Beekman St. Corridor: Access and Opportunity

South Cumminsville – Millvale Resident Survey Report
Rev. October 31, 2013

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Executive Summary

In 2013 Working In Neighborhoods (WIN) performed a survey of residents in South Cummins-ville-Millvale. The survey was focused on walkability conditions, fresh food retail needs, and community workforce characteristics. This report will summarize participant responses and analyze survey results in community context. Recommendations provided will discuss potential strategies to address community needs and create new economic development opportunities.

Key Findings

Of the one-hundred residents WIN surveyed:

- 66% are concerned about pedestrian safety, particularly for young children, seniors, and persons with physical disabilities.
- 39% reported that living in this community has negatively impacted their health.
- Over half (54) of the residents surveyed cited poor quality / freshness as a main reason for not shopping at local convenience stores.
- Fresh food items that are in-demand include: grapes, greens, bananas and apples.
- 25% are full time employees, 12% are part-time or seasonally employed.
- 15% are unemployed (seeking work), only 2% are jobless (not seeking work).
- Limited number of job openings is the #1 barrier to finding employment.
- Lack of transportation is the #1 barrier to maintaining employment.

Key Recommendations

- Strategies to improve walkability include: move paint, narrow travel lanes, improve safety of pedestrian crossings and remove obstacles to active transportation.
- Partner with Center For Closing the Health Gap: Do Right! Healthy Corner Store Network.
- Participate in the City of Cincinnati’s Mobile Produce Vending Program.
- Convene a Beekman St. Corridor Business Council.
- Support business growth and expansion by promoting infrastructure improvements, financing and other resources for facility upgrades.
• Partner with Cincinnati State Community Technical College to promote manufacturing careers to residents and to prepare them for stable, highly paid, high-performance production jobs.
• Consider possibilities to provide Entrepreneurship Education for aspiring entrepreneurs and current small business owners in S.Cummins ville-Millvale.
• Advocate for expanded public transit access to create new connections with major employment centers.

The survey results and recommendations in this report will serve to help guide community planning for Beekman St. Corridor Initiative to address the issues of Walkability, Fresh Food Access and Economic Opportunity.

Introduction

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Mill Creek Expressway Project is currently under construction in several Cincinnati neighborhoods. The project involves ramp closures and newly designed full access interchanges including I-74 Colerain/Beekman, the gateway to South Cummins ville. Working In Neighborhoods (WIN), together with the S.Cummins ville community, has seized the moment as an economic development opportunity by launching the Beekman St. Corridor Initiative. The initiative aims to leverage public infrastructure dollars towards growing private investment and developing a more walkable and livable community for all.

WIN’s survey report focuses on issues which are becoming national priorities for community developers and policy makers alike. These priorities are demonstrated in All-In Nation: An America that Works for All, a new book by Policy Link and the Center for American Progress:

“Infrastructure – including transportation, water, and energy systems -- is critical to connect people to economic opportunity. But infrastructure is often crumbling in communities of color. How can we leverage billions of dollars of infrastructure improvements to reduce the nation’s unemployment and poverty rates and create pathways to jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for our fastest-growing demographic groups?” (Center For American Progress, Policy Link, 2013)
Access and Opportunity are the keys to success for today’s urban commercial corridors. From transportation and employment, to fresh and healthy food – Many low-income communities of color in the U.S. lack access to the basic resources needed to secure economic opportunity and improve quality of life. This report analyzes survey results from one such community, South Cumminsville – Millvale, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Survey Objectives

The survey was designed to achieve the following three objectives:

1. IDENTIFY: Walkability concerns, fresh food retail need and community workforce characteristics.
2. COLLECT: Information on daily modes of transportation and consumer behaviors / preferences.
3. ENGAGE: Community members in corridor revitalization planning and implementation.

Survey results will help guide recommendations for creating economic development opportunities during the planning process.

Participants

The total number of individuals who participated in the survey was 100. These individuals are current residents of South Cumminsville-Millvale. Survey participants have lived in the community for an average of 19 years. Of the 100 survey participants, 52% reside in Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Millvale Townhomes.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a door-to-door canvassing approach as the primary method of initial contact. Additional contacts were made by visiting Community Council meetings and by making phone-calls to schedule survey visits. The survey was also translated in Swahili to accommodate the East African immigrant community which resides in the Millvale public housing development. The surveys were conducted in person by verbally asking participants ten questions and recording responses on paper forms. Survey forms were then entered into a tracking
spreadsheet with one column for each question response type, including comments separately.

**Data Collected**

The survey collected two forms of data:

- **Qualitative**: Qualitative data including participant comments.
- **Quantitative**: Quantitative data including responses to multiple choice questions as well as general frequency of similar terms used.

Results are reported as statistical figures, summary charts and narrative paragraphs.

**Survey Results**

The results are listed by question in each of three survey focus areas: Walkability, Fresh Food Access and Economic Opportunity.

**A. Walkability**

**Are residents concerned about pedestrian safety?**

Sixty-six percent of residents surveyed are concerned about pedestrian safety issues pertaining to unsafe driving speeds, heavy truck traffic and poorly marked / timed pedestrian crossings at key intersections. Thirty-four percent are not concerned about pedestrian safety, many of whom lived on “No Outlet” streets, away from major thoroughfares, or rarely walked anywhere if they had access to family vehicles.)
Many participants surveyed are concerned that potential future pedestrian safety may worsen, as a result of the ODOT Interstate 74/75 Mill Creek Expressway Project at Colerain/Beekman. Of particular concern is the safety of young children, seniors, and persons with physical disabilities.

S. Cumminsville residents reported large semi-trucks have consistently travelled on residential streets – causing damage to sidewalks, tree branches, telephone lines and signage. Some residents expressed fear that they will be held financially responsible for repairing damages incurred by clients and employees of local distribution companies. Two residents reported being struck by vehicles while crossing residential streets in the last five years. Residents state that pedestrian crossing signals at main intersections need to be updated to accommodate children, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

**What is the daily mode of transportation?**

Forty-eight percent of resident surveyed have access to personally owned vehicles; thirty-eight use public transit; twenty-three share rides with others; sixteen walk; and six are cyclists. One resident reported walking fifteen miles on a semi-regular basis to seek employment.
What schools do neighborhood children attend?

Twelve percent of respondents’ children are currently attending Ethel Taylor Academy, the local neighborhood primary school. Many participants’ children are now adults who attended Millvale Elementary School (which was re-built as Ethel Taylor Academy) for grade school education. Some parents have chosen to take advantage of new educational opportunities for their children being made available by charter schools. Twenty-four respondents’ children attend other schools, including:

- The Horizon Science Academy
- Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy
- The Academy of World Languages
- CSR Academy
- St. Catherine of Sienna Parish
- Riverside Academy
- Rockdale Academy
- Cheviot Elementary
- Schools out-of-state

High schools attended by children of survey respondents include:

- Hughes High School,
- The Cincinnati Zoo Academy,
- Walnut Hills High School,
- Western Hills University High School.

Figure 3 Schools Attended by Children of Survey Participants

![Bar chart showing current schools children attend]

Figure 4 Other Schools Attended by Children in S.Cumminsville-Millvale

![Bar chart showing "Other" schools]

How do children get to and from school?
Of the respondents with school-age children, ten drove their children to school, one carpooled, eleven used the school bus, and twelve walked.\(^1\) Parents with children currently attending Ethel Taylor Academy prefer driving their children to school if they have access to private transportation. When asked the reason for this, concerns cited primarily focused on unsafe driving speeds on Beekman St. or crime near the intersection of Beekman Street and Moosewood Avenue.

![Figure 5 Mode of School Transportation](image)

**B. Access to Fresh and Healthy Food**

Where do residents shop for food?

Ninety-seven percent of residents surveyed shop primarily at a retail chain for their grocery needs. 93% rely on Queen City Kroger as their primary food retail destination. Thirty-two respondents rely on Save-a-Lot in the neighboring community of Northside\(^2\). Sixteen residents shop at Wal-Mart, eight at Sam’s Club, and three patronize Aldis. Six survey participants who immigrated to the U.S. from Burundi and Tanzania in East Africa support an independently owned

\(^2\) Save-a-Lot’s Northside location has closed since the time of this survey, as of September 2013. This was the primary fresh food outlet for 30% of residents surveyed. As the nearest major grocery chain location, the closing of Save-a-Lot will increase the average amount of travel time by bus to access fresh food retail.
store in Westwood that sells African foods. Four residents patronize Findlay and Northside Farmer’s Markets, and five residents grow their own produce in backyard gardens.

Figure 6: Type of Fresh Food Retailer Supported

Figure 7: Specific Retailers Relyed Upon
How do residents get to and from the grocery store?

Half of the residents surveyed use personally owned vehicles to access grocery needs, while forty-one percent get a ride from friends or family. Ten residents surveyed rely on METRO public buses for their grocery trips, and six pay taxi-cabs.

Residents not able to get a ride from family or friends to the grocery store must take between two and four buses each way to access a fresh food retailer. Based upon the location of respondents’ primary food outlets in relation to S.Cumminsvelle – Millvale with consideration to current bus routes, the average trip time for two metro rides to the store takes a minimum of 37.75 minutes, or one hour and 15 minutes roundtrip.

Nearby Corner / Convenience Stores

There are four convenience stores located in the community: three small independently-owned vendors on Beekman Street, and one gas station at the intersection of Elmore St. and Colerain Ave. When asked whether or not they would choose one of these establishments for primary food needs, only one responded yes. Ninety-nine percent of respondents shop at these establishments only for daily snacks, lottery tickets, and alcohol. Most respondents had multiple reasons for avoiding local vendors as a food source.

1. Poor quality / freshness of food
2. Extremely high prices
3. Negative atmosphere
4. Narrow selection of items
5. Perception of safety in the store

Figure 92 Resident Concerns about Local Food Retailers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Residents Avoid Local Corner Stores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant Comments on Corner Stores**

Residents described their experiences at the community’s four independently owned stores. Long-term residents spoke highly of the previous owner of Fey’s Grocery Store who carried fresh affordable food items. However since change in ownership the majority of residents surveyed have purchased spoiled meat and produce from the store on more than one occasion, and report expired food on shelves. One resident surveyed said her family has inadvertently purchased outdated WIC\(^3\) items for her infant grandchild. A resident reported that the owner of Fey’s offers a customer discount on expired products, rather than removing from the shelves. Many residents noted the undesirable atmosphere inside the store including: roaches, dim lights, and disrespectful behavior towards customers.

Some residents shop at Shell Gas Station for convenience items, however fresh food items are not available. Security is a concern for walking to and from the gas station. Some residents avoid walking to the store at night due to poor lighting conditions on Elmore St. Most residents prefer large retailers (Kroger and Wal-Mart) for the wide selection, affordable prices, and clean

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\(^3\)“The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.” (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
atmosphere. Residents indicated their support for developing new and improved local retail to provide fresh and healthy food options for residents and hire from the community.

**How Do Residents Feel That Living in this Community Has Affected Their Health?**

1% of residents surveyed reported that living in this community has improved his/her health. 39% percent of residents surveyed report that living in S. Cumminsville – Millvale has had a negative impact on their health. 59% of residents surveyed reported no health affects as a result of their residency.45

**Participant Comments on Health Impacts**

Environmental health concerns include exposure to hazardous materials, lead, and mold.6 Health issues reported include new or increased severity of the following diseases and health problems:

- Diabetes
- Eczema
- High blood pressure
- Asthma
- Allergies
- Lung cancer
- COPD
- Congested breathing
- Mental and learning disabilities
- Psychological disorders related to trauma from experiencing violent crime

Respondents self-reporting zero health impact were, in many cases, unable to name a single fresh vegetable currently in their diet and had no knowledge of how to prepare fresh food. Young adults

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4 A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, reported* twenty-four of sixty-six identified studies demonstrated self-reported health data consistently underestimates the proportion of individuals considered “at-risk.”

6 Proper nutrition is important in the prevention of lead poisoning, especially in young children. A balanced diet of grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products and selections from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, nuts or eggs can help decrease susceptibility to lead intoxication. It is particularly important to include adequate amounts of calcium and iron. (Pearse)
and middle-aged residents alike in this response category reported the absence of vegetables (fresh or canned) in their diet. This study casts serious doubt upon the wisdom of relying exclusively on self-reported health information. Qualitative data from survey comments in this segment indicate the need for education and awareness building around the impacts of nutrition on health.

Figure 10 Self-Reported Community Health Impacts

![Image](image_url)

**Which Fresh Food Item(s) Would Residents Most Like To Purchase?**

*(Within walking distance)*

Eighteen residents would like to have grapes; twelve want collard or kale greens; eleven would buy fresh bananas; ten like apples and nine want oranges. Eight residents love broccoli, seven chose watermelon, and six will buy tomatoes. Five residents would like to have fish. Those items selected by less than five residents were: cherries, plantains, pineapples, cassava, bell

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7 This question was added after recruitment ended for the June 25th Walkability Workshop as a replacement to the RSVP question. Responses will help the Center for Closing the Health Gap and Beekman Street Market to determine which new fresh items would be most successfully sold in the store. Of the sixty respondents to this question, many offered more than one food item that they would like to purchase locally. WIN compiled these responses and has included items selected by five or more residents.
peppers, zucchini, tangerines, spinach, cucumbers, kiwi, Brussels sprouts, mangos, cabbage, pears, and onions.

Figure 11 Fresh Food Items Desired By (5+) Residents

**Notes and Comments:**
This question was intended to provide residents with the opportunity to voice their needs and desires for fresh healthy food. Many residents would start supporting local corner stores if they offered some of these food choices. While the responses were overwhelmingly in support of fresh food retail, some residents were unable to name any fresh fruits or vegetables. When asked this question, these respondents named processed food items (such as bologna) or stated that they had never eaten a fresh vegetables or fruit. When asked why, respondents explained that they had never been taught how to prepare fresh and healthy meals.

**C. Employment and Economic Opportunity**

27% of those surveyed are retired senior citizens. 25% are employed full-time (including four self-employed), 15% are unemployed seeking work, 12% are employed part-time or seasonally, 12% are full time students, 13% are disabled, 4% are full-time homemakers and
caregivers, while 2% are jobless not seeking work. Residents worked in a variety of fields ranging from medical, social services, and fast food operations, to higher education and business management positions.

Figure 12 Employment Statuses of Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Employment Status</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time homemaker or Caregiver</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time student</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobless / not seeking work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed / seeking work</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time or seasonally</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 Types of Resident Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation*</th>
<th># Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical / Home Health Care</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed / Small Business Owner</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Volunteer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptionist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef / Cook</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government / Social Service Agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care-taker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare Provider</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Driver</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House keeping</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Stylist / Beautician</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nine respondants are "Open" to occupation, based upon opportunity.

Key Barriers to Finding Employment

36% of residents surveyed are challenged by the limited number of jobs available. 20% reported commuting costs make many jobs unaffordable in relation to the earnings provided. 9% cited their lack of experience; Disability, high cost of college education, fear of losing public benefits and criminal history are all barriers for many in securing employment. A few feel they have experienced discrimination based upon age or cultural differences; language barriers are also
keeping some from finding employment. Those without personally owned vehicles are forced to decline job offers in remote areas and outer suburbs without public transit routes.

Figure 13 Barriers Faced by Residents to Find a Job

Residents with criminal misdemeanors are challenged to find employment above minimum wage, which is not enough to support their families. One resident spoke of discrimination because of his dreadlocks which may cause him to be perceived as unprofessional in interviews.

**Key challenges to maintaining employment**

28% of those surveyed cited their main challenge to maintain employment is lack of transportation. 12% of respondents are challenged to keep a job while caring for their children or elderly family members. 11% are struggling with physical health problems or disabilities. 6% are challenged to keep up with changing family dynamics (single parenting, relocations, etc.), 5% cannot risk losing public benefits, and 3% experience frequent job changes. Criminal backgrounds, particularly felonies, prevent many from maintaining employment; some feel they have been let go after their employer has fulfilled tax credit obligations.8

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8 “The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a Federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain veterans and individuals from other target groups with significant barriers to employment. The tax credit employers can claim
Community Context

The community of South Cumminsville - Millvale in Cincinnati, Ohio is predominantly African American (91%) of 1,254 households. The 3,108 members of this community’s population are 41.4% male and 58.6% female; 40% children and 7% seniors. Of nearly 1500 housing units, 16% are vacant. South Cumminsville has a historic housing stock, while Millvale is public housing. Over fifty-three percent of housing units in South Cumminsville are owner-occupied (US Census Bureau, 2010); there is a close sense of community and commitment to place. There are several large vacant industrial properties and brownfields abutting the residential area. Aging infrastructure and private disinvestment combined with unplanned traffic flow present a complex challenge for commercial corridor revitalization.

depends on the target group of the individual hired, the wages paid to that individual in the first year of employment, and the number of hours that individual worked. There is also a maximum tax credit that can be earned.” (http://www.doleta.gov)
**Map 1: S.Cumminsville Context Map**

South Cumminsville and Millvale are located in the Mill Creek Valley. The two neighborhoods are surrounded by integral transportation routes including Interstate 74, Interstate 75 and the CSX railroad. Camp Washington, English Woods, Fay Apartments, and Northside are the bordering neighborhoods. Key features of the area include the Mill Creek Bike Trail, Ethel Taylor Academy, Wayne Playground and the legendary Mr. Gene's dog house.

**Map 2: Beekman St. Corridor Framework**
Transportation & Walkability

Two major transportation corridors frame the residential neighborhood, bordered by several well-established manufacturing and distribution industries. Beekman Street connects South Cumminsville - Millvale to downtown Cincinnati and serves as the main local access to Interstates 74/75. The commercial corridor is disconnected from surrounding communities with unsafe pedestrian conditions, sparse public transit options, no fresh food retail and few job opportunities. According to www.walkscore.com, the neighborhood is “car dependent”. This means that “most errands require a car”; yet 75% of households do not own a car and are public transit-dependent (American Community Survey). 90% of children attending Ethel Taylor Academy walk to school. (Burks, 2013)

Estimated percent of housing units for which no vehicles are available in 2007-2011.

Access to Fresh & Healthy Food

A 2012 Food Trust study of Cincinnati neighborhoods examined low retail sales, low income and high diet-related deaths to identify areas of greatest need. The study report identifies S.Cummins-ville-Millvale as an area of greatest need for fresh food retail financing. (The Food

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9 Walk Score measures the walkability of any address. For each address, Walk Score analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to the amenities in each category. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (.25 miles) are awarded maximum points. Walk Score also measures pedestrian friendliness by analyzing road metrics such as block length and intersection density.
Trust, 2012) The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) designates this community as Limited Supermarket Access (LSA) status.\(^\text{10}\) (An access score indicates the degree to which a block group's residents are underserved by supermarkets.) Block group scoring shows that distance to a supermarket needs to be reduced by over 43 percent in order to achieve fresh food access. In some areas over 83 percent of retail demand is “leaking” or being lost from the community to nearby stores. (The Reinvestment Fund, 2011)

**Economic Opportunity**

In 2013 University of Cincinnati Research Collaborative published the fifth edition of the “Social Areas of Cincinnati” which analyzes socio-economic trends across Cincinnati’s 52 neighborhoods. South Cumminsville - Millvale ranked among the highest in rates of joblessness and unemployment in 2009. Approximately 57% of residents were jobless while 27% of residents or 266 people were unemployed. “Unemployed” was defined as “a civilian (16 years or older) that did not have a job but had looked for a job within the past four weeks and were available for work”. The term “jobless” was defined as “individuals unemployed and under 65 years of age not in the civilian labor force.”

*Total number of jobs located in this area in 2011.*

\(^\text{10}\) TRF’s methodology is designed to identify areas where residents travel longer distances to reach supermarkets when compared to the benchmark (average) distance traveled by residents of non-low/moderate income areas. Comparative areas are grouped based on similar values for population density and car ownership rates. The data sources include US Census (2010) for population living in households, residential land area, US Census ACS data (2005-2009) for car ownership rates; and Trade Dimensions (2011) data for supermarket locations.
South Cumminsville and Millvale ranked 52nd out of 52 Cincinnati neighborhoods on the Socioeconomic Status Index (SES) in 2009. The SES indicators are: Family Income, Family Structure, Occupation, Education, and Crowding. The SES index consists of four quartiles, where 1 is the lowest socio-economic status and 4 is the highest status. The 2005-2009 SES Index for this neighborhood was 11.6. In fact, since 1980, S.Cumminsville – Millvale has ranked at or near the lowest on Cincinnati’s socio-economic scale out of all fifty-two neighborhoods. (Maloney & Auffrey, 2013)

**Recommendations**

Included in this report are recommendations for encouraging economic development and revitalizing the commercial corridor. These recommendations aim to create opportunity and increase access in order to improve quality-of-life in the S.Cumminsville-Millvale community.

- Short Term – Year One
- Mid Term – Years 2-3
- Long Term – Years 3-5

**Transportation and Walkability**

The following key principles should be kept in mind for well-designed roads that accommodate all users:

- **Design to accommodate all users.** Street design should accommodate all users of the street, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, vehicles, freight trucks, and emergency responders. Streets should work for all ages and abilities. A well-designed street provides appropriate space for all users to coexist.

- **Design using the appropriate speed for the surrounding context.** The right design speed should respect the desired role and responsibility of the street, including the type and intensity of land use, desired activities, and the overall safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists. The speed of vehicles impacts all users of the street and the livability of the surrounding area. Lower speeds reduce crashes and injuries and increase the ability to turn safely, park safely, and to live, work, shop or play.

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11 On June 24-25, WIN held a Walkability Workshop and Walk Audit which was facilitated by the Walkable and Livable Communities (WALC) Institute. Several of the recommendations below pertaining to walkability were received within the WALC technical recommendations report.
- **Design for safety.** The safety of all street users, especially the most vulnerable users (children, the elderly, and disabled) and modes (pedestrians and bicyclists) should be paramount in any design of the road. The safety of streets can be dramatically improved when all modes are taken into account in the design of our roads. (Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, 2013)

A complete study of walkability conditions and recommendations by the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute is available for download on WIN’s website: [here](#).

The Corridor Action Team has set the following top two priorities for early action:
- Ensure safety of children walking and biking to/from Wayne Playfield by slowing down traffic on Beekman between Elmore and Dreman.
- Provide safe crossings for children, seniors and people with disabilities to cross at main intersections and destinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations: Walkability</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Move Paint:</strong> Reallocate space on Beekman and Elmore Streets by moving the paint to narrow travel lanes, allowing the additional space for on-street parking on one side and with bike lanes. (Ten-foot travel lanes help slow vehicle speeds and keep drivers vigilant while honoring the community.)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve Marked Crossings:</strong> Paint high visibility crosswalk markings on all legs of priority intersections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create Sense of Place and Build from Victories:</strong> Continue to assess and prioritize sidewalk repairs, maintenance and enforcement in South Cumminsville. Create an enforcement task-force or “street crew” of resident volunteers who socialize as they walk the streets recording, cleaning and reporting areas that need to be maintained or enforced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Right-Size &amp; Right Scale Streets:</strong> Elmore Street is an ideal candidate for a road diet—converting the road from two travel lanes in either direction to one travel lane and a center turn lane. The remaining space can be used to widen sidewalks, add on street parking, bike lanes and green the street by adding tree wells.</td>
<td>Mid Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure safe crossings for all users:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Install Curb Extensions at the Beekman-Elmore intersection in order to shorten crossing distance for pedestrians. Ensure properly placed curb ramps for safe wheelchair access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reduce crossing distances with a median or Pedestrian Crossing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Island - this makes crossing streets safer for all users. Treatments such as a pedestrian crossing island or marked crossing should be considered on Elmore Street.

**Safe Routes To School:** Work with Cincinnati Public Schools Safe Routes to School and Ethel Taylor Academy.

**Remove Barriers to Active Transportation:**

- Repair and maintain sidewalks.
- Provide transit shelters and seating at key bus stops. Benches, sheltered bus stops, water fountains, rest rooms, bike racks and other amenities to encourage active transportation place “eyes on the street”— discouraging unwanted behaviors.

**Improve land use mix:** Careful transition between land-uses is critical to ensuring an activity promotes the right uses throughout all hours of the day. Many of the land-uses in S. Cumminsville are not supporting healthy lifestyle choices.

---

**Access to Fresh Food Retail**

The Center for Closing the Health Gap (CCHG) has successfully piloted “Do Right! Healthy Corner Store” network in the Avondale community. To date, three locations have been converted to healthy corner stores representing examples for stores in the next round of communities. In 2013 WIN partnered with CCHG to bring the Corner Store Program to S. Cumminsville-Millvale. A team of community members assessed four corner stores; one to two stores will be selected to participate in the program.

**Recommendations: Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations: Access</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy Corner Stores</strong></td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with Center For Closing the Health Gap to maximize the incentive for current corner store owner(s) to sell fresh and healthy food. Programming such as taste tests and demonstrations will help create awareness and educational opportunities for residents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile Produce Vending</strong></td>
<td>Mid Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain permission for community use of private property or obtain permit for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
use of public Right-of-Way location for mobile produce vending. This site should be located near places attracting foot traffic (i.e. Mr. Gene’s Doghouse or Wayne Playfield). Prepare the site and work with the Office of Environmental Quality Mobile Produce Vending Program to attract participating vendors. Perform community outreach and promote designated vending days as community-wide events. Program taste testing and demonstrations on vending days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Retail Attraction Strategy</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform a market feasibility study; Develop a shovel-ready site that meets potential vendor needs; Obtain / allocate incentives using the new Cincinnati Fresh Food Retail Financing Fund and other policy tools.</td>
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</table>

**Economic Opportunity**

**Workforce Development**

The #1 barrier to finding employment among residents surveyed is the current limited number of job openings. Workforce development strategies must address this barrier by preparing residents with training and work experience in future job growth areas. Residents surveyed have worked in a variety of occupational groups, only some of which are projected to grow over the next several years. According to the *Greater Cincinnati 2020 Jobs Outlook*, the following relevant occupational groups are projected to grow five percent or more: Healthcare & Support; Installation, Maintenance & Repair, Building, Grounds, Cleaning & Maintenance; Personal Care & Service. (Agenda 360, 2010)

Strategies should concentrate on those occupations with an Annual Median Wage of $35,000 or more and projected net job growth which are related to the needs of existing local businesses: Truck Drivers; Carpenters; Electricians; Industrial Machinery Mechanics; Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics; Operating Engineers; Heating, Air Conditioning , & Refrigeration (HVAC) Mechanics & Installers; Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters.

The #1 barrier to maintaining employment among residents surveyed is transportation. Short-term strategies must address this barrier by improving access to quality public transportation.
which connects residents with major employment centers. Mid-long term strategies should focus on supporting and attracting small businesses to grow new jobs in the corridor.

**Small Business Growth & Entrepreneurship**

The Beekman St. Corridor is a designated “Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone”. The U.S. Small Business Administration HUB Zone Empowerment Contracting Program promotes economic development and employment growth in distressed areas by providing access to more federal contracting opportunities. Federal contracts can mean big business for manufacturing companies. As such, certified local businesses hiring at least 35% of their employees from the community will receive priority on federal government contracts. Small businesses which are currently located in the corridor should be supported to grow and expand in order to create new jobs for community residents. Infrastructure improvements, facility upgrades and financial incentives will be necessary to support and attract local employers. In addition, new programming could be developed and piloted to provide entrepreneurship education and business-start up assistance to community members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations: Opportunity</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote infrastructure improvements and facility upgrades for existing businesses to successfully grow and expand within the corridor.</strong></td>
<td>Short Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organize a Beekman St. Corridor Business Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Broker relationships with existing business interested in growth and/or expansion. Develop partnership(s) with lender(s) such as Fifth Third Bank to provide SBA financing and technical assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assist businesses with recruitment to train and hire local residents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Market new HUB-Zone incentive opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use Existing Policy Tools and Incentives.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work with CMHA to explore options for using HUD Section 3 resources to create new economic opportunities for residents of Millvale public housing. (i.e. access to mainstream banking, Individual Development Accounts, job training support, etc.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage growing companies by promoting the benefits of SBA’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop Green Jobs Training &amp; Apprenticeship Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work with local HUB-Zone certified businesses to provide residents with job training and apprenticeship opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partner with Cincinnati State Community Technical College’s Environmental Engineering, Sustainable Horticulture and Renewable Energy programs to provide green jobs training. Teach students and residents the skills needed to grow food, build rain gardens, maintain landscapes, clean up brownfields, rehabilitate abandoned commercial property and install solar panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design an initiative modeled after “Raise the Floor” which recently launched in Northern Kentucky to develop a skilled manufacturing workforce in Lower Mill Creek Valley neighborhoods.</td>
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<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Entrepreneurship Education Program</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This program could be an expansion upon WIN’s Homebuyer Education Course and Homebuyer Clubs to provide Entrepreneurship Training for community members and small business owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Pilot the new program in South Cumminsville-Millvale as a city-wide demonstration.</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Create a Green Jobs Pipeline

Incorporate community workforce development into WIN Energy Efficiency and Housing Development projects (e.g. PUSH Buffalo Green Development Zone). This may include forming a local contractor network.

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12 “Raise the Floor has two primary goals: to help women improve their economic well-being and increase the pipeline of skilled workers—in this case women—to ease the current and projected manufacturing labor shortage. The program was developed by a group of women from a variety of employers…”

13 “To create new jobs, PUSH has focused on expanding the local weatherization and rehabilitation business. Because of PUSH’s many construction projects in the Green Development Zone, PUSH has been able to call on a growing network of high-road contractors who are committed to hiring new workers from the West Side—and offering good pay, good benefits, and real prospect for a future in the business.”
Conclusion

As a community development corporation (CDC), WIN understands that communities are complex and interconnected systems. The challenges of access and opportunity in S. Cumminsville – Millvale are self-reinforcing in many ways. The survey provided several examples of this phenomenon, such as:

- The absence of fresh food retail is compounded by inability to access grocery stores; corridor disinvestment and lacking transportation service jointly contribute to diet-related illness.
- Residents reported “health problems” and “lack of transportation” as the top two barriers to maintaining employment; unsafe driving speeds discourage the walking and physical activity necessary for good health.

Acknowledging the inter-relatedness of these issues is a critical step to understanding the community needs and identifying a comprehensive development strategy. As WIN joins the ranks of CDCs across the United States broadening their approach, it is time to bring S.Cumminsville-Millvale into the national conversation about equitable development and economic opportunity for communities of color.
Appendix:
Survey Tool

Address_______________________ Date _______________

Beekman Street Corridor Community Survey

1. How long have you lived here in the community?
   A) South Cumminsville: _______________
   B) Millvale: _______________
   Comments: ____________________________________________________________

TRANSPORTATION

2. With the current traffic in the community, are you concerned about walking?
   a. Yes. (What concerns do you have?)
   _________________________________________________________________
   b. No.

3. What is your daily source of transportation?
   a. I own or have access to a vehicle, and drive myself.
   b. I depend on other’s to ride with. (How has that worked for you?)
   c. Public Transportation (How accessible is transportation?)
   d. Walk (How far do you typically walk in a day?)
   e. Cycling

   Comments: __________________________________________________________

4. If you have children, what school do they attend, and how do they get to/from school?
   a. Ethel Taylor Academy
   b. Chase Elementary School
   c. Other _______________
   a. Drive
b. Carpool 

c. School bus 

d. Walk (Concerned about traffic conditions?) Y/N 

Comments: ____________________________________________________________

ACCESS TO FRESH & HEALTHY FOOD

5. How has living in this community affected your health? 
   A) Improved-why? ______________________________________________________
   B) Worsened-why? ____________________________________________________
   C) Same N/A

6. Where do you shop for food, and how do you get to the store?
   Name of Outlet(s): _____________________________________________________
   Type (Chain supermarket, corner store) ___________________________________
   Circle all that apply: Personal Vehicle Bus Walk Bike Taxi Get a ride OTHER______
   Comments: ___________________________________________________________

7. If you don’t shop at nearby corner stores, why not? Check all that apply:
   Quality/Freshness of food Atmosphere Prices Location Safety OTHER:________________________

EMPLOYMENT

8. What is your current employment status?
   a. Employed full time 
   b. Employed part time or seasonally 
   c. Unemployed/looking for work
   Industry: __________________
   d. Unemployed/not seeking work 
   e. Full Time Student 
   f. Full Time Homemaker or Caregiver 
   g. Disabled h. Retired
9. What are the main challenge(s) that you have experienced in finding employment? (Max 3)
   a. Limited Job Openings
   b. Lack of Experience and Skills (e.g. no experience or specific requirements)
   c. Lack of Education Level or Training (e.g. GED, reading skills, etc)
   d. Cost/Availability of Education and Training
   e. Disability
   f. Fear of losing public benefits (SSDI, food stamps, unemployment, etc)
   g. Job Location
   h. Criminal History

10. What are the main challenge(s) that you have experienced in maintaining employment (keeping a job)? (Max 3)
   a. Lack of child or elder care
   b. Frequent Job Changes (layoffs, terminations, temp or seasonal work)
   c. Transportation
   d. Physical Health Issues
   e. Changes in family dynamics or housing circumstance (e.g. single parenting, relocations, etc)
   f. Need for benefits

| A) Increase access to fresh food in your neighborhood? | Yes | No |
| B) One fresh food item in walking distance?          |     |    |

May we send you updates? YES NO What is the best way to contact you?
Name: ________________________________
Phone: ________________________________
Email: ________________________________
Postal Mail: ____________________________
Mobile: ________________________________
Carrier ________________________________ Yes, I understand

Disclaimer: Although the WIN does not charge for text message alerts, you may see a charge for incoming text messages at a rate determined by your cell phone carrier.

Best Days & Times: Circle all that apply:
Monday am/pm Tuesday am/pm Wednesday am/pm
Thursday am/pm Friday am/pm Saturday am/pm

May I refer you to the Lead Organizer for this project?
YES (Great! Samantha Brockfield will be contacting you to follow-up on your responses.)
**Works Cited**


Center For American Progress, Policy Link. (2013). Infrastructure: Supporting Communities So All Can Thrive. In *All In Nation: An America That Works For All* (pp. 53-75).


**References**


Pearse, A. J., & Mitchell, M. C. *Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet Nutrition and Childhood Lead Poisoning*. Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, Human Nutrition and Food Management.


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