

5.0 Conclusion

This chapter will briefly summarize the major findings of the data collection completed as part of the planning process. It is split up in sections according to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the neighborhood. It is often hard to separate what is a weakness from an opportunity and it is important to try to turn potential weaknesses into future opportunities. The threats category requires that we look to the future and predicting trends, something that is both hard and at times unreliable, we do however give it a qualified try in this section. We start by outlining the strengths of the neighborhood in that they are the foundation we have to build on, when addressing the weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

STRENGTHS

Lansdowne have many areas of strengths, and the following will outline the most frequently cited ones:

- ?? Creation of LSC shows a commitment to a better neighborhood and with this network in place comes strength in numbers.
- ?? The cooperation with the university of Illinois' ESLARP program is a positive development in that it provides technical and organizational assistance on the resident's terms to achieve goals of LSC.
- ?? Many residents that have not previously been involved in neighborhood based organizations have throughout the planning process expressed an interest in becoming actively involved with a residential community program; if this support and commitment is developed progress in the Lansdowne area should be easier.
- ?? Area largely families (1,499 of the 2,113 households) so in theory a more stable, agreeable setting for action and change.
- ?? The unemployment rate for the area is decreasing (Census Data 26.4% - 24.86%, 1980 to 1990).
- ?? Lansdowne often sited as quiet and peaceful neighborhood.
- ?? Much of Lansdowne's housing stock is in good or fair condition

2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

- ?? Educational facilities for teenagers and younger are relatively strong. The Jackie Joyner-Keese center is beneficial in this area.
- ?? Transportation networks (bus and metro) is a positive feature of the neighborhood.

WEAKNESSES

There was a high degree of agreement among residents on what the key problems in Lansdowne are. The following summarizes weaknesses:

- ?? The decreasing population of Lansdowne (32.78% decrease in population between years 1980-1990) and ESL due to emigration/flight is a trend that is hard to turn about. Dropping number of households leads to more vacant and often derelict houses leading to worsening appearance of the area at large.
- ?? Street repair and maintenance bad with 79.2% residents highlighting poor street conditions. Also lack of lighting and no sidewalks a high concern.
- ?? High crime/low level police surveillance a residential concern
- ?? Drug activity unsatisfactory
- ?? Lack of recreation areas in area
- ?? No job training facilities or drug/alcohol treatment centers.
- ?? Environmental problems; in particular illegal dumping (69.2% residents rated this problem very serious)
- ?? Poor Drainage
- ?? Lack of people in area with bachelor's degree/high school diploma (3.88% and 52.7%) shows lack of attractive pull factors for those with qualifications to settle in the neighborhood.
- ?? Low median pay of area (\$13,028) means that lack of money for shopping (no local shopping business' can survive) or for home improvements.
- ?? The ratio of median rent compared to income is increasing (1980:1990 = 8%:12% for tract 5004. 1980:1990 = 13%:21% for tract 5005) if this trend continues residents have even less spare money to invest in local economy.

2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

?? Continuing decline in value of owner occupied units in the area compared to ESL (see table pg 28)

OPPORTUNITIES

As stated earlier opportunities often arise based on threats and weaknesses. It is important that we work towards turning the negative into positive attributes of the neighborhood and focus on achieving the best outcomes for residents in Lansdowne:

- ?? High % of female led households (42.7%) shows that resources could be put into providing more services for single mothers
- ?? With the low level of high school/diploma holders in area incentives and opportunities such as job training for these people need to be created so they can become stronger assets and help attract employers to the area.
- ?? Convert vacant lots (51.1% of parcels in Lansdowne vacant) into something productive = better looking neighborhoods, encourage people back in, cleaner areas
- ?? Over 50% of parcels are vacant; obvious potential; recreation areas?
- ?? With many retail buildings unoccupied need there is potential for attracting new businesses. Residents surveyed said they had to shop outside the area, which indicates that there is a market for more retail to take advantage of these vacant buildings if they are in reasonable condition.
- ?? Beautify the neighborhood with more trees and flowers.
- ?? Creation of quality housing to encourage people into the area, preferably as home buyers so giving stability in an otherwise largely renters area.
- ?? Creation of jobs to attack poverty levels and general economic problems. In addition preparation for employment/education centers important as they can serve as stepping stone.

2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

THREATS

The following outlines the most frequent cited threats:

- ?? There is a link between unoccupied and dilapidated units with poorer conditions (see page 52). Without funding this problem cannot be addressed. Landlords are failing to keep up standards of property.
- ?? Poor infrastructure; including lack of lighting (encourages theft/crime + neighborhood unease at night). Also conditions of roads cannot support any possible introduction of mechanical vehicles for new development.
- ?? As a largely segregated minority community politicians potentially easily ignore the needs of Lansdowne. The community needs to come together and act as one to show their political cloud.

The remaining part of this plan will focus on developing detailed programs to address the needs identified.