What is the Integrated Assessment?

Starting in 2011, the Graham Sustainability Institute at the University of Michigan (U-M) partnered with Focus: HOPE on an Integrated Assessment that brings together U-M researchers, Focus: HOPE staff, community stakeholders, and others to support efforts to advance the HOPE Village Initiative.

This collaboration recognizes that the success of Focus: HOPE and the HOPE Village Initiative is tied to sustainability factors including the physical environment, economic development, community health, and education.

For the assessment, the Graham Institute and Focus: HOPE selected six unique projects led by U-M faculty. These projects were conducted in collaboration with Focus: HOPE and community members. Residents have offered valuable information to the projects, and in some cases, were part of the research teams. The outcomes of the projects include studies, plans, and interventions that help Focus: HOPE achieve the objectives of the HOPE Village Initiative.

What is the HOPE Village Initiative?

Focus: HOPE launched the HOPE Village Initiative in 2009. Led by a broad partnership of residents, community leaders, businesses, and others, the HOPE Village Initiative is a long-term plan to revitalize the community surrounding Focus: HOPE’s campus by offering opportunities and support with a focus on education.

The Initiative aims to ensure that, by the year 2031, 100% of neighborhood residents will be educationally well-prepared, economically self-sufficient, and living in a safe, supportive environment.

This ambitious goal includes:

- Supporting academic achievement in neighborhood schools, and creating a strong educational pipeline that begins at birth and allows children to succeed educationally through college.
- Creating a beautiful, safe, stable, and economically viable community.
- Generating a sense of pride in the community where community leaders and everyday citizens are empowered to take an active role in the revival of their neighborhood.

What is the Graham Sustainability Institute?

The Graham Sustainability Institute is a partnership of schools, colleges, and units across the University of Michigan that connects researchers, policy-makers, and communities to address challenging sustainability problems at home in Michigan and across the globe.

The Institute works with diverse stakeholders and brings together information from different perspectives to identify real-world sustainability solutions that protect the environment and enhance quality of life for present and future generations.

What is Focus: HOPE?

Focus: HOPE is a nationally recognized civil and human rights organization founded in 1968 to help overcome racism, poverty and injustice.

Focus: HOPE’s achievements over the past 45 years are remarkable. These include opening career opportunities to nearly 12,000 men and women who have completed its job and education programs and providing food to hundreds of thousands of mothers, children, and senior citizens. Focus: HOPE works with the residential and business communities to revitalize the neighborhood surrounding its campus, and provides opportunities to get involved—and make a difference.

What is my role?

Input from community members has been important throughout the Integrated Assessment. Now it’s your turn— we’re interested in your ideas and hope you will share what you know with us. Take a look at the posters to learn more about the projects, then share your ideas using the post-it-notes.
The Development of a Community-Based Coalition to Promote Career and College Preparation

John Burkhardt Ph.D. | Betty Overton-Adkins Ph.D. | Esmeralda Hernandez | Silvena Chan | Sarah Erwin | Jacqueline Duarte

Introduction

HOPE Village is a community that is passionate about education as the key to success. The community also has assets in place that can help to build a vibrant college-going culture. Many times, however, these resources are not accessible and there are no opportunities to talk about what can be done as a community to help raise the number of residents attaining post-secondary degrees. This project was an attempt to begin this conversation and give communities the agency to name the issue, and take steps toward making sustainable change.

Educational Opportunities Asset Map

One of the HOPE Village Initiative’s values is empowerment – the initiative seeks to inspire people and communities to acquire the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to achieve their full individual and collective academic potential. The Educational Opportunities Asset Map booklet we developed aims to empower HOPE Village residents by providing them with information about local and accessible educational services.

The Educational Opportunities Asset Map lists and maps out educational resources that are available to the residents of the HOPE Village Community. These resources are located all throughout Detroit.

The categories of educational opportunities include adult services, youth services, parks, libraries, and schools. The goal of putting these community resources together in one convenient booklet is to help HOPE Village residents easily identify and contact any services that may be of use to them. The booklet will provide information such as address, phone number, email, and contact person for each resource.

Community Dialogues

Using Participatory Action Research (PAR), researchers from The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good at the University of Michigan and HOPE Village Initiative community members formed a research team that planned and hosted four community dialogues. These discussions focused on barriers to access to higher education, the resources that already exist to overcome these barriers, and the resources that are still needed to improve the college-going culture in this community.

We are currently working on the preliminary analysis of the dialogues, which involves identifying the major themes of the discussions. Our early results reveal that finances and economic security are among the most noted barriers for accessing higher education. Access to tutoring resources, after school programs, and other educational assets to assist students academically are cited as still needed. Community members at the dialogues also expressed needing to engage more of the community in building the college culture. The PAR Team will disseminate findings to the community as soon as they are finalized.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dell Stubblefield, David Troupe, Brandon Love, Arlyssa Heard, and Kaiya Simon for all of their work and dedication to this project.
### Overview

Where is the local economy?
Is it only located in stores and workplaces?
That’s only the tip of the iceberg.

What about inside homes, at church, in schools, community centers, food pantries, community gardens, and in block clubs?

The goal of this project is to discover the full range of economic activities that take place in the HOPE Village Initiative neighborhood.

So, we conducted a set of approximately 30 in-depth interviews and surveys in order to uncover the hidden skills in the local economy. These are skills that may not be rewarded in the marketplace but may be of immense value to the community.

What’s your role in this ‘other’ economy?

### Project Design

The project team collected three types of data:

1. An inventory of 147 resident skills;
2. In-depth interviews focusing on residents’ role in the economy; and
3. Identification of key community assets.

The goal of the project is to make the information available to community members and Focus: HOPE staff in order to identify clusters of skills that are not currently located in the tip of the iceberg.

For example, in the results obtained so far (look to the charts at the right), we can begin to identify clusters of resident skills. These activities could be put to productive use in the local economy through the development of producer cooperatives, bartering systems, volunteer networks or non-profit community development initiatives.

Community members might then form interest groups in order to pool their shared skills, explore ways of providing services to the neighborhood, and develop funding initiatives to make it happen.
STREET-LEVEL NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING
Planning for the Future of the HOPE Village Initiative, One Block at a Time
Eric Dueweke, Margaret Dewar, Eric Huntley, Steve Luongo (2012), Peter McGrath (2012)

Street-Level Planning Strategies
Active streets are the building blocks of successful neighborhoods. They connect residents and visitors to businesses while helping to deter crime and ensure pedestrian safety. This project uses two primary strategies as part of a long-term vision of a neighborhood filled with safe, vibrant streets.

First, by working with Focus: HOPE staff to develop a framework for neighborhood improvement, the project team hopes to attract both human and financial investment to the neighborhood. Second, by creating guidelines for “streetscape” improvements, we aim to positively shape the streets of the HOPE Village Initiative area, making them safer and more usable for residents.

Street Improvements
A “streetscape” refers to a street and its surroundings: sidewalks, plantings, bike lanes, car travel lanes, parking spaces and building fronts. By approaching the design of a street by looking not only at its vehicle travel lanes but also at their context, we can plan for the safe and smooth movement of all users of the street.

As part of this project’s efforts to plan for increased activity and improved safety in the HOPE Village Initiative area, the project team is working with Focus: HOPE staff and volunteers to develop strategies for future streetscape improvements. Through the careful design of streetscapes, we can create a network of streets that moves people seamlessly and safely throughout the neighborhood whether they walk, drive, or ride a bike.

Neighborhood Improvement Sites
To help create lasting vitality in the Hope Village Initiative neighborhood, the project team, with direction from Focus: HOPE staff is identifying specific locations that show potential for visible improvement.

These improvements could take many forms: public art or a small “park” on a previously vacant lot; refurbishing an empty apartment building; or providing information on the resources available to a resident trying to retain their home.

By identifying locations for neighborhood improvement, Focus: HOPE can attract further investment. These physical changes could lead to increased activity and resource availability in the HOPE Village Initiative area.

Map of potential locations for improvement
Map of potential multi-family housing improvements
**THE DETROIT INNER CIRCLE GREENWAY**

Connecting – and Strengthening – Communities
Alicia Alvarez and Priya Bakaran, University of Michigan Law School

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**The Detroit Inner Circle Greenway**

When complete, the Detroit Inner Circle Greenway will be a continuous 26-mile pathway for walking and biking that connects the cities of Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck to recreation, historic, cultural, and downtown destinations and the Detroit River. The project builds upon existing greenways, such as the Dequindre Cut and RiverWalk, extending their reach into more neighborhoods. By the end of 2014 about half of the entire Inner Circle Greenway will be built.

**Closing the Gap & Bringing the Greenway to HOPE Village**

One of the longest stretches of the Inner Circle Greenway, and the one that creates this opportunity, is the 8.3-mile abandoned Conrail railroad property that extends through the HOPE Village Initiative area and the surrounding neighborhoods (shown on the map in bright pink). A critical step in converting this railroad to a Greenway is gaining control of the property – and now we’re one step closer to making it happen!

Faculty and students at the University of Michigan Law School helped put the HOPE Village Initiative area at the forefront of the plans developing for the Greenway. As a result, the Michigan Trails & Greenway Alliance worked with the City of Detroit to submit applications for State and Federal grant money to buy this missing segment. If approved, they will bring money into Detroit that would otherwise go to other communities and help fill the largest gap in the Greenway. This would bring the benefits of the Greenway to residents in the neighborhoods in the HOPE Village Initiative and bring the entire Inner Circle vision closer to reality.

**What’s Next?**

Completing the project will take some time, but the rewards will be worth it. There are missing bridges and other land issues along the railroad property that will need to be resolved before the rail bed is converted to trail. In the meantime, the addition of bike lanes along Oakman Boulevard could form part of the greenway loop. These lanes would have the additional benefit of making everyone on the road safer by reducing traffic speeds.

The Inner Circle Greenway partners plan to work collaboratively with residents along the rail corridor to make sure that the Greenway improves the quality of life in the neighborhood. For instance, Focus: HOPE may add programs to train residents in trail maintenance and construction. Areas for new retail opportunities may be available where the Greenway crosses existing roads like Linwood and Rosa Parks. Safety and security would be factored into the design. How would you like to use the Greenway?

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**What are Greenways? How Do They Benefit My Community?**

Greenways are linear open spaces, including habitat and trails, that link neighborhoods, schools, commercial areas, parks, and cultural and historic sites. Greenways, trails, and bike lanes have many benefits:

- **Transportation** – Greenways are a healthy, fun, and green alternative for getting to work, school, or a park.
- **Safety** – Trails allow people to walk or bike safely away from street traffic. Painted bike lanes make streets look narrower, which reduces traffic speeds and increases safety.
- **Jobs & Economy** – Trails provide a way for residents to get to work directly and to connect to public transportation. Trail-related businesses can spring up in communities with trails. New businesses often look to locate in cities where their employees can bike and walk, and beautiful greenways help attract tourism that can improve the overall economy. Trails may also improve nearby property values.
- **Health** – Trails and greenways provide safe, inexpensive opportunities for regular exercise.
- **Recreation** - Greenways are a nice, clean, and safe place to play, ride a bike, walk, or run.
- **Environment** - With trees, plants, flowers, and other natural features, greenways are just as important to wildlife as they are to people. Trails and greenways also help improve air and water quality.
PLAY*GROUNDS AT THE HOPE VILLAGE: RECLAIMING OPEN SPACE

(1) Open Space Visioning Plan (2) Courses on Integrated Design-Research (3) Design-Build Initiatives


Open Space Visioning Plan

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY & REPORT
The team, led by Profs. Maigret and Arquero, created an Open Public Space Visioning Plan. This ongoing effort took a deep look at vacant property in the area, visioning how those properties could be used in the future for community engagement and environmental stewardship.

FOCUSED HANDS GARDEN

Undergraduate Course
Dr. Lorelle Meadows led 20 first year engineering students on a collaborative design project for the Focused Hands garden, leading to the design of four water catchment systems to provide water to the raised beds. Students visited the garden to better understand the site and the community and created four innovative concepts shared at a design expo in December.

LIQUID PLANNING
Graduate Interdisciplinary Seminar
Profs. Jen Maigret and Maria Arquero led a group of 24 students from the Architecture and Urban Planning graduate programs in the research of design strategies for the open space network in the HOPE Village.

Courses on Integrated Design-Research

SCHOOLYARD AT GLAZER
Landscape Architecture Graduate Design Studio. Prof. Bob Grese led 22 landscape architecture students who worked with the children and teachers at Glazer Academy to develop design ideas for revitalizing the schoolyard and playground. The UoM students led two workshops to identify changes children would like to see in the schoolyard and to explore ideas for food and flower gardens around the school. The UoM students developed designs for the schoolyard and shared them with Glazer students.

FOCUS: HOPE SPRING-SUMMER INTERNSHIP
Two of the students from Dr. Meadows’ winter course are currently interning at Focus: HOPE to identify design opportunities in collaboration with Focus: HOPE and community members. Dr. Meadows will bring back their ideas to student design teams in fall 2013.

Design-Build Initiatives

COMMUNITY-BUILD AT GLAZER ACADEMY, SATURDAY AUGUST 24TH
With funding from Christ Church Cranbrook, one of the students from Prof. Grese’s class—Robert Primeau—is working this summer with Focus: HOPE and Glazer to facilitate improvements in the schoolyard, incorporating many ideas generated in the workshops at Glazer. Join the team on August 24th for the construction.

COMMUNITY-BUILD AT NEW OAKMAN LINWOOD PARK, SEPTEMBER
The third part of the project, led by Profs. Maigret, Arquero and Craig Borum, involves constructing a small “proof of concept” that brings together an appreciation for water, play, and public space and serves as a catalyst for future initiatives.

The location capitalizes on the high visibility of the corner at Linwood Avenue and Oakman Boulevard, two main arterials in the Village, and a gateway to the Focus: HOPE campus.

The goal is to create a new, communal space on a currently vacant lot for children and adults that includes community gardens, a rain reservoir, and small play areas.

Visualizations of the students’ proposals
Proposals for Linwood and Ford Streetscapes
Focus Groups on vacancy opportunities
Open Space Typologies Visual Inventory

2012 Spring - Summer
Fall

2013 Winter
Spring
Summer
What We Proposed

The HOPE Village Initiative is ambitious in its scope. It aims not only to have an impact on those who participate directly in Focus: HOPE programs, but to produce benefits for other residents by improving conditions in the neighborhood overall.

For our study, we proposed to gather baseline information about the current conditions of the neighborhood during this early part of the Initiative from a wide range of area residents. By listening to diverse voices, we will have a better idea of the challenges that residents are facing. We intend to continue our research activities in the future in order to understand the effects of the HOPE Village Initiative on residents’ daily lives. In this way, we will be able to track the impact of the HOPE Village Initiative as it unfolds.

What We Are Doing

There is no better way to learn about a place than to walk through it and meet people face to face. That is how we have met most of our interview participants. It has also given us a much better sense of ground-level variation across the neighborhood.

We use the following methods in our study:
1) Social history and daily routines interviews
2) Economic surveys
3) Environmental inventories
4) Focus groups
5) Photovoice projects

Each of these methods allows us to capture a different aspect of life in the neighborhood, from social histories and daily routines of individual residents to their monthly income and expenditures; from shared concerns, hopes and fears of groups such as homeowners to actual block-by-block physical conditions.

What We Have Learned

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An African American man in his mid-50s commented on the interconnection between local economic and social challenges: “What causes the mentality of the people to degenerate to the gutterbucket level? ...When a neighborhood declines, it’s on a financial basis...more or less people who were NOT thieves BECOME thieves...”

Quotes from Individual Interviews Reveal Different Views of Neighborhood Life

“Honestly I’m—I’m proud of this neighborhood. I got a deep love. I gotta love, man, for the people that I know—that have been with me for the years I’ve been in this neighborhood. And the elderly people that I know—that have—that were here and are still here. I know—a lot of the people that I hung with I know their kids. So, you know, I—I have a history with this neighborhood. And I’m comfortable with it, and I’m—I’m proud of it and at the same time, disappointed, because of the way that things are now. You know, when I came here you didn’t have all these abandoned houses, and look like they dropped a bomb on—a few of the streets.”

African American man, mid-40s

“It used to be better than it is—like I say, when I was growing up, but now it’s kind of wow, you know, people are sellin’ drugs and shootin’ and fightin’, you know, and, and gettin’ drunk all the time, but they don’t, you know, they’re peaceful. They don’t bother anybody. They just go their way and, you know, it’s just—it should be better than what it is. You know, people need to just either find them a job or do something constructive with their self. It’s like a little, a lot of young boys, you know.”

African American woman, early 50s

Social Themes

The most consistent theme in the social interviews is that of neighborhood decline, and the struggle to maintain living standards, either in terms of social values or economic livelihood, in the face of that decline. For example, one African American woman in her 40s stated: “We moved here back in 1979 from the south—and um, it was more, um, family oriented when we moved here. And um, now due to the economy, due to, uh, a lot of the seniors are dying out. They’re leaving their homes to their grandchildren, and they’re not keepin’ up the property, and it’s a lot of drug activity goin’ on- within their neighborhoods.”

What’s Next

We are still conducting individual interviews, and we are looking for more people to participate in focus groups and Photovoice projects as well. If you are a HOPE Village resident and you are interested in participating as an individual or with a group of fellow residents, please call Julie @ 248-703-5628.