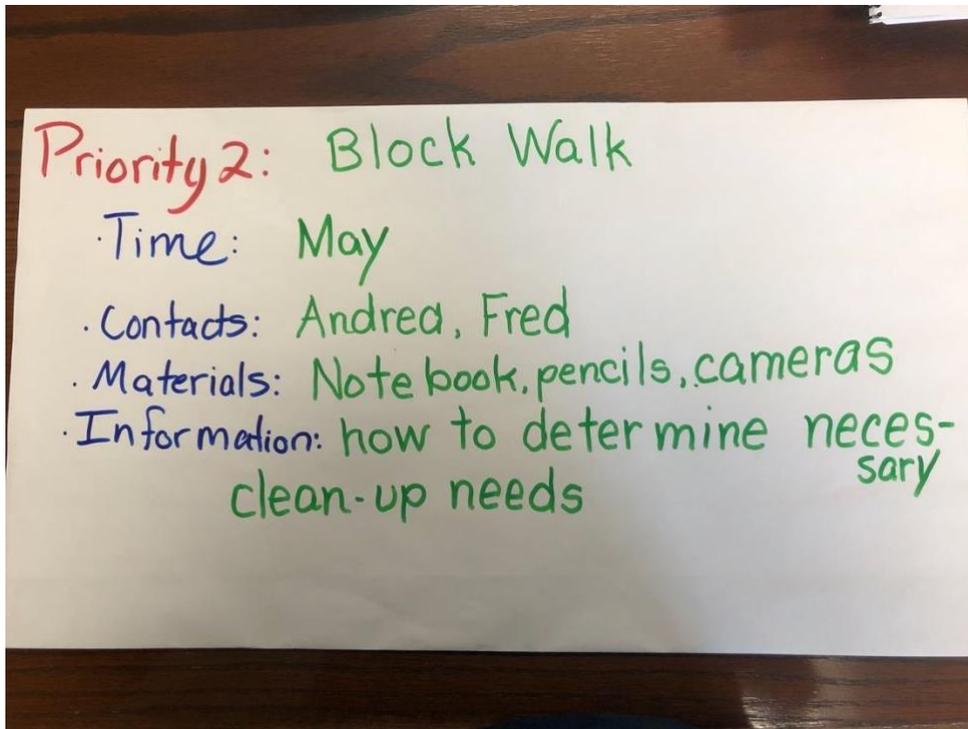


*Resident Priority recognized for 2020; taken February 10, 2020; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2020.DP.003*

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<sup>32</sup> Fieldnotes 2/10/20

<sup>33</sup> Fieldnotes 2/10/20



*Resident Priority recognized for 2020; taken February 10, 2020; taken by Daniela Panetta: 2020.DP.004*

#### Shared vision

Having a shared vision means that partners or future partners share a common goal. In my experience, while partners may have a common goal, the approach may differ. This is where shared vision can ground collaboration because the main stakeholder, the community, is included in the equation when figuring how to approach the common goal in a way that is culturally appropriate. Within the redevelopment plan, one example of a shared vision occurred during a discussion on what would be the best use of the private property the RDC owns and that sits in the center of the neighborhood.



*RDC owned space that stakeholders would like to see as a park; taken April 9, 2021; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2021.DP.002*

Prairie Creek Run residents have stated a number of times through our conversations and have mentioned that there were plans drawn up or envisioned for this space to be a park back in the 90's. During one of the most recent resident visioning sessions, residents mentioned again that this space has potential to be a park that can be used for more neighborhood engagement, for youth to have a place to play and interact, and for adults to have a space to walk.<sup>34</sup> With the RDC as a stakeholder in this neighborhood redevelopment plan, the project coordinator Natasha was present at this session and was able to speak to who owned the lots and if there were any plans for the land to date. She was able to inform residents that a potential vision county and city have is to combine adjacent lots to see this land used. After this session, Natasha was able to start an initial conversation with the city's park director and was able to provide him a shared vision to make this space a park, and that residents have expressed interest in being a part of that planning process. Residents shared that this is in their neighborhood, and they would like to have space to name it after Benny Russo, the past Township Trustee that many neighbors were close to (See Key people section). "During the years 2003–2016, the Osolo Township Trustee, Ben Russo, was known to be very active in Prairie Creek Run. Residents remember him as someone who really cared for everyone in the neighborhood and did what he could to address concerns that were brought to him. Benny, as he was called by everyone who knew him, would regularly drive around the neighborhood and talk to people about concerns they had and then would take those concerns to whoever could make it right. He became a reliable liaison between residents and county leaders. In January 2016, Benny passed away after a brief battle with cancer." (Milne, 2021). The common goal articulated in this space grounds this collaboration as residents were at the table representing their interests when discussing how this space will be used and creates space for the land to be utilized in a meaningful way for the residents of the neighborhood.

### Layers of Power

Within Bau Graves's book *Cultural Democracy*, he references a case study of a day long Sudanese conference (2005, 145). The goal for the conference was to bring the community together and "foster cultural initiatives that would grow from the discussions and feel compelling to community members and their families" (Graves, 2005, 145). The history of Sudan and intricate understanding of what representation of the culture means, was important in planning this conference. This brings about a layered power dynamic that is important to recognize because it affects the success of the partnership in play. In order to recognize the power dynamic all stakeholders need to be recognized. Reflecting on the Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan process, stakeholders consisted of:

- Daniela – Community builder and contractor of county
- Andrea – Urban planner and contractor of county to put the plan together
- Redevelopment commission
- Residents of Prairie Creek Run

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<sup>34</sup> Field notes 7/25/19, 4/10/21

My power here is having access to: personal and organizational resources, skills (e.g., knowing how to build meaningful relationships), personal and professional experiences, “the circle of influence,” and knowing how to ethically and responsibly gain access to and support the individuals like residents, all of which is needed to inform this plan (Graves, 2005, 150). My partner Andrea Milne’s power is having access to resources, “the circle of influence,” urban planning skills and experiences in developing a plan of this magnitude. She also has the deciding power of what information is included and how information is perceived in the plan. The redevelopment commission is the driving authority of this project. They requested a plan be developed, they have the resources to fund this work, and they have the final say on what gets accomplished from the plan. The residents of Prairie Creek Run have the power to decide on whether they want to participate in conversations, and they have power to control the topic of conversations or spend their time on planning neighborhood activities; during public appeals, they have the power to disagree with an idea. Residents also have the power to determine what information is shared and at what point in time.

Graves mentions that, “to be a cultural mediator means to place oneself at the center of the intersecting circles of interest ...[and] to be willing to give power away to others at every turn” (Graves, 2005, 148). In this space where I play a mediator of understanding between all stakeholders, I wouldn’t say I am giving away power at every turn, but instead I am using my power to make the planning table more accessible for individuals so that collaboration, communication, and partnership is supported, sustainable, and possible. Graves also defines another role – that of the strategic broker – whose function is, “to marshal the resources necessary to do the job and to keep everyone’s eyes on the general goals while encouraging creativity,” and provides a different perspective to my role and my partner’s role in this plan (Graves, 2005,148). Andrea has been the strategic broker of this plan as her role is to take all the data we collect and connect resources available to a potential solution to an issue that was brought up by residents.

### Shared Vision/Power/Collaborative Planning

Another Tom Borrup case study I looked at was the Waterfire Providence festival, focusing on how the city redeveloped spaces to encourage more foot traffic and use of the spaces in the downtown. In the city’s vision to increase use of space, they connected to a community public art event that could assist in making this vision come to life, while also providing city support and infrastructure to this art event. The art event focused on the city’s history and by focusing on the history, they are at the same time illuminating the identity of the city and renewing the community’s sense of pride. This was a good case study as it provided an example on how a city can be the starting point of a community building space, but what is most meaningful is when this city vision connects to and provides support to a community-based initiative, which also helps ground the shared vision.

According to Borrup, one strategy to engage people in public spaces is by building social capital. Social capital translates to using cultural activities like festivals that include community-based music, performance, and art as a way to increase engagement or the coming together of people (Borrup, 2013, 75). The coming together of people in this way of entertainment is focused on activities that a diverse audience could be interested in attending. Understanding the interest in

attending is what I would also consider one of the keys to successful interactions. When a researcher is more aware of the interests of residents, interactions will become more based on the wants and interests of the residents, which can be measured by the increase in participation vs. interactions dictated by an outsider's agenda. To gain this knowledge a researcher starts in an ethnographic process where trust and relationship building are key, but you are also learning the interests/hopes of residents.

With that in mind, reflecting on the redevelopment plan, the County set out to improve the Prairie Creek Run neighborhood (see community history section) and as a way to build consensus they asked for a Community Builder/ Cultural Worker to lead the consensus building process while engaging the Prairie Creek Run residents. My goal here was to connect with residents and gain an understanding on what improvements they would like to see and if there were resident groups that were already working together to improve the neighborhood. Similar to the Waterfire Providence festival case study, I wanted to gain knowledge from residents and then find a way where the process can be grounded in the neighborhood with residents collaborating.

When it came to building social capital, in the redevelopment planning space, the relationship and trust building still occurred among residents but less in a way of entertainment and more around their interest in knowing what is happening in their neighborhood. Susie Good mentioned to me in an interview that she took a stipend neighborhood coordinator position in the 90's to help distribute funds that were granted to residents of Prairie Creek Run to use to improve the neighborhood but also because she wanted to know what was going on in the neighborhood.<sup>35</sup> She shared with me that she would ask residents "what would be good for the individuals living here and that this went a long way" (Good, 2020). She also realized that she was starting to understand that everyone you interact with requires a customized approach. Susie once told me a story of a neighbor that was using her fence to hang dry her clothes on. This frustrated Susie as this was her property and it was discoloring the fence. Susie could not understand why her neighbor would do this because this the rust from the fence, it was certainly getting on her neighbors' clothes as well. Susie considered calling others such as law enforcement to get involved, however, with her experience as Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Coordinator in the 90's she knew that this approach wasn't the only option. She decided to have a personal conversation with her neighbor and listen and learn as to why she was hanging clothes on the fence. As Susie spoke to her neighbor, she realized that the reason for her hanging her clothes on the fence was because she did not have the means to buy a clothes hanger. With further context to the situation Susie was able to reconcile this dispute and was able to provide her neighbor with a donated clothes hanger (Good, 2020).<sup>36</sup> This experience provided a new perspective to address the structural issues in the neighborhood and not just merely reacting and addressing the negative or unwelcome situations. Reflecting on the redevelopment plan, **to make change sustainable a toolkit is needed to help identify the real problems, help create solutions that are culturally appropriate, and uncover ways to heighten the assets that are already in place.**

When I reflect on different approaches that can be used in this planning space, consensus building vs. collaborative/community-based approach, I can't help but feel that the consensus building skips ahead to a space where the foundation of connection, relationship building, and

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<sup>35</sup> Field notes 3/2/20

<sup>36</sup> Field notes 3/2/20

trust is already formed and is strong enough to build off of. However, the relationship and trust building must happen first and an approach that supports this, while also leaving space for planning, is a collaborative/community-based approach.

**Direct outcomes of a collaborative/community-based approach:**

- Trust built, which led to in depth conversations
- Collaborative planning
- Strengthen capacity for resident leadership

**Indirect and potential impacts:**

- Sense of reinvestment in the community
- Restored sense of support from county government
- Residents gain a sense of ownership and pride

### Building Social Capital

Having the space and infrastructure for connection is important foundational work for building interactions where neighbors come together for collective civic action; work, make decisions, solve problems, and share in the celebration of success together (Borrupt, 2013, 84). Borrupt states that for this strategy of increasing social capital you need access to public space for the community members to meet (2013, 73). In my experience with this redevelopment plan, it is not just about having space available, it is also about where the space is located; is it accessible to the community and is it available year-round? Does the space feel welcoming and/or neutral ground vs. intimidating or unfamiliar? The space needs to work for the community and in a sustainable way in order for interactions to continue. When thinking about public spaces available for neighbors to come together in the redevelopment plan, we pulled on a number of wider community assets. We have used a vacant lot that was owned by Lacasa for a community event, the deli space at a local grocery store that is 5-7 mins from the neighborhood, an in-neighborhood church for an open house to share information, township fire station that services the neighborhood in emergencies, and the Lacasa offices for steering committee conversations. Each location provided different results. Viewing the success of the location by the number of residents present, which could indicate that residents felt comfortable in the space, they felt welcome, and they felt it was a space where their voices would be heard; the use of the local grocery store space is where we had 11 residents present, which was almost triple the number of residents we had present from the first meeting. This meeting was where we hosted an informative conversation with community partners (sheriffs, council member, and code enforcement). It is the closest location to the neighborhood and a familiar space.<sup>37</sup> While all these spaces were available to us<sup>38</sup>, they are not long-term solutions, and some are not in the neighborhood where neighbors could potentially cross paths or where informal community interactions could occur (Borrupt, 2013, 76). One area of focus for the plan is to suggest that the county could redevelop a large green space in the center of the neighborhood that could be transformed into a pavilion or space where residents could connect and build further connections. This would take a space that has been poorly maintained by the county and turn it into a space

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<sup>37</sup> Field notes 1/13/20

<sup>38</sup> I use "us" as some locations would not be as available if certain stakeholder were not present.

that could build social capital. In the WaterFire Providence, Rhode Island example, they took a space in the downtown that used to not be a destination of choice and the city created the infrastructure (sidewalks and parks) that allowed for further use of the space. The outcome of this renewed use of space and the festival is a renewed sense of community pride (Borup, 2013, 79). An example of one approach to strengthening the community's social capital is by co-developing the green space. County builds the infrastructure, and the community makes it a meaningful community space.



*Prairie Creek Run Greenspace; taken April 9, 2021; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2021.DP.006*

Reflecting on the redevelopment plan, another example to where social capital was built was my approach to first engaging the community, which was an outside event that included food, entertainment, resident led neighborhood conversation, and neighborhood redevelopment plan information.



*PCR Introductory Event-Space Setup; taken August 3, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.003*



*PCR Introductory Event-Face Painting and Art; taken August 3, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.010*



PCR Introductory Event-*Radio Station and Resident Interaction*; taken August 3, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.011



PCR Introductory Event-*Resident Led Conversations*; taken August 3, 2019; taken by Daniela Panetta; 2019.DP.009

## Recommendations

Throughout this text the reader will find a number of recommendations for how a researcher could approach future redevelopment community-based work and how to make this process sustainable. In this recommendation section I will focus on pulling three main recommendations, one for each of my main toolkit sections: discover, methodology, and partnership.

### Discover

The discovery process is an essential first step in a community-based redevelopment process because it provides a foundation of sustainable practices that enables the researcher to continue to build from. Practices include learning and becoming aware of the community's history, identifying expertise in local voices, and supporting the recognition of community assets. Critical self-reflection is another key component to the discovery phase as it ensures that the community's priorities shape the redevelopment project vs. being influenced by the researchers. Features of this phase include:

- Making self-awareness an intentional process will provide space for you to view the community through its own culturally appropriate lens.
- The act of discovery of a community provides an understanding but also provides an opportunity for appreciation for the individuals knowledge and expertise of their community.
- The preparation work for knowledge of community and self in this work provides a foundation for building mindful relationships with the community.
- Self-awareness, cultural knowledge, understanding expertise, and relationship and trust building, will prepare you to be a responsible and ethical advocate.

### Methodology

The methodology section is key to the research as it sets an intentional framework for the process. The researcher must determine and choose methods and/or approaches that are culturally appropriate, methods that provide the researcher guidance in what it means to be responsible and ethical, and methods that ensure the safety of residents when and how information is shared. Features of this phase include:

- What approaches and lenses align with how you intend to move through the discovery process?
  - Qualitative research
    - Oral history interviews
    - Field notes
    - Cultural documentation
  - Asset based lens
    - During the discovery process recognizing the strengths of the community vs. what they are lacking.
  - Relationship and trust building
    - Provide clarity, transparency, and information throughout the research process.

- Know how to maintain that relationship, culturally appropriate representation and advocacy.
  - Ethics
    - Self-reflective space encourages critical thinking, which helps recognize personal bias and encourages a responsible and accountable researcher.
    - Paying attention to consent and researchers' responsibility to ask permission to share information.
    - Understanding multiple roles and power
    - Sharing project information encourages transparency, which enables relationships and trust to be built

## **Partnerships**

Focusing on creating a successful partnership among stakeholders encourages success and sustainability throughout the community-based redevelopment process. Practices include assessing and recognizing what stakeholders are bringing to the project and partnership, discerning multiple visions that people may be bringing, discovering their power/resources and how they define success. Implementation of these practices can lead to collaborative planning spaces but can also provide indications to what could damage or break the foundational relationship and trust that is essential in the success of this work. Features of this phase include:

- Assess and recognize what stakeholders are bringing to the project and partnership. Items that require particular attention may include: What are the multiple visions that people may be bringing, what are their power/resources, how they define success, and how all of these points can lead to a collaborative planning space?
  - Asset inventory/mapping is an approach to supports the recognition of assets or strengths in the neighborhood or people in the room.
- Coming to a shared vision among stakeholder is helpful in realizing how collaborative spaces can be more sustainable.
- Sustainable engagement includes building social capital for residents and providing appropriate infrastructure for residents or other stakeholders.
- It is important to recognize and understand that residents have dedicated a lot of time and effort into this process and have history of not getting their needs met, so if follow through with specific redevelopment projects does not occur or is not communicated, residents will be frustrated and will not respond to future collaboration.

## Next steps

This work focused on the first 18 months of a 2-year contract to develop the Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan. As I continue to work in this space to finish out the 2-year contract, the creation of this toolkit helped support thoughts about next steps and how this work can continue while also being effective and sustainable. After the completion of this 2-year contract Andrea and I will be presenting main highlights of the plan to the RDC and focusing on components of the plan that we want to shed light on.

During the final presentation to the RDC to close out this project, I will focus on two main points that I feel is my responsibility as a researcher to speak to: The importance of relationship and trust building throughout the process and a recommendation for the sustainability of relationships and trust that have been built. A related concern to share will focus on recognizing the residents' time and effort through this process and how compensation could remove a challenge for resident participation.

Building relationships and trust with residents of Prairie Creek Run was a challenge and took a considerable amount of time because there was hesitancy from residents as they have had a history of investing a lot of time into planning processes and the results consisted of not getting their needs met. Through this community-based neighborhood planning process, I was successful in building relationships and trust with residents, but this should not be taken lightly. Relationships must be maintained to ensure the success of neighborhood redevelopment work.

Approaches to sustaining these relationships includes my continuous presence throughout the fulfillment of the redevelopment work as suggested in the Redevelopment plan. I have built rapport with residents and the RDC and I can act as a trusted support throughout future work and collaboration. Another approach for sustaining this partnership is by including or creating a method of communication that flows from the RDC to the residents. A suggested method to consider, (depending on their capacity), is utilizing the Osolo Township Trustee to send newsletters to the residents as a way to communicate. Another method could include sending communications with resident's utility bills; something that allows communication to flow without it being a big capacity or funding issue.

The second main point I would like to focus on during the RDC presentation is recognizing the amount of time and effort that residents gave to make this process successful. Since the beginning of this planning process residents have attended two or more meetings a month. This is time and effort that was not supported with compensation, which is another challenge for lower income individuals to engage in processes like this. As partners in this work, Andrea and I have extended an invitation to residents to come to the presentation, speak to their experience, and provide any recommendations for future neighborhood involvement.

## Conclusion

Presented here is a Cultural Sustainability-focused toolkit that was produced from assessing a multi-stakeholder 18-month section of a 2-year neighborhood redevelopment plan project in the Prairie Creek Run neighborhood in Indiana. This toolkit is grounded in theory through voices like Soyini Madison, Tom Borrup, and Bau Graves and has helped me determine through this writing what I experienced, how to articulate it, and where Cultural Sustainability has influenced the planning process. I used this writing to then reflect offer recommendations for next steps. A reference to my on- the-ground experience as a community builder and cultural worker in the field provides an illustrative narrative of my methodology, what was successful, and what and where were there spaces that could have been more successful if certain structures were available. Finally, practices are made accessible to the reader through my offerings of future recommendations. The evaluative space throughout this process supported the understanding of what success looks like, what is a good partnership, and how this enhances planning processes in a planning space with multiple stakeholders. I have uncovered and learned throughout this process, **to make change sustainable a toolkit and a strong partnership is needed to help identify the real problems, help create solutions that are culturally appropriate, and uncover ways to heighten the assets that are already in place.**

Engaging in community-based work comes with a set of responsibilities that includes discovering self in work and discovering the community. Being aware of the position and the bias you hold; how can your biases change the focus of, for example, how others view a community? Engaging in a self-reflective space provides the opportunity to view the community through its own culturally appropriate lens and enables the possibility for an ethical and responsible researcher. Discovering the community requires knowing how to approach building a rapport with the community, knowing the community's history, relationships residents may or may not have with the stakeholders, and what will support the building of relationships and trust (e.g., asset mapping/inventory). This work is not one we can do alone so best practices include, defining what success looks like among stakeholders, knowing how to recognize a shared vision, and how this can lead to collaborative planning.

This toolkit is meant to invite a critical conversation on how building relationships and trust (and knowing the process of this relationship building) is the foundation needed for sustainable neighborhood redevelopment planning. The Asset Based Community Development focus strengthens the notion that we all have gifts and something to offer. This toolkit focuses on approaches for community-based neighborhood planning that provides residents with the infrastructure and access to be a part of this planning process, while also encouraging the inclusion of resident voices and a recognition of their expertise. A key takeaway from this case study is that the processes that are made to create change in our systems should include the people the change will affect. Humanizing the planning processes should not be merely stated as an intention but should be acted on by providing support to make this intention a reality. As you can see throughout this toolkit, residents are recognized as the experts in their neighborhood experience. PCR residents' knowledge and participation were critical to this process and is why this toolkit is important because it suggests approaches for community-based neighborhood planning—approaches that make this planning process more democratic—by providing residents the infrastructure and access to be a part of this work.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Partner Goals and Objectives

*The intention of this document is to collaboratively develop goals and objectives for the various elements of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan. Please make sure you are signed in and making any changes while in “Suggesting” mode (click on “View” ---> “Mode” ---> “Suggesting”). Comments can be added and viewed by clicking the word bubble to the left of the share button (top right corner of your screen).*

*For future reference, additions and significant changes made to this document will be color-coded by author (↗ Andrea ↗ Daniela ↗ Natasha ↗ Hailey) and track changes will be removed.*

#### Overall Project Goals (rev. 7/8/19)

1. Document the perceptions, needs, and desires of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood.
2. Propose priorities and a plan of action for future work to be completed in the Neighborhood by the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission and staff.
3. Inspire community members to have a sense of ownership for their neighborhood to support the sustainability of the improvements.

Objective: Develop a comprehensive neighborhood profile

Objective: Develop a recommended plan of action for RDC

Objective: Gather neighborhood input for public record

Objective: Publish a final report of activities and recommendations

Objective: Create a valuable resource that connects residents and policy makers to evoke change in relationships and perceptions

#### Survey Goals (6/12/19 - first draft)

1. Understand current living situation & standard of living for PCR residents
2. Make contact with each household in the PCR neighborhood
3. Understand resident perceptions of redevelopment potential and priorities
4. Understand the residents feelings towards this process and how the past is informing their decision to participate
5. Understand individual goals and priorities of the residents to help prioritize actions proposed in a neighborhood plan
6. To create a record of engagement for future funding & programing opportunities

#### Conditions Assessment Goals (6/12/19 - first draft)

1. Document existing physical and environmental conditions
2. Understand the assets and liabilities present in the neighborhood
3. Develop list of opportunities and challenges to physical redevelopment options
4. Develop list of priorities for physical redevelopment options
5. Develop a Resource list that will help inform the residents of the local resources that are available to them and their neighborhood.

#### Introductory Event Goals

1. To build trust and relationships with the community members that are volunteering.
  1. Open up for questions and comments to get a more natural rapport going
2. Cultivate a sense of ownership (to their community/event, etc.) and advocacy for community members that are helping plan the event.
3. Introduce ourselves and the project to the community.
4. Making sure that our intentions are clear and that we are here to help not to tell them what to do.
5. Introduce the surveys/conduct some of the surveys.

#### First Neighborhood Meeting Goals (6/12/19 - first draft)

1. Share summary of survey responses with residents
2. Share summary of draft conditions assessment
3. Supplement data gathered from resident conversation
4. Identify key redevelopment priorities from resident perspective

#### Neighborhood Block Walk Goals (3/10/2020 - first draft)

1. Lead residents in building awareness of the space they live in.
2. Gather comments and sentiments about residents' experiences of living in PCR.
3. Identify key areas of pride and concern.
4. Lead the residents in developing the story they want to tell about their neighborhood.
5. Help prepare residents to tell the stories of their spaces to Council members and others who will join us on the next block walk tour.

#### Second Neighborhood Meeting Goals (5/14/2020 - first draft, rev. 5/15/2020)

1. Share with residents and other stakeholders a summary of the main concerns we have heard to-date.
2. Compile ideas from residents and other stakeholders for how to prioritize and address these (and other?) concerns.
3. Initiate conversation with residents re: their own responsibility and ability to address concerns.

4. Share with residents and other stakeholders a summary of the draft conditions assessment.
5. Assess neighborhood interest in working with the County and/or City of Elkhart.
6. Document current and desired neighborhood identity (rural v. urban, individual v. community).
7. Assess resident familiarity with current regulations (re: burning, trash, inoperable vehicles, etc.)

# Prairie Creek Run

## Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan

Some questions you may have...

**Q. What is Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood?**

A. For the purposes of this planning project, the Neighborhood boundaries are Johnson St / Co Rd 9 on the west, Bristol St on the south, Osolo Rd / Co Rd 11 on the east, and Modrell Ave, Reckell Ave, and Medford St on the north.

**Q. Who are you and what are you doing here?**

A. Daniela Panetta works with Lacasa, a local nonprofit agency that specializes in community building projects throughout Elkhart County. Andrea Milne works with Dovetail Projects, a small research and urban planning firm based in Goshen, Indiana.

The Elkhart County Redevelopment commissioners and staff have asked us to help figure out what (if any) changes you would like to see in the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood. Our hope is to have many conversations with you and your neighbors over the next few months to create a list of priorities for any future work the Redevelopment Commission considers.



**Daniela Panetta**  
Daniela.Panetta@lacasainc.net  
(574) 533-4450 ext. 19



**Andrea Milne**  
andrea@dovetailprojects.com



**Q. What is going to be redeveloped?**

A. That's the big question we want to ask you! What is most important to you when it comes to your home and your neighborhood? What would you like it to look like? Do you feel safe? Where are the areas of your community that you want to see improved?

**Q. How can I stay informed of what you are up to?**

A. Join the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Facebook group! Any resident of the neighborhood can request to join. Or, if you aren't on Facebook, give us a call or send us an email and we will put you on the list to be notified of meetings we hold and draft documents we produce throughout this process.

**Q. How can I add my thoughts to this project?**

A. We will be sending out a survey to every household in the neighborhood in Fall 2019. Please look for this in your mail and send it back with your responses. You will be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$20 gift cards to Martins Supermarket! You are also invited to join us at public meetings that we will set up specifically for you to share your thoughts and hear from your neighbors. And, of course, you may call or send us an email anytime. We want to hear from you!

**Q. What am I going to get out of all this?**

A. All of the conversations and research we will be doing over the next few months will be summarized in a final plan to be presented to the County Redevelopment Commission. That document is also for you! We hope that it will be helpful to you as a citizen, working with your neighbors and county staff to make the improvements you want to see in Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood.

**Q. How do I reach you?**

A. We can be contacted with the following phone and email addresses:

**Daniela Panetta**  
Daniela.Panetta@lacasainc.net  
(574) 533-4450 ext. 19

**Andrea Milne**  
andrea@dovetailprojects.com

## Appendix C: Field Notes Example

### **Resident Meeting Martin's Super Market Monday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 5:30pm**

Those in attendance: Susie Good (Address / Phone Number); Tom & MaryAnn Surface (Address / Phone Number); Mike and Treesie McCovitt (Address / Phone Number); Nancy Berentz (Address / Phone Number)

This meeting's purpose was to get the newer people that were contacted and brought in by Susie, up to speed with what we spoke about from the first meeting. (The first meeting was introducing the first group to this idea of a plan and letting them know where it was coming from and clarifying that the plan will be filled with their thoughts, ideas, wants, etc.) After the update there was a Q&A portion.

Tom Surface mentioned that along Sunset it was supposed to be a park and said the county says they would do stuff and don't.

Susie mentioned that the NA was given \$1000 to distribute to the community members and would be used to help with eliminating blight in the neighborhood. However, she mentioned that many of the community members didn't know that this was a resource. In terms of the space for the park, this land was then taken care of by the residents. She also told us about 3 benches and 3 grills (that I am guessing were supposed to be in that park space). She said that she stored them for years and nothing happened.

From the residents understanding as residents, that the TIF was "supposed to help the neighborhood but feels like it really is to help businesses."

Referring to the water project and the movement with that, they said that they hadn't seen anyone in the neighborhood in 2 weeks. (Feels like a communication concern that is resulting in this constant friction with the community.)

Along the same lines of the water project, some residents mentioned that they had to pay more than others, and this was frustrating to them. One couple mentioned that they had to pay \$7,000 for their water system.

As a result of many comments and questions about the water project I asked if it would be helpful to have Natasha there to give an update and more information on the process? This was a unanimous decision that if it was possible, they would like that.

The residents went on to talk about the south side of the park being city property and that it is a mess and that there are drugs in the area.

Mentioned that the Northside needs mowing and that it is never taken care of.

Told us (Andrea and I) that Benny Russo would always get these little things done for the community.

Tom stated that the code enforcements are not clear and that him and his wife went around the neighborhood and wrote down what they saw and what was being ignored as a way to help the code enforcers and then the enforcers turned around and gave them a citation for a car in their drive that runs and that is plated. (The sentiment that I was feeling expressed: that certain occasions like this make residents feel like they should not trust authority nor help.)

(Tom then said something that I feel should always be kept in mind when doing work like this, “didn’t have a problem working with people it was after they were done with their projects was when there was a problem.”)

Nancy started the conversation about the flood plain and how she has been paying flood insurance to FEMA this whole time because this is what the map reflects but technically, she is not in the flood plain anymore because the map doesn’t reflect the drains that were put in in the 90’s.

Also stating that the creek is not kept up and wondered why they don’t just dredge it.

Stating, “they don’t care.”

All of the residents agreed that it would be nice to see the community cleaned up. Specifically focusing on getting rid of non-plated trailers and campers that some people live in but they are full of trash. Stating that it’s an “eyesore.”

They then went toward listing a few things that they would like to see improved:

1. Tag vehicles
2. Blight housing (Grover on the northside)
3. Follow up with vacant housing (12 houses 2x2 block area that are vacant)
4. Code enforcement
5. (I would say communication between county and residents)

I then moved to ask the general question of if they would be interested in starting up the association again. They mentioned that they like the meetings because it was a way to communicate and to get information. They said they used to meet at the church on Modrell.

However, they stated that Benny was the backbone of the NA and that he was always in the neighborhood. (Residents said that they want my help to help the trustee to understand that here is a “meet them halfway feel”! I am glad they see me as a resource and a bridge in this space. Residents mentioned that they noticed that this kind of work only keeps moving if someone (with capacity, funding, infrastructure, etc.) is constantly in the neighborhood.

Then a thought came up that it would be of interest if they had a list of ordinances and laws, like a reference sheet. They said that would be nice and it would also be good to also have attached to it, legal actions that could be taken if they don’t follow the laws and ordinances.) When talking

about this they said a phrase that they would say to their fellow residents, “we are making you aware because our neighborhood needs to be improved.”

We asked the residents what would be the best form of communication? Mailing is the best way to communicate and that going to the door is not a good idea.

## Appendix D: Field Notes Example

### **Interview/conversation with PCR resident Bridget**

**Location:** Charlie's Butcher Shop<sup>39</sup>

**Date/Time:** Tuesday May 7, 2019; 11:00am – 12:45pm

The interview was set up by the redevelopment program coordinator, Natasha Kauffmann, as she is the one that has made an initial contact with the community. Natasha, myself and Andrea Milne (urban planner that is leading the creation of the plan for redevelopment for the area) were all present at this meeting with Bridget.

The location was chosen by Natasha as well, I believe, and also because it is a part/one of the assets for PCR. Charlie's Butcher shop is a deli style shop that has an array of different foods available meats, salads, desserts, coffee, etc. I spoke with the lady that was manning the register, who appeared to be in charge, she told me that the shop has been here for about 40 years. I was shocked to hear this, since I am from the area and have never really known of this shop. The time I was sitting there, I could see a number of people that would come in and out of the shop for take away food or to come and eat in.

I arrived around 10:50am as our meeting was scheduled at 11. Natasha arrived around 10:55am, Bridget came right after her and Andrea around 11:00. Once we were all there, Bridget's phone actually kept ringing and she started to apologize and warning us that this is going to continue to happen as she runs her own business and phone calls come in and out constantly. Natasha introduced her as the "mayor of this fine Neighborhood" she rolled her eyes a bit (unsure of the specifics on this expression). Then when she showed us where her house was located on the map, she made the emphasis that she is only there for another week. She mentioned that she has lived in PCR for about 20 years and is moving to Georgia in a week. She didn't really mention why she was moving but did say that she had her house for sale 2 years ago and nothing happened and then a member of PCR a "Hispanic guy" came to her and her husband and asked if it was for sale still and this is what made things start happening. She did mention that she grown up here in Goshen but then moved to Indy and finally moved back to Elkhart County, this time to PCR.

As we continued to talk to her about different subjects that would relate to urban planning and redevelopment concerns, she did a great job of giving us a first look at the neighborhood and the people. She mentioned that our "biggest problem" would be the whole annexation into the city, she said, "People don't want this because there are too many rules with the city." Another problem will be Reckell Ave.; she described them as "nasty, disgusting people," that they shoot their guns to get their dog to come back inside, don't clean their property and that they just don't care." During the conversation she mentioned that another problem is making sure that someone is bilingual.

Bridget also brought up some history of the area. I know from reading past documents that this area used to be called Sawmill district but did not know about the connection to the sawmill

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<sup>39</sup> Local butcher and sandwich shop; well known to neighborhood

business that was in the area. She mentioned that during this time there were “skid houses<sup>40</sup>” built and that there is still one that she knows of on Lilac St. Also, mentioning that there were some encounters with the gentlemen that lives there.

When looking at the map further she was able to tell us and point out who lived in some of the houses and where they were located. Some of the instances during her showing us points on the map was to tell us of people to stay away from (Reckell Ave.), but also to point out those that are real friendly like, Gina that lives on Lilac. Bridget stated that she is a lifer and has had family here for generations. Other times was to let us know of the renter vs. owner occupied situation. She mentioned that Modrell St. is mostly rentals and mostly all new people, but that that whole strip is used as a drag race strip. That there is such a problem with speed and that there is nothing there now to help with this, so she takes in upon herself to slow people down. Stating that she has thrown old tires in the street to slow them down. This has a bit of history and sadness/loss connected to this problem, as there was a little girl in 1999 or 2000’s that was hit and killed by someone that was speeding on that road.

In the process of making our way around the map, she also mentioned that they were able to get Ron David Hizer out of the neighborhood. I asked how they were able to accomplish that, and she responded with, “do you really want to know?” She said that they were “going to burn him out of there.” That they had many encounters with him to just needs to pick up his trash and she also mentioned that, on top of that, he was also bringing drug dealers to the neighborhood. As she spoke about him further, she mentioned that her husband used to work for him and that he only pays his employees \$4.25 an hour and that’s why he can’t ever get people to work/stay for him. Also, that once his wife died that the situation only got worse, since she used to help him with the properties.

We then shifted gears to the industrial part of PCR. Natasha had asked if this was bothersome, she answered with, it doesn’t bother them as much, but that she can hear Tom’s<sup>41</sup> alarms go off. The conversation continued to the “water situation,” which brought her to circle back around to her place and how they put in a well that would pump 200 gallons and would have to change the pump every 6 months. However, the gentlemen that is purchasing her house is planning on redoing it to make it bigger, but she mentioned that she still would not use that water. Telling us that ever since she moved in, she has bought water to cook with and to drink. Also, stating that you would not have to dig real deep for water because there is water real close, but the water has so much build-up. Lastly, she spoke to us about how wet the land is and that you can’t really plant anything because it will die from the over access of water.

At this point Bridget had come back to the annexation and suggesting that it would be a good idea to describe it in a way that will be understood for both the Spanish and English speakers. Natasha stepped in and said that she would provide me with documents that describe that the city wouldn’t annex them in (this is not the purpose of this project).

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<sup>40</sup> A skid house, according to Bridget is a house that was built from skids and later drywall was put in place.

<sup>41</sup> Local business- Towing service

Looking at the map further Natasha had asked about a space that seemed forested or empty and if the community would want to restart the want for a park.<sup>42</sup> She said no that is not a good idea. This brought up the drug issues that they have in the neighborhood. She had said that no one lives in that house next to hers and considers it a “trap house” where you see people pull up and leave, but no one ever parks there.<sup>43</sup> She relayed this information to the cops to help clean that out of the neighborhood and it worked sometimes. However, she did say that there is not a big drug dealing scene anymore, that it is 100% better from when she moved in, but as we continued to chat, she did refer to the forested area that is in PRC as where meth is cooked. Telling us that she and her husband have gone around that area and taken picture of the syringes that are all around that forested area. There is also a field where the grass tends to get pretty tall and said that if they keep the grass cut, that it is crime prevention because they use this field to run drugs. This brought up doing surveys and Bridget stated that we shouldn’t go by ourselves. Natasha chimed in here mentioning that I would be the face of the project and that she would try to connect me with people to go with. There was mentioned of police enforcement and Bridget said, “I would not do that because then no one will talk to you.” I had expressed my opinion of this after the meeting to Natasha and that if it was at all possible to go with a community member that would be ideal.

At this point during the conversation, Bridget started talking about the demographics of the area, stating that up until 8 years ago it was a “white community” and in those year moving forward they started to see more of the Hispanic presence. When Natasha asked about the age group and she said that for the “Hispanic group,” there are all ages and the others they are 40s - 50s or younger. Also, stating that “if the youth were pushed to do better, they might do better.” Here is where she told us of how her and her husband have tried to help children in the neighborhood by encouraging school and helping where they could (I believe in terms of money), but occasionally would get push back for this. When referring to what the race demographic included, she told us of an incident in 2000 where there was an African American boy that was just walking down the street and a cop picked him up and told him to not come back to this neighborhood. Bridget had spoken about a Hispanic church in the area, and I asked if their presence is the reason for more of a Hispanic presence and she said that she believes they were there before they presence. She also mentioned another church “Tabernacle” that is in the area and the pastor is known for helping in the community if people need the help.

Our conversation from that point led to Bridget revealing some do’s and don’ts in terms of the people. Suggesting us to not use the “make” word (referring to forcing them to do something), stating that some people just don’t like change and that “we hear you” doesn’t work in this neighborhood. In terms of how things are accomplished among the residents, Bridget said that “nice doesn’t work” in the neighborhood. Mentioning that the police doesn’t like coming to this neighborhood because they know that most likely it’s not good. If the police was in the neighborhood, she said that people would ask if they had a warrant and if the answer was no, then they would shut the door. I had asked at this point if getting to know people 1<sup>st</sup> would be a good first step and she said yes but making sure it is done in a way that shows “we are here to help” rather than “we are here to tell you what to do.”

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<sup>42</sup> As they were talking I was trying to pick up on if this park was something Lacasa was trying to help them get or if this was in works in general but nothing happened with it.

<sup>43</sup> I had asked her to elaborate on this and she said that is where they deal drugs.

I was admiring Bridget's dedication and will to improve the area, so I decided to ask her where this dedication is rooted from? She answered humbly with, "people should help people. People are just tired of not being heard and they feel that since they are poor that no one cares." Here is where I asked is there a central thing that pulls the community together and she said that there isn't really much, but they would rally around an issue that needed to be solved, but they don't really fight among themselves, its mainly with the county. One reason for fighting with the county is because she feels they pick on the elderly, where they are barley getting by to get food and then the county fines them for something about their property. However, she did remember a time when a church had a block party that attracted many people, young and old. Also, reflecting on a neighborhood clean-up that Benny Russo initiated and that she worked with him on this. She said that there was a lot of people that showed up and that the key is focusing on doing things that people believe in. She did suggest that going in, make sure to have resources ready to go. I had mentioned that it may be a good idea to have a collective resource list that we could provide to the residence. She had mentioned a "program that Lacasa has done for weatherizing windows and wondered if we still do it. Bridget also suggested giving information on renter vs. homeowner rights and Natasha chimed in and said she would give me resources on this. She ended the session by stating that "our neighborhood doesn't require money, just manpower!"

## Appendix E: Household Survey

### OFFICIAL 2019 SURVEY FOR THE PRAIRIE CREEK RUN NEIGHBORHOOD

CONDUCTED BY DOVETAIL PROJECTS LLC  
FUNDED BY ELKHART COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

#### **Dear Resident of Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood,**

The Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission has hired Dovetail Projects, a local urban planning and research firm, to gather information about your neighborhood. There are two primary goals for this survey. First, we want to understand what is important to you about your community. Second, in order to determine eligibility for possible funding for future improvements in your neighborhood, we need to know a bit about you and your household. Your responses will be kept anonymous in any reporting we do with the results of this survey.

To thank you for taking time to participate in this survey, your household will be entered into a drawing to receive one of five **\$20 gift certificates to Martins Supermarket**. We must receive your survey by October 5, 2019 to be entered to win.\*

There are two ways to submit your survey.

- 1. Mail it using the included self-addressed stamped envelope**
- 2. Complete it online at <http://bit.ly/survey-PCR>**

If you would like assistance completing this survey, please call 574-400-5858 or email [andrea@dovetailprojects.com](mailto:andrea@dovetailprojects.com).

Thank you for your help in gathering this information!

*\* Please note: **Your responses will be kept anonymous**. The enclosed return envelope is marked with a number that is unique to your mailing address. When the envelope is returned to us with your completed survey, it will be separated from the survey and the number will be written down to be entered into the drawing. If you choose to submit your survey online, you will be asked to enter this number in order to be entered into the drawing.*

OFFICIAL 2019 SURVEY FOR THE PRAIRIE CREEK RUN NEIGHBORHOOD

Please mark your response with a check:

For the purpose of this survey, Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood’s physical boundaries are Johnson St / County Road 9 on the west, Bristol St on the south, Osolo Rd / County Road 11 on the east, and Modrell Ave, Reckell Ave, and Medford St on the north.

1. Did you know that the area where you are living has been named “Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood”?

- Yes       No

2. How long have you lived in Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_ years, or  less than a year

3. Did you grow up in the neighborhood?       Yes       No

4. Do you have family or relatives in the neighborhood?       Yes       No

(This helps us understand the extent of your family’s presence in the community.)

5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Prairie Creek Run?

- a. The neighborhood **looks good**.       Agree       Disagree  
 b. The neighborhood **is safe**.       Agree       Disagree  
 c. The neighborhood **is friendly**.       Agree       Disagree  
 d. I know my neighbors.       Agree       Disagree

6. How important to you are each of the following?

- a. **Appearance** of the neighborhood?       Very important       Somewhat important       Not important  
 b. **Safety** of the neighborhood?       Very important       Somewhat important       Not important  
 c. **Friendliness** of the neighborhood?       Very important       Somewhat important       Not important  
 d. Knowing your neighbors?       Very important       Somewhat important       Not important

7. Is Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood a good place to live?       Yes       No

8. How long do you plan to continue living in Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood?

- Less than a year       1-4 years       5 or more years

9. a. Are you interested in attending a neighborhood meeting in the future?       Yes       No

b. If yes, when are you usually available to attend a neighborhood meeting? (Check all that apply)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning (9:00 AM–12:00 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						
Early Afternoon (12:00–2:00 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						
Late Afternoon (2:00–4:00 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						
Early Evening (4:00–6:00 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						
Late Evening (6:00–8:00 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						

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**c. What would make it more likely for you to attend a neighborhood meeting? (Check all that apply)**

- Meeting location within walking distance of my home
- Childcare available
- Snacks/refreshments served
- Spanish translation
- Accessible for:
  - Physical disabilities
  - Hearing impaired
  - Vision impaired
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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The remaining questions on this survey help us to identify possible funding sources for future improvements in the neighborhood. **These questions are optional.**

*Note: The term "household" refers to all people who consider this address to be their primary residence.*

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**10. Do you own or rent the home where you received this mailing?**

- Own (no contract or loan)       Purchasing (with contract or loan)       Rent
- Other arrangement: \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. a. Including yourself, how many people are in your household? \_\_\_\_\_**

**b. How many people are age: 6 or younger? \_\_\_\_\_ 7 to 18? \_\_\_\_\_ 55 to 64? \_\_\_\_\_ 65 or older? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**12. Including yourself, how many people in your household are currently...**

- a. ...employed, working 40 or more hours per week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. ...employed, working 1 to 39 hours per week? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. ...self-employed? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. ...unemployed and currently looking for work? \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. ...retired or not looking for work? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**13. In 2018, what was your household's total income (including Social Security and SSI) before taxes?**

- \$15,000 or below       \$30,001 to \$40,000       \$70,001 to \$100,000
  - \$15,001 to \$20,000       \$40,001 to \$52,500       \$100,001 to \$150,000
  - \$20,001 to \$30,000       \$52,501 to \$70,000       \$150,001 or more
- 

**14. Are you or is anyone in your household a/an...**

- a. Single parent/guardian?       Yes       No
  - b. Individual with U.S. veteran status?       Yes       No
  - c. Individual with physical or other type of disability?       Yes       No
- 

END OF SURVEY – THANK YOU!

## Appendix F: Summary of Resident Conversations and Engagement

5/7/2019 – Resident Interview – **1 Resident**  
7/16/2019 – Intro meeting at True Vine - **4 residents**  
7/22 & 7/24 – 1 Resident Phone call  
7/25/2019 – Resident Meeting- Continued efforts to inform the neighborhood planning process, gaining understanding of resident interest in this process, and hearing from residents about PCR history, concerns, and points of improvement - **6 residents**  
7/29/2019 – Resident Meeting – Prep for PCR introduction event, which focused on sharing information for this planning process and where residents had conversations with their neighbors around what the future of PCR could look like. – **4 residents**  
8/3/2019 – PCR Intro event – included a table with information about the plan (lay summary-goals, timeline, about us, etc.), information on the water project (with Natasha in attendance to follow-up and answer questions), a table for residents that were leading neighborhood conversations (listening to their neighbors in what they would like to see change and if they are interested in working together), and community partners present (Osolo Twp. Fire Department, Community Foundation of Elkhart County – volunteer and sponsor). – **Approx. 60 residents**  
8/13/2019 – Resident meeting – Follow up on the event and updates on concerns voiced (e.g. Natasha contacting Highway to pass concerns that were related) – **6 Residents**  
9/23/2019 – Resident Meeting – **5 residents**  
10/7/2019 – Resident Meeting – **5 residents**  
11/1/2019 – Distributed PCR open houses flyers  
11/4/2019 – 6 Resident phone calls  
11/7 – 11/09/2019 – PCR Open Houses – **18 residents**  
11/20/2019 – 8 Resident phone calls  
12/2/2019 – Resident Meeting – Clarification of the plan and positionalities, debrief<sup>44</sup> from open houses<sup>45</sup>, and small action planning<sup>46</sup> – **7 residents**  
12/18/2019 – 2 Resident phone calls  
1/6/2020 – 3 Resident Phone calls – BZA case<sup>47</sup>  
1/10/2020 – 3 Resident Phone Calls – meeting agenda  
1/13/2020 – Resident Meeting – Relationship building with community partners (code enforcement, county council member, and Sheriffs and information and resource sharing – **11 residents**  
1/16/2020 – Residents at BZA hearing – **4 residents**  
1/27/2020 – 4 Resident Phone calls  
2/10/2020 – Resident Meeting – Resident team Priorities – **7 residents**  
3/2/2020 – Resident interview – **2 residents**  
3/2/2020 – Resident Meeting – Evaluation of the process and planning for further conversations – **7 residents**

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<sup>44</sup> Main take away, what did we learn and what needs to be informed)

<sup>45</sup> Open house – a term Andrea and I used to mean an open space to interact with the larger neighborhood and share information and data that has been collected

<sup>46</sup> Small action planning stood for focusing on small wins and what we as a group could do together

<sup>47</sup> Board of Zoning Appeals case that a resident brought to my attention and asked what we could do to stop the request for a double-wide trailer without a permanent foundation

3/9/2020 – Resident Meeting – Neighborhood identity and relationship to county and city – **4 residents**  
 -----COVID Hits-----  
 3/29/2020 – Resident Check-in (How were they doing during COVID)  
 4/20/2020 – PCR zoom and conference call – **4 residents**  
 4/20/2020 – PCR email exchange – **1 resident**  
 5/18/2020 – PCR email exchange – **1 resident**  
 5/22/2020 – 3 Resident Phone calls  
 6/1/2020 – Resident meeting – **4 residents**  
 6/22/2020 – PCR email exchange – **2 residents**  
 7/13/2020 – 2 resident phone calls  
 7/16/2020 – 4 resident phone calls  
 7/20/2020 – Resident Meeting – **6 residents**  
 8/6/2020 – PCR email exchange – 1 resident  
 8/12/2020- Resident Meeting (planner meeting) – **3 residents**  
 8/24/2020 – Resident Meeting PCR SWOT Conversation (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) – **8 residents**  
 9/14/2020 – Resident Meeting – Vibrant Neighborhood<sup>48</sup>, space concern, next conversations, Clean-up, and intro to asset mapping – **2 residents**  
 9/17/2020 – Flyer distribution – 1-2 residents assisting  
 9/19/2020 – Resident Meeting (Wastewater conversation) – **7 residents**  
 9/25/2020 – PCR email exchange – 1 resident  
 10/2/2020 - PCR email exchange – 1 resident  
 10/3/2020 – PCR Roadside clean up – 4 residents  
 10/5/2020 – Resident Meeting – Vibrant Neighborhood, resident reflection, and research – **4 residents**  
 10/10/2020 – Follow up to wastewater convo – **1 resident**  
 10/16/2020 – PCR email exchange – 1 resident  
 10/31/2020 – Resident Meeting – Neighborhood plan and Brush management – **5 residents**

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<sup>48</sup> County-wide initiative to increase and encourage community engagement and building social capital

## **Elkhart County Development Projects in Prairie Creek Run**

*Italicized text highlights partnership and resident involvement*

1990 – Elkhart County submitted an application proposal for Indiana’s Community Focus Fund grant to extend sewer lines to serve the PCR neighborhood.

1990 - 1994 – County submitted a number of applications for relocation and drainage projects.

*The relocations of 12 occupied homes that were damaged in the flood seemed to start in 1994 and was supported by residents in the Neighborhood Association that was supported by Lacasa.*

1991 – Responding to known drainage problems in the Lilly Creek area within the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood, Elkhart County prepared a preliminary engineering report to determine which properties were most impacted. The study concluded that major ditch reconstruction was needed to lower the water table in that area and improve the flow of water. Twelve occupied houses would need to be demolished as part of the project. *That summer, a task force of city and county officials met to strategize ways to improve the area and submitted a second CFF request, this time for work on the Osolo Ditch and removal of homes located in the Flood Zone.*

By the end of 1991, the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission officially declared the “Sawmill Area District” to be a Neighborhood Development Area, which made projects in the neighborhood eligible for federal grant funding.

“WHEREAS, the Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission after due consideration and study now finds that the “Sawmill Area” has become blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating to an extent that cannot be corrected by regulatory processes or by the ordinary operations of private enterprise without resort to the provisions of Indiana Code 36-7-14 et seq., and that the public health and welfare would be benefited by the redevelopment or urban renewal of this area under Indiana Code 36-7-14 et seq.;

“WHEREAS, at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing stock in the “Sawmill Area” is in a deteriorated or deteriorating condition based upon information provided by and records contained in the Office of the Osolo Township Assessor for the year 1989 [...].”

County submitted third CFF application proposal for relocation and drainage project

### January 1992

*County officials met with LaCasa of Goshen asking for expertise and assistance with neighborhood development project.*

### February 1992

- County applied for the use of recaptured CDBG funds to prepare an engineering planning study for Lily Creek.

### March 1992

- County submitted fourth CFF application proposal for relocation and drainage project.

### April 1992

- County received approval from IDOC the permission to use recaptured CDBG funds for an engineering planning study for Lily Creek.

### August 1992

- Lily Creek Planning Study completed.

### April 1993

- *County submitted Housing Development Fund application for a Neighborhood Planning grant and housing purchase assistance program to be administered by LaCasa.*

### June 1993

- The County submitted an application proposal to the Indiana Department of Commerce for the sole purpose of developing a Sawmill Area Neighborhood Plan. The project would utilize recaptured funds for previous Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). LaCasa of Goshen was the administrator and manager of the project, in coordination with Elkhart County. The project would study “the needs of and goals for the Sawmill Area residents and businesses.” In a memo to the County Board of Commissioners on June 22, 1993, the purpose of this project was stated as “for planning activities related to a Neighborhood Plan for Housing Development Fund (HDF) and Community Focus Fund (CFF) applications for the Sawmill/Lily Creek Area.”

“The accomplishment of a grassroots-driven Neighborhood Plan will enable us to carry out future projects with neighborhood control.”

“The Sawmill Area Neighborhood Plan will prioritize the many needs of the area based on extensive data gathering and coordinated neighborhood forums, and individual interviews with residents and businesses. Future local, state and federal funding can then be applied to the area based on the overall area plan.”

Two public hearings were held on June 24, 1993, at 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM. The notice posted in newspapers says the County planned to submit the application “on or about June 25.” Both meetings were closed within 15 mins with no attendees in the audience.

### July 1993

- *LaCasa of Goshen received a planning grant from IHFA (Indiana Housing Finance Authority) to begin work on neighborhood organization and a comprehensive housing study and plan for the area.*
- *County received recaptured CDBG funds to use towards the HDF planning grant with LaCasa.*

### August 1993

- *General Neighborhood meeting led by Mark Chupp of LaCasa to begin organization of the neighborhood plan to be developed by the residents. Initial goals set to have a neighborhood cleanup and picnic.*
- *Another general neighborhood meeting:*
  - *Smaller groups formulate ways for the residents to work together*
  - *How does government serve residents report.*
  - *Plan for neighborhood cleanup and picnic.*
- *“A new approach to planning improvements with residents came in August 1993 through a small HDF [Housing Development Fund] planning grant and Program Income dollars. LaCasa, an experienced community development organization, and the County are working in cooperation to empower the residents to take ownership in their future. Through an active neighborhood association, LaCasa is facilitating the development of an overall neighborhood plan.*

*(From 1994 Community Focus Fund Application for the Lilly Creek Drainage / Prairie Run Infrastructure Project project narrative)*

*“sawmill district project begins (aug 11) Elkhart board of Commissioners and Lacasa announce start of 18 month planning project.*

*First planning meeting was Aug 19 with residents of Sawmill district. Led by Mark Chupp (Lacasa). Meeting to begin organization of the neighborhood plan to be developed by the residents. Initial goals set to have a neighborhood clean up and picnic.*

- *General optimism from residents that things would get better. “Ultimate goal of the project was to produce a document containing a neighborhood housing assessment and plans for future needs.” (The Elkhart Truth, 8/20/93)*

- *About 75 people came to the first neighborhood planning meeting, led by Mark Chupp of LaCasa. Focused on the positive aspects of the neighborhood. Discussed possibly changing the name of the neighborhood given the negative connotation of “Sawmill”. Scheduled another neighborhood meeting for August 31st. Some residents’ goals for the project included a neighborhood watch organization, better access to local government and some projects for young people. (South Bend Tribune, 08/20/1993)*
- *Another general neighborhood meeting*
  - *Smaller groups formulate ways for the residents to work together*
  - *How does government serve residents report*
  - *Plan for neighborhood cleanup and picnic*

### September 1993

- *County and LaCasa brought in Goshen College for expertise in socioeconomic statistics and for their Community Development class to participate in the project.*
- *Sawmill Area Neighborhood Cleanups and picnic. Over 35 truckloads of junk hauled from the neighborhood to the county landfill.*
  - *Clean-up described as a community organizing effort coordinated by Elkhart County planners and LaCasa of Goshen. Pictures Peggy Watson, Nekeya Watson and Kim Bender loading up a truck during clean up. (South Bend Tribune, 10/12/93)*
  - *Kenny Snapp and Alan Brink II pictured loading a television into a trash container. Mentions clean-up on Saturday that was followed by picnic. Described as an “offshoot of a neighborhood planning project started in August and administered by the Elkhart County Commission and LaCasa.” (Elkhart Truth, 10/12/93)*
  - *Tom and Mary Ann Surface publish in Elkhart Truth’s People’s Forum, thanking the Elkhart County Landfill, Elkhart County Highway Dept, and local businesses for helping with clean-up. Also thank Elkhart Community Schools and Roselawn Mennonite Church for loaning meeting places for neighborhood association. Thank residents who came out to help and Mark Chupp and Amy Gliden for their effective leadership. (Elkhart Truth, 9/27/93)*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *REAL Services Weatherization program presentation*
  - *Township Trustee presentation*
  - *Plan for smaller neighborhood cleanup*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*

- *Name contest announced*
- *History of neighborhood report*
- *Getting organized and forming a Steering Committee discussed*

#### October 1993

- *General neighborhood meeting*
  - *Neighborhood Crime Watch presentation by the Elkhart County Sheriff's office*
- *Neighborhood meeting with County Surveyor Blake Doriot who talked about Lilly Creek and drainage problems(Goshen News, 10/25/93)*

#### November 1993

- *Mark Chupp reports his findings about Sawmill District to Redevelopment Commission, he says that he is working with residents to plan improvements and see what they like about the neighborhood. Some things noted were "it's quiet," "people are friends," "mostly crime-free," and the area has "low taxes" and "no city taxes". Also "many families have lived there for decades." Steering committee that was formed this fall is helping Chupp and Glidden get neighborhood meetings scheduled regularly. (Goshen News, 11/9/93)*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *Name changed to PRAIRIE CREEK RUN NEIGHBORHOOD*
  - *Planned for Christmas food drive*
  - *Discussed Lilly Creek project*
- *Sawmill District residents voted to adopt a new name, Prairie Creek Run for their neighborhood to help promote a positive image for the area. This name was voted for the most of many that were submitted in a local name contest. Residents wanted something new, a fresh start. (Elkhart Truth, 11/30/93)*
- *Commissioners decide to pursue buying a vacant lot along Osolo Ditch that was recently cleaned by residents. This vacant lot is 90' x 141' and is in the floodplain of the ditch and is unbuildable, is listed for \$9,900 but the owners will take a lower offer. The redevelopment plan calls for buying all the land possible along the ditch before it gets rebuilt in a couple of years. Most of these lots would be purchased with grant money. Glidden also asked to apply for state grant next spring that would allow home improvements, about \$50,000-\$75,000, to be made in the area to about 10 homes. This plan to apply was approved. (Goshen News, 11/8/93)*

#### December 1993

- *PCR Neighborhood Association packed Christmas baskets for needy residents of their neighborhood. Food of the baskets was collected by youths who went door to door and*

*local merchants who provided donation space in their stores. Dave Watson and daughter Shona pictured delivering baskets. (South Bend Tribune, 12/16/93)*

- *Christmas food drive*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
- *Christmas party*

#### January 1994

- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *Planning for redevelopment along Lilly Creek*
  - *Goshen College students began working with Steering Committee to do a neighborhood survey to get input on the needs and wants of the whole neighborhood*
- *Relocation of homeowners who live along Lilly Creek so Elkhart County can continue with the area's reconstruction was discussed at a neighborhood meeting. Glidden says before this takes place, we will apply for grant money to put sewers and water systems and construct modular homes elsewhere in the neighborhood so they can relocate families who live on creek. She says that residents will remain in their homes until the new homes are done, which she estimates will be November 1995. (Elkhart Truth, 1/15/94)*

#### February 1994

- *County submitted 5th CFF application proposal for Lilly Creek drainage and relocation project, including sewer and water lines to serve other neighborhood properties.*
- *Door to door neighborhood surveys—housing needs assessment*
- *Public hearing on proposed redevelopment project for PCR, one point raised is that some people in the neighborhood will need financial help to pay the connection fees to proposed water and sewer lines in the area. The county board of commissioners supports the project that is mostly state funded. Total project costs would exceed \$1 million and involve at least 2 state grants. (South Bend Tribune, 2/4/94)*

*From meeting minutes at the first public hearing for the CFF and HDF application proposals (February 3, 1994):*

- *Fifteen attendees were in the audience.*
- *“Mark Chupp gave some background on the neighborhood organization which started in August 1993. He explained that from the beginning his role has been to serve as a resource to residents to both plan how to go about improving the neighborhood and to help the residents get organized to make those improvements.*

- *“Mr. Chupp talked about the organization of the six member steering committee who are very active, providing the leadership for the neighborhood project. Mr. Chupp also talked about the housing assessment that is currently being worked on with Goshen College and will be carried out soon.*
- *“Mr. Chupp explained that although we knew the needs for improvements were great, other factors have come into play to push ahead the timing of the needed improvements. The public hearing is part of what it takes to get the project going.”*
- *“Susie Reed... asked if the houses along Lilly Creek were the only ones that would be replaced. There are many other homes that also need major rehabilitation and some even replacement.*
- *“Mr. Chupp explained that this was a specific grant project that would pay for the Lilly Creek relocation project. Based on the needs identified in the housing assessment there are future plans for applying for other types of grants for rehabilitation and replacement.”*
- *Responses from residents in the audience included concern about annexation; question about how rentals would be handled in the relocation; concern about County ability to get funds from both CFF and HDF (Glidden said both agencies are working with them collaboratively); positive statements about recent changes in the neighborhood; concern about elderly homeowners not being able to afford hook ups; interest in expanded rehabilitation to other homes in the area*

#### March 1994

- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *Planning for long-term solutions for Lilly Creek flooding problems*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *Relocation project*
  - *Report on door-to-door housing assessment*
- *Public hearing with the Elkhart County Board of Commissioners to allow citizens and residents to express their views on community development and housing needs. Also the proposed Lilly Creek Relocation Project will be discussed. (Elkhart Truth, 3/27/94)*
- *There will be one more public hearing before the Elkhart County Commissioners before a \$1 million in federal grants is applied for regarding the PCR neighborhood. The application must be submitted by April 22nd, there will be another hearing on April 19th, the last hearing had 40 residents from the neighborhood attend. The county and LaCasa are focusing on creek improvements, relocations and installation of water and sewer lines because those are the first steps in the grant application process. (Elkhart Truth, 3/30/94)*

- *Many neighbors in the PCR area are continuing to raise questions about a \$1 million neighborhood improvement plan that they have been working on for months. Chupp says this is good because neighbors' voices are needed to show genuine support for the project, as the grant application world is very competitive. Neighbors are mainly secured about if the grant money falls through and about the possible relocation of some residents who live along the creek. (South Bend Tribune, 3/31/94)*
- Six vacant lots in PCR will be getting offers from Elkhart County to purchase their property as part of the redevelopment project for the area. The county commissioners approved the offers, which total \$8,000, for the tracts that are all south of Modrell Blvd. If for some reason the federal grant money doesn't come through, the purchase of these lots would still allow drainage improvements to be done for Lilly Creek, says Glidden. (Elkhart Truth, 3/1/94)
  - Glidden also notes that the county will eventually acquire 26 parcels of land after receiving a federal grant. (Goshen News, 3/2/94)

#### April 1994

- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *Drainage and relocation project*
- County applied for HDF and CFF grants to take care of Lilly Creek properties, including construction of sewer and water lines to serve new houses to be built and existing houses along those lines, and also rehab of up to 15 houses in the neighborhood.

“The resident Steering Committee played a major role in shaping the Lilly Creek project. Current plans reflect input from six neighborhood meetings on the subject. Due to the success of the neighborhood organization, residents have pressed the County to act swiftly to alleviate the serious drainage and infrastructure problems. Attachment “S” is a letter from the Steering Committee, outlining their support.

“LaCasa, the Steering Committee, and Goshen College recently collaborated to conduct a comprehensive housing assessment of the entire neighborhood. The survey found strong support for the neighborhood association, and for the Lilly Creek Drainage and Prairie Run infrastructure projects. Attachment “T” is an executive summary of the survey results.”

(From 1994 Community Focus Fund Application for the Lilly Creek Drainage / Prairie Run Infrastructure Project project narrative)

- County and LaCasa met with Society Bank regarding application for a Federal Home Loan Bank grant to serve the neighborhood.
- From meeting minutes at the second public hearing for CFF and HDF application proposals (April 19, 1994):
  - Forty-one attendees were in the audience.

- “Ms. [Amy] Glidden showed the map of where the twenty four properties would be acquired by the county, and pointed out the area where the drainage will be improved. Ms. Glidden proceeded to explain where the sewer and water lines are to be placed. The streets involved were Baldwin, Sunset and Berkley. Ms. Glidden explained public water would be run up Baldwin from Sunset to Modrell and down Rosemary Drive off of Baldwin Street.

“Ms. Glidden explained that HDF [Housing Development Fund] proposal is to develop five lots on the corner of Sunset and Berkley, and five other houses also in the area. The HDF application is also to make funding for owner-occupied rehabilitation available.”

Responses from residents in the audience included concern about where the new homes would be built (some said they do not want more neighbors and want to keep their large properties intact); interest in participating in housing rehabilitation projects; concern about the possible use of eminent domain to acquire properties; concern about increased expenses for households who hook up to new water and sewer lines; concern about relocation expenses; and questions about relocation of renters.

- Mixed support on relocation of houses and extending water and sewer lines.
- April 1994: *Lilly Creek Drainage Project Family Size and Income Survey* delivered to 43 households and collected from 37 households (86% response rate) in the Lilly Creek Drainage Project area. Of the 37 households in the sample, 46% had “very low income” (equal to, or less than 50% of the median income for the County), 40% had “low income” (equal to, or less than 80% of the median income for the County), and 14% had “above low to moderate income.” 62% of the households owned or were in the process of buying the home through a land contract. 38% of households were renting. None of the households had a mortgage on their home. Nine of the 37 households included at least one person 62 years or older. Eight households included one person with a disability. Nine households were “Female-Headed” (e.g., single mothers).
- Also in April 1994: *Prairie Run Neighborhood Infrastructure Project Family Size and Income Survey* delivered to 34 households and collected from 31 households (91% response rate). Of the 31 households in the sample, 48% had “very low income” (equal to, or less than 50% of the median income for the County), 29% had “low income” (equal to, or less than 80% of the median income for the County), and 23% had “above low to moderate income.” 77% of the households owned or were in the process of buying the home through a land contract or mortgage. 7% of households were renting. Sixteen of the 31 households included at least one person 62 years or older. Eleven households included at least one person with a disability. Nineteen households were “Female-Headed” (e.g., single mothers).

- Public meeting in April 1994: In general, there was support for the drainage part of the project.
  - The following is *adapted* from the 1994 Community Focus Fund Application for the Lilly Creek Drainage / Prairie Run Infrastructure Project application narrative and supporting documents:
  - In April 1994, Elkhart County submitted an application to the Indiana Department of Commerce, Community Focus Fund for the *Lilly Creek Drainage / Prairie Run Infrastructure Project*. The primary project activities were drainage improvements to Lilly Creek and construction of sewer and water infrastructure to serve houses in the surrounding area.
  - Drainage of Lilly Creek required re-constructing the creek to be straighter, wider, and deeper, opening the flow of water and lowering the water table. Forty-three remaining homes near the creek were expected to benefit from these improvements, which would lessen problems with septic system failure, private water well contamination, and structural damage due to frequent flooding. The new sewer and water infrastructure would provide safe water supply and sewage disposal to 34 existing residences that had been developed on very small lots.
  - As part of the project, the County would acquire 18 privately-owned and occupied parcels near Lilly Creek and demolish all structures on these parcels. Twelve households were provided with relocation support, including funds and/or housing subsidies.
  - The Interlocal Agreement between the County and City of Elkhart states that the City will be the lead agency on the water/sewer infrastructure part of the project and will hold the primary responsibility for project management. The County was responsible for getting most of the funding—through CFF and local funds.
- The drainage board agreed to appropriate \$50,000 to help with drainage improvements at Lily Creek in Osolo Township. This \$50,000 serves as a 10% local match to receive a \$500,000 state grant for drainage, utility and housing improvements in the PCR area. (Goshen News, 4/6/94)
- Federal grant applications for a total of \$1 million are to be submitted on the 22nd and the county is supposed to find out May 27th if the grants are being rewarded. The Elkhart City Board of Works approved an agreement with the county to help with sewer and water lines. (Elkhart Truth, 4/21/94)

#### May 1994

- *Neighborhood meeting with Lilly Creek residents*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
  - *County Code Enforcement Officials presentation*

- Engineering complete for sewer and water. Sewer and water permit applications submitted. CFF Grant awarded.

#### June 1994

- *Spring neighborhood clean up—5 loads to the landfill.*
- *Steering Committee trip to Battlecreek, MI to begin to look at other neighborhood organizations and projects.*
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
- County was awarded CFF grant for Lilly Creek drainage project.
- State officials announced that the PCR area will benefit from a \$500,000 grant to relocate several families from flood-prone areas near Lily Creek and to extend city water and sewer service to the neighborhood. The Elkhart County Drainage Board will also clear and dredge the creek to improve the flow. The board's contribution, along with other local agencies, adds \$140,000 to the total value of the project. The breakdown of how the \$500,000 will be used is as follows:
  - \$267,000 to buy 18 properties adjacent to Lilly Creek
  - \$107,900 in relocation payments to 12 families living on those properties
  - \$124,600 to extend sewer and water service from Elkhart to 34 existing residences and 10 new residences in PCR
  - \$11,000 in services from the City of Elkhart to engineer and coordinate sewer and water line construction
  - \$50,000 from the Elkhart County Drainage Board to clear and dredge Lily Creek
  - \$79,000 in services from Elkhart County to clear properties along the creek
- Awarded HDF grant for housing construction and rehab project
- Engineering complete for drainage work. Drainage permit applications submitted. Professional services for relocation procured.

#### July 1994

- *Another \$300,000 grant has been added from the Indiana Department of Commerce, this will be added to the \$500,000 grant. Chupp says this will be a \$1.2 million project when complete. The reason the County was finally able to get somewhere with the PCR residents is because of the increase in collaboration between the residents and the government via LaCasa. This grant money will be used to help people in the neighborhood to make improvements to their homes. (Elkhart Truth 7/1/94)*
- *Mary Ann and Tom Surface discuss their excitement for the neighborhood to be rehabilitated and organized. Chupp reports a few things that he has found out about the*

*residents in the neighborhood. Mary Jane Dollinger is always the person who alerts everyone when someone has died and she collects donations for the family. Charles and Sue Reed are known for helping kids fix their bikes and letting people borrow tools from them. Mr. Reed has purchased and fixed up many houses in PCR and made them available to other family members. The neighborhood is also becoming more organized, the residents just had their first successful neighborhood cleanup and they have formal meetings regularly that they send out flyers to all residents for. (Elkhart Truth, 7/1/94)*

- Survey of housing in PCR, conducted by Goshen College students last winter, reveals that 85% of homes sampled in the neighborhood did not meet a federal definition of “decent, safe and sanitary dwellings”. Survey also found that 1/3 of homes sampled had one repair need, while almost 40% had multiple repair needs. Survey also showed low incomes, despite high employment rate in the neighborhood. They also found that most people in PCR “like the neighborhood’s peaceful, friendly character, regardless of income of the inadequacy of their home”. Survey showed high ownership % of 65% in the neighborhood. 6 Goshen college students and members of the neighborhood steering community conducted the data collection. Study focused on 186 of the 366 homes in the neighborhood, the sample houses were selected based on being assigned relatively low grades of condition in a 1989 township assessment. The surveys also found that water and housing inadequacies are the biggest issues facing the neighborhood and also very low income (less than 50% the median income in the county). (South Bend Tribune, 7/8/94)
- *General Neighborhood meeting*
- Press release for \$300,000 Housing Development Fund (HDF) grant from the Indiana Housing Authority Fund (IHFA)
- Sewer and water construction permits secured.

#### August 1994

- Certified appraisals for properties obtained. Drainage work permits secured. Demolition permits secured. Environmental Review / Release of Funds. Advertisement for sewer and water construction bids. Construction bids received.

The following is quoted and adapted from the 1994 Housing Development Fund Application project narrative and supporting documents.

“The goal of this project is to help revitalize a blighted residential neighborhood and provide standard housing for households in the Prairie Run Neighborhood.” The funds would allow for the construction of ten new homes and rehabilitation of fifteen homes. Four of the new homes would provide replacement housing for very low-income households relocated due to the Lilly Creek Drainage Project. “All households assisted through the project will be low and moderate income.”

“During the past two years the County has invested in street paving and clean-up of the neighborhood.”

“The Prairie Run Neighborhood and its low/moderate income residents were selected as targets for this project because the area contains a high concentration of substandard housing. The area also has a high degree of interest and participation by area residents which indicates that the area can successfully be revitalized.”

*“LaCasa of Goshen, Inc. will be responsible for coordinating and administering the new construction portion of this grant project. LaCasa will serve as the developer of the new subdivision for the replacement homes.”*

“After literally decades of inaction and skepticism, perceptions by residents have changed dramatically. This goodwill and support will act as a springboard for the relocation project.”

*In August and September 1994, LaCasa of Goshen submitted a grant application to the Elkhart County Community Foundation to support leadership growth of the newly formed Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Association. Funds received were to be used, in part, to create a multi-use facility in the neighborhood with meeting space and storage capacity.*

#### September 1994

- *General neighborhood meeting*
  - *Discussion of grant projects*
  - *Neighborhood Block Group reports*
  - *Application for Project Safe and REAL Services Weatherization program.*
  - *County purchased 5 properties along Lilly Creek, including Cooper property on Modrell.*
  - *County cleaned up Cooper property—51 loads to landfill!*
- *Mark Chupp and LaCasa thanks employees of 20 Society Bank for volunteering their time to work on upgrading two residences in PCR. (Elkhart Truth, 9/25/94)*
- *County purchased 5 properties along Lilly Creek, including Cooper property on Modrell.*
- *Construction contracts awarded. Lilly Creek properties acquired.*

#### October 1994

- *Elkhart County commissioner candidates, Osolo Township trustee candidates and all candidates seeking Osolo Township Advisory Board seats attended a PCR neighborhood meeting given that their offices impact the PCR area. (Elkhart Truth, 10/11/94)*
- *Residents of PCR grow weary of the constantly changing timelines for the redevelopment project. The latest snag in the project, causing a delay in federal funds being released, is waiting to get a complete environmental survey of the Lilly Creek area to see how the proposed project could affect the wetlands. Some steering committee members in the*

*neighborhood have resigned and many residents are expressing their doubts that the government will go through with anything they promised. While Mark Chupp and LaCasa maintain that the project is complex with many layers of government and different agencies to coordinate. (South Bend Tribune, 10/30/94)*

- Construction commences.

#### January 1995

- Requested use of recaptured CDBG funds
- *Lily Creek Greenway Committee meets - Discussed options for Greenway plans. Committee notes through 1996*

#### March 1995

- Several homeowners whose homes were being purchased felt pushed to take housing in the neighborhood when they would prefer to buy a home elsewhere. (The Elkhart Truth, 3/2/95)
- Date for the purchase and closing of several properties in PCR keeps getting pushed back, it was first supposed to be December, then January, then February 15th. Because of this, some of those being relocated have already packed up and are living out of boxes and have already put down payment on homes that they can't live in until they get their relocation payments. (Elkhart Truth, 3/2/95)
- Indiana Michigan Power Co (I & M) determined they could not accommodate the neighborhood's request for individual residence billing on new street lights to be installed. Residents wanted to evenly split the costs of all street lighting installed while I & M wanted to bill each light to the closest resident (South Bend Tribune, 3/5/95)
- Grant money is now available and being appropriated for projects by the Elkhart Council including purchasing specific properties along Lilly Creek, extending water and sewer lines from Elkhart into the neighborhood and improving drainage in Lilly Creek. (Elkhart Truth, 3/7/95)
- Grant funds were released late last month after many hold ups and the redevelopment project in PCR has finally started with the county recently buying 3 homes along Lily Creek and negotiating to buy another. Other parts of the project scheduled for this year include major repairs to 16 houses and extension of Elkhart water and sewer lines to parts of the neighborhood. Several residents explain their relief and hopes now that the project they have been inputting on for so long is finally starting. As the purchase of these homes starts, relocation funds are getting sent to families so they can live in better housing outside the neighborhood or in modular homes being set up within the neighborhood. (Elkhart Truth, 3/17/95 & South Bend Tribune, 3/19/95)
- LaCasa and Elkhart County officials discuss the construction of 5 modular homes on vacant land at Sunset and Berkeley streets, for sale to low- and moderate-income families (favorable terms like 2% down and forgivable loans up to \$35,000). This is a key element

of the redevelopment project in PCR. These homes will replace several in the area that are in flood-prone areas along Lilly Creek. The modular homes will include 3 homes of 1,350 SF with 3 bedrooms and 2 homes of 1,670 SF with 4 bedrooms. Residents being relocated will have priority eligibility for these homes. They estimate that total monthly costs for utilities, taxes, and property and life insurance will be \$200-\$250. Rent will be significantly lower than the average rent in the neighborhood says Chupp. These new houses will also have Elkhart water and sewer service. (South Bend Tribune, 3/19/95)

- Brush cutting along Lily Creek north of the St Joe River and in the PCR area of Elkhart nearing completion; contractor Wayne Howell contracted for \$20,700 by the Elkhart County Drainage Board to cut brush and trees out of creek bank and mulch it. (Lily Creek referred to as the natural drain for the twin Simonton Lakes) (Goshen News, 3/21/1995)
- Completion of construction.

#### May 1995

- Now that parts of the redevelopment project are underway, several residents are much more optimistic about the future of the neighborhood when interviewed and discuss how they have been involved with the planning process for this project from the start with the help of LaCasa, Mark Chupp and Aimee Glidden. (South Bend Tribune, 5/15/95)
- All Lilly Creek properties vacated. Advertisement for demolition along the creek.

#### June 1995

- Demolition bids accepted. Demolition commences. Advertisement for drainage work. Drainage work bids taken. Drainage work commences.

#### July 1995

- Announced by Elkhart County Drainage Board that Lily Creek will be cleared of brush, but not excavated. Some residents wanted to lower lake level (Simonton Lake) with outflow into Lily Creek to prevent overflowing in their yards while others did not want a lower lake level as it could hamper their boat access (Elkhart Truth, 7/12/95)

#### August 1995

- Clearing of the brush from the south banks of Lily Creek quoted at \$14,700. Being cleaned to improve the drainage in the county redevelopment area of PCR. Lily Creek is part of the county-regulated drainage system (Elkhart Truth, 8/1/95)
- Six new manufactured homes go into PCR neighborhood, \$300,000 federal grant paid for the new homes. Funding is also available to rehabilitate 15 existing homes in the neighborhood. Residents that used to live on sites of the new homes were moved elsewhere in neighborhood while homes were demolished and new ones were made ready (Elkhart Truth, 8/18/95)

#### September 1995

- Completion of drainage work.

#### December 1995

- Elkhart County donates bricks from demolished house on Modrell Blvd, part of PCR neighborhood project, to the city of Elkhart's EnviroCorps for use in landscaping (Elkhart Truth, 12/26/95)
- Administratively complete CFF Grant.

#### September 1996

- The Elkhart County Commission will meet to coordinate planning in the unincorporated areas near Elkhart and Goshen, which will become more formal with creation of a five-year consolidated plan for the county. This plan will form the basis for the Elkhart County HOME Consortium application for federal funds to promote the development of affordable housing and the Goshen and Elkhart applications for Community Development Block Grant projects. Both would receive money from HUD. (Elkhart Truth, 9/5/96)

#### March 1997

*Neighborhood expresses disappointment to County Drainage Board that Lily Creek has not been completely cleaned up yet. Tom Surface complained that the neighborhood had helped to clean up the area with/for the county and they had plans for the greenway that were now two years old. He referenced that they are "holding our area hostage to Simonton Lake." He said, "We were told it would be completed by 1995, but it is still not done." "It's worse than it was then." (Goshen News, March 4, 1997).*

*RFQ for cleanup of the creek due March 21.*

#### April 1997

Agreement signed with contractor to complete Lily Creek clean up

#### May 1997

Lily Creek clean up completed.

2000s and 2010s

Uptick in building permits; neighborhood improvement noted in 2005 Elkhart Truth article.

During the years 2003–2016, the Osolo Township Trustee, Ben Russo, was known to be very active in Prairie Creek Run. Residents remember him as someone who really cared for everyone in the neighborhood and did what he could to address concerns that were brought to him. Benny, as he was called by everyone who knew him, would regularly drive around the neighborhood and talk to people about concerns they had and then would take those concerns to whoever could make it right. He became a reliable liaison between residents and county leaders. In January

2016, Benny passed away after a brief battle with cancer. He had served 13 years as Osolo Township Trustee and seven years as a township board member before that.

July-August 2016

Prairie Creek Run Water Sampling project completed by JPR

## Appendix H: Plan Recommendation for Garbage and Yard Waste Removal

There are several approaches to waste removal that the County and Prairie Creek Run residents should consider. One strategy is to simply continue strong enforcement of codes related to the Elkhart County Public Nuisance Ordinance (Ord. 2013-211), particularly in regard to accumulation of trash and debris. Residents can assist the County Code Enforcer by reporting violations when observed.

A more proactive approach would consider options for regular pick-up and removal of garbage and yard waste. Osolo Township, for example, could facilitate these services by negotiating and securing a bulk contract with a waste removal company, thus providing access to lower costs for residents who choose to participate. The Township may also consider subsidizing these services through existing funding mechanisms, such as the Township Assistance Fund.

Support annual neighborhood clean-up events, including large item pick up

Elkhart County should continue to support the countywide Leaf Collection Competition, as it has in previous years. In 2019, 218 tons of leaves were removed to the landfill from households throughout the unincorporated areas of the county. Competitors arranged to pick up fall leaves from private property owners and tried to collect the most leaves by weight. Any team that delivered at least one ton of leaves to the county landfill for composting were eligible for a percentage of the \$50,000 grand prize.

This competition could have a significant impact on reducing the amount of leaves that are burned in the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood, as well as throughout the county. However, the success of the program relies on broad promotion, both to potential competitors and to households who would benefit from having their leaves picked up.

### Neighborhood Blight Elimination Committee

Residents in the neighborhood are best positioned to take responsibility for the appearance of their neighborhood. Since Elkhart County Code Enforcement does not have the resources to patrol the neighborhood, looking for violations, residents must take initiative to report unsightly and unsafe conditions before those violations can be addressed through legal channels.

Several residents have noted that they fear retaliation for “snitching” on their neighbors’ code violations. By forming a resident committee whose role it is to watch for and report code violations, residents have a buffer from being targeted for retaliatory actions.

The Committee could specifically take the lead in reporting conditions that create blight, such as inoperable vehicles in front yards, illegal dumping of tires and mattresses, and unsafe buildings.

### ACTION ITEMS

- Investigate possible arrangements for a negotiated bulk rate waste removal service.
- Seek legal guidance to determine the availability of Township Assistance Funds or other funding sources to subsidize waste removal services.

- Establish an annual neighborhood clean-up event.
- Develop and implement a targeted promotional strategy to increase Prairie Creek Run participation in the Elkhart County Leaf Collection Competition.
- Inquire about resident interest to form a Blight Elimination Committee

## Appendix I: Index to Media

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

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**Contents:**

*Photo Logs:*

A. Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Introductory Event in Elkhart, IN (2019-08-03)

B. Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Greenspace in Elkhart, IN (2021-04-09)

C. Prairie Creek Run Neighbor's Asset Mapping in Elkhart, IN (2019-09-23)

D. Prairie Creek Run Open Houses in Elkhart, IN (2019-11-07) (2019-11-09)

E. Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Conversations in Elkhart, IN (2020-01-13) (2020-02-13) (2020-03-09)

F. Site visit of Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood in Elkhart, IN (2021-03-29) (2021-04-09)

**Key Words:** Social Capital, event, relationship and trust building, asset mapping, greenspace, personal and community assets, information sharing

## Photo Log A

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.001 – 2019.DP.017

**Number of Images in Series:** 17

**Camera Make/Model:** iPhone 8 Plus back dual camera 3.99mm f/1.8

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):** 2048 × 1536

**Date(s) of photography** (2019-08-03)

**Location(s):** Vacant Lot owned by Lacasa Baldwin St. and Bristol St.

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Introductory Event Site, neighbors of Prairie Creek Run and community partners

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Social Capital, relationship and trust building, introductory event to the planning project of the neighborhood redevelopment plan

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows the engagement and participation of the residents of the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood, community partners present building relationships, and the set-up of the introductory event to the neighborhood redevelopment plan. All contributing to building social capital, relationship and trust building among stakeholders.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No,  Yes, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2019.DP.001—Wide angle picture of the open-air introductory event site set-up.

2019.DP.002—Brighter wide-angle picture of the open-air introductory event site set-up.

2019.DP.003—Wide angle view of the complete set-up for introductory event.

2019.DP.004—Up-close view of the art projects tent, sponsor sign and far view of the neighborhood conversation table.

2019.DP.005—Up-close view of the dining tent and far view of the welcome and information table.

2019.DP.006— Up-close view of the children's corner equip with games and prizes.

2019.DP.007—Wide angle view of food vendor.

2019.DP.008—Wide angle view Osolo Township Fire Dept.

2019.DP.009—Wide angle view of Prairie Creek Run residents engaged in conversation.

2019.DP.010—Wide angle view of Prairie Creek Run residents engaging with the face painting, art and food.

2019.DP.011—Wide angle view of the Radio station that broadcasted the event and provided entertainment.

2019.DP.012—Wide angle view of resident engaging as they eat.

2019.DP.013—Up-close view of a fire fighter joining the festivities through face painting.  
2019.DP.014—Up-close view of the neighborhood conversation table where Prairie Creek Run residents and Osolo Township Fire fighter engage in conversation.  
2019.DP.015—Up-close view of Radio Horizonte host joining the festivities through face painting.  
2019.DP.016— Up-close portrait of Osolo Township Fire fighters posing after face painting.  
2019.DP.017—Up-close portrait of food vendor posing after face painting.

## Photo Log B

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2021.DP.001 – 2021.DP.06

**Number of Images in Series:** 6

**Camera Make/Model:** iPhone 8 Plus back dual camera 3.99mm f/1.8

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):** 2048 × 1536

**Date(s) of photography** (2021-04-09)

**Location(s):** Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Greenspace on Sunset Ave.

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Site visit of Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Greenspace and Communication survey popup conversation.

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Neighborhood assets, greenspace

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows a site visit to the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Greenspace and a communication survey pop-up conversation that contribute recognizing and utilizing the assets already in the community.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No,  Yes, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2021.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2021.DP.001—View of the spacious greenspace in the center of the neighborhood.

2021.DP.002—Wide angle picture of greenway and side angle of Lily creek.

2021.DP.003—Up-close image of Lily Creek and bridge.

2021.DP.004—Wide angle view of Lily Creek flowing through the greenspace.

2021.DP.005—View of the Communication survey popup set-up and resident engagement.

2021.DP.006—Up-close view of PCR art and wide-angle view of the greenspace.

## Photo Log C

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.001 – 2019.DP.09

**Number of Images in Series:** 9

**Camera Make/Model:** iPhone 8 Plus back dual camera 3.99mm f/1.8

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):** 2048 × 1536

**Date(s) of photography** (2019-09-23)

**Location(s):** Martin's Supermarket Deli

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Prairie Creek Run residents Asset Mapping

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Asset mapping/inventory, building trust and relationships

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows an asset mapping/inventory session that was held at the local grocery store deli sitting area. All items in this collection contribute to recognizing personal assets that exist among neighbors and building trust and relationships among residents and researchers.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No,  Yes, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2019.DP.001—Tom and MaryAnn Surface engaging with the personal asset mapping/inventory activity as they have answered the question and are placing their post-it notes.

2019.DP.002—Ray and Susie Good engaging with the personal asset mapping/inventory activity as they have answered the question and are placing their post-it notes.

2019.DP.003—Tom and MaryAnn Surface, Nancy Bernetz, and Andrea engaging in conversation and continuing the asset mapping activity.

2019.DP.004—Wide angle picture of the responses for “what activities do you look forward to?”

2019.DP.005—Up-close view of the responses for the asset inventory question, “what drives your passion for this/these activities?”

2019.DP.006—Up-close view of the responses for “where do these activities take place?”

2019.DP.007—Up-close view of the responses for “do people come to you for certain resources.”

2019.DP.008—Up-close view of the responses for “do you find it important to talk to others about community issues?”

2019.DP.009—Up-close view of the responses for “What fills my day?”

## Photo Log D

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.001 – 2019.DP.012

**Number of Images in Series:** 12

**Camera Make/Model:** iPhone 8 Plus back dual camera 3.99mm f/1.8

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):** 2048 × 1536

**Date(s) of photography** (2019-11-07)

**Location(s):** Iglesia Cristo Te Llama and Osolo Township Fire Department

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Open houses – sharing data to the Prairie Creek Run Neighbors

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Open house, data sharing sessions, neighborhood and community assets

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows Prairie Creek Run open houses, which are data sharing sessions with the neighbors of PCR all held at neighborhood and community assets. Images include site set up and resident interaction and participation.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No,  Yes, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2019.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2019.DP.001— Up-close image of Iglesia Cristo Te Llama which is a neighborhood church that we asked to use their space for one of the open house data sharing sessions.

2019.DP.002— Wide angle picture of the data sharing from household survey set up and refreshments and snacks.

2019.DP.003— Wide angle view of an interactive table activity that asks for residents to circle what they would consider their neighborhood and circle location that they may use the trolley.

2019.DP.004— Up-close view of the boundary and trolley questions.

2019.DP.005— Wide angle view of the survey results display, comment box, and project information table.

2019.DP.006— Up-close view of survey result charts and analysis.

2019.DP.007— Up-close view of a visioning table of what solutions could look like and what residents would prefer.

2019.DP.008— Up-close view of the table that focuses on showing where flooding or draining issues are.

2019.DP.009— Up-close view of a visioning table of “what would you do for the neighborhood if you had a magic wand?”

2019.DP.010—View of Natasha Kauffman, Tom Surface, Andrea Milne, and sign language professional engaging in conversation at the magic wand table.

2019.DP.011—MaryAnn Surface at the visioning table of what solutions could look like and what residents would prefer.

2019.DP.012—Wide angle view of the open houses site set up for the second day of open houses to share data from household survey.

## Photo Log E

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2020.DP.001 – 2020.DP.008

**Number of Images in Series:** 8

**Camera Make/Model:** iPhone 8 Plus back dual camera 3.99mm f/1.8

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):** 2048 × 1536

**Date(s) of photography** (2020-01-13) (2020-02-10) (2020-03-09)

**Location(s):** Martin's Super Market and Lacasa office

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Neighborhood conversations

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Information sharing, building relationships and trust, neighborhood identity, neighborhood priorities

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows residents of Prairie Creek Run interacting and participating in neighborhood conversations across three months. Also present are materials that were the outcomes of the neighborhood conversations.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No, Yes, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2020.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2020.DP.001—Portrait of a group of residents speaking after an information and relationship building session with 2 sheriffs, councilman, and county code enforcer.

2020.DP.002—Close up view of residents speaking after an information and relationship building session with 2 sheriffs, councilman, and county code enforcer.

2020.DP.003—Neighborhood priority 1 recognized by residents of Prairie Creek Run.

2020.DP.004—Neighborhood priority 2 recognized by residents of Prairie Creek Run.

2020.DP.005—Up-close view of a community resources available and made available to all residents in the PCR care packet made and distributed during COVID lock down.

2020.DP.006—Up-close view of a community resources available and made available to all residents in the PCR care packet made and distributed during COVID lock down.

2020.DP.007—Questions addressed during a neighborhood identity conversation.

2020.DP.008—Up-close view Susie and Ray Good and MaryAnn and Tom Surface working on the identity activities that was to help with answering the identity questions.

## Photo Log F

**Researcher:** Daniela Panetta

**Date Logged:** 2021.04.30

**File Name Root:** 2021.DP.001 – 2021.DP.064

**Number of Images in Series:** 64 (some pictures were removed as they were duplicates)

**Camera Make/Model:** (Unknown – as I did not take these photographs)

**Format:**  JPEG  TIFF  RAW  Other: HEIF

**Color space:**  Grayscale  Color

**Bit Depth:**  8  16  24  Other: 64

**PPI:**  72  300  600  Other:

**Pixel Dimensions (Approx.):**

**Date(s) of photography** (2021-03-29) (2021-04-09)

**Location(s):** Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood

**Type of Documentation:**  Portrait  Landscape  Object  Other:

**Subject(s):** Site visit of Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood - Boundaries: Johnson St., Osolo Rd. Bristol St. and Medford St.

**Keywords, Event(s), Names:** Neighborhood assets, greenspace, vacant lots/homes, broken/downed trees

**Summary:** This brief collection of portraits shows a site visit to the Prairie Creek Run Neighborhood Greenspace and a communication survey pop-up conversation that contribute recognizing and utilizing the assets already in the community.

**Copyright Holder:** Daniela Panetta **Restricted?** No, **Yes**, details: for Capstone

**File Name Root:** 2021.DP.XXX

### IMAGE # CONTENT DESCRIPTION

2021.DP.001—Vacant lot with downed branches, a broken “no trespassing” sign in the right corner, abandon trailer, burn barrel, and other unknown items.

2021.DP.002— Wide angle view of a PCR home with a trampoline, kids toys, and a “please slow down children playing sign.”

2021.DP.003— Wide angle view of a vacant lot with an “no trespassing” sign and tree trucks that looks like they are lined up along the side of the road as a barrier.

2021.DP.004—Portrait of brush, litter, and downed trees that is also in close proximity to at least 2 homes.

2021.DP.005—Wide angle view of brush, litter, and downed trees.

2021.DP.006—Wide angle view of tailers, “no parking” sign that someone has added “no outlet parking,” a resident made slow down children playing sign and a bobcat machine in the background.

2021.DP.007—Up-close view of “no outlet parking” and a resident made sign stating “slow down children! playing.”

2021.DP.008—Up-close view of “slow down children! playing” sign and a bobcat machine in the background.

2021.DP.009—Wide angle view with a close up of the resident made sign stating, “slow down children! playing.”

2021.DP.010—Up-close view of resident made sign stating “slow down children! playing" with freehand drawing of a bike and children playing soccer.

2021.DP.011—View of a PCR homes surrounded by trees and where a tree and branches have fallen and where brick on the front of the house have fallen off.

2021.DP.012—Wide angle view of the numerous trees near a PCR home.

2021.DP.013—Wide angle view of a vacant lot with the foundation still present, a fence along the left side of the property, and a car parked on the right side of the property.

2021.DP.014—Different view of vacant lot and the close proximity of house that sits on the right of the vacant lot.

2021.DP.015—Wide angle view of Glenmore St. that includes a “caution children at play” sign.

2021.DP.016—Up-close view of a PCR home that is surrounded by brush and trees where some tree trucks are broken and have fallen along with a fence in the background separating properties.

2021.DP.017—Different view of the fallen tree truck the close proximity of the next property and a car parked on the property to the left of fallen tree truck.

2021.DP.018—Up-close view of more broken and fallen tree branches that are also close to power lines.

2021.DP.019—Wide angle view of vacant and clear lot with trees surrounding the property.

2021.DP.020—Up-close view of overgrown trees.

2021.DP.021—Wide angle view of a vacant and clear lot with trees surrounding the property and fence in the background separating the properties.

2021.DP.022—Wide angle view of a vacant and clear lot with trees surrounding the property and fence in the background separating the properties.

2021.DP.023— Wide angle view of a vacant and clear lot with trees surrounding the property and another vacant and clear space across the street.

2021.DP.028—Newer home addition to the PCR neighborhood with the space around the foundation looks like it is being worked on and with sand in and around the grass.

2021.DP.029—Wide angle view of PCR homes along Berry St.

2021.DP.030—Up-close view of PCR home that seemed to be working on the porch area, Michiana waste service container, detached garage off to the right, and in the background an outdoor seating setup and kiddy pool.

2021.DP.031—Up-close view of an updated PCR home.

2021.DP.032—View of Iglesia Cristo Te Llama, one of the two churches in the neighborhood.

2021.DP.033—View of PCR home with an Elkhart Central Graduate sign in the front lawn along with a truck also in the front lawn.

2021.DP.034—Wide angle view of the neighborhood street that is in close proximity of where the Industrial area starts and the neighborhood ends.

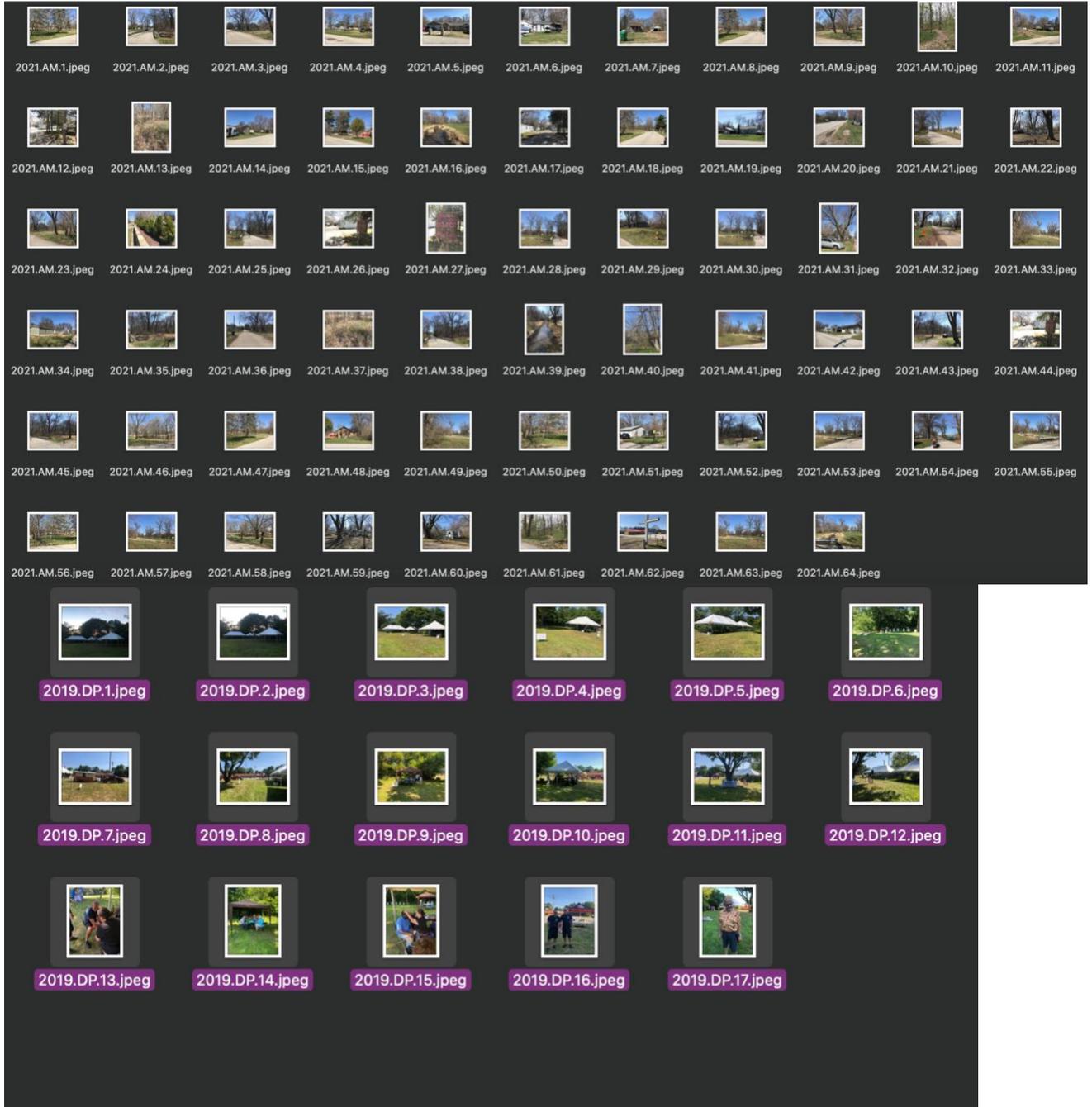
2021.DP.035—Up-close view of items near the side of the road and a parked car on the other side of the street along the fence where the industrial area begins.

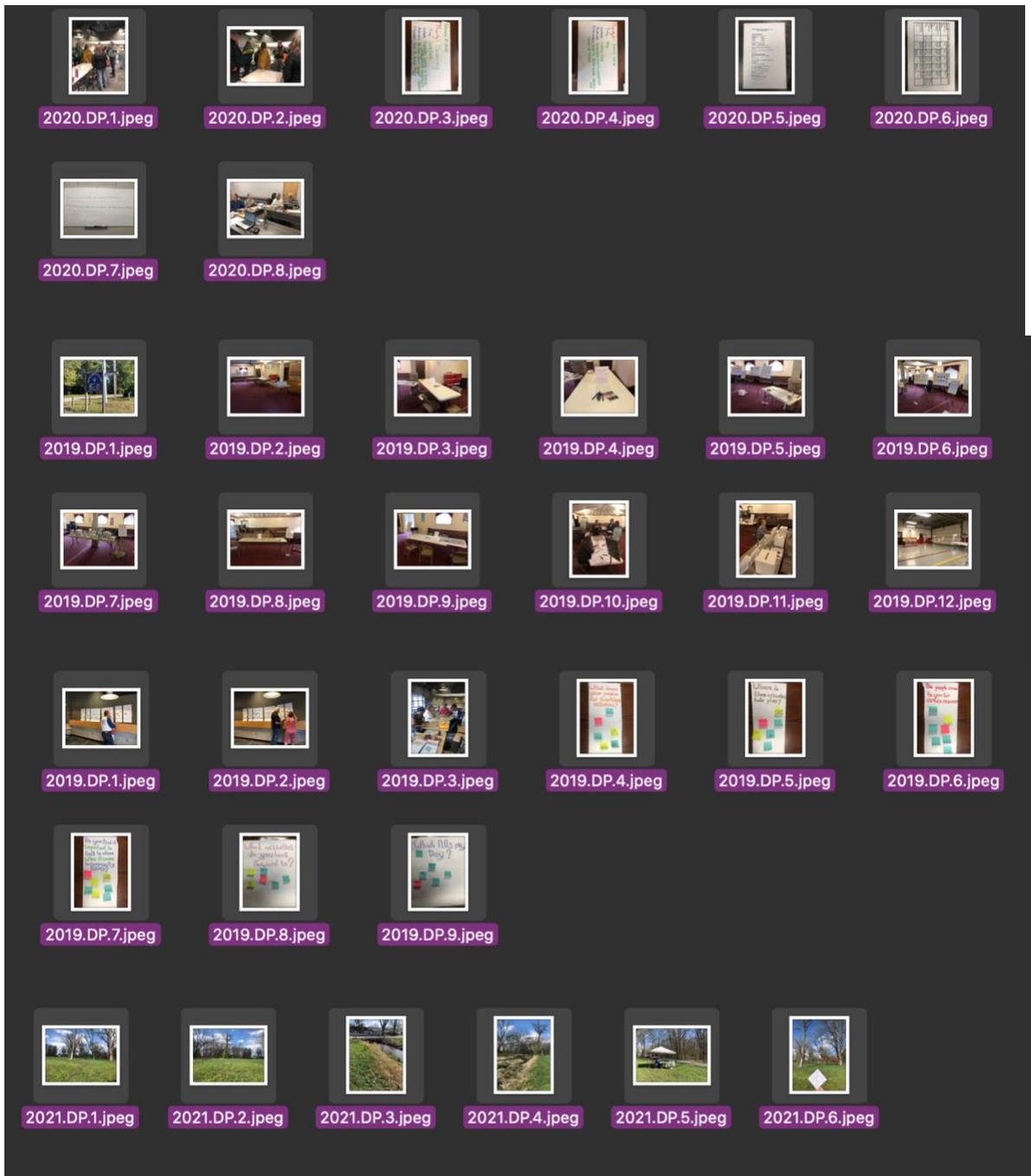
2021.DP.036—Up-close view of the placement of the mailbox from where the road ends, the effects of the consistent driving into to the yard to get to the mailbox and what residents have done to help with preventing ditches forming the constant driving into the yard.

2021.DP.037—View of a PCR home where the roof has caved in.

2021.DP.039—Wide angle view of the Prairie Creek Run greenspace and Lily Creek.  
2021.DP.040—Up-close view of Lily Creek  
2021.DP.041—Wide angle view of the Prairie Creek Run greenspace and Lily Creek.  
2021.DP.042—Side angle of Lily Creek and the trees and brush that run alongside it.  
2021.DP.043—Wide angle view of the Greenspace to the left, the wooded space to the right, and the creek running through the spaces.  
2021.DP.044—Wide angle view of the greenspace and Lily Creek.  
2021.DP.045—View of Lily Creek running through the greenspace.  
2021.DP.046—Up-close view of Lily Creek running through the green space with no particular design or direction.  
2021.DP.047—View of the wooded area, the creek separating the wooded area and a PCR home.  
2021.DP.048—View of the wooded area across from the greenspace.  
2021.DP.049—Wide angle view of the greenspace.  
2021.DP.050—Wide angle view of the greenspace and Lily Creek running through.  
2021.DP.051—Up close view of the natural vegetation and trees that occupy the greenspace.  
2021.DP.058—Up-close view of PCR home with a boat and a cage of some kind in the front yard.  
2021.DP.059—Up-close view of a vacant home that tree fall on and made major damages to the roof.  
2021.DP.060—Up-close view of a vacant home that tree fell on, a van and trailer off to the left, a table in the front lawn and a car seat on top of a pile of debris to the right.  
2021.DP.061—Up-close view of True Vine Tabernacle Church the one of two churches in the neighborhood.  
2021.DP.062—View of a walking trail in the wooded area across from the PCR greenspace.  
2021.DP.064—View of the walking trail in the wooded area across from the PCR greenspace where trees have fallen and have obstructed the path.

## Media Screenshots G





**WORKSHEET 2: Community Asset Inventory**

*For each item below, describe your community in terms of its strengths, characteristics, and/or unique features.*

**1. Geographic parameters and demographics**

**2. History and industries**

**2a. Native American/pre-colonial**

**2b. Significant events and people**

**2c. Products manufactured and grown**

**2d. Cultural and technological innovations**

**2e. Economic base and employment**

**2f. Other**

**3. Geography**

**3a. Natural or geological features**

**3b. Climate**

**3c. Recreational amenities**

**3d. Other**

**4. People (Give special thought to historic or recent uncelebrated heroes, especially women and people of color whose contributions mirror the spirit of community building)**

**4a. Openness**

**4b. Age range and balance**

**4c. Ethnic mix**

**4d. Economic status**

**4e. Education levels**

**4f. Outstanding individuals (Borrup, 2013)**

**4g. Other**

**5. Public sector**

**5a. Effective leadership**

**5b. Communications and accountability**

**5c. Service quality and capacity**

**5d. Versatility and innovation**

**5e. Other**

**6. Reputation**

**6a. Identity to outside world**

**6b. Receptivity to visitors**

**6c. Location and accessibility**

**6d. Navigability**

**6e. Safety**

**6f. Aesthetic experience**

**6g. Other**

**7. Nearby features and attributes**

**7a. Natural amenities**

**7b. Widely known attraction(s) or features**

**7c. Urban center or district (includes or is how far?)**

**7d. Major or unique service(s)**

**7e. Well-known institution(s)**

**7f. Special places**

**7g. Other**

**8. Infrastructure**

**8a. Transportation (Borrup, 2013)**

**8b. Education and culture**

**8c. Housing stock—quality, mix of owner and rental**

**8d. Architecture or built environment**

**8e. Power, water, and sewer adequacy and capacity**

**8f. Underutilized structures and real estate**

**8g. Healthcare**

**8h. Other**

**(Borup, 2013)**

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