

# *Resident Perspectives on the North End*

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## *Abstract*

In conjunction with the North End Action Team (NEAT), a community organizing group based in the North End of Middletown, Connecticut, a research team from Wesleyan University worked to survey the residents of the neighborhood to understand their perspectives on the greatest issues presently facing the community. Through convenience and random sampling methods, we surveyed 113 residents. The top five greatest issues were found to be Crime and Drugs, Infrastructure and Access, Street Dynamics, Youth Activities, and Public Space. We hope that these results can help direct the future community organizing efforts of NEAT.

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## **Introduction**

In January 2015, four students from Wesleyan University's Community Research Seminar partnered with the North End Action Team—a nonprofit, community-based advocacy organization—in order to identify the greatest issues facing Middletown's North End, from the perspective of the neighborhood's residents. Officially established in 1996, the North End Action Team (NEAT) strives to mobilize community resources and grassroots leadership in order to identify and address the shared concerns and needs of the North End community. NEAT's former Executive Director, Bobbye Knoll Peterson, expressed to our team that the organization has been playing a reactionary role in the neighborhood in recent years—addressing the most visible problems as they arise. The Board of Directors felt it was time to look at the neighborhood more closely in order to find those issues that may have been less visible to NEAT in recent years and to tailor NEAT's agenda more closely to the perspectives, concerns, and hopes of North End residents.

Wesleyan students and NEAT members worked together to design and carry out a research project that would gather North End residents' perspectives on their neighborhood, identifying the biggest issues facing the neighborhood and important changes that residents would like to see. At the conclusion of our field research, discussed further in the "Methodology" section of this report, we were able to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data recorded by 113 surveys. These findings will support NEAT's continued efforts to advocate for the needs of the North End neighborhood, hopefully attracting new sources of funding and engaging new members in the process.

## Literature Review and Background

### *The North End*

The North End of Middletown is a historic neighborhood: the sole surviving residential neighborhood in Middletown's downtown area, the North End has always existed at the heart of an ever-changing urban economy (Kuehn, 1990). The predominantly working-class neighborhood is home to a notable immigrant population, which for decades has lived and worked amidst the ebbs and flows of local industry and commerce. Moreover, the North End has served as a "first neighborhood" for generations of immigrant groups from around the world (Department of Planning, n.d.).

Although the history of Middletown is one of diversity and change, the North End neighborhood remained largely untouched throughout the 1950s and 1960s when the City chose to concentrate large-scale redevelopment efforts on commercialization of the South End (Busch et al., 1998). Largely due to residents' objections to the round of urban renewal projects that was destroying sections of historic Main Street, the North End escaped massive redevelopment in the 1950s (NEAT, n.d.). While this left the North End intact throughout the sixties and seventies, it also forced the neighborhood to contend with economic downturn and an ever-intensifying process of urban blight, marked by physical, economic, and social deterioration accelerated by the intensive use and non-renovation of the neighborhood's longest-standing residential buildings. Furthermore, intensive redevelopment efforts in Middletown's South End were often marked by the aggressive pursuit of commercial development at the expense of low- and moderate-income Middletown residents. In the seventies, the North End endured a steady

growing population and a strained supply of affordable housing, largely due to the fact that many residents of the South End were displaced by urban development projects (Busch et al., 1998).

Since the development boom of the fifties and sixties, the North End—without ever losing its richness in history and diversity—has become increasingly characterized by an array of physical and social ills. Urban blight, poverty, homelessness, and crime became enduring problems in the North End, and City Hall was moved to pay greater attention to the neighborhood in hopes of addressing these problems. In 1988, the Mayor and City Council appointed a Task Force to examine the social and physical problems that had come to characterize the North End and ultimately passed their findings along to the City’s Redevelopment Agency (Kuehn, 1990).

The redevelopment process that ensued was characterized by intentions—sometimes aligned and sometimes conflicting—to revitalize the North End, upgrade its living and business conditions, preserve its historic qualities, and maintain its demographic diversity. Despite the City’s declaration of the North End as a municipal priority for revitalization and preservation, the neighborhood continued to struggle and emerge as a site of increasingly public concern. In 1990, the New York Times circulated images of the North End nationwide, insisting, “homeless people now outnumber shoppers, on Middletown’s Main Street” (O’Brien, 2008). In 1996, when 16-year-old Omar Irving was fatally shot in the North End, city officials finally recognized the need for a more comprehensive strategy for rehabilitating the troubled neighborhood (O’Brien, 2008).

The result of Irving’s death was the city government’s creation of the “Urban Homesteading Task Force,” which it organized in order to partner with North End residents in the interest of much-needed revitalization efforts in the neighborhood (O’Brien, 2008). This Task Force was NEAT’s earliest formation, and its purpose was to transform the North End into a

Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) that would be funded by federal grants and loans, managed by the city government, yet designed according to the wants and needs of the North End community (Lisker, 2005). Ultimately, these goals were only partially realized, and grassroots members of the Task Force grew frustrated with bureaucratic gridlock and a lack of community involvement in the North End NRZ's planning process (Lisker, 2005).

### *The North End Action Team*

As frustrations grew among residents looking to address revitalization issues, a group of North End residents and neighborhood stakeholders, which included NEAT's first executive director Lydia Brewster, redirected their energies to the formation of the North End Action Team as the first major grassroots advocacy organization for the revitalization and well-being of the North End neighborhood in 1997. NEAT began to organize block parties, neighborhood cleanups, and public forums and formed committees and programs to address crime, blighted housing and to improve community relations and satisfaction in relation to police, landowners, and local schools (Lisker, 2005).

Housing was of particular concern to NEAT, as the organization came to represent a growing number of residents struggling with landlord non-compliance with residential building codes and the reality of a neighborhood in which "housing and landlords vary from acceptable to appalling" (Lisker, 2005). Consequently, one of NEAT's first public forums in 1999 resulted in the formation of a Housing Committee, which eventually grew to include NEAT organizers, developers, landlords, and representatives from various housing-related charities and services, and members hailing from City Hall and Wesleyan University. After a couple years of relentless negotiation and pressure, the Committee took the name of the "North End Housing Initiative"

(NEHI) and became a major political player in housing and urban development in the North End (Lisker, 2005). After earning the initial support of the Redevelopment Agency, NEHI was ultimately replaced by the Agency with a private developer for the major North End Housing project. NEHI was formally dissolved in 2005, but by that point NEAT had already risen to local political prominence as the voice of Middletown's North End (Lisker, 2005).

Although still young in its existence, NEAT has left a number of major, positive legacies in the North End. In 2005, NEAT partnered with Wesleyan University and the City of Middletown to establish the Green Street Arts (now Teaching and Learning) Center, providing a source of neighborhood stability and community building, particularly for North End youth and families (Wesleyan, n.d.). NEAT has brought measurable improvements to the stability and quality of life of the North End neighborhood through major contributions to affordable housing, food accessibility, community funds, and code enforcement. Furthermore, NEAT has maintained an ongoing commitment to the day-to-day quality and livability of the neighborhood and organizes clean-ups and community gardening activities throughout the year.

In addition to these tangible improvements, NEAT has always been very impactful in its commitment to community building and organizing. It sponsors various programs aimed at fostering neighborhood pride and connectivity, and it insists that all of its programs and projects represent the diversity of the neighborhood and emerge from community processes and community decisions. NEAT can be recognized for its growing political clout in Middletown, while maintaining a grassroots mission for empowering residents to strengthen their voices through facilitation of community meetings, events, and long-term projects throughout the neighborhood.

While the City's revitalization projects have facilitated a renewed sense of pride and growth in the North End, many residents and community stakeholders, including NEAT, continue to sense a need for further improvements. Those who praise Middletown, specifically progress in the North End, for its recent revitalization projects cite the construction of the new Community Health Center and environmentally friendly, brick complex as symbols of successful neighborhood change. North End business owner, Phil Oullette of Eli Cannon's Tap Room, was one to express his confidence in the community by opening NoRA ("North of Rapallo Avenue") Cupcake Company to signify a new identity for the neighborhood. In 2012, NEAT's former Executive Director Izzi Greenberg commented on the growth of the commercial district setting the neighborhood "on the right track...for this next wave in revitalization of this neighborhood." Mayor Daniel Drew praised the dedication of hard-working individuals in the community to reversing the prolonged negative stigma of poverty, crime, drugs, and violence that have plagued the North End for so long (Beals, 2012). Deservingly so, the North End has received a renewed perception of neighborhood success and pride by virtue of its transforming commercial district. NEAT fears, however, that overconfidence in the neighborhood's revitalization has the potential of leaving many persisting issues within the community to be forsaken.

### *Community Organizing*

NEAT's commitment to grassroots development recognizes that neighborhood solutions to problems such as unemployment, crime, violence, and poverty are inextricably linked to the neighborhood's capacity to identify common problems and work toward common goals. Community organizations throughout the country and world are increasingly focused on promoting community empowerment and grassroots leadership as a means of addressing specific



issues voiced by local residents themselves. The triumphs of many of these organizations reveal that the capacity of residents to identify their own problems often provides empowerment to the individual and community and results in increased community participation and local decision-making.

Instead of leaving the fate of a community in the hands of antipoverty programs, social scientists, social workers, teachers, physicians, or priests—all of which may maintain a large gap in communication with the poor communities they seek to serve – organizations like NEAT work to ensure that projects and programs designed to address neighborhood problems actually originate from within the neighborhood. By helping residents assume personal responsibility for addressing neighborhood needs, NEAT inspires North End residents to become engaged in an ongoing effort to address common neighborhood issues and to advocate for the mobilization of local resources and the delivery of social services necessary for the wellbeing of the North End neighborhood.

NEAT's mission, as provided by NEAT's former Executive Director Bobbye Knoll Peterson, is to "empower residents to identify neighborhood concerns and advocate for the interests of the North End neighborhood." It was in this tradition of grassroots empowerment, organization, and advocacy that this project was initiated. Before our first meeting, Bobbye provided us with a collection of NEAT's training guides to community organizing that extended well beyond common understandings of local outreach, volunteerism, and service provision. Every community-organizing project, these guides insist, should not merely address specific neighborhood problems, but cultivate new relationships within the community – the key to meaningful community organizing. The ultimate goal of community organizing, it follows, is not simply to address local problems or needs but to fundamentally restructure local power

relationships, allowing previously disempowered residents to realize the potential for their voices to become influential in local decision-making and development processes (NeighborWorks, n.d., 2010).

This report reflects our intention to honor NEAT's commitment to grassroots community organizing while carrying out an effective and comprehensive research project that uncovers resident perspectives, concerns, and hopes for their neighborhood. Our intentions were always twofold—to provide NEAT with a platform for implementing new programs for addressing community-wide issues identified by residents, and to ensure that it would remain open to change or further elaboration by community members for years to come.

### **Methodology**

At the outset of the project, our Community Research team hosted a dinner at the NEAT office to introduce the project, encourage NEAT member participation in the research process, and solicit NEAT member perspectives on how the survey should be constructed. Based upon this feedback, and other discussions with NEAT leadership and members, and an extensive review of the available literature, the research team decided to construct an open-ended survey aimed at assessing the major neighborhood issues from the perspective of North End residents. NEAT leadership feels that in recent years they have strayed from one of the major tenets of their mission: to ensure that resident perspectives are being heard and that members of the community will have a direct role in shaping the direction of community planning. NEAT hoped to hear from as many voices as possible, including, but not limited to, people with whom previous contact had been limited.

In the interest of getting as many viewpoints as possible while still ensuring that a large number of North End residents was reached, the research team determined that both random sampling and convenience sampling would be utilized to conduct the surveying. The random sample would ensure that people from every area of the neighborhood were surveyed. While this technique is optimal for achieving a representative sampling of the total North End population, there were some concerns among the research team that this method would yield low numbers of respondents. By adding the convenience sample, the team could ensure that many more voices would be heard.

### Map of the North End



Figure 1. The North End is defined as the area between Washington Street, the Connecticut River, and Route 3.

A list of the household units within the North End area was acquired from the City of Middletown through the Director of Planning, Conservation and Development. This list was used to create a random sample of North End units, which was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and randomized so that every twelfth unit on a block would be surveyed. If there was no answer at a selected door, we moved to the next unit on the block. Sometimes, this was simply the next unit in the same dwelling. If no one answered there, we crossed the street and chose the unit directly across from the original survey house. Researchers went door-to-door in pairs of two students or, when possible, of one student and one member of NEAT in an effort to honor our goal for collaborative participation throughout the entire research process.

The same survey was used to conduct interviews with convenience samples of North End residents at Macdonough Elementary School, Green Street Teaching and Learning Center, Community Health Center, and the Saint Vincent DePaul soup kitchen. At each location we set up at a table or chair and solicited participants who were passing by to pick up their child or head to an appointment. At Macdonough School, the survey was conducted during the week of Parent-Teacher conferences. The table was set up in front of the main office of the school to catch parents who were frequently walking to and from their conferences. Typically, we would stop parents to ask if they had a few minutes before or after their conference to help out with a survey about resident perspectives of the neighborhood. Sometimes parents would stop by the table of their own volition to ask what we were doing. At Macdonough the response rate was fairly high. Many parents had already taken time off work and were happy to stop and talk for a little while. At Saint Vincent de Paul the response rate was similarly high. At Green Street Teaching and Learning Center and the Community Health Center, the rate was lower. Parents were rushing to

pick up their kids and return home for the evening, and patients were rushing to and from appointments.

The data collected through random sampling and the data collected through convenience sampling were stored and analyzed separately to acknowledge the potential bias of the different sampling methods, particularly the use of convenience sampling. The location of the surveying, we hypothesized, might affect the type of people being interviewed and potentially the representativeness of the responses.

For example, the surveys collected at Macdonough School during their parent-teacher conference week made up a large part of our convenience sample. The principal of the school allowed placement of a table to conduct surveys near the front office so that we would receive significant parent traffic. This was incredibly helpful as it ensured that we would have access to many parents arriving to talk to their children's teachers. The location of the table, however, was potentially problematic: given that there were questions on the survey about the school, it is possible that parents withheld their concerns for fear of being overheard by school staff. Additionally the entire population of respondents at Macdonough consisted of parents with children. It would make sense that their primary considerations would be community factors that affect their children, especially because they were in a location where their child or children were the focus of the visit. Green Street Teaching and Learning Center brought similar potentially child-related biases. The parents picking up their children were those utilizing youth activities and focused on the happiness and safety of their children. In this way, we risked over representing those with concerns about children.

The population we surveyed at Saint Vincent de Paul also might skew our results, but with different concerns. Many are homeless and/or living significantly below the poverty line.

Many of the homeless residents of the North End reside on or close to Main Street. Much of the drug activity in the North End is centered closer to Main Street, so it would follow that crime and drugs might be of greater concern to these community members than others.

However, though we may have overrepresented this population through our surveying at Saint Vincent DePaul, we believe their perspective is important for understanding the issues faced by the North End neighborhood. Our decision to do convenience sampling at Saint Vincent DePaul stemmed from our desire to represent the perspectives of Middletown's homeless population as well as the perspectives of those who encounter homelessness on a regular basis—even if such perspectives are not necessarily echoed throughout the entire North End. Furthermore, from a logistical standpoint, Saint Vincent DePaul was a great location for surveying because it provided us with daily access to North End residents and allowed us to have sit-down conversations with 16 residents during the soup kitchen's lunch hours.

In short, we chose to conduct surveys at Saint Vincent DePaul for both the sake of convenience and for the purpose of gaining insights into a particular sub-population of the North End. We don't believe bias was introduced by this, first because the issues that were voiced by our Saint Vincent DePaul survey respondents came from both homeless and housed frequenters of the soup kitchen; and second, because later analysis showed that responses from the soup kitchen respondents were no more centered on issues of housing and homelessness than other North End respondents.

Table 1: Greatest Issues at Saint Vincent DePaul (SVD) compared with Greatest Issues at Other Locations

<i>Issues</i>	<i>SVD</i>	<i>SVD % (out of 16)</i>	<i>Other Locations</i>	<i>Other Locations % (out of 97)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total % (out of 113)</i>
<i>Crime and drugs</i>	8	50.0	21	21.6	29	25.7
<i>Youth activities</i>	1	6.3	13	13.4	14	12.4
<i>Infrastructure and access</i>	1	6.3	18	18.6	19	16.8
<i>No issue</i>	1	6.3	12	12.4	13	11.5
<i>Public space</i>	0	0.0	11	11.3	11	9.7
<i>Street dynamics</i>	3	18.8	11	11.3	14	12.4
<i>Police</i>	1	6.3	4	4.1	5	4.4
<i>Housing</i>	1	6.3	3	3.1	4	3.5
<i>Community relations</i>	0	0.0	4	4.1	4	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.3</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.9</b>

As Table 1 illustrates, the perspectives gathered at Saint Vincent DePaul show that—despite being a sub-population disproportionately affected by homelessness—these respondents were concerned about a wide variety of issues in their neighborhood. The only issue that stands out amongst this sub-population is that of crime and drugs, which was consistently voiced as the major issue throughout the North End. As Table 1 shows, the issues raised by residents in the Saint Vincent DePaul population were comparatively consistent to the general population

surveyed; Crime and Drugs, Street Dynamics, and Infrastructure and Accessibility were the three greatest issues.

Unlike the convenience sample, the door-to-door random sample should provide less concern regarding overrepresentation of individual factors that are shaping responses, such as children-gearred answers at Macdonough. However, answers could differ based upon the area in the North End where residents live. For example, there could be different perceptions about noise and traffic based on proximity to Main Street. This highlighted the importance of ensuring that every street of the North End be represented so that a wide array of voices would be heard.

There were a few limitations to this research that should be addressed to improve the quality of future research. First, a language barrier existed that limited (but only occasionally) capturing the perspectives of non-English speaking residents since the research team members could only speak English. This limitation was apparent in a convenience sampling done at Macdonough Elementary School. Several times parents came by the Main Office who solely spoke Spanish. One mother who did not speak enough English to complete the survey walked past our table, and shortly thereafter, a few of the school's staff members discussed that particular parent's displeasure that there were not enough resources at the school to help with translating and navigating the system. If other Spanish-speaking residents felt this way, we completely missed a significant issue for a subset of the population.

More limitations exist within the collected data. The size of our surveyed population (labeled as "n" in typical scientific research) posed problems when we reached the analysis part of the project. Due to the small size of our *n*, we were unable to find statistical significance in the data when we ran statistical correlation tests. Without statistical significance we cannot prove our



answers represent the total population, but nonetheless we believe, given how widely we surveyed the North End, that the answers are representative.

Lastly, we were unable to utilize our income demographic information because there were discrepancies in responses. At the beginning of the surveying the wording of the question caused people to answer with their individual income, when we really needed the household income. This could have been an essential part of identifying which income bracket identified more with a certain issue. However, despite these limitations, we were still able to find important information pertaining to our research topic and present it here.

After the surveying was completed, the team determined by an informal general analysis of the data that the variation between the random and convenience samples was not large enough to necessitate a separate analysis of the data, and the two samples were combined. To account for slight biases found in areas such as youth activity related answers with parent participants, however, the team decided to run separate analyses based upon parental status and home ownership. This allowed us to understand the different patterns of responses based on these characteristics.

Resident perspective on greatest issues facing the North End were grouped into eight categories: Crime and Drugs, Housing, Policing, Public Space, Street Dynamics, Infrastructure and Accessibility, Youth Activities and Schooling, Community Relations, and No Issue.

## **Results**

This report represents the perspectives of a total of 113 North End residents. 56 of these residents were surveyed through convenience sampling at the Community Health Center, the Green Street Teaching and Learning Center, Macdonough Elementary School, and Saint Vincent

de Paul. The other 57 perspectives within this report were part of a random sample of North End residents, which we obtained by going door-to-door in the neighborhood. Of the 113 surveyed North End residents, 13 reported that there was no biggest issue or change needed in the North End. The answers of the remaining 100 were divided into eight categories (defined below) that, from the perspective of the research team, would render the data more understandable and useful to NEAT. Table 2 presents the biggest issues in the North End from the perspectives of 113 surveyed residents.

*Table 2: The North End's Biggest Issues According to 113 Residents*

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Crime and drugs	29	25.7
Infrastructure and access	19	16.8
Street dynamics	14	12.4
Youth activities	14	12.4
No issue	13	11.5
Public space	11	9.7
Police	5	4.4
Housing	4	3.5
Community relations	4	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

The top four issues, as shown in Table 2, are concerns with crime and drugs (25.7%), infrastructure and access (16.8%), street dynamics (12.4%), and youth activities (12.4%). These percentages are a helpful means through which to understand the general findings of our

research, but it is important to note that the research team created these categories fairly arbitrarily, for the purpose of data analysis. While each survey response was assigned to only one category for the purposes of quantification and analysis, responses to the survey, in actuality, were qualitative and did not always fit easily into a single category. Therefore, the discussion below of our results will aim to show that the categories listed in Table 2 are not isolated groups of survey responses but, rather, are interrelated groupings of resident concerns. Ultimately, all nine categories deal with overlapping issues, and all 113 responses work together to paint a picture of residents' perspectives on the North End.

### *Crime and Drugs*

The Crime and Drugs category represents resident concerns with crime and drug use in the North End and the ways in which drug activity impacts the safety of the neighborhood. Despite the fact that recent efforts to revitalize the North End—particularly on and around Main Street—have been commended for cleaning up the neighborhood and improving its safety, crime and drugs were still cited by over a quarter of our survey respondents as the major issues facing the North End.

Of the 29 respondents who expressed concern with crime and drugs, the vast majority felt that these issues compromise the safety of the neighborhood. The few residents who were not very concerned about neighborhood safety seemed to view crime and drugs as more annoying than dangerous and, overall, improving. One such resident commented that drug activity primarily leads to “stuff you just don’t want to see—like funny characters laying down on the street.” Moreover, this resident felt that recent revitalization efforts—particularly the opening of new businesses and of the Community Health Center on Main Street—have indeed helped clean

up the area's crime and drug problems and have helped to minimize the presence of those "funny characters." However, while a few other residents acknowledged these redevelopment efforts, one resident considered them to be more of a "short-term solution" to a persistent problem and one opined that Main Street's revitalization was more tailored to the interests of the local business community than to the needs of North End residents.

Moreover, 23 residents felt that—in spite of recent redevelopment efforts—crime and drugs continue to compromise the safety of their neighborhood. Five of these residents expressed that their concerns were not simply with drug activity alone but rather with the conditions—such as "the gunpoint, the violence, the drama, and the stealing"—that come along with it. One such resident claimed to care less about what drugs people use than about "who they knock out and rob." About a quarter of those citing crime and drugs as the North End's greatest issue were explicitly concerned about the visibility of drug activity to their children. One respondent feared that his son would be influenced by exposure to the drug trade, and another resident worried about letting his daughters walk alone to certain areas for fear of what they might see along the way.

While a few residents stated that drug problems seem to be concentrated in certain areas closer to Main Street—such as Grand and Ferry Streets—the majority of respondents concerned with crime and drugs (25 out of 29) agreed that these issues were community-wide in their reach. Furthermore, more than half of those citing crime and drugs as major issues in the North End could not think of any past efforts to solve this issue. A few respondents who could think of past efforts mentioned the frequency of police raids in the neighborhood.

In general, however, respondents were split on their evaluations of the police response to crime and drugs. Eighteen respondents felt the police are, to a certain extent, responsive to crime

and drug-related problems. Their answers ranged from “somewhat responsive” and “it depends on the officer” to “Yes, the police do what they can” or “yes, the police are doing their job.” The other eleven residents, however, did not think the police were adequately responsive. While most of these eleven respondents agreed that the police do not respond consistently or sufficiently to crime and drug activity, some went even further to claim that the police actually enable the drug trade: “They [the police] allow it to go on, said one resident, insisting that the police get paid to lay off the drug dealers. A second resident echoed these concerns about corruption within the local police force.

Thus, amongst the 29 respondents whose leading concerns were related to crime and drugs, there was a significant amount of disagreement over the extent to which the police are helpful in addressing these issues. The concerns voiced by residents about the police response to crime and drug activity in the North End must also be understood alongside a more general concern with the policing of the neighborhood, which we grouped into a separate category called “Policing.”

### *Policing*

The Policing category is composed of five residents who expressed issues with police presence and behavior in the North End. While these five residents certainly add to the debate about the police response to crime and drugs in the neighborhood, their responses were placed in a separate category because they emphasized policing—not the crime or drug-related issues to which the police respond—as their primary concern.

Three of the five residents concerned with policing in the North End expressed a desire for an increased police presence. One resident suggested that the “stigma on the neighborhood

due to drugs” could be altered by a greater police presence, which would foster a sense of safety and stability throughout the neighborhood. Of the two residents that did not request increased police presence in the North End, one young man desired *less* police presence and one parent explained that the police are visible but are often just seen “giving people a hard time,” suggesting that changes in police behavior are more important than shifts in police quantity or visibility. All five residents concerned with policing agreed that police-related issues exist community-wide and prove to be bothersome on a daily or weekly basis.

Therefore, residents in both the “Policing” and “Crime and Drugs” categories are notably concerned with policing, but they are divided in their opinions of what a better policing strategy would look like. In order to make sense of these divisions, a more focused study would be necessary and would have to examine demographics, location, and other factors that might influence resident perspectives on the police.

### *Street Dynamics*

Street Dynamics encompasses 14 residents’ concerns with the social dynamics and behaviors that take place on the streets of the North End. While the concerns expressed by these 14 residents—12.4% of our surveyed population—are certainly related to the concerns with street activity and behavior that were expressed by residents in the “Crime and Drugs” category, this category primarily includes resident concerns with loitering and homelessness.

Nine respondents within this category voiced explicit concerns about loitering in the North End. Some of these respondents attributed the North End’s loitering problem to the use and sale of drugs taking place on local streets and, therefore, support the finding that drug activity remains a major issue facing North End residents. A couple respondents related loitering

to the lack of activities available to kids and teenagers in the neighborhood, reflecting concerns regarding youth activities that will be discussed later in this report.

Eight of the residents whose concerns fell into this category felt that homelessness is a major problem facing the North End and emphasized that—even with the variety of homeless shelters and services that exist in Middletown—a consistently large number of homeless people are forced to live and sleep on the streets. Three of these residents emphasized the need for more programs to help Middletown’s homeless population get and stay off the streets. Two residents articulated a need for more housing programs for the local homeless population, one resident wanted more substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, and one woman problematized the fact that the nearest women’s shelter does not allow children.

### *Housing*

Although only four residents voiced explicit concerns about housing in the North End, two of these four residents echoed the concerns of those respondents in the “Street Dynamics” category who felt that homelessness is a major issue facing the North End. These two residents—one of whom is currently homeless—cited the lack of affordable housing as a major issue to which the prevalence of homelessness in the neighborhood is likely connected.

The three non-homeless residents whose primary concerns were related to housing were concerned with affordability, the upkeep of their homes, and their treatment by their landlords. It is interesting to note that all three of these residents were renters and voiced concerns that were directly related to their status as renters. However, because only three of the 77 rent-paying residents that we surveyed voiced such concerns, we cannot draw any significant conclusions about the problems that might face renters in the North End. Overall, our findings with respect to

“Street Dynamics” and “Housing” suggest that homelessness is a major issue facing the North End while other housing-related issues appear to be less significant.

### *Infrastructure and Accessibility*

The Infrastructure and Accessibility category contains concerns with the built environment and accessibility of the North End and how this influences the businesses and resources available to residents. Residents concerns grouped into this category ranged from traffic patterns and parking to food access. At a total of 19 residents, this category includes a set of issues that were vocalized by the second highest percentage of survey respondents (16.8%).

Ten of these respondents focused their concerns on street infrastructure, particularly on traffic and parking. Six people complained about the amount of traffic in the neighborhood, which most attributed to the North End’s busy roads and intersections. One person thought that traffic lights could be longer and two residents—from pedestrians’ perspectives—felt the need for more crosswalks. Five respondents were concerned with parking spaces, but in contrasting directions: two thought parking in the areas surrounding Lincoln and Pearl made those streets too congested, while two others wanted more, wider parking spaces. Two respondents were concerned with the quality of roads in the North End: one said that the state of local streets is “horrible,” and another expressed concern about potholes. Another resident complained of traffic speed on residential streets; he commented that there is a need to install speed bumps to create safer conditions in the neighborhood because crossing signs have been ineffective. The ten residents concerned with street infrastructure felt that these issues compromised their daily ease of access, the safety of the neighborhood, or a combination of the two.



One resident particularly worth noting affirmed that the North End’s perennial street infrastructure problem—road access to the Miller-Bridge area—continues to be a problem for its residents. Although we were only able to conduct two surveys in the Miller-Bridge community, a small subpopulation of the North End, one respondent stated that the inaccessibility of the Miller-Bridge neighborhood by car was his biggest problem with living in the North End.

Four respondents were concerned with the businesses accessible to North End residents, particularly with respect to food. Two of these residents were concerned about hunger in the neighborhood and emphasized the need for more healthy and affordable food. The other two residents hoped for a greater diversity of businesses, with one commenting that there should be more to do in the neighborhood than just eat. While these residents hope to see new businesses in the North End, two other residents were concerned about the gentrification that might accompany new business development.

### *Public Space*

The Public Space category covers issues of litter, dog waste, and how people use the shared environment that reduce the sense of cleanliness and upkeep within the North End neighborhood. Eleven survey respondents (9.7% of the sample population) cited public space issues as a consistent occurrence in the North End.

The majority of these respondents believe the issue of clean public space is community-wide, while a few delineating only certain blocks/areas of the North End to be the problem. One resident felt the neighborhood has been “ignored by [the] City of Middletown on upkeep and development from Washington [Street] and up,” a discrepancy in service dating back to the North and South redevelopment history that many feel still exists. Another person mentioned

that “people hanging out on streets”—which residents expressed as generally occurring in specific pockets of the neighborhood—contributes to the accumulation of trash in these areas.

Respondents were almost evenly divided between believing it is the individual or the community’s responsibility to address these issues. Many mentioned past neighborhood cleanups, which hold the community as a whole responsible for maintaining a positive appearance in public spaces. Other respondents expressed that it is up to the individual to maintain personal responsibility or the police to levy fines on those who do not. Obstacles to addressing issues in public spaces appear primarily to be lack of interest and lack of funds for providing the neighborhood with resources to keep trash and dog feces off the street (e.g., trash cans, pick-up signs, and waste disposal bags).

### *Youth Activities*

The Youth Activities category includes residents who believe the largest issue is that the needs of youth in the community are not being met in their school environments and/or in after school and weekend activities. Of the 113 respondents, 14 (12.4%) stated that the lack of youth activities or the schools was the biggest issue in the North End.

There were three main areas related to youth activities and schooling that residents felt needed improvement. The first concern was afterschool activities. Many North End parents are still working when school lets out and wish that there were resources for children to utilize, like tutoring, music, dance, art, and outdoor activities. Some requested options besides sports for children who were not interested in athletics. Residents also felt evening community activities would be utilized. They believed that events such as a bowling or skating night would be popular. Another suggestion was a community center for teenagers. Many feel there are adequate

places for small children and for elderly folks but that teenagers do not have a place they feel comfortable in the community. The third major suggestion was improving facilities in the North End. Residents would like to see more parks and improvements in existing facilities, such as fencing around the Ferry Street park.

In order to take steps to resolve this issue, nine reported that community efforts (e.g., volunteering, knocking on doors with a petition) were needed, three emphasized the importance of resources (e.g., sponsors), and one believed in individual efforts (identify and find a space for teens to hang out).

### *Parent Concerns*

In light of the somewhat skewed representation of parents in the data set because of the Macdonough and Green Street convenience samples, we analyzed the data based on parental status, looking for any notable differences from the overall survey population.

*Table 3: Biggest Issue and Parental Status*

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Parent % (out of 61)</i>	<i>Non-Parent</i>	<i>Non-Parent % (out of 52)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total % (out of 113)</i>
<i>Crime and drugs</i>	16	26.2	12	23.0	28	24.8
<i>Youth activities</i>	13	21.3	1	1.9	14	12.4
<i>Infrastructure and access</i>	10	16.4	9	17.3	19	16.8
<i>No issue</i>	7	11.5	6	11.5	13	11.5
<i>Public space</i>	7	11.5	4	7.7	11	9.7
<i>Street dynamics</i>	4	6.6	11	21.2	15	13.3
<i>Police</i>	2	3.3	3	5.8	5	4.4
<i>Housing</i>	1	1.6	3	5.8	4	3.5
<i>Community relations</i>	1	1.6	3	5.8	4	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Although focused on their children, parents did, however, have similar concerns as the general sample population. Most notably, crime and drugs were the most mentioned issue among parents.

A majority of North End parents surveyed believe that crime and drugs compromise the safety of the neighborhood, but also that police are responsive. According to one parent:

*Yes, they [the police] are around more and drive by, asking [us] if we have any concerns. It does [compromise safety]. I hate to have my child see such sketchy behavior.*

Unsurprisingly, the issue with the largest difference between parents and non-parents was youth activities. There were, however, some non-parents who believe that a lack of teen activities leads to other issues such as loitering or crime and drugs. Again, as with many of these categories, the issues overlap quite a bit; some of the nonparent answers in categories like Crime and Drugs nonetheless mentioned the lack of alternatives for teens as a contributing factor.

Parents who reported youth activities as the greatest issue provided examples of changes they would like to see. Examples include utilizing a building as a community center and increasing after-school activities (e.g., skating/bowling night), most of which look to engage children during the evenings. One parent had the idea of starting a Boys and Girls Club in the neighborhood. Nearby cities such as Meriden and Hartford have Boys and Girls clubs that provide a space for children and teens to engage in a variety of activities, ranging from education and career programs, to health and life skills classes, to sports and to arts. While many parents believe that there are a few good options for childcare and youth activities, such as Green Street, they believe there is a dire need for spaces where teenagers feel comfortable spending time.

While parents desired more activities, they also acknowledged that a lack of funds impeded the creation of activities and that there needs to be more community involvement (e.g.,

volunteering) and discussion/meetings in order to take steps towards resolving this issue, something that NEAT could easily facilitate.

### *Community Relations*

The Community Relations category consists of resident concerns related to neighborhood stigma, community relationships, and a lack of activities within the neighborhood, reported by four residents to be the biggest issue(s) in the North End.

Two residents wanted better neighborhood relations, in general, and another expressed a desire for more “person-to-person contact” in order to make residents more willing to work together and support one another. While these responses were too few to suggest widespread concern within the neighborhood, they do lend credence to our findings—which will be discussed in the following section of our report—that North End residents seem to be in favor of a more engaged, united, and organized community.

### *No Issue*

Thirteen residents (11.5%) reported having no issue with the North End. These responses have been mainly catalogued in other categories such as Crime and Drugs; again, the overlap of categories made assigning qualitative answers to one category or another somewhat arbitrary. However, because we did not question these respondents further about why they did not report an issue with the neighborhood, we do not have enough information to explain these responses any further. Therefore, what is most significant about the size of the “No Issue” category is that it confirms that the vast majority of surveyed residents (88.5%) *did* report an issue with their neighborhood. With this in mind, the need to consider potential solutions to the North End’s issues becomes particularly pressing.

## **Solutions to Neighborhood Issues**

### *A Local Preference for Community-generated Solutions*

Since this project’s inception, our intention has been to produce a prescriptive report that would ultimately help inform NEAT’s future organizing strategy. As such, we designed our survey to include both questions about what a given survey respondent believes to be the major issues in the neighborhood *and* questions about how these issues, according to said respondent, should be addressed. Thus, one part of our survey focused on residents’ perspectives on how issues in the North End might be addressed and about what obstacles, if any, might stand in the way of addressing these issues. The resulting findings can be grouped into four categories that represent potential types of solutions to neighborhood issues: Community, Individual, Policy, and Resources. The “Community” category refers to community-generated solutions, such as discussions and volunteering. By contrast, the “Individual” category comprises the perspectives of those residents who believe that it is an individual’s responsibility to address his or her own problems, such as by calling the police when encountering drug activity on local streets. The “Policy” category consists of residents who believe that solutions to their expressed issues must come from the city government, and the responses grouped within this category tend to reflect resident demands for particular actions on the part of city officials. The “Resources” category—while related to the “Policy” category in that it refers to government resources—is less concerned with the behavior of city officials than with the availability of public funds.

*Table 4: Resident Perspectives on Potential Types of Solutions to Neighborhood Issues*

Type of Solution	Frequency	Percent
Community	38	38.0
No Solution	21	21.0
Policy	17	17.0
Resources	15	15.0
Individual	9	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

First, it is important to note that Table 4 includes the perspectives of only 100 of our 113 total surveyed residents. This is because 13 respondents expressed no issue with the North End neighborhood and, consequently, were not even asked to come up with potential solutions. Table 4, therefore, depicts the types of solutions favored by the 100 respondents who could identify a major issue in their neighborhood. Of these respondents, a plurality (38%) believed that a community-generated solution would be the best strategy for dealing with the issue(s) they expressed. Almost all of the residents in this category articulated a general desire for residents to become more involved in their community.

Suggestions from the 38 residents who favored community-generated solutions to neighborhood concerns included community-wide meetings and discussions, volunteering opportunities, and even some direct references to NEAT and its past and current programs. While most of the residents in this category expressed the need for more volunteers to help address neighborhood issues, a handful did not seem to think that volunteers would have the time or political clout to be entirely effective. One resident, for example, thought that the North End needs more salaried advocates, and eight residents who favored community-wide discussion still felt discussion should not just remain amongst the community but, rather, should ultimately lead to action from local government.

While community-generated solutions clearly overlapped with—and often led to—policy-related solutions, this first category identifies those residents who felt that changes—including policy change—must have community-wide discussion and organization *as the starting point*. One such resident, for example, felt that residents should organize around issues *in order to* bring them to the city government, adding that residents could utilize NEAT to support them in their organizing efforts. Clearly, community organizing has an important role in the North End from the perspective of the residents we surveyed, and NEAT’s past and current organizing efforts continue to be supported by many North End residents.

“Policy” and “Resources” approaches were favored by about the same amount of residents—at 17 and 19, respectively. In the “Resources” group, residents expressed a need for greater funding, more housing options, and an increase in public resources, in general. In the “Policy” group, residents expressed more pointed concerns about the behavior of city officials. Ten residents articulated the need for city officials to either be more attentive to the North End in general or, more specifically, to more effectively enforce city regulations in the neighborhood, particularly with respect to parking, loitering, littering, and drug use. Suggestions related to policing often fell into this category.

Finally, a “Not Applicable” category was created for those survey respondents who did not provide or could not think of potential solutions to their stated issues with their neighborhood. Twenty-one residents, as seen in Table 3, fell into this category. While responses in the “Not Applicable” category do not provide much in the way of recommendations for NEAT’s future organizing strategy, it must be acknowledged that many residents—when stopped and surveyed unexpectedly—simply did not have ample time to think of solutions to complex and lasting community-wide issues.



Table 4 provides another breakdown of resident perspectives on solutions to issues in the North End. In this table, a resident’s favored solution is cross-tabulated with his or her greatest issue with the neighborhood. Once again, all 13 of the residents who had “no issue” with the neighborhood are not included in this table.

*Table 5: Resident’s Greatest Issues and Favored Solutions to these Issues*

	Community	Community % (out of 38)	Policy	Policy % (out of 17)	Resources	Resources % (out of 15)	Individual	Individual % (out of 9)	Nothing	Nothing % (out of 21)	Total
Crime and drugs	9	23.7	6	35.3	3	20.0	3	33.3	8	38.1	29
Infrastructure/Access	7	18.4	4	23.5	3	20.0	2	22.2	3	14.3	19
Street dynamics	2	5.3	4	23.5	3	20.0	1	11.1	4	19.0	14
Youth activities	9	23.7	0	0.0	3	20.0	1	11.1	1	4.8	14
Public space	5	13.2	1	5.9	2	13.3	1	11.1	2	9.5	11
Police	3	7.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1	1	4.8	5
Housing	1	2.6	1	5.9	1	6.7	0	0.0	1	4.8	4
Community relations	2	5.3	1	5.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100</b>

Significantly, for all issue categories except “Street Dynamics,” residents favored community-generated solutions. Residents concerned with street dynamics had their solutions spread evenly across the “Not Applicable,” “Policy,” and “Resources” categories. Because resident concerns with “Street Dynamics” were closely tied to drug-related street activity and homelessness, their favored solutions included calls for greater police regulation of drug activity and for more funding to be made available for housing provision and anti-homelessness measures.

Importantly, for the two most stated issue categories—“Crime and Drugs” and “Infrastructure and Accessibility”—community-generated solutions were favored despite the fact that regulation of these issues tends to fall under the purview of local government. With respect to crime and drugs, respondents’ answers to what can be done were varied. Eight of 29 respondents stated that they did not know how to solve this issue or thought it to be irresolvable, with a few of these residents believing that crime and drugs are inevitable issues with which

urban neighborhoods “nationwide” must contend. Only three residents believed in individual efforts (e.g. voicing opinions and taking a stand), while six residents favored policy measures (e.g. more police or greater police responsiveness). Three residents believed in more indirect solutions related to the provision of public resources: one felt that improving the quality of public education would lessen the influence of the drug trade in the neighborhood, and another felt that more bus routes would attract young working families to the area and gradually steer the population away from drug activity. Still, community-generated solutions were favored by the greatest number of residents whose concerns were related to crime and drugs, and these nine residents felt community-based resource groups and discussions could help address these issues.

With respect to those residents whose concerns fell into the “Policing” category—albeit related to crime and drugs—three of the five respondents noted that greater community involvement is a necessary precursor to addressing concerns with policing. Interestingly, not a single resident that we encountered seemed aware of NEAT’s community policing initiatives despite the fact that NEAT has spent years focusing on police-related issues. While our findings reveal that residents would likely be favorable to a community-generated solution to concerns with policing, it is important to emphasize that a far greater number of residents were concerned with the prevalence of crime and drugs in the North End than with police responses to these issues.

Residents whose concerns fell into the Public Space and Youth Activities categories also demonstrated a clear preference for community-generated solutions. Public Space responders were particularly interested in more neighborhood clean-ups like the ones that NEAT has organized since its founding. Youth Activity respondents were particularly interested in their creation through some form of community organizing, as opposed, for instance, in having the

schools create more activities. A few residents specified that the community should be engaged in a more active effort to create youth activities and programs that are *not* tied to a particular school and that take place on the weekends or over the summer.

### **The Role of NEAT in the North End**

The above findings suggest that some form of community-generated solution--such as community meetings, discussions, volunteering, or organizing--is the favored approach to addressing most community issues, according to our survey respondents. This strongly suggests that NEAT's original and core mission remains important in the North End and fits well within many residents' visions about how neighborhood issues can be addressed.

While this finding alone holds great significance for NEAT and its future plans, we began our research with the intention of gathering even more concrete resident perspectives on NEAT, its mission, and its role in the North End. We therefore concluded our survey with a set of questions focused explicitly on residents' perspectives of NEAT: have residents heard of or worked with NEAT? If so, what do they think of NEAT's role in the neighborhood? And finally, if they have not heard of NEAT, are they interested in getting more involved? Together, these aspects of the survey served to assess resident perceptions of NEAT and its mission, as well as to acquire a list of new membership for NEAT.

*Table 6: Responses to the Question: "Have you heard of NEAT?"*

	Frequency	Percent
No	35	31.0
Yes	78	69.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

Our results regarding resident knowledge and perspectives of NEAT suggest that NEAT is perceived to have a positive role in the North End. 78 of our respondents (69%) had heard of NEAT. Of these 78 residents, 43 (55%) believed that the organization plays a positive role in the neighborhood. Ten of the 43 residents who spoke positively about NEAT emphasized the importance of NEAT’s initiatives related to public space, such as neighborhood clean-ups and community gardens. Six residents spoke favorably about NEAT’s youth activities and mentoring programs, and seven residents appreciated NEAT for empowering residents by giving them the information and tools to improve their own situation. In more specific terms, one resident valued NEAT’s voting booth earlier this year, while another respondent appreciated NEAT’s efforts toward helping residents with their taxes. Two residents thanked NEAT for lending them support when they were struggling to find housing, and another resident claimed that NEAT—either by lending support to residents in need of housing or by organizing activities—helps “keep people off the streets.”

In addition to resident empowerment, NEAT was also commended for improving community relations in the North End. Eight residents valued NEAT’s efforts to build community by hosting events and “bringing people together.” Five of these eight residents felt NEAT really looks out for the North End, continues to expand its reach to new people, and remains “open-minded” to all residents.

Fifteen residents (19%) categorized their perception of NEAT as “neutral,” some of whom qualified their statements by saying that they did not know enough about NEAT to form an opinion. Of the remaining twenty residents who had heard of NEAT, nineteen residents (24%) had mixed perspectives that were neither completely positive nor completely negative. Four residents said that they valued NEAT’s existence and history of organizing but that the organization’s current outreach to the community could be improved. One resident felt that NEAT could be reaching out to more areas of the community, and another felt that the organization should host fundraising and outreach events more frequently. Another two residents explained that they had not heard much about NEAT in recent years, but did not say that that is necessarily the fault of the organization. Of all 78 surveyed residents who had heard of NEAT, only one resident had a negative opinion of NEAT, but he admitted to appreciating their work in the past and lamented the fact that the organization has been less active in recent years. Significantly, no surveyed residents expressed concerns about any particular NEAT campaigns or programs; rather, negative, neutral, or uncertain feelings about NEAT’s role in the neighborhood came from residents who hoped to see more from NEAT and felt the organization has become less active and present than it has been in years past.

Our results regarding resident knowledge and perspectives of NEAT, therefore, suggest that the majority of surveyed residents view NEAT as playing an important role in the North End. Both a majority of the survey respondents who had not heard of NEAT and some of those residents who had heard of NEAT but were not in contact with the organization expressed an interest in becoming more involved: 50 residents--almost half of our surveyed population--asked to be added to NEAT’s membership list. Overall, our findings reveal the North End to be a community that views community organizing, in general, and NEAT, in particular, favorably.

## Conclusion

As seen through the eyes of 113 North End residents, many of the issues traditionally found in the North End—including crime and drugs, infrastructure problems, street dynamics, and the need for more youth activities—remain pressing, despite the city’s efforts to resolve these through the years.

One of the most significant findings of our research—that crime and drugs remain the leading concerns of North End residents—challenges the idea that recent redevelopment efforts have cleaned up the North End and remedied its long-standing, problematic involvement in the drug trade. While a few residents acknowledged the merit of recent attempts to revitalize the neighborhood, the majority of the residents concerned with crime and drugs felt that these issues have persisted and continue to pose serious threats to the safety of the North End.

While a fair amount of residents expressed related concerns about the state of policing in the neighborhood, residents were significantly more concerned about the prevalence of crime and drugs than with police responses to these issues. Moreover, those residents who did express police-related concerns were not in agreement about what, exactly, should be done to improve policing in the neighborhood. Considering all of this, we would recommend that NEAT redirect its attention from police-related issues toward a broader focus on the persistence of crime and drugs in the neighborhood, an issue to which concerns about policing are inextricably linked. In terms of how issues related to crime and drugs should be addressed, another significant finding of our research is the fact that the majority of residents who were concerned about crime and drugs favored community-generated strategies for addressing these issues. Among the strategies suggested by these residents, resource groups and discussions were the most favored.

Realistically, community-wide discussions are not likely to solve the North End's crime and drug problems, and there do not appear to be many ways that NEAT can *directly* pull drug dealers off the street and police the neighborhood with its own manpower. However, NEAT can focus its efforts on *indirectly* softening the effects of drugs and crime on concerned residents, by decreasing the likelihood that children will encounter what is described by parents as shady or sketchy behavior. Many of the residents we surveyed were worried about crime and drugs, street activity, and loitering primarily because of how these behaviors might affect children. Therefore, by implementing more activities for children, NEAT could help lessen the amount of time that children spend on the streets and exposed to drug activity or other unsafe situations.

In addition to providing an indirect solution to crime and drug-related street activity, NEAT initiatives in favor of more youth activities would directly satisfy the 12.4% of our surveyed population who cited youth activities as their primary cause for concern with the North End. Almost every resident who expressed concerns about the quantity or quality of youth activities available in the neighborhood favored collective, community-generated efforts to improve this situation. In our opinion, NEAT-led efforts to bring a greater diversity of youth activities to the North End would be highly supported by a vast array of North End residents, ranging from those residents concerned with drug activity and loitering to those residents concerned with youth activities, specifically.

Another set of issues for which residents clearly favored community-generated solutions were those issues related to public space, such as littering and dog waste. Several residents hoped for more neighborhood clean-ups and other volunteer-supported efforts to beautify the North End, and we urge NEAT to spearhead the organization of these efforts.

As all of the above findings reveal, the majority of residents felt that their stated issue could best be resolved through collective, community-generated efforts as opposed to individual-oriented actions. Community-generated solutions were favored for almost every issue that was expressed by our surveyed population, and residents favoring collective-oriented solutions even outnumbered those residents who stressed policy changes and greater access to resources as the key to neighborhood improvement. The collective orientation of these residents' perspectives bodes well for NEAT's future and its collective-oriented mission of community organizing and neighborhood empowerment. Furthermore, NEAT's past and present volunteering efforts were validated by the significant number of surveyed residents who favored volunteerism, the majority of whom expressed interest in becoming more involved with NEAT in the future.

In conclusion, it is clear that NEAT has already positively impacted the North End in a myriad of ways and is positively regarded by most of the residents who have heard of the organization. However, we encourage NEAT to continue to reach out to previously untouched areas of the North End, to continue to seek new members, and to turn its focus toward some of the issues that—according to our findings—continue to be most pressing in the neighborhood. We believe that the North End Action Team and its mission are well-suited for a community that has demonstrated both a continued concern with the issues facing their neighborhood *and* a continued belief in community organizing as the best strategy for addressing these issues.



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