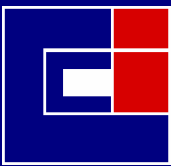


Troubles, Triumphs and Promises: Assessing the Needs and Assets of the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood

Prepared for the
FreshMinistries, INC of Jacksonville



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
Introduction	iv
Research Design and Methods	iv
Findings.....	v
Windshield Survey	v
A Visual Understanding of the Characteristics of East Jacksonville.....	vi
Telephone Survey	vii
East Jacksonville Community Meetings Observations.....	viii
Focus Groups and Interviews	x
Community Assets.....	xii
Conclusion and Recommendations	xii
Conclusion	xii
Recommendations	xii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction	1
Research Design and Methods	1
Challenges and Hurdles	1
Promising Findings and Opportunities.....	3
II. WINDSHIELD SURVEY.....	5
Introduction	5
Where is the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood?.....	5
Demographic Characteristics	9
Voter Characteristics.....	15
Methodology	18
Introduction	18
Detailed Description.....	18
Windshield Survey	21
Overall Classification	21
A Focus on Residential Parcel Characteristics.....	26
Mapping the Neighborhood: A Visual Understanding of the Characteristics of East Jacksonville	28
Mapping the Neighborhood: A Picture of Neighborhood Safety.....	35
Summary	44
III. TELEPHONE SURVEY.....	45
Introduction	45
Methods	45
Results.....	46
Characteristics of Surveyed Residents	46
Neighborhood Overall.....	50
Education.....	51
Economic Development and Employment	52
Safety and Public Services	53
Health.....	55
Family Strength and Environment.....	56

The Future	59
Summary	60
IV. EAST JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY MEETINGS OBSERVATIONS.....	62
Introduction	62
Methods	62
Observations.....	62
Summary	65
V. FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS.....	67
Introduction	67
Methods	67
Residents.....	67
Principals and Teachers	68
Religious Leaders	68
Service Providers	69
Results.....	69
Adult Respondents.....	69
Youth Focus Group	81
Summary	83
VI. COMMUNITY ASSETS	85
Summary	85
VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	88
Conclusion	88
Recommendations	88
VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	91
IX. APPENDICES	92
Appendix A.....	92
Appendix B.....	98
Appendix C.....	99
Appendix D.....	132

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In the following pages, we report on the findings of an extensive Needs and Assets assessment of a targeted area of East Jacksonville. This study was carried out by the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives as part of a collaborative effort with FreshMinistries, INC, of Jacksonville, funded as part of the Compassionate Capital grant program of the Federal Government. This project included extensive data collection efforts, meetings with community residents, service providers, and FreshMinistries staff, as well as qualitative field work by CCI staff. While there were a number of obstacles and hurdles to overcome (discussed in more detail), we believe that the information presented here can serve as a foundation from which on-going efforts focusing on the East Jacksonville Core can be developed.

In many ways, a Needs and Assets assessment puts together in one place a large body of information that may already be known. As a “snap-shot” of the community, the following report provides a wealth of data and information that may already be known, but that has not been synthesized to be used in a coherent plan of action. It is the hope, indeed the plan, that the information provided here will be used to spur action – an issue that was brought up by a large number of informants in this study – and not merely relegated to a bookshelf to accumulate dust. Indeed, CCI is dedicated to working with the community members and FreshMinistries to use this information to bring about Positive Change for East Jacksonville.

Research Design and Methods

Between January 2007 and July 2007, research team members from The Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives (CCI) collected an extensive and diverse data set from which the report is based, incorporating quantitative, qualitative, and archival data collection strategies. These strategies included:

- ✚ Conducting a “Windshield” survey to develop a community physical profile.
- ✚ Participating in Community Resident Dialogue/Town Hall meetings.
- ✚ Conducting Community Resident surveys and focus groups.
- ✚ Conducting Interviews and focus groups with service providers, educators, religious leaders and other officials.
- ✚ Developing an Economic and Social Indicators database, including data from the US Census Bureau, Duval County Health Department, Police, Education sources, Quality of life indicators, School data and others sources

Findings

Windshield Survey

Introduction

A windshield survey of the physical aspects of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood was conducted as part of the overall needs and assets assessment. A windshield survey, as the name implies, allows for data to be gathered about the physical neighborhood through observation usually through a car windshield; it can also be conducted when walking through a neighborhood. The results of this survey were then combined with other geographic data collected primarily from the 2006 property appraiser database of the City of Jacksonville and secondarily from other governmental sources (census, supervisor of elections, sheriff's office).¹ These data sources help to put the windshield survey into context through a comprehensive examination of the neighborhood. First, however, a general look at the neighborhood is needed and provided below to help acquaint the reader with the geographic area being discussed.

Where is the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood?

As of 2002, there were 206 neighborhoods defined by the city of Jacksonville which cover virtually all of the developable land in Duval County. While most of these neighborhoods have names derived from the main road or water way that runs through them or by the key subdivision that dominates them, a few have names based on their geographic location in relation to downtown Jacksonville. For instance, as their names imply, Mid-Westside is located west and slightly North of downtown, Midtown is located directly East of downtown, and the Southside neighborhood is located directly south and across the St. Johns River from downtown. Included in this group is the neighborhood of East Jacksonville which is located East and slightly North of downtown. The East Jacksonville neighborhood, commonly referred to as 'East Jax,' has boundaries that extend from 8th Street on the North, the St. Johns River on the East, the Arlington Expressway to the South, and a somewhat ambiguous West boundary that falls on an old line of railroad train tracks. The tracks – or at least what is left of them – are located in the Ionia St. / Spearing St. corridor.

Demographic Characteristics

As detailed by the 2000 U.S. Census, the five tracts that make up the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood² have a population that is almost 75 percent African-American. Independently, these tracts range from 94.5 percent (tract four) to 65.5 percent (tract 10). This predominately African-American neighborhood is statistically quite different

¹ Unless otherwise mentioned in the report, 2000 U.S. census data, 2000-2006 election data, and 2000-2007 crime data were used.

² Tract 4 and 5 cover the majority of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood – with the outside boundaries falling on mainly industrial or city use. Tract 10 also covers the jail and part of the 'revitalized' downtown core. The additional land covered by Tracts 11 and 12 is similar to the core neighborhood.

than Duval County where 65.8 percent of residents are white. While these numbers essentially show the majority race to be African-American in the East Jacksonville Core and white for Duval County, the numbers of non-African-American minorities are, for all intents and purposes, equal. Duval County has a 6.4 percent rate; while the core neighborhood also has a 6.4 percent rate overall. Within tracts, the percents range from 1.2 to 14 percent.

In Duval County as a whole, a majority of households (71.1 percent) with children under 18 are headed by married couples. Only 22.5 percent of these households are run by unmarried women, and 6.4 percent are run by unmarried men. In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, however, the percentage for married and female headed households with children under 18 is almost completely opposite. Overall, the core has a 56.4 percent unmarried women rate and a 35.8 percent married headed household rate.

In Duval County, the median household income in 1999 was \$40,703. In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, the median household income ranged from a low of \$7,857 to \$27,446. Duval County has a poverty rate of 11.9 percent, while the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood has rates that are three and four times that.

A Visual Understanding of the Characteristics of East Jacksonville

As can be seen in the Windshield Survey section, it is clear that the residential structures in East Jacksonville Core neighborhood are, on the whole, much older than we find in much of the rest of the city. Residences in the area are also much smaller and are located on undersized lots compared to those found in Duval County overall. In addition, a review of property use codes and windshield survey indicate a number of vacant buildings, closed businesses, and a significant number of residences that are in only fair or poor condition. There are very few “new construction” sites in the core area. Given that most of the housing was built in the pre-WW II era, this is not a surprising picture. The lack of recent building represents an important area of focus for core neighborhood improvement efforts as the potential impact of such new construction on the overall neighborhood could improve resident quality of life through jobs, increased property values, and retail store attraction.

With the data that were available, we were able to locate where police responded to incidents and subsequent made arrests within the core neighborhood from 2001 through the first half of 2007. Several important points need to be made about the distribution of incidences and arrests in the core neighborhood. First, it is important to note that there appears to be little variation on the number and distribution of incidences across years since 2001. Indeed, the police are quite busy in the neighborhood, and there appears to be little easing in the number of calls despite efforts by community leaders and authorities. Second, although spread throughout the core neighborhood, there are several areas where there appear to be significant concentrations of arrests and incidents. Most noticeable are the large number reported

around the schools and areas in the far south where a number of abandoned buildings and vacant lots are located

Summary

There are some serious issues facing the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. The residential structures are quite old, and many are in fair or poor condition. Many are small houses and are appraised at significantly lower rates than much of the rest of Duval County. On the other hand, there are areas of the neighborhood that are in much better condition than many in Jacksonville would have suggested. These “promising pockets” represent an important asset for the neighborhood, and a potential source of energy from which efforts to improve the area can draw.

Similarly, the business infrastructure of the neighborhood is also in serious disrepair, with many vacant buildings and vacant lots, and little in the way of economic opportunity for those living in the community. Again, however, there is some optimism in that, while vacant, some of these business properties could provide the base for a renewal of the local economy in the neighborhood, without the dislocation of residents so often accompanying urban renewal and development. Combined with the few all ready established businesses, this represents a great opportunity for growth.

As is confirmed by media portrayals, and responses from focus groups and interviews, there is significant crime and police action within the core neighborhood area. And, this activity has been consistent for a number of years. While some efforts have been successful in dealing with the criminality, it is clear that significant work remains.

Telephone Survey

Introduction

A telephone survey was conducted in April 2007 as part of the needs and assets assessment to supplement the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and focus groups conducted with various stakeholders in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. The goal of the survey was to gather opinions of neighborhood residents regarding a few specific topics including the general quality of the neighborhood, public services, safety, education, and the family learning environment. The UNF Polling Lab was able to obtain 103 completed surveys, a 19 percent response rate.

Summary

The telephone survey provides the research team and other stakeholders a personal perspective of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood on a number of topics and issues. The telephone sample of residents was demographically similar to the overall neighborhood, supporting the validity of the respondents’ responses. For instance, while there was a higher percentage of female survey respondents compared to the

overall neighborhood, the distribution of age, employment, and income were comparable between the two groups.

The ratings of the neighborhood and various neighborhood services such as public schools and neighborhood businesses were split with approximately half reporting them to be excellent and good and the other half rating them as fair or poor. The large majority of respondents tended to perceive these services as good or fair. There was strong consensus concerning the number and quality of jobs available in the neighborhood with many of the resident respondents rating each of these aspects of neighborhood jobs as poor.

While a majority of the resident respondents reported being afraid to walk alone at night in particular areas around their home, nearly all of the respondents felt safe and secure at night while in their home. Many of the surveyed residents rated public safety services such as rescue, fire, and the police as excellent or good, but were split in regards to the police working with people in their neighborhood to solve problems. Responses were also divided for rating public spaces such as streets and parks. Many of the residents surveyed believed that the removal of trash in the neighborhood is fair or poor.

A number of assets were discovered through the questions concerning health and the family environment. For example, many of the survey respondents claimed to always have access to health care services for themselves and their children. In addition to health care, children residing in the households surveyed also tend to receive parental homework assistance and frequently visit the library. Approximately half of the households represented in the telephone survey also had access to a working computer, access to the internet, and owned more than 50 books. Furthermore, slightly more than half of the resident respondents had volunteered their time within the past six months to help at a local agency such as a school, church, or community organization.

Arguably, the most promising asset gleaned from the telephone survey is that a majority of those surveyed felt that people like themselves can have a big or moderate impact in making their community a better place to live. Such a response indicates a hope and promise within many of the residents that can be harnessed to improve the neighborhood. The challenge will be to get residents of all statuses and in all stages of life to take a stake in shaping the future of their neighborhood.

East Jacksonville Community Meetings Observations

Introduction

One of the initiatives FreshMinistries has already begun in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood includes organizing and coordinating monthly community meetings every fourth Thursday evening. According to FreshMinistries staff, the meetings have been organized for and are advertised to the residents in the East Jacksonville Core

neighborhood that was defined for the needs and assets assessment. The community meetings are intended to be a forum for community residents to voice their concerns about issues in the neighborhood. In addition, these meetings provide opportunities for residents to discuss ideas and actions to be taken to solve issues thus identified and for FreshMinistries to distribute information on resources available that would assist in such actions. The meeting attendees are also involved in a number of neighborhood events sponsored by FreshMinistries. Given the purpose and nature of the community meetings, the Center for Community Initiatives (CCI) decided that these gatherings would provide valuable information for the needs and assets assessment.

Observations

The community meetings were initially held at Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ and were then moved to the Mary Singleton Senior Center. Community meetings were finally moved to the East Jacksonville Neighborhood Resource Center once it was open. Those attending the meetings during CCI's period of observation were current and past community residents, pastors, as well as representatives (or invited speakers) from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO), City Code Enforcement, and other local service agencies or businesses. The number of residents attending the meetings varied, ranging anywhere from only three to approximately 30.

Crime-related issues were often discussed at the community meetings. Meeting attendees complained about drug-related activities, loitering, prostitution, and the lack of police enforcement. A representative from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) attended many of the meetings. The JSO officer listened to the complaints and concerns of residents, explained actions that should take place in regards to specific complaints, and shared what the police department is doing within the neighborhood. The JSO representative requested residents to call in criminal activity, explaining that calls can be anonymous. Despite the promise of anonymity, residents expressed frustration that their identities are not always kept confidential and fear of retaliation from the perpetrators they may report.

Another common topic of discussion at the meetings over the seven-month observation period concerned problems associated with abandoned houses and the lack of trash collection. Residents were not only concerned that the abandoned houses were eyesores in the neighborhood, but that they were being used for illegal activities. Unkempt shrubs and streetlights were also brought up as being unsightly and providing criminals with a means of concealing their activities. Another housing-related complaint made by residents entailed defective siding on some of the neighborhood Habijax homes.

There was also a number of FreshMinistries-sponsored neighborhood events that community meeting attendees were encouraged to assist coordinate and/or attend. For example, a Spelling Bee was arranged for the students of a neighborhood school and

volunteers were required to help make the event a success. FreshMinistries staff also attempted to recruit volunteers to arrange a Community Festival.

Summary

The community meetings were observed by CCI staff during a time of organization and development. Like many grassroots initiatives, it takes time and persistence for such efforts to take root and flourish. FreshMinistries staff used various incentives to entice residents to the table and brought a wide variety of agencies to showcase available resources and ways residents can get involved in their community.

It is clear from the community meetings that the residents of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood face a myriad of challenges. However, the presence of City agencies, such as JSO and Code Enforcement, illustrates a commitment from the City to assist the residents in the neighborhood.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the Recycling Center issue discussed above, while eliciting significant input from residents, was one that lay outside of the target area identified for the research reported here. However, the motivation and energy elicited from the neighborhood residents can be seen as possible strengths in the area when developing approaches to address issues more central to the target neighborhood. Continued residential and City involvement will foster a working relationship in which significant progress in addressing the issues facing the neighborhood will become possible.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Introduction

A primary component of the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood research project entailed gaining the opinions and perceptions of neighborhood stakeholders regarding the needs and assets of the neighborhood. This was accomplished through three separate methods; a telephone survey of adult residents, observation of monthly neighborhood meetings, and face-to-face interviews and focus groups with neighborhood stakeholders. Each method provides a unique perspective and has its own advantages and rewards. For instance, interviews and focus groups are useful because they afford respondents the opportunity to expound upon issues and discuss those that may not have been brought forward by the researcher. On the other hand, surveys are primarily used to obtain quick, simple responses. A combination of the various data gathering methods provides the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive picture of the issues faced by those living and working in the neighborhood. This section of the report presents the findings from the interviews and focus groups.

Summary

Conducting interviews and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders afforded the research team the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive perspective of residents in East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. It was almost unanimous that safety concerns (crime, drugs, etc.) are major issues confronting the community. Many of the discussions centered on drug-related crimes and fear of reporting criminal activity. Problems with neighborhood youth were also thought to be of concern for many. There was general consensus that proper parenting is at the root of a lot of these problems. The prevalence of teen pregnancy and young parenthood were some specific issues expressed by many respondents. Other top needs and issues of East Jacksonville Core neighborhood residents included education, employment, housing, and health.

In general, most of the interviewees were aware of some services and programs in their area. By far, respondents expressed a desire for services and activities aimed at neighborhood youth the most. This need is particularly evident at the local library where a relatively large number of children hang out after school. While library staff offer some structured activities for the children, these children need more space and assistance than the library can accommodate.

Fear of being pushed out of the neighborhood was another theme found in some of the interviews and focus groups. This fear emerged in discussions regarding both housing and education. While the general consensus was that the new construction and renovation occurring in the community was promising, some were afraid that it would displace many of the poorer residents. Respondents also expressed concerns that the neighborhood children are being pushed out of their neighborhood. They reported that instead of attending the neighborhood schools, they are bussed to schools outside of their neighborhood.

While respondents generally struggled in finding an asset within the neighborhood, a number of strengths emerged from the discussions. The residents themselves were identified as being an asset to the neighborhood. Their resiliency and compassion for one another were perceived as a positive foundation from which neighborhood improvements can grow. Other assets acknowledged by respondents included the numerous churches and specific programs within the neighborhood, and recent home restoration and construction.

One of the common themes resonating throughout almost every interview was the passion and commitment of the interviewees to improve the quality of life of the population they served. It was also routine that they used their own money and resources to help others. It is their dedication that provides hope that the neighborhood can grow and prosper in the near future.

Community Assets

Summary

CCI staff compiled a list of community assets available to the residents of the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood from multiple sources, including the Northeast Florida Information Network, FreshMinistries, Andrew Jackson Full Service School, as well as other sources. While not exhaustive, this list is certainly comprehensive and includes all assets an organization provides.

Duval County has close to one thousand (912) different community assets or 'resources' available to its residents. There were 47 community assets that specifically target the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Finally, there are 32 (3.5 percent of the overall list) different assets within the core neighborhood. Not all of these assets are designed specifically for the residents of East Jacksonville, such as those provided by Gateway Community Services, but there are several that directly target the residents, like the Brewer Center, Kennedy Center, and the Brown Eastside Branch library.




Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

In the previous pages, we have presented the results of an extensive Needs and Assets Assessment of the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood. As discussed, there are a number of problems facing this neighborhood, which was not surprising. There are also, however, a significant number of assets in the neighborhood, including a core group of citizens, pastors, and service providers, who are intent on making things better. This finding was, in many ways, not so much expected. For the East Jacksonville is often described as "the worst" neighborhood in the city, and little attention has been paid to those assets in the past.

Recommendations

While there are a number of areas which it may not be realistic to recommend action – or which may be outside the abilities of FreshMinistries or CCI to act upon – the findings from this Needs and Assets Assessment do provide information that suggests a number of ways and areas in which action can be taken. Many of these recommendations are taken directly from the community residents interviewed for this study, while others are based on their reflections. These recommendations include:

-  *Development of a Community Action Group (CAG).*
-  *Create Collaborative Efforts to provide additional/focused organized youth sports.*
-  *Extended Library Availability.*

- ✚ *Increase Pressure on the City to address Garbage and Crime Issues.*
- ✚ *Draw Upon Broader Community Service Resources.*
- ✚ *Work to Re-Deploy the Police Athletic League (PAL) Facility in the Core Neighborhood.*
- ✚ *Facilitate the Introduction of Other Community Service Efforts.*
- ✚ *Create Economic Opportunity Through Existing Infrastructure and Assets.*

There are a number of other activities, for example a “Clean up the Neighborhood Day,” campus visits and college application support, or parenting support classes, which can also be suggested. But the primary concern here is that the recommendations above be implemented to empower the neighborhood residents. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, it was clear that the residents, and community leaders, were not looking for “outsiders” to come in and take charge, but for the resources and opportunities to be available to, in the words of a former community leader in the area, “give a hand up not a hand out.” To that end, perhaps the most important recommendation that we offer is that FreshMinistries (and CCI) **NOT** abandon the neighborhood – as so many of the residents interviewed are sure will happen. Action around the recommendations above will go a long way to both build up the neighborhood, as well as to bring together people from across the broader Jacksonville Community.

I. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the following pages, we report on the findings of an extensive Needs and Assets assessment of a targeted area of East Jacksonville. This study was carried out by the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives as part of a collaborative effort with FreshMinistries, INC, of Jacksonville, funded as part of the Compassionate Capital grant program of the Federal Government. This project included extensive data collection efforts, meetings with community residents, service providers, and FreshMinistries staff, as well as qualitative field work by CCI staff. While there were a number of obstacles and hurdles to overcome (discussed in more detail below and in the conclusion section), we believe that the information presented here can serve as a foundation from which on-going efforts focusing on the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood can be developed.

In many ways, a Needs and Assets assessment puts together in one place a large body of information that may already be know. As a “snap-shot” of the community, the following report provides a wealth of data and information that may already be known, but that has not been synthesized to be used in a coherent plan of action. It is the hope, indeed the plan, that the information provided here will be used to spur action – an issue that was brought up by a large number of informants in this study – and not merely relegated to a bookshelf to accumulate dust. Indeed, CCI is dedicated to working with the community members and FreshMinistries to use this information to bring about Positive Change for East Jacksonville.

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- ✚ Conducting a “Windshield” survey to develop a community physical profile.
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- ✚ Conducting Community Resident surveys and focus groups.
- ✚ Conducting interviews and focus groups with service providers, educators, religious leaders and other officials.
- ✚ Developing an Economic and Social Indicators database, including data from the US Census Bureau, Duval County Health Department, Police, Education sources, Quality of life indicators, School data and others sources.

Challenges and Hurdles

As can be seen from the report, the diverse research methodologies resulted in a large quantity of information from which future efforts can be drawn. The research project

was also confronted with a number of “challenges and hurdles” throughout the past year, beginning with the implementation of the contract. Originally, the “kickoff” for the project was set for late October 2006, with data collection commencing in February 2007 and completion of the final report in August 2007. Due to various circumstances, including differing institutional requirements between UNF and FreshMinistries, internal UNF budgeting issues, and finally in getting the official contract signed, CCI was not able to actually start the project until late January 2007. This delay subsequently delayed obtaining permission from the UNF Institutional Review Board (IRB) for CCI to collect data from “human subjects” (i.e. conduct focus groups and surveys with community residents, children, etc) until April 2007. Thus data collection was not able to start until almost three months after the original planned date. Although we were able to make up for much of the lost time in the data collection process, data collection in some important areas, particularly access to the schools, was hindered.

Similarly, obtaining data from “Official Sources” to develop a comprehensive neighborhood indicators database often proved to be elusive. For instance, although the Duval County School System was considered a collaborative team member for FreshMinistries’ Six-Point plan (which was the umbrella project through which CCI conducted the Needs and Assets Assessment), CCI research members never received all of the detailed information requested multiple times. Additionally, Federal HIPPA regulations were cited as reasons why we could not obtain health status information on the target neighborhood. While crime data was made available by the Jacksonville Sheriffs office, a significant number of phone calls and meetings were needed before the (somewhat limited) data obtained and were able to be analyzed. The Florida Department of Children and Families failed to return multiple phone calls and emails requesting data such as child abuse and neglect. Finally, obtaining data and information from FreshMinistries staff was often difficult or, when provided, not timely. This is due, in part, because of changing of personnel at FreshMinistries during the project period, as well as the result of changes in the FreshMinistries operations in the Core neighborhood taking place in Spring 2007. Future efforts will need to address how to get “official” information (from all of the entities mentioned above) more readily and complete.

Another important hurdle concerned mustering community involvement in the research process. This was manifest in two ways. First, there was little response from community leaders (School personnel, ministers in the area, etc) when surveyed about participating in focus groups and/or interviews. Second, at least through the June monthly meetings, there was little participation in the Community Resident Dialogue/Town Hall meetings (then held at the Mary Singleton Center), which was to have been one of the primary entrées into the community for CCI. Note that once the meetings were moved to the new Community Resource Center in the core neighborhood, the July and subsequent meetings have had much better participation.

While we were able to talk with a significant number of residents and community leaders, we were surprised at the small fraction of those contacted willing to participate. Indeed, it was presented to CCI that FreshMinistries representatives had “paved the way” for reaching community members who wanted to talk with us. Unfortunately, as the data collection proceeded, it became clear that the “presence” of FreshMinistries in the community was less pronounced than either CCI (or FreshMinistries) had believed. On several occasions, in fact, focus group and interviews diminished the role FreshMinistries was playing in the neighborhood.

Finally, one hurdle that we faced was that of resentment to “Outsiders doing research that won’t matter/change things.” This was most forcibly stated in one interview with a very active community leader (discussed in more detail below), but was also an under-current in almost all of the focus groups and interviews with persons living in the community. Perhaps this is the one issue that future efforts in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood (and elsewhere in the city where efforts such as this are located) should keep in the forefront.

Promising Findings and Opportunities

Despite the setbacks and hurdles mentioned in the previous pages, the project was, overall, quite successful at collecting a wide variety of information that can serve as the foundation for future action in the Core Neighborhood. Of course, we found that there are significant problems in the neighborhood – many of which have been around for a long time. In many ways, the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood studied here has been left behind from virtually all of the economic and social progress made in Jacksonville over the past three decades. There are virtually no economic opportunities in the neighborhood and little in the way of amenities available to just about any other neighborhood in Northeast Florida. Crime is a major problem, and residents feel little is being done to address the issue. Indeed, during the research project researchers observed several “open air markets” in clear operation where one could buy drugs, basically any time of the day. In addition, a number of comments were made about the large number of ex-convicts living in the neighborhood – family and friends who were unable to find jobs or anything “legit,” and thus destined to return to criminal activities.

The trash does not get picked up, and little has been done to improve the basic infrastructure of the neighborhood in decades, save the Brewer Learning Center and the PAL center (both of which were not seen by residents as being really a part of the neighborhood anyway). Despite being only a few blocks from the glistening Sports Complex, it is not clear that any of that “economic engine” makes it north of the Arlington Expressway. A number of the houses are in disrepair, and incomes are at the lowest levels in the city. Similar problems and issues are found in every area we examined.

On the other hand, the research also uncovered some truly optimistic assets in the community that offer promise for future action. While small in number, there is a core

group of local residents – born and raised in the neighborhood and either still living there or still in regular contact – that cares deeply about what is going on. While little faith was expressed for what the schools were currently providing, many of those interviewed also saw the possibility of education and improving the schools for the next generation of kids. While the attitudes and actions of teens were frequently mentioned as a problem, many of those interviewed also expressed confidence that the young people in the neighborhood were “the future.” The role of churches, and more specifically, a handful of ministers was also seen as a major asset for the neighborhood, providing leadership and direction in areas where the city and schools were seen as having abandoned.

In addition, not all of the neighborhood was in shambles. A significant number of houses appear to be in good shape, and many of those interviewed saw hope for improvement. Few persons interviewed expected (or wanted) outsiders to come in and “do something” (and many expressed cynicism toward the intentions of outsiders), rather they wanted to merely get the chances and opportunities that were being given to other neighborhoods. Many residents expressed optimism that something can be done.

To that end, the following represents the results of an eight month research foray into a neighborhood that has both promise and problems.

II. WINDSHIELD SURVEY

Introduction

A windshield survey of the physical aspects of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood was conducted as part of the overall needs and assets assessment. A windshield survey, as the name implies, allows for data to be gathered about the physical neighborhood through observation usually through a car windshield; it can also be conducted when walking through a neighborhood. The results of this survey were then combined with other geographic data collected primarily from the 2006 property appraiser database of the City of Jacksonville and secondarily from other governmental sources (census, supervisor of elections, sheriff's office).³ These data sources help to put the windshield survey into context through a comprehensive examination of the neighborhood. First, however, a general look at the neighborhood is needed and provided below to help acquaint the reader with the geographic area being discussed.

Where is the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood?

As of 2002, there were 206 neighborhoods defined by the city of Jacksonville which cover virtually all of the developable land in Duval County. While most of these neighborhoods have names derived from the main road or water way that runs through them or by the key subdivision that dominates them, a few have names based on their geographic location in relation to downtown Jacksonville. For instance, as their names imply, Mid-Westside is located west and slightly North of downtown, Midtown is located directly East of downtown, and the Southside neighborhood is located directly south and across the St. Johns River from downtown. Included in this group is the neighborhood of East Jacksonville which is located East and slightly North of downtown. The East Jacksonville neighborhood, commonly referred to as 'East Jax,' has boundaries that extend from 8th Street on the North, the St. Johns River on the East, the Arlington Expressway to the South, and a somewhat ambiguous West boundary that falls on an old line of railroad train tracks. The tracks – or at least what is left of them – are located in the Ionia St. / Spearing St. corridor.

As one can see from [MAP II-1](#), the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, the area under study as defined by FreshMinistries, has a slightly different boundary than the East Jacksonville neighborhood. The difference is essentially a shift in the East and West boundaries – from the St. Johns River to the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and from the old railroad tracks to Liberty Street respectively. This approximately one square mile area (with an average length and width of approximately a mile each) has roughly 120 blocks with streets that run predominately in a grid pattern. The area contains two

³ Unless otherwise mentioned in the report, 2000 U.S. census data, 2000-2006 election data, and 2000-2007 crime data were used.

of three schools examined for this needs and assets evaluation, R.L. Brown Elementary and Matthew Gilbert Middle, as well as the Brown Eastside Branch Library.

MAP II-1 – The East Jacksonville Neighborhood



Notes: The area East of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway is mostly industrial.

Source: City of Jacksonville, FreshMinistries

In MAP II-2, one can see that while the East Jacksonville Core is essentially one neighborhood, the residents are separated by a web of invisible, overlapping boundaries that are delimited by local and federal agencies. In fact, the neighborhood is divided into five census tracts, five voter precincts, four police sub-sectors, and two zip codes. While at first glance it would seem that all of these different boundaries mean the neighborhood is divided, a simple look at the data reveals that this is not necessarily the case. In the following paragraphs, one will see that while there are variances,⁴ the

⁴ Tract 4 and 5 cover the majority of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood – with the outside boundaries falling on mainly industrial or city use. Tract 10 also covers the jail and part of the ‘revitalized’ downtown core. The additional land covered by Tracts 11 and 12 is similar to the core neighborhood. Zip Code 32206 covers the majority of the East Jacksonville Core, with zip code 32202 covering only a small corner on the South-East side.

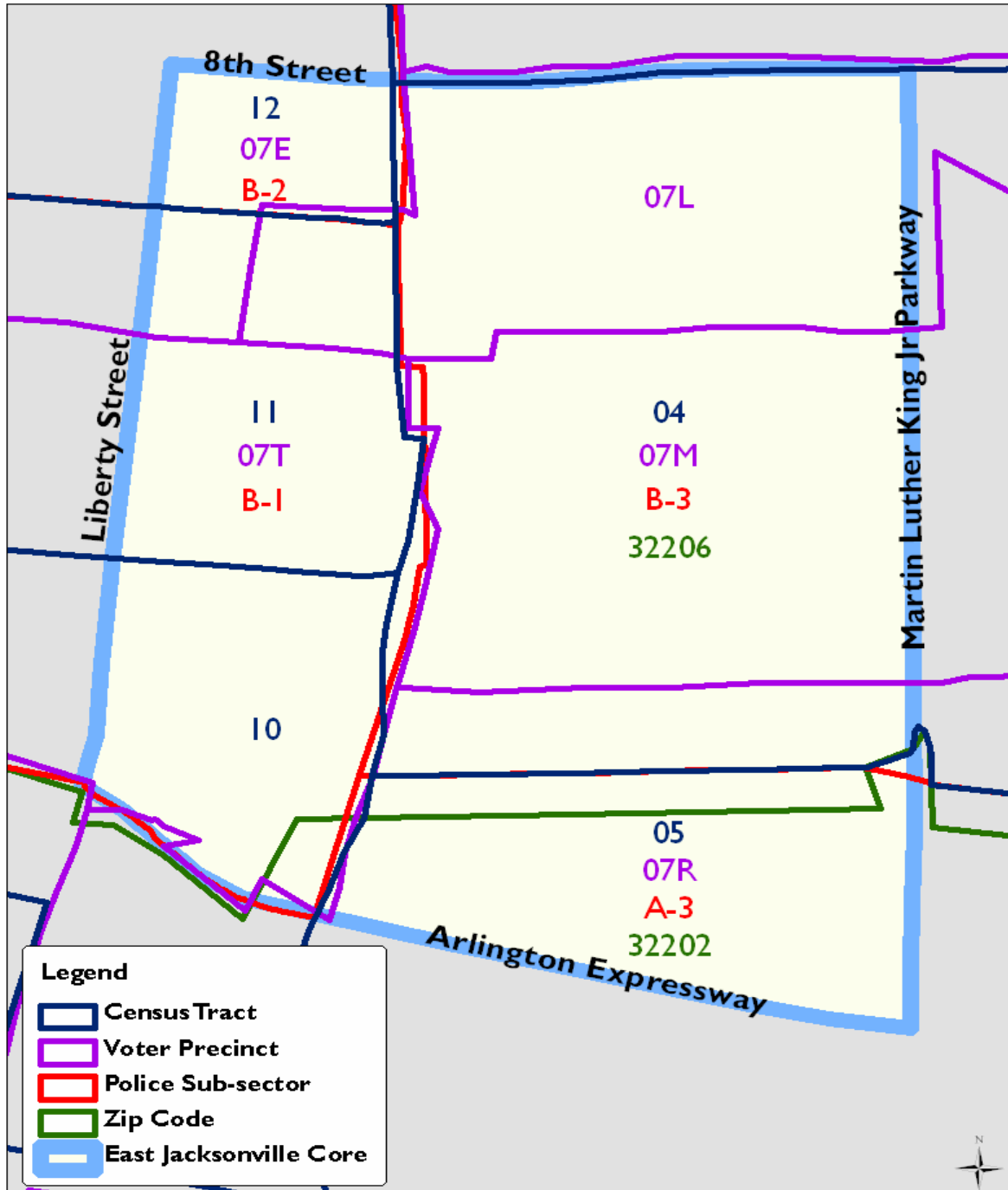


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Northeast Florida
Center for Community Initiatives

information for the tracts and precincts (the area including and surrounding the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood) shows the residents have similar demographic and political characteristics to each other, but not necessarily to Duval County. Police sub-sector activity will be covered in a later section.

MAP II-2 – The East Jacksonville Core Subdivided by Governmental Geographic Boundaries

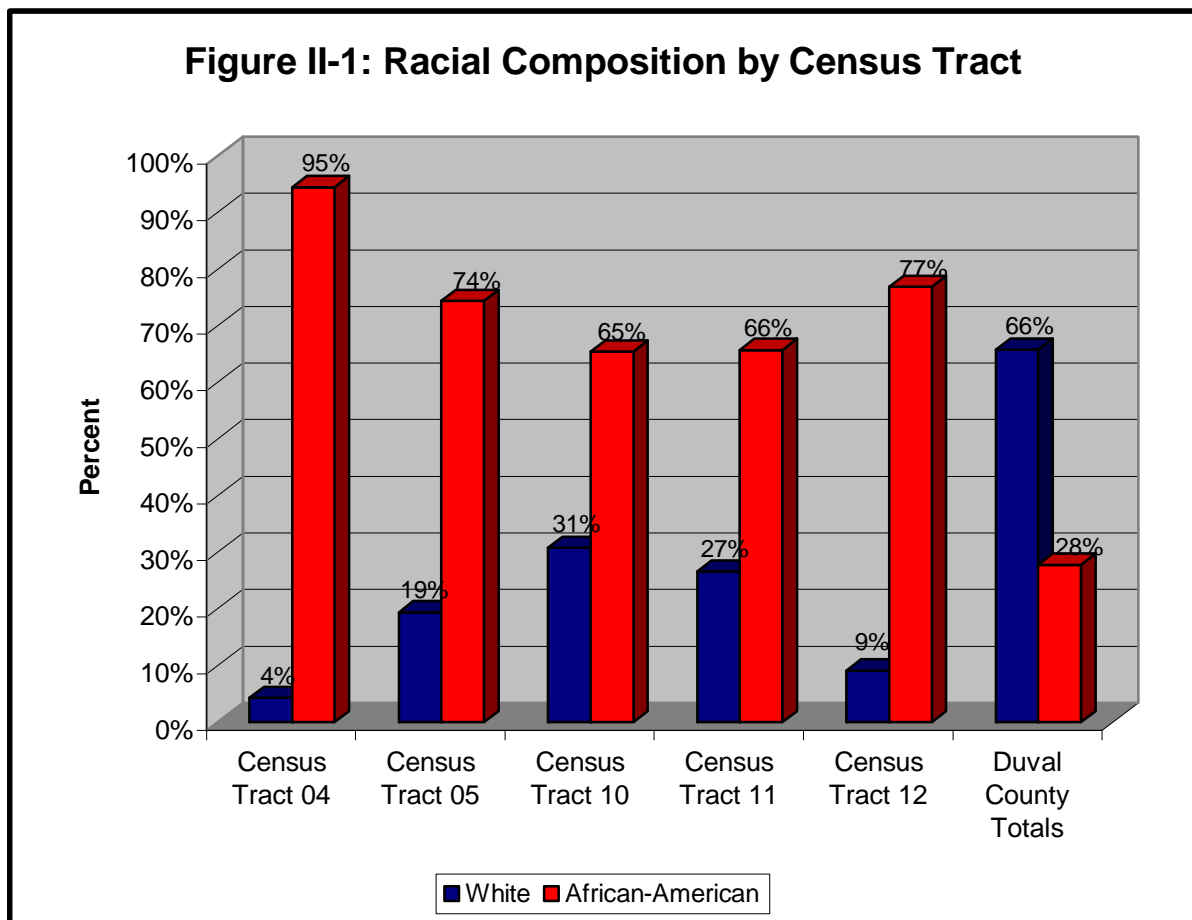


Notes: Only the portion of the boundary that intersects the core neighborhood is shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, FreshMinistries, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Demographic Characteristics

As detailed by the 2000 U.S. Census, the five tracts that make up the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood have a population that is almost 75 percent African-American. Independently, these tracts range from 94.5 percent (tract four) to 65.5 percent (tract 10). This predominately African-American neighborhood is statistically quite different than Duval County where 65.8 percent of residents are white (see [Figure II-1](#)). While these numbers essentially show the majority race to be African-American in the East Jacksonville Core and white for Duval County, the numbers of non-African-American minorities are, for all intents and purposes, equal. Duval County has a 6.4 percent rate; while the core neighborhood also has a 6.4 percent rate overall. Within tracts, the percents range from 1.2 to 14 percent.



As one can see in [Figure II-2](#), the East Jacksonville Core is also predominately male according to census figures. However, while overall close to 60 percent of the residents in the Core Neighborhood are male, one tract (with over 69.7 percent of “residents” being male) includes the jail. While this does seem to skew the overall percentage for the male-female distribution, it does not look as if it had an effect on

other outcomes. Tract four was at the low end of the range (45.9 percent) compared to Duval County, as a whole, where only 48.5 percent of the population is male. For further evidence that the East Jacksonville Core is similar to Duval County when it comes to the sex of the resident, a look at [Figure II-3](#) illustrates that zip code 32206 (47.4 percent) and Duval County (48.5 percent) are almost equal, while zip code 32202, which contains the jail, is at 68.0 percent.

Figure II-2: Sex by Census Tract

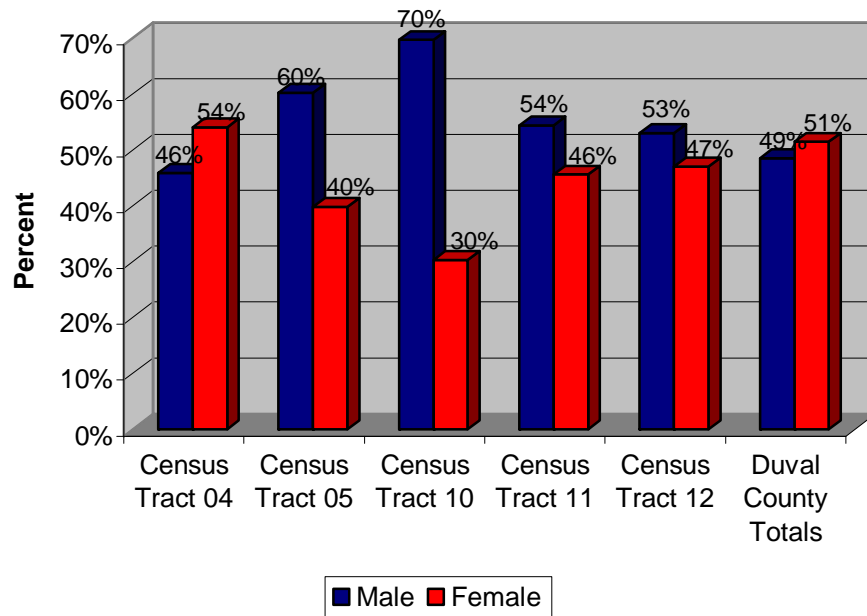
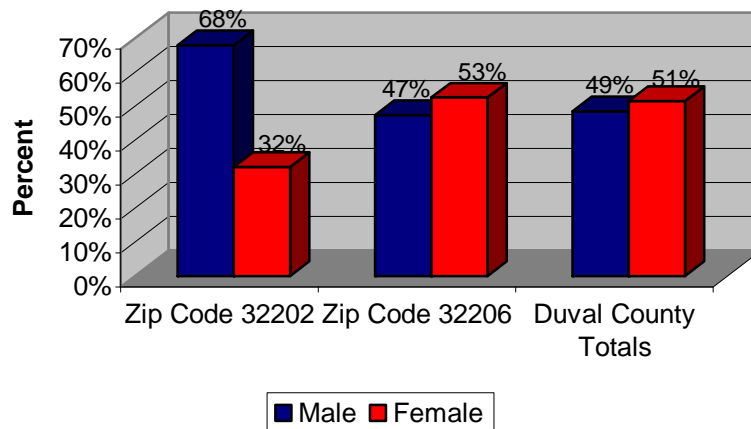


Figure II-3: Sex by Zip Code



An examination of the population by sex and age reveals that within the East Jacksonville Core Community, females represent a greater portion of those under 18 year old than the city overall (24.8 percent and 17.5 percent respectively), while there are more males between the ages of 18 to 34 (28.8 percent to 18.6 percent). For the population 35 years and older, females are slightly more represented when compared to males, with 56.6 and 53.8 percent respectively. A closer look at the tract breakdown in [Figure II-4](#) shows that while there is a small level of variance, the majority of age group by sex figures are relatively similar, including Duval County.

Figure II-4: Age Groups by Sex by Census Tract

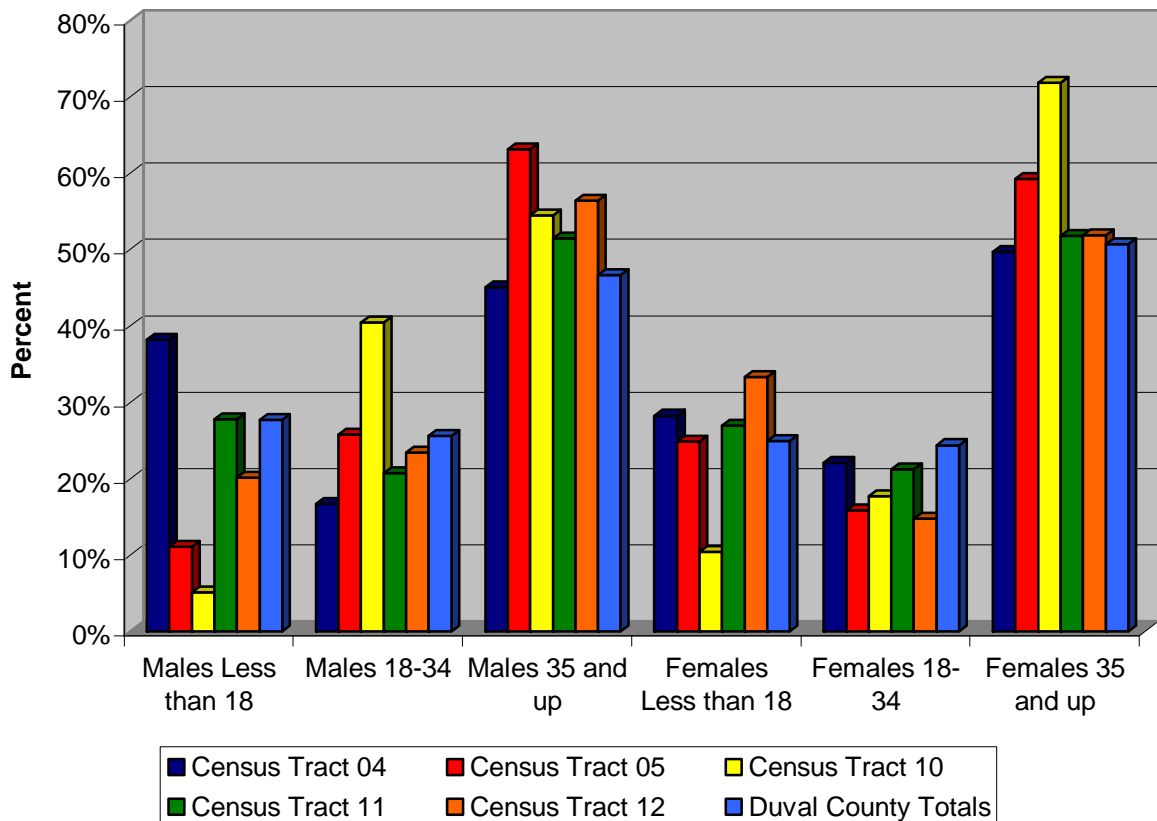
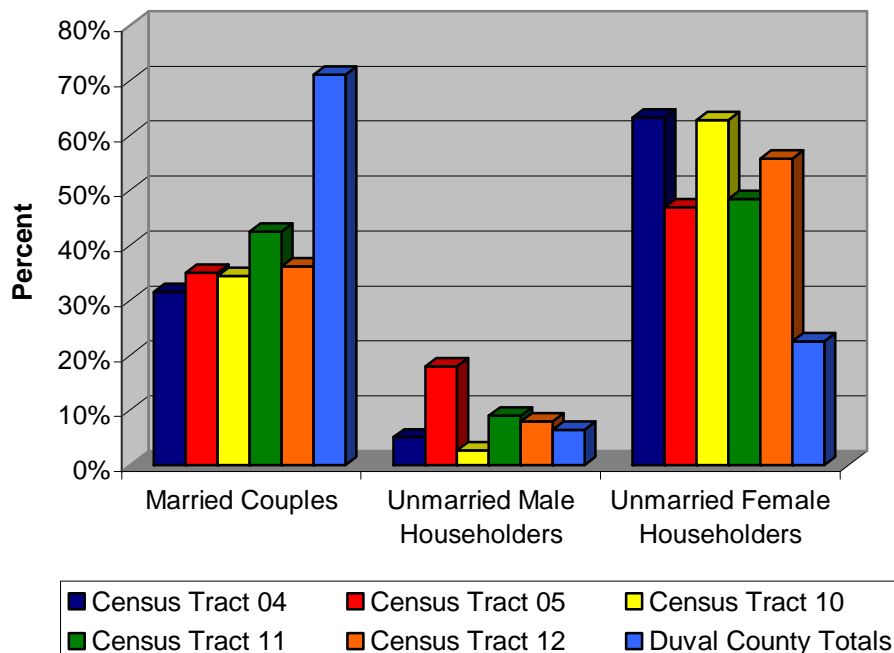


Figure II-5: Marital Status of Households with Children Under 18 by Census Tracts



In Duval County as a whole, a majority of households (71.1 percent) with children under 18 are headed by married couples. Only 22.5 percent of these households are run by unmarried women, and 6.4 percent are run by unmarried men. In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, however, the percentages for married and female headed households with children under 18 are almost completely opposite. Overall, the core has a 56.4 percent unmarried women rate and a 35.8 percent married headed household rate. Census Tract 11 has the highest percentage of married couples raising children (42.6 percent) (see [Figure II-5](#)). The highest percentage of unmarried females raising children can be found in Census Tract 4, where just under two-thirds (63.3 percent) of population fits this criteria.

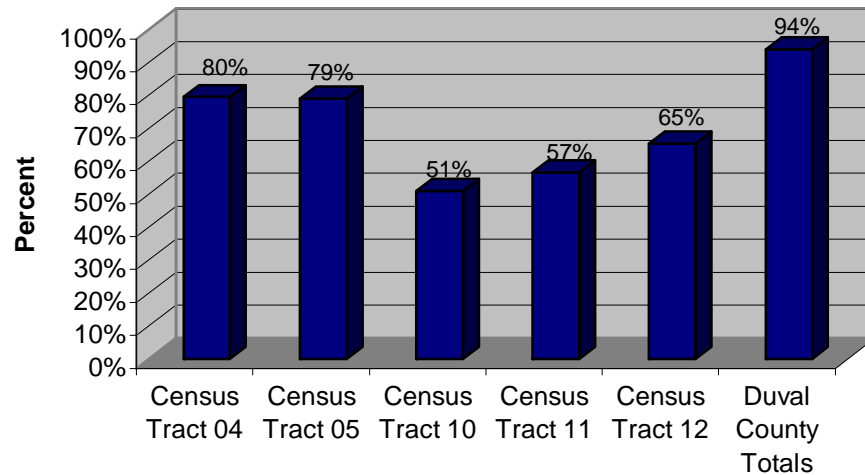
In Duval County, the median household income in 1999 was \$40,703. In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, the median household income ranged from a low of \$7,857 to \$27,446 (see [Table II-1](#)). While an overall median income can not be calculated because of restrictions within the census data, one can still see that the majority of households in the core have incomes less than half that of the Duval County average. Perhaps an even more telling statistic about the neighborhood is that of the percentage of households below poverty level. Duval County has a poverty rate of 11.9 percent, while the census tracts of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood have rates that are three and four times that. The core's lowest area of poverty is found in Census

Tract 5, which at 30 percent is still extremely high. The highest rate of poverty is found in Census Tract 10, where over half (51.8 percent) are living below the level of poverty.

Table II-1: Resident Income and Poverty Status by Census Tract						
	Census Tract 4	Census Tract 5	Census Tract 10	Census Tract 11	Census Tract 12	Duval County
Median Household Income, 1999	\$13,305	\$27,446	\$7,857	\$18,571	\$25,423	\$40,703
Percent Below Poverty Level	39.7%	30.0%	51.8%	40.4%	32.9%	11.9%

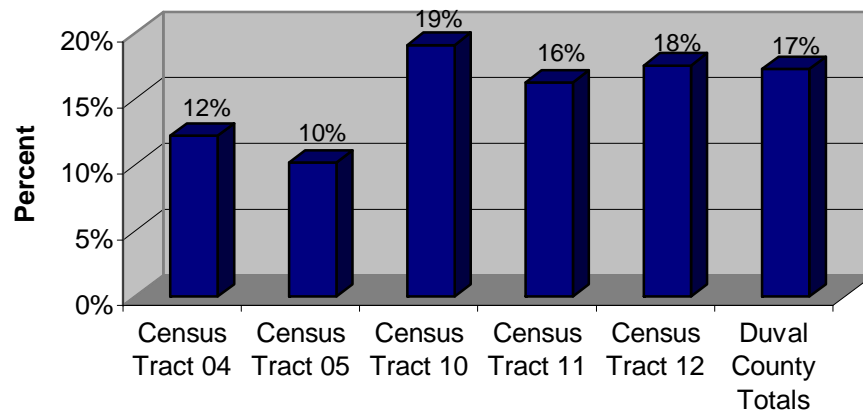
As seen in [Figure II-6](#), over 94 percent of the residents of Duval County were born in Florida. In contrast, the residents of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood seem to be a bit more mobile – an overall rate of 63.3 percent. In Census Tract 10, only 51.1 percent of the residents were reported by the 2000 census to have been ‘born in the state of residence.’ Census Tract 4 comes closest to Duval County totals with 79.6 percent, however, this is still almost 15 percent less. As a supplemental figure, it should be noted that the percentage of residents who only speak English within the East Jacksonville neighborhood range from 85.1 to 90.7 percent, which is approximately the same as Duval County (84.1 percent).

Figure II-6: Residents Born in Florida by Census Tracts



In Duval County, 17.3 percent of residents 18 years of age and older have served in the military (see [Figure II-7](#)). In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, the percentages are similar, ranging from 10.2 percent in Census Tract 5 to 19.1 percent in Census Tract 10.

Figure II-7: Residents 18 and up Have Served in the Military



Voter Characteristics

There are two themes that are very apparent when examining the voter data for both the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood and for Duval County overall; the core residents do not turn out to vote in great numbers, and when they do turnout, they vote democratic.

The voter turnout in the East Jacksonville Core area has been shown to be substantially lower than the voter turnout in the rest of Duval County. As one can see in Table II-2, in each of the past six general elections,⁵ the percent of eligible voters in the East Jacksonville

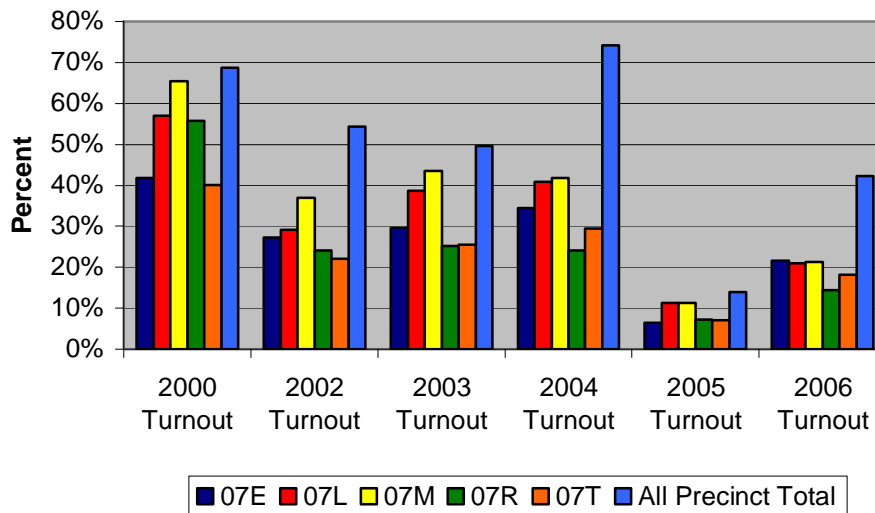
Core who vote is substantially lower than Duval County as a whole. Only two times is the difference less than 20 percent; first in 2003 when the

Table II-2: Percent of Eligible Voter Turnout			
General Election	East Jacksonville Core Overall	Duval County	Difference
2000	48.6%	68.8%	- 20.2%
2002	26.3%	54.4%	- 28.1%
2003	29.8%	49.6%	- 19.8%
2004	31.5%	74.1%	- 42.6%
2005	8.0%	14.0%	- 6.0%
2006	18.3%	42.3%	- 24.0%

difference was 19.8 percent and then in 2005 when turnout around the county was extremely low. The 2004 general election that featured President Bush versus Senator John Kerry for the president had over a 40 percent difference in turnout. Whereas approximately 74 percent of Duval's registered voters turned out to vote, in the East Jacksonville Core area, the voter turnout in this election ranged from 24 percent to 42 percent in the various precincts. The highest turnout percentages for East Jacksonville Core occurred in the 2000 Presidential election. In this election, approximately 69 percent of Duval County's registered voters voted while almost 50 percent of East Jacksonville Core area registered voters turned out. The breakdown of individual tract percentages containing the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood can be seen in Figure II-8.

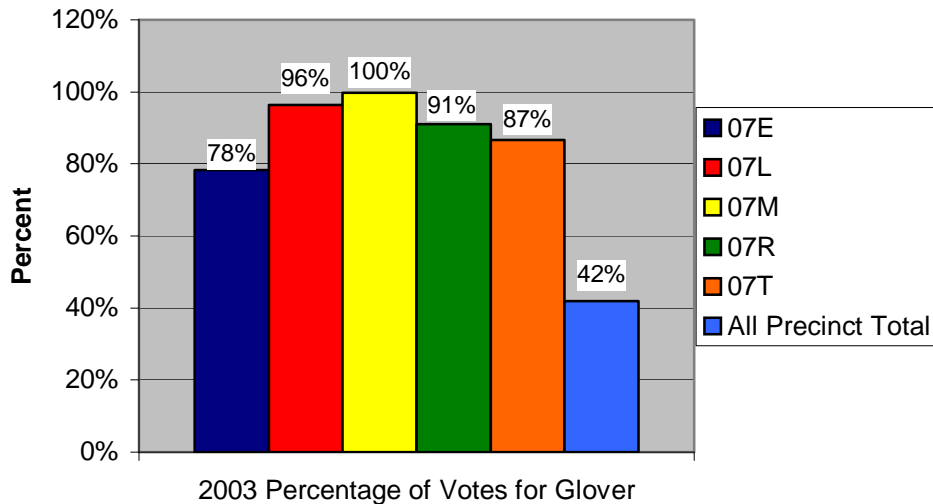
⁵ No general election was conducted in 2001.

**Figure II-8: Voter Turnout Percentages
for 2000-2006 by Precinct**



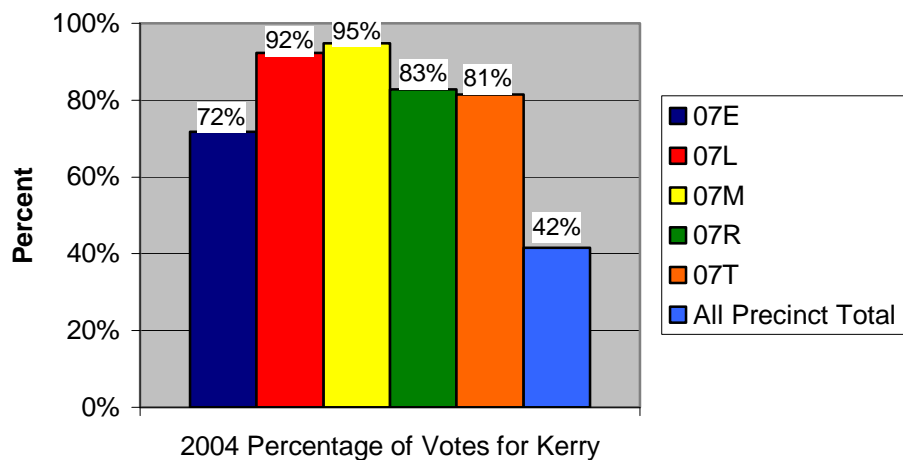
One thing is for certain when it comes to party affiliation in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood – voters lean heavily towards the Democrats. Two examples of this loyalty can be viewed in [Figures II-9 and II-10](#). In the 2003 general election featuring the City of Jacksonville mayoral race, a full 90.4 percent of voters cast their ballot for Nat Glover, the democratic nominee. This means that for every 10 voters who walked into their respective polling locations, nine of them were going to vote for Glover. In precinct 07M alone, 370 of 371 (99.7 percent or one shy of unanimous) voted for Glover. A total of three precincts were above 90 percent, one in the mid 80s, and one slightly below 80 percent. Keep in mind that there was only a 29.8 percent turnout in the core neighborhood for this election.

Figure II-9: 2003 Mayoral Election by Precinct



The results are similar, though not quite as dramatic, for the 2004 general election featuring the Presidential race. Over four out of five people cast their ballot for the Gore – Lieberman ticket. The precincts within the core neighborhood ranged from 71.8 to 94.8 percent. The high end of the range also came from the 07M precinct, where 347 of 366 voters backed the democrats. Again, however, there was only a 31.5 percent turnout for eligible voters from the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood.

Figure II-10: 2004 Presidential Election by Precinct



Methodology

Introduction

As stated above, a windshield survey allows for data collection through observations of aspects in a neighborhood or geographic area. For the East Jacksonville Core study, the decision was made to utilize a new data collection approach to the time tested process of a windshield survey. Instead of teams of staff driving or walking the streets and writing down the condition of each property as they went (known as ‘coding’), CCI staff used a camcorder to record the neighborhood properties and then coded the information in the staff offices of CCI. This new way to collect data was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of North Florida and ultimately used for three important reasons: resident privacy, accuracy, and time.

As in all evaluations conducted by CCI, the protection of the individual (in this case the residents) far exceeds any research benefit derived from the study. As no data for the windshield study was being collected on residents, there was little reason to subject them to the sometimes intense and lengthy scrutiny that a windshield survey often requires. This point leads to both the second and third reason.

First, after reviewing several test runs using the videotape process, it was determined that the tape was providing satisfactory images of the properties while not being clear enough to identify any individuals who happened to be in the area. Basically, images from the tape sufficiently blurred individual faces but not the larger structures, such as homes and businesses. This was due in part to the quality of the videotape and also the speed of the vehicle as it traveled – if the vehicle was not traveling at least 10 miles per hour when individuals were present, the camera was lowered so as to not record them.

Second, it takes time to examine a property for each of the variables CCI staff was looking to collect. As described above, the core neighborhood covers approximately one square mile and 2,445 properties. To send teams of staff into the neighborhood to code each property would take an excessive amount of time that could have been viewed as very invasive by the residents.

Detailed Description

The first step in conducting the windshield survey was to obtain a street map of the area that could then be used to determine driving routes of the neighborhood. The core neighborhood was divided into three sections that could be driven in about two hours. With this information in hand, teams of three CCI staff – a driver, a navigator, and videographer – would then systematically drive the streets and record the properties using the digital camcorder. The neighborhoods were always driven during the week between the hours of 9am and 11am while kids were in school and most adults were at work. This was done in an attempt to reduce the chance even further of individuals

being recorded. Once the entire neighborhood was recorded, it was time to code the properties back at the CCI offices.

The digital videotape was transferred to a computer and a media file was created with each of the streets dividing into different chapters. This media file was then stored on a secure computer where CCI staff could access it during the coding process. A database was then created with each property number as well as variables for each of the criteria needing to be collected.

The video was then watched and paused on each of the East Jacksonville Core properties so that the information about each could be entered. Staff first determined if the lot was vacant, a park, or had a structure. For the few parks in the area, staff looked to see the type and condition of equipment located on the park and recorded the data as such. Based on the equipment and the appearance of the park, an overall condition for the park was also assigned.

Next, if there was a structure on the lot, the exterior of the structure was examined and items such as color, brick façade, fencing (including barbed wire), and window condition (including broken, barred or boarded) were recorded. Once these variables were entered into the computer, the building was examined and general observations about the structure, such as peeled paint, condemned signs, signs of remodeling or new construction (within the past five years), exterior structural integrity, and other signs of disrepair were documented. Finally, the outside of the property was studied to determine whether there was lawn and bush overgrowth on the lot and excessive garbage piled on the curb or in the yard.

Once the property was thoroughly examined on all of the above variables, the last step in the process was to determine an overall condition of each structure. In order to do this, staff used the criteria set forth in [Figure II-11](#) and assigned a *good*, *fair*, or *poor* rating for the overall condition of the structure. Structures with a rating of *good* appeared to be structurally sound, meaning that they only appeared to need cosmetic changes. Structures with a rating of *fair* needed some work, such as exterior paint, but could still be lived in without major work. Structures with a rating of *poor* appeared to need major structural work before being considered habitable; these structures were often boarded up and had overgrown yards.

Figure II-11

<u>PROPERTY CONDITION CLASSIFICATION</u>	
Classification:	GOOD
Overall:	Unit does not need any work; can be moved into immediately.
Description:	Unit appears to be well maintained and structurally sound. Roof lines are straight. Siding, gutters, trim, windows and doors are in good repair with good exterior paint condition.
Repair Costs:	Minimal.
Classification:	FAIR
Overall:	Needs some outside work; could be lived in while work was performed.
Description:	Unit appears structurally sound, but is in need of some maintenance and minor repair. These units usually require minor repairs such as painting the house, fixing a broken door or window, putting on new shutters, replace or fix awnings, etc.
Repair Costs:	Range from inexpensive to costly.
Classification:	POOR
Overall:	Major repairs would be needed before moving in.
Description:	Unit appears to have been neglected for a long period of time with a large number of visible structural defects, such as uneven roof lines, a broken porch, boarded or broken windows/doors, faltering foundation.
Repair Costs:	Substantial - bordering on infeasible (the cost of the repairs would be equal to or exceed the value of the unit).

After each of the properties was classified with an overall condition grade, data obtained from the City of Jacksonville code enforcement division was used to supplement the CCI data. The CCI overall condition was upgraded, downgraded, or kept the same after being compared to the code enforcement data. In the case where the code enforcement data was outdated, the original CCI assessment remained.

One of the complications that arose during the coding process was that several properties had multiple structures. In order to keep the coding consistent – one structure, one grade – private resident lots were subdivided and a new unique property number was assigned. The end result is that every structure (except apartments /

businesses with multiple structures) has its own unique property number and condition code.

Windshield Survey

As mentioned above, the task of completing the windshield survey was long and labor intensive, but as one will see below, well worth the effort. After compiling the data and coding the property information, a series of maps and figures were produced and will be used to better illustrate the extent to which the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood in some ways is very much the same and yet, in some areas or pockets, very much different.

Overall Classification

A total of 2,445 parcels⁶ were classified within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood using the property use code (PUSE) supplied with the property appraiser's database with confirmation from the CCI conducted windshield survey. Just over half (51.0 percent) of the parcels were determined to be residential lots with structures, with an additional 536 (21.9 percent) residential lots with no structures (referred to as a 'vacant lot'). The remaining parcels consisted of non-residential (including businesses and government owned property) with 16.9 percent, multi-unit apartments (6.5 percent), churches (2.7 percent), parks (0.6 percent), school owned (0.4 percent), and one cemetery lot. For the residential parcels, the majority of PUSE codes fall within the single family home with differences only in number of stories (i.e. one story or two). The only notable omissions are condominiums and trailer homes.

When examining the PUSE codes for non-residential parcels, however, there is a little more variety. As one can see in Table II-3, there are several types of businesses one would not expect to see in a community, especially the highest percentage wise: vacant commercial. All of the vacant institutional parcels are owned by different religious organizations. A further examination also reveals that there are several types of PUSE⁷ codes that are not in the core that one would considered to be

Table II-3: Business/Institutional Property

PUSE Code (n=412)	Percent
Vacant Commercial	13.8%
Vacant Institutional	10.7%
Parking Lot	5.8%
Store - Retail	5.6%
Warehouse	5.6%
Storage/Distribution	3.9%
Vacant Industrial	3.9%
Light Manufacturing	1.9%
Service Garage	1.0%
Night Club / Bar	0.5%
Convenience Store	0.2%

⁶ Originally, there were 2,472 parcels identified in the core neighborhood. However, after combining parcels with the same real estate (RE) number and diving parcels with multiple structures, the net result is a decrease of 27 parcels.

⁷ While the PUSE code was used as the main identifier for each parcel, an additional tool, the Building Use Code or BUSE, was used to examine what the buildings on each parcel were used for.

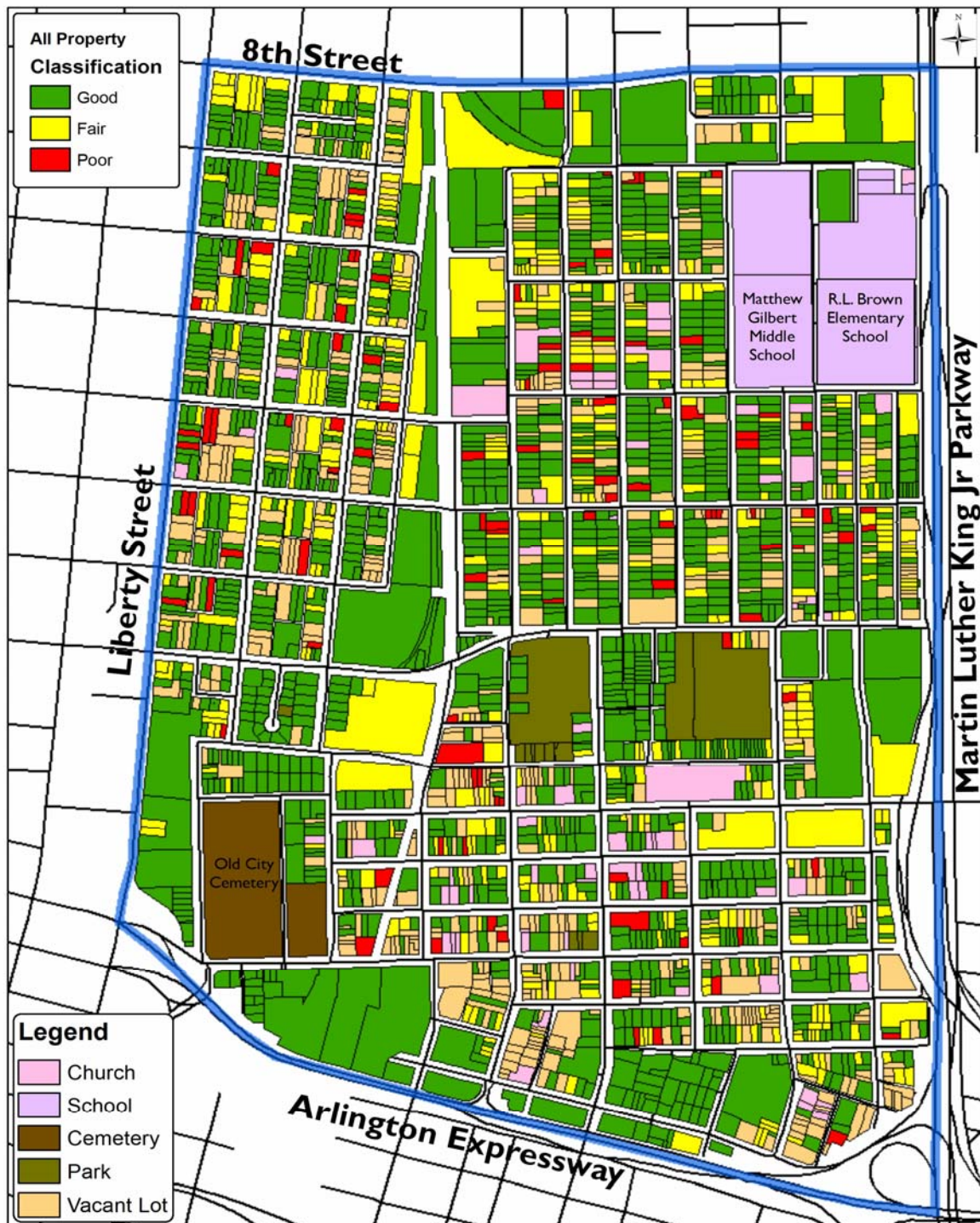
staples in most communities within Jacksonville. For instance, while there are several parking lots – used for Jacksonville Jaguars games played just south of the core neighborhood – there are no restaurants to cater to the fans appetite, let alone the residents, and no hotels or motels to house the out of town fans in to root on their team. While there are a couple of night clubs and convenience stores, there are no grocery stores. While there are several warehouses for storage and distribution, there are no recreational outlets, such as movie theatres, bowling alleys, golf courses, etc. While there are some retail stores, there are no department stores. The lack of these staple businesses is certainly a cause of concern for the residents and the organizations determined to help them.

A look at [Table II-4](#) reveals how the 2,445 parcels are broken down by PUSE code and classification. As one can see, the schools, cemetery, parks, and vacant lots are all in good condition; the parks and vacant lots were classified based on trash and overgrowth. The rest of the structures, however, did not grade quite as well. Only 71.5 percent of residences were in ‘good’ condition, with 5.7 percent ‘poor.’ The other option for residence, the multi-unit apartments, fared even worse. With only 53.8 percent considered ‘good’ and just over 13 percent ‘poor,’ these apartments may provide a less expensive place to live, but appear to be rundown based on the windshield survey assessment. The non-residential parcels, including businesses and government owned properties, were only slightly better than the residential parcels. The majority of the 79.9 percent ‘good’ non-residential parcels were located on the perimeter of the core neighborhood and consisted of one major and several small manufacturing facilities – an auto-parts store, an electrical sub-station, and numerous parking lots. Overall, the churches were the highest classified properties with 81.5 percent classified as ‘good,’ but overall, 18.5 percent were ‘fair’ or ‘bad.’ The churches that were considered in ‘good’ condition seemed to be more established with their own designated buildings for worship.

Table II-4: Classification by Lot Type				
PUSE Code	n	Good	Fair	Poor
Residential	1,247	71.5%	22.9%	5.7%
Multi-Unit Apartments	160	53.8%	33.1%	13.1%
Non-Residential	412	79.9%	16.7%	3.4%
Church	65	81.5%	13.8%	4.6%
School	10	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cemetery	1	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Park	14	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vacant Lot	536	99.8%	0.2%	0.0%

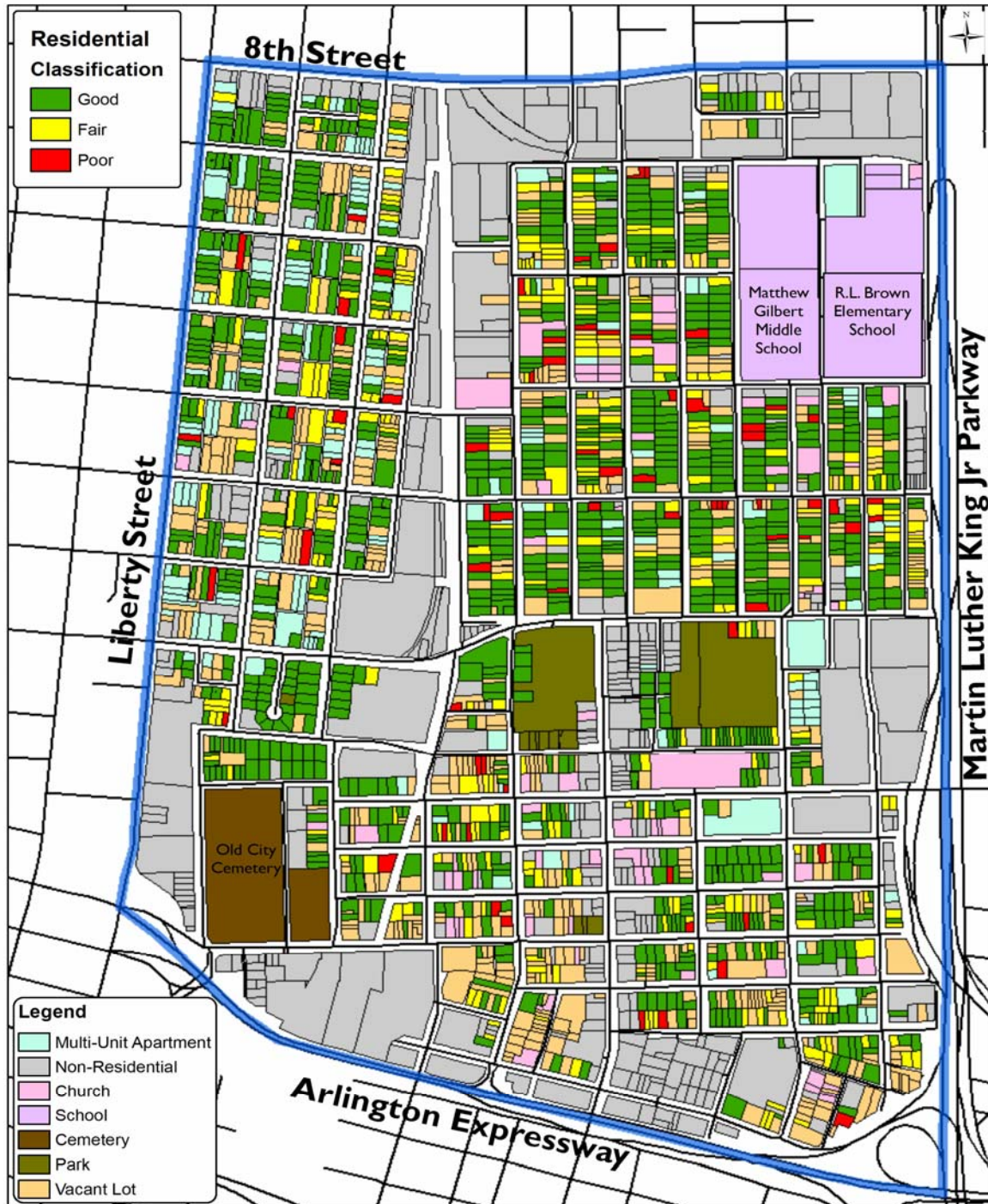
In [Map II-3](#) below, the conditions of both types of residential and the non-residential parcels are displayed. As one can see, the perimeter of the neighborhood contains mostly 'good' parcels, while the 'fair' and 'bad' parcels are located on the interior of the core neighborhood. [Map II-4](#) shows just the residential parcels to better differentiate between the three classifications. As one can see, there are a few pockets of houses that are in 'fair' or 'bad' condition, but overall, these houses are spread throughout the neighborhood.

MAP II-3 – All Property Classification within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: If an apartment or business had multiple buildings, the overall condition of all buildings was given. See the 'Methods' section for property grade classifications.
Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

MAP II-4 – Residential Property Classification within the East Jacksonville Core

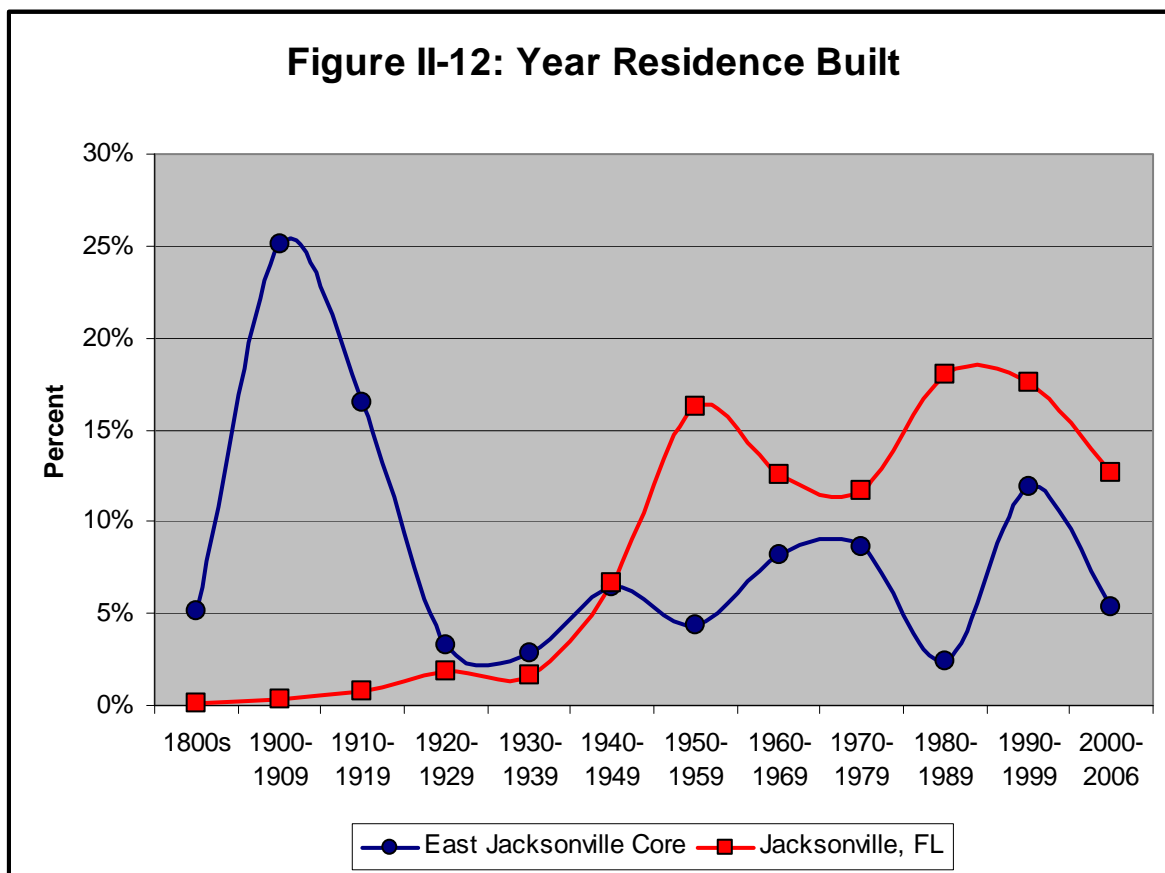


Notes: Every resident structure has its own unique property number and condition code. See the 'Methods' section for property grade classifications.
Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

A Focus on Residential Parcel Characteristics

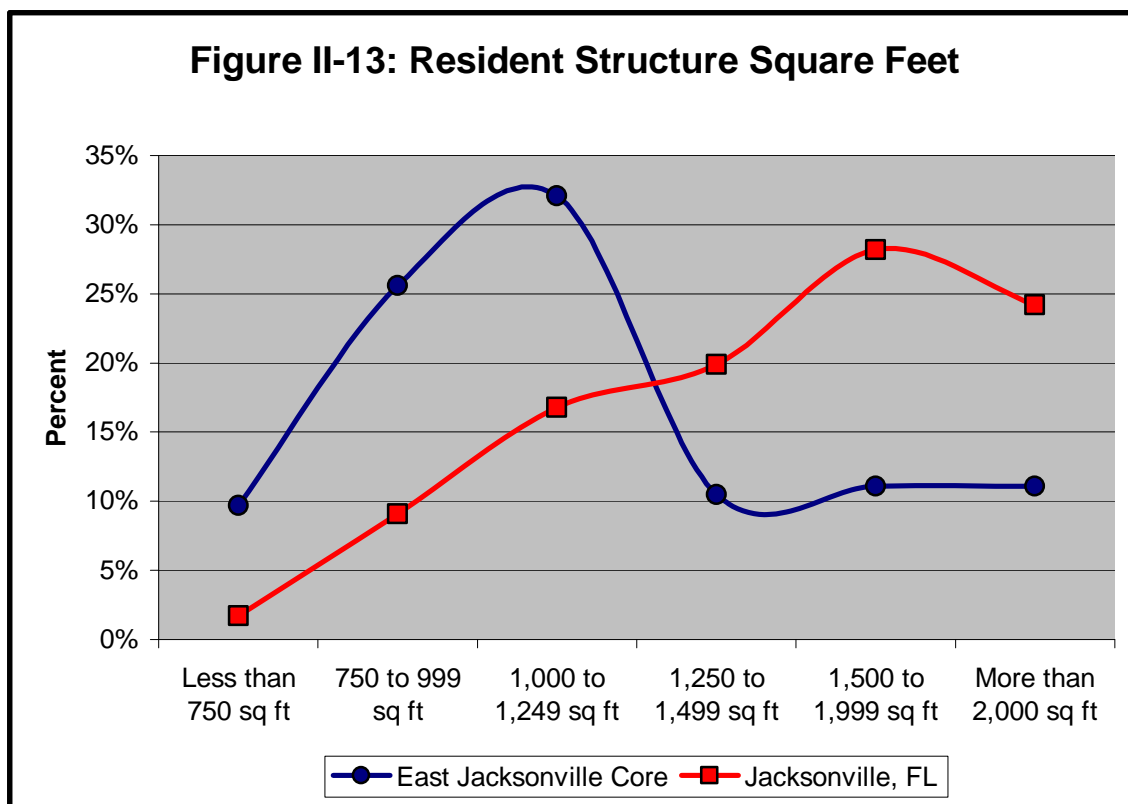
While the ultimate purpose of the windshield survey was to assign a classification to each parcel in order to get an overall snapshot and evaluate the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood as a whole, there are several other variables that, when looked at in light of the above findings, allow for a more complete and defined picture. In this section, information concerning the technical aspects of the residential structures and lots obtained from both the City of Jacksonville Property Appraiser's database and the windshield survey will be used to increase the reader's knowledge of the core neighborhood. When appropriate, this information will be compared with the City of Jacksonville as a whole.⁸

In the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, half of the homes were built before 1930. One in four (25.1 percent) were built between 1900 and 1909 alone. In Jacksonville, half of the homes were built after 1978, with 72.4 percent coming after 1959. As one can see in [Figure II-12](#), the rate of homes being built within the core has followed a similar upward trend to that of the city since the 1930's albeit at a much lower rate.



⁸ Data concerning multi-unit apartments were not included in this portion of the analysis because of their limiting effect on the residential component analysis.

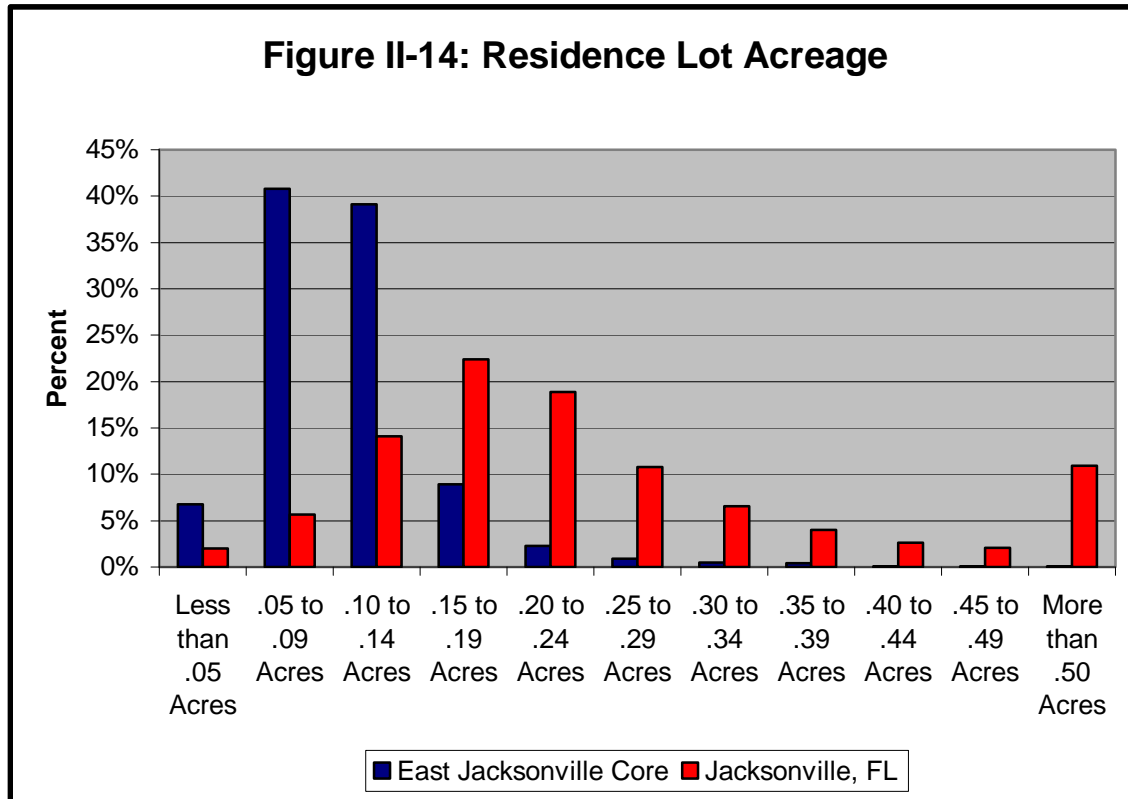
In addition to being built in an earlier time, the houses in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood are also much smaller than those throughout the rest of the city. In the core neighborhood, the average square footage⁹ is 1,256 compared to 1,688 for the city. This is a difference of over 400 square feet. As [Figure II-13](#) illustrates, 25.6 percent of homes in the core neighborhood are 750 to 999 square feet, with 31.1 percent between 1,000 and 1,249 square feet. Conversely, 28.2 percent of houses in Jacksonville are between 1,500 to 1,999 square feet and an astounding 24.2 percent – nearly one in four – are more that 2,000 square feet. The majority of houses that meet this last criteria in the core neighborhood (59.0 percent) were built before World War II, with relatively few (4.7 percent) built since 1990.



The final look at the residential parcels shows that the vast majority of houses are built on lots covering less than .14 acres (see [Figure II-14](#)). In fact, nearly 86.7 percent of homes are built on these tiny lots, with 6.8 percent on less than .05 acres. This trend is almost completely opposite of Duval County where 78.3 percent of homes are built on lots larger than .15 acres. To some extent, this is not surprising considering the size and age of the structures. However, any future growth will be hampered by these small

⁹ Square footage is a total of finished space within the residence that is heated. It does not include garages, porches, or attics unless these areas are in fact finished off.

lot sizes, either by limiting the size of a new house or by the difficulties in building on multiple parcels.



Mapping the Neighborhood: A Visual Understanding of the Characteristics of East Jacksonville

As can be seen in the previous section, it is clear that the residential structures in East Jacksonville Core neighborhood are, on the whole, much older than we find in much of the rest of the city. Residences in the area are also much smaller and are located on undersized lots compared to those found in Duval County overall. In addition, a review of PUSE codes and windshield survey indicate a number of vacant buildings, closed businesses, and a significant number of residences that are in only fair or poor condition. In the next few pages, we examine how these and other social and economic characteristics of the neighborhood are distributed spatially.

As can be seen in [Map II-5](#), when we examine a map of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood that identifies property values, one can see that there are significant differences across the neighborhood. In the northwest corner of the target area (along Liberty Street and 8th Street), we find a number of properties that are valued at or above \$100,000. However, in those blocks to the east of A Phillip Randolph Avenue, and in the southeast corner of the core neighborhood, we find that the majority of properties are valued at less than \$50,000.

A similar, although not as pronounced, pattern occurs when we examine the spatial distribution of residential properties by size. As we can see in [Map II-6](#), in the northwest area of the core neighborhood, we find a number of residential properties with over 1,500 square feet, with only a small number of residences under 1,000 square feet in size. As we move to the East and South, however, we find fewer large houses, and a significant number of residences under 1,000 square feet.

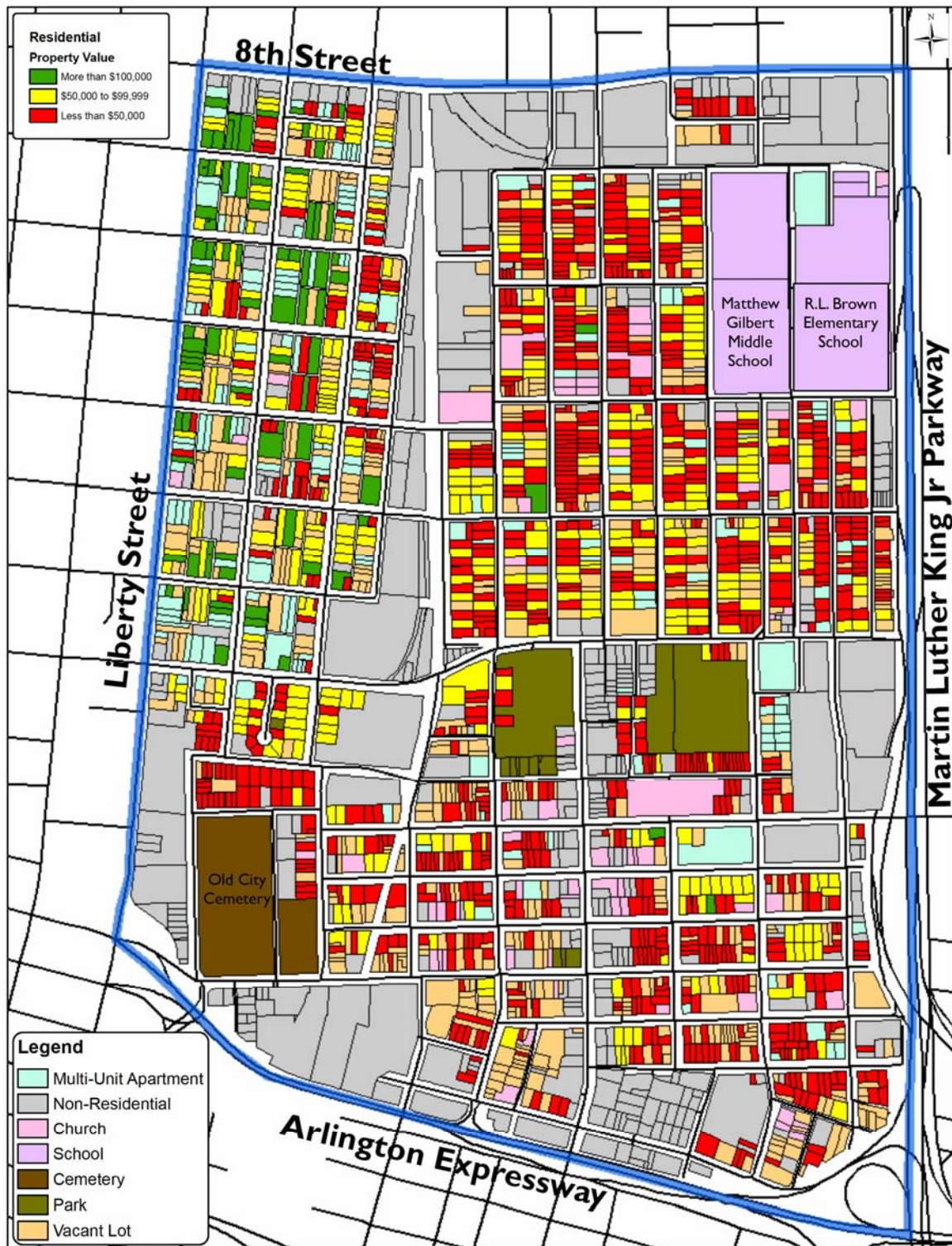
One of the more striking maps – and an area discussed above – shows the spatial distribution of the age of housing in the core neighborhood. As shown in [Map II-7](#), there are very few “new construction” sites in the core area. Given that most of the housing was built in the pre-WW II era, this is not a surprising picture. The lack of recent building represents an important area of focus for core neighborhood improvement efforts as the potential impact of such new construction on the overall neighborhood could improve resident quality of life through jobs, increased property values, and retail store attraction. Of course these relatively small ‘new construction’ efforts will not have a significant impact on the core neighborhood, however, as any new larger projects, such as a hotel, condominium, or retail space, would. These larger projects must be evaluated with an eye towards the impact they would have on the ‘community of residents’ within the East Jacksonville Core.

Two final areas of interest for the Windshield survey concerned “property amenities;” the presence of garages/carports for protection of vehicles and the presence of fencing to enclose ones property. As is to be expected in an urban area, few if any of the residences in the core neighborhood had either a garage or carport to cover their automobiles at their residences. As can be seen in [Map II-8](#), those with garages are concentrated in the lower east quadrant, with carports scattered across the neighborhood.

On the other hand, many residences had fences surrounding at least part of the property. As we see in [Map II-9](#), over half of residences had a fence around the property, although the quality (and condition) of the fencing varied widely across the neighborhood.

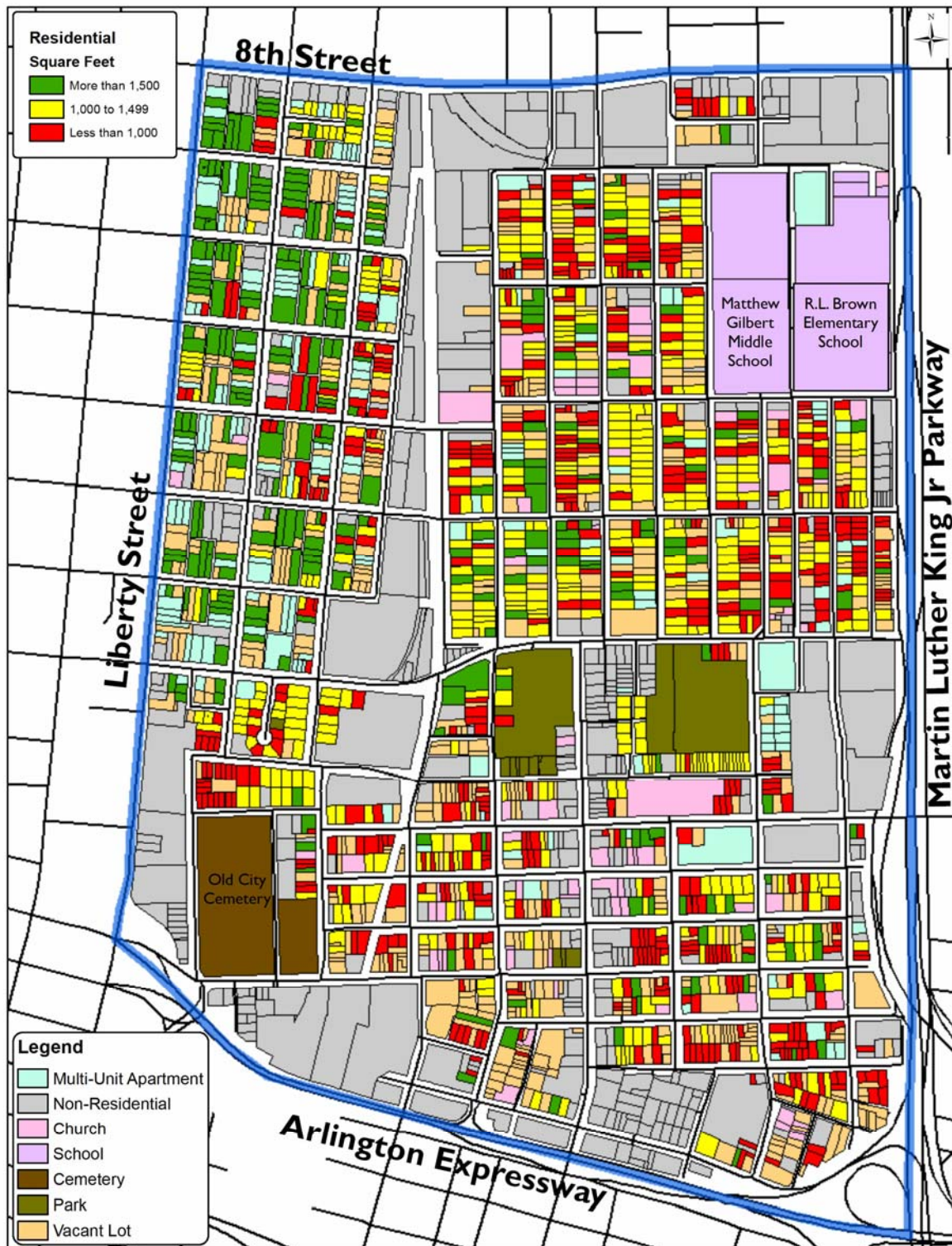
[Maps II-5](#) through [II-9](#) are presented below.

MAP II-5 – Residential Property Value within the East Jacksonville Core



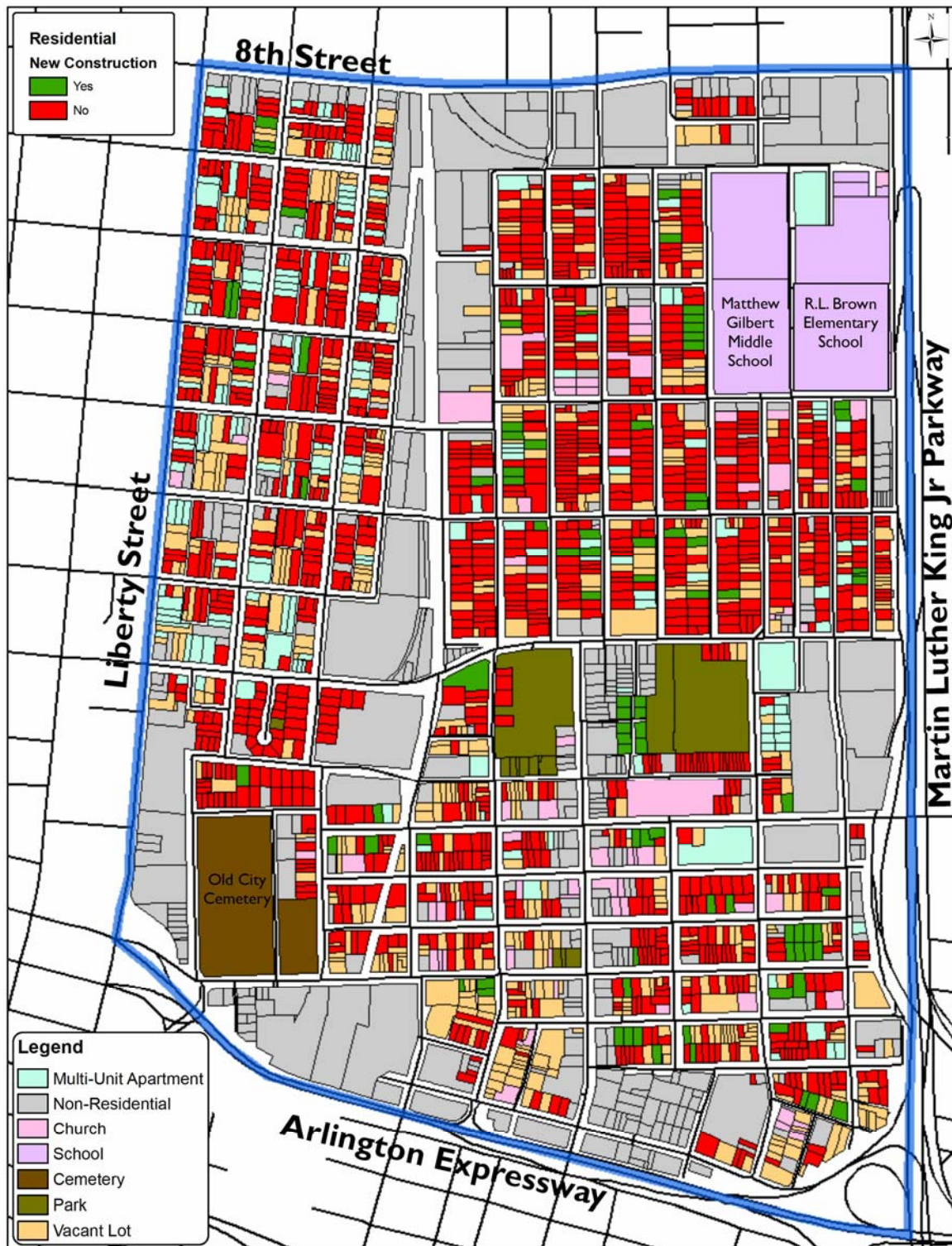
Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

MAP II-6 – Residential Square Feet within the East Jacksonville Core



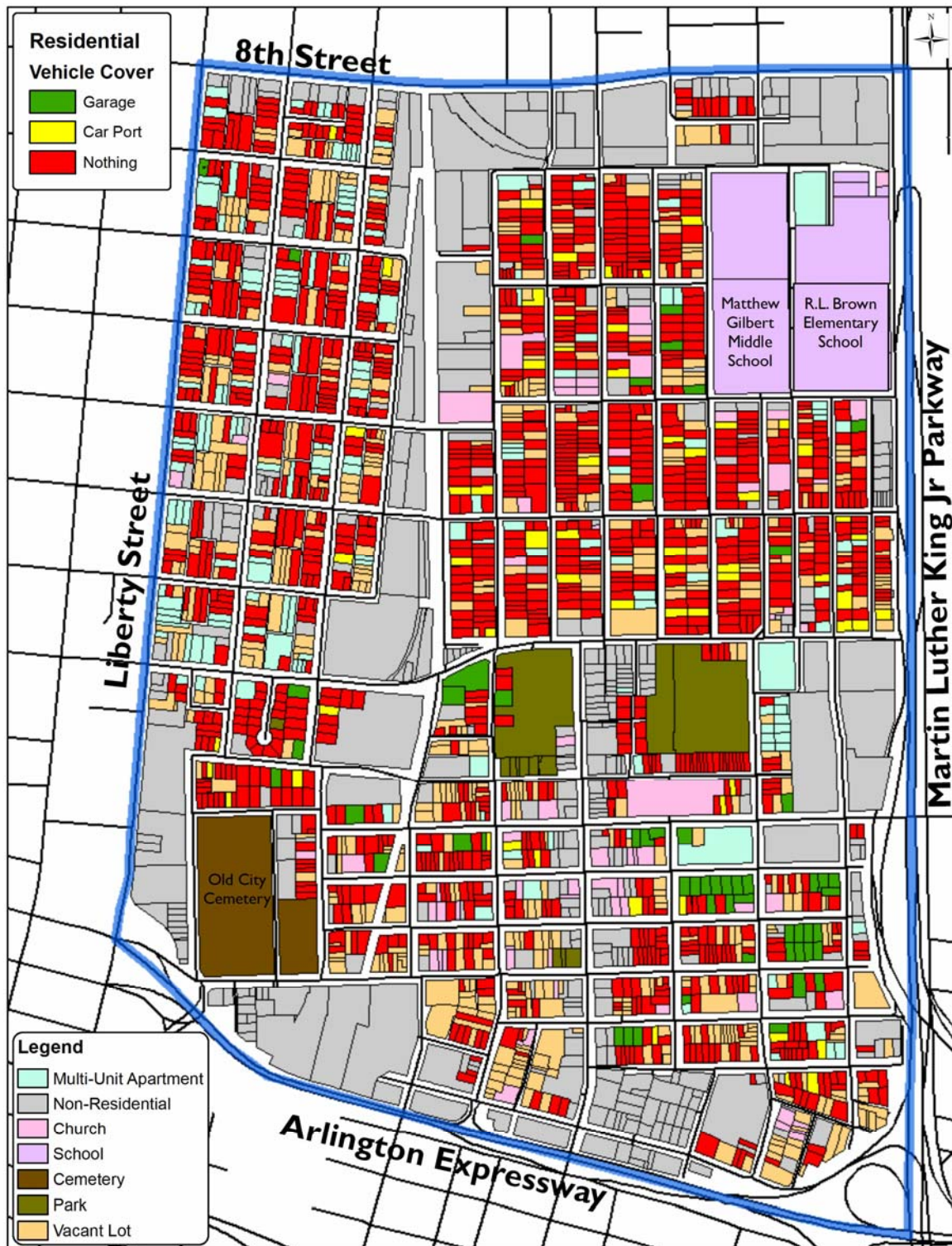
Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

MAP II-7 – Residential New Construction within the East Jacksonville Core



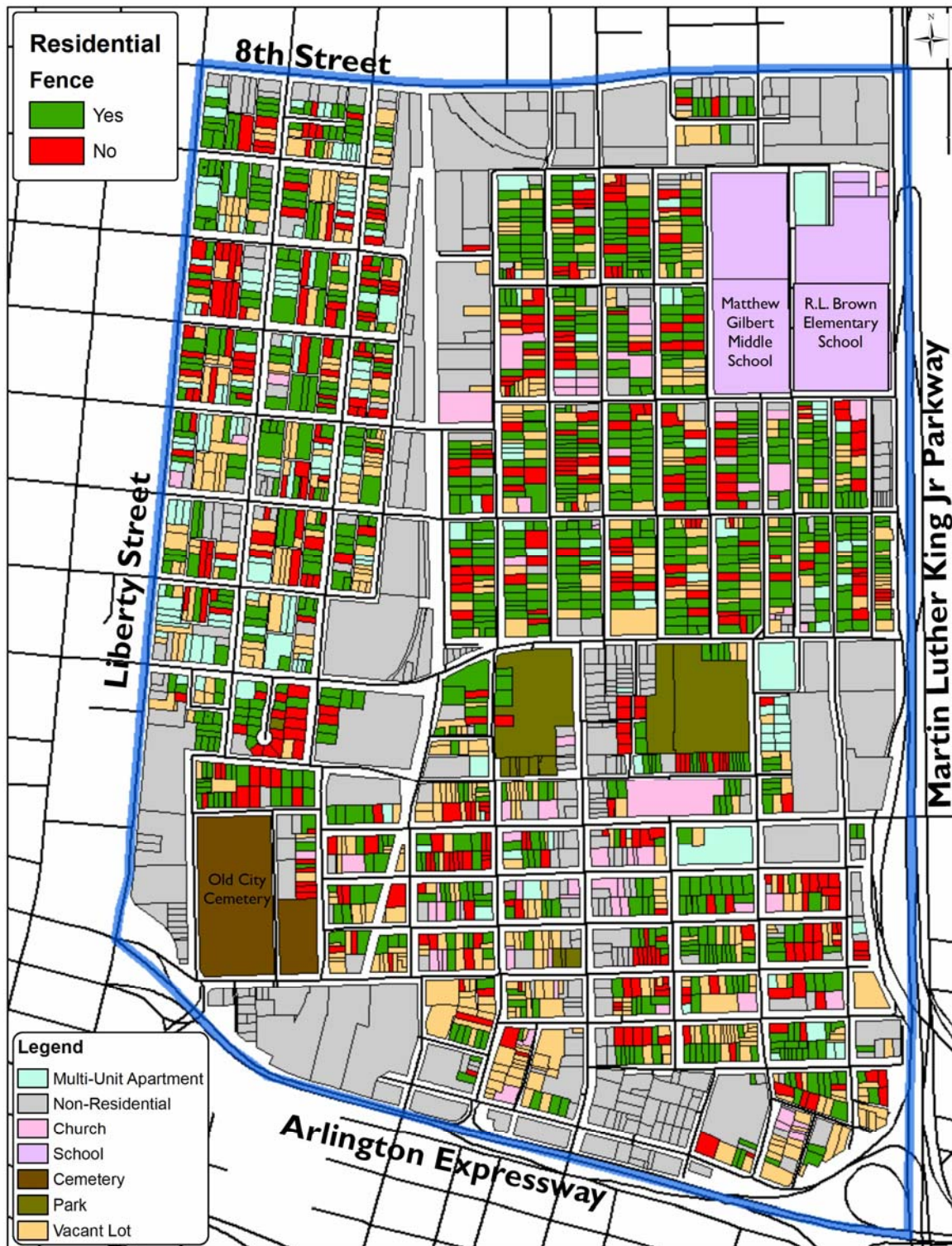
Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

MAP II-8 – Residential Vehicle Covering within the East Jacksonville Core



Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

MAP II-9 – Residential Fencing within the East Jacksonville Core



Source: Windshield Survey Database, Jacksonville Property Appraiser

Mapping the Neighborhood: A Picture of Neighborhood Safety

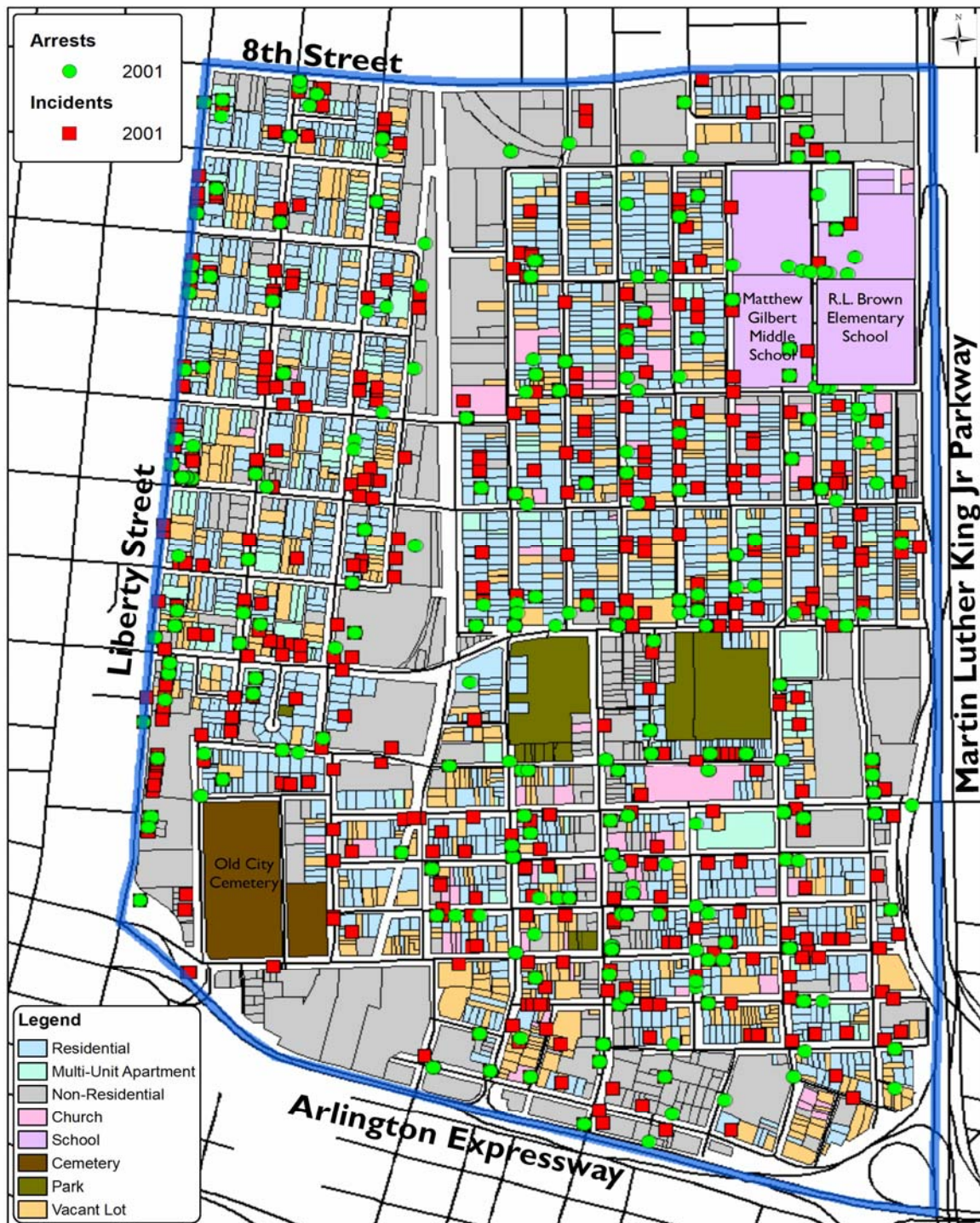
Finally, as part of the overall East Jacksonville Core neighborhood description, it is also important to examine issues of crime and safety. In almost all of the conversations, interviews, and focus groups the research team encountered, issues of crime and safety were the most emotional. Although obtaining in-depth data on crime issues for the target area proved elusive, CCI was able to obtain some basic information on arrests and incidents through the Jacksonville Sheriff's office and other public data. While a number of informants also discussed the location of a large number of released felons residing in the neighborhood, with the exception of (publicly available) data on sex offenders, we were not able to gather information on the extent of the presence of these individuals in the core neighborhood.

With the data that were available, we were able to locate where police responded to investigate an alleged criminal activity or a public service call and where arrests were made within the core neighborhood from 2001 through the first half of 2007. These incidents and arrests are mapped by location in [Maps II-10 through II-16](#).

Several important points need to be made about the distribution of incidences and arrests in the core neighborhood. First, it is important to note that there appears to be little variation on the number and distribution of incidences across years since 2001. Indeed, the police are quite busy in the neighborhood, and there appears to be little easing in the number of calls despite efforts by community leaders and authorities. Second, although spread throughout the core neighborhood, there are several areas where there appear to be significant concentrations of arrests and incidents. Most noticeable are the large number reported around the schools and areas in the far south where a number of abandoned buildings and vacant lots are located.

Finally, as can be seen in [Map II-17](#), there are nine registered sex offenders who reside in the core neighborhood according to the State database when reviewed in May 2007. Though records of registration are not always the most accurate, two of these individuals lived within 1,000 feet of a school and four in the same range of a park. All individuals were easily within walking distance of both.

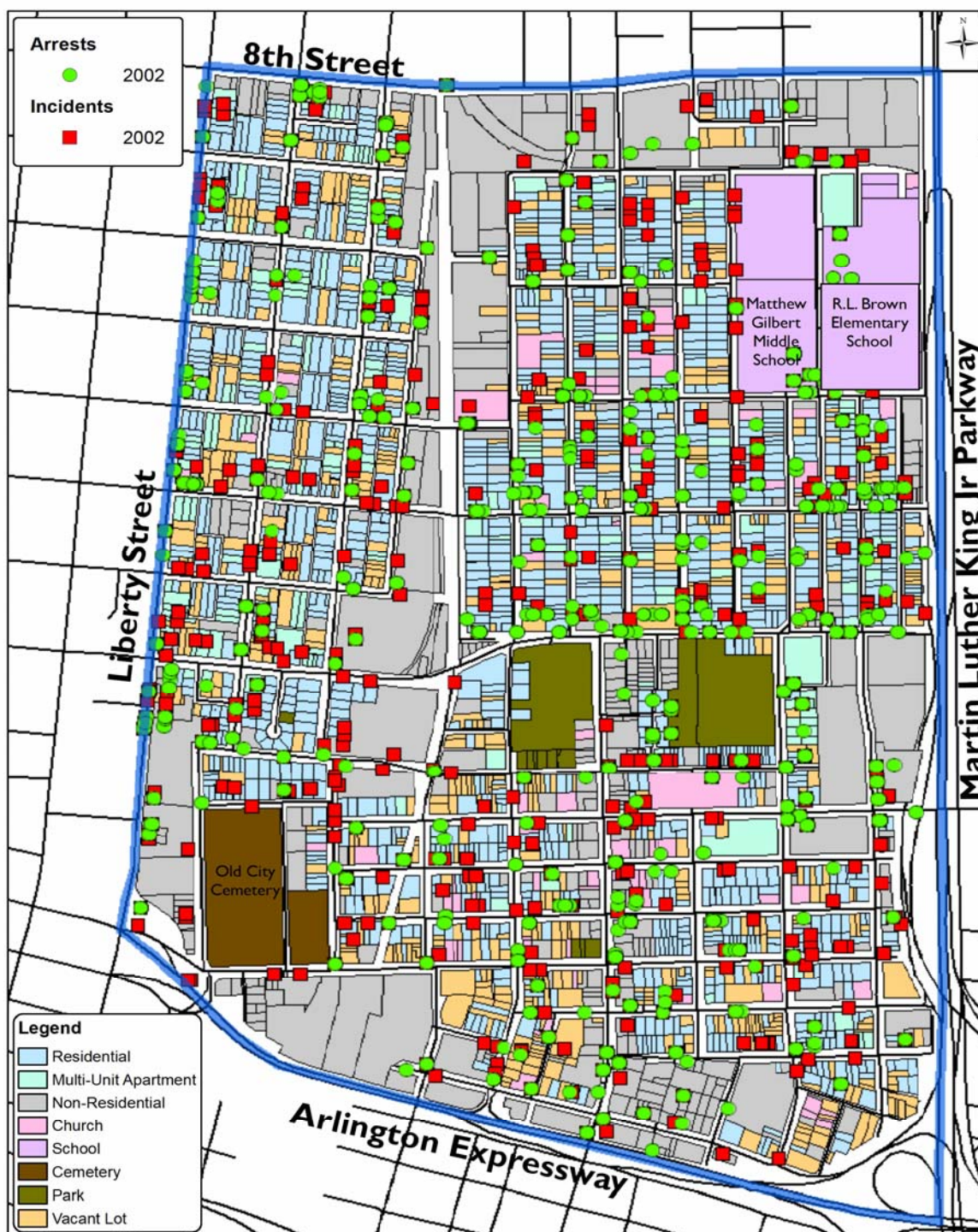
MAP II-10 – 2001 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

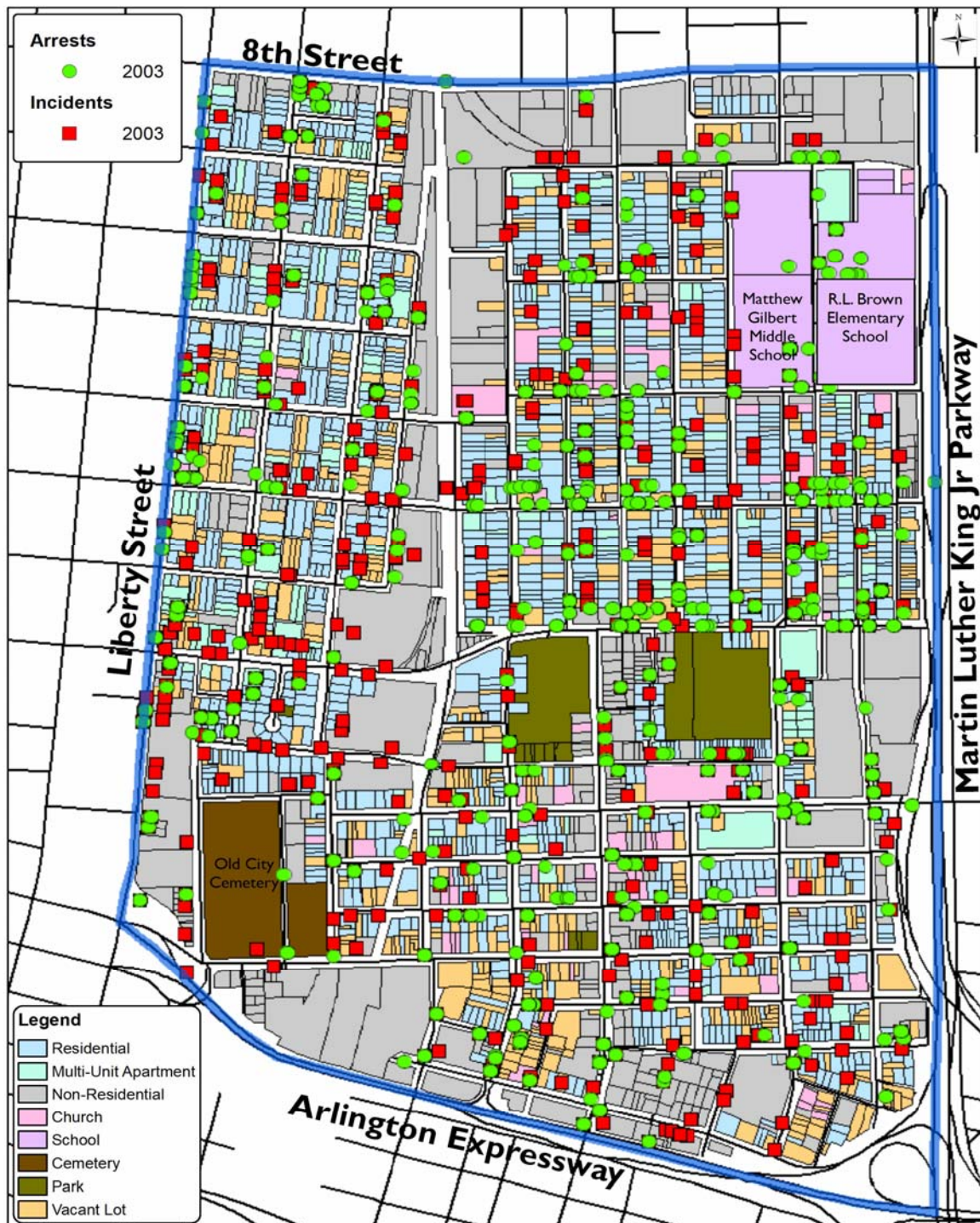
MAP II-11 – 2002 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

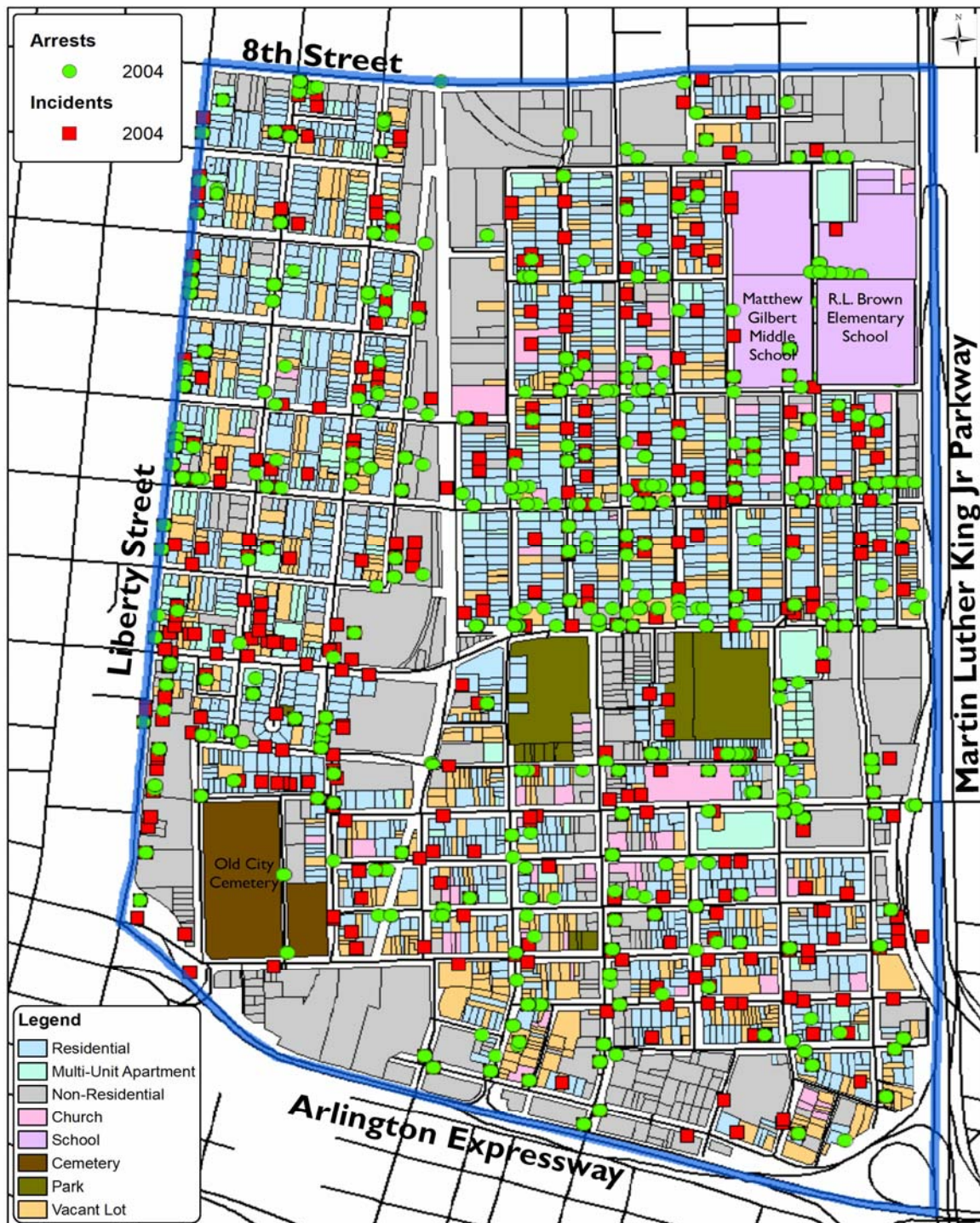
MAP II-12 – 2003 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

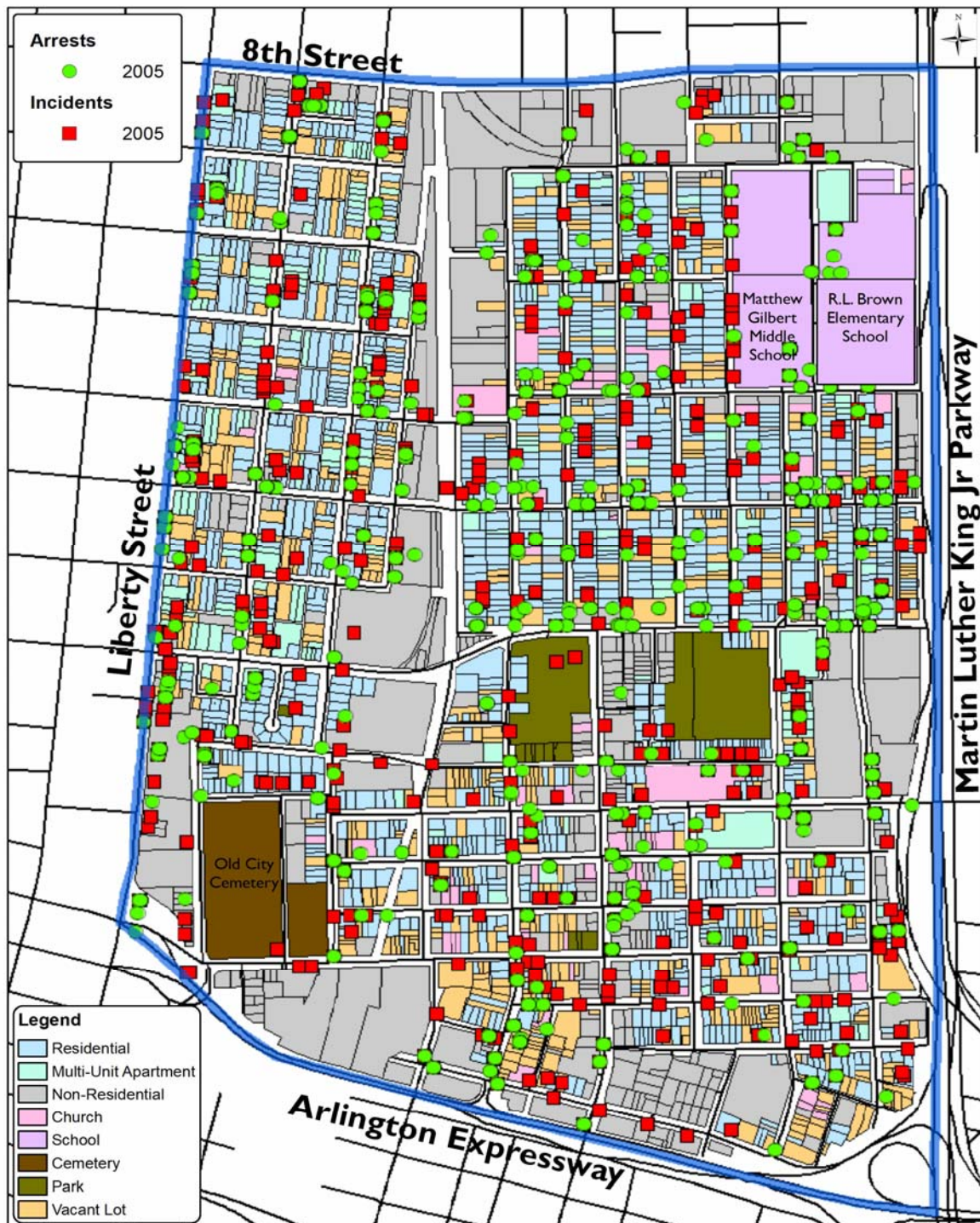
MAP II-13 – 2004 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

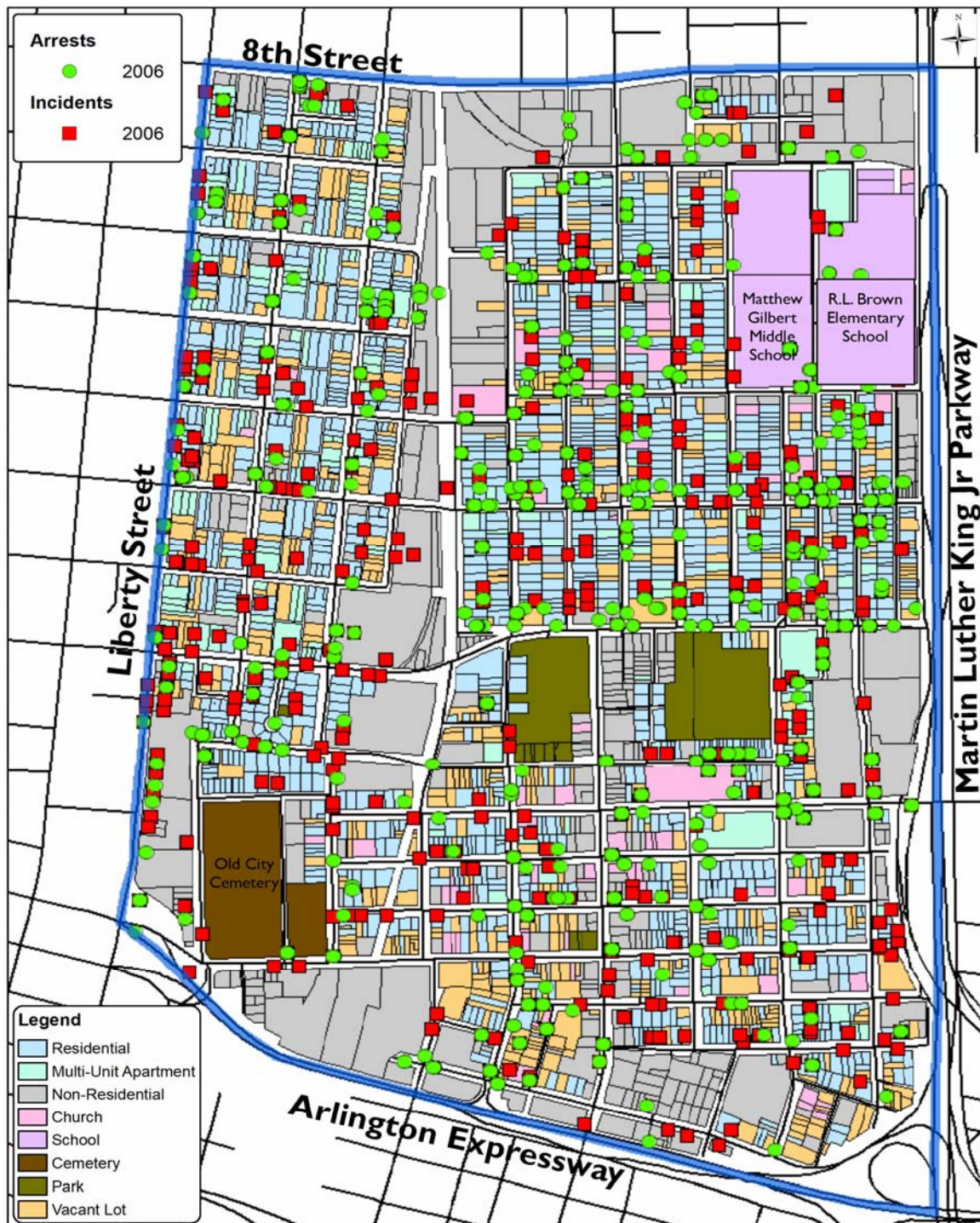
MAP II-14 – 2005 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

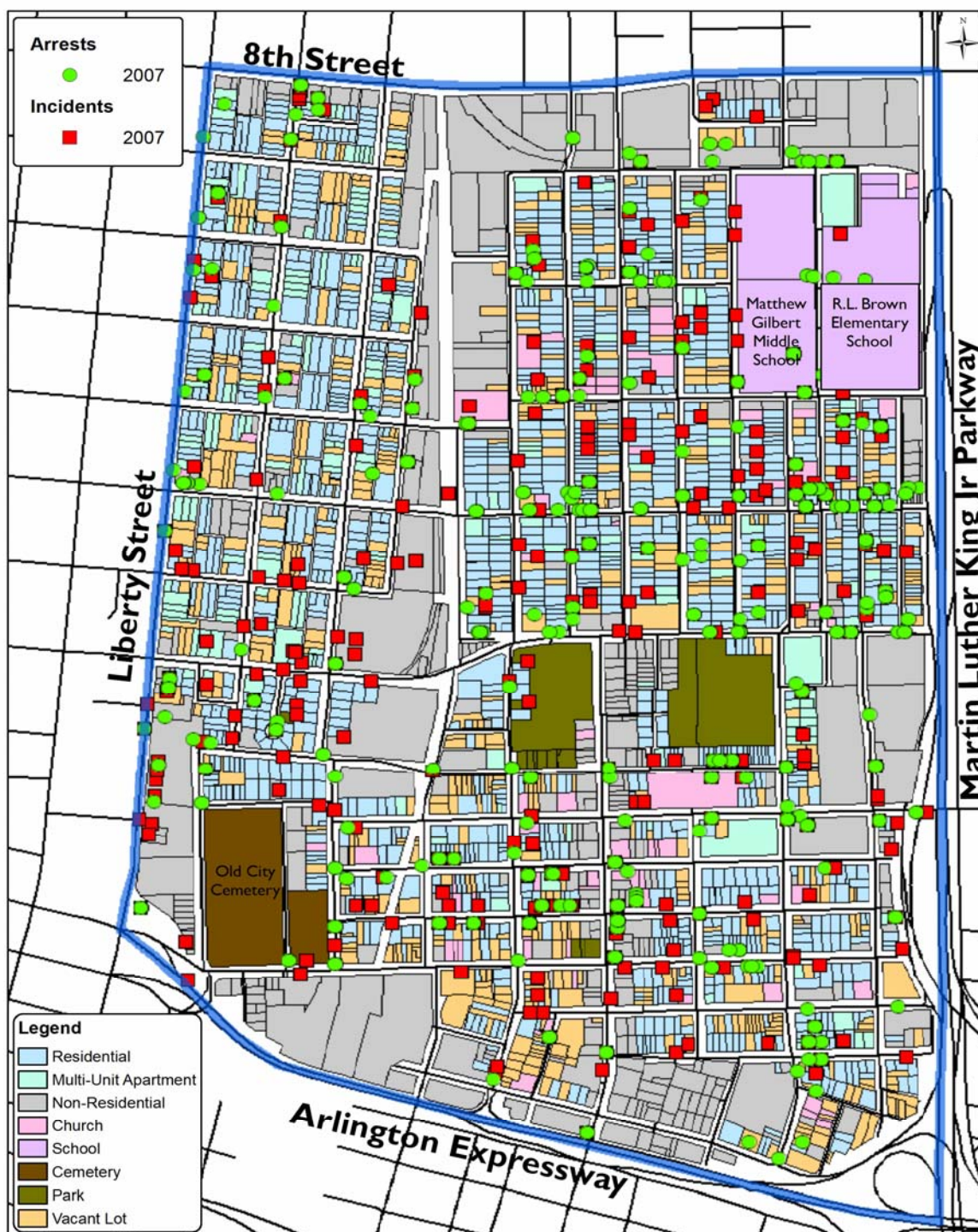
MAP II-15 – 2006 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

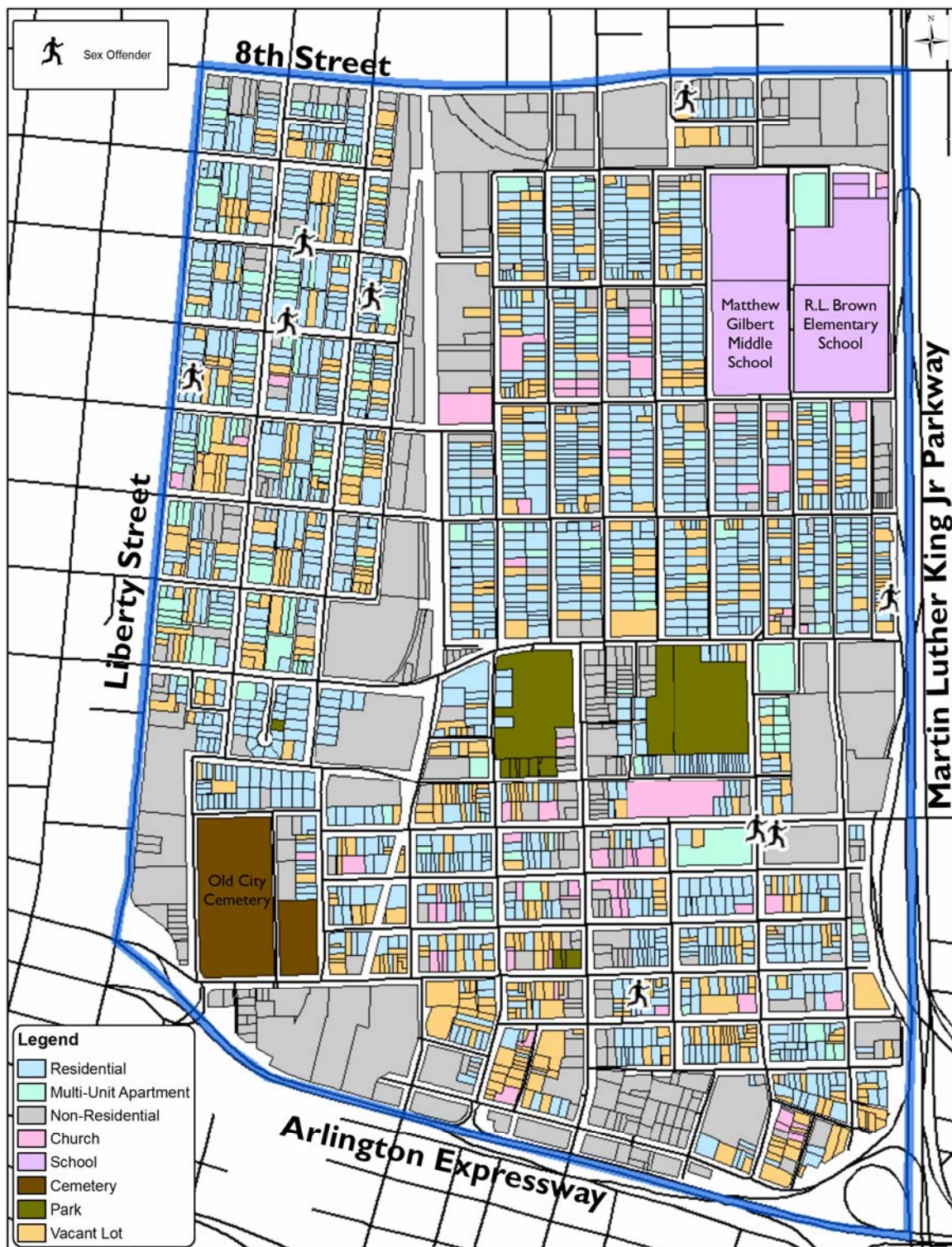
MAP II-16 – 2007 Arrests and Incidents within the East Jacksonville Core



Notes: An arrest means someone was taken into custody, while an incident is an investigation by a police officer into criminal activity or a public service call.

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

MAP II-17 – Convicted Sexual Offenders within the East Jacksonville Core



Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Summary

The primary purpose of the Windshield Survey is to provide an in depth, and where possible, visual understanding of the structural conditions in the area in question. In the previous section, it is clear that there are some serious issues facing the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. The residential structures are quite old, and many are in fair or poor condition. Many are small houses and are appraised at significantly lower rates than much of the rest of Duval County. On the other hand, there are areas of the neighborhood that are in much better condition than many in Jacksonville would have suggested. These “promising pockets” represent an important asset for the neighborhood, and a potential source of energy from which efforts to improve the area can draw.

Similarly, the business infrastructure of the neighborhood is also in serious disrepair, with many vacant buildings and vacant lots, and little in the way of economic opportunity for those living in the community. Again, however, there is some optimism in that, while vacant, some of these business properties could provide the base for a renewal of the local economy in the neighborhood, without the dislocation of residents so often accompanying urban renewal and development. Combined with the few all ready established businesses, this represents a great opportunity for growth.

As is confirmed by media portrayals, and responses from focus groups and interviews, there is significant crime and police action within the core neighborhood area. And, this activity has been consistent for a number of years. While some efforts have been successful in dealing with the criminality, it is clear that significant work remains.

The Windshield Survey reported here is merely a snapshot of the structural and macro-level conditions of the neighborhood. In other sections of this report, we examine the perceptions and actions of residents and other constituents present in the neighborhood. Combined, these efforts provide significant information and support for the development of a number of interventions to improve the troubled areas of the core neighborhood by drawing on the positive aspects also identified.

III. TELEPHONE SURVEY

Introduction

A telephone survey was conducted in April 2007 as part of the needs and assets assessment to supplement the windshield survey and qualitative data obtained from the interviews and focus groups conducted with various stakeholders in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. The goal of the survey was to gather opinions of neighborhood residents regarding a few specific topics including the general quality of the neighborhood, public services, safety, education, and the family learning environment.

Methods

The telephone survey was created by CCI staff. The questions were developed to reflect the FreshMinistries Six-Point Plan. While some questions were written specifically for this project, others were copied from previously implemented surveys. FreshMinistries staff were presented a draft of the survey and were afforded the opportunity to offer input and suggestions (see Appendix A for the survey instrument).

The respondents for this survey were adults living within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood who had local landline telephone service during the survey period. Cellular phone numbers were not included in the sample frame. Spanish speaking interviewers were available for respondents whose primary language was Spanish. The Public Opinion Research Laboratory (Polling Lab) at the University of North Florida was contracted to conduct the telephone survey. The Polling Lab purchased the residential telephone sample frame from Survey Sampling INC, in Connecticut, a nationally prominent survey sampling firm. The purchased sample frame was extracted from a database that is updated every two months. Using the sample frame, the Polling Lab called all of the phone numbers in the sample and completed 103 interviews with neighborhood residents. Table III-I provides detailed information regarding the residential phone numbers of the neighborhood. As seen in the table, there were 733 total phone numbers in the sample frame, all of which were called by the Polling Lab. Of these phone numbers, 172 (24 percent) were disconnected. Another 27 phone numbers were deemed ineligible phone numbers for the survey (12 were cellular phones, eight were connected to a fax or modem, and seven were for a business or government agency). Subtracting the disconnected and ineligible phone numbers from the original list of numbers left 534 total eligible phone numbers. The Polling Lab was able to obtain 103 completed surveys, a 19 percent response rate.

Table III-I: Response Rate

733 Total Phone Numbers
- 172 Disconnected Numbers
- 27 Other Ineligible Numbers
= 534 Total Eligible Numbers

103 Total Phone Surveys
/ 534 Total Eligible Numbers
= 19 % Response Rate

The original plan included conducting a door-to-door survey to assess the residents' opinions and perceptions. However, the project began later than initially proposed and a telephone survey offered a more efficient method. While each method is widely accepted and used among social science researchers, each method presents some limitations for researchers. For example, door-to-door surveys take more time and resources than a telephone survey. Additionally, not everyone is willing to open their door to a stranger and/or complete a face-to-face survey, eliminating some potential participants.

There are also limitations associated with conducting a telephone survey. Foremost, not all residents may be reachable through a landline telephone, consequentially eliminating some potential residents from participating. Although the great majority of US residents have access to a landline telephone within their household, a small percentage of households remain without access. As a general comparison, 82 percent of the resident households in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood and surrounding area had telephone service available in 2000.¹⁰ The percentage of those without a landline telephone may actually be on the rise more recently with increasing numbers of persons relying solely upon cellular telephones and eliminating their landline telephone altogether. Despite the limitations to conducting a telephone survey, as discussed later in the report, the survey respondents tended to be similar to the overall neighborhood residents.

Results¹¹

In addition to the findings gleaned from survey responses discussed below, information can also be ascertained from the actual telephone response rate. Of particular note is the amount of disconnected phone numbers discovered in making phone calls for the survey. While there are a number of reasons for having a phone disconnected, the fact that nearly one-fourth of the phone numbers were disconnected at the time of the survey speaks to the financial instability and/or mobility of those who reside in the area.

Characteristics of Surveyed Residents

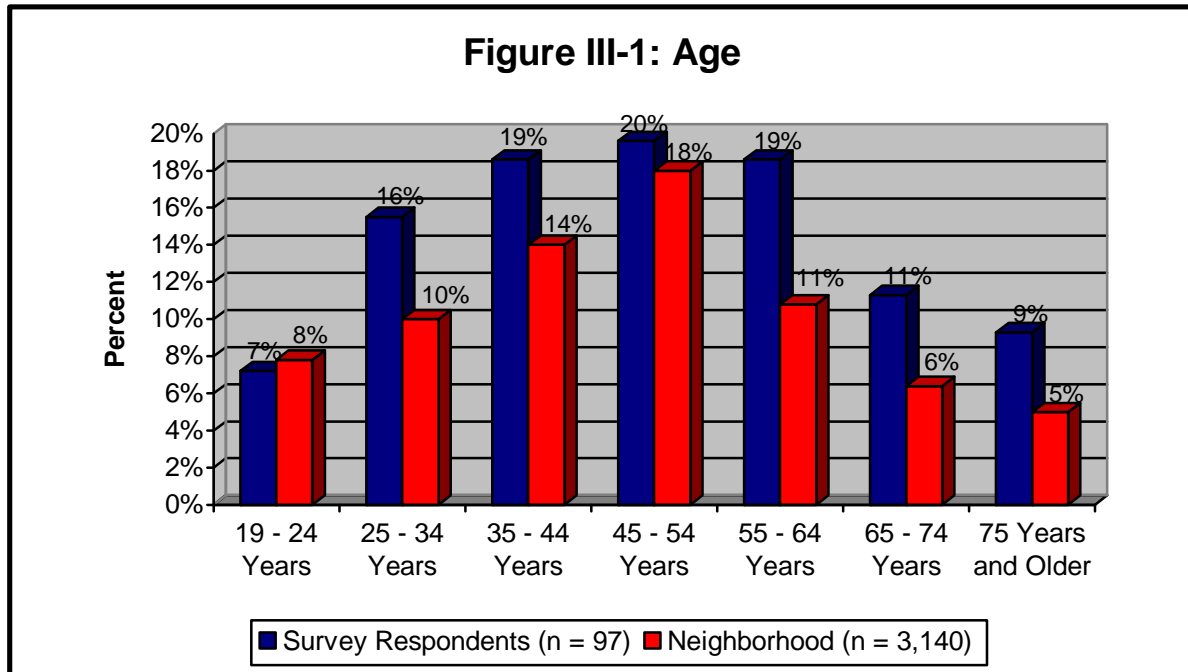
Respondents were between the ages of 19 and 84 with a median age of 48. While the median age is higher than the 2006 estimated median age¹² for the entire East Jacksonville Core neighborhood of 39, it is primarily due to the fact that no one under the age of 19 is included in the telephone sample. Indeed, the overall neighborhood median age is similar to that of the telephone sample, falling in the 45 to 54 age group, when it is calculated for a comparable age group of neighborhood residents aged 20 and

¹⁰ <http://factfinder.census.gov>. This percentage was calculated using data from Census Tracts that include the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, but also encompass comparable areas outside of the Core neighborhood. These Census Tracts are 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12.

¹¹ All percentages in this report section are rounded to the whole number and therefore may not add up to 100%.

¹² 2006 overall neighborhood estimates for this report were obtained from ESRI Business Analyst, which provides data specifically on the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood.

older. As seen in [Figure III-1](#), the ages of the telephone survey respondents and the neighborhood residents in general are somewhat similarly distributed.



**The Neighborhood percentages are based on the entire neighborhood population. Residents under 19 (29%) are not included in the graph. Therefore, the Neighborhood percentages will not equal 100%. The percent of those 24 and younger represents the percent of persons 20 to 24 in the neighborhood, while the youngest survey respondent was 19.

Approximately 70 percent of the survey respondents were female. This percentage is much higher than the 2006 estimates for overall neighborhood residents where 49 percent are female. Race was not a question for this survey given the racial composition of the neighborhood. According to 2006 estimates, 91 percent of the neighborhood population was African-American.

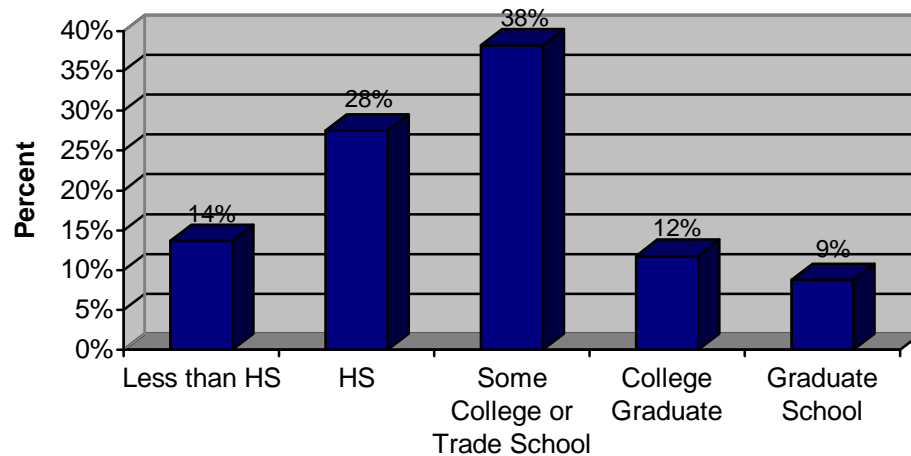
The marital status of the survey respondents was relatively evenly distributed. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of the resident respondents had never been married, while another 29 percent were married at the time of the survey. One out of four of the respondents were divorced or separated and 15 percent were widowed.

Nearly one out of three (32 percent) of the survey respondents had at least one child under the age of 18 residing in their household of which, the vast majority (91 percent) had at least one school-aged child. More than one-fourth of the 33 households with children had a grandparent living in the household with them.

A great majority (86 percent) of the residents surveyed had at least a high school education (see [Figure III-2](#)). Nearly 40 percent had attended some college, technical

school, or trade school, and one out of five respondents graduated from college or graduate school. These figures are much more favorable than the educational attainment estimates for the community as a whole. In fact, just over half (55 percent) of East Jacksonville Core residents had a high school diploma or higher level of education in 2000.¹³ One possible explanation for the differences between expected and actual educational attainments among the telephone respondents may be that those with less education typically earn less income and would therefore not be easily reached because they are more likely to not have a telephone or to have had it recently disconnected.

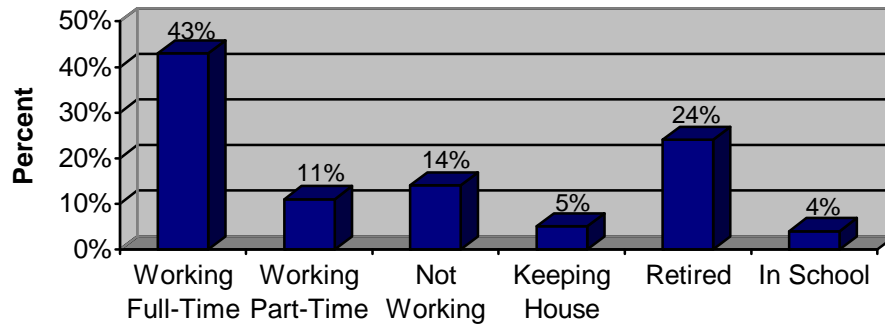
Figure III-2: Educational Attainment
(n = 102)



Just over half (53 percent) of the survey respondents were employed at the time of the survey; forty-three percent of these respondents were employed full-time (see [Figure III-3](#)). Approximately one-fourth (24 percent) were retired. Five percent of the surveyed residents were keeping house and four percent were attending school. Fourteen percent stated they were not working at the time of the survey. This corresponds with 2006 estimates for the overall East Jacksonville Core in which 13 percent of the civilian neighborhood residents 16 years old and older were unemployed.

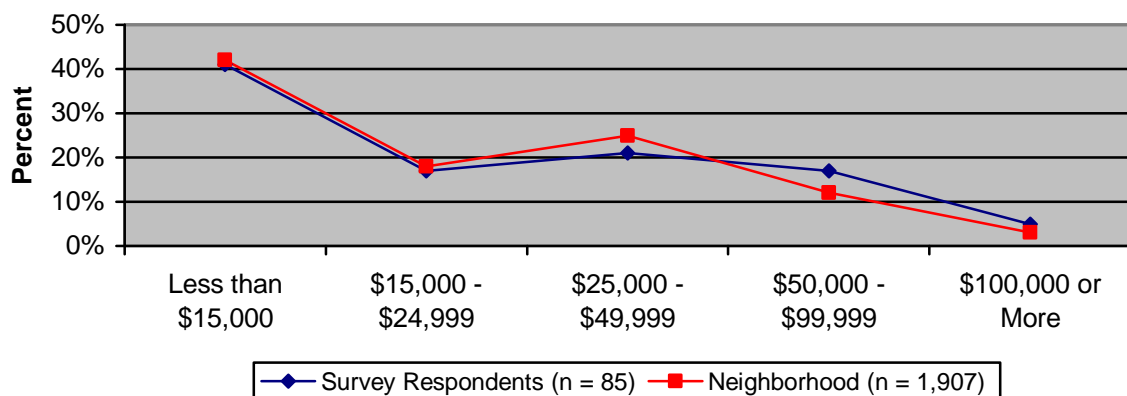
¹³ 2006 estimates were unavailable. 2000 estimates obtained from ESRI Business Analyst.

Figure III-3: Employment Status
(n = 103)



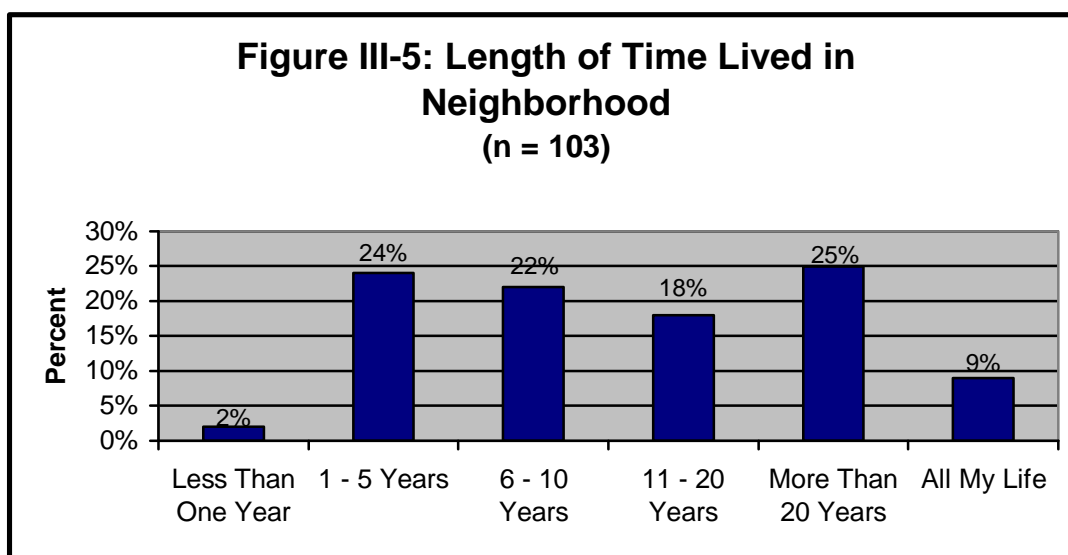
A relatively large proportion of the residents surveyed in the East Jacksonville Core lived in a household that earned less than \$10,000 last year. Indeed, almost one-third (29 percent) of the respondents claimed such income (see Figure III-4). More than half (58 percent) of the surveyed residents had an annual household income less than \$25,000. Therefore, the median annual household income for these survey respondents was between \$15,000 and \$24,999. This is similar to the 2006 median annual household income for the East Jacksonville Core, which was \$16,334. As seen in Figure III-4, the income distribution of the telephone respondents was reflective of the overall neighborhood residents. Eighteen respondents refused to disclose their household income.

Figure III-4: Total Household Income Last Year



While the median household income of the survey respondents and the general population of the East Jacksonville Core were somewhat similar, the rate of homeownership differed greatly between the two groups. A large majority (69 percent) of the survey respondents lived in owned homes, while less than one-third (30 percent) of the homes within the neighborhood were owned in 2006. Part of the discrepancy may be because the statistics involving homeownership within the East Jacksonville Core also include vacant housing units. Twenty-two percent of the housing units in the neighborhood were vacant in 2006. Respondents 35 years and older were more likely than those under 35 to live in an owned home.

The surveyed residents tended to be somewhat long-term citizens of the neighborhood. In fact, 34 percent of those surveyed had lived in the area for more than 20 years (see [Figure III-5](#)). Another 40 percent had been in the area for six to 20 years. Slightly more than one out of four (26 percent) resident respondents had resided in the neighborhood for five years or less. Residents can offer different perspectives of the neighborhood depending upon the length of time they have been there. It could be argued that those who have lived in the area for a long period of time have the ability to compare the neighborhood over time, while those who have been in the area a much shorter time might be more likely to compare the neighborhood in regards to other places they recently lived.



Neighborhood Overall

Survey respondents were asked how they would rate, on a scale from excellent to poor, the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood overall as a place to live. As seen in [Table III-2](#), 44 percent of the residents surveyed rated the neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live. It appears that residents who had lived in the neighborhood for longer periods of time were more likely to perceive the neighborhood as an excellent or good

place to live (see Table III-2). Similarly, survey respondents who lived in an owned home were also more likely than those who resided in a rented home to rate the neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live. Forty-seven percent of residents who lived in an owned residence believed their neighborhood is excellent or good, while 37 percent of those dwelling in a rented home rated it as such.

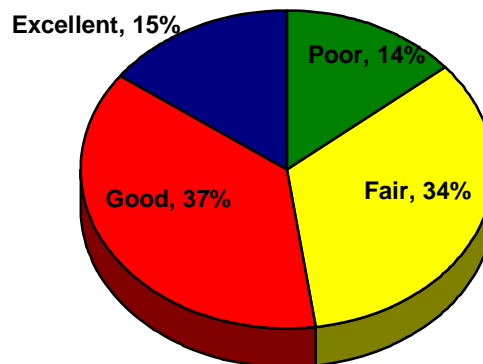
Table III-2: Neighborhood Overall as a Place to Live by the Length of Residency (n = 102)

	10 Years or Less	More than 10 Years	All Respondents
Excellent or Good	35%	53%	44%
Fair or Poor	65%	47%	56%

Education

East Jacksonville Core residents were asked to rate a number of features and services of their neighborhood, including the quality of the public schools. The public schools for this neighborhood are Andrew Robinson Elementary, John Love Elementary, R. L. Brown Elementary, Matthew Gilbert Middle School, and Andrew Jackson High School. While many children attend their assigned neighborhood school, many also commute to magnet schools or other specially assigned schools. As a result, perceptions of schools may not necessarily be directed toward the immediate neighborhood schools. As seen in Figure III-7, slightly more than half (52 percent) of the respondents rated the neighborhood public schools to be excellent or good. Fourteen percent believed that the neighborhood public schools are poor. Survey respondents with children in their household were less likely than those without children to rate the neighborhood public schools as excellent or good. Almost 60 percent (58 percent) of the residents who did not have any children residing in their household rated the schools as excellent or good, while only 41 percent of those who had at least one child in their residence believed the schools to be of such caliber.

Figure III-7: Neighborhood Public Schools (n = 86)



Economic Development and Employment

The East Jacksonville Core neighborhood is primarily residential, with a few businesses scattered throughout. As seen in [Figure III-8](#), the respondents were split in regards to their perceptions of the quality of the businesses within the neighborhood. Less than half of the respondents felt the businesses are excellent or good. Almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the surveyed residents rated the available businesses in the neighborhood as poor.

Forty-six percent of the survey respondents claimed to use businesses within the neighborhood to purchase basic

necessities. Respondents who purchase basic necessities within the neighborhood were more likely than those who do not to believe these businesses are excellent or good. Indeed, while more than half (53 percent) of the residents who utilize the neighborhood businesses felt the business are excellent or good, only 38 percent of those who do not use the businesses rated them similarly. This may be the result of decisions made by some residents not to purchase from the neighborhood businesses because of the perceived low quality.

While surveyed residents were split in their perceptions of the businesses, they were in agreement regarding the jobs in the neighborhood. Only 16 percent of the respondents rated the number of jobs available in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood to be excellent or good (see [Figure III-9](#)). In fact, two-thirds of the residents believed the number of jobs to be poor. Furthermore, only one out of five surveyed residents thought that the quality of available jobs is excellent or good. Sixty percent believed they are poor.

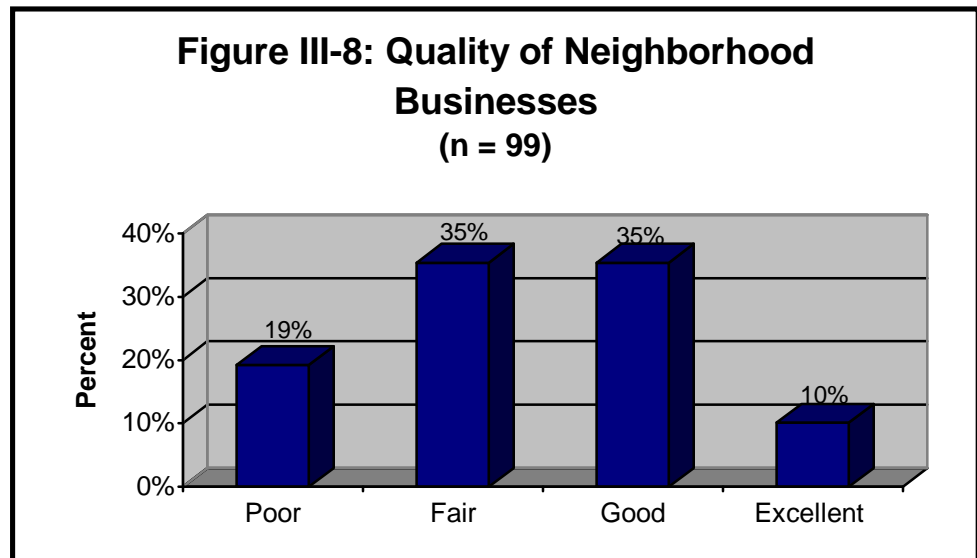
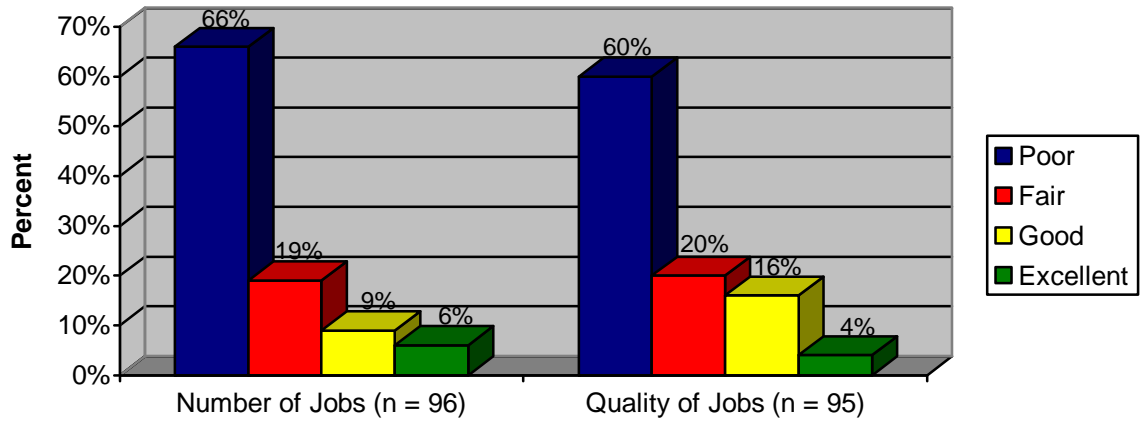


Figure III-9: Number and Quality of Jobs Available



Safety and Public Services

One out of four of the surveyed residents claimed that they or someone in their household had been a victim of a crime in their neighborhood within the past year. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) reported that there are areas around their neighborhood where they would be afraid to walk alone at night. Interestingly, this response is the opposite of a national study finding where less than one-third (32 percent) of adult respondents felt that there are areas around their neighborhood where they would be afraid to walk alone at night.¹⁴ Not surprising, older surveyed residents (55 years old and older) in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood were more likely than younger respondents to be afraid to walk in particular areas at night (see Table III-3).

Table III-3: Percentage of Residents Afraid to Walk Alone at Night in Areas Around Neighborhood by Age (n = 96)

Under 55 Years Old	55 Years Old and Older	All Respondents
58%	70%	64%

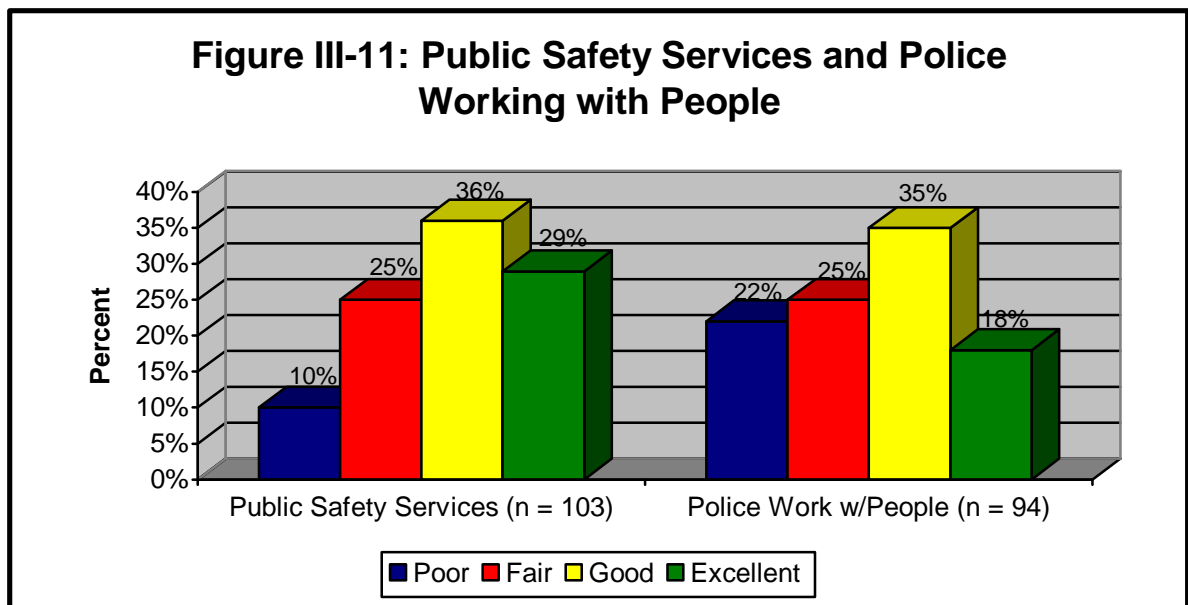
While many of the respondents would be afraid to walk in particular areas in their neighborhood alone at night, almost all of the residents (91 percent) responded that they feel safe and secure in their home at night. Although age did not seem to make a

¹⁴ 2004 General Social Survey. <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/projects/General+Social+Survey.htm>

difference in survey respondents' perceptions of security, residents who were living in an owned home were somewhat more likely to feel safe and secure in their home at night than those residing in a rented home (see [Table III-4](#)).

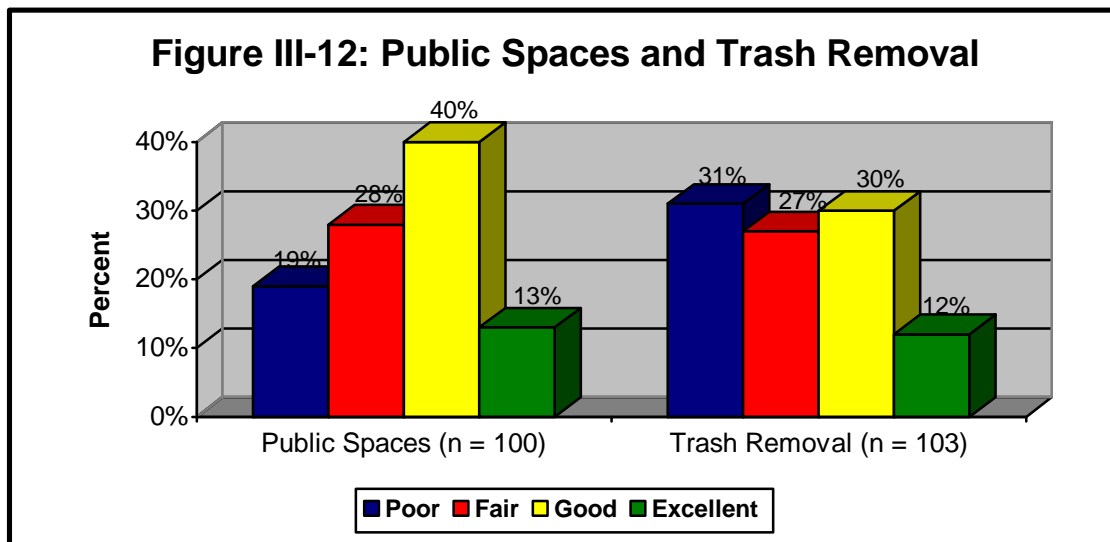
Table III-4: Percentage of Residents Who Feel Safe and Secure at Night by Homeownership (n = 101)		
Owned Residency	Rented Residency	All Respondents
96%	87%	91%

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the survey respondents rated public safety services such as rescue, fire, and the police as excellent or good in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood (see [Figure III-11](#)). Only ten percent of the respondents believed such services are of poor quality. Attitudes specific to the police were less favorable. Just over half (53 percent) of the surveyed respondents assessed the ability of police officers to work with people to solve problems in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood as excellent or good. More than one out of five (22 percent) respondents thought the police are doing a poor job working with people to solve problems.



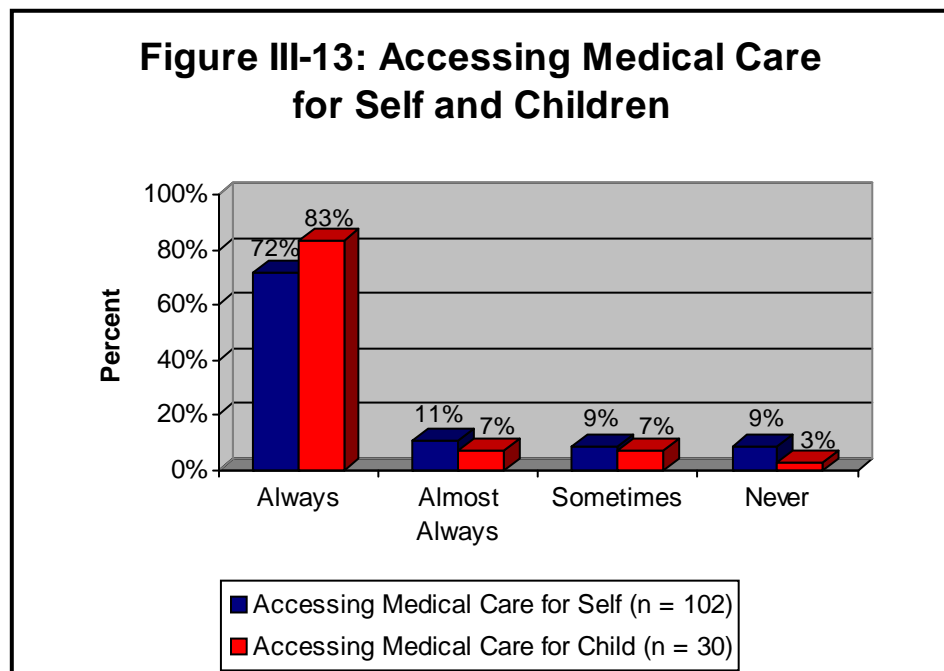
Residents were asked to rate other public services as well. Survey respondents were split in their perceptions of the public spaces such as streets and parks of their East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. As seen in [Figure III-12](#), slightly more than half (53 percent) of the surveyed residents believed that their streets and parks are excellent or good. Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of the respondents rated such public spaces as

poor. Trash removal appears to be seen as somewhat of a problem with many of the surveyed residents. In fact, more than half (58 percent) of the survey respondents thought the removal of trash and debris in the neighborhood is only fair or poor (see Figure III-12).



Health

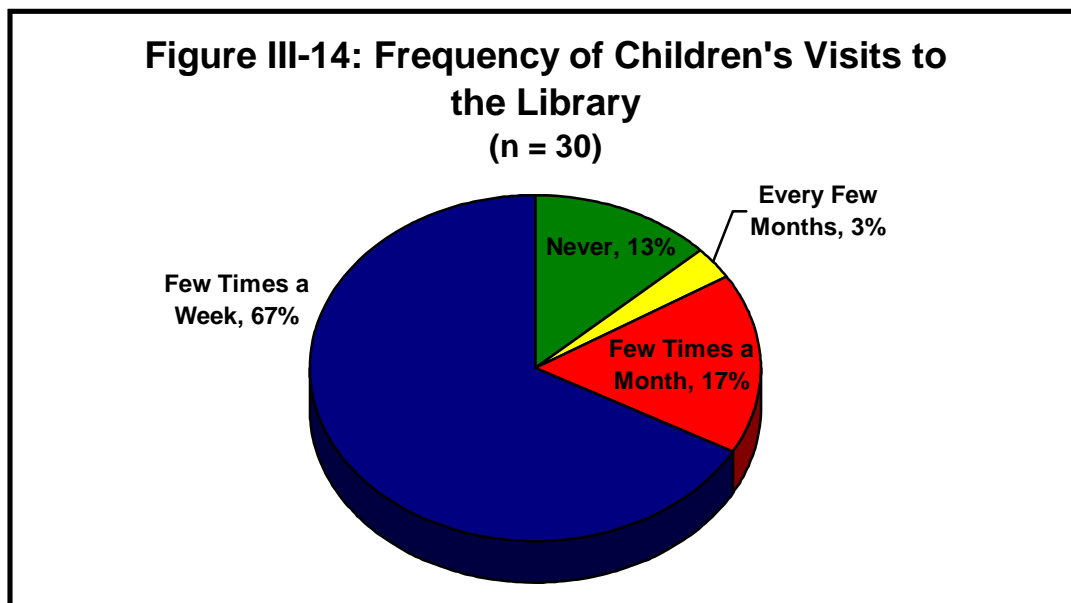
Access to medical care does not appear to be a problem for a majority of the East Jacksonville Core residents surveyed for this project. In fact, when asked how often they could access medical care for themselves, 72 percent responded that they are always able to access such care (see Figure III-13). Obtaining health care is an issue for some survey respondents as nine percent replied they are never able to access health care for themselves.



Health care for surveyed residents' children also seems to be rather accessible. As seen in [Figure III-13](#), 83 percent of the surveyed residents with children claimed they are always able to access health care when needed for their child. Only one respondent reported that he or she can never access medical care for their child when needed.

Family Strength and Environment

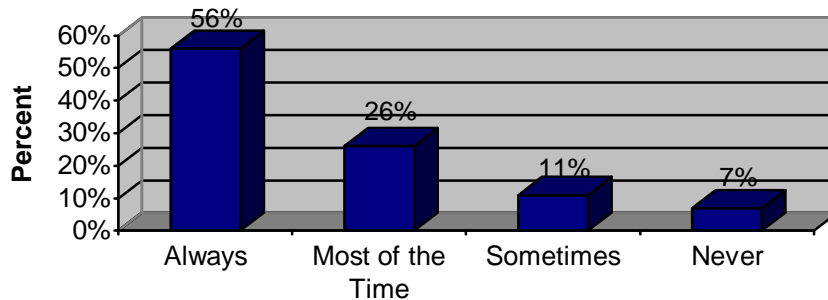
It appears that the children of the survey respondents utilize the public library quite often. Indeed, two-thirds of the surveyed parents claimed their child or children typically visit the library a few times a week and another 17 percent said their child or children go a few times a month (see [Figure III-14](#)). This is not surprising given that many children from the neighborhood use the local library after school and throughout the summer. Thirteen percent of the survey respondents reported that their child or children have never visited the public library.



Nearly all (89 percent) of the survey respondents with school-aged children had met with their child or children's teacher during the current school year.

A large majority (82 percent) of surveyed parents claimed to help their child/children with their homework always or most of the time (see [Figure III-15](#)). Only seven percent of the respondents never assist their child or children with their schoolwork. The survey did not include a follow up question inquiring as to why these parents never help their children. There are a number of reasons why parents do not assist their children with homework. For example, many parents work and lack the time to help. Some parents do not have the educational ability to help, while others do not value education. Still, some parents may not help their child because the child does not need assistance or may not have homework on a regular basis.

Figure III-15: Frequency of Helping Child with Homework
(n = 27)



Slightly more than half of the resident respondents had a working computer in their household (see Figure III-16). This is about 10 percentage points lower than the national average in 2003. According to the U.S. Census, 62 percent of households had a computer in 2003.¹⁵ All but two of the telephone respondents who had a working computer had access to the internet in their household. In other words, nearly half of the resident respondents had access to the internet at their home. Similarly, 55 percent of the households nationwide had internet access in 2003.¹⁶

Table III-5: Percentage of Residents with Working Computer by Age and Homeownership

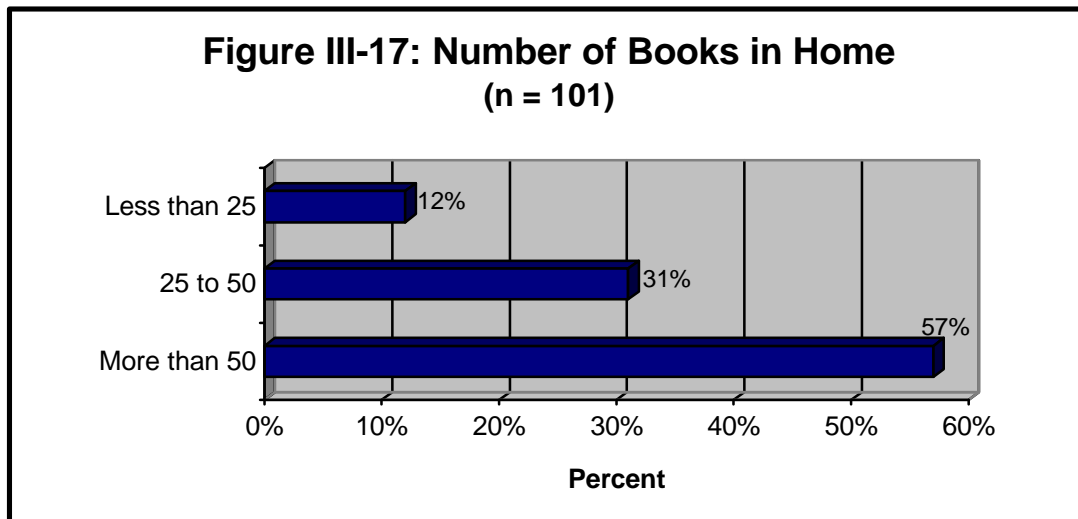
Age (n = 97)		
Under 55 Years Old	55 Years Old and Older	All Respondents
65%	40%	51%
Residency (n = 101)		
Owned Residency	Rented Residency	All Respondents
56%	39%	51%

A large majority of the respondents surveyed had numerous books within their households. In fact, 57 percent of the residents surveyed estimated that they had more than 50 books in their household and 31 percent claimed to have 25 to 50 books (see

¹⁵ Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2003. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid

Figure III-17). Respondents with at least a college education or residing in households earning \$25,000 or more annually were more likely to have more books within their households than others.



Slightly more than half (53 percent) of the survey respondents reported to have volunteered their time within the past six months to help at a local agency such as a school, church, or community organization. Residents tended to be more likely to volunteer based on their age and educational attainment and whether or not children are in the household (see Table III-6). Additionally, survey respondents who lived in a rented dwelling were more likely than those living in an owned home to have volunteered. Sixty-one percent of the respondents who resided in a rented home claimed to have volunteered within the past six months, while half of the respondents who lived in an owned residence had volunteered. This may be due to age, as younger surveyed residents were generally more likely to volunteer than older respondents and younger respondents were more likely to reside in a rented house than older residents.

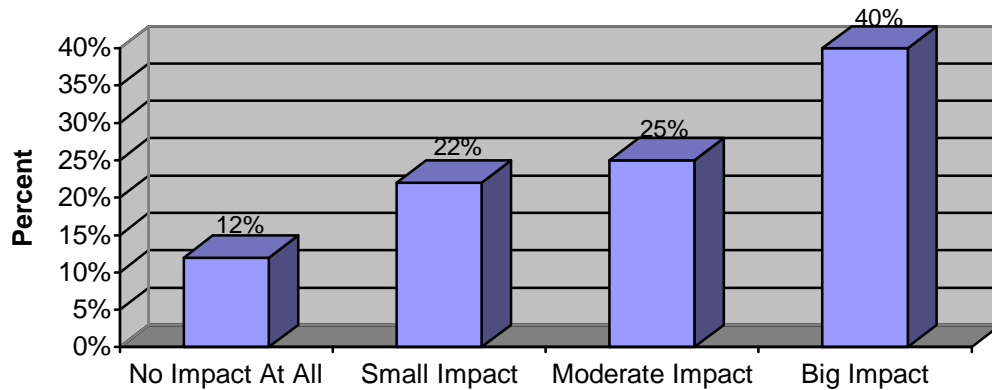
Table III-6: Percentage of Residents Who Have Volunteered within Past Six Months by Age and Education and Children in Household		
Age (n = 97)		
Under 55 Years Old	55 Years Old and Older	All Respondents
60%	46%	53%
Education (n = 102)		
HS or Less	Some College/ Technical/Trade School or More	All Respondents
38%	63%	53%
Children in Household (n = 103)		
Children	No Children	All Respondents
64%	49%	53%

Approximately two-thirds (67 percent) of the surveyed parents claimed their child or children six years or older had been involved with a club, sports, or group within the past year.

The Future

A perception of power is important for citizens of any community who wish to see change take place. Without empowerment, a sense of hopelessness overcomes a neighborhood, paralyzing the citizens and stalling change and advancement. Respondents were asked how much of an impact people like themselves can have in making their community a better place to live. Two-thirds of the surveyed residents felt that people like themselves can have a big or moderate impact in making their community a better place to live (see [Figure III-18](#)). Interestingly, survey respondents living in owned residences were more likely than those residing in a rented home to believe that people like themselves have a moderate or big impact on making their community better (see [Table III-7](#)).

**Figure III-18: How Much Impact People Like You
Have Making Your Community Better**
(n = 99)



**Table III-7: Percentage of Residents Who Believe People Like
Themselves Have Moderate or Big Impact on Their Community by
Homeownership**

Owned Residence	Rented Residence	All Respondents
72%	48%	66%

Summary

The telephone survey provides the research team and other stakeholders a personal perspective of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood on a number of topics and issues. The telephone sample of residents was demographically similar to the overall neighborhood, supporting the validity of the respondents' responses. For instance, while there was a higher percentage of female survey respondents compared to the overall neighborhood, the distribution of age, employment, and income were comparable between the two groups.

The ratings of the neighborhood and various neighborhood services such as public schools and neighborhood businesses were split with approximately half reporting them to be excellent and good and the other half rating them as fair or poor. The large majority of respondents tended to perceive these services as good or fair. There was strong consensus concerning the number and quality of jobs available in the neighborhood with many of the resident respondents rating each of these aspects of neighborhood jobs as poor.

While a majority of the resident respondents reported being afraid to walk alone at night in particular areas around their home, nearly all of the respondents felt safe and secure at night while in their home. Many of the surveyed residents rated public safety services such as rescue, fire, and the police as excellent or good, but were split in regards to the police working with people in their neighborhood to solve problems. Responses were also divided for rating public spaces such as streets and parks. Many of the residents surveyed believed that the removal of trash in the neighborhood is fair or poor.

A number of assets were discovered through the questions concerning health and the family environment. For example, many of the survey respondents claimed to always have access to health care services for themselves and their children. In addition to health care, children residing in the households surveyed also tend to receive parental homework assistance and frequently visit the library. Approximately half of the households represented in the telephone survey also had access to a working computer, access to the internet, and owned more than 50 books. Furthermore, slightly more than half of the resident respondents had volunteered their time within the past six months to help at a local agency such as a school, church, or community organization.

Arguably, the most promising asset gleaned from the telephone survey is that a majority of those surveyed felt that people like themselves can have a big or moderate impact in making their community a better place to live. Such a response indicates a hope and promise within many of the residents that can be harnessed to improve the neighborhood. The challenge will be to get residents of all statuses and in all stages of life to take a stake in shaping the future of their neighborhood.

IV. EAST JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY MEETINGS OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

One of the initiatives FreshMinistries has already begun in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood includes organizing and coordinating monthly community meetings every fourth Thursday evening. According to FreshMinistries staff, the meetings have been organized for and are advertised to the residents in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood that was defined for the needs and assets assessment. The community meetings are intended to be a forum for community residents to voice their concerns about issues in the neighborhood. In addition, these meetings provide opportunities for residents to discuss ideas and actions to be taken to solve issues thus identified and for FreshMinistries to distribute information on resources available that would assist in such actions. The meeting attendees are also involved in a number of neighborhood events sponsored by FreshMinistries. Given the purpose and nature of the community meetings, the Center for Community Initiatives (CCI) decided that these gatherings would provide valuable information for the needs and assets assessment.

Methods

CCI's purpose for attending the community meetings was two-pronged; to glean information from the monthly community meetings and to become a familiar face for future contacts regarding focus groups and interviews. CCI staff attended the meetings from December 2006 until June 2007. While the research staff members introduced themselves to meeting attendees and were available for questions regarding the evaluation, the primary role of the research team was to observe the meeting and to take notes for future analysis.

Observations

The community meetings were initially held at Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ and were then moved to the Mary Singleton Senior Center. Community meetings were finally moved to the East Jacksonville Neighborhood Resource Center once it was open. Those attending the meetings during CCI's period of observation were current and past community residents, pastors, as well as representatives (or invited speakers) from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO), City Code Enforcement, and other local service agencies or businesses. The number of residents attending the meetings varied, ranging anywhere from only three to approximately 30.

Recruitment of residents to attend the neighborhood community meetings presented a challenge during the period of time that CCI staff attended the meetings. The FreshMinistries staff member responsible for coordinating the meetings often expressed frustration with the low turnout of residents. As seen in Appendix B, her frustration can also be seen in one of the community flyers used to promote attendance. She

stressed that more participation was needed if changes were to take place in the neighborhood. It was also made clear to the residents that this was to be their Association, not FreshMinistries', and that the goal was to have enough residents attend so that they could eventually form committees and elect officers. Efforts to recruit residents included having volunteers go door-to-door with FreshMinistries staff to invite residents to the meetings and offering a \$10 Winn Dixie card for each new person brought to the meeting. In addition, the Eastside Environment Council hosted a block party to focus on recruitment of new members.

Meetings typically began with light refreshments brought by FreshMinistries staff consisting of chips, cookies, soda, juice, and/or water. An agenda was prepared and presented by FreshMinistries staff as well. A variety of topics were discussed at the community meetings; however, a number of issues emerged repeatedly during the seven months that CCI observed. These issues included crime and drugs, trash collection, and abandoned and dilapidated houses.

Crime-related issues were often discussed at the community meetings. Meeting attendees complained about drug-related activities, loitering, prostitution, and the lack of police enforcement. A representative from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) attended many of the meetings. The JSO officer listened to the complaints and concerns of residents, explained actions that should take place in regards to specific complaints, and shared what the police department is doing within the neighborhood. The JSO representative requested residents to call in criminal activity, explaining that calls can be anonymous. Despite the promise of anonymity, residents expressed frustration that their identities are not always kept confidential and fear of retaliation from the perpetrators they may report. For instance, residents were afraid their identity would be revealed once police officers came to their residence for information. One female resident expressed her disappointment in the system. She retold an incident in which she reported a house theft. After calling the police, an officer came to her house, obtained information about the crime and was able to arrest the perpetrator soon thereafter. The witness went to court to testify and the case was thrown out of court on a technicality. Therefore, despite her efforts to be a "good citizen" and to help the police, her identity was released to the criminal all for naught.

The JSO representative informed residents of other ways in which they could take a stand for their community. For instance, at one meeting the JSO representative notified meeting attendees of proposals for topless bars to be permitted to operate near schools and churches. He then invited them to attend a city meeting to voice their opposition.

In addition to listening to concerns and proposing what residents could do, the JSO representative also explained what the JSO was doing to improve the neighborhood. While he informed meeting attendees of efforts to increase police presence in the neighborhood, he also discussed other initiatives available to the residents and their neighbors. For example, in response to concerns regarding loitering and trespassing,

the JSO officer informed meeting attendees of HITZ (High Intensity Trespass Zone). Residents and business owners can register for HITZ and obtain a sign for their property. Properties covered under the HITZ program are policed more often and individuals trespassing upon such properties can be arrested more readily. Community meeting attendees were also informed of another initiative in which elderly residents are provided free cellular phones that only dial 911. The intent is to provide increased freedom and mobility for the elderly in the neighborhood who may be fearful of leaving their residency.

Another common topic of discussion at the meetings over the seven-month observation period concerned problems associated with abandoned houses and the lack of trash collection. Residents were not only concerned that the abandoned houses were eyesores in the neighborhood, but that they were being used for illegal activities. Unkempt shrubs and streetlights were also brought up as being unsightly and providing criminals with a means of concealing their activities. Another housing-related complaint made by residents entailed defective siding on some of the neighborhood Habijax homes.

A representative from City Code Enforcement was often available at the meetings to hear concerns, provide advice, and to present updates of current activities. Activities included newly opened code enforcement cases and the demolition of condemned structures. While many of the residents complained about Code Enforcement issues, they also expressed appreciation over areas recently cleaned by the City. According to the Code Enforcement representative, all of the streets in the neighborhood had been inspected.

Another primary agenda item appearing over the summer was the proposal for a Debris Recycling Center to be constructed near the Evergreen Cemetery, north of the East Jacksonville Core area under study. At one meeting, FreshMinistries staff informed the attendees of the proposal and attempted to organize action for those residents who were against the center. It was announced at the May meeting that despite a four-page petition against the construction of the recycling center presented to the City Planning Council, the proposal was approved by the Council. Options for further action against the approval involved a fee to be paid by those requesting an appeal.

In addition to inviting City officials to the monthly meetings, FreshMinistries staff and other agency representatives presented and distributed information regarding various community resources. For instance, a financial education initiative, Prosperity Campaign, was presented to neighborhood residents. The Campaign offers classes on financial information such as budgeting, banking, and credit. Another financial institution let residents know that \$10,000 in grant money is available as a down payment for a home. Additionally, there was discussion of free house repairs offered through the Housing Commission since 2000; however, residents said they had never been contacted or received the application for this service. Paint the Town and Builders

Care, initiatives that offer residential house repairs, were also presented at the meetings.

School-related programs were discussed as well during some meetings. These included a partnership with Nova Southeastern University Fischler School of Education and Human Services, developers of the Florida School Choice Resource Center. Additionally, someone affiliated with the Teen Outreach Project, a group that develops after school programs, came and described the Project and how volunteers could get involved.

At one meeting, a representative from the City Housing and Neighborhoods Department extended an invitation and distributed flyers for the “Building Better Neighborhoods” Summit. Finally, the East Jacksonville Neighborhood Resource Center, which opened during the time CCI observed the meetings, was explained and promoted at the meetings.

There was also a number of FreshMinistries-sponsored neighborhood events that community meeting attendees were encouraged to assist coordinate and/or attend. For example, a Spelling Bee was arranged for the students of a neighborhood school and volunteers were required to help make the event a success. FreshMinistries staff also attempted to recruit volunteers to arrange a Community Festival. It was stressed that a commitment by those attending the meeting was required in order to obtain funding for the event. In addition, the East Jacksonville Housing Alliance and FreshMinistries held a Spring Affair, an event to disseminate information about home ownership. Finally, there were a couple of occasions when volunteers were asked to help with neighborhood clean-up events.

Summary

The community meetings were observed by CCI staff during a time of organization and development. Like many grassroots initiatives, it takes time and persistence for such efforts to take root and flourish. FreshMinistries staff used various incentives to entice residents to the table and brought a wide variety of agencies to showcase available resources and ways residents can get involved in their community.

It is clear from the community meetings that the residents of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood face a myriad of challenges. However, the presence of City agencies, such as JSO and Code Enforcement, illustrates a commitment from the City to assist the residents in the neighborhood.

Furthermore, it is important to note that while the Recycling Center issue discussed above was one that lay outside of the target area identified for the research reported here, it elicited significant response from many residents. This motivation and energy elicited from the neighborhood residents can be seen as possible strengths in the area when developing approaches to address issues more central to the target neighborhood. Continued residential and City involvement will foster a working relationship in which



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significant progress in addressing the issues facing the neighborhood will become possible.

V. FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Introduction

A primary component of the East Jacksonville Core Neighborhood research project entailed gaining the opinions and perceptions of neighborhood stakeholders regarding the needs and assets of the neighborhood. This was accomplished through three separate methods; a telephone survey of adult residents, observation of monthly neighborhood meetings, and face-to-face interviews and focus groups with neighborhood stakeholders. Each method provides a unique perspective and has its own advantages and rewards. For instance, interviews and focus groups are useful because they afford respondents the opportunity to expound upon issues and discuss those that may not have been brought forward by the researcher. On the other hand, surveys are primarily used to obtain quick, simple responses. A combination of the various data gathering methods provides the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive picture of the issues faced by those living and working in the neighborhood. This section of the report presents the findings from the interviews and focus groups.

Methods

The CCI research team developed questions for the interviews and focus groups using similar needs and assets assessments completed by CCI and other organizations. The questions were selected and written to gather information pertaining to the FreshMinistries Six-Point Plan. As with the telephone survey, FreshMinistries staff were provided the opportunity to offer their input. Neighborhood stakeholders selected for the interviews and focus groups included adult and youth residents, school personnel, religious leaders, and service providers. The decision to conduct a focus group or individual interviews with groups of stakeholders was determined by the feasibility and the ability to reach as many members of the group as possible. While the questions were tailored for each group of stakeholders, the questions were the same whether an interview or focus group was held. These questions can be found in Appendix C. CCI research staff and FreshMinistries staff attempted to work together to maximize the number of interviews and focus groups conducted in the neighborhood. Additionally, food and beverages were provided by CCI at all of the focus groups in order to encourage participation and as a “thank you.” Despite these and other efforts, contacting and convincing individuals to participate was a challenge. These challenges, specific to each group of stakeholders, are discussed in more detail below.

Residents

Three focus groups were conducted with adult residents of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. One focus group was conducted at the monthly community meeting organized by FreshMinistries held in May. While focus groups typically consist of a small group of six to eight participants, this particular focus group had ten residents, one pastor, and one FreshMinistries staff member. All of the participants were female with

the exception of the pastor. Another focus group was held in June with a group of six residents (five males and one female) who coordinate sports activities with neighborhood youth. A third focus group with residents was conducted in July at the FreshMinistries East Jacksonville Neighborhood Resource Center. This group was arranged by FreshMinistries staff and consisted of four residents and two FreshMinistries staff. Again, a great majority of the participants were female; all were female except for one male resident. The research team attempted to coordinate focus groups of residents with neighborhood churches; however, as discussed in more detail later, pastors were not eager to participate and be interviewed. Additionally, it was discovered from the interviews conducted with pastors who chose to speak with CCI staff that many of the church members do not reside within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Rather, pastors explained that a number of their members once lived in the neighborhood, but chose to move out when they had the means to do so.

Only one focus group was completed with youth residents. The seven youth (four females and three males) who participated in the focus group were teens who were hanging out at the Brown Eastside Library the day CCI staff visited. As with other focus groups, food was provided. While more focus groups with youth would have been preferred, this population proved to be difficult to reach. CCI research staff attempted to contact a couple of neighborhood youth groups several times and phone messages were left explaining the purpose of the project and the connection with FreshMinistries. Even with FreshMinistries staff offering to help with contacts, efforts to reach these youth service providers failed. At the conclusion of an interview, a pastor whose church offers an after school care program declined a focus group with the older children stating, “No, not with my kids...Those kids have enough problems just trying to survive.”

Principals and Teachers

The research team desired the input from neighborhood school personnel as well. A letter was sent to each of the principals of the three neighborhood schools - R. L. Brown Elementary, Matthew Gilbert Middle, and Andrew Jackson High - that explained the purpose of the project and their proposed role. Approximately one week after mailing out the letters, several phone calls were made to contact school principals. Again, FreshMinistries agreed to connect CCI staff and principals together since they had previous conversations with the principals. Only one school responded to the phone calls and messages. As a result, an interview was conducted with the school principal and a focus group with six school teachers was coordinated. The teacher focus group consisted of three males and three females. The teachers taught a variety of subjects including, science, English, math, health, and sports.

Religious Leaders

Many religious organizations are known to have a charitable mission in which they not only serve the spiritual needs of the community; they serve physical, monetary, and other needs as well. Such organizations typically have firsthand knowledge of the

neighborhood residents. Thus, interviews were also sought from neighborhood religious leaders. A list of churches was compiled using City property appraiser data, the phone book, and the Internet. While all religious groups were included in the search, only Christian churches were found in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. A list of 39 churches was obtained from these sources. A letter was sent to all of the church pastors explaining the research project and our desire for their input. One pastor responded to the letter and was interviewed soon thereafter. It was found that not all of the churches on the list were active. Telephone numbers were obtained for 29 of the 39 neighborhood churches on the list. Repeated phone calls were made beginning approximately one week after the letters were mailed to the remaining churches in which phone numbers were found. The response for input was not always a congenial one. For instance, one church pastor refused to be interviewed, stating that a FreshMinistries staff member had already spoken with him for two hours. He felt that this person had already gathered all of the information she could obtain from him. The response from pastors was low even with FreshMinistries staff offering to connect CCI research staff with pastors. In the end, four face-to-face interviews were completed with neighborhood pastors.

Service Providers

Finally, service providers were interviewed to fulfill a comprehensive view of the neighborhood. A list of service providers including community centers, child care centers, youth groups, health care services, and a wide variety of other programs was compiled from multiple United Way sources and a list from FreshMinistries. FreshMinistries staff agreed to assist in arranging contacts with the service providers. As with other stakeholder groups, these contacts did not materialize. After several attempts to contact service providers in the neighborhood, six interviews were completed with this group of stakeholders. Representatives from the community center, neighborhood day cares, sports groups, police, and other service agencies were interviewed.

Results

Adult Respondents

Services Identified

Residents, pastors, and service providers were asked to participate in a mapping exercise at the beginning of the interview or focus group. Respondents were given a map of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood and immediate surrounding area at the beginning of interviews and focus groups. A list accompanied the map which included possible services and assets in the following categories: cultural, education, employment, faith-based, health, housing, neighborhoods, nutrition, public facilities, public services, public safety, and social services. Respondents were asked to think about the area and to identify community assets in each of the categories (see Appendix C). This exercise was not always successful as some respondents could better orient themselves to the

map and/or knew the neighborhood more intimately than others. However, the information gleaned from the exercise offers some insight into stakeholders' general knowledge of services existing in the area. School personnel were not asked to participate in the mapping exercise as they may not be as familiar with the neighborhood as other groups of stakeholders. School related services acknowledged by school personnel are discussed later in this section under Education.

Respondents identified a wide variety of services during the map exercise. This was partially due to the map covering an area larger than the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, including the downtown area. The most often identified neighborhood asset was churches. This is not surprising given the number of churches scattered throughout the neighborhood. Area food banks at various locations within the map boundaries were also identified by a number of respondents. Additionally, various Head Start programs and public schools were pointed out by many participants. Interview and focus group respondents appeared to know of the neighborhood library, Police Athletic League, and Kennedy Center. FreshMinistries was identified by two participants; a pastor and school principal. Other services identified by only one or two respondents include River Region, ACORN, Impact House, and Abba's Emergency Center.

Services Wanted

In addition to asking respondents to identify services within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood, residents, pastors, and service providers were asked to discuss services and programs they would like to see made available. By far, respondents most often expressed a desire for services and activities aimed at neighborhood youth. Interestingly, organized sports was specifically mentioned by a number of residents and service providers. One group of residents who spend their own resources to coach neighborhood youth spoke of the challenges they face in providing such activities. These residents have been able to acquire sponsors so that the children can play for free, but they are in need of a place to practice. According to these individuals, they have requested to utilize the gym and football field at Matthew Gilbert. They have been denied access to the facilities although groups from outside of the area have been granted permission. As a result, the neighborhood coaches must take the youth to Kirby-Smith Middle School. Other wanted youth services and activities included child care, computer education, job skills training, counseling, and after school programs in general. Some respondents expressed a specific need for programs for teens over the age of 12.

Residents and service providers also wanted services for adults in the neighborhood. Such services discussed included social services for individuals recently released from jail, computer literacy program, retail stores, a "one stop center" where multiple services are available, employment services, and parenting classes. One service provider

expressed that he would like to see some of the Jaguar players make appearances and begin initiatives in the neighborhood.

Obstacles and Needs

Some prevalent topics emerged when speaking with residents, service providers, school personnel, and pastors about the top needs and issues with which East Jacksonville Core neighborhood residents are dealing. Respondents were asked this question in regards to people they know as well as for the neighborhood in general. The responses were similar for both questions.

Issues regarding safety were of utmost concern for many respondents. More specifically, drug activities and drug-related crimes were often the topic of discussion regarding the issues facing the neighborhood residents. "There are drug dealers in the area and people are afraid to go out at night.

"There is a lack of education, a lack of employment, a lack of social standards, and doors are closed in people's faces when they should be opened." - Church Pastor

People call the police, but nothing happens. It would make a great difference in the community if drug dealers were taken away," explained a pastor. Fear was expressed by many respondents during the focus groups and interviews. Residents are fearful of walking about their own neighborhood as well as retaliation from criminals if they speak out against crime. A service provider stated, "There is a fear of standing up to criminals and drug dealers because of fear of retaliation."

The neighborhood youth were also another often cited issue in regards to struggles of people within the neighborhood. The prevalence of teen pregnancy and young parenthood were concerns expressed by many respondents. The parental skills of the general neighborhood residents were also questioned and criticized, specifically in regards to the lack of male role models and overall parental support. As stated by a

"They [youth] are unsupervised and left to the culture of the area." –
Service Provider

service provider, "They [youth] are unsupervised and left to the culture of the area." A lack of respect for the neighborhood and in general was also an issue respondents believed residents encounter from youth.

Other top needs and issues of East Jacksonville Core neighborhood residents included education, employment, housing, and health. All levels of education, from childcare to adult education, were mentioned by respondents as issues facing the neighborhood residents. The lack of childcare and adult education were perceived to be problems for some. While all groups of participants spoke of an educational need or issue, different issues were raised by each of the groups. Educators perceived a lack of priority given to education as a problem, while the actual quality of education provided for youth was a concern for others.

Lack of employment and low wages were also discussed in terms of the top needs and issues with which the area residents struggle. Additionally, it was mentioned that individuals with past felony charges experience additional barriers in locating employment. A couple of focus group and interview participants felt that health needs and access to health care were among the top issues encountered by the residents, while a few others were concerned over the poor quality of housing in the neighborhood.

Education

Residents and pastors were asked to speak on the quality of education offered at East Jacksonville Core neighborhood schools; R. L. Brown, Matthew Gilbert Middle, and Andrew Jackson High. Responses ranged from good to poor. A couple of respondents felt that schools were doing good or fair “with what they have to work with.” They were sympathetic to the pressures placed upon schoolteachers. Discipline problems of students and the lack of discipline required by school personnel were a concern for some residents. They also expressed that they believed that discipline problems stem from the home and that the schools should not take all of the blame. Other criticism aimed at the schools included the perceptions that teachers only teach so that students will pass the FCAT and that students who pass or graduate still need remediation.

One interesting point that emerged in a discussion with a pastor and then again in a resident focus group was that the neighborhood children do not attend the neighborhood schools discussed, rather they are bussed to schools outside of their neighborhood. The pastor elaborated his viewpoint and explained that he believed neighborhood students were being replaced by children from outside of the area desiring the R. L. Brown’s IB magnet program. This information was neither confirmed nor discredited since only one principal chose to speak with the research team. Whether this is factual is inconsequential as the perception alone speaks to the fear some individuals have that they are being pushed out of their neighborhood.

Residents and pastors were also asked about their thoughts regarding dropouts. The consensus was that the dropout rate is a problem. While everyone agreed it is a problem, the blame for the problem was doled out to the children themselves, their parents, and teachers. Those who thought the students are to blame expressed that the kids “are not motivated,” “don’t care,” and “feel like they are owed something.” Other respondents blamed the parents stating that the parents do not teach their children the value of an education, do not supervise their children, or support the teachers. A couple of individuals thought teachers are at fault either because they do not try or get discouraged.

Teachers and principals participating in the focus groups and interviews were asked a separate series of questions related to their particular school. They were asked about

the strengths of their school. A number of programs were listed as strengths for the school, including the magnet programs, ROTC, drop out prevention programs, ABID (Advancements By Individual Determination), and a Blue Cross Blue Shield program. A teacher also spoke of a grant the school received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to offer AP courses. The grant provides “the system of College Board programs, tools, and support services designed to prepare more American high school students for postsecondary success.”¹⁷

In addition to programs, the teachers and student resource officer were lauded for their efforts. Also, some teachers felt that the students at their school are unjustly labeled as “bad kids” because of the location of the school. They criticized the media for publicizing only negative stories and ignoring the positive happenings at the school such as 15 students receiving football scholarships.

The dropout rate was the top issue that the teachers felt hinders the school in preparing students for productive futures. Safety nets such as dropout prevention programs and tutoring are offered at the school to promote students’ success.

“We need to look at children differently. If you look at them expecting nothing, you’re going to get nothing.” – Church Pastor

Teachers thought some other things could be done to improve the school’s ability to prepare students for the future. For instance, one teacher suggested making the curriculum more interesting and applicable to the students. This teacher saw a need to help students make a connection between what they learn and why they learn it. Another teacher stated that the school needed more technology to

assist the students. Finally, some teachers felt that the school should offer career and vocational tracks for the students who may not be ready to go to college. A teacher added that students need ‘common sense’ courses – like consumer math. The teachers felt the students need a way out if they are not passing the current system, what they see as a ‘college track.’

“There is too much societal promotion – it sets kids up for failure. They aren’t held to standards.” – Teacher

Employment and Economic Development

Although the lack of employment opportunities within the immediate East Jacksonville Core neighborhood is relatively clear with a physical examination of the neighborhood, residents and pastors were asked about the job opportunities in the neighborhood to obtain firsthand accounts. While one respondent claimed that there are a variety of jobs available, from professional to menial, the other participants had a much different viewpoint. Simply stated by one resident, “We don’t have any.” Residents explained that they must work outside of their neighborhood and that transportation is an issue

¹⁷ DCPS News. The College Board Announces Expansion of EXCEerator Schools Project to Four Additional Duval County Schools.
<http://www.dreamsbeginhere.org/static/contact/communications/press%20release/pr0123-2.asp>

for many. Transportation is particularly challenging for those who rely upon public transportation. According to the residents, the buses are not always on time and the names of the bus lines have been changed, confusing people. Area labor pools were mentioned in conversations with both residents and pastors as job opportunities. However, such jobs are typically unstable, labor intensive, and low paying jobs that do not provide enough support for adequate housing and other essentials.

Again, the lack of available stores for residents becomes apparent while driving through the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. When asked about the places available to purchase goods and services, residents and pastors were in agreement that little existed in the immediate area. Winn-Dixie on Market Street is the closest large scale grocery store to the residents in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Residents and pastors knew of a couple of smaller grocery and convenience stores, but they claimed that the prices were higher at such establishments. Some residents explained that they must “cross the bridge” to shop for clothes and other items.

There are a number of public services provided by the City that can be assessed to measure the vibrancy of the neighborhood. Such public services include trash collection, street and sidewalk maintenance, parks, and libraries. The City’s ability to provide and maintain services also conveys compassion and interest for the residents of that neighborhood. This was illustrated when a resident summarized his or her thoughts regarding public services stating, “The City doesn’t take care of the neighborhood.”

Trash collection was by far the most cited issue for this question among pastors and residents alike. They are not satisfied with the City’s efforts to pick up trash. They complained that trash is regularly dumped in vacant lots and the City is slow to respond to requests to pick up trash from these and other locations. While a couple of residents were not satisfied with the conditions of the streets and sidewalks, one resident was more optimistic after recently noticing repairs to the streets and sidewalks. Participants also voiced grievances concerning parks, the library, and bus stops. A pastor expressed that although there were parks within the neighborhood, they do not have sufficient play equipment for the children to play upon. One resident complained that the area library has limited hours of operation and another resident expressed a desire for covered bus stops.

Residents and pastors overall were pessimistic in regards to obtaining assistance from government officials. A pastor conveyed his viewpoint stating, “The people with money and power don't care. They know what needs to be done, but they don't care unless it affects other areas.” Similarly, a resident summed up her thoughts with - “No money, no prestige, no response.” Another resident acknowledged that it takes a community effort to implement community change, but explained that many people have given up on the government.

“No money, no prestige, no response.” – Resident

The lack of hope may be a result of government's slow responsiveness, but also from unkept promises from government officials. For instance, a pastor spoke about how the City had claimed that sidewalks around his church were going to be repaired for the Super Bowl, but it never happened.

Health

As previously mentioned, health care concerns were identified when participants were asked to discuss the top needs and obstacles of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. If not discussed at that time, then residents and pastors were asked about any health issues facing the neighborhood and what could be done to improve them. While access to medical care does not appear to be a problem for a majority of the East Jacksonville Core residents surveyed for this project, some interview and focus group participants believed it was a problem. A pastor informed CCI staff that his church works with St. Vincent's to get medications for individuals to disadvantaged individuals and assists people filling out the required paperwork for a Shands card. This same pastor also claimed that there is a lack of dental care available in the neighborhood for low-income individuals. A couple of residents expressed concern over a perceived lack of insurance among the neighborhood citizens. They also explained that a number of people without insurance cannot benefit from Medicaid because their earned income is just above the required threshold. Finally, transportation to access health care was believed to be an issue for many residents.

In addition to access to healthcare services, a few additional health problems were raised during focus groups with residents. For instance, asthma, other upper-respiratory problems, and diabetes were believed to be experienced by relatively high percentages of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood residents. One resident also felt that there is a lack of health education available to the residents in the neighborhood.

Some residents offered their thoughts on what could be done to improve the healthcare issues discussed. For example, it was stated that more affordable doctors working within the neighborhood would improve conditions. Additionally, a pharmacy located within the neighborhood would be helpful. Preventative care and healthcare education were suggested by residents. Finally, better air quality was believed to be a solution to some to the residents' health problems such as asthma and other upper respiratory issues.

Housing

Housing was another issue pastors and residents were asked to discuss if they had not already brought it up during the topic of neighborhood needs. They were simply asked about any possible housing issues faced by residents in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood and how such concerns could be addressed. While respondents acknowledged the age and the state of disrepair of much of the housing stock, some also

recognized the efforts of Habijax and other programs building and making repairs for little or no cost.

A pastor explained that the “housing in the area is affordable because the area is not doing well.” Similarly, a resident stated, “People in this area can't afford to move. The affordability is what keeps people here.” A couple of participants reported that because the general size of the property lots is relatively small to today's standards, people interested in rebuilding in the neighborhood must purchase multiple lots, which is costly to do so. Still, the fear that housing will become less affordable as it is renovated was expressed by a pastor.

Another concern one pastor had was in regard to renters in the neighborhood. He feared that renters are not aware of their rights as tenants and, as a result, some are taken advantage of by their landlords. The pastor knew of instances where landlords illegally padlocked doors of homes for nonpayment. He believed that community awareness of their rights is essential to improving this situation. Additionally, he suggested that landlords should have to sign a contract stating that the tenant has been advised of his or her rights and tenants should receive a pamphlet spelling out their rights.

Safety and Public Services

Because safety issues were such a concern among respondents and discussed at length earlier in interviews and focus groups as the top neighborhood needs, not much more was added in regard to these issues. One resident explained, “The neighborhood is on the threshold of being a danger zone. You don't think anything of hearing gunshots in this neighborhood.” While there was a desire for more police presence was expressed, the fire and rescue were lauded for their quick response time.

Family Strength and Environment

Although interview and focus group participants discussed the needs and obstacles of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood in general, it was important to understand the needs specific to families. Thus, all groups of stakeholders were asked a series of questions related specifically to families. Many of the needs identified for neighborhood parents were noted in the needs of the general neighborhood. For instance, a lack of general education, well-paying employment, and income were believed to be issues for parents in the area. Some reported that parents need financial assistance, but do not qualify for benefits because they earn slightly more than the required minimum income. One resident stated, “It's easier to not work - there is a 'penalty' for working.” As mentioned previously, many participants also believed that people are becoming parents at an early age and are not equipped to successfully parent their children. Additionally, the relatively high percentage of single female headed households was viewed as a concern by a number of respondents.

Participants recognized a number of organizations that benefit families in dealing with these needs. Such organizations included churches, food banks, Jacksonville Urban League, Jacksonville Children's Commission, Brewer Child Care Center, Work Source, Full Service Schools, and Daniel Memorial.

Interview and focus group respondents were asked about possible obstacles to families receiving services. Some claimed that there were enough programs, but that residents do not take advantage of them for a variety of perceived reasons. For instance, one service provider believed that the residents are lazy, while others thought they did not have the information that would empower them to obtain the services available. A service provider had another explanation for individuals not benefiting in the available services. She stated, "African Americans have a rule, 'What happens at home stays at home.'"

A service provider and residents explained that those with a criminal record are hindered from obtaining sustainable employment. According to a resident, individuals who have served time in jail are limited to construction jobs which are seasonal and, as a result, do not provide adequate income. Additionally, service providers felt that the residents do not like or trust the police officers in the neighborhood, which prevents residents from receiving assistance from the JSO.

When asked for solutions to the needs and obstacles faced by parents, respondents offered a variety of options. Parenting education was a primary suggestion among the participants. One resident offered the idea of having a town hall style meeting with parents. Job skills and employment were also identified as solutions to families' needs. Additionally, counseling and a health clinic providing free birth control were thought to be possible solutions to problems facing parents. Mentors and activities for neighborhood youth were also suggested. A service provider felt that agencies should go into community to get the word out about their services. For instance, they could provide different events within the neighborhood, such as a recent health fair in an apartment complex.

Just as the youth criticized the school for not informing them of how to get into college, the teachers suggested that they need to get information to the students more effectively. One teacher stated, "The students figure things out too late." The teacher spoke about a senior who made the comment in his last semester of high school that he was going to get good grades so that he could go to college.

Service providers were asked an additional question regarding the challenges in serving the residents in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Service providers offered a variety of challenges including getting the information about services out to the residents. A lack of parental participation was mentioned as a challenge by a couple of service providers. Again, safety was discussed as an issue in providing services.

Additionally, understanding the youth, substance abuse, broken homes, and poverty were listed as hindering service providers from effectively performing their job.

Strengths and Assets

In addition to the many obstacles and needs the neighborhood faces, it also has strengths and assets that can be tapped into to improve the neighborhood. Some of the assets identified by respondents included the residents themselves, available services, neighborhood churches, and housing restoration. Some believed the strength of the

neighborhood could be found in many of the residents who have lived in the neighborhood for several years. They saw their long-term residency as “deep roots” or a “strong hold on the neighborhood.” Focus group and interview respondents claimed that

“... with all of the difficulties that it [the neighborhood] faces, it still strives and struggles to hold on. If it’s nothing but by just thread, it’s still trying to survive.” – Church Pastor

the residents are friendly and look out for those who they know. A pastor said, “They want to see crime decrease, peace, and reduced violence.” As a service provider and resident explained, “People do care. They just don’t know or understand the system.”

Other respondents saw the neighborhood youth as an asset to the community. As one resident stated, “The youth can become the future leaders.” Interestingly enough, however, the group of residents in which this strength was offered, did not believe there was currently a group of youth who could step up to the challenge.

In addition to the neighborhood residents, many respondents identified particular services within the neighborhood that they believed to be a community asset. For instance, FreshMinistries, the Kennedy Center, Don Brewer Early Learning, Research, and Development Center, Sheriff’s Advisory Council, Habijax, and Northeast Florida Community Action Agency were all acknowledged strengths. Recreational facilities available in the neighborhood, such as parks and the swimming pool, as well as the proximity to the City’s stadiums and downtown were also thought to be valuable assets for the neighborhood.

Some residents expressed that they saw the numerous churches as an asset to the neighborhood. However, these residents also understood that a majority of the church members come from outside of the neighborhood. The after school program provided for neighborhood children at the Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ was also an asset identified by one resident.

Finally, improvements in the housing stock within the community was seen by service providers and school personnel as a neighborhood strength. These individuals believed that the construction of new homes and the restoration of older homes were signs of rebuilding and improving the neighborhood.

The Future

Hope for the future and a sense of empowerment are important for citizens of any community who want to see positive change. When asked about their perceptions of where the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood will be in five years, respondents had differing pictures of the future community. Some were optimistic, observing a number of promising developments. For instance, some respondents were optimistic in regards to the services and programs already available, ones that they believe are coming, and the potential collaboration among the agencies. FreshMinistries was specifically mentioned by an interviewee. When asked about the future, he stated that FreshMinistries is having a great impact on the area. A few informants cited improvements in the neighborhood housing stock; old and crack houses will be torn down and more Habijax homes will be built. The teachers thought that the neighborhood would be improved in terms of educational measurements such as increased graduation rates, test scores, and the number of students entering college.

The foreseen growth in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood was viewed differently by those interviewed. Some were cautiously optimistic about the growth in the area. For example, one resident believed that the revitalization of Springfield will spill over into the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood bringing businesses and job opportunities for the residents. However, he and others also fear that improved housing and growth will force current residents out of their neighborhood. The consequential increase in housing from renovations and new construction will make housing unaffordable for the current residents. Others believed the future growth of the neighborhood would include expansion of downtown services and hotels which will push the residents to other parts of town.

Other respondents were much more pessimistic when reflecting upon the future of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. They did not foresee positive changes for the neighborhood. As one resident stated, "It doesn't look good." A pastor explained, "There's no plan for the future." He went on to say that future residents' "attraction here will be the lack of things...they'll come here because not much is expected."

Another neighborhood pastor was particularly pessimistic and outspoken. He believes that the crime and unemployment will increase without immediate intervention. The pastor also expressed fervent frustration over witnessing no change over the past decade. "...People come by, blow a lot of smoke. And they're going to do this and everybody's going to fix this and everybody's going to fix that. And nothing gets fixed." He also believed that the consequences of apathy will be

"Without intervention this community will be worse. The crime rate will increase, family values will decrease, and the unemployment will also increase. We need immediate intervention." –
Church Pastor

experienced city-wide stating, “If you, me, and everybody else don’t do something about the crime, the poverty in these poor neighborhoods, eventually it will affect everybody.”

Common concerns among those with negative outlooks involved the neighborhood youth. According to a resident, the future for some of the neighborhood youth is “the cemetery or jailhouse.” Another resident mentioned COI, which stands for correctional institution, is a well known acronym among the youth. Similarly, a service provider stated, “...If our youth have no direction now, our future has no direction later. Our children are taught to destroy or be destroyed. Eventually, if they continue to do what they’re doing today, we’re not going to have a tomorrow.” According to a couple of respondents, their bleak forecast stemmed partly from their concerns over the prevalence of young parents.

Many informants discussed various services when they were asked where they would like to see the neighborhood in five years. Some respondents were general in their thoughts concerning the types of services. For instance, one service provider did not provide information on the types of services needed, but thought it would be advantageous to have resources available in apartment complexes and other housing areas. Other respondents were more specific in terms of the services they would like to see available. Health services for the elderly, trash pickup, and services for youth were mentioned by residents and service providers. Some of the youth services included positive role models, entertainment, and after school care.

In addition to services, respondents desired more opportunities for higher education and employment. Improved housing and a decrease in crimes and drugs were also cited by informants. One resident explained that she would like to see the neighborhood similar to Springfield or San Marco – a community where people take pride in where they live and the neighbors come out for various activities and events.

Community involvement was a common thread that emerged when asked what they or people they know could do to reach their vision for the neighborhood. It was explained that the desired improvements and changes need to begin from within the neighborhood or with the neighborhood residents’ input. In order for this to take place, residents expressed a need for the neighborhood to become organized and be the voice for the community and its needs.

Again, neighborhood youth was a topic of discussion. A resident recommended that mentoring the neighborhood youth could assist the area in reaching her vision for a better community. Other respondents spoke about reaching and developing younger people, and teaching respect.

Focus group and interview participants were also asked what they thought the City of Jacksonville could do to reach their vision for the community. Many recommendations revolved around services for the youth. For instance, a number of respondents desired the city to provide well-equipped parks for the

neighborhood youth. Some remarked on their perceived inequality between different parts of town. Others offered further suggestions the city could do for youth such as provide assistance with truancy, mentors and role models, jobs and exposure to careers, supervised programs, and more libraries. A service provider also spoke to the importance of children being exposed to more cultural activities, specifically within their own neighborhood. He believes that providing more experiences for the youth opens them up to a whole other world. He told a story of how children from a program in the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood went to an art show in Arlington and saw nude statues. He said their initial responses were that the statues were “nasty.” He pointed out that the children from Arlington had a different perspective; that the nude statues were art. He attributed the differing perspectives of the two groups of children to their previous exposures, or the lack thereof, to art.

“...go to the people who have the money and the power. That’s what you could do if you really want to make a better future. Because they are the only people who can change the conditions.” – Church Pastor

Respondents had other suggestions for the City as well. Some revolved around safety issues such as assisting the neighborhood in stopping crime and drug-related activities. Others wanted the City to literally clean up the neighborhood, picking up the trash and debris in the area. Education, job training, and business incentives were also support services respondents believed the City could provide to improve the neighborhood.

While some responses were favorable toward the city, claiming the city was doing what it could, pessimism pervaded some responses. “I don’t think the city wants to do that [revitalize the community],” explained one pastor. He believes that the city stands to benefit from cheaper available land if the area is left to deteriorate.

Youth Focus Group

Services Identified

While the adult respondents participated in a mapping exercise at the beginning of the interviews and focus groups, youth did not participate in such an exercise. Teens were asked, however, about the activities available to them and their peers in their neighborhood. The respondents listed basketball, the Kennedy Center and pool, Team Up at Andrew Jackson High school, and the Police Athletic League.

Youth and Adults

Youth participants were also asked about their relationships with adults in the neighborhood. When asked about the most important thing most adults do not get

about being a teenager in their neighborhood, one youth said, “You have to keep yourself busy, because it’s easy to get in trouble around here.” At the same time, another youth explained that many adults have a negative perspective toward the neighborhood youth. He believes that many adults think that “we just get in trouble and get pregnant.” He expressed that such negative attitudes did not affect him, but he felt that it did influence other youth in regards to their school performance, their appearance, and their life in general.

“You have to keep yourself busy, because it’s easy to get in trouble around here.” – Female Youth

Education

Education-related questions focused on dropouts. The youth claimed to know many peers who had dropped out of school and a number of these peers parented a child before or after dropping out. Youth participants believed that students drop out of school because it is perceived to be “cool to drop out.” They also thought that some teens struggle academically or do not believe that school will be useful for their future and therefore decide to dropout.

The teens had a few suggestions as to what can be done to prevent students from dropping out. For instance, one youth suggested the schools could “show kids how fun school can be.” Additionally, a couple of the participants felt that the guidance counselors do not have time for the students and do not “really help.” One teen thought that more electives and extra curricular activities should be offered at school, while another believed discipline problems should be resolved. Finally, it was suggested that more teachers that can relate to the students would prevent students from dropping out.

All of the teens in the focus group had aspirations to go on to college after graduating from high school. They all had some ideas on the major they wanted to pursue. These majors included criminal justice, computer engineering, business, fashion, pharmacy, cosmetology, and nursing. One respondent’s goal is to go to Penn State and play college football. While the youth had plans to go to college and most of them knew someone who had graduated or was currently attending college, they did not perceive there to be much support from their high school to reach these goals. One youth explained, “Although the school is trying to increase the number of students completing AP courses, no one tells you much about college or assists with applications.”

Adults’ Needs

Youth participants were asked what they feel are the major needs of parents or adults in their neighborhood. One teen stated that adults need to go back to school and get an education. Another youth felt that adults need to stay positive for their kids and stay in their lives, providing guidance. According to this youth, “too many don’t care and don’t spend enough time with their kids.”

Future

As mentioned above, all of the youth participants hope to attend college in the future. A couple of them also stated that they may join the Army in order to pay for their education. While they believed peer and adult support would help them achieve their future goals, they were also aware of possible pitfalls that could prevent them from fulfilling their goals. For one teen, it was simply “the neighborhood” that could hold him back. Similarly, other youth spoke of relatives currently in jail, underlying the importance of staying out of “trouble.”

When the youth participants were asked about the future of the neighborhood, the respondents spoke about the changes they had recently noticed. These changes included home renovations and more racial diversity within the neighborhood. The teen who had acknowledged other races moving into the area also noted that these individuals do not appear to be as afraid to be outside on the street.

Finally, the youth participants offered suggestions as to the types of programs or services they would like to see offered in their neighborhood. They expressed a desire to see more organized sports offered within the neighborhood. One teen added that he would like to have a youth summer job program made available.

Summary

Conducting interviews and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders afforded the research team the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive perspective of residents in East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. It was almost unanimous that safety concerns (crime, drugs, etc.) are major issues confronting the community. Many of the discussions centered on drug-related crimes and fear of reporting criminal activity. Problems with neighborhood youth were also thought to be of concern for many. There was general consensus that proper parenting is at the root of a lot of these problems. The prevalence of teen pregnancy and young parenthood were some specific issues expressed by many respondents. Other top needs and issues of East Jacksonville Core neighborhood residents included education, employment, housing, and health.

In general, most of the interviewees were aware of some services and programs in their area. By far, respondents most often expressed a desire for services and activities aimed at neighborhood youth. This need is particularly evident at the local library where a relatively large number of children hang out after school. While library staff offer some structured activities for the children, these children need more space and assistance than the library can accommodate.

Fear of being pushed out of the neighborhood was another theme found in some of the interviews and focus groups. This fear emerged in discussions regarding both housing and education. While the general consensus was that the new construction and

renovation occurring in the community was promising, some were afraid that it would displace many of the poorer residents. Respondents also expressed concern that the neighborhood children are being pushed out of their neighborhood. They reported that instead of attending the neighborhood schools, they are bussed to schools outside of their neighborhood.

While respondents generally struggled in finding an asset within the neighborhood, a number of strengths emerged from the discussions. The residents themselves were identified as being an asset to the neighborhood. Their resiliency and compassion for one another were perceived as a positive foundation from which neighborhood improvements can grow. Other assets acknowledged by respondents included the numerous churches and specific programs within the neighborhood, and recent home restoration and construction.

One of the common themes resonating throughout almost every interview was the passion and commitment of the interviewees to improve the quality of life of the population they served. It was also routine that they used their own money and resources to

help others. It is their dedication that provides hope that the neighborhood can grow and prosper in the near future.

“I’m a black preacher in this neighborhood and you’re asking me things that does nothing but hurts me, because I know what’s going on and I know nothing is going to change. Because I really care. I care about the people that live in this neighborhood. I care about the drug addict that’s taking drugs. I care about the 11 year old boy that’s selling drugs. I care about the teen mother who’s had a kid at the age of 13 or 14 years old. I care. And I know that this is just a waste of my time. And it does nothing but just brings up things that you have to suppress to just try to go day by day. – Church Pastor

VI. COMMUNITY ASSETS

Summary

CCI staff compiled a list of community assets available to the residents of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood from multiple sources, including the Northeast Florida Information Network, FreshMinistries, Andrew Jackson Full Service School, as well as other sources. While not exhaustive, this list is certainly comprehensive and includes all assets an organization provides. After removing duplicates, the assets were coded according to [Figure VI-I](#) and a summary of findings is presented below (see Appendix D).

Figure VI-I

ASSET CLASSIFICATION

Classification:	One (1)
Overall:	Available to all Jacksonville residents regardless of where one lives and are provided in home or through a non-intensive stop.
Examples:	General Counseling over the phone, food and clothing banks, in-home case management services.
Classification:	Two (2)
Overall:	Available to all Jacksonville residents and one needs to physically go to a location to receive intensive help.
Examples:	Clinics – health, eye, and dental, shelters, one-on-one or group counseling in person.
Classification:	Three (3)
Overall:	Serve a defined area and are generally available to only those residents in that area. Generally, one needs to physically go to the location to receive help.
Examples:	Schools, community and senior centers, youth clubs, libraries, thrift stores.
Classification:	Four (4)
Overall:	Serve the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood specifically, though may be available to other residents of a larger area. Generally, one needs to physically go to the location to receive help, but not necessarily.
Examples:	Clinics, food and clothing banks, counseling, schools, community and senior centers, youth clubs, libraries, thrift stores.
Classification:	Five (5)
Overall:	Physically located within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood.
Examples:	Schools, libraries, counseling, youth clubs.

Duval County has close to one thousand (912) different community assets or ‘resources’ available to its residents. These resources offer services to all age groups, though many, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Junior Achievement, and the Brewer Center focus on youths. Another service that many of the resources offer is health care or counseling. Some of the health care organizations focus on women’s health, such as the Magnolia and Azalea clinics, while others focus on specific health concerns, such as the American Diabetes Association and the American Lung Association of Florida. Still others offer affordable or free health services, such as Volunteers in Medicine Jacksonville and Shands Wellness Center. Other services include homeless shelters, food programs, and housing programs.

As one can see in [Table VI-1](#), just over 45 percent of these 912 resources were coded as generally available to all Jacksonville residents and 30.5 percent available to the general population, as long as they traveled to the asset location. There were 79 coded as fours or fives. A total of 142 or 15.6 percent were assets available to specific communities. While these assets generally do not bar other residents throughout the city from receiving services, they are generally set up to help those located in the direct vicinity of the assets location. In addition, there were 47 community assets that meet this description, but specifically target the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Finally, there are 32 (3.5 percent of the overall list) different assets within the core neighborhood. Not all of these assets are designed specifically for the residents of East Jacksonville, such as those provided by Gateway Community Services, but there are several that directly target the residents, like the Brewer Center, Kennedy Center, and the Brown Eastside Branch library.

Table VI-1: Community Asset by Classification

Classification	n	Percent
One	413	45.3%
Two	278	30.5%
Three	142	15.6%
Four	47	5.2%
Five	32	3.5%

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion



In the previous pages, we have presented the results of an extensive Needs and Assets Assessment of the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. As discussed, there are a number of problems facing this neighborhood, which was not surprising. The extent of these problems, including crime, poor health, poor schools, high drop out rates, and myriad other issues present any efforts to ameliorate them with some serious obstacles.

There are also, however, a significant number of assets in the neighborhood, including a core group of citizens, pastors, and service providers, who are intent on making things better. This finding was, in many ways, not so much expected. For the East Jacksonville is often described as “the worst” neighborhood in the city, and little attention has been paid to those assets in the past.

Thus, taken as a whole, there are some serious needs for the neighborhood, and there is a serious core group of assets that can be strengthened to address those needs. Such strengthening, however, cannot take place without some infusion of resources, including financial and human. Nor, can such strengthening be done by outsiders usurping these assets, or taking over the neighborhood.

Recommendations

While there are a number of areas which it may not be realistic to recommend action – or which may be outside the abilities of FreshMinistries or CCI to act upon – the findings from this Needs and Assets Assessment do provide information that suggests a number of ways and areas in which action can be taken. Many of these recommendations are taken directly from the community residents interviewed for this study, while others are based on their reflections. These recommendations include:

-  *Development of a Community Action Group (CAG).* There is a core group of dedicated residents and pastors that could form the core of a Community Action Group that could serve as the voice (both internally and externally) for the neighborhood. Creation of the group could be facilitated by continuing the Community Meetings at the Resource Center, with the support of FreshMinistries.
-  *Create Collaborative Efforts to provide additional/focused organized youth sports.* A number of those interviewed were concerned about the availability of athletic opportunities for youth in the neighborhood. Indeed, special concern was expressed over the lack of access to the local schools. It is recommended that a cooperative arrangement be developed between the schools, other community service agencies, and the churches in the neighborhood to provide such opportunity.

- ✚ *Extended Library Availability.* One of the primary resources in the Core Neighborhood is the Library. Although it is a small building, every afternoon the library serves as a de-facto after school program, with (on the occasions observed by the research team) dozens of students using the computers and services of the library. In addition, the library staff is, in effect, a major community resource. Yet this facility operates on a limited basis during the week and is closed on weekends. While it is understood that library operations are limited at a number of locations in the city due to budget constraints, it is strongly recommended that FreshMinistries work with the community and City officials to extend the availability of the library to the community.

- ✚ *Increase Pressure on the City to address Garbage and Crime Issues.* Two themes that were mentioned on many occasions were Trash and Crime. The trash does not seem to get picked up, and the crime seems to only shift streets. In its capacity as a major Community Agency, FreshMinistries could use the Resource Center Community Meetings and the Community Action Group to leverage increased basic services for the neighborhood. This would include getting the newly elected City Council representative for the neighborhood involved with the CAG.

- ✚ *Draw Upon Broader Community Service Resources.* There are a number of organizations and institutions in Jacksonville that provide community service to neighborhoods in Jacksonville. This includes, in particular, the institutions of Higher Education in Jacksonville. Few of these groups, however, appear to be involved in the East Jacksonville neighborhood. This, again, seems particularly true for The Institutions of Higher Education (and most conspicuously, UNF). It is highly recommended that FreshMinistries, with the involvement of CCI, create a Higher Education Task force to develop collaborations between UNF, Jacksonville University, Edward Waters, and FCCJ, as well as organizations including Volunteer Jacksonville and similar organizations to assist the Community Action Group's activities in the neighborhood. This alliance could provide much needed tutoring, health care, and other social support mechanisms to the East Jacksonville neighborhood.

- ✚ *Work to Re-Deploy the Police Athletic League (PAL) Facility in the Core Neighborhood.* On the southern edge of the Core Neighborhood is the PAL facility – which, from what was learned in focus groups and interviews, is virtually non-existent in so far as the community is concerned. It is recommended that FreshMinistries and the CAG work with PAL to re-invigorate the facility, and to restore the neighborhood connection that once existed. With that facility in operation, additional activities like Girl Scouts, and other groups working with Youth in the neighborhood can be established. The CAG could also facilitate the coordination of efforts between PAL and the activities at the Kennedy Center.

- ✚ *Facilitate the Introduction of Other Community Service Efforts.* Through the collaborative efforts of FreshMinistries, the CAG, and other community groups, additional foundations could be attracted to work within the East Jacksonville Core neighborhood. Such organizations could include the Jacksonville Community Foundation and the Tony Boselli Foundation, among others.
- ✚ *Create Economic Opportunity Through Existing Infrastructure and Assets.* Finally, it is highly recommended that FreshMinistries and other Agencies listed above, develop an action plan to increase economic opportunities for community members (and others) by drawing on the basic infrastructure in the neighborhood (e.g. the abandoned businesses in the southern section of the Core Neighborhood) and the human assets that already exists in the neighborhood. Note that this increased economic opportunity should first and foremost be directed at improving conditions and opportunity for *neighborhood residents* first – and should protect the neighborhood from being over-run by economic interests whose primary draw (both for employees and for customers) is focused outside the neighborhood.

There are a number of other activities, for example a “Clean up the Neighborhood Day,” campus visits and college application support, or parenting support classes, which can also be suggested. But the primary concern here is that the recommendations above be implemented to empower the neighborhood residents. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, it was clear that the residents, and community leaders, were not looking for “outsiders” to come in and take charge, but for the resources and opportunities to be available to, in the words of a former community leader in the area, “give a hand up not a hand out.” To that end, perhaps the most important recommendation that we offer is that FreshMinistries (and CCI) **NOT** abandon the neighborhood – as so many of the residents interviewed are sure will happen. Action around the recommendations above will go a long way to both build up the neighborhood, as well as to bring together people from across the broader Jacksonville Community.

VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The entire East Jacksonville Core neighborhood needs and assets project entailed a great deal of coordination and work. To this end, sincere gratitude is extended to all of whom were involved in the process. Foremost, appreciation goes out to all of the residents, pastors, service providers, and school personnel who took the time to speak with us about their concerns and hopes for East Jacksonville. Their voices provided a vital component to the project that only they could have provided.

The needs and assets assessment also involved the work of student research assistants – Kacie Mullally and Jeremy Chaplin. These students were responsible for many of the behind-the-scenes activities. A huge thank you goes to their tireless efforts of calling individuals to obtain data, coding windshield data, recording interviews and focus groups, and much more.

Finally, we'd like to extend appreciation out to the FreshMinistries staff who worked with us on this comprehensive project. Their assistance provided some insight into the neighborhood and facilitated the focus group process with residents. It is our hope that their dedication to improving the lives of East Jacksonville residents continues far into the future.

IX. APPENDICES

Appendix A

East Jacksonville Resident Telephone Survey

Hello, my name is _____, and I am a student calling from the University of North Florida and the city of Jacksonville. This is not a sales call. We are conducting a research study to get your opinions about your neighborhood and the residents who live there. May I please speak to a member of the household who is 18 or older?

First, I'd like to ask you a little bit about the neighborhood East of Main St. and South of 8th St.....

1. How long have you lived in this neighborhood?
 - a. Less than one year
 - b. One to five years
 - c. Six to ten years
 - d. Eleven to twenty years
 - e. More than twenty years
 - f. All my life
 - g. Don't know/Refused

IF THEY ABSOLUTELY INSIST THEY DON'T LIVE IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD – CALL SHOULD END.

2. Overall, how would you rate your neighborhood as a place to live — excellent, good, fair, or poor?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
 - e. Don't Know/Refused
3. Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making your community a better place to live — no impact at all, a small impact, a moderate impact, or a big impact?
 - a. No impact at all
 - b. A small impact
 - c. A moderate impact
 - d. A big impact
 - e. Don't know/Refused

4. Are there businesses in your neighborhood where you purchase basic necessities such as food and clothing?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused

I am now going to mention some things in your neighborhood and I would like you to rate them based on your own and your family's experience. Please tell me if you think they are excellent, good, fair, or poor.

- a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
 - e. Don't Know/Refused
5. The public safety services such as rescue, fire, and police.
6. The police at working with people to solve problems in your neighborhood.
7. The number of available jobs in the neighborhood.
8. The quality of available jobs in the neighborhood.
9. The public spaces, like streets and parks.
10. The removal of trash and debris.
11. The neighborhood public schools.
12. The neighborhood businesses.

Our next concern is neighborhood safety...

13. Over the past year, have you or anyone in your household been a victim of a crime in your neighborhood?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused
14. Is there any area right around your neighborhood where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused
15. How about at home at night--do you feel safe and secure
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused

Another important part of this study is to learn more about the children living in your neighborhood.

16. Are there any children under the age of 18 in your household?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused

IF YES TO 16...

17. What are the ages of those children?
- a. At least one five or under
 - b. At least one six or older
18. Do any of the children under 18 have a grandparent living in the household with them?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused
19. Are you the parent or guardian of any those children?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused
20. *(If parent or guardian of children)* When it comes to getting medical care for your child (or children) when they need it, would you say you get the care always, almost always, sometimes, or never?
- a. Always
 - b. Almost always
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Never
 - e. Don't know/Refused
21. *(If parent or guardian of children)* How often do your kids go to the public library?
- a. A few times a week
 - b. A few times a month
 - c. Every few Months
 - d. Never
 - e. Don't know/Refused

22. *(If parent or guardian of children)* Within the past year, were any of your kids involved with a club, sports team, or group?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/Refused
23. *(If parent or guardian of children and at least one child six or older)* Have you met with your child's teacher during the current school year?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/Refused
24. *(If parent or guardian of children and at least one child six or older)* How often do you help your kids with homework...
- a. Always
 - b. Most of the time
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Never
 - e. Don't know/Refused

Finally, I would now like to ask a few questions about you and your household for statistical purposes.

25. Within the past six months, have you volunteered your time to help a local agency such as a school, church, or community organization?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know/Refused
26. When it comes to getting medical care for yourself when needed, would you say you get the care always, almost always, sometimes, or never?
- a. Always
 - b. Almost always
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Never
 - e. Don't know/Refused
27. Do you have a working computer within your household?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/Refused

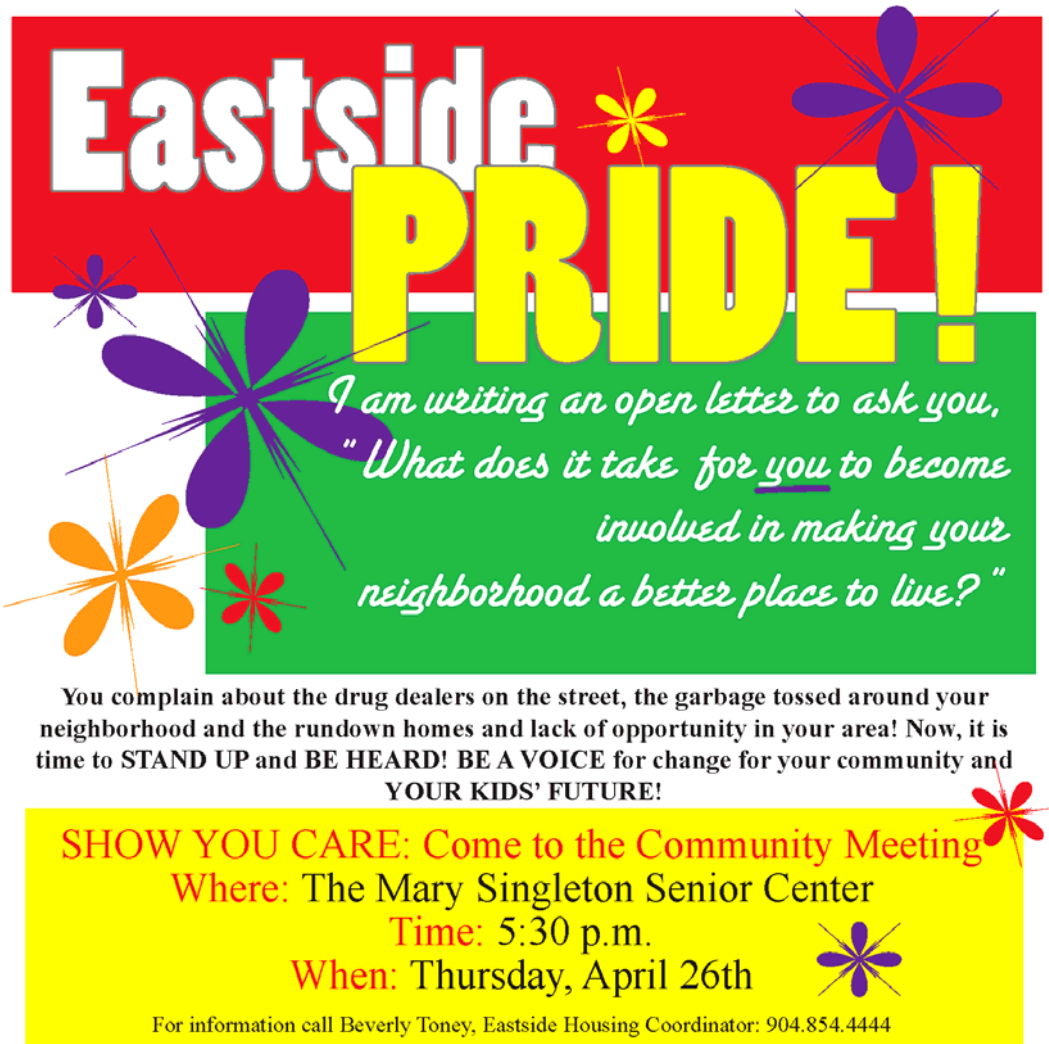
28. Do you have access to the internet at home?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know/Refused
29. When looking around your home, can you give me an estimate of how many books you have? – Include both children's and adult books.
 - a. Less than 25
 - b. 25 – 50
 - c. More than 50
 - d. Don't know/Refused
30. Do you own or rent your current residence?
 - a. Own
 - b. Rent
 - c. Don't own or rent - Living with someone else
 - d. Don't know/Refused
31. Last week, were you working full time, working part time, not working, keeping house, retired, or were you in school?
 - a. Working full time
 - b. Working part time
 - c. Not working
 - d. Keeping house
 - e. Retired
 - f. In school full time
 - g. Don't know/Refused
32. Which of the following best describes you?
 - a. Never married
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. Widowed
 - f. Don't know/Refused
33. How many years of education have you completed?
 - a. Less than high school
 - b. High school graduate/GED
 - c. Some college/technical, or trade school
 - d. College graduate
 - e. Graduate school or more

34. Don't know/Refused What was your total household income for last year?
- a. Less than \$10,000
 - b. \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - c. \$15,000 to \$24,999
 - d. \$25,000 to \$49,999
 - e. \$50,000 to \$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 or more
 - g. Don't know/Refused
35. How old were you on your last birthday?

That is all of the questions I have for you today. Thank you for your time.

36. RESPONDENT SEX
- a. Male
 - b. Female

Appendix B



**Eastside
PRIDE!**

*I am writing an open letter to ask you,
"What does it take for you to become
involved in making your
neighborhood a better place to live?"*

You complain about the drug dealers on the street, the garbage tossed around your neighborhood and the rundown homes and lack of opportunity in your area! Now, it is time to **STAND UP** and **BE HEARD!** **BE A VOICE** for change for your community and **YOUR KIDS' FUTURE!**

SHOW YOU CARE: Come to the Community Meeting
Where: The Mary Singleton Senior Center
Time: 5:30 p.m.
When: Thursday, April 26th

For information call Beverly Toney, Eastside Housing Coordinator: 904.854.4444

Refreshments will be served!

EAST JACKSONVILLE HOUSING ALLIANCE



Supported by The City of Jacksonville

Appendix C

East Jacksonville Focus Groups/Interviews – Residents

Hi. My name is _____ (facilitator/interviewer) and this is _____ (note taker) and we're with the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives at the University of North Florida.

Before we get started, I want to give you some background on why we're here today and what we're going to do. Organizations who work in your neighborhood say they want to help the community, but they have to understand the neighborhood first. We're interested in what residents in your community have to say about what it's like living in your area. We will be asking you to assess your community on several issues, including safety, health, education, and economics and employment.

[For focus groups] Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. Everyone is encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses and better tell your story about your neighborhood. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - no one will be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For interview] Your participation is voluntary and you can stop participating at any time. You are encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses and better tell your story about your neighborhood. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - you will not be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For focus groups] **Introductions**

Please take a minute to introduce yourself. Please just give us your first name for confidentiality purposes and tell us who you live with and how long you've lived in the neighborhood.

Defining Neighborhood

We'd like to begin with an exercise that will help define your neighborhood and the services available. Looking at the map, try to locate your home. Then think about the area that you consider your neighborhood and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available to you and your friends and family. There is a list of different types of services at the bottom of the map. When you think about a service, mark it on the map and write what that service is.

Now, let's compare what everyone has and put it on the larger map.

[Bring group together and put identified services on map and discuss]:

1) What services are being provided?

For whom?

What kinds of activities are available in this neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

2) What types of programs or services have you experienced that do work for you or your friends or family?

What makes them work?

Could they be changed to work better?

What would that change be?

3) What types of programs or services have you experienced that don't work for you?

How could they be changed so they would work?

4) Have you or your friends or family ever wanted to get some help or advice or service, but not been able to because it wasn't there or you didn't know how to find it?

[If yes] What were you or they looking for?

Where did you/they look?

5) What types of programs or services would you like to see offered in your neighborhood? [clubs; sports; community programs; tutoring; parenting classes, job training; continuing education; GED]

General Community/Neighborhood

Now let's talk about your community.

1) First off, how many of your neighbors would you say you personally know?

2) Now thinking about the people you know that live in this area, what are the top needs or issues they are dealing with? [poverty, unemployment, education, health, crime, drugs, etc.]

3) Thinking about the area in general, what are the top overall needs of the neighborhood? [better jobs, better education, less crime, child care, after school programs, better housing etc.]

Many communities not only deal with needs, but they also have some positive things about them.

4) What would you say are the top strengths or assets of this neighborhood? [programs, library, schools, child care, volunteers, sports, health clinics, family connections, etc.]

[Discuss topics brought up by residents and then go over the following project topics.]

Health

Health and access to health care are major topics of concern around the country.

- 1) [If not discussed above] What sort of health issues do people in this neighborhood face? [lack of accessibility, obtaining prescriptions, heart, elderly health care, asthma, maternal health, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, etc.]
- 2) What could improve the health of people who live in this neighborhood?

Housing

So let's talk about housing now.

- 1) [If not discussed above] What sort of housing issues do people in this neighborhood face? [evictions, needed improvements, abandoned homes, trash, etc.]
- 2) What could improve the housing of people who live in this neighborhood?

Economic Development and Employment

- 1) [If not discussed above] What are the employment opportunities like in this neighborhood?

Do most people in the neighborhood have jobs?

What types of jobs do they have?

- 2) What about places to purchase goods and services? Are there places in this neighborhood to purchase goods and services you need?

[If yes], what do you think about the quality of these places?

[If no], where do you go to purchase such things?

- 3) How satisfied are you with basic public services such as streets, sidewalks, parks, libraries, and trash removal?

4) How responsive would you say local government officials are to your neighborhood's needs?

Who have you gone to or would you go to for assistance in dealing with an issue in your neighborhood?

How would you describe your ability to influence local government decision making?

Education

Many people are concerned about the quality of schools in their community.

1) [If not discussed above] Thinking about R.L. Brown, Matthew Gilbert, and Andrew Jackson specifically, what do you think about the quality of the education offered at these schools?

Why do you think the quality is [good, OK, or poor]?

2) Do you think that school dropout is a problem in your neighborhood?

Why do you think that kids drop out of school?

What do you think would help kids stay in school?

What can be done at the school?

What can be done in the neighborhood?

3) How optimistic are you about the opportunities for most of the youth in your neighborhood to attend higher education institutions such as universities, community colleges, or technical or trade schools?

Do kids in the neighborhood go on to higher education?

Safety

- 1) [If not discussed above] In general, how safe do you feel your neighborhood is to live?

What makes the neighborhood/community unsafe/safe?

- 2) How satisfied are you w/public safety services such as rescue, fire, and police?

Why would you say you are satisfied/dissatisfied?

Family Strength

- 1) What do you feel are the major needs of parents in your neighborhood?

What conditions in the community benefit families in dealing with these needs?

Are there any organizations/agencies in the neighborhoods to help parents meet these needs?]

What conditions make it more difficult for families to find solutions to their problems?

What could or should be done to meet the needs of the families in this neighborhood?

- 2) [If not discussed during mapping] What kinds of activities are available in your neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

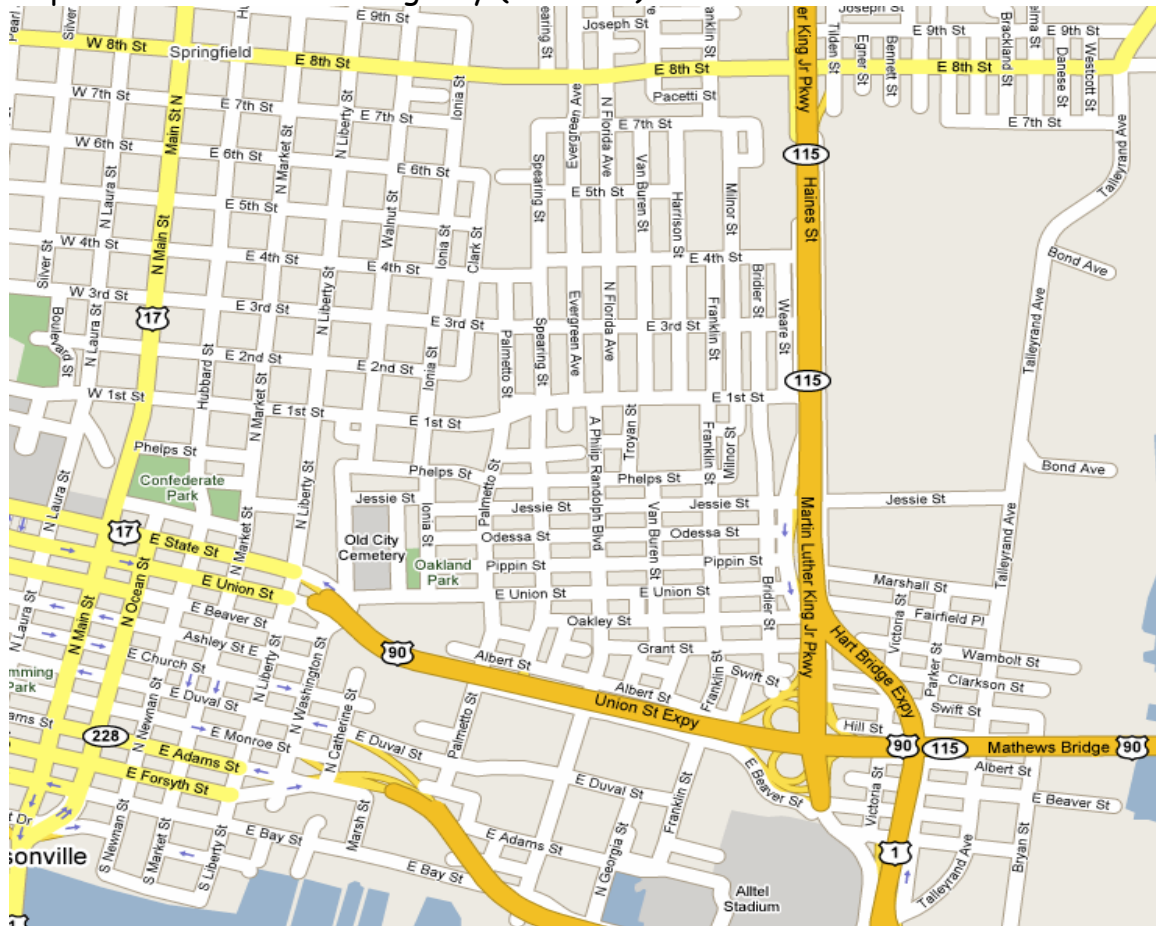
- 3) [If not discussed during mapping] What activities would you like to see made available for children and teens? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

Future

- 1) When you think about the future, where do you see this neighborhood in five years? [employment, education, families, etc.]
- 2) Where would you like to see this neighborhood in five years?
- 3) What could you, or people you know, do to reach that vision in this community?
- 4) What could the City of Jacksonville, in general, do to help this community reach that vision?
- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that we did not cover today?

Thank you for your time.

This is an exercise that will help define your neighborhood and the services available. Looking at the map, try to locate your home. Then think about the area that you consider your neighborhood and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available to you, your friends and your family on this map. There is a list of different types of services on the next page. For each service, please mark the corresponding number on the map and the name of the agency (if known).



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COMMUNITY ASSETS

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) CULTURAL | Museums, Theaters, Community Arts Programs |
| 2) EDUCATION | Migrant Education, Schools, Universities, Preschools, Colleges, Head Start, Adult Education, Trade Schools |
| 3) EMPLOYMENT | One Stop, Tax Department of Employment and Training, Nonprofit Based Employment Offices |
| 4) FAITH-BASED | Churches, Mosques, Temples, Faith-Based Food Programs |
| 5) HEALTH | Hospitals, Clinics, Public/Nonprofit Dental Facilities, Physical Therapy, Health Centers, Rehabilitation Centers, Mental Health |
| 6) HOUSING | Duval County Public Housing, Nonprofit Housing Providers, Nursing Homes |
| 7) NEIGHBORHOODS | Homeowners Associations, Clubhouses, Tenants Association, Neighborhood Networks |
| 8) NUTRITION | Food Banks |
| 9) PUBLIC FACILITIES | Libraries, County Fair Grounds, Parks & Recreation Facilities, Town Halls, City Senior Centers, Pools, Community Centers |
| 10) PUBLIC SERVICES | Public Works, Municipal Services, Wastewater Treatment, Water Tanks, Department of Motor Vehicles |
| 11) PUBLIC SAFETY | Police Station, Sheriff's Offices, Fire Stations, Police Sub-Stations |
| 12) SOCIAL SERVICE | Nonprofits, Community-Based Organizations, Social Service Agencies, Senior Centers, Substance Abuse, Counseling |

East Jacksonville Focus Groups/Interviews – Pastors

Hi. My name is _____(facilitator/interviewer) and this is _____(note taker). We're with the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives at the University of North Florida.

Before we get started, I want to give you some background on why we're here today and what we're going to do. Organizations who work in your neighborhood say they want to help the community, but they have to understand the neighborhood first. We're interested in what people living and working in the East Jacksonville community have to say about what it's like living in the area. We will be asking you to assess the community on several issues, including safety, health, education, and economics and employment.

[For focus groups] Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. Everyone is encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - no one will be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For interview] Your participation is voluntary and you can stop participating at any time. You are encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - you will not be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For focus groups] **Introductions**

Please take a minute to introduce yourself and why you are here tonight.
Please provide only your first name for confidentiality purposes.

Defining Neighborhood

We'd like to begin with an exercise that will help define the neighborhood surrounding your church and all of the services available. Looking at the map, try to locate your church. Then think about the area that you consider the neighborhood around your church and draw along the boundaries. This boundary is not meant to define your congregation or the area you are trying to outreach to. Next, we want you to think about services available to the residents in the neighborhood, not necessarily limited to the boundary you drew. There is a list of different types of services at the bottom of the map. When you think about a service, mark it on the map and write what that service is.

Now, let's compare what everyone has and put it on the larger map.

[Bring group together and put identified services on map and discuss]:

1) What services are being provided?

For whom?

What kinds of activities are available in this neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

2) What types of programs or services would you like to see offered in the neighborhood? [clubs; sports; community programs; tutoring; parenting classes, job training; GED; continuing education;]

General Community/Neighborhood

1) Thinking about people you know that live in this area, what are the top needs or issues they are dealing with? [poverty, unemployment, education, health, crime, drugs, etc.]

- 2) Thinking about the area in general, what are the top overall needs of the neighborhood? [better jobs, better education, less crime, child care, after school programs, better housing etc.]

Many communities not only deal with needs, but they also have some positive things about them.

- 3) What would you say are the top strengths or assets of this neighborhood? [programs, library, schools, child care, volunteers, sports, health clinics, etc.]

[Discuss topics brought up by pastors and then go over project topics.]

Health

Health and access to health care are major topics of concern around the country.

- 1) [If not discussed above] What sort of health issues do people in this neighborhood face? [lack of accessibility, obtaining prescriptions, heart, elderly, asthma, maternal health, etc.]
- 2) What could improve the health of people who live in this neighborhood?

Housing

- 1) [If not discussed above] What sort of housing issues do people in this neighborhood face? [evictions, needed improvements, abandoned homes, trash, etc.]
- 2) What could improve the housing of people who live in this neighborhood?
- 3) How mobile is the population? Do people move in and out of the neighborhood much?

Economic Development and Employment

- 1) [If not discussed above] What are the employment opportunities like in this neighborhood?

Do most people in the neighborhood have jobs?

What types of jobs do they have?

- 2) What about places to purchase goods and services? Are there places in this neighborhood to purchase goods and services you need?
- 3) How satisfied are you with basic public services such as streets, sidewalks, parks, libraries, and trash removal?
- 4) How responsive would you say local government officials are to your neighborhood's needs?

Who have you gone to or would you go to for assistance in dealing with an issue in your neighborhood?

How would you describe your ability to influence local government decision making?

Education

Many people are concerned about the quality of schools in their community.

- 1) [If not discussed above] Thinking about R.L. Brown, Matthew Gilbert, and Andrew Jackson specifically, what do you think about the quality of the education offered at these schools?

Why do you think the quality is [good, OK, or poor]?

- 2) Do you think that school dropout is a problem in your neighborhood?

Why do you think that kids drop out of school?

What do you think would help kids stay in school?

What can be done at the school?

What can be done in the neighborhood?

- 3) How optimistic are you about the opportunities for most of the youth in your neighborhood to attend higher education institutions such as universities, community colleges, or technical or trade schools?

Do kids in the neighborhood go on to higher education?

Safety

- 1) [If not discussed above] In general, how safe do you feel this neighborhood is to live?

What makes the neighborhood/community unsafe or safe?

- 2) How satisfied are you w/public safety services such as rescue, fire, and police?

Why would you say you are satisfied/dissatisfied?

Family Strength

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions regarding families.

- 1) What do you feel are the major needs of parents in the neighborhood?

What conditions in the community benefit families in dealing with these needs? [Are there any organizations/agencies in the neighborhoods to help parents meet these needs?]

What conditions make it more difficult for families to find solutions to their problems?

What could or should be done to meet the needs of the families in this neighborhood?

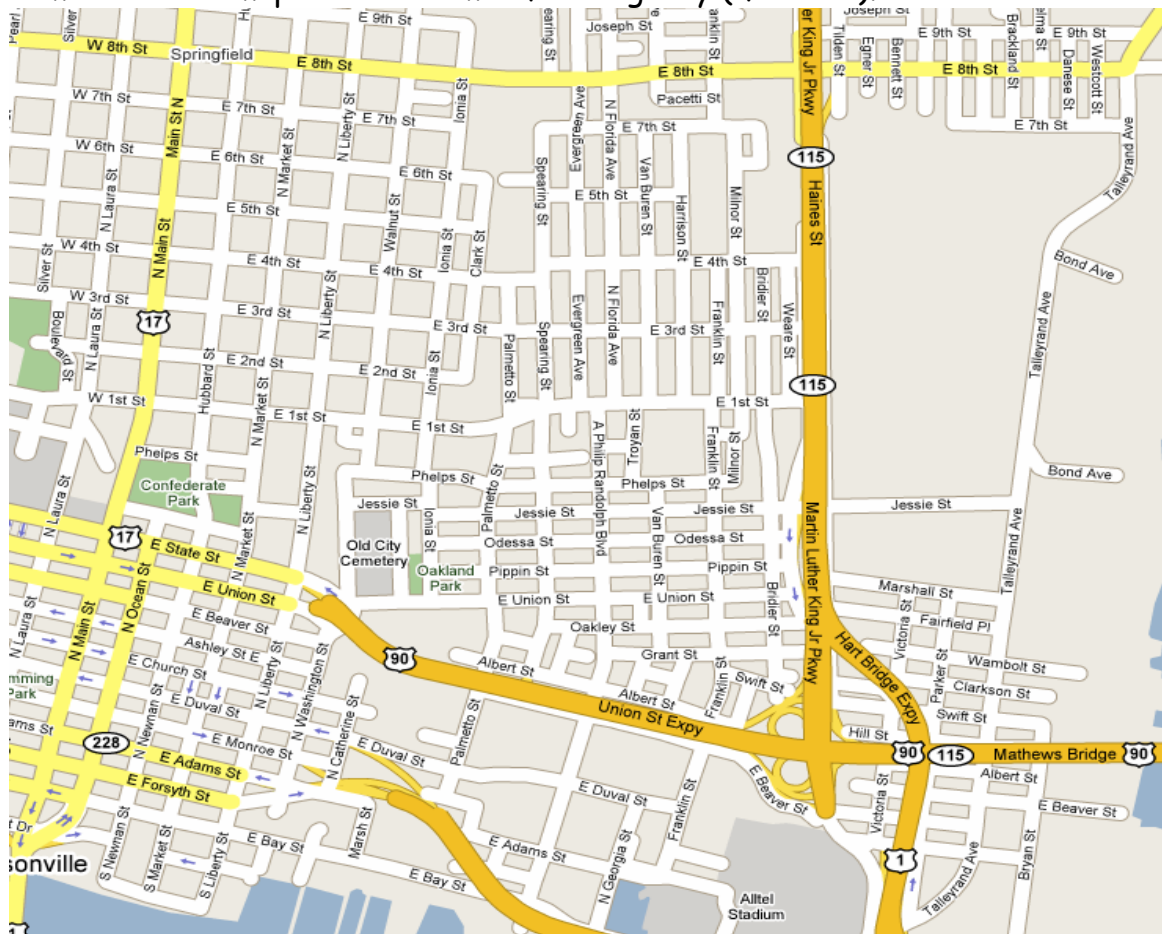
- 2) [If not discussed during mapping] What kinds of activities are available in your neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]
- 3) [If not discussed during mapping] What activities would you like to see made available for children and teens? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

Future

- 1) When you think about the future, where do you see this neighborhood in five years? [employment, education, families, etc.]
- 2) Where would you like to see this neighborhood in five years?
- 3) What could you, or people you know, do to reach that vision in this community?
- 4) What could the City of Jacksonville, in general, do to help this community reach that vision?
- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that we did not cover today?

Thank you for your time.

This is an exercise that will help define the neighborhood surrounding your church and the services available. Looking at the map, try to locate your church. Then think about the area that you consider the neighborhood and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available to the residents on this map. There is a list of different types of services on the next page. For each service, please mark the corresponding number on the map and the name of the agency (if known).



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COMMUNITY ASSETS

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) CULTURAL | Museums, Theaters, Community Arts Programs |
| 2) EDUCATION | Migrant Education, Schools, Universities, Preschools, Colleges, Head Start, Adult Education, Trade Schools |
| 3) EMPLOYMENT | One Stop, Jax Department of Employment and Training, Nonprofit Based Employment Offices |
| 4) FAITH-BASED | Churches, Mosques, Temples, Faith-Based Food Programs |
| 5) HEALTH | Hospitals, Clinics, Public/Nonprofit Dental Facilities, Physical Therapy, Health Centers, Rehabilitation Centers, Mental Health |
| 6) HOUSING | Duval County Public Housing, Nonprofit Housing Providers, Nursing Homes |
| 7) NEIGHBORHOODS | Homeowners Associations, Clubhouses, Tenants Association, Neighborhood Networks |
| 8) NUTRITION | Food Banks |
| 9) PUBLIC FACILITIES | Libraries, County Fair Grounds, Parks & Recreation Facilities, Town Halls, City Senior Centers, Pools, Community Centers |
| 10) PUBLIC SERVICES | Public Works, Municipal Services, Wastewater Treatment, Water Tanks, Department of Motor Vehicles |
| 11) PUBLIC SAFETY | Police Station, Sheriff's Offices, Fire Stations, Police Sub-Stations |
| 12) SOCIAL SERVICE | Nonprofits, Community-Based Organizations, Social Service Agencies, Senior Centers, Substance Abuse, Counseling |

East Jacksonville Focus Groups/Interviews – Service Providers

Hi. My name is _____ (facilitator/interviewer) and this is _____ (note taker). We're with the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives at the University of North Florida.

Before we get started, I want to give you some background on why we're here today and what we're going to do. We are conducting research about the East Jacksonville community. We're interested in what people living and working in the East Jacksonville community have to say about what it's like living in the area. We will be asking you to assess the community on several issues, including safety, health, education, and economics and employment.

[For focus groups] Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. Everyone is encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your response. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - no one will be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For interview] Your participation is voluntary and you can stop participating at any time. You are encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - you will not be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For focus groups] **Introductions**

Please take a minute to introduce yourself and the services your organization offers to this community. Please use only your first name for confidentiality purposes.

Defining Neighborhood

We'd like to begin with an exercise that will help define the neighborhood you serve and all of the services available. Looking at the map, think about the area that you consider the neighborhood you serve and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available that you are aware of for residents in the neighborhood. There is a list of different types of services at the bottom of the map. When you think about a service, mark it on the map where it is physically located and write what that service is.

Now, let's compare what everyone has and put it on the larger map.

[Bring group together and put identified services on map and discuss]:

1) What services are being provided?

For whom?

What kinds of activities are available in this neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

2) What types of programs or services would you like to see offered in the neighborhood?

General Community/Neighborhood

1) Thinking about people you know that live in this area, what are the top needs or issues they are dealing with? [poverty, unemployment, education, health, crime, drugs, etc.]

- 2) Thinking about the area in general, what are the top overall needs of the neighborhood? [better jobs, better education, less crime, child care, after school programs, better housing etc.]

Many communities not only deal with needs, but they also have some positive things about them.

- 3) What would you say are the top strengths or assets of this neighborhood? [programs, library, schools, child care, volunteers, sports, health clinics, etc.]

[Discuss topics brought up by service providers and then go over project topics.]

Family Strength

- 1) What do you feel are the major needs of parents in the neighborhood you serve?

What conditions in the community benefit families in dealing with these needs? [Are there any organizations/agencies in the neighborhoods to help parents meet these needs?]

What conditions make it more difficult for families to find solutions to their problems?

What could/should be done to meet the needs of the families in this neighborhood?

- 2) What is the greatest challenge to serving the residents in this neighborhood? (Lack of services, lack of information about services, families, nature of service system, preconceptions?)

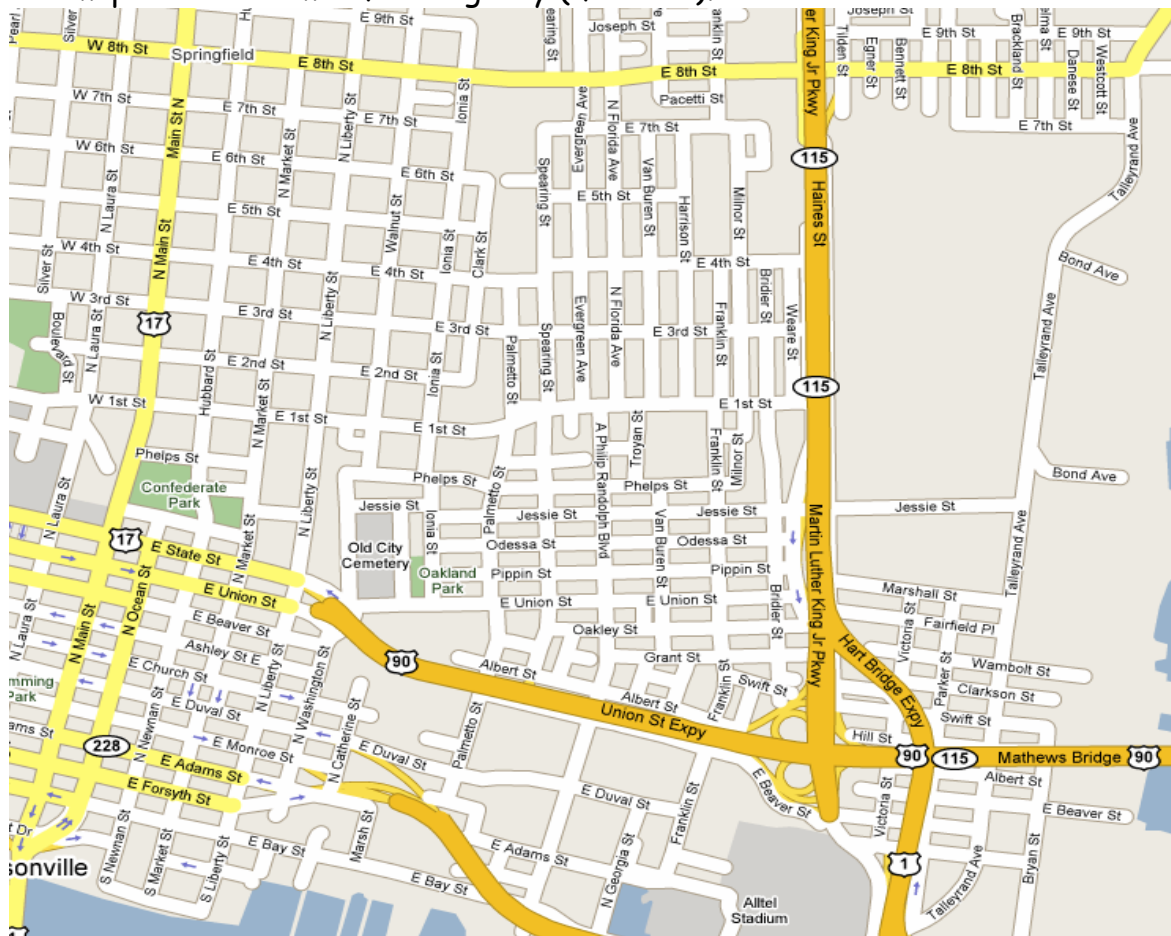
- 3) [If not discussed during mapping] What kinds of activities are available in your neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]
- 4) [If not discussed during mapping] What activities would you like to see made available for children and teens? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

Future

- 1) When you think about the future, where do you see this neighborhood in five years? [employment, education, families, etc.]
- 2) Where would you like to see this neighborhood in five years?
- 3) What could you, or people you know, do to reach that vision in this community?
- 4) What could the City of Jacksonville, in general, do to help this community reach that vision?
- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that we did not cover today?

Thank you for your time.

This is an exercise that will help define the neighborhood and the services available around your agency. Looking at the map, try to locate your agency. Then think about the area that you consider the neighborhood and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available to the residents on this map. There is a list of different types of services on the next page. For each service, please mark the corresponding number on the map and the name of the agency (if known).



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COMMUNITY ASSETS

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) CULTURAL | Museums, Theaters, Community Arts Programs |
| 2) EDUCATION | Migrant Education, Schools, Universities, Preschools, Colleges, Head Start, Adult Education, Trade Schools |
| 3) EMPLOYMENT | One Stop, Jax Department of Employment and Training, Nonprofit Based Employment Offices |
| 4) FAITH-BASED | Churches, Mosques, Temples, Faith-Based Food Programs |
| 5) HEALTH | Hospitals, Clinics, Public/Nonprofit Dental Facilities, Physical Therapy, Health Centers, Rehabilitation Centers, Mental Health |
| 6) HOUSING | Duval County Public Housing, Nonprofit Housing Providers, Nursing Homes |
| 7) NEIGHBORHOODS | Homeowners Associations, Clubhouses, Tenants Association, Neighborhood Networks |
| 8) NUTRITION | Food Banks |
| 9) PUBLIC FACILITIES | Libraries, County Fair Grounds, Parks & Recreation Facilities, Town Halls, City Senior Centers, Pools, Community Centers |
| 10) PUBLIC SERVICES | Public Works, Municipal Services, Wastewater Treatment, Water Tanks, Department of Motor Vehicles |
| 11) PUBLIC SAFETY | Police Station, Sheriff's Offices, Fire Stations, Police Sub-Stations |
| 12) SOCIAL SERVICE | Nonprofits, Community-Based Organizations, Social Service Agencies, Senior Centers, Substance Abuse, Counseling |

East Jacksonville Focus Groups/Interviews - Schools

Hi. My name is _____(facilitator/interviewer) and this is _____(note taker). We're with the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives at the University of North Florida.

Before we get started, I want to give you some background on why we're here today and what we're going to do. Organizations who work in the East Jacksonville neighborhood say they want to help the community, but they have to understand the neighborhood first. We're interested in what people living and working in the East Jacksonville community have to say about what it's like living in the area. We will be asking you to assess the community on several issues, including safety, health, education, and economics and employment.

[For focus groups] Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. Everyone is encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - no one will be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For interview] Your participation is voluntary and you can stop participating at any time. You are encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - you will not be personally identified in any way in any report. Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions]. I have an information sheet about everything we just went over. There is some contact information on the sheet if you should have any questions later. [Hand out information sheets].

[For focus groups] **Introductions**

Please take a minute to introduce yourself and the grade and classes you teach. Please tell us only your first name for confidentiality purposes.

- 1) How long have you been teaching?
- 2) Have you taught outside of your current school?
- 3) Have you taught outside of Duval County Public School System?

General Community/Neighborhood

- 1) Thinking about people you know that live in the area surrounding your school, what are the top needs or issues they are dealing with?
[poverty, unemployment, education, health, crime, drugs, etc.]
- 2) Thinking about the area surrounding your school in general, what are the top overall needs of the neighborhood? [better jobs, better education, less crime, child care, after school programs, better housing etc.]

Many communities not only deal with needs, but they also have some positive things about them.

- 3) What would you say are the top strengths or assets of the neighborhood?
[programs, library, schools, child care, volunteers, sports, health clinics, etc.]

[Discuss topics brought up by teachers and then go over project topics.]

Family Strength

- 1) What do you feel are the major needs of parents in this neighborhood?

What conditions in the community benefit families in dealing with these needs? [Are there any organizations/agencies in the neighborhoods to help parents meet these needs?]

What conditions make it more difficult for families to find solutions to their problems?

2) What could or should be done to meet the needs of the families in this neighborhood?

Education

- 1) Thinking about your school/the school where you teach, what do you think are the top strengths of the school in preparing the students for productive futures? [resources, parental support, parental participation, students' enthusiasm, principal, staff, etc.]
- 2) What do you think are the top issues hindering the school in preparing the students for productive futures? *Greatest challenges?* [lack of resources, lack of parental support and/or parental participation, lack of governmental support, lack of students' enthusiasm, principal, staff, etc.]
- 3) What needs to be done, if anything, to improve the school's ability to prepare the students for the future?
- 4) How would you rate your schools' resources [school's technology, library, athletic facilities, laboratories]?
- 5) What types of safety nets are in place at your school for the students? [after school tutoring, in-class teaching assistants, etc.]

Future

- 1) When you think about the futures of the students, where do you see them in [five/ten] years? [employment, education, families, etc.]
- 2) What type of future would you like for the students to have in [five/ten] years?
- 3) What could you, or people you know, do to reach that vision for these students?
- 4) What could the City of Jacksonville, in general, do to help this community reach that vision?
- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that we did not cover today?

Thank you for your time.

East Jacksonville Focus Groups - Youth

Hi. My name is ____ (facilitator/interviewer) and this is _____
(note taker) and we're from the University of North Florida.

Before we get started, I want to give you some background on why we're here today and what we're going to do. Organizations who work in your neighborhood say they want to help the community, but they have to understand the neighborhood first. Since they are all adults, they don't get what life is like for teenagers in your neighborhood. That's why we've come to you. We're interested in what teenagers in your community have to say about what it's like living in your neighborhood. We will be asking you about your neighborhood in general, about school, family, and the future.

You do not have to participate if you don't want to and you may stop participating in this focus group at any time. You will not be in trouble if you don't want to participate. You will not be given money or gifts for participating in the focus group.

Everyone is encouraged to speak freely and openly. There are no right or wrong answers. We are going to tape record the session, only so that we can accurately record your responses and better tell your story about your neighborhood. What you say here today will be kept strictly confidential - no one will be personally identified in any way in any report. We also ask that you do not identify anyone's responses outside of the focus group. If the discussion includes any indication of behaviors likely to lead to harm of the individuals in the group or others, this may be reported to appropriate authorities, as will be information required to be reported by law.

Are there any questions before we begin? [Answer questions].

Introductions

Please take a minute to introduce yourself. Please just give us your first name for confidentiality purposes and tell us what school you attend. In

addition, if you could tell us who you live with and how long you've lived in the neighborhood.

Defining Neighborhood

We'd like to begin with an exercise that will help define your neighborhood and the services available. Looking at the map, try to locate your home. Then think about the area that you consider your neighborhood and draw along the boundaries. Next, we want you to think about services available to you and your friends and family. There is a list of different types of services at the bottom of the map. When you think about a service, mark it on the map and write what that service is.

Now, let's compare what everyone has and put it on the larger map.

[Bring group together and put identified services on map and discuss]:

1) What services are being provided?

For whom?

What kinds of activities are available in this neighborhood for children and teens to participate in outside of school? [clubs; sports; community programs; church activities]

2) What types of programs or services have you experienced that do work for you or your friends or family?

What makes them work?

Could they be changed to work better?

What would that change be?

3) What types of programs or services have you experienced that don't work for you?

How could they be changed so they would work?

- 4) Have you or your friends or family ever wanted to get some help or advice or service, but not been able to because it wasn't there or you didn't know how to find it?

[If yes] What were you or they looking for?

Where did you/they look?

- 5) What types of programs or services would you like to see offered in your neighborhood? [clubs; sports; community programs; tutoring; parenting classes, job training]

General Community/Neighborhood

OK, now that we've talked about the neighborhood, let's talk about you some.

- 1) What is the most important thing about being a teenager in your neighborhood these days, which most adults don't get?
- 2) How do most adults in the neighborhood feel about teens? [opinions they express, attitudes they have towards teens]
- 3) What is the best part of being a teenager in your neighborhood these days?

What do you like to do?

Where do you go to have fun or relax and enjoy yourself?

What places have you gone to outside of your neighborhood?

- 4) What's the hardest thing about being a teenager in your neighborhood?

What are young people worried or concerned about?

Who or what are you able to turn to when things get particularly hard or scary?

5) How safe do most teens feel this neighborhood is to live?

What makes the neighborhood safe or unsafe?

[Discuss topics brought up by youth and then go over project topics.]

Education

Let's talk about everyone's favorite topic, school.

1) How many different high/middle schools have you attended?

2) Tell me about your current school.

What are some of the fun things you do at school?

What classes do you enjoy going to?

What teachers understand you?

How safe do you feel at your school?

3) How's the homework?

How long do you spend doing homework every week?

Where do you do your homework?

Do you have what you need to complete your homework? [supplies, calculator, computer, printer, etc.]

Are you able to get homework assistance when you need it?

[If yes] Who do you get the assistance from?

4) Do you know of anyone who has dropped out of school?

Do you think that dropout is a problem in your neighborhood?

Why do students drop out of school?

What might help students stay in school?

What can be done at the schools?

What can be done in the neighborhood?

5) Right now, how confident are you that you will graduate high school? [very, sort of, not really, not at all]

Why and Why not?

6) When it comes to life after high school, how many of you hope to go to college?

How well do you think your school is preparing you for college?

For those of you who are not considering college at this time, how well do you think your school is preparing you for work?

Family Strength

Now we'd like to talk about your family and relatives.

1) What do you feel are the major needs of parents or adults in your neighborhood?

What could or should be done to meet the needs of the families in this neighborhood?

Future

What about the future?

1) When you think about the future, where do you want to be in five years?

What will you be doing?

2) How optimistic are you that you can reach those goals?

3) What can you do to reach those goals?

4) What or who else could help you reach those goals? [parents, teachers, mentors, programs, etc]

How could they help you?

5) When you think about the future, where do you see this neighborhood in five years? [employment, education, families, etc.]

6) Where would you like to see this neighborhood in five years?

7) What could you, or people you know, do to reach that vision in this community?

8) What could the City of Jacksonville, in general, do to help this community reach that vision?

9) Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that we did not cover today?

Thank you for your time.



Department of Sociology
and Anthropology

Northeast Florida
Center for Community Initiatives

Appendix D